

**Minutes of the Whittlesey & District IDB Meeting held on  
Thursday, 2 July 2020 at 2.30 pm via Zoom**

Present: R Brown (Chairman), R Fletcher (Vice Chairman), A Cade, A Price, R Price (CEO), P Tingey, A Wagstaffe, H Whittome, Cllr E Butler, Cllr D Laws, Cllr D Mason, K Mayor and Cllr B Wicks

**WD01/20. Apologies for absence:** Cllr C Boden, P Bradshaw, R Easton, M Fisher, J Fountain, S Goodger, C Saunders, I Stanley, Martin Sweet

**a. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest:**

Cllr Butler, Cllr Laws, Cllr Mayor, A Price and R Price declared a pecuniary interest.

**WD02/20. Matters Arising**

a. A605 Kings Dyke Scheme

The new contractor is yet to discuss plans with the board. Concerns were expressed by members that the project is pressing ahead without an agreement in place over drainage strategy. Cllr Laws will make enquiries to obtain contact details for R Price.

b. Wisbech Garden Town

Cllr Laws, the portfolio holder for planning, confirmed that this project has come to a halt. May be on future projects list. It may be on the future projects list plan to be adopted in the next 2 years.

**WD03/20. Operation Engineer**

a. R Price ran through the 2020 drain works programme. It is hoped to cover everything on the list. Work will start earlier this year weather permitting.

b. R Price confirmed that he remained unable to gain access and control of the Barclays Bank accounts; this has been ongoing for 5 months. He hoped this would soon be resolved to enable standing orders to go on the website for good governance. There appears to be similar issues with Barclays across the board not helped by the Covid-19 pandemic. R Brown thanked the Price family for their continued patience.

**WD04/20. General Matters**

a. Risk Management & Health & Safety

In 2018/19 the NFU did all the risk assessments. Anything flagged has now been dealt with.

b. ADA continue to address issues affecting land Drainage Authorities. Subscriptions will increase by about 2% in 2020/21.

In R Price's opinion, the ADA is value for money, having been very supportive during the current predicament and have offered solutions.

**WD05/20. Payments 2020/21**

A Price advised that since the beginning of April, voucher payments numbered 1-49 have been made to various companies totalling £46,977.24. The money in Barclays Bank account is £38,035.92. The monies in deposit accounts are Shawbrook £77,344.36, Cambridge £77,506.44 and NSI £75,881.18. A VAT repayment of £24,646.82 is due for 2019/20. VAT has been paid out for 2020/21 of £3,131.53 which has not yet been claimed.

Holmewood, Feldale and Woodwalton drainage boards currently owe Whittlesey & District IDB £3,540.42 for NFU insurance; in future this bill will be separated and paid by the individual boards at source.

#### **WD06/20. Annual Accounts year ending 31 March 2020**

a. Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020

There were no issues with the AGAR statement. The internal auditors were happy with the accounts. Approved by R Brown, and A Wagstaffe.

b. Annual Accounting Statement for the year ending 31 March 2020

Whittlesey & District IDB Balance Sheet was agreed and will be signed by R Brown. Approved by R Fletcher and Cllr K Mayor.

c. Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2020

The Accounts were approved as a true and accurate statement; approved by A Cade and H Whittome.

d. Notice of public Rights and Publication of unaudited Annual Return

The unaudited accounts will go on the website and displayed outside the Ironside office.

e. Approval of Internal Audit arrangements for 2020/2021

Mr Cooper has undertaken the 2019/2020 review and there were no specific issues to be brought to the attention of the Board. Approved auditor. Approved R Brown and Cllr D Laws.

#### **WD07/20. Income & Expenditure**

R Price reported on income and expenditure for 2019/2020. The biggest expense this year was electricity, running a lot more than usual, but savings had been made elsewhere. R Brown asked if everyone was content with the accounts. The reserves are lower than usual but not returning much in the bank presently. The budget estimate for 2020/21 is predicting a £30,000 deficit.

#### **WD08/20. Rates and Levy Requirement**

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Board must be met for 2020/2021 is:

a.	Agricultural Sector	57.55%
b.	Special Levy issued to Fenland District Council	36.34%
c.	Special Levy issued to Huntingdonshire D C	6.11%

In 2020/21 a rate of 1p would raise £21,487.59.

The Board made a deficit of £31,304.95 in 2019/2020

The Whittlesey Board has raised a 12p rate since 2009/2010

R Price presented the various rate options for 2020/21. Following discussion, R Brown having reviewed the account balances commented that they had not depleted too much of the reserves and that it might be prudent in the current financial crisis to keep the rate of 12p in the £1 as it has been for several years, but that there should be some warning that future rates are likely to rise.

R Fletcher agreed with holding the rate and to forewarn the price increase. R Brown proposed that the rate for this year remains as 12p in the £1 and that the board will be looking to increase the rate next year. Approved by A Cade and Cllr D Laws.

## **WD09/20 Any Other Business**

a. At a previous meeting Cllr Laws suggested the Board considers handling its own straightforward planning applications. This suggestion was considered at the Finance Meeting and it was felt that some planning applications would need specialist advice which would incur further costs.

b. Cllr Laws as portfolio holder for planning, is concerned that there are no responses from Middle Level and therefore the voice of the Board is not heard and asked:

1. Does the Board receive the actual response submitted on their behalf?
2. Are they received within the consultation time period?
3. How frequently do Middle Level submit the planning application response, with a fee?

R Price confirmed that recently soakaway related applications have been received; he makes notes if there is a direct discharge. There is weekly communication with Middle Level and applications are sent to him to review, for example, the A605.

Cllr Laws will raise for discussion at the next finance meeting to check whether consultations are made and, within the timescale. (Action Point RP)

c. A Price suggested that the rate and levy requirement be set in the February before the year end. This would be better for budgeting purposes and come in line with other drainage boards. R Brown suggested this be discussed at the next Finance Meeting in November. (Action Point AP)

d. R Brown advised that fly tipping is becoming a real problem. Cllr Laws confirmed that it's an ongoing issue and that any sightings should be reported to the Rapid Response Team, who will come out immediately. However, the team cannot access a water level as they are not covered by insurance.

### **9. Dates of next meeting**

The meeting will take place on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 in the Town Hall, Market Street, Whittlesey at 2.30pm unless Covid-19 remains a problem.