

# BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## MINUTES

of the proceedings of a meeting of the Executive Committee

held remotely on  
10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 3pm

### Members

Chairman - \* Mr K C Casswell

* Cllr P Bedford	* Mr M Brookes
* Mr J Fowler	* Mr P Holmes
* Mr M Rollinson	

\* Member Present

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)  
Mr D Withnall (Finance Manager)

Due to COVID-19, this meeting was held remotely in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

#### 1606 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Agenda Item 1

There were no apologies of absence.

#### 1607 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Agenda Item 2

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 1608 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - Agenda Item 3

Minutes of the last meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record with the following amendment:

- Minute 1564(f) – Mr M Rollinson also attended the staff training day and therefore need adding as follows; ‘The Chairman thanked Mr P Holmes and Mr M Rollinson for their attendance.’

#### 1609 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - Agenda Item 4

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

#### 1610 MATTERS ARISING - Agenda Item 5

There were no matters arising.

(a) PERIOD 12 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Finance Manager highlighted a number of overspends including;

- £86,781 repairing large slips
- £49,176 Graft Drain Scheme
- £12,812 Ewerby Pumping Station repairs
- £30,979 Dyke Fen Pumping Station repairs
- £75,089 Emergency working
- Total overspend on Schemes of £187,308
- £270,387 additionally spend on electricity; 227% increase compared to last year
- £20,668 labour and £16,527 plant on Pumping Station Maintenance

The Brewin Dolphin investment is currently at £472,876.21, which the Finance Manager noted isn't too bad considering the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 and how low it dropped as a result of this.

It was reminded that the original investment was £500,000. It peaked in December 2019 at £504,000. Mr P Holmes noted that because the 'low risk' option was taken the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have not actually hit the investment that hard.

The Chairman questioned if the income is expected to be affected? The Finance Manager responded that the estimated annual income is approximately £1,000 less at the moment.

The Finance Manager explained that despite all the overspends, only an additional £219,880 will be withdrawn from the General Reserve. This is a better position than what was expected due to the restructuring of expenditure.

Mr J Fowler questioned that, as result of the underspend on Drain Maintenance this year, if there will be a 'catch up' needed this year and so will use up some of last year's underspend? The Finance Manager acknowledged this, adding that because of COVID-19, some of the other works cannot be completed and so Drain Maintenance is currently overspent as a result of this.

The Finance Manager drew the committee's attention to the graph showing the Pumping Station Maintenance Year V's Year, highlighting the vast increase in electricity costs last year.

Mr P Holmes referred to the table showing the breakdown of cost for each pumping station, noting that some had a much higher increase in 2019 than others, questioning if this was just due to location and being under more pressure during the rainfall event? The Finance Manager acknowledged this, noting that the more northern pumps were, indeed, under more pressure.

Mr M Rollinson made reference to the percentage increase at the bottom of the table, questioning why electricity and insurance are together? The Finance Manager noted that in previous years they were two of the biggest costs.

Mr P Holmes added that surely insurance isn't a variable, it doesn't fluctuate with a fluvial event as electricity would? The Finance Manager explained that the whole insurance cost is within Pumping Station General and to change it now would make previous year comparisons invalid.

(b) DRAFT 2019/20 UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This is a more recognisable format of accounts for publicising, which are published on the website. It summarises, to a certain extent, the accounts previously presented and discussed.

(c) ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

This is an even further summarisation of the Unaudited Financial Statements, which has been signed by the Internal Auditor.

At the meeting of the Board, the Annual Governance Statement will require approval, it being noted that item 4 is indicated as 'no' following instruction from the external auditors last year due to a mistake in the number of working days allowed for the public inspection.

The Finance Manager also noted that his signature should be at the bottom of Section 2, Accounting Statements 2019/20, and is on the original that will be presented for approval at the next Board meeting and then will be reviewed by the External Auditor.

The Finance Manager noted that, usually, a full Board meeting has to be held by the end of June to approve the AGAR and the public inspection has to include the first ten days of July in the time period for public inspection. However, due to COVID-19 there is new legislation and timeframes that states it needs to be available to the public for inspection before the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020, therefore allowing extra time to hold a Board meeting up to 30<sup>th</sup> August, to then publish the AGAR on 31<sup>st</sup> August for the public before the 1<sup>st</sup> September.

1612 TO RECEIVE THE 2019/20 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - Agenda Item 7

The Finance Manager explained that the Internal Auditor attended the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 to present the report. The Finance Manager informed the committee that the Board has gained 'substantial assurance' again and also referred them to the recommendations regarding health and safety. The Finance Manager explained that this is being reviewed by management and that the Audit & Risk committee also considered the ADA Health and Safety recommendations which were felt to be complied with already. Mr M Brookes, as Chair of the Audit & Risk, confirmed this.

The Chairman added that the 25% that didn't reply to the ADA Health and Safety questionnaire were all part of one consortium.

The Chairman and committee congratulated the achievement of substantial assurance and thanked the officers for their hard work.

1613 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE ACCOUNTS OF BOURNE FEN FARM - Agenda Item 8

The Finance Manager presented this item, highlighting that the fund has generated a surplus of £1,645. The investment showing on the balance sheet within the agenda, £308,640, is now at £336,684.05.

The Finance Manager further noted the reserve of £11,256, noting that it is at a position to draw the contribution rate down at the beginning of the year when the rates are raised and is keen to keep a reserve of that level to offset the contribution.

The Chairman questioned if it had recovered as well as the other Brewin Dolphin investment? The Finance Manager felt that they have recovered equally as well.

1614 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON FINANCE & RATING - Agenda Item 9

The Finance Manager explained that he has included this report as we have had one ratepayer out of the ordinary that has requested to spread their payments over a period of time due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The Finance Manager referred to the timetable set out within the agenda, displaying the timeline approved by the Executive Committee in 2012, the actual dates that were achieved last year and the proposed time line for this year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, feeling that it would be beneficial to extend this timeline and delay court proceedings from October 2020 to January 2021, allowing ratepayers extra time to restructure their finances if required.

The Finance Manager informed the committee that at Period 2, the actual collected so far is £629,000 which is 58% of the rates for the year. The budget was £681,000 so are £52,000 behind the budget and £39,000 behind where we were last year. Some of this will be a result of a delay in banking cheques because of COVID-19.

Mr J Fowler congratulated the officers for getting the demands out at the usual time, especially in comparison to some of the other local IDBs who sent theirs out much later than usual. The Chairman agreed, congratulating the officers also.

1615 TO CONSIDER PERIOD ONE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS - Agenda Item 10

The Finance Manager presented the period one accounts, noting his concern with Wages On-cost, as within the first two periods of this financial year the deficit has increased by £10,000. At the end of the last financial year it was at a deficit of £27,000 and now has a deficit of £37,000. Therefore, the Finance Manager suggested increasing the on-cost rate from 240% to 260%, which would then, in turn, increase the cost on all jobs with labour included. The Finance Manager compared it to previous years, outlining that by increasing the percentage, it will increase the budget by about £60,000. The Finance Manager explained that the new Works Manager salary will have impacted on Wages on-cost and suggested it would be beneficial to increase the percentage now and see a gradual gain over the year rather than have a big lump sum at the end of the year.

All AGREED to increase Wages On-cost from 240% to 260%.

1616 TO CONSIDER THE EIGHT-YEAR PLANT REPLACEMENT BUDGET - Agenda Item 11

The Chief Executive presented this item, presenting on screen photographs of the new Unimog, also noting that a purchase of a new low loader trailer is imminent.

The Chief Executive referred to the budget, highlighting to the committee that at the end of financial year 2021/22 there is set to be a carried forward balance of £74,848. The Chief Executive further suggested the addition of a Drott to the Board's plant so that the workforce are able to spread arisings and silt with the Board's own machine, rather than hiring one, as is current practice. The hired in Drott is also too big to move with the Board's Unimog and trailer and so the Chief Executive noted that it would be beneficial to have one at a size that could be transported by the Unimog and could be used whenever the Board required, rather than having to wait for one to be available to hire. The Chief Executive explained that it typically costs approximately £12,000 a year for the hiring of a Drott. The budget being requested for the Drott is C£50,000.

The Chairman questioned if outside work would be considered to offset the cost? The Chief Executive responded that if the Drott was to be hired out, then he would want a Board operative to be operating it which then takes them away from their work for the Board that they would have been doing otherwise.

Cllr P Bedford expressed his support for the purchase of a Drott.

Mr P Holmes questioned whether the neighbouring Board's, Welland & Deepings and Witham 4<sup>th</sup>, had been contacted regarding this, to inform them that the machine would be available to them. The Chief Executive noted that adjacent Board's will be notified.

Mr P Holmes noted that the criteria for finding the machine should be that it is big enough and powerful enough to do the job, but small enough to transport with the Board's Unimog and low loader.

All AGREED for the Chief Executive to begin to look for the purchase of a Drott with a budget of C£50,000.

Mr M Rollinson referred to the row 'Net spend from Plant Reserve' of the budget, highlighting that it is quite consistent over the next three years and then the values start to fluctuate year on year. Mr M Rollinson questioned whether this could be 'smoothed out', noting he felt it would be beneficial to have a consistent net spend of around £150,000 each year, rather than fluctuate so much year on year. The Chief Executive responded that he will look into amending this.

1617 TO CONSIDER THE ADA PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MODEL IDB LAND DRAINAGE BYELAWS - Agenda Item 12

(a) LAND DRAINAGE ACT SECTION 23 CONSENT CHARGES

The Chief Executive referred to the Land Drainage Act Section 23 Consents Charges, explaining that ADA have asked for views about increasing the consent charges, which is currently £50.

ADA have noted a potential increase to £250, which the Chief Executive was concerned about, explaining that he is worried that if the consent fee is increased to £250 applicants will be wary of applying for consent. The Chief Executive noted that if there were particular cases that required more Officer's time and work then they could be notified that it would be an increased charge, but he would be wary to set all consent fees at the increased rate of £250.

The Chairman agreed with the Chief Executive, adding that it would be useful to be able to increase the fee if a particular case took more work.

Mr J Fowler questioned whether there would be a menu of consent charges published on the website showing how much each application would be based on its complexity? The Chief Executive acknowledged, yes.

(b) MODEL IDB LAND DRAINAGE BYELAWS

The Finance Manager gave an update on the model land drainage byelaws, noting that this has been going on for quite some time now and unfortunately is still not resolved, displaying on screen emails between the Finance Manager and Ian Moodie of ADA;

*Email to Ian Moodie from the Finance Manager:*

*'For the purposes of getting the proposed byelaws approved by our Board and this year's IDB 1, do you have any timescale when the amended Model Byelaws will be available please?'*

*Response from Ian Moodie:*

*'I'll press Defra for an outline timetable at our meeting with them on Thursday. I'd hope that they could move to advertise this before the summer recess, so that should hopefully get us something available as a model for IDBs to adopt before year end. That will be my ask.'*

It is now a matter of waiting for the final sign off so that it can be adopted.

1618 TO REVIEW THE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN – COVID-19 - Agenda Item 13

The Finance Manager noted that this policy was produced at the very early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak and is constantly reviewed and updated.

The Finance Manager reminded the committee that the Risk Assessment appendix was mistakenly not all included in the agenda, and that the full risk assessment was sent out to members prior to the meeting.

Photographs were displayed of the new screens that have been implemented around desks in the office and the new signage outlining how many people can safely be in one room whilst conforming to social distancing. Everything has been done to both the office and workforce to certify as COVID secure. Therefore, the office is ready for staff to return as soon as the Prime Minister announces it is safe to do so.

The Chief Executive thanked the Finance Manager for his involvement with this policy and ensuring the workplace is COVID secure. The Chairman further thanked the Finance Manger for his efforts.

Mr J Fowler referred to the third sentence of the first introductory paragraph, 'This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not been infected.' Mr J Fowler noted he wasn't sure if this was correct, the Finance Manger explained that it was based on guidance at the beginning of the outbreak, which is ever changing and so will remove the sentence.

1619 CONFIDENTIAL - WORKFORCE, PAY & CONDITIONS - Agenda Item 14

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

1620 CONFIDENTIAL - BOARD MEMBERS INVOLVEMENT - Agenda Item 15

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

1621 TO REVIEW OUTSTANDING MATTERS FROM CANCELLED COMMITTEE MEETINGS DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS - Agenda Item 16

The Chairman explained that this item is to cover outstanding matters from committee meetings that have had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

(a) STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

At the annual Structures Committee, the Structures Replacement Policy is reviewed, with there being no Structures Committee meeting this year, the Chief Executive proposed that the policy continues (no revision) until the next Structures Committee review in 2021.

The Chairman of the Structures Committee felt there was no further additions or amendments that need making, in his opinion, and so RECOMMENDED that the Structures Replacement Policy be kept as it is until the next review of the Structures Committee in 2021.

(b) ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was due for review, but because of the current involvement of the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) reviewing the BAP model, the Chief Executive proposed that the BAP review be postponed again until the GNLP work is published that the Environment Committee can use this in their review.

At the annual Environment Committee meeting the environmental budget is also usually considered and approved. Therefore, the Chief Executive suggested that he can send details of the work proposed for the proposed budget of £20,400 for 2020/21 to the Chairman of the Environment Committee to review.

The Chairman of the Environment Committee felt this was all reasonable and therefore RECOMMENDED that the BAP review be delayed and the proposed environmental works, in line with the budget of £20,400 for 2020/21, go ahead.

(c) NORTHERN WORKS COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive gave updates on 2020/21 works as follows:

(a) WYBERTON MARSH WEEDSCREEN CLEANER

This order has been placed and so will go ahead this year.

(b) NORTH FORTY FOOT REVETMENT

This includes the desilting using the Royal Smals machine, who are travelling to this country despite COVID-19 restrictions due to being a key worker, and are going to meet with the Operations Manager. A silt lagoon location has been agreed adjacent to the North Forty Foot, so this work will likely commence following the bird nesting season at the end of the year.

(c) JETTING TO MAJOR PIPELINES

Jetting will continue, completing sections that didn't get done in 2019/20.

The Chief Executive explained the proposed 2021/22 works:

(d) PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT OF WEEDSCREEN CLEANER - GREAT HALE

Proposed budget of £46,000 to refurbish the weed screen cleaner at Great Hale Pumping Station.

(e) PROPOSED NEW ROOF - KIRTON MARSH

Proposed budget of £10,000 for a new roof at Kirton Marsh Pumping Station.

(f) KIRTON DRAIN – ADJACENT TO BALACLAVA COTTAGE

The occupier has offered to pay £10,000 towards the cost of repairs to the bank with the proposal of completing this works.

The Chairman of the Northern Works Committee RECOMMENDED that the proposed works go ahead, questioning if his approval was sufficient? It was noted that in accordance with the delegation of authority Board approval will be required for some elements so the committee AGREED to recommend the all the works to the Board.

1622 CONFIDENTIAL - EA Precept - Agenda Item 17

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.



1623 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Agenda Item 18

(a) CONFIDENTIAL - DAMAGE TO WORKSHOP DOOR

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

(b) SLWP AQUATIC SURVEYS

The Chief Executive informed the committee that a letter is being sent to approximately 50 rate payers, selected at random, to notify them of aquatic surveys to take place over the next four years as part of the SLWP's environmental inspections.

(c) WORKFORCE DRIVING ON RIVERBANKS

At the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, it was brought to attention that the Environment Agency (EA) ensure that any member of staff driving on raised banks are certificated in doing so. Currently, the workforce obtain the required licence for the machine but do not have to complete a qualification for driving on raised banks specifically.

This has been looked into and there is LANTRA qualified land rover course, which it is proposed to send 3 workforce members on at £200 per person and gather feedback from them whether they found it beneficial.

(d) VIKING LINK

Viking Link have been in contact, explaining that they are due to commence work in summer 2020 and will be holding quarterly meetings during the construction phase with different groups based on location, the Board's being the section from Gypsy Bridge to the converter station. Viking Link would like to know of anybody that would be interested in attending these meetings as a representative of Black Sluice IDB, the Chief Executive proposed that the Chairmen of the Northern and Southern Works Committees may attend?

Cllr M Brookes noted that he will be attending as a county council member.

Mr P Holmes, Mr J Fowler and the Chairman all noted that they would be willing to attend.

Mr M Rollinson noted that it may be of interest to Mr R Wray to attend as he has got the connector station on his farm. The Chief Executive will get in contact.

(e) STRUCTURAL SURVEYS

The Chief Executive noted that quotes have been obtained to structurally survey Ewerby, South Kyme and Damford Pumping Stations due to their problems with high water levels. The quote is for £4,800 + VAT for all three pumping stations and the Chief Executive is still seeking financial support from the Environment Agency.

The Chairman felt it was important work that needs doing. All AGREED that the structural surveys at Ewerby, South Kyme and Damford Pumping Station should go ahead at the cost of £4,800 + VAT.

(f) PURCHASE OF DRONE

The Chief Executive explained that the operations team are looking into purchasing a Drone and questioned if anybody had any experience or knowledge of the Mavic Mini DJI Drone, which the Chief Executive is looking to purchase at a cost of £500. This will save time having to physically visit all sites.

Cllr M Brookes noted that Mr C Wray has an interest in Drones and so it may be worth contacting him.

Mr J Fowler added that he has a Mavic drone of a similar size, noting that good weather is required to use it because of its small size. A larger drone would cope with and be more stable in worse weather conditions. Mr P Holmes agreed with Mr J Fowler's point, suggesting that they see how they get on with it as it is a very good starter drone.

(g) CONDUCTING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Mr P Holmes questioned the best way to conduct these virtual meetings, questioning if headsets would be better to use? The Finance Manager suggested that a lot of phones come with free earphones and so they could be used. Further discussion took place around being on a computer as opposed to an iPad. The Finance Manager and administration team will conduct further research into using Go To Meetings on an iPad.

(h) LETTER TO EMPLOYEES - COVID-19

The Finance Manager referred to an email he sent prior to the meeting regarding whether any members had any suggestions to include in the update letter that will be sent to all employees in relation to COVID-19.

The Chairman noted that a message of thanks should be included for all the employees, thanking them for working well during these uncertain circumstances.

(i) BOARD MEETING DATE

The Committee AGREED that the summer 2020 Board meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 2pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 17:08.