

# **BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

## **MINUTES**

of the proceedings of a Joint Meeting of the  
Northern and Southern Works Committees

held at the Offices of the Board on  
21<sup>st</sup> November 2019 at 2pm

### **Northern Works Members**

Chairman - Mr P Holmes

Cllr T Ashton	Cllr R Austin
* Cllr P Bedford	* Mr M Brookes
Mr D Casswell	Cllr M Cooper
Mr J Fowler	* Cllr M Head
* Mr R Leggott	Mr R Needham
Cllr F Pickett	* Mr J E Pocklington
Mr P Robinson	Mr N Scott
* Cllr P Skinner	* Mr R Welberry

### **Southern Works Members**

Chairman - \* Mr M Rollinson

* Mr W Ash	Mr J Atkinson
* Mr V A Barker	* Cllr C Benn
* Mr K C Casswell	* Mr J Casswell
* Mr R Dorrington	Mr C Dring
Mr A Mair	* Mr M Mowbray
Cllr S Walsh	* Mr C Wray
* Mr J R Wray	

(\* Member Present)

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)  
Mr D Withnall (Finance Manager)  
Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)  
Mr S Disley

Mr M Rollinson chaired the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed the guest; Simeon Disley.

#### 1540 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Agenda Item 1

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Atkinson, Mr J Fowler, Mr P Holmes, Mr P Robinson, Cllr F Pickett, Cllr S Walsh, Mr D Casswell, Mr A Mair, Mr R Needham and Mr C Dring.

1541 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Agenda Item 2

Declarations of interest were received from Mr V Barker regarding works in the Gosberton catchment.

1542 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM SIMEON DISLEY - Agenda Item 3

Simeon Disley, the Vice Chairman of the Wash Frontage Group and member of the Wrangle Bank Committee gave a presentation on the improvements to the sea bank since the storm surge of 2013, the resulting works at Wrangle and what needs to be done next.

Interesting points brought to the members attention during the presentation included:

- The predicted increase in sea levels is one metre in the next 100 years.
- The benefits of land reclamation – the increase in area available for agricultural production and the result on an improvement in the sea defences.
- There have been no substantial improvements to the sea banks along the coastline of The Wash for 36 years.
- The flooding event of 2013 prompted Stafford Proctor to reform The Wash Frontage Group, a group which has not met since 1982.
- A meeting was held in August 2014, attended by landowners and a committee was formed to campaign for improvements to the sea defences around The Wash.
- The Environment Agency only had £570,000 of funding available and could not do anything meaningful with such an amount.
- Therefore, Peter Bateson, Chief Executive of Witham 4<sup>th</sup> IDB, suggested that the IDB would act as the 'agent' of the Environment Agency in managing the works.
- In early 2015 an outline business case was developed to increase the height of the sea bank between Leverton and Friskney to 6.5 metres.
- With the support of the Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) a further £500,000 was made available from EU Funding – used to heighten the banks to 7 metres.
- In January 2017, the 14 landowners and 4 agricultural tenants along the sea bank agreed to support the works – to supply soil to use for the bank improvements.
- The proposed commencement date of the work was 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, due to the weather, this was delayed by 13 days.
- The project was completed in September 2018 and a defects period followed for 12 months.
- The Wash Frontage Group's aim is that the successful completion of this project should be the beginning of a rolling programme of improvements to the whole length of The Wash sea defences. Once national politicians are no longer pre-occupied with Brexit, the group will meet at Westminster with the 5 MPs.
- The Wash Frontage Group believe that it should be considered that the Environment Agency focus on maintaining population centres and give the responsibility of countryside rural areas to IDBs due to the Environment Agency's current attitude that 'it is only agricultural land'.

Following the presentation, discussion took place as follows:

The Chairman felt that things are starting to turn back to prioritising water management as opposed to focusing on factors such as biodiversity because of all the attention and focus it has recently received in the public eye.

Mr S Disley agreed, adding that politicians have to react to these events. He further noted that lack of dredging and lack of practical understanding from the Environment Agency.

The Chairman added that if Black Sluice IDB had not dredged the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) it would have overtopped in the October / November 2019 rainfall event.

The Chief Executive stated that the IDB has approximately 8km of frontline sea defences in the catchment and are lucky that all has a secondary bank.

The Chief Executive further referred to the South Lincs Water Partnership's (SLWP) previous meeting where it was noted that there was previously a Lincolnshire County Councillor who was trying to lobby for the approval to build a power station on the sea defence. It has now been recognised that if that had been built we would have the strongest defences in the country.

Mr S Disley explained that in terms of money, the Wrangle works cost approximately £3 million, adding that he feels the whole Wash Frontage could be completed for around £200 - £250 million, which is not a huge sum of money. Mr S Disley further felt that Brexit could bring another opportunity to help build the case for the works; stating that the country would be more reliant on food production and agriculture.

Cllr P Skinner agreed with this point about food security and the importance of farming.

Mr K Casswell added that is it not just about protecting Lincolnshire, it is also about Norfolk and Cambridge.

The Chief Executive referred to some recent figures, in reference to the rain received in the last five weeks, there has been 2.5 tonnes of silt washed off the land per hectare in the catchment.

Mr R Leggott referred to two models from the Environment Agency; 'hold the line' and 'managed retreat', questioning if the hold the line model needs to be updated frequently?

Mr S Disley added that there is a meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019; a shoreline management plan refresher.

Mr C Wray questioned whether the Environment Agency hold any liability? Mr S Disley responded that the Environment Agency have powers to do things, but are not obliged to do anything.

The Chief Executive further noted that the approach and policy taken by the Environment Agency is 'fix following failure'.

The Chairman added that it is a shame they are reactive and not proactive.

The Chairman thanked Mr S Disley for the interesting and informative presentation.

Mr S Disley left the meeting.

The Chairman suggested that a letter of thanks be sent.

1543 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING OF THE NORTHERN WORKS COMMITTEE - Agenda Item 4

The Minutes of the last Meeting of the Northern Works Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019, copies of which had been circulated, were considered by the Northern Works Committee Members and it was AGREED the Minutes should be signed as a true record.

1544 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE NORTHERN WORKS COMMITTEE MINUTES - Agenda Item 5

(a) BOSTON BARRIER TOUR - Minute 1403(c)

The Chief Executive noted that he will try to organise another visit to the barrier at the Northern and Southern Works Committee Inspection Tours.

(b) WASTE ISSUE - ALBAN RETAIL PARK - Minute 1403(f)

Mr M Brookes questioned whether any further progress has been made? The Operations Manager responded that himself and the Planning & Byelaw Officer have held a site meeting with B&M. A fence was discussed and B&M said they would look into it. Whilst there is no fence up, there has also been no more rubbish on the banks since and so the issue has been resolved.

1545 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN WORKS COMMITTEE - Agenda Item 6

The Minutes of the last Meeting of the Southern Works Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019, copies of which had been circulated, were considered by the Southern Works Committee Members and it was AGREED the Minutes should be signed as a true record with the following amendments:

- List of members present – Mr P Holmes is the Chairman of the *Northern* Works Committee as opposed to *Southern* Works Committee.
- Minute 1419(i) – miss-spelling of *opportunity*

1546 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SOUTHERN WORKS COMMITTEE - Agenda Item 7

(a) TERMS OF REFERENCE - Minute 1418

The Chairman noted that both the Southern Works and Northern Works Committees still has vacancies for co-opted members if anybody has any suggestions, noting that they don't necessarily need to be a farmer. It was suggested that possibly Mr Simeon Disley could be a co-opted member? The Chairman noted that he will approach him.

(b) LAND LOSS CLAIMS DUE TO BOARD WORKS AFTER AWS BURST - Minute 1419(h)

Mr V Barker questioned whether a response has yet been received regarding this? The Operations Manager responded that there has been no response yet.

The Chairman questioned whether a meeting was being held with these utilities following the Irrigation and Abstraction meeting? The Chief Executive noted that he wants to hold a second meeting for the irrigators and abstractors, to confirm new rules that all parties are happy with. Once these have been agreed, they will be communicated to the utilities.

1547 TO RECEIVE THE ENGINEERING WORKS REPORT - Agenda Item 8

The Operations Manager presented the Report on Engineering Works, and referred the Committee to the Capital Scheme Budget mentioned within the report:

**2019/20 Defra/EA Funded Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes**

(a) North Forty Foot Drain - Scheme 2113

The letter of approval has been received to claim the funding for this scheme. The figures shown within the agenda report are the full figures that can be claimed; including the contingency that is available. The contingency value is £83,000 which includes the cost of consultancy (£33,000) to get the business to approval stage. This is scheduled to be completed by March 2021.

(b) Sempringham Fen Weedscreen - Scheme 2096

The letter of approval has been received to claim the funding for this scheme. The Grant in Aid figure stated in the agenda report includes the contingency and consultancy fee. A dump area is being considered to be created on the far side of the pumping station, therefore, the Board will need to purchase a strip of land from the landowner.

The Chairman questioned the term 'refurbishment' when really it is an addition? The Operations Manager responded that the terminology has to be specific in order to receive the grant in aid contribution.

This is scheduled to be completed by September / October 2020.

**2019/20 BSIDB Funded Capital Schemes**

(c) Chain Bridge PS Refurbish Weedscreen Cleaner - Scheme 2207

This is inclusive of replacing all of the moving parts of the weedscreen cleaner which helps to prolong its life and prevent future failure. The order has been placed, with installation estimated in early 2020. The recent issues of failure experienced during the recent rainfall events were noted.

(d) Dyke Fen PS Replacement Control Panel - Scheme 2205

The control panel is currently being built, with completion estimated in late March 2020.

- (e) Pinchbeck Fen PS New Roof - Scheme 2197  
The Pinchbeck pumping station new roof was completed in September 2019.
- (f) Dowsby Lode Improvements - Scheme 2206  
The survey has been completed and can therefore now be analysed to decide upon the best way forward. All adjacent landowners will be consulted about these works.  
  
Mr V Barker informed the Operations Manager that there are new slips in the drain at the eastern end of the proposed length of drain. The Operations Manager added that he is aware of them.
- (g) Graft Drain Improvements - Scheme 2086  
There is quite a large overspend on the Graft Drain improvements.
- (h) Wyberton Towns Drain Re-alignment - Scheme 2181  
The land where the drain is proposed to move over to is not yet in the name of Chestnut Homes and so there has consequently not been any further progress.
- (i) Jetting to Major Pipelines  
There is an overspend in jetting works in order to complete the full run and still a considerable amount left to complete.
- (j) Sempringham Fen PS Refurbishment - Scheme 2096  
The total cost to the Board this year is £17,175.
- (k) NFFD Revetment & Langrick Road Pipeline - Scheme 2113  
The total cost to the Board this year is £56,889.
- (l) Swaton Bank Stability (17/18) - Scheme 2073  
This is a carry-over from 2017/18. There has been no reports of problems since the work has been carried out, even with the heavy rainfall.
- (m) Scredington Beck Improvement (17/18) - Scheme 2204  
This is a carry-over from 2017/18. There has been no reports of problems since the work has been carried out, even with the heavy rainfall.
- (n) Board Emergency Working  
Board emergency works have been included for reference.

### **Proposed Works 2020/21**

- (o) Defra/EA Granted Schemes
  - (i) Remote Control H&S Scheme  
Improvements to the telemetry system have been considered including having remote control of the pumping stations. Currently, members of the workforce have to physically attend the pumping station to turn the pumps on / off; however, this could be completed at the touch of a computer if it could be controlled remotely. From a health and safety point of view, it would be safer not to send the workforce to the pumping stations where the water levels could be dangerously high.

The works are to start this year, with the budget of £57,000, which will allow some sites to be completed, with the remaining pumping stations to be considered in following years. In addition to this, most of the pumping station gauge boards are imperial and so there has also been consideration towards the installation of metric gauge boards. The Executive Committee have approved that the Officers complete a combination of a number of pumping stations to be made remote controlled and a number of metric gauge boards be installed within the £57,000 budget, based on their opinion of priority.

The Chief Executive added that the South Lincs Water Partnership (SLWP) has applied for funding, which has been approved at the preliminary stage. The SLWP have applied for approval of £350,000 for smart water measurement within the catchment. The data gained from this will then hopefully be used to gain a further grant to transfer water through the catchment. The smart water management will involve the installation of flow measuring equipment, water quality instrumentation, increased coverage of rainfall gauges, soil moisture evaluations, CCTV cameras for monitoring and the such likes. The Chief Executive added that this could be used for Black Sluice IDB also, i.e. the cameras could monitor the weedscreen cleaners at pumping stations, also noting that once redundant from the SLWP, the equipment may continue to be used by the Black Sluice IDB.

The Operations Manager pointed out that the funding is still trying to be achieved through Grant in Aid for this health and safety scheme.

(p) Board Funded Capital Schemes

(i) Graft Drain Improvements - Scheme 2086

It is proposed to continue with the Graft drain improvement works with the intention to remove any non-required access culverts. Within the £60,000 budget, there is also a 60 metre stretch of pipe that requires inspecting and repairing accordingly.

(ii) Jetting to major pipelines

The funding is to complete the outstanding sections in the Kirton and Donington area, followed by going back to Wyberton.

Mr M Brookes questioned if the jetting works in Kirton had any connection to the flooding event there? The Operations Manager responded that investigative work has been carried out there and the information passed on to the relevant people.

(iii) General Culvert contributions

Culvert 635, 2880 and 1795 have been identified as being in poor condition. Culvert 1795 is the only culvert that would be considered for contribution from the Board, as the other two culverts are along sections which have been proposed to give up and so they would not be required for Board access.

(q) Pumping Station Schemes

(i) Wyberton Marsh PS Replacement Weedscreen Cleaner

An estimate has been received at just below the budget. However, the preferred option is the Bosker equipment which is considered the best value for money. It is expected that the Bosker estimate will be slightly more than budget. From the point of order it will be 5 – 7 months before the equipment is received.

**Drain Maintenance**

(r) Annual Summer Flailmowing/Cutting

A map of the catchment was presented on screen, the blue lines showing the sections that have not yet been cut, this being approximately 150km. The summer cutting programme is currently 5-6 weeks behind schedule. This is due to the high water levels and the Workforce having to complete other more important jobs rather than be cutting i.e. monitoring the pumping stations. The wet weather has also slowed down the progress.

Mr V Barker questioned how many days have been lost due to the Twiga's breaking down and requiring repair?

The Operations Manager explained that one Twiga has been broken down for a continuous five weeks, with a hired flail being brought in after two weeks. The other two Twiga's have had incidental breakdowns but nothing significant.

Cleansing notifications have been distributed. There is c60km to complete this year, which includes the uncompleted sections of last year.

(s) Prior Notice Given for Summer Cutting

A new text message service has started this year, on a fortnightly basis, to inform landowners that BSIDB machinery will be entering their land for summer cutting purposes. This works well, however, mobile numbers are still required from many landowners. Members were encouraged to spread the word about having contact numbers.

The officers are currently investigating whether it would be achievable to purchase a second hand Drott, as when the Board required one this year to hire, there wasn't one available.

**Pumping Station Maintenance**

(t) There is a change in the actual expenditure which is £297,830.

**Health and Safety**

(u) A new five-year contract with Cope Safety Management commenced June 2019.



## **External Partnerships, Strategies & Agreements**

(v) Boston Barrier

Photos were displayed on screen of the Boston Barrier being delivered on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2019.

(w) Rationalising the Main River Network (RMRN) - De-maining

This is the first year of works since the Board took on the maintenance of these watercourse. There have been no significant issues encountered to date.

Mr V Barker questioned whether this extra work has put extra pressure on machines and the workforce and has contributed to being six weeks behind on the summer cutting programme?

The Operations Manager responded that he feels it is due to the weather and heavy rainfall events that the summer cutting is behind schedule.

Mr V Barker noted that, in previous years, members of the Board have been asked to supply farm workers from their farms who would then be partnered with a skilled member of the workforce – if this had happened this year, so many members of the workforce would not have needed to be taken off their machines.

The Operations Manager responded that in the last recent rainfall event, three of South Hollands workforce were used by the Board. The Chief Executive added that it will need approving by the Board if the committee want the protocol to be that farm workers are sought in emergency situations.

The Finance Manager added that there are issues with using farm labour in regards to health and safety, insurance, the correct PPE etc. He further added that the machines can't be used when the water levels are high in an emergency anyway. Other IDB members were used in this instance as they are already trained, have the correct PPE and so on.

The Chairman added that it makes sense to use staff from other IDBs. It was also noted that not many Board Members have labour on their farms.

Mr K Casswell also noted that it has been too wet for the Twiga's to get on the land.

The Chairman referred back to Mr V Barkers original question about whether this additional Environment Agency work has hindered the Board's progress, noting that these works contribute to the Board and so help to keep the rate down.

Mr M Rollinson commended all the staff of the IDB on the remarkable job they have done in these heavy rainfall events.

(x) Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) (BSPS) Effectiveness Initiative Project

Mr R Leggott questioned whether any consideration has been given to another gravity outfall? The Chief Executive responded that it has been introduced and is currently being looked into further.

The Chief Executive noted that the current navigation channel at the BSPS is in full floating mode; the mechanical arms have been disengaged, the navigation doors are continuously open and so the pointed doors are operating on the force of water pressure and gravitating on every tide. It will be left like this until Easter 2020 when the SFFD levels are lifted for summer navigation.

Mr M Mowbray questioned how effective the emptying of the SFFD has been over the recent rainfall events? He noted that the water levels seemed to remain high for a long period following. The Chief Executive responded that he feels because of the works completed, such as the desilting and bushing, it prevented the SFFD from overtopping.

Mr V Barker further noted another factor that slows the water down in the SFFD, he explained, he believed, that a north wind holds back the movement of water.

The Chief Executive displayed on screen the telemetry trace, explaining to members that these traces show the recovery period for the SFFD following a typical rainfall event. It has been noted that the navigation lock has dramatically reduced the recovery time in comparison to when the pumps were running.

Mr V Barker noted that the water has not been arriving at the pumps from the land to get to the SFFD.

(y) SFFD Embankment Armouring to 'Low Spots'

It was noted that there were very high water levels at a low spot on the bank at Dunsby Fen during the recent rainfall events. The SFFD / Swaton Eau armoured 'low spot' did not overtop.

(z) SFFD De-silting

Bushing works are currently being completed from the A52 for C3km. Negotiations with the Environment Agency (EA) are continuing regarding the continuation of desilting the SFFD, with the EA potentially wanting to conduct another survey of the silt levels. The aim is to desilt until the A17.

(aa) Swaton Natural Flood Management

There has been a lot of landowner interaction with favourable responses. Funding has been achieved for natural flood management and the Board has indicated they would like to be involved.

(bb) Upper Catchment Natural Flood Management & Control Analysis

There will be two people employed to walk the upper catchment and liaise with landowners, looking at potential business cases for the 25 individual valleys for funding to implement natural flood management.

## **Planning Matters**

- (cc) Planning matters, as listed below, were presented for information purposes only.
- Ashwood Homes Developments – Phases 1 – 3, London Road, Kirton
  - Ashwood Homes Development – Phase 2, Town Dam Lane, Donington
  - Waterloo Homes Development – A52, Swineshead Road, Wyberton

## **EA PSCA Works 2020**

- (dd) It was noted that the Board has just entered into a new five year Public Sector Cooperation Agreement with the Environment Agency.

## **Emergency Events**

- (ee) The Finance Manager noted to the committee that the October 2019 budget is overspent by an estimate of £192,000 as a result of the emergency event. This is expected to be similar in November 2019. Therefore, that is £384,000 that hadn't been planned to be spent from the reserves. It is estimated that £80,570 of the £192,000 will be electricity costs. A graph showing the cumulative pump hours for 2018 vs 2019 was displayed.

Mr C Wray questioned whether the Environment Agency contribute any money based on the Board having to pump the water twice due to it coming back over? The Finance Manager responded that the EA will be charged for the water that is taken into the Board's system on their behalf, however it is not a significant amount of money. The Finance Manager further added that if the emergency reaches a certain expenditure level then the Belwin Scheme is enacted and money can be claimed from central government for additional costs. Belwin has not been enacted in this area for any of the events in October or November 2019.

Traces of the SFFD levels during the October 2019 rainfall event were displayed on screen. It was noted that some of the pumps were failing and so it was crucial that the telemetry is constantly monitored to identify them and therefore respond quickly.

Mr M Mowbray questioned how it is decided which pumps to turn off? The capacity is initially reduced at Black Hole Drove and then downstream following that, whilst also managing catchment area levels. The remote control system of the pumps will aid with this as it will be quicker and easier to turn pumps off and on.

Videos were shown at South Kyme Pumping Station, showing how the water was running back around the pumping station. It is believed that it is coming through the retaining wall, the EA have been informed. It was noted the amount of damage this could be doing. Ewerby Pumping Station has also experienced similar problems with water running back around the pumping station.

1548 REPORT ON RAINFALL - Agenda Item 09

The rainfall figures at Swineshead and Black Hole Drove were circulated. The Committee RESOLVED that this report be noted.

The Operations Manager made reference to the point raised at the Board meeting about the accuracy of Black Hole Drove and whether it is correct. The gauge will be tested and calibrated to ensure that it is working correctly.

1549 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Agenda Item 10

(a) PROBLEM WITH DRAIN 22/20 - BEACH BANK TO GOSBERTON RISEGATE

Mr V Barker made reference to a drain that is causing problems, suggesting that it might be considered to take the water out at the lowest point of the drain. The Operations Manager suggested it may be worthwhile to have a look at it on the Southern Works Inspection Tour. The Operations Manager also suggested that a higher maintenance programme may help it, i.e. cut it at least twice a year in order to allow good flows.

(b) BANK SLIP AT KIRTON MEERES - FX1339

Photographs of a bank slip at Kirton Meeres were displayed on screen, it being noted that there is a property adjacent to it. The property owner was advised, in 2002, not to cut down the hedge, which he proceeded to do. He then continued to place a fence on the bank top without consent. The bank is now starting to slip in, he has tried to stop the slip himself, with little success. The property owner is aware of a similar problem that the Board contributed towards and questioned whether the Board will contribute or carry out any works on his slip? The estimated cost for piling works to reinforce the stability of the bank is £7,500. The proposal would be to consider a 50% contribution? It was noted that the property owner has actually caused this and so should the Board actually be contributing? All AGREED that it is to be included on the Northern Works Inspection Tour where it will be further discussed.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 16:38.