

NORTH LEVEL DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

3 FEBRUARY 2010

At the meeting of the Board held this day at the Drainage Office, Thorney

Present: -

	J H R Hoyles (Chairman)
M H S Sly (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr J Holdich OBE
Cllr C Bellamy	N S Manser
Cllr C J T H Brewis	H Neale
B Britain	Cllr Mrs P M C Potts
J A Clarke	J W J Sly
D R Coates	Cllr R C Speechley
T J Gee	A J Wadsley
P S Gray	Cllr D Wheeler
N J Harris	

In attendance:

S H Morris (Chief Executive)
P D Sharman (Engineer to the Board)
C L Emery (Secretary)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Cllr M Cotterell MBE, C J Cutteridge, Cllr R Dobbs, G T Fisher, A E Gee, W Gee, P T R Hurn, Cllr S G Marthews, M D Seymour and J Waltham

Before continuing with the business of the meeting the Chairman asked members to stand in silence as he reported the death of Councillor A R German on the 17 December 2009 being a Fenland District Councillor since 1979 and a valued member of the North Level Board since 1994.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED (172)

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 25 November 2009, copies of which having been circulated with the agenda, be taken as read and certified under the hand of the Chairman as being a correct record of the business of such meeting.

3 MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

Item 12 French Drove House Alterations

The Engineer reported that due to delays in receiving quotations for the work to be carried out he had obtained confirmation from Peterborough Care and Repair Agency that they are prepared to carry over the funding into their next financial year.

Item 14 to Approve Amendments to Agricultural Rating Assessments

The Chief Executive reported that no objections have been received following the issuing of the amendments to the Agricultural Rating. The amendments would now be implemented on 1 April 2010.

There were no other matters arising.

4 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Chief Executive explained to members that within the Governance Action Plan: Use of Resources, the Auditors had requested that more documentary evidence be provided with the Agenda to preface the Finance Report and also to include highlighted pertinent points. He referred to the preface and the Finance Report enclosed with the agenda and updated the position regarding income from drainage rates by saying there was now approximately £1000 outstanding between 3 ratepayers, approximately £1300 was due from one ratepayer £450 of which has been paid, the remaining rates due are still being actively pursued. He advised members that the term deposit with Tipton & Coseley had not been re-invested and had been placed into the main current account. He further said that the authorised signatories had set up a new mandate to open an additional deposit account with Santander who was offering a current interest rate of 2.0%. With regard to bank charges, whilst 12 months ago the interest from the main account countered the Bank charges, this was no longer the case. He has recently negotiated with Barclays a new interest earning current account paying a basic interest of 0.1% plus a bonus of 0.5% paid after 12 months based on the average balance, which should mean that Bank charges on this account are offset against interest earned.

He explained that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had examined the accounts of expenditure referred to in his report and found the same to be correct.

Members raised no questions and in conclusion it was

RESOLVED (173)

That the Financial Report be accepted and approved.

5 ENGINEER'S REPORT

1 Rainfall has been as follows:-

	<u>Nov</u>		<u>Dec</u>	
	mm	inch	mm	inch
a) Tydd P S	66.50	2.62	77.00	3.03
b) Sutton St Edmund	66.70	2.63	83.60	3.29
c) Thorney Offices	64.10	2.52	75.80	2.98
d) Cross Guns	80.10	3.15	72.50	2.85
e) Dog-in-a-Doublet	63.00	2.48	71.80	2.83
f) Peakirk	69.00	2.72	48.00	1.89
g) Mouth Lane	45.20	1.78	60.00	2.36
h) Hundreds	24.00	0.94	70.50	2.78

2 Hydrometric Information

Date	Mean Temp Degrees Celsius	Soil Moisture Deficit -mm	Date	Mean Temp Degrees Celsius	Soil Moisture Deficit -mm
03/11/09	11.2	107.6	01/12/09	5.7	65.4
10/11/09	6.8	106.3	08/12/09	7.0	49.3
17/11/09	9.5	91.1	15/12/09	4.9	43.5
24/11/09	11.3	81.9	22/12/09	-0.5	38.0
			29/12/09	1.7	23.0

3 Pumping hours have been as follows:-

	Nov	Dec
a) Poplars	23	191
b) Denhams	0	43
c) Dog-in-a-Doublet (New)		
(Large)	6	99
(Small)	0	5
Dog-in-a-Doublet (Old)	35	40
d) Cross Guns – Electric	0	20
– Diesel	52	200
e) Mouth Lane – Electric	0	11
– Diesel	0	16
f) Willow Holt	9	114
g) Tydd – Electric	0	35
– Diesel	31	251
h) Postland	7	76
i) Newborough	36	84
j) Peakirk	2	26
k) Hundreds	0	0
Total	201	1211

4 Maintenance to 11 January 2010

2009

a) Hand roding		
20,520m have been completed in urban areas		(23,652m)
b) Machine roding		
Hitachi ZX180	117,290m	(134,208m)
Hitachi ZX210	166,015m	(154,180m)
Berkenheger	225,229m	(179,535m)
Hired	81,040m	112,515m)
Boat	Nil	(Nil)
Tractor & weed-basket	35,957m	(24,130m)
c) Flailing		
1,132,956m on one side have been completed using 4 No flail mowers		(1,004,174m)
d) Mudding Out – machine		
Hitachi ZX180	Nil	(Nil)
Hitachi ZX210	1,668m	(Nil)
Hired	Nil	(160m)
e) Mudding Out – hand	Nil(Nil)	
f) Chemical weed control		
Midstream GSR – tractor	173,010m	(98,230m)
Midstream GSR – hand	67,474m	(65,730m)
Roundup pro-biactive - tractor	58,830m	(7,800m)
Roundup pro-biactive – hand	7,552m	(13,940m)
g) Piping side dykes	Nil (Nil)	
h) Revetment work		
84m of watercourse has been stabilized using a combination of timber piles, toe boards and faggots		(Nil)
i) Properties		
A new boiler has been installed at Tydd PS house.		
Routine maintenance to all Board's property		
j) Faggot making	Nil	(Nil)
k) Pumping stations		
General repairs and maintenance carried out to all pumping stations		
l) Water level control structures		
All freshwater are closed. The majority of slackers and dam boards have been removed.		
m) Board's plant		
General repairs and servicing carried out to all plant and vehicles.		

5 Capital Works to 11 January 2010

Tydd Pumping Station Refurbishment Scheme – Phase III

This phase of the works involves the supply and installation of a fourth Scania engine to drive pump No 4. Works are now complete; however we are still resolving a few minor fine-tuning issues regarding the vacuum pump procedure and operation.

Works are 90% complete

East Counter Drain Phase III – Guyhirn

This is a non-grant aided scheme financed from revenue designed to improve the East Counter Drain from Redgate Farm for a length of 1400 metres. Approximately 2100m³ of spoil has been excavated over the 1400m length of drain; all excavated spoil has been deposited directly on the bank of the river Nene. This will be re-profiled and seeded by the Environment Agency.

500 metres of timber piling has been constructed using 4.2m timber fir piles and 3.9m pressure treated toe boards to provide stability to sections of the drain with poor soil structure.

Due to the weather, works on the new stock fencing have been delayed and are due to start as soon as the ground conditions are suitable.

Works are 75% complete

Murrow Main Drain – pipeline inspections and cleansing

This is a non-grant aided scheme financed from development levy funds to cleanse and inspect 151 metres of Armco pipeline in the Murrow village, as part of the Board's ongoing asset management programme.

Originally constructed in 1976 the pipeline has had no maintenance or inspections carried out since its construction; and required approximately 100m³ of silt to be removed from the pipe. On completion of the cleansing a CCTV camera survey was carried out to ascertain the condition of the pipe, the results indicate that the pipe is in good structural condition.

Works are now complete.

Schemes prepared but not yet started

Hundreds Drain – Crowland
Whitehall Drain Phase II - Postland
Culpin's Drain Phase II – Newborough
Culpin's Spur Drain Phase II Newborough
East Counter Drain – Phase IV - Guyhirn

Schemes being prepared

Thirty Chain Spur Drain – Postland
Main Drain Phase I - Tydd Gote
Moor Drain – Newborough
Moor Drain West – Peakirk
New Drove Drain – Wisbech St Mary
Old Wryde Drain - Murrow
Foul Anchor sluice refurbishment – Foul Anchor
Clough Cross sluice refurbishment – Parson Drove
Telemetry upgrade
Tydd catchment strategy modelling
Steward House Drain Phase II – Thorney
Proctors Drain – West Side Marshes
Gores Drain – pipeline inspections/cleansing – Thorney
Leverington Church Drain - pipeline inspections/cleansing Leverington
Tydd Pumping Station Refurbishment – Phase IV
Mossops pipeline- Newborough

P D Sharman

The Engineer updated the Hydrometric Information, pump hour figures and rainfall data. In response to a members question regarding the ease of use of Tydd pumping station he said that the new diesels gave infinitely more flexibility, rather than holding water high over the weekend. Prior to the refurbishment, the recent inclement weather conditions would have resulted in two men working overnight during the weekends, we are now able to pump through Saturdays and Sundays without paying day rates for the electric or overtime for supervision. He also said that Tydd was now in the final stages of fine tuning, when the refurbishment of engines 1-4 would be complete.

In response to a question regarding the sluice refurbishment, the Engineer reported that the outfall sluice had two large doors outside the pointing doors which had a wind-up mechanism. These doors have not been used for many years and the refurbishment would be to seal up the two outer doors, not to replace the main pointing doors.

A1073 IMPROVEMENTS WORKS

The Engineer gave a brief report regarding the A1073 Improvements Works. He reported that a snagging list regarding the Boards drains had been supplied to the contractors, and that he had been given a permit to traverse along the length of the road on 21 January 2010. Following this inspection he reported that he was unhappy with the standard of drainage being provided and has raised his concerns with Lincolnshire County Council (Mr L Rowley) and also copied in the Lincolnshire County Council representative on site (Mr Mark Jarvis), Morgan Est (Contractor) and Jacobs (Design contractor).

The main points of contention being the lack of attenuation along sections of the road; and the poor quality of the swales and bunds. The swales appear much too shallow to store any volume of run-off and the bunds merely serving to hold the water very close to land levels along various lengths of the scheme. He said it is noticeable that the emphasis has again been on laying down the road and not the ancillary works such as drainage.

Following a request he agreed to send details to Councillors Holditch and Brewis, and confirmed that he has also advised Lincolnshire County Council of the development levies which will become payable should a satisfactory solution not be found.

Chemical Treatment

Mr Britain asked if any alternative chemicals have been found to replace the Midstream GSR granules when they are withdrawn on 18 March this year. The Engineer said that he was in touch with Midstream regarding an alternative and also was hoping to gain some insight from the Robson meeting which is to be held shortly.

DEFRA Visit

The Engineer advised members of a half day visit by Ms Branwen Rhead from DEFRA on 18 January 2010. The visit was made at short notice and for the purpose of Ms Rhead gaining some insight into the functions and purpose of Internal Drainage Boards. A similar presentation to that used on the local Councillors view day was given with the Vice-Chairman in attendance. From that meeting it is quite clear that DEFRA are seeking to establish indicators to measure the performance of IDBs and to this end, we have already sent to Ms Rhead a copy of the Finance and Engineering reports as presented to the Board plus the Boards Strategy Plan.

Lincolnshire Flood and Drainage Management Framework

The Engineer told members that a series of workshops have been held where officers from the Board and Cllr Marthews had attended. The final workshop is to be held on 18 February when officers and the Chairman will attend.

The framework implements the recommendations of the Pitt Review and the provisions of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in a way that is tailored to suit the geographical, social, economic and environmental characteristics of Lincolnshire. Its purpose is to ensure that local communities and infrastructure are better protected from flood risk, and that improved resilience towards flooding is built into all aspects of planning and service provision in the future.

The Lincolnshire Framework is based on a 3 tier arrangement with a Strategy Group, an Operations Group and finally a Local Flood Risk and Drainage Group. The Strategy Group will be responsible for integrating the strategic direction of the Environment Agency's flood and coastal risk management overview role with that of the new leadership role of the lead local flood authority. This group will be led by the Environment Agency. The Operations Group will deliver the responsibilities of the lead local flood authority, being led by Lincolnshire County Council with support from the Environment Agency, District Councils, Anglian Water and Internal Drainage Boards via the Lincolnshire branch of ADA. This group will co-ordinate key countywide functions, empowering the Local Flood Risk and Drainage Groups to deliver flood risk management and drainage solutions at the local level.

In contrast, Peterborough, being a Unitary Council, has elected to work with Flood Risk Partners on the equivalent of Lincolnshire's third tier and have their next meeting on 11 February 2010. Cambridgeshire are further behind in the scheme but the North Level will be invited to join at a later date, with Mr I Smith from the Middle Level Commissioners representing the interests of Drainage Boards initially.

Clough Cross

In response to a question from Mr Neale, The Engineer said that an application for a grant had been submitted to DEFRA for Clough Cross sluices, but that no final decision had been received as yet.

There being no further questions it was:

RESOLVED (174)

That the Engineer's Report be accepted and approved.

6 TO RECEIVE THE AUDITORS CERTIFICATE AND OPINION FOR ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

The Chief Executive advised members that he had now received the Auditors Certificate and Opinion for the Board's Accounts for the financial year 31 March 2009 as had been reported at the previous meeting.

7 PAY AWARD

The Chief Executive explained that the annual pay award would be calculated at 1.44% by applying the North Level District formula as agreed by the Board.

After a short discussion it was

RESOLVED (175)

That the pay award of 1.44% be approved and applied with effect from 01 April 2010.

8 STAFF MATTERS

The Engineer informed members, that having joined the North Level on a part time basis, Ms Toni Moles the secretary/payroll clerk would be leaving the post on the 31 March 2010. Ms Katie Jones has been appointed as a replacement on a 6 month temporary contract working initially for 2 days per week.

9 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER MINUTES OF GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2010

Mr J Sly (Chairman of the Governance & Audit Committee) reported on behalf of the Audit Committee, he referred to Item 5 explaining additions to the Risk Management Strategy, Policy & Register. He asked members to note the Audit Committee's recommendation in Item 6, the Financial Estimates, when considering item 10 on the Board agenda. He explained that the Internal Auditor had, over the last two years, reported in detail on Stock and Stock control, and also Payroll, and would carry out a similar exercise on another major topic during 2010.

Following a brief discussion it was

RESOLVED (176)

That the revised Risk Management Strategy, Policy & Register be accepted and approved.

10 TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL ESTIMATES FOR THE YEAR, LAY DRAINAGE RATES AND FIX SPECIAL LEVIES

The Chief Executive referred to his estimates of the financial requirements of the Board for the twelve months ending 31 March 2011, a copy of which having accompanied the notice of the meeting.

The Chief Executive continued by saying that he had given a detailed explanation of the items therein to the Governance and Audit Committee who had recommended that a drainage rate of 10.56p in the £ be made for Area 1 and 7.11p in the £ for Area 2.

After a full discussion with the Chief Executive explaining the reason for the increase in Special Levy due from both South Holland District Council and Peterborough City

Council being attributable to land taken out of agriculture for the new A1073 being transferred to Special Levy. He went on to say that he had already forewarned both Peterborough City Council and South Holland District Council of the impact of the new A1073 on their Special Levy payments. He continued by saying that the investment income is being reduced drastically due to the financial climate but on the positive side the On-Cost on labour had also reduced from 65% to 60% due to the preceding year being heavily affected by long term sickness payments. After answering members' questions in connection with his estimates, it was

RESOLVED (177)

- 1 That the drainage rate for Area 1 for the financial year ending 31 March 2011 be fixed at 10.56p in the £
- 2 That the following Special Levies be issued for the year:-

Fenland District Council	£306,938
Peterborough City Council	£248,863
South Holland District Council	£125,980

It was also **RESOLVED (178)**

- 1 That the drainage rate for Area 2 for the financial year ending 31 March 2011 be fixed at 7.11p in the £
- 2 That the Special Levy for Area 2 of £14,215 be issued to Fenland District Council

11 BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

The Engineer reported that along with 3 neighbouring IDB's, Lapwing Consultancy had been contracted to produce the Boards' Biodiversity Action Plan. This plan encompasses conservation sites, such as the Nene Washes, and species audit including species deemed to be of national or local importance. It highlights those that are of potential importance for the IDB, where water level management or other IDB activities may be of benefit to the natural environment. He specifically mentioned the existing reed bed works already underway by the Board to meet the proposed target of creating 500 linear metres of reed fringe over a 5 year period, and also the work carried out installing barn owl nesting boxes within the Board's area. He advised members that the full Action Plan would be published on the Board's web site and if any members' wished to comment they should be made by 31 March.

There were no members questions therefore it was

RESOLVED (179)

To adopt the Biodiversity Plan as presented

12 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Engineer referred to the minutes of a meeting of the Committee held on the 18 December 2009, a copy of which having been circulated with the agenda and being attached to these minutes. After a short discussion, with the Engineer and Chief Executive answering questions it was

RESOLVED (180)

That the recommendations of the Technical Committee be approved.

13 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Applications

Relevant Fenland District Council and Peterborough City Council members, wished to confirm that they attended the meeting and that they took no part in debate or voting on any planning application thereon. The Engineer referred to his Planning Report, a copy of which having been circulated with the agenda and being attached to these minutes, in which were listed those planning applications received since the last meeting of the Board where it had been necessary for him to respond to the Planning Authority in respect of drainage matters. There were no comments made on the applications

(b) Enforcements

The Engineer advised members that there were currently 11 ongoing enforcements. He advised members that a group of residents had carried out mudding out work to a private drain in Wisbech St Mary.

There were no questions on this matter, it was therefore

RESOLVED (181)

That the report be received and its contents noted.

It was decided to take Item 15 next followed by a short break before the presentation made by the Operations Engineer.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman suggested that following the success of the Local Council visits in 2008 and 2009 he felt it would be appropriate to continue with a further visit this year, and suggested that it could be opened up to include members guests. He said that this is a good vehicle for raising the awareness of the role and function of the North Level. After a short discussion it was

RESOLVED (182)

To invite members of local councils who had not yet attended a visit together with member's guests to a tour of the district following the annual view day later in the year.

Mr Sly (Vice-Chairman) informed members that from his role on the Regional Flood Defence Committee, he was able to report that the Environment Agency had now published their Shoreline Management Plan for the wash area. In the plan the EA are confident that with the continued accretion of salt marshes the current sea defences would last for at least 40 to 50 years. He also explained that he had been appointed to represent the E.A. on the Fens CFMP working party.

14 REVIEW OF CHANNEL MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

The Operations Engineer made a presentation to the Board reviewing technical operations achieved by the recent plant changes and the efficiencies that had made. He went on to explain in detail, changes to plant requirements that the Board may wish to consider over the next five years.

Details were provided to members of the current plant used for flail mowing of watercourses, highlighting savings of £34,557 achieved over the last five years. He suggested that, in future, the flail mowing fleet may be reduced from four to three combination units to enable further savings to be made.

The weedcutting plant was also reviewed, considering various options for future plant replacements. It was also reported that the Berkenheger Spider and its operations were being reviewed by an independent environmental consultant so as to ascertain its suitability for use in the future. The feasibility of purchasing a new Berkenheger in five years time was also discussed, with an alternative option being considered of carrying out a major rebuild on the existing machine.

The Operations Engineer concluded by assuring members that plant operations are constantly under review ensuring that the Board carry out its operations as efficiently as possible, providing a value for money service to the ratepayers.

Members expressed their thanks to the Operations Engineer for his excellent presentation.

There was no other business