

Minutes of a meeting of the Holmewood & District Internal Drainage Board held on Thursday 17th November 2016 at the Addison Arms, Sawtry Road, Glatton at 11.00 a.m.

Present J Ayres (Chairman), G Bliss, D Collett, M Davis, R Hollins, J Mears, L Parker, J D Wright, R Wright (Clerk) Mrs M A Wright (Secretary, Cllr D Watt

Apologies for Absence J Davis N Collett

244/16 Membership – The Chairman reported that Cllr D Watt has been appointed as Huntingdonshire District Council representative on the Board in place of Cllr G Bull. Cllr D Watt was welcomed as a member of the Board.

Philippa Crooke of Natural England has left and as yet no replacement has been nominated to fill the position.

245/16 Confirmation of Minutes – RESOLVED- that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2016 were correctly recorded and that they be signed as being a true record.

246/16 Matters Arising

a) Water control Yaxley Fen – Further to minute 236/16(a) – J Mears reported that works were now in hand and would be completed by the end of the year.

247/16 Pumping Stations

a) Whittlesey Mere

The Chairman reported that that a leak on the penstock on Pump No 2 need attention and the Clerk agreed to contract Messrs Shoebridge to arrange for the necessary works to be undertaken. Otherwise all was well with the pump and automatic weedscreen cleaner.

Two loads of weed have been removed since pumping started and all appears to be in order.

b) Yaxley

J Mears reported that the condition of the pump was good but rubbish in the main drain after fail mowing was an issue. The weed rake broke whilst in use and it was suggested that Davies Contracting Ltd be approached to remove the build-up of weed as drainworks would not be commencing until December and water would need to be pumped out.

248/16 Maintenance of Channels

a) The Chairman reported that drain works for 2016/2017 were due to commence at the end of November/ beginning of December. All flail mowing had been undertaken and the Clerk reported that Dereck Beaton was in a residential home and it was uncertain as to whether he would be able to undertake next year's flail mowing. It was agreed that future maintenance arrangements be reviewed at the February 2017 meeting.

The inlet at point 78 need attention and Ruairi Hollins and Mike Davis agreed to look into its condition and report to the Clerk.

b) Great Fen Project –

i) Lorna Parker reported upon the Great Fen Project

- Old Decoy Farm – the pool construction was being held due to budget restraints.
- New Decoy Farm – works scheduled to begin mid-November and be completed by late January. However, the recent road works on the Ramsey Road are holding up the start date and the project may be delayed by eight weeks. Planning approval from Natural England was also affecting the start date.

- Corney's Farm – any further works being dependent upon the Decoy farm works.
- Engine Farm – the pool is partially filled with rain water, hope to fill over winter.
- Rymes - Car park on hold due to budget restraints - Kesters Docking looking good as a wet spring and operation of sluices helped. A thank you is extended to the Chairman for working closely with us on achieving the desired water levels.
- Clay stockade – legal problems with lease now resolved and works on the access road are in hand.
- Water Abstraction – waiting final comment from Natural England (deadline 8th Nov).
- Memorial stone installed and commemorated north of Holme Fen. Location of kissing gate discussed with Chairman and movement of structure agreed.

249/16 General Matters

a) Planning Matters -The Clerk referred to a letter from the Consulting Engineers. The main issue with the system was that I.D.B's were not a consultee in the planning process and developers were less than keen to enter correspondence with them. However, MLC and the Board would continue to comment on applications affecting the district.

M Davis asked if any details regarding a new dwelling at the rear of May Cottage had been received. The Clerk reported that to date no information had been received.

Embryo Habitat – a fishing syndicate have purchased the Roughts and need to drop the level of the lake in order to deepen parts to assist with fish stocking. RESOLVED – that the Clerk, Chairman, M & J Davis meet to discuss arrangements.

b) Consents

45 Wildlife Trust BCN – Safety works to Holme Lode Bridge and installation of pedestrian gate.

Handrails were still to be erected and the gate re-positioned.

c) (i) Risk Management – The Clerk reported upon systems of internal control and Control and Risk Management – RESOLVED – that no amendments to the current policies and procedures were required.

(ii) The Health & Safety arrangements continue to be updated when Contractors and Board members were on drainage board duties.

d) DEFRA/ADA

Association of Drainage Authorities – Great Ouse Branch – meeting Tuesday 7th March 2017 to be held at Prickwillow Village Hall at 2.30 p.m.

Future Flood Preventive Report:-

ADA has been working closely with England's flood risk management authorities to build the communication and collaboration that is needed to enable efficient local delivery solutions. ADA is pleased that the report supports closer working arrangements between Internal Drainage Boards, Local Authorities, Water Utility companies and the Environment Agency. It is however key that the correct balances of responsibility are found involving all of those authorities.

Taking a total catchment management approach to our river networks from source to sea can unlock innovative and better ways of managing water. New ways of slowing the flow and retaining water upstream should be tested and applied more widely. ADA supports the report's call to work much more closely with farmers and land managers to encourage and incentivise them to provide flood storage where this can offer a wider public benefit. ADA also supports a much more robust approach to SuDS to drive future good development and planning practice. Critically, best

governance arrangements need to be put in place to ensure that SuDS can continue to operate to their design standards for the duration of their operational life.

At the same time, maintenance of watercourses and systems will continue to play a vital role in future flood risk management. ADA is pleased that the report highlights the need for adequate provision for river channel maintenance, and this should equally apply to other essential systems and equipment such as surface water systems, pumping stations, barriers and tidal sluices.

e) Water Abstraction – Wildlife Trust – Application to vary a licence AN/033/0053/143

The variation applied for is:

To change the use of water from spray irrigation to wetland conservation

To incorporate the abstraction licence under AN/033/0053/113

AN/033/0053/113 will be revoked.

To add winter abstraction.

To remove abstraction reaches currently licenced under AN/033/0053/143 and add a new abstraction point.

250/16 Payments

2016/2017		
ICO	Data registration	£35.00
Haven Power	Whittlesey Mere	£425.52
Bt	Phone	£80.28
Addison Arms	Meeting expenses	£34.35
Middle Level Commissioners	Fees – flail mowing	£552.00
SSE	Yaxley Fen	£208.19
Cambs County Council	Pension contributions	£1,407.55
Haven Power	Whittlesey Mere	£464.81
Middle Level Commissioners	Fees	£75.60
Bt	Telephone	£80.28
Haven Power	Whittlesey Mere	£514.91
Environment Agency	Precept	£4,242.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP	Audit fee	£360.00
SSE	Yaxley Fen	£130.53
Haven Power	Whittlesey Mere	£701.51
Whittlesey & District IDB	Admin & repairs	£280.36
Haven Power	Whittlesey Mere	£424.51

D Collett asked about the Precept and Pension payments, which the Clerk explained. The question of payments to BT were also raised and it was agreed to make investigations as to other monitoring devices. Originally it was felt that for lone workers it was an asset but with mobile phones its use is now in question.

The Chairman reported that the main drain had not been slubbed for several years and if finances allowed would it be appropriate to undertake this year. The Board were in a programme of electrical improvements at the station and felt that as the main drain was not causing a problem it be left for another year.

251/16

Estimates of Income and Expenditure

a) The Clerk presented a schedule of Income of £50,761.81 & Expenditure of £14,409.72 for 2016/2017

b) The Clerk reported that the Certificate for the Audit of the Accounts was signed on 13th September 2016. – PKF Littlejohn LLP reported “On the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.” On other matters not affecting their opinion – Section 2 Boxes 4 and 6 have been correctly restated for 2014/2015, but the changes are not marked as “restated” on the return.

252/16 Other matters

a) J Mears reported that he had been approached by the Middle Level Commissioners about pumping restrictions from 9th January - 11th February 2017. Due to impending works on the railway bridge it would be a necessity to pump only at wee- ends. The Board would assist when-ever possible to pump only sat weekends.

b) M Davis explained that the levels in Yaxley Fen were difficult to maintain and it was felt that a dam could help retain higher levels. The dam would be in a private DITCH. The Clerk stated that consent would be required but should not be an issue. Once further details were known the Board would be able to consider the matter and give the appropriate consent.

253/16 Dates of Meetings 2017

Thursday February 9th at 11 am

Thursday June 1st at 11 am

Thursday November 2nd at 11 am

The meeting was closed at 12.12