

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

M I N U T E S

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the
Southern Works Committee

held remotely on the
19th May 2021

Members

Chairman - * Mr M Rollinson

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| * Mr W Ash | * Mr J F Atkinson |
| * Mr V A Barker | * Mr K C Casswell |
| * Mr J Casswell | Mr R Dorrington |
| Mr C Dring | Mr A Mair |
| Cllr P Moseley | 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 Harrison	(Works Manager)
	Mr K Methley	(Pump Engineer)
	Mr P Holmes	(Vice Chairman & Northern Works Chairman)
	Cllr P Bedford	(Executive Committee)
	Mr J Fowler	(Executive Committee)
	Ms Lesley Sharpe	(Guest Speaker)

The Finance Manager explained that there were temporary amendments made to the Standing Orders last year to allow remote meetings to take place due to COVID-19, which had an expiry of 7th May 2021. There has now been a permanent replacement paragraph added, as displayed on screen, to allow for remote meetings to continue, which will be presented at the next meeting of the Board for approval, but are required to be presented at the beginning of any meeting prior to that due to the temporary version having expired. All APPROVED.

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Executive back to work and thanked all other members of staff for their hard work acting up in the Chief Executive's recent absence.

The Chairman informed the committee that it is planned to hopefully hold an inspection in September 2021 once COVID-19 restrictions are eased.

1783 RECORDING THE MEETING – Agenda Item 1

Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

1784 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Agenda Item 2

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Mair, Mr M Brookes and Cllr P Mosley.

1785 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Agenda Item 3

There were no declarations of interest.

1786 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING - Agenda Item 4

The Minutes of the Southern Works Committee, which was held on 12th November 2020, copies of which had been circulated, were considered. It was AGREED that the Minutes should be signed as a true record.

1787 MATTERS ARISING - Agenda Item 5

There were no matters arising.

1788 RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM LESLEY SHARPE REGARDING THE UPPER CATCHMENT STUDIES - Agenda Item 6

The Chairman introduced Ms L Sharpe, explaining that she has been conducting surveys for natural flood management and has visited himself amongst many other landowners.

Ms L Sharpe gave a presentation on the upper catchment studies as follows.

Ms L Sharpe explained that she was commissioned to identify opportunities and constraints for natural flood management (NFM). She began by conducting a desktop study, followed by walking all the main watercourses and flow paths. The catchment was split into six sub catchments; Heckington, Helpringham, Billingborough, Aslackby, Rippingale and Morton. Constraints were considered e.g., archaeological or environmental, followed by talking to landowners where viable NFM opportunities had been identified, followed by mapping and prioritising these opportunities and drawing up ballpark costs. Ms L Sharpe noted that she is currently at the stage of finishing talking to the landowners and beginning to map, prioritise and draw up costs, following delays due to COVID-19.

Ms L Sharpe next presented a Scimap map on screen, explaining that this tool enables the identification of where water is likely to flow under heavy rain (red areas). There were 297 opportunities identified which then have a flow calculation applied to them to see if it is viable. Following this, the opportunities were reduced to 259. There were 55 landowners identified with these NFM opportunities, most of the visits have been carried out, outline designs for interested landowners prepared and some have been revisited. Ms L Sharpe next presented some examples of designs to the committee.

Ms L Sharpe next displayed some photographs of work done upstream of Horncastle on the River Waring, to showcase the variety of work that can be done e.g., earth bunds (used to slow the flow), swales etc.

Ms L Sharpe explained that of all the landowner visits completed there have only been two that have outright said 'no', the rest are considering the options discussed. The biggest concerns with landowners are around existing stewardship schemes and the future of the ELMs scheme.

Ms L Sharpe further explained to the committee that Morton and Billingborough sub catchments offer the best opportunities, with the Heckington sub-catchment offering the least.

Ms L Sharpe concluded her presentation by noting that she is on course to be submitting the relevant maps and costs by June.

The Chairman thanked Ms L Sharpe for her informative presentation, inviting questions and observations.

Mr V Barker noted his idea of putting in pipes of reduced size upstream through a culvert to slow the water down. Ms L Sharpe responded that pipes have not been considered as the work is focusing on natural processes.

The Chief Executive gave a further overview of Ms L Sharpe's work, noting that, in general, NFM works are generally lower in cost, also highlighting the size of the upper catchment; 20,000 ha. This upper catchment was split into sub catchments, as explained by Ms L Sharpe previously, however, Ms L Sharpe is not working on one of the sub catchments, Swaton, at the Environment Agency (EA) are currently undertaking NFM work in this area. The Chief Executive continued by adding that the general purpose of Ms L Sharpe's work is that the majority of the water from the upper catchment ends in the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) from the eight unrestricted highland carriers that the Board maintain on behalf of the EA. The Chief Executive welcomed the NFM opportunities, working with landowners and thanked Ms L Sharpe for her work.

The Operations Manager informed the committee that the Board's Officers will be continuing to be in contact with Ms L Sharpe.

The Chairman also noted that in the original countryside stewardship scheme there was funding available for putting grips into wet land, suggesting it would be of interest to many landowners. Ms L Sharpe noted that there is still some but not much available in current schemes and that it is being looked into including NFM within ELMs.

Mr J Fowler questioned if the schemes are measured in square metres or cubic metres of water held back? Ms L Sharpe noted that it is usually cubic metres depending on what can be done, for example, a bund is continually emptying and filling, sometimes monitoring can be done in relation to how much is not being discharged / the slow of the discharge.

Mr K Casswell felt it is a good place for ELMs to be, Ms L Sharpe agreeing, adding that one aspect of ELMs looks at how groups of farmers can work together. There is discussion ongoing around some funding within countryside stewardship this year to trial how groups of farmers within a catchment could be managed as part of ELMs.

1789 RECEIVE THE ENGINEER'S REPORT - Agenda Item 7

The Operations Manager presented the report on Engineering Works, highlighting points as follows.

1. CAPITAL ASSET IMPROVEMENTS

(a) 2020/21 Defra/EA Funded Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes

(i) REMOTE MONITORING, TELEMETRY H&S SCHEME

Works on this scheme have started; implementing the remote control system at some of the pumping stations and continuing with the installation of metric gauge boards.

The funding for this scheme has changed – there is a Local Levy claim for funding to be made this financial year (2021/22).

If funds are sufficient CCTV will be looked into at as many pumping stations as possible.

(ii) SWATON NFM

The Board are delivering all work on site, there are three sites involved – Holland Road Farm, Manor Farm (North and South) and Grove Farm. The Holland Road Farm attenuation site is almost complete, with the swales completed, the site design shown on screen, followed by photographs of the attenuation site at Holland Road Farm displayed on screen for the committee. The Operations Manager noted that the attenuation pond is expected to sustain more water year round than shown in the photograph once operational.

It was confirmed that there will be an opportunity to visit this site on the inspection in September 2021.

The Chairman questioned what the EA is compensating the landowner? The Operations Manager responded that he will share that information with the Chairman following the meeting, he is also going to share it with Ms L Sharpe.

Mr P Holmes questioned the size area of this project? The Operations Manager explained that the Holland Road Farm attenuation pond holds 3,220 cubic metres, in terms of area size, it is 95 metres long and 20 metres at its widest point (approx. 0.5 acre).

The Chairman questioned whether it will hold water all year round? The Operations Manager explained that it is designed to hold water all year round. The Chairman noted that if it holds water all year round then it will have less capacity in a flood. The Operations Manager noted that it has been designed in this way for the water to allow for biodiversity all year round.

The Operations Manager noted that the other two sites are owned by the Crown and are still awaiting the agreement to be signed before works can commence.

(b) 2020/21 Board Funded Capital Schemes

(i) GRAFT DRAIN IMPROVEMENTS - Scheme 2086

The map outlining the Graft Drain improvements was displayed on screen, the red showing completed works to March 2021 and the light blue area showing the works to be completed this year currently, with the objective of being substantially completed by the end of 2022. There are still some long sections of culvert to review as soon as able to be surveyed. It was confirmed that currently works are being done to remove three culverts to the same field and replace with the one. The main objectives of this scheme being to reduce the number of culverts where possible and to reduce the water level. Work is on programme to be completed by the end of the next financial year.

The Chairman noted that many of the culverts are surrounded by residential properties and so may be difficult to replace.

The Operations Manager noted that once the condition of the culverts are established then options and associated costs can be considered.

Mr V Barker noted that some of the culverts have water in, wondering whether the land has sunk, expressing his concern for lining a culvert and it being permanently under water. Mr V Barker also noted a new culvert, just after culvert 2521 on the map displayed, stating that he is not sure why it has been put in, feeling it is unnecessary as there is alternative access to the field. The Operations Manager responded that negotiations were held with the landowner and was proven as needed.

Mr P Holmes noted that a lot of culverts were put in for stabilisation, not just access.

It was noted that there would be opportunity to visit the site on the inspection in September 2021.

(ii) LEAK FROM EA BILLINGBOROUGH LODE INTO 20/5 NOW CURED

Leakage from EA Billingborough Lode into Board systems was identified in December 2019 and repairs have now been completed to resolve the issue. The EA initially stated that they may be responsible, after seeking a purchase order to complete the works, they stated that it is not their asset and therefore not their responsibility. The Operations Manager will try to recover the cost of the work from the EA.

(c) 2021/22 Defra/EA Funded Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes

(i) UNDER CAPACITY CULVERT – LANE DYKE

A small amount of work has been done on this scheme and it may have to be pushed into the next year.

The Operations Manager noted that a new Grant in Aid (GiA) Manager has been appointed. Once established she will be able to assist in getting schemes approved for funding.

(ii) UNDER CAPACITY CULVERT – LEAVES LAKE DROVE

This scheme is looking to replace the existing outfall into the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD). There is potential for GiA Funding available for this scheme.

Replace existing outfall through GiA. Business case needs work.

(iii) SWATON NFM

The sites were shown in detail on the screen.

(d) 2021/22 - Board Funded Capital Schemes

(i) SFFD DESILTING BLACK HOLE DROVE TO GUTHRUM

It is proposed to look at desilting the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) upstream of Black Hole to Guthrum (2.6 km) over the next two years, noting there are no records of the last time it was desilted.

It may be that the proposed budget for this scheme is insufficient to use the cutter suction dredger method and therefore a long reach excavator may be the method chosen. It was confirmed that it would require the hire of a long reach machine, whether it be a drag line or hydraulic machine.

(ii) GRAFT DRAIN IMPROVEMENTS - Scheme 2086

The map showing this year's work was displayed on screen.

2. Proposed Works 2022/23

(a) Defra/EA Granted Schemes

(i) DOWSBY LODE CATCHMENT WORKS

It was explained that funding is available to have studies completed to identify the benefits of the whole catchment and how to best spend any funding achieved.

It was noted that all of the original scheme built pumping stations are over 50 years old, and the Board has not got funds to replace them without external funding. The new restrictions around Eel passage were also noted.

Mr P Holmes questioned whether the feasibility of amalgamating pumping stations has been considered?

The Operations Manager noted that he is hoping it will drive a 'blank piece of paper' scenario whereby all options can be considered and explored.

Mr K Casswell also noted the impact that the South Lincs Water Partnership (SLWP) work could have, especially if the reservoir is built in the Board's catchment. The Chief Executive echoed this, noting that the Board's Officers are very involved and it could be very beneficial to the Board.

(ii) HACONBY FEN CATCHMENT WORKS

The above in relation to Dowsby Lode catchment works also applies to Haconby Fen.

(b) Board Funded Capital Schemes

(i) DOWSBY LODGE CATCHMENT WORKS

The potential Board contribution for this work, if required by the scheme to enable Grant in Aid could be £25,000.

(ii) DUNSBY FEN P/S WEEDSCREEN CLEANER

The weedscreen cleaner is at end of life, with the pump pumping almost every day, the weedscreen cleaner also operates when the pump runs and so has done a lot of work, Based on the final cost for some of the other weedscreen cleaner replacements, it may be found that the £90,000 budget is not enough.

All AGREED £90,000 for the replacement of the weedscreen cleaner at Dunsby Fen Pumping Station.

(iii) SFFD DESILTING BLACK HOLE DROVE TO GUTHRUM

All AGREED £65,000 for the desilting of the South Forty Foot Drain from Black Hole to Guthrum.

(iv) GRAFT DRAIN SCHEME

All AGREED £60,000 for the continuation of the Graft Drain Scheme.

The Finance Manager noted that there has been a lot of work transferred from 2020/21 to 2021/22, so the Capital Schemes Budget will be updated for the Board meeting. It was also noted about the loss of use of red diesel from April 2022. The Chairman also noted the notion of being carbon neutral in the future.

1790 REPORT ON RAINFALL - Agenda Item 8

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

1791 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Agenda Item 9

(a) UNIMOG

Mr V Barker noted that a lot of the efficiency of the work of the Board is dependant on the Unimog, adding that he has previously seen machines stood not doing any work waiting for the Unimog to transport them.

Mr V Barker continued that he has seen other Board's with a rubber tyred excavator that can tow a trailer with its attachments, suggesting that this should be considered, and that discussion should take place with this Board about it.

The Operations Manager responded that the Board made the decision, within the law, that tractors could not be used for haulage unless licenced for vehicle haulage. The Operations Manager also noted that an excavator on tracks is useable all year round.

Mr V Barker made the comparison to a combine harvester having a specific trailer to tow its bed with, the Board's machine would have a specific trailer tow its attachments with.

Mr W Ash suggested a forklift with a high speed gear box and trailer. The Operations Manager explained that the Board used to do this but can no longer do this as the Board is not classed as agricultural.

Mr C Wray suggested that it could be a Twiga that is replaced, possibly by the JCB Hydradig, noting that when it isn't flailmowing, it will still be a sufficient 360 excavator. The Operations Manager is aware of this machine and it will be considered, but also noted that although it is a versatile machine it may be too compromised as a predominantly flailmowing machine.

(b) SHEEP IN DRAIN – FX1792 – SEMPRINGHAM

The Works Manager explained that last week the workforce were desilting the Sempringham Pump Drain, this work includes dropping the water level.

The following day a phone call was received from the tenant of neighbouring land regarding his sheep getting into the drain as a consequence of which two ewes and two lambs died. The tenant has no fencing / any form of barrier to stop the sheep getting into the drain and allows the sheep to use the drain to drink from. The tenant complained that nobody had notified him of the works and wants to claim compensation for the loss of the sheep.

The Works Manager continued by explaining that the desilting was being carried out on the opposite side to the tenant's field of sheep and so he would not be notified, it is only the landowner of the side of the desilting that is notified. Photos were displayed on screen.

The Chairman felt that the tenant's sheep should not be on the watercourse bank anyway.

Mr V Barker noted that he grazes livestock on watercourse banks and that they do drink from the watercourse, but that he would not claim from the IDB if he lost one of his livestock and that the desilting work should make no difference.

Mr P Holmes suggested that he should perhaps be counter sued for damaging the watercourse bank.

The Chairman suggested that it should be put in writing that the Board are not liable. The Finance Manager suggested a letter with a copy of the Board's complaints policy and form.

The Chief Executive clarified that the tenant's initial complaint was regarding that he hadn't been notified of the works being carried out but the Board only notify landowners / tenants on the drain side they are working on and so the complaint is unjustifiable.

The Finance Manager also suggested including Byelaw 13 within the letter – 'Damage by animals to banks'.

Mr C Wray noted that if Byelaw 13 is mentioned within the letter the Board need to ensure they act on it.

All AGREED to send the tenant a letter explaining that the Board are not liable for the loss of his sheep as they should not have been on the bank anyway.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15:48.