

## TRENT VALLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held at 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, 27th March 2014, at The Showground, Newark.

### *Elected Members*

- \* Messrs W.J. Staunton (Chairman)
- J. Miller (Vice-Chairman)
- \* R. Warburton (Vice-Chairman)
- \* A. Arden
- \* T.H. Farr
- \* A. Howick
- R.J. Jackson
- \* D. Loates
- \* R.R. Oates
- \* R.N.J.S. Price
- \* S.E. Richardson
- \* J. Strawson

### *Nominated Members*

- Bassetlaw District Council
- \* Messrs J. Bowler
- I. Davies
- \* Cllr J.B. Rickells
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Cllrs J. Bradbury
- \* D.R. Payne
- \* I. Walker
- \* Mrs S. Michael
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Cllrs J.A. Cranswick
- \* R. Hetherington
- \* N.C. Lawrence
- \* P. Smith
- Gedling/Melton Borough Councils
- Mr J. Evens
- West Lindsey/North Kesteven District Councils
- \* Cllr Mrs P. Woodman MBE

### \* *Present*

- \* Messrs A. McGill (Chief Executive)
- \* D.J. Sisson (Engineer)
- \* S. Thackray (Director of Finance)
- \* R.P. Mitchell (Director of Operations)
- \* M.S. Everett (Operations Manager)
- \* P. Baines (Rating and Administration Officer)
- A. Wallace (Nottinghamshire County Council)
- \* Mrs J. Bradley (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust)
- Misses H. O'Callaghan (Nottinghamshire County Council)
- \* C. O'Brien (Administration Assistant)

### \* *In attendance*

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs I. Davies, J. Miller, R.J. Jackson, Cllr J. Bradbury and Miss H. O'Callaghan.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

## 3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed to discuss the Association of Drainage Authorities Trent Branch meeting and staff pay increases under any other business.

## 4. BOARD MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 30th January 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

## 5. MATTERS ARISING

### 5:1 Minute 6, Page 134 - Finance and Plant Committee Minutes

The Director of Operations reported that tenders were being sought for the replacement of the tractor, flail mower and pick-up and a new low loader. As the next meeting of the Committee was not until June, he asked the Board to consider granting delegated authority to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to accept the tenders as long as they were within the approved budget. This was proposed by Mr R.R. Oates and seconded by Cllr I. Walker.

#### RESOLVED

That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be granted delegated authority to approve tenders for plant and equipment within the budget approved by the Board.

### 5:2 Minute 5:1, Page 134 - Website

The Chairman reported that a link to the new website had been circulated to all members and any comments or amendments should be notified to the Manby office.

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### 5:3 Minute 11, Page 135 - Environment Agency (EA) Withdrawal of Maintenance on Main Rivers

Mr T.H. Farr reported that an additional £40m had been allocated in 2014/15 for revenue maintenance and £70m for capital works across the whole country but it was not yet clear how much of this would be spent in the Trent area. He emphasised that although this was a positive move it would not be sufficient to make up for the work that had been neglected in the past.

The Chief Executive further reported that the Association of Drainage Authorities Trent Branch had discussed the EA six year forward look and had asked for this to include capital works to put rivers back to the original design standard. Mr T.H. Farr confirmed that a lot of work was being done on the six year programme which would be ready for Autumn. He emphasised that although it was necessary to undertake new schemes it was essential to look after the existing assets. Mr Farr felt that the EA would be looking to IDBs for assistance in the future.

The Chairman referred to recent comments by Mr P. Fox (Head of Strategy and Investment EA), stating that there seemed to be a definite turn towards maintenance now.

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### 5:4 Estimates of Income and Expenditure for the Year 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015

The Chairman, Mr J. Miller and the Chief Executive had recently met with members of Newark and Sherwood District Council. This had been very successful and annual meetings were proposed for the future. He stated that a meeting had yet to be arranged with Rushcliffe Borough Council but this was being pursued. Cllr D.R. Payne stated that it was important that these meetings were held ahead of budgets in the future.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had already met with Bassetlaw District Council. Mr J. Bowler stated that this meeting had been very well received by councillors who had previously not been fully aware of the role of internal drainage boards.

The Chairman stated that it was essential for all authorities to pull together and to keep people informed, particularly now that there was additional pressure on funding.

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5:5 Minute 14:2, Page 139 - Car Dyke, Bingham

The Engineer reported that he had recently been re-consulted on the Car Dyke Management Plan and it was planned that this project would start up again shortly.

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6. CONSORTIUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was noted that the Environment Agency had been informed that the Board would be interested should they have any surplus plant and equipment for sale.

Regarding the Senior Officers' Performance Review, the Chairman reported that this would be held on 29th April 2014 and asked members to let him know if they had any comments or suggestions on the strategic direction of the Board.

RESOLVED

That the attached minutes of the Consortium Committee be approved.

7. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

The Rating/Administration Officer reported that 99.7% of drainage rates had been collected.

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8. FINANCE

8:1 Accounts for the Period Ended 31st January 2014

The Director of Finance presented a detailed report on income and expenditure which showed a net surplus to date of £93,754; this was largely due to the above budget expenditure on pumping station and drain maintenance being offset by the delay in undertaking capital works and unbudgeted income for work undertaken for the Environment Agency under the public sector cooperation agreement.

The Director of Finance forecast a net deficit of £207,378 for the year end which would be £163,870 adverse to budget. This included unbudgeted expenditure for pumping stations and pension costs and overspends on drain maintenance and assumed that all works would be completed by the year end or the money accrued for 2014/15.

RESOLVED

That the Board's financial position be noted.

8:2 Cash Reserves and Investments

The Director of Finance reported a total of £1,218,409.78 currently invested with four banks/building societies.

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8:3 Payment Schedule

The Board's Internal Auditor had recommended that all expenditure over £500 should be published on the website from 1st April 2014 to comply with The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency. A schedule of all payments made during the current year totalling £1,328,168.85 was circulated.

The Chief Executive requested that should Board members have any queries on the payment schedule they contact officers prior to the meeting so that they could look into it.

RESOLVED

- (a) That payments made during the current year be approved.
- (b) That a schedule showing all payments over £500 together with a brief description be included in future finance reports to members and uploaded onto the website.

9. OPERATIONS REPORT

The Director of Operations reported that all drain maintenance works would be completed by the end of the month as scheduled and would be within the revised budget. Winter maintenance works were well underway.

It was noted that two new land drainage operatives had been appointed to fill the vacancies and some minor changes to existing roles had taken place within the team

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10. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

10:1 Medium Term Plan (MTP)

The attached summary showing schemes submitted for Flood Defence Grant in Aid over the next six years was circulated for information.

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10:2 Hams Dyke Pumping Station

The Engineer reported that consent for working near a main river had been obtained from the Environment Agency. Construction works to improve handrails and access steps were underway and should be completed by mid-March. Works to the kiosk, lighting and ductwork were due to commence in April.

Requirements for phase 2 of the works (plant refurbishment) were being identified and would be reported to a future meeting.

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10:3 Torksey Pumping Station

As agreed at the estimates meeting, inspections had been brought forward to ascertain whether refurbishment or replacement of the station would be necessary so that financial provision could be made. Inspections of the superstructure, gravity outfall and all mechanical and electrical plant had been carried out and divers had undertaken a survey of the sump area. The Engineer reported that final reports were awaited but initial findings indicated that refurbishment was a viable option and could be sufficient to extend the life of the station in excess of 20 years. Plans and costings were being updated and it was hoped to report further to the next Board meeting.

Mr R.N.J.S. Price stated that with the current restrictions on income (less than 2% per annum) the Board should consider a minimum spend and would not recommend undertaking additional works that were not essential whilst the cap on rate increases remained. He asked officers to consider what works were absolutely essential. The Engineer stated that the electrical works must be compliant with current regulations. The Chairman emphasised that this pumping station was very important for the drainage of the area.

The Chief Executive expected the refurbishment would cost in the region of £750,000 as opposed to the £3million originally estimated for a complete replacement. Once the reports and costings had been completed, he confirmed that each phase would be considered individually and the risk assessed before any work was undertaken.

Mr R.N.J.S. Price stated that the Board was already facing a deficit for this year and one more heavy rainfall event could reduce the balances even further. He further stated that the Board had already agreed to undertake some work on those main rivers which were essential for the Board's systems. Mr Price did not oppose the scheme in principle but stated that the Board must be aware of the budgets and may in the future have to delay some work if it was not essential.

Mr T.H. Farr stated that grant-in-aid was available for this scheme and suggested the Board should proceed as grant may not be so readily available in the future.

Mr Farr also stated that although he understood why the Board was restricting increases to under 2%, the 2% increase applied to the overall council budget and not specifically to the IDBs' special levy. The Chief Executive understood that the situation was as described by Mr Farr but stated that the Board would have to have a very valid reason for increasing the special levies to over 2%, e.g. a major flood event. He stated that councils did have the option to contribute separately towards specific schemes as a partner and that this may be an option worth investigating further. The Chief Executive reported that a 2% increase equated to £39,000 and this would not be sufficient to cover additional expenditure should the Board take over more main river maintenance. If this requirement materialised the Board would have to carefully consider what work to undertake and the risks involved in delaying any works.

Cllr N.C. Lawrence stated that he would be unlikely to get the support of Rushcliffe Borough Council to approve an increase above 2%, particularly as the recent flooding had only affected a very small part of that Council's area. He suggested that Officers contact the Council to arrange a presentation to members on the work of the Board.

Cllr D.R. Payne stated that as Newark and Sherwood District Council's area had been much more affected by the recent flooding it was therefore more sympathetic towards any necessary work to prevent a recurrence in the future.

The Engineer confirmed that all work was done on a risk basis and he would not recommend any work that was not essential. He further stated that it was important for all the Board's assets to be maintained in a good condition rather than postponing work until a problem occurred.

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10:4 Thurgarton Village

Officers reported that in 2007 50mm of rain had fallen overnight on an already saturated catchment but in 2013 over 100mm of rain had fallen in one and a half hours causing massive surface water flooding due to the very dry baked ground and this had also overwhelmed watercourses; some three feet of water over the top of the Thurgarton Beck watercourse. Thirty properties were flooded in 2013 and 19 in 2007.

In partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council and the villagers, investigations had been undertaken to ascertain the mechanisms leading to the flooding in the village. These investigations had been funded by the Board.

The Engineer reported that investigations into the flooding in 2007 and 2013 had now been completed. The condition assessments of all watercourses serving the village had identified some issues in the Thurgarton Beck, Railway Drain and Bentleys Drain; provision had been made in the 2014/15 estimates to address these. To alleviate the problem, reforming of some watercourses would be required together with work to increase the capacity of some culverts.

Mr R.N.J.S. Price enquired how the necessary works would be funded and what contribution the other partners would be making. The Engineer reported that this had not yet been agreed but confirmed that the partners were looking at contributing towards the final scheme and the villagers were also considering works they could undertake and fund themselves. The Chairman stated that the Board must ensure that its systems were up to the required standard and would consider any additional works in the future.

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10:5 A57 Flooding at Newton on Trent

A scheme promoted by Lincolnshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority to provide flood protection to the A57 at Newton on Trent had been approved for reserve local levy funding in 2014/15. These works were being supported financially by Anglian Water Services Ltd. The Engineer confirmed that final designs were being prepared and works were scheduled to be undertaken during late spring/early summer 2014.

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10:6 Caythorpe, Gunthorpe and Lowdham Flood Action Group

The above Group had been set up in 2000 but had only recently approached the Board for advice. The Engineer reported that there were three main rivers serving this area: Dover Beck, Cocker Beck and the Trent but the villages relied on the Board maintained Carr Dyke, Barn Dyke, Marlock Drain and Hall Drain to take the water to these. The Board had made provision in the 2014/15 estimates to undertake work on the Carr

Dyke and Barn Dyke but there was an issue with Hall Drain where the water had to pass through ten culverts.

The Action Group was investigating the possibility of forming a protection bank to protect properties in Gunthorpe. The Board's officers were now liaising with the Action Group and would report the outcome to a future Board meeting.

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## 11. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

### 11:1 Environmental Stewardship and Cross Compliance

Work by Natural England and the Association of Drainage Authorities to produce guidance for the industry continued.

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### 11:2 The Fairham Brook Restoration Project

The Engineer reported that liaison with landowners had secured approval for several channel improvement projects, these included berms and low level meanders which would be installed once funding became available.

Mrs J. Bradley reported that a decision on continued funding was still awaited but the Chairman had written a letter of support for the Project to the Environment Agency. She also reported that some works had been undertaken in the nature reserve and vegetation had been cut back to improve access to the Brook. A grant application had also been submitted to create a flood storage area.

Mr A. Howick confirmed that the landowners were in agreement with the proposals but disappointed that the bottom section of the Brook had not been cleaned out first.

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### 11:3 Invasive Species

A huge mat of Floating Pennywort in the Board maintained Drinsey Nook Drain had been discharged into the Foss Dyke when the pumps operated last autumn; the Canal and River Trust had been informed. Officers confirmed that any left in the Drinsey Nook Drain would be removed by hand and if a build-up reoccurred, glyphosate would be used.

Measures were also being undertaken to control Japanese Knotweed alongside Drain 41 at Misterton and Himalayan Balsam at Collingham (part of a wider initiative along the Collingham Fleet involving the Parish Council, RSPB and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust).

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### 11:4 Beckingham Marshes

The Engineer reported that management of water levels at Beckingham Marshes had commenced by altering the pump levels rather than by installing dams. Curlews were already present and lapwings were pairing up. The Chairman stated that the levels

were monitored regularly and would balance the needs for irrigation, land drainage and the environment.

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## 12. PARTNERSHIP WORKING - ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EA)

The Board was aware that the EA was not intending to conduct any maintenance works in the Board's area. It appeared that the allocation of EA maintenance funding had been geared to those areas where there were EA operations staff on the ground; as there was no EA workforce in the Board's area no funds were allocated, although the Board had undertaken works on behalf of the EA under the maintenance contract in the past. Negotiations with the EA were ongoing.

Mr R.N.J.S. Price stated that although £60k had already been allocated by the Board this year it must be made clear to the EA that this was not a long term solution and the Board did not have the funds continue this.

It was suggested that a representative from the EA be invited to attend a future Board meeting to discuss maintenance of the main rivers and how they saw the relationship with the Board developing.

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## 13. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Chief Executive reported that the new Health and Safety Committee had met on 3rd March 2014 for the first time. In future, these meetings would be held quarterly and a representative from each of the Consortium Boards' workforces would attend along with the works managers. Items discussed had included the change of the provision of health and safety services and training and emphasis was placed on the culture and communication of health and safety matters both up and down the chain of command along with the need to actively clear any issues raised and recorded on the Health and Safety Issues database. Issues arising from the recent driver safety training recently undertaken were also discussed.

It was noted that Point of Work Risk Assessment forms had been introduced to replace the dynamic risk assessments previously used; these new risk assessments were aimed at engaging employees in the task they were about to undertake and required a brief written record to be made.

Full copies of the minutes were available on request should any member wish to consider these matters in more detail.

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## 14. DELEGATED MATTERS - PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

### 14:1 Byelaw Applications

The following consents had been granted under delegated authority since the last Board meeting:

B002-2014 Increased flow of surface water to the Board maintained Drove Lane Drain from drainage at the school field at Coddington Primary School at national grid reference SK 83165 54408 in the parish of Coddington.

B003-2014 Temporary laying of a fibre optic cable within nine metres but no closer than four metres of the Board maintained Pingley and Car Dyke between national grid references SK 75721 54450 and SK 75794 54296 in the parish of Staythorpe.

B004-2014 Installation of an outfall into the Board maintained Collingham Fleet Drain from the re-development of an existing site at Pitomy Farm, Low Street at national grid reference SK 82863 62433 in the parish of Collingham.

B005-2014 Re-development of a site within nine metres of the Board maintained Collingham Fleet Drain at national grid reference SK 82894 62409 in the parish of Collingham.

B007-2014 Renewal of existing 11Kv overhead electricity supply within nine metres of the Board maintained Thorney Brown Drain at national grid reference SK 86804 72338, Thorney Grange Drain at national grid reference SK 86201 72320, Parish Drain at national grid reference SK 85559 72299 and Torskey Main Drain at national grid reference SK 84498 72316 in the parish of Thorney.

B008-2014 Construction of two security screens at culvert inlets on the Board maintained Seymore Drain at national grid references SK 81645 78723 and SK 81810 79480 in the parishes of Treswell and Rampton.

B009-2014 Erection of new boundary fence within nine metres but no closer than one metre of the Board maintained Cuckstool Dyke at national grid reference SK 79834 65637 in the parish of Sutton on Trent.

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14:2 Section 23 Applications

No consents had been granted since the last Board meeting.

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14:3 Planning Applications

Mr A. Arden declared an interest in planning application number 13/01873/FULM.

The Engineer reported on 16 planning applications that had been reviewed by Officers since the last Board meeting. An objection had been raised to planning application number 14/00161/FULM (erection of 50 dwellings at Sutton on Trent) because of concerns regarding flooding in the area.

Mr T.H. Farr queried the Board's response to P/A/13/00689/FULM (40 houses in Southwell) especially in light of the flooding in the town in June 2013. The Engineer agreed to review the response and advise Mr Farr.

Mr D. Loates was concerned to know who would keep the weedscreen clear at Cottam Pumping Station (Byelaw Consent B008-2014). Again the Engineer agreed to review the conditions to ensure that this was kept clear in the future.

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15. ASSOCIATION OF DRAINAGE AUTHORITIES (ADA) TRENT BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Officers reported that the ADA Trent Branch AGM would be held on 4th June 2014 at Doncaster Rugby Club. The meeting would commence at 10.00 a.m. and would conclude with lunch at 1.00 p.m. Presentations would include an ADA National update, the National Farmers' Union Flooding Manifesto, the River Idle Maintenance Pilot and the Environment Agency. Members were asked to notify the Manby Office if they wished to attend (the cost would be £40 per delegate).

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16. STAFF PAY INCREASE

The Chief Executive reported that the Association of Drainage Authorities Lincolnshire Branch had negotiated a 1% increase with the Unions for all employees effective from 1st April 2014. This was in line with Government guidance for public sector bodies.

It was proposed by Mr J. Strawson and seconded by Cllr R. Hetherington that the 1% pay increase recommended by the Association of Drainage Authorities Lincolnshire Branch Pay and Conditions Committee be approved by the Board for all employees with effect from 1st April 2014.

RESOLVED

That a 1% pay increase be paid to all employees with effect from 1st April 2014.

17. LOCAL POLICE ALERTS

Mr J. Strawson suggested that Officers should sign up with the local police to receive alerts of any criminal activities within the area. The local police were very proactive and may be able to offer advice on ways to protect the Board's plant and buildings. He suggested contacting Sgt Brooks at the Newark station.

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CHAIRMAN