

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a meeting of the Executive Committee

held at the offices of the Board on
17th September 2024 at 10am

Members

Chairperson - * Mr K C Casswell

* Cllr P Bedford

* Mr M Leggott

* Mr J Fowler

* Mr P Holmes

* Mr M Rollinson

* Member Present

In attendance: Mr D Withnall (Chief Executive)
Mr P Nicholson (Projects Director)
Mr M Brookes (Guest)

2359 Recording the Meeting - Agenda Item 1

Committee members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

2360 Apologies for absence - Agenda Item 2

There were no apologies for absence. Guest and previous member of the Executive Committee, Mr M Brookes, was welcomed.

2361 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

There were no declarations of interest.

2362 Minutes of the Meeting - Agenda Item 4

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th August 2024, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

2363 Confidential Minutes of the Meeting - Agenda Item 5

Confidential Minutes of the last meeting held on 14th August 2024, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

2364 Matters Arising - Agenda Item 6

(a) Pumping Station Structural Review (Swineshead Pumping Station) - Minute 2354(f)

The Projects Director informed the committee that a feasibility study has been commissioned to look at pumps for Swineshead Pumping Station, the study being funded from the catchment study budget.

It was anticipated that additional funding would be achieved through Grant in Aid (for 2025/26) for this to replenish the catchment study budget. This has not been achieved and so the earliest likely funding achievable is now two years' time (2026/27).

There has been an indication that £1.5million will be approved for Ewerby Pumping Station and so the Grant in Aid Manager is enquiring as to whether this funding could be transferred to Swineshead Pumping Station due to it now being possible that Ewerby will be funded through the IDB Recovery Fund Tranche 2. The original bid for Swineshead Pumping Station was £2million to build the specification. The amount, £2million, for this was questioned? The Projects Director explained that consultants will complete the work and based on previous projects, this amount will likely be required. The concern with this delay in funding is that it could be another 4-5 years before a new pumping station is built.

Mr M Rollinson questioned whether there will come a point where the pumping station must be condemned / can't use it? The Projects Director confirmed that the locks have been changed, entry only with a permit to work and it will only be used as needed. It was noted that Chain Bridge and Donington North Ings Pumping Stations together still do not have the capacity of Swineshead alone. The Chairperson noted that if the survey hadn't been done, the Board would have been none the wiser and continued using the station normally.

Mr P Holmes questioned how long it has taken to deteriorate to its current state? It was felt this couldn't be known; it being noted that there was no survey done when the work was done to join the suction.

Mr M Leggott questioned if there are alternative plans in place for if Swineshead Pumping Station can't be used but is needed? The Projects Director noted that he had made initial enquiries, which works out at £70,000 per week for the hire of pumps to cover the same capacity as Swineshead Pumping Station (this excludes fuel, mobilisation / demobilisation).

Mr M Rollinson noted that it is a scary thought that the Board could be without its biggest capacity pumping station.

Mr J Fowler suggested that if Swineshead Pumping Station is to keep operating for a number of years in its condition, then it needs setting up with extensive CCTV and to have a specific set of guidelines for operating it. It was noted that it will only be used as required when the other two pumps (Chain Bridge PS & Donington North Ings PS) can't cope. For context, it was noted that Chain Bridge can pump for a week in times of no excess rainfall and so Swineshead Pumping Station will need to be used as required as to not increase pressure and problems at Chain Bridge Pumping Station. It was further noted that Stantec are currently completing a report to review the feasibility of new pumps and motors at Chain Bridge and Donington North Ings Pumping Stations. Mr M Leggott questioned whether it would be viable to increase the capacity of the pumps whilst doing this? It was noted that if capacity was increased then the pumps would be required to be fish and eel friendly and the whole system would need reviewing, it is therefore just looking at feasibility within the existing site and system.

The Chairperson questioned if a pump was to fail at Swineshead Pumping Station whether it would be repaired? It was noted that it is very rare that Swineshead has had to use all three pumps and so it would depend how many of the three had failed.

(b) Section 23 Culverting Application & Byelaw No.10 – Drain 36/7 Stump Cross Hill / London Road, Sleaford - Minute 2354(g)

The Chief Executive informed the committee that this is now resolved, with the developer having agreed to pipe the whole section as opposed to leaving a section in the middle open, with the Board's consent issued.

(c) ADA Pay & Conditions Committee - Minute 2354(h)

The Chairperson noted that there is an ADA Pay & Conditions Committee meeting scheduled for the 03 October which will negotiate the 2025/26 Pay Award and is therefore of the opinion that he shouldn't represent the Board at this meeting as he won't be in the role when it applies next year.

Mr P Holmes felt it should be somebody on the Audit & Risk Committee.

The Chief Executive felt it should be somebody on the Executive Committee. Also noting that he doesn't feel it is right for him, as the Chief Executive and recipient of the Pay Award, to have the vote on the committee.

Mr M Leggott was suggested and was given some more detail about the committee meeting. All AGREED Mr M Leggott to represent the Board on the ADA Pay & Conditions Committee.

(d) IDB Recovery Funding - Minute 2355

The Chief Executive referenced Tranche 2 of the IDB Recovery Fund bids and that it is being taken into consideration that the delay in the result of these bids, will have inevitably impacted on the feasibility of completing these works within the financial year. The Board have now got to complete a survey around what is achievable by 31 March 2025 and then Defra Officials are approaching Treasury Officials to discuss extending this to 2026. The four pumping stations with water ingress through the EA banks that a bid was submitted for has a work programme of 33 weeks, scheduled to commence May 2025 and so could therefore be achieved by 31 March 2026 and attract IDB Recovery funding.

Cllr P Bedford noted that Boston Borough Council have received 64% of their claim (£431,000).

Discussion was held around special interest groups, with the Chief Executive noting that he is attending a reception at Westminster with John Hayes MP with the Local Government Association Special Interest Group on 08 October.

The Chief Executive referred to the catchment wide bank slips that IDB Recovery funding was achieved for and that they are well underway, however, more are still being found. In the original bid for funding, an extra 50% was requested for those that had not yet been identified but was not approved and so the Grant in Aid Manager is re-asking about this funding given that more are being found.

Mr P Holmes felt that the thanks of the committee should be expressed to the workforce for their work.

The Chief Executive also noted that the new pile hammer and welfare unit have been purchased and received, with materials also arriving continually.

(e) Board's response to the Phase 2 Consultation for the Lincolnshire Reservoir - Minute 2357

The Chief Executive referred to the Board's response to the Lincolnshire Reservoir and that one Board Member has responded to it, outlining that the reservoir proposal is not in line with his thinking.

The SLWP Consultant has been invited to attend the Joint Works Committee meeting on 01 October to give an update on the Lincs Reservoir. Followed by an internal meeting to discuss the role of the SLWP Consultant going forward.

The SLWP Consultant is encouraging open water transfer through the South Lincs Water Partnership, but ultimately, it won't make a lot of difference to the Board whether it is piped or open transfer. The main concern for the Board is the level in the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD). The Chairperson and Chief Executive noted that the water company's preferred option is piped and that it won't be reversible for discharging the water in an emergency evacuation. The decision timeline for being piped or open water transfer is September, but no decision has been released yet.

The Projects Director added that the main interest to the Board is the SFFD and the potential deepening of it, noting that it has to be navigable by law which dictates the level, the Board want it at a level that would allow us to be able to gravitate into it.

The Chairperson also referred to the decommissioned Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) and that it may be needed to discharge the water, also adding that Fens 2100+ have indicated that it may be required because of sea level rise.

The Chief Executive noted that last week, the Board required the levels in the New Hammond Beck reducing because of strain on a dam and so started to pump. An issue was discovered with the Black Sluice Complex not discharging and upon contacting the Environment Agency (EA) it was found that there had been no water discharged at the Black Sluice Complex due to a fault that the contractors had to manually reset.

It was also noted that there is an upcoming expected high tide this week, where it anticipated that the Boston Barrier may close.

(f) Planning and Enforcement Officer Vacancy - Minute 2356(b)

The advert has attracted 21 applicants, there are five with relevant experience and these are going to be shortlisted for interview.

Mr M Leggott questioned if the Board are waiting for the new appointed officer to continue with outstanding applications and matters? The Chief Executive explained that himself and the Projects Director have managed to clear the majority of the back log, noting the work the Projects Director has put in to do so. The Chairperson thanked the Projects Director for this.

The Projects Director added that he has been in contact with Lincolnshire County Council enforcement team about getting assistance from them regarding enforcement letters etc. Mr P Holmes questioned whether the LCC logo could also feature in enforcement letter headers? It was felt it could be a possibility in the extended area, but not within the Board's catchment. The Projects Director noted he feels it is best practice for LCC to see a draft of proposed enforcement letters sent out by the Board.

2365 Period 04 Management Accounts - Agenda Item 7

The Chief Executive highlighted the following points:

- Rechargeable income has worsened in the period (£49,352 less than budget YTD). It being noted that the Board are still doing a considerable amount of work for the EA using the Aebi and 2015 Twiga. The South Kesteven District Council contract has also not been approved yet; the PSCA has been sent to them for approval but is currently still being reviewed by their legal team. However, they have been informed that if it is not soon accepted, the Board won't be able to do it (usually commences in June).
- Expenditure – only £108 has been spent on Allan House Pumping Station so far, however, this is about to change as work commenced on site last week.
- Summer cutting is underspent, however, the programme is still on schedule without the additional hired operator.

Mr M Rollinson questioned if there has been a problem with the solar? The Chief Executive noted that there has been a problem with two; one issue is the isolation switch and the other is a problem where each panel has got to be removed one by one to find the issue. This work is all scheduled to be completed.

2366 Quarter 01 Forecast - Agenda Item 8

The Chief Executive highlighted the following points:

- *Highland water claim* – Emergency meeting called by the Environment Agency (EA) was held last week to discuss the Highland Water claims. They (EA) are going to pay the balance of the 20% from last year's claim, but are only paying 54% of the payment on account for the current year. The Chief Executive didn't think this would be an issue for the Board as the Board's claim is usually between £6,000 - £9,000 and it was £23,000 last year, but once reworked following the IDB recovery funding, it should reduce to £21,000. The Chief Executive felt it will work out that the Board will owe them rather than the other way around.
- *Sempringham Pumping Station refurbishment* – Contingencies may have to be claimed to cover what has already been spent, however, the proposed gravity channel and tilting gate works may have to be funded from an alternative source.
- *Pumping Station Maintenance* – The minus figure in August (P05) relates to when we are expecting to receive the £452,936 claim from the IDB recovery funding, which is therefore showing as a minus figure.
- *Drain Maintenance* – Summer cutting re-phased to extend the season. Desilting has been re-phased from February 2025 onwards because of the slip works to be completed. Bushing is not expected to be spent also because of the slip work, as well as the jetting (still included in schemes budget).

- *Environmental* – The Chief Executive referred to rubbish collection, noting the lack of engagement with Boston Borough Council (BBC) regarding Fly Swat and it now seeming more of an invoice for service rather than partnership working. The Board therefore have not yet paid this invoice. The Chief Executive further added that the Board have stopped bringing rubbish back to the depot for collection by BBC because they refuse to load it and so the Board has to load it. Cllr P Bedford agreed with the Board's new way of working, removing it from the watercourse and leaving on the side for collection by BBC. The Chief Executive further added that even if the rubbish is in a very shallow dry watercourse, that anybody would be capable of stepping into, the BBC team refuse to remove it. Cllr P Bedford didn't believe this was happening throughout the whole catchment and so noted that he will talk to Cllr C Butler as the Environmental Portfolio Holder at the council regarding this matter.
- *Summary* – currently forecasting to gain an additional £496,674 for the reserves.

2367 Direction on 2024/25 Budgets and Ten-Year Estimates - Agenda Item 9

(a) 2024/25 Capital Schemes Budgets

The colour key code was explained as follows; purple highlights changes and orange highlights those works that have been applied for within the IDB Funding but have not yet been approved. It was noted that this version is not the most up to date version, highlighting the fact that it is an ever-changing live document.

The Projects Director reminded the committee of the previous decision that had to be made around the schemes totalling £1.9million which were not included within the adopted 10-year budget. Following this review, schemes totalling £1.3million of the £1.9million are now included.

Mr M Leggott referred to Rippingale Pumping Station under pump inspections and Hacconby Fen Pumping Station under pump inspections within 2024/25, questioning the cost difference of £5,885 and £25,000? It was noted that it is dependent on how much work is involved, i.e. how much silt there is to be removed, installation of dams etc.

(b) 2024/25 Plant Budget

The Projects Director noted that there is a bid within Tranche 2 of the IDB Recovery Funding for two 8" pumps with associated pipework and auxiliary fuel tanks. It is currently still unknown whether this has been successful. Referring to the past wet winter, the Projects Director noted that it will be beneficial to have a better capacity in-house. Quotes received range from £55,000 - £75,000. The Projects Director further noting that if not successful in achieving funding through the IDB Recovery Fund Tranche 2, he believes it would be beneficial to review the budget to enable the purchase of one. It may be that the recharge rate would be increased.

The Chief Executive further supported this by explaining that the Board currently have two single pump stations (Helpringham and Pinchbeck) that are scheduled for pump refurbishment. It takes two months for the pump to be removed, refurbished and re-installed. Due to the Board only having one mobile pump, the work on the two pumping stations can therefore not be completed simultaneously.

For context, the Projects Director noted that the 8" pump capacity is 160 litres/second and Helpringham Pumping Station capacity is 1300litres/second.

The Chief Executive therefore suggested that the mobile pump should be ordered imminently to allow for the removal of the pump at the second pumping station (Pinchbeck).

The Chief Executive also highlighted that over the past storm events, a second 8" pump has been borrowed from SHIDB and so it is felt there is a need for the Board to have their own additional mobile pump capacity.

The Projects Director noted that one supplier can hire a pump at c£600 per week whilst building one to the Board's specification, with a lead time of a month.

The cost to purchase was confirmed; £55,000 plus the cost of the pipes and tanks (estimated total c£75,000).

Mr M Rollinson supported the purchase of the 8" pump, noting that all the Board's pumps are getting to an age where the need for a mobile pump will increase.

It was confirmed that if the pump is purchased now and the IDB Recovery Fund bid is successful, then it can be claimed retrospectively.

All AGREED to purchase an 8" pump.

Mr P Holmes noted the ramp on SHIDB's pump, and whether the Board has considered this? It was noted that one could possibly be made in house, or by a local company.

The Projects Director noted that it is his intention to purchase the pump from DXB, it being believed that it isn't AdBlue.

Reference was further made to the dump trailer, the Projects Director noting that he has obtained one quote of £37,500, noting that he also still needs to contact Bailey Trailers. The Chairperson also noted Larrington and Weston trailers. Mr M Rollinson noted the swan neck? The Projects Director noted that it is the preferred position to tow from on the Unimog. It was also noted about the legal requirement to cover loads.

(c) 10 Year Estimates

The Chief Executive noted that the 10-year estimates aren't usually presented to the committee yet, but felt with the IDB Recovery Funding achieved it was important to provide an update on everything.

The Chief Executive reminded the committee that it was planned to be at 6% next year, but the Board could now afford to decrease it to 5% without having to search for additional funds and is based on 5% inflation increases.

It was noted that if it is possible the IDB Recovery Funding should be recognised by keeping the % increase to the minimum possible for both the special levy paying councils and the farmers.

Mr M Rollinson noted that the drainage rate collection is down compared to other years? The Chief Executive noted that there is nobody protesting against paying, noting that complaints are often related to things that are Environment Agency (EA) responsibility and so are referred to them.

Reference was made to the complaint and claim regarding the tree felling at Aswarby Estates, noting that a response was sent, as agreed by the insurers, and nothing further has been heard.

(d) CONFIDENTIAL – Salary Reviews

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 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

(e) CONFIDENTIAL – Salary Reviews (Directors)

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 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

2368 To review the Mobile Phone Contract renewal - Agenda Item 10

The Chief Executive explained to the committee that he can't see there is any alternative but to change provider from EE to Vodafone as it is £10,279.56 cheaper over a two-year contract.

The Chief Executive noted that his preference would have been to stay with EE. It was noted that the Vodafone signal with the pumping stations isn't great and so they will have to remain with EE along with Simon who also doesn't get a Vodafone signal. The Chief Executive noted he gets neither signal at his house. It was confirmed that the contract consists of 17 workforce plans, the Directors, George and 8 data only for the pumping stations.

All AGREED to keep the pumping stations and Simon on EE and move the remaining contract over to Vodafone.

2369 CONFIDENTIAL – To review the Brewin Dolphin charges – Agenda Item 11

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 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

2370 CONFIDENTIAL – To receive a HR update – Agenda Item 12

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 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

2371 To review the draft timetable for 2025 meetings - Agenda Item 13

The committee RESOLVED to recommend the below timetable of meeting dates for 2025:

Executive	Tuesday 21 st January 2025	2pm
Board	Tuesday 11 th February 2025	2pm
Environment	Tuesday 4 th March 2025	2pm
Structures	Tuesday 25 th March 2025	2pm
Audit & Risk	Tuesday 15 th April 2025	2pm
Northern Works	Tuesday 13 th May 2025	-
Executive	Tuesday 3 rd June 2025	2pm
Board	Tuesday 24 th June 2025	2pm
Southern Works	Tuesday 15 th July 2025	-
Executive	Tuesday 16 th September 2025	2pm
Joint Works	Tuesday 7 th October 2025	2pm
Audit & Risk	Tuesday 28 th October 2025	2pm
Board	Tuesday 18 th November 2025	2pm
Executive	Tuesday 9 th December 2025	2pm

2372 Any Other Business - Agenda Item 14

(a) To consider the Electric Car Scheme

The Chief Executive explained that this scheme would give an employee the option to pay for a car before tax. The cost to the Board is always guaranteed to be nothing. The payments for the car would be taken out of the employee's salary before tax and therefore reducing the taxable income. The Board will effectively be leasing the car to the employee, however, if the car had to go back for any reason there would be no cost to the Board.

It was questioned if there is an electric car charging point at the office? It was confirmed that there isn't. The Chief Executive noted that if there was a charger installed at the office there would need to be some way of recharging back to the employee. The offset of the solar was noted. It also being noted that Witham 4th IDB have two charging points. Mr J Fowler noted that there is a workplace grant for the installation of an electric chargers.

Mr M Leggott noted that it would probably be prudent to look at an electric vehicle charging policy. The Chief Executive added that, in the future, the workforce will probably have electric vans. Mr M Leggott noted that Witham 4th IDB don't currently have electric vehicles for the workforce but are installing chargers at the pumping stations through grants.

(b) Insurance Renewal

The Chief Executive presented the following:

Black Sluice IDB

Insurance renewal 30th September 2024

	NFU 2023/24	NFU 2023/24 after adjustments in year	NFU 2024/25	Increase in Premium	Premium Increase %
Motor Fleet	£ 15,670.34	£ 21,936.03	£ 23,255.02	£ 1,318.99	8.42%
Commercial Combined	£ 48,053.11	£ 48,052.60	£ 52,649.08	£ 4,596.48	9.57%
Excess Liability (Extra £10m Public, £5m Employers)	£ 3,472.00	£ 3,472.00	£ 3,808.00	£ 336.00	9.68%
Environmental Liability	£ 6,050.24	£ 6,050.24	£ 6,534.08	£ 483.84	8.00%
Engineering Inspection	£ 9,824.50	£ 9,824.50	£ 12,154.31	£ 2,329.81	23.71%
Professional Indemnity	£ 3,024.00	£ 3,024.00	£ 3,735.20	£ 711.20	23.52%
Management Liability	£ 5,600.00	£ 5,600.00	£ 6,720.00	£ 1,120.00	20.00%
TOTAL PREMIUM	£ 91,694.19	£ 97,959.37	£ 108,855.69	£ 10,896.32	11.88%
VAT	£ 1,964.90	£ 1,964.90	£ 2,430.86		
	£ 93,659.09	£ 99,924.27	£ 111,286.55		

Engineering Inspection – NFU reviewing this as there has only been two new items (Sempringham weedscreen cleaner and the bar it sits on).

Professional Indemnity and Management Liability - are with Dual which is the company that Towergate used and NFU had to use last year because they couldn't get anybody else to quote. It is the same situation this year. The Board had a high increase in it last year to the minimum premium (£5,000 + Insurance Premium Tax). It is thought that it was not previously subject to the minimum because Towergate were in a group policy with other IDBs. The Chief Executive has therefore contacted John Cooke of Towergate to look at these two policies in isolation, which the NFU are aware of. The committee agreed to look into the possibility of splitting out those policies.

It was noted that the Board is going into the third year of a five-year long-term agreement with the NFU.

Mr P Holmes questioned whether there would be a claim if Swineshead Pumping Station collapsed? It was felt there wouldn't be if it collapsed because of structural problems that the Board are aware of.

(c) Last Executive meeting of Mr M Brookes, Mr J Fowler & Mr K Casswell

The Chairperson thanked Mr M Brookes and Mr J Fowler for their work and commitment to the Board.

The Chairperson also thanked the Executive committee for their time and input in his time as Chair of the Board. The committee thanked the Chairperson.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:15.