

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the
Southern Works Committee

held at the Offices of the Board on the
25th March 2025 at 2pm

Members

Chairperson - * Mr C Wray

* Mr W Ash	* Mr G Atkinson
* Mr V A Barker	* Mr M Mowbray
* Mr J Casswell	* Mr R Dorrington
* Mr K Casswell	* Cllr M Geaney
* Cllr Z Lane	Mr A Mair
* Mr M Taylor	

(* Member Present)

In attendance: Mr D Withnall (Chief Executive)
Mr P Nicholson (Projects Director)
Mr K Methley (Pump Engineer)
Mr S Harrison (Maintenance Director)
Mrs A Chamberlain (Finance & Admin Director)
Mr P Holmes (Chairperson of the Board)
Mr M Rollinson (Executive Committee)
Cllr D Middleton (Executive Committee)
Mr D Leverton (Guest)

2450 Recording the Meeting - Agenda Item 1

Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

2451 Apologies for absence - Agenda Item 2

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Needham, Mr M Leggott, Mr A Mair, Mr C Bird (invited guest), Miss A Hunns (attended inspection tour, invited guest) and Cllr P Bedford (attended inspection tour).

2452 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

(a) Flooding at Donington Road, Horbling Fen Drain 18/4 - Minute 2456(1)
Mr J Casswell declared an interest in the above matter.

(b) Donington North Ings Pumping Station Roadway - Minute 2456(4)
Mr J Casswell declared an interest in the above matter.

(c) View / discuss slips at old Beck / Atkinsons Cut, Rippingale Drain 23/4 - Minute 2456(3)
Mr R Dorrington declared an interest in the above matter.

2453 Review the Terms of Reference - Agenda Item 4

All AGREED to recommend the Southern Works Committee's Terms of Reference to the Board for approval.

2454 Minutes of the last meeting - Agenda Item 5

The Minutes of the Joint Works Committee, which was held on 1st October 2024, copies of which had been circulated, were considered. It was AGREED that the Minutes should be signed as a true record, with the following amendment:

- Minute 2380(a) - '...with early season flailing completed on major pump drains following Storm Henk and Babet on a four ~~monthly~~ weekly basis'.

2455 Matters Arising - Agenda Item 6

There were no matters arising.

2456 Discuss the Operations Report and Inspection - Agenda Item 7

The Projects Director led discussions about the inspection, as follows, with an accompanying presentation.

1. View / discuss recent flooding at Donington Road, Horbling Fen Drain 18/4

Mr J Casswell declared an interest.

Site visit - The committee viewed the low spot at the above location and the current alleviation measure (spillway) in place. The landowner joined the committee at the site. It was explained to the committee that the Board took responsibility of this drain from the Environment Agency (EA) in 2017/18. The landowner explained that he believes the flooding is man-made, noting that the farm never used to flood, expressing his disappointment in the lack of responsibility from the EA, despite land, property and agricultural sheds being flooded numerous times, highlighting that he can no longer afford to keep being flooded. Options were discussed on site, with the landowner favouring the current 'spillway' being deepened (3-4") and widened (3-4 metres wide). It was noted that there is currently a syphon in place and the Projects Director noted to the committee that this will introduce extra water into the Board's systems and so suggested there needs to be some form of control on this (penstock). It was agreed on site that the Board's Officers will look at designs to widen and lower the spillway.

Discussion continued at the committee meeting, as follows.

It was noted that photos 3 and 4 within the agenda are of the site visited, when in use during the flooding in 2012, when the landowner had dug it himself (pre- EA works).

It was further noted that proposed works to widen and deepen would cost approximately £10,000.

Mr J Casswell noted that in recent events some water was also going into the adjacent field as well as overflowing into the drain, therefore requesting that when the work is done, it is angled correctly to ensure it is all overflowing into the drain.

Mr M Rollinson questioned if the landowner has indicated if he would be willing to contribute? Mr P Holmes responded that he has briefly mentioned it to the landowner, who didn't seem forthcoming, but could be asked more formally.

The Chief Executive noted that there needs to be some end to this ongoing situation, and some form of caveat that if these works aren't successful there will be no further works.

The Projects Director and Pump Engineer noted that they do not believe the works will be entirely successful, confirming that he thinks it will help, but may possibly still overtop.

Mr P Holmes noted that if the Board carry out the works as the landowner has requested, if it isn't successful, then the Board have simply carried out what the landowner requested.

The Chief Executive highlighted that if the Board's Officer's don't think it will work then the Board shouldn't be spending money doing it. The Projects Director responded that he thinks it will help alleviate the issue but can't guarantee it will completely stop the overtopping dependant on reaction time.

Mr V Barker questioned whether the existing syphon will be affected by the increased water volume? The Projects Director noted that the efficiency of the syphon will already be affected by the volume of water in the channel anyway.

Mr P Holmes questioned if the Board could request a 50% contribution from the landowner?

Mr R Dorrington noted that he thinks the landowner would object to this on the basis that he already did some of the works himself.

The Projects Director added that he believes there should be some form of control mechanism on it, to prevent any water coming into the Board's system outside of a flood / high water level event. It was felt that if it is armoured at a set level, this will effectively give that control.

The Board were of the agreed opinion that something needs to be done, and it is a relatively small cost to alleviate the issue. All AGREED for the Board to complete, in conjunction with the landowner, a cost-effective solution to help alleviate the overtopping.

The Chief Executive noted that this work is not budgeted for, but there is a surplus in the SFFD desilting budget which could be used to fund this work.

2. Visit / discuss SFFD overtopping – Dunsby Fen Pumping Station

Site visit – The committee viewed the low spot where overtopping has occurred in both 2024 and 2025 (flooding c250acres) and the Environment Agency's (EA) repair to the bank.

The EA have repaired the bank to the original level. It had been requested that the bank be raised to prevent this overtopping, however, the EA are not willing to do this as it would then overtop at the next lowest point.

Discussion was had around whether it is effective to continue pumping when overtopping and it was felt that it helps the situation from worsening.

The committee also viewed one of the Board's new 8" mobile pumps that had been set up on site for demonstration purposes, purchased through the IDB Recovery Funding along with another 8" pump and a 6" pump.

Discussion continued at the meeting, as follows:

The Projects Director confirmed that the EA's cost of this repair was estimated at £250,000 (it is not known if this also included the repair works to Quading).

It was also noted that a committee member has identified another 100 acres of land flooded upstream and are going to report to Lincolnshire County Council for the purpose of Section 19 investigations.

Mr P Holmes questioned if the Board are satisfied with the EA accepting this as a low point knowing it will flood land and then the Board having to pump that water. The Projects Director added that there is a similar scenario at Helpringham.

The Chief Executive noted that if the Board didn't pump the water, he doesn't believe the EA would do anything and would leave it to drain from the land naturally. If the Board then didn't pump, that is then not aiding the Board's ratepayers.

The Chief Executive continued that representations can be made to the EA from the Board. Mr P Holmes felt the EA should be compensating the Board for the cost of having to pump the water.

The Chief Executive added that the pumping costs of Storm Henk and Storm Babet were recovered through the IDB Recovery Fund, but this won't be an option for the January 2025 event or future events.

The Chief Executive suggested that a letter from the Chair of the Board be sent to the EA Area Director outlining that the Board shouldn't be expected to pump the water 'in circles' because the EA are not willing to repair it to an acceptable level.

Mr V Barker noted a suggestion that the landowner put a bund in on the land that is higher than the bank? The Chief Executive noted that it would be a bund to contain the flood water.

Mr K Casswell noted that if the area is going to continually overtop then the EA are going to have to make an arrangement with the landowner.

Mr D Leverton noted that if the Black Sluice Pumping Station (Boston) was operational then this would alleviate some of this issue. The Chief Executive confirmed that it would increase capacity to reduce overtopping.

3. View / discuss slips at old Beck / Atkinsons Cut, Rippingale Drain 23/4

Mr R Dorrington declared an interest.

Site visit - The committee viewed the slip work, including installation of artificial Kingfisher nests within the bank, at the above location. This work was completed with the IDB Recovery funding. The work is c750metres and was brought back to the original position. The artificial Kingfisher nests were made using IBC containers filled with sand and gravel. There have been sightings of Kingfishers in the area already. The cost of the works was £85,731.

Discussion continued at the meeting, as follows:

Mr V Barker suggested that an alternative approach be considered in future, installing a weir (downstream of the eroded area) with a pipe at the bottom which would take a lot of the water, slowing the water down and reducing the bank erosion.

Mr R Dorrington felt that because of the volume of water, the weir would overflow in five-ten minutes. Mr V Barker didn't think this was an issue with the aim being to reduce the speed of the water and therefore reducing its power to erode the banks. Mr R Dorrington therefore suggested that if the water was running slower, it would increase levels and therefore overtopping.

It was noted that the hedgerow being re-planted on site is being done so because the Board removed some existing hedgerow, it being noted that the Board will look to contribute to this through the IDB Recovery Fund.

It was also noted that the stone seen field side will be removed by the Board.

4. View / discuss Donington North Ings Pumping Station Roadway

Mr J Casswell declared an interest.

Site visit – The committee viewed the ongoing work to the new access roadway. It was explained that the previous access included having to cross a railway line, a major safety concern for the Board. In 2014, the Board were approached by Network Rail to say they were going to close the level crossing, the Board has tried to get an alternative access funded through Network Rail but to no success. The new roadway has been funded through the IDB Recovery Fund (£185,000 achieved). The cost of the roadway is £141,000, with the remaining funding required for the purchase of land, legal fees, security gates etc.

The previous access also included crossing the Donington Northings pump drain via a culvert that is now failing, which was another reason for requiring a new access. It was noted that the height of this culvert will probably be reduced but not completely removed to prevent slippage. It was also explained that the roadway widens with the change of direction in order to be able to bring machinery on a low loader / artic lorry without running off the access roadway and onto the field.

5. Point of interest – Lowland Agricultural Peat Sites Infrastructure Project (LAPSIP)

This project was DEFRA funded and is almost complete; tilting weirs have been installed to raise water levels to keep the peat wet. The total cost was £27,000 less than the claimed estimate. The only remaining work to be completed is fitting the level controllers (done by contractors). Water levels will be raised in conjunction with the adjacent landowners.

6. 10 Year Schemes Budget

The Chief Executive noted that the items shown in red were all approved in the budgeting processing.

The Chief Executive also highlighted the Board's normal income (Drainage rates, Special Levies and rechargeable works) would be £3-4million. With all the approved funding for next year, the expenditure for schemes alone is £14,339,267 (2025/26). Due to this increase and therefore increased workload, the Executive Committee have approved the recruitment of a Project Manager on a two-year fixed term basis, which will be advertised this week.

2457 Receive the Engineer's Report - Agenda Item 8

Capital Asset Improvements

1. 2025/26 Defra/EA Funded Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Grant in Aid (GiA) Schemes

(i) Black Hole Drove Pumping Station Structural Repairs - Estimate £50,000

Following discussion with the Structural Engineers (Stantec), divers will be utilised to complete some of the inspection at a cost of £2,000-£3,000 per day (five-person team), which is proposed to take place in the next few weeks. This will be more cost effective than trying to reduce water levels enough with a dam. This inspection is required due to visible corrosion being identified at a visual inspection carried out by the Pump Engineer, Projects Director and Grant in Aid Manager.

(ii) Donington Northings Pumping Station Refurbishment - Estimate £450,000

This site, along with Chain Bridge Pumping Station, is currently in the first part of an indicative allocation for funding towards a full refurbishment (including new fish and eel friendly pumps).

There is currently £450,000 in the budget for next year and it is expected to secure another £1.5million. Two specifications, one for structural and one for the mechanical and electrical elements are to be produced for tender.

(iii) Horbling Fen Pumping Station Structural Repairs - Estimate £50,000

Structural Engineers (Stantec) will also be completing an inspection of this site (8th - 10th April 2025) due to visible corrosion being identified by Board Officer's.

It was noted that in a previous report on this site, costs were compared to replace or refurbish, as displayed on screen, it being noted that the estimated cost provided for replacement was very optimistic and unrealistic.

(iv) Black Sluice Catchment Strategy

The hydrological modelling is currently being run, with further data inputs being requested as required. The more accurate the data is that is used, the more realistic the outputs. Once the outputs have been concluded, the next challenge will be achieving funding for the works.

(v) Swaton Natural Flood Management Schemes

The estimated £25,000 included in the agenda has been increased by the EA to £30,000 for the scour revetment works to the level control culvert at Grove Farm. The scouring has occurred because the cover level is not sufficient. The Board did suggest concrete cover at the time of installation, but the EA preferred to use a more environmentally friendly choice.

The repair work is being completed through the Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA) (Board acting as contractor for the EA).

Mr M Rollinson noted that this has now been in place for 18 months and Swaton has flooded in this time, questioning how effective it is? The Projects Director responded that the EA have got an ongoing study in place to determine this, noting a previously encountered issue where landowners took it upon themselves to change the penstock levels which made the data inaccurate.

(vi) Sempringham Fen Pumping Station Refurbishment

Additional funding has been achieved for the gravity channel works required, delivery to site is next week and will be fitted between now and the start of the cutting season.

2. 2025/26 Board funded capital schemes

(i) Jetting / CCTV Survey of Major Pipelines - Estimate £40,000

The sites still to complete in Dowsby and Donington were displayed on screen.

- (ii) Horbling Fen Pumping Station 1x pump motor refurb - Estimate £4,000
The electric pump motor now requires refurbishing.
- (iii) South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) Desilting Guthrum to Black Hole Drove Pumping Station - Estimate £105,000
A small area has been surveyed, and it is believed that there is between 300-600mm of silt. This work will be combined with inspections at Black Hole Drove Pumping Station. Dams will be placed by specialist contractors.
- (iv) Black Hole Drove Pumping Station Under Pump Inspections - Estimate £35,000
This is work to complete the replacement of pump section nuts and bolts and visual inspections of the wet well and intake channel and removal of silt. This work will be combined with the SFFD desilting.
- (v) General Culvert replacement contributions - Estimate £5,000
The Board may make a contribution of £1,000 if the culvert is used by the Board.

3. 2026/27 Defra/EA FCERM GiA Schemes

- (i) Donington Northings Pumping Station Refurbishment – £450,000
There is currently £450,000 in budget for next year and it is expected to secure another £1.5million. Two specifications, one for structural and one for the mechanical and electrical elements are to be produced for tender.

4. 2026/27 Board Funded Capital Schemes

- (i) Graft Drain - Estimate £45,000
There are three driveway culverts to be lined by an external contractor.

Notification from Lincolnshire County Council has been received that they are going to replace the culvert on Short Drove on the Graft Drain.
- (ii) Gosberton Fen Pumping Station 3 x axial flow pump refurb - £78,750
Unless a funding opportunity arises from another source, this work will be funded from the Board's capital.
- (iii) Dowsby Fen Pumping Station replace MCC - £60,000
It is proposed that the current Motor Control Centre (MCC) is replaced.
- (iv) Swaton Fen Pumping Station replace MCC - £48,000
It is proposed that the current Motor Control Centre (MCC) is replaced.
- (v) Rippingale Fen Pumping Station replace MCC - £48,000
It is proposed that the current Motor Control Centre (MCC) is replaced.

Mr D Leverton questioned what goes wrong the MCC's? The Pump Engineer responded that it is general wear and tear, wiring regulations change, adding that it would cost more to replace the different internal components than it would to replace with new.

(vi) Donington Northings Pumping Station new transformer - £55,000

This work will form part of the refurbishment if the expected funding is achieved (Grant in Aid). It would be hoped to get an LV connection, removing the need for a transformer.

(vii) Jetting to Major Pipelines – Estimate £50,000

The sites still to complete in Dowsby and Donington were displayed on screen.

(viii) General Culvert replacement contributions – Estimate £5,000

The Board may make a contribution of £1,000 if the culvert is used by the Board.

5. IDB Recovery Funding

The Projects Director explained that the Board has been successful in achieving IDB Recovery funds, giving an update as follows.

- There are still pumping stations site works to be completed, but a six-month extension (from 31 March 2025) has been achieved for that. The delay has been with regard to the National Grid supply to site.
- The Donington Northorpe culvert is due to be completed week commencing 14th April.
- Slip repairs – the Board were initially awarded £705,000, then awarded an additional £150,000 and have since been awarded a further £42,000.
- Embankment projects (running water around Ewerby, South Kyme, Trinity College and Dunsby) – funding has been achieved for one of these sites and the others are on a reserve list, which the outcome will be shared at the end of April.

There was only one project that the Board applied for funding that was unsuccessful.

Mr K Casswell congratulated all those involved with this work, commending the Board on such an achievement, echoed by the full Board.

6. Emergency Response Plan

The Projects Director reminded the committee about the Emergency Response Plan procedure, included within the agenda.

The Chief Executive noted that there is currently an ongoing court case, where a ratepayer is seeking compensation for flooding of her paddock/stables/menage. The rate payer is arguing that the Board turning off pumps has contributed to / caused this flooding. If this case is successful, the Board will have to seriously consider whether to continue the current practice of turning pumps off when the South Forty Foot Drain levels are extremely high, as it will set a precedence for further potential successful claims.

7. Crop Loss

The Projects Director reminded the committee about the Crop Loss Compensation procedure, also included within the agenda.

2458 Report on Rainfall - Agenda Item 9

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

2459 Any Other Business - Agenda Item 10

(a) Sempringham Fen – leak from concrete pipe

Mr V Barker referenced the site of an old pump at Sempringham Fen, which produced a leak, and the pipe was filled with concrete. This pipe is now leaking beneath the concrete, noting that he shared a video of this with the Board at the time he observed it. The water is coming back from the Sempringham Drain into the Fen Drain. Mr V Barker questioned whether any work will be done to this as it is putting water into the Board's system?

The Projects Director noted that it is the responsibility of the Environment Agency (EA), it can be raised with them to possibly deliver through Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA) works.

(a) Quadring Drain

Mr V Barker declared an interest, referencing the highways bridge on the Quadring drain, noting that during a recent event the water was a lot lower on the pump side compared to the other side. The Projects Director noted that hopefully because Lincolnshire County Council are repairing Short Drove, this may also be repaired, but the question can be asked.

(b) Risegate Eau – build up of weed

Mr V Barker declared an interest, noting that where the Risegate Eau crosses the Beck Bank there is weed at the bottom of the drain which he believes could be holding the water up by 9" or more.

It was noted that the Hooby can't reach, and a larger machine is restricted by the low hanging cables. The only way to complete the works would be by hand. The Maintenance Director will look into it.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15:27.