

Minutes of a meeting of the Holmewood & District Internal Drainage Board held on Thursday 27th February 2020 at the Addison Arms, Sawtry Road, Glatton, at 11.18 am

Present J Ayres (Chairman), G Bliss (Vice Chairman), D J Collett, N Collett, M A Davis, J Davis, C Evans, J J Mears, L Parker, J D Wright, Cllr J Clarke. R Wright (Clerk), Mrs M A Wright, A Price, R L Price.

Apologies for Absence T Simpson

Declaration of members Pecuniary Interests - none

338/20 Confirmation of Minutes – Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2019 were correctly recorded and that they be signed as being a true record.

339/20 Matters Arising

a) Clerk replacement – further to minute 336/19(c) – The Chairman reported that an interview with R L Price and Andy Price (PDSM Ltd) with a view of them undertaking the administrative role for the Board had taken place. Richard and Andy Price were introduced to the members of the Board. Resolved that R L Price be appointed as Clerk to the Board with an annual salary of £500. PDSM Ltd be appointed to provide an administrative support to R L Price in his role as Clerk with an annual fee of £4,000. R L Price duly signed a contract of appointment and A Price as a Director of PDSM Ltd signed a Service Contract. A new bank mandate was also signed removing R and M Wright and adding R L Price. The Chairman and Vice Chairman were still signatories on the account.

b) Fen Road – further to minute 332/19(b) the matter has been reported but the Clerk had little response from the Local Authorities. G Bliss reported that he had logged a complaint on the appropriate web site and works had been undertaken from Holme Post to Dunkling's Bridge. Other works were planned but had been delayed due to the weather conditions.

c) Complaint – Further to minute 334/19(d) The Clerk confirmed that a reply had been sent and to date no reply has been made. The matter is therefore considered to be resolved.

d) Fenflow – Whittlesey Mere weed screen cleaner – further to minute 332/19(a). The Chairman reported that the weed screen cleaner had broken down again on 22nd Feb and FenFlow had been out to check the reason. RESOLVED – that payment would be withheld until the Board considered that a satisfactory repair had been undertaken. Once satisfied a meeting to discuss payment of the outstanding invoices would be held with FenFlow. Future maintenance would be discussed with Middle Level Commissioners who were undertaking maintenance and servicing of weed screen cleaners for Whittlesey & District IDB.

340/20 Pumping Stations

a) Whittlesey Mere - The Chairman reported that an incident with cattle occurred at the pumping station and damage to the value of £337.00 had been made to the lawned area. An insurance claim had been submitted to the insurers of the owner of the cattle and the claim amount accepted. A payment of £30 was also agreed to be made to Mrs Shelton. Work would be undertaken once the land was in a suitable condition.

b) Yaxley – The Chairman reported that John Mears has been seriously ill and unable to manage the pumping station. The water levels were too high for drain works to be undertaken and Johnathan Davis had to seek assistance from A J Speechley & Son as the pump would cut out before a suitable level reached. A temporary repair was made but it was found that weed in front of the screen and in the actual sump was causing issues. Due to these issues Speechley's set a hold off timer to 35 minutes to assist the pump. Also, the electrode holders in the station lower pit are broken and replacement works will be scheduled when the conditions are more favourable. The need for lighting whilst clearing weed was an issue and flood lights had been installed.

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It is apparent that the station needs more regular maintenance and new arrangements for its maintenance were required. D J Collect endorsed the importance of the station to the local ratepayers and the need to improve the maintenance was essential. Resolved that the possibility of improving access to the station and into the compound be investigated and ADC be approached to quote for the removal of weed from the front and rear of the weed screen.

341/20 Maintenance of Channels

a) The Chairman reported that apart from section 53 to 37 drain works had been completed. Fen Ditching Co were still to provide a price for the water control between points 52-53. J Davis felt that an earth dam would be more appropriate than and having a boarded dam that could cost in excess of £10,000. The Clerk to report back when a price from Fen Ditching was received.

J Wright reported that he had removed a side culvert as it was restricting water from draining from his land. The side culverts may have been put in by the Board to assist with machine movements whilst drain works were undertaken. The flail mowing contractor had raised concerns as to their width which he felt was a Health & Safety issue. Resolved that when drain works were planned side culverts would be inspected to see whether they were low enough and wide enough and appropriate action taken.

b) Great Fen Project – Issues with electric fencing, electric gates across tracks to the riverbank and electric fencing connected to structures has caused the Chairman great concern and he felt that more co-operation between the Great Fen and Board was required. Resolved that the Chairman and N Collett along with representatives from the Great Fen drive the route required for access to inspect the district in order to monitor water levels be undertaken and a consensus tried to be reached.

Fen Group will be starting preparation work for wetland crop trials on field F632 on Engine Farm next week. They will have their own welfare provisions so vehicle movements should be minimal. They will be creating a series of planting beds and shallow trenches within the field but outside of the 9m IDB access zone, HDC have confirmed planning consent is not required. An application could apply for land drainage consent for some element of the pump associated with it. Details of the design will be forwarded for consideration once finalised. An issue with works that had encroached the nine- meter maintenance strip had been addressed.

342/20 General Matters

a) Planning Matters – D J Collett & Sons – 3 dwellings involving demolition of agricultural building.

b) Russell Burgess Ltd – erection of office and admin building

c) Consents – The Clerk reported that AM & EA Davis had been given consent for two security gates at Belt Drove & Bell Drove on the assumption that all relevant authorities agreed.

d) Risk Management - Ongoing

The Health & Safety arrangements continue to be updated and a review of actions to be taken whilst undertaking inspections has been discussed with Great Fen and the Board.

e) DEFRA- Scrutiny of IDB's web sites to show that appropriate Governance documents have been listed has been suggested so work may be required to the Board's web site.

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f) ADA – Great Ouse Branch meeting Tuesday 3rd March 2020.

g) Water Abstraction - none.

343/20 Payments – The following payments were approved by the Board

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| 2019/2020 | | |
| Haven Power | Whittlesey Mere | £1674.98 |
| Addison Arms | Meeting expenses | £53.60 |
| Middle Level Commissioners | Engineering fees | £55.20 |
| Whittlesey & District IDB | Repairs and admin | £117.34 |
| Havenpower | Whittlesey Mere | £2316.13 |
| Swalec | Yaxley Fen | £329.46 |
| Association of Drainage Authorities | Subscription | £678.00 |
| J Ayres | Chairman expenses | £1050.00 |
| Fen Ditching Co Ltd | Drain works | £12952.80 |
| Hargrave Agriculture | Grease – Whittlesey Mere | £428.10 |
| Havenpower | Whittlesey Mere | £3518.80 |
| J Mears | Duties Yaxley Fen | £300.00 |
| A J Speechley & Son | Pump & Panel Yaxley Fen | £774.86 |
| R J Dale | Flail mowing | £2092.08 |
| R Wright | Clerk fees and expenses | £4104.69 |

344/20 Estimates of Income and Expenditure

The Clerk presented a schedule of income of £61,388.13 and expenditure of £39,722.20 to date and confirmed that the balance held with Barclays Bank as at 15th February was £82,456.94

345/20 Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 4th June 2020.

The Board considered whether to move the meeting time to evening but members preferred a morning time.

The Chairman thanked member for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 12.45.