

NORTH LEVEL DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

17th June 2020

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

Present:

	M H S Sly (Chairman)
W E C Gee (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Mrs D Laws
Cllr A C Beal	Cllr Mrs K Mayor
Cllr G Booth	Cllr N Meekins
Cllr R Brown	Cllr A Miscandlon
Cllr S Clark	H Neale
G T Fisher	S Proctor
A J N Gee	Cllr N Simons
N J Harris	J W J Sly
Cllr P Hiller	A J Wadsley
Cllr J Holdich OBE	J Waltham

In attendance:

P D Sharman (Chief Executive)
J Stubley (Operations Engineer)
S Smith (Secretary)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Cllr C J T H Brewis, J A Clarke, D R Coates, C J Cutteridge, Cllr M Humphrey, P T Hurn and Cllr M Seymour.

The Chairman welcomed all Members to their first Virtual Board Meeting.

The Chairman explained how Board Members could participate, by raising their hand to ask a question or by reactions of Yes or No to vote on an item on the Agenda.

He explained that the meeting would be recorded to aid the minute taker and once the minutes were completed the recording would be deleted.

He welcomed Mr Neale who was able to participate in the meeting via the Board Room.

Mr Coates had given his apologies and the Chairman read out an explanation as to why he did not feel he could take part due to his lack of knowledge of the necessary technology.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED (706)

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 5th February 2020, 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 1 – page 719

Cllr Hiller reported that Peterborough City Council elections have been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and asked that it be noted that as a result Councillor Holdich OBE would now be a Member of the Board for a further twelve months.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Holdich for a further year.

Mr Fisher raised further concerns regarding the possibility of lorries tipping over the slip road at the Dog in a Doublet and asked who was responsible for this area.

The Chief Executive agreed to speak to the Environment Agency (EA) regarding safety measures in this area.

Item 16 – Page 731

The Chief Executive explained that the training planned for Board Members on 19th March 2020 had been cancelled due to the lockdown. He explained that training is covered on the IDB1 form and he had received an offer from the trainers to provide Virtual Training and asked Board Members if they would be available to take part or would they prefer to wait until they could all meet and train together in a room. On the whole most were available to attend virtual training, five were not in favour and Councillor Booth explained that he is currently manning a helpline for medications during the day so would have to decline on that basis.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he would seek further details from the trainer and the Chairman agreed that the possibility of more than one training session should be considered.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.14a.m. for approximately ten minutes as connection to the internet was lost and interrupted the meeting.

4 PROCEEDINGS AND STANDING ORDERS

The Chairman and Chief Executive explained that as a result of Coronavirus, changes have been made to this document by ADA in consultation with Defra to ensure that meetings such as this one today could take place. It was agreed that the Board would amend and adopt the changes at Items 28 and 29, Special Circumstances added to the Policy April 2020.

RESOLVED (707)

To approve and accept the amended Proceedings and Standing Orders.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest in relation to Item 12 Planning Matters were given as follows:

Councillor Hiller – Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning at Peterborough City Council;
Councillor Laws – Portfolio Holder for Planning at Fenland District Council;
Councillor Mayor – Member of Planning Committee at Fenland District Council;
Councillor Clark – Member of Planning Committee at Fenland District Council;
Councillor Meekins – Member of Planning Committee at Fenland District Council;
Councillor Beal – Member of Planning Committee at South Holland District Council;
Councillor Miscandlon – Chairman of Planning at Whittlesey Town Council.

6 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Chairman of the Health and Safety Committee reported that there were no updates, confirming that the workforce were now back working in the field.

He confirmed that the next meeting of the Health and Safety Committee would take place on 1st July 2020 and he would report back to the Board following that meeting.

7 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Chief Executive referred to the preface and the Finance Report enclosed with the Agenda and updated the position regarding income from drainage rates and special levies.

He explained the reason for the significant differences between Expenditure for Maintenance of Drains 2020 and last year and Capital works. He explained that the workforce had now returned to work.

Councillor Hiller raised concerns regarding three of the Boards investments being in excess of £100k, the limit of the FSCA being £85k and the low return, plus the £2.5m in the Barclays account. He asked if this puts the Board at higher risk and is there any possibility of a better return on the Board's finances.

The Chief Executive explained that the Barclays account had an additional £1.5m, the FDGiA Grant being received at the end of March and he assured the Board that these funds would be spent quickly throughout the Summer period.

The Chairman suggested that the Board consider one or two other accounts for the excess amounts to be invested in. He commented that the process for setting up new investment accounts was not an easy one.

Councillor Booth commented that the Board would not be covered for compensation via the FSCA for losses of £85k.

The Vice-Chairman commented that investments were all within the limit set by the Boards Investment Policy currently set at £500,000.

Councillor Hiller suggested that the Chief Executive seek advice from an Independent Financial Advisor. The Chief Executive confirmed that he had previously sought the help of a Financial Advisor, taking advice on how to spread the risk. Councillor Hiller commented that it would be worth revisiting as there may be other options open now.

The Chairman responded that it may be worthwhile contacting NFU Mutual and to consider other forms of investment such as Bonds.

The Chief Executive accepted that there are some risks involved and agreed that he would explore other options of investment prior to the next meeting of the Board.

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 further questions and in conclusion it was

RESOLVED (708)

That the Financial Report be accepted and approved.

8 ENGINEER'S REPORT

1 Rainfall has been as follows:

		March		April		May	
		mm	inch	mm	inch	mm	inch
a)	Tydd P S	22.5	0.9	22.0	0.9	1.3	0.0
b)	Sutton St Edmund	14.5	0.6	32.5	1.3	0.0	0.0
c)	Thorney Offices	16.0	0.6	34.7	1.4	0.1	0.0
d)	Cross Guns	19.0	0.8	18.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
e)	Dog-in-a-Doublet	17.6	0.7	25.2	1.0	0.2	0.0
f)	Peakirk	12.4	0.5	29.4	1.2	0.2	0.0
g)	Mouth Lane	25.2	1.0	45.6	1.8	2.4	0.0
h)	Hundreds	13.4	0.5	30.0	1.2	0.4	0.0

2 Hydrometric Information

Date	Mean Temp Degrees Celsius	Soil Moisture Deficit -mm	Date	Mean Temp Degrees Celsius	Soil Moisture Deficit -mm
14.04.20	11.7	51.0	12.05.20	11.3	83.4
21.04.20	9.7	61.9	19.05.20	11.9	97.8
28.04.20	10.6	62.6	26.05.20	16.9	111.9
05.05.20	9.6	66.0	02.06.20	16.1	121.9

3 Pumping hours have been as follows:

		March	April	May
a)	Poplars	100	37	19
b)	Denhams	0	0	0
c)	Dog-in-a-Doublet (New) (Large)	111	11	0
	(Small)	21	0	0
	Dog-in-a-Doublet (Old)	0	0	0
d)	Cross Guns – Electric	150	13	0
	– Diesel	41	45	29
e)	Mouth Lane – Electric	49	0	0
	– Diesel	0	0	0
f)	Willow Holt	65	14	8
g)	Tydd – Electric	142	26	0
	– Diesel	59	32	36
h)	Postland	63	6	0
i)	Newborough	86	2	0
j)	Peakirk	20	4	1
k)	Hundreds	0	0	0
		907	190	93

4 Maintenance

		2019/20 to 31st March	2020/21 to 30th May
a)	Hand Roding	3,840m	(Nil)
b)	Machine Roding		
	CAT 320	192,200m	(Nil)
	Volvo EC250	178,770m	(Nil)
	Hitachi ZX130	91,953m	(Nil)
	Hired	100,520m	(Nil)
	Tractor and Weed Basket	26,041m	(Nil)
	Total	589,484m	(Total Nil)
c)	Flailing		
	John Deere 6170R	321,787m	(Nil)
	Claas Arion 650	346,915m	(Nil)
	John Deere 6175R	365,324m	(Nil)
	Hired	Nil	Nil
	Total	1,034,026m	(Total Nil)
d)	Mudding Out – Machine		
	Volvo EC250	380m	(Nil)
	CAT 320	500m	(Nil)
	Hired	Nil	(Nil)
	Total	880m	(Total Nil)
e)	Mudding Out – Hand	Nil	(Nil)

- | | | | |
|----|--|----------------|------------------------|
| f) | Chemical Weed Control | | |
| | Roundup Pro-biactive – tractor | 60,116m | (50,000m) |
| | Roundup Pro-biactive – hand | 2,170m | (4,175m) |
| | Total | 62,286m | (Total 54,175m) |
| g) | Piping Side Dykes | 141m | (12m) |
| h) | Revetment Work | 30m | (120m) |
| i) | Cott Raking – Machine | 9,628m | (Nil) |
| j) | Tree Cutting – Machine | Nil | (Nil) |
| k) | Properties | | |
| | Routine maintenance to all of the Board's properties. | | |
| l) | Pumping Stations | | |
| | Diesel pump number 2 at Tydd is still undergoing repairs following damage in February.
Routine maintenance to the Board's other pumping stations. | | |
| m) | Water Level Control Structures | | |
| | Fresh water feeds from the Welland and Nene are now open to allow water into the Newborough, Cross Guns and Dog in a Doublet catchments. Dam boards have been installed and structures adjusted to retain water in the required locations. | | |
| n) | Board's Plant | | |
| | General repairs and maintenance to Board's plant and vehicles. | | |

Maintenance – Slip Repairs

Slip repairs have been completed on White Engine Drain, Baxters Eau, Colmans Drain, Highside Drain, Gorefield Main Drain and Straight Reach North Drain. Further slip repairs are planned for June on the Old Wryde at Parson Drove.





Recent slip repairs

Capital Works to 30th May 2020

No further work to report

Public Sector Cooperation Agreement Works (PSCA)

No further work to report

Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) and Local Levy Works

Bridges and Culverts

This scheme was successfully supported by the RFCC and £189,000 for the first year of culvert replacements was granted. The project was also put forward for accelerated FCERM Grant in Aid (GiA) funding, which was subsequently supported to a value of £250,000, a business case update report is currently being prepared for this GiA. The £189,000 Local Levy funding previously obtained will be returned to RFCC balances.

Culvert/bridges replacement began in February 2020 and we have replaced 29 culverts to date. These were the worst condition culverts within the catchment, many of which were corrugated steel.



Recently replaced culverts essential for Board maintenance activities

Culvert Relining Projects

FDGiA funding was successfully obtained for 4 out of the 5 proposed pipe lining schemes in March 2020, these were:

1. Seadyke Drain, Murrow - £274,547;
2. Sandbank Drain, Wisbech St Mary - £226,836;
3. Still Drain, Wisbech - £160,400;
4. Church Drain, Leverington - £336,000.

Work is still progressing on the business case for lining the culvert adjacent to Mill Drain, Parson Drove, the aim is to submit this in June 2020.

Pipe lining tenders have been sent out to prospective contractors and enabling works are currently being planned. The aim is to complete the 4 schemes during Summer/Autumn 2020.

Hundreds Pumping Station Refurbishment

The business case for Hundreds Pumping Station Refurbishment was supported in March 2020, Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding of £241,350 was obtained for the works. Refurbishment plans include replacing the 2 submersible pumps, replacing the electrical control panel, refurbishing the weed screen cleaner and replacing the GRP housing.

Work is currently ongoing with a consultant preparing tender documents and project specifications, it is anticipated to undertake site works in Autumn 2020.

Foul Anchor Sluice Refurbishment Phase 2

Following the departure of the Lincolnshire IDB Grant Application Manager, Gradeas Consulting is now continuing the Foul Anchor Sluice Refurbishment Business case. The scheme involves refurbishing/replacing the two outer doors on the Foul Anchor Sluice and the flap valves immediately downstream of Tydd Pumping Station.

Schemes being prepared

Mortons Leam Improvements (RFCC Local Choices)
Culvert Replacements – Various Sites
Foul Anchor Sluice Refurbishment
Main Drain Dredging

The Operations Engineer referred to Rainfall being a wet Winter and a dry Spring as reflected in the report, with Soil Moisture Deficit currently being 130mm. He explained that pumping had tailed off at the end of March and May had been dry.

The Operations Engineer explained that the report contained end of year figures and the Maintenance figure being nil due to the Coronavirus and the workforce carrying out other duties.

He reported that the damage to the Impellar of pump number two at Tydd was being repaired by Fenflow at Spalding, being delayed due to the pandemic, the costs given were approximate and dependent on these could be a possible insurance claim.

He confirmed that irrigation is in progress, an early season weedcut and confirmed that the Board are operating control structures at Stanground and the Dog in a Doublet resulting in quicker action for the Board.

He reported that the Chief Executive is in talks with the EA at Peterborough regarding PSCA works and once discussions are satisfactory these will then be in place.

He provided information regarding the Bridges and Culverts scheme beginning in February, the failures that are due to corroded steel and provided a culvert replacement plan in the presentation given on screen.

He explained that the FDGiA Grant had replaced the Local Levy and currently tenders are being obtained in relation to the Culvert Relining Projects and it is proposed that these works will begin within the next two weeks.

The Operations Engineer confirmed that the draft specification for the Hundreds Pumping Station is expected within the next two weeks and the refurbishment completed by the Winter of 2020.

He confirmed that so far seven aerators had been purchased, being situated in French Drove, Cloughs Cross and Poplars, already dissolving oxygen into the drain. The EA Fish Officers are keen to 'big up' the Board for its work to improve water quality in its drains.

Following the EA's Bee Pollinator training sessions the Board have set up a successful wildflower meadow at French Drove.

Mr Harris asked who had set up the wildflower meadow. The Operations Engineer responded that the Board had planted it. Mr Harris and Councillor Laws both congratulated the Board on its Wildflower Meadow.

Councillor Laws commented on the EAs proposals to invest in its structures at Stanground and Rings End and asked if these had now been carried out. It was confirmed by the Chief Executive and the Operations Engineer that Rings End had been repaired and remote operation is now possible, but it is thought that no investment had yet been made at Stanground.

Councillor Laws raised concerns that if the EA do not invest in Stanground Sluice it would put Whittlesey in a flood position as the equipment there is not fit for purpose.

The Chief Executive agreed to speak to the EA regarding its proposals for Stanground Sluice. The Chairman noted that this was ongoing.

Councillor Miscandlon noted that the Aerators that had been purchased were from Germany and asked if there were any UK manufacturers.

The Operations Engineer responded that there are only two or three specialists who supply aerators, he agreed to consider the possibility of a UK supplier but it may be unlikely.

The Chairman confirmed that the Board had previously agreed the spend of up to £30k and agreed that the Operations Engineer should seek out any UK suppliers. The Operations Engineer responded that £7k of the original budget had currently been spent.

The Chairman noted that it could be difficult to place some aerators as they require an available power source or an electric sub meter, as a temporary measure it was noted that a generator could be used.

Mr Fisher commented that the water quality in the drains was currently crystal clear.

The Chairman thanked the Operations Engineer and the rest of the team for carrying out their jobs during a difficult time and requested that thanks be recorded on behalf of the Board.

RESOLVED (709)

That the Engineer's report be accepted and approved.

9 RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 7th JANUARY 2020

Mr J Sly (Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee) reported on behalf of the Committee, he asked Members to note the Committee's recommendations in Item 6 when considering Item 10 on the Main Agenda and Item 7 when considering Item 11 on the Main Agenda.

Members were asked to approve the new 'Participating Employer Personal Data Retention Policy for Employers in the LGPS Scheme and Members received a copy for them to approve in their Agenda pack.

Dealing with the recommendations from the Governance and Audit Committee it was:

RESOLVED (710)

To approve and accept the new Participating Employer Personal Data Retention Policy for Employers in the LGPS Scheme.

RESOLVED (711)

That the Board note the recommendations from the Governance and Audit Committee to approve and accept the:

1. Annual Governance Statement at Section 1;
2. Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability and
3. Management Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020.

10 TO CONSIDER THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020

The Chairman referred to the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 being Section 1, Accounting Statements 2019/20 being Section 2 and the Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20, requesting approval from the Board for their acceptance.

Members discussed the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2019/20 as shown in the presentation, noting that it had been received after the Agenda despatch due to the staff at Moore Stephens being furloughed due to the pandemic. It was noted that all boxes have been checked and signed off by the Internal Auditor.

It was proposed by Cllr Beal and seconded by Cllr Mayor and by majority vote to accept the findings in the Annual Governance Statement, Section 1 and

RESOLVED (712)

That the Board approve and accept the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2020.

It was proposed by Cllr Mayor and seconded by Cllr Beal and by majority vote to accept the findings in Accounting Statements 2019/20, Section 2 and

RESOLVED (713)

That the Board approve and accept the Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2020.

It was proposed by Cllr Beal and seconded by Cllr Mayor and by majority vote to accept the Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20.

RESOLVED (714)

That the Board approve and accept the Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Officer and the wider team for all their hard work in preparing the Accounts within the legislative timescales.

Cllr Mayor complimented the staff on an excellent job well done.

Cllr Laws commented that the report was exemplary as a document and congratulated the staff for their work.

11 TO RECEIVE THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020

The Chief Executive explained the Management Accounts, income, expenditure, the highlights from Maintenance and Pumping Stations and colour coding across documents to aid understanding. He explained that the Board had overspent by £100k with a Net Operating Loss of £27,306.

The Chief Executive informed the Board that help is provided by Geoff Spurr Accountants, he assists the Finance Officer to prepare the Management Accounts.

He confirmed that the Accounts had been scrutinised by the Governance and Audit Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr Laws and seconded by N Harris and by majority vote to accept the Management Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020.

On behalf of the Board the Chairman thanked the Finance Officer for her hard work, the Team for their support and G Spurr, in preparing the Accounts through what had been a trying time through lockdown.

RESOLVED (715)

That the Board approve and accept the Management Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020.

12 PLANNING MATTERS

a) Applications

The Chief Executive explained that there had been some issues in relation to Planning Application F/YR19/0990/F, however these have since been resolved with the applicants plans now being to discharge via Anglian Water surface water sewer into Cox's Lane Drain and the Board have no further objections to this application.

The Chief Executive explained that there had been some byelaw issues in relation to Planning Application F/YR20/0423/F, however these have since been resolved and the Board have no objections to this application.

Cllr Meekins asked the Chief Executive if he could confirm that there are no further objections to Planning Application F/YR19/0990/F. The Chief Executive confirmed that if the applicant continues with the amended drainage strategy the Board have no further objections to this application.

Cllr Booth asked if the Chief Executive was satisfied with the Gull Road, Guyhirn planning application. The Chief Executive confirmed that as the Board do not access the side of the drain mentioned in the report there is no requirement for the Board to enforce its byelaws.

Cllr Laws asked if the Chief Executive had received an application from D Wilson Homes regarding Snowley Park maintenance strip. The Chief Executive responded that he had not received any response to his email.

Cllr Laws advised the Chief Executive that she had details for a senior person at D Wilson Homes and would email these details to him.

b) Enforcement of Byelaws

The Chief Executive advised Members that he had been successful with Jelson Homes enforcing the removal of trees over the Boards pipeline but the telephone poles at Newborough remain. Discussions regarding their removal are ongoing however owing to the BT lines now being in use, it is proving somewhat protracted getting them moved.

RESOLVED (716)

That the report is received and its contents noted.

13 MEETING DATES 2021

The Board considered and agreed the Boards Meeting Dates as set out for 2021. The Chairman requested that Board Members note the dates in their calendars and diaries.

The Chairman advised Members that the next meeting on 16th September 2020 was to have incorporated the Board's Annual View Day, it was decided to cancel this in light of the pandemic and hold a Virtual Meeting on Zoom at 10.00a.m.

It was agreed that meeting arrangements for the November Board meeting would be reviewed closer to the meeting date. The Chairman suggested that a mini catch up could be arranged if required between meetings.

Cllr Laws asked if the meeting scheduled for 18th November would be at 10.30a.m. The Chairman responded that if the meeting takes place at the Board's office it will be at 10.30a.m. if a virtual meeting it will be at 10.00a.m.

RESOLVED (717)

To approve and accept the Meeting Dates for 2021.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Booth asked if a part physical, part virtual meeting could be held. The Chairman agreed that this may be an opportunity for those struggling with technology to take part in future meetings, in limited numbers with social distancing.

Cllr Holdich commented that this could not be done and meetings should be either all online or a physical meeting in a building.

Cllr Booth advised that he had studied the regulations and Regulation 5, Item 1 does allow for a mixed meeting as an option.

Cllr Clark thanked the team for clearing some reported fly tipping at Tydd St Giles adding that it was really appreciated.

Mr Waltham commented that it had been a good meeting and it had worked well as a virtual meeting.

Cllr Hiller thanked the staff for their efforts to manage the virtual meeting, it had been appreciated, he commented that Members must get used to new technology and it had 'worked well today'. The Chairman commented that many across the age groups had embraced the new technology very well.

Cllr Laws congratulated the Chairman for a very good Drainage Board meeting, it had gone smoothly and thanked all staff at North Level.

Cllr Simons thanked staff for their efforts in clearing up some reported fly tipping.

The Assistant CEO thanked all Members for trying hard with the technology and for attending today.

Mr Fisher raised concerns regarding some regular fly tipping between Whittlesey and Thorney that is not cleared up as the grass is cut.

Cllr Mayor advised that she had driven from the Dog in a Doublet to Whittlesey and as part of Whittlesey Town Council's contract with Peterborough City Council the verges had been cut and cleared and no fly tipping/rubbish could be seen at the roadside. It was noted that the area referred to by Mr Fisher was further along on the B1040.

The Chief Executive advised that it was three years since the Board had begun its adoption of the ADA Model Byelaws and continues to be a work in progress with release being imminent. The Chairman requested that an email of confirmation be circulated once adoption had been agreed.

Cllr Beal commented that the meeting had been worthwhile and well run.

The Finance Officer commented that she would pass on the Board's appreciation of the help that had been provided by G Spurr in preparing the Boards Accounts. The Chairman thanked all staff for their hard work.

Cllr Mayor referred to some fly tipping that had been reported and discussed with the Operations Engineer, however it could not be removed as it was on private land.

Cllr Meekins thanked the Operations Engineer for his prompt answer to a question regarding a bomb being found at Tydd. The Operations Engineer explained that posts had been made on social media regarding a bomb that had been found at Main Road Bridge, Tydd Gote.

The Vice-Chairman commented that the meeting had gone well.

Mr Proctor advised that there was an NFU Food Standards Petition and asked if the Board could engage to support it, to address poor standards of imported foods.

The Chairman responded that as the Board are a public authority and not political it would be more appropriate for Members to take part in the petition on social media platforms.

Mr Harris commented that it had been a good meeting.

There was no other business.

The Chairman thanked all the Staff at North Level for all their hard work over this period and thanked all the Board for joining the virtual meeting and wished for all to stay safe.

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Chairman

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Dated