

Minutes of a meeting of the Holmewood & District IDB held on Thursday 6th June 2019 at 11.00 am. at the Addison Arms, Sawtry Road, Glatton.

Present J Ayres (Chairman), N Collett, M Davis, C Evans, J Mears, L Parker, J Wright, R Wright (Clerk)

Apologies for Absence G Bliss, D J Collett, T Simpson, Cllr J Clarke

320/19 Declaration of members Pecuniary Interests – All members declared an interest in matters dealing with land they owned/occupied or acted as managers.

321/19 Confirmation of Minutes – Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th February 2019 were correctly recorded and that they be signed as being a true copy.

322/19 Matters Arising – to be dealt with under main headings

323/19 Pumping Stations

- a) Whittlesey Mere - The Chairman reported upon condition of pump which was in a reasonable working order and is currently switched off. FenFlow had taken the grab back to their workshop to quote for repair works. Any works to be approved by the Chairman. To date no quote has been received.

The Chairman had spoken to Matt Cullup of A J Speechley & Son who were servicing the pump and panel. Matt introduced his son who would be assisting the works and would replace Matt upon his retirement.

UK Power - the Electricity service provider would be cutting back trees that could affect the overhead cables. It was agreed that J H Services would undertake a deep clean and general tidy up of the station and site.

- b) Yaxley - J Mears reported that the pump is in reasonable condition. It was agreed that J H Services would undertake a deep clean of the station and tidy up of the site.

324/19 Maintenance of Channels

- a) The Chairman reported that maintenance of the channels of the former Yaxley district would be undertaken along with flail mowing for 2019/2020.

It was felt that flail mowing of drains in the Holmewood District could be decided when the contractor was on site. Issues with saplings on stretches 23-24-25 would be a priority.

The Chairman reported that some of the sandbags on the culvert under the Ramsey Road needed attention and the Great Fen agreed to investigate and take the appropriate action. It was felt that at present the new system seemed to be working but further monitoring was required as the Corney's inlet had not been opened. It was suggested that the whole length be flailed, and an inspection made prior to the November meeting to ascertain when it would be adopted.

- b) Great Fen Project – The Great Fen had a good winter season where they trialled adding water onto Corneys/New decoy and Old Decoy using the syphon pump and slacker. This

was very promising and we look forward to more water manipulation in the Autumn. We currently have an application in to vary our licence so that we can let water on to more than one farm at a time.

Details for consent works were submitted – installation of water storage pool near slacker at Old Decoy.

Security gates in various locations to restrict access from roadsides/tracks by are coursers. Gates to have combination locks

Engine Farm – aqua pipe & linear pools.

The Chairman to investigate the application along with the clerk and to report back to the Board their observations.

- c) P J Lee – gateway at Leading Drove – The Chairman reported that the site where the extension was made had not been returned to its former condition and the material left was considered unsuitable. Resolved – That a letter be sent requesting that the culvert be returned to its former condition prior to the works and the sand removed. Failure to comply may result in the Board doing the work later in the year and re charging them.

325/19 General Matters

- a) Planning Matters - The Clerk reported that the Consulting Engineer had written regarding the provision of Engineering Services on a Consultancy Basis – HDC Local Plan – response to Main Modifications of Public consultation – Holme Property development Ltd 2 dwellings – DJC Farms Ltd – agricultural storage building at Ladyseat Farm.
- b) Consents - application from QTS Group Ltd for culvert cleansing at Hod Fen Drove. The Company wished to undertake the works 1st July. The Chairman felt that this was not appropriate as the drains were at summer level and access would damage growing crops. The Clerk to write to confirm that works should be undertaken until October/November.
- c) (i) Risk Management - Control and Risk Management to be reviewed in line with guidance from Defra.

The Clerk attended a workshop in Peterborough - Good Governance Guide – It provided members with a comprehensive guide to their role as water managers servicing the local communities. The workshops were well attended, and future events will cover Finance, Environment, Health & Safety and welfare and Communications engagement.

New model byelaws were being considered but amendments were being discussed by ADA/Defra and until resolved no action would be taken. Work on a WMLP was also being held back until issues had been addressed.

Insurance risks had been discussed with the NFU and amendments made to the level of cover.

The Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, Systems of Internal Control were deemed to be adequate and would be reviewed when changes were required.

The Health & Safety arrangements continue to be updated, -Whittlesey & District IDB have implemented a review of policies and procedures by the NFU and this will be available for the Board to adopt. New policies were in the process being introduced -Site Management of Plant Equipment, Site Risk assessment, Survey and works, working in close proximity to water, Working with sewerage dredged materials.

- d) 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.
- e) ADA –Catchment Strategy – The EA, LLFA. IDBs and other partners are co-operating in work that is looking at the pressures on the catchment from a development and climate change perspective.

The New Rivers Authorities & Land Drainage Bill – Its progressing through the House of lords – Its main aim is to put Somerset Rivers Authority onto a statutory footing as a precepting body and to reform IDB rating of annual values.

Subscriptions will increase by about 2% in 2019

Lower Nene Water Planning Group – Users of water from the Nene have set up a workgroup to look at the management of water and the quantity that can be used.

- f) Water Abstraction – Issues with variations to licences were discussed along with problems that were encountered last year. The Clerk reported that a Lower Nene users Group had been established to look into water use, storage and management. The group consisted of members from AWA, EA, North Level, Middle Level, Whittlesey Consortium, RSPB, Natural England and Great Fen
- g) Electricity - A new contract from 1st April 2019 for 28 months has been agreed with SSE at Yaxley Fen station.

326/19 Payments The considered and approved the following payments.

2018/2019		
Middle Level Commissioners	Planning fees	£180.60
Middle Level Commissioners	Environment Officer fee	£740.00
NFU Mutual	Commercial	£470.89
The Addison Arms	Meeting expenses	£115.55
R Wright	Clerks fee & expenses	£3132.50
Middle level Commissioners	Planning fees	£83.40
Haven power	Whittlesey Mere	£710.90
Mrs M A Wright	Secretaries duties	£1,438.50
Whittlesey & District IDB	Insurance	£1,879.52
2019/2020		
Haven Power	Whittlesey Mere	£676.72
I J Cooper	Internal audit	£130.00

327/19 Estimates of Income and Expenditure

- a) The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31st March 2019.
- b) The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounting Statement return for the year ended 31st March 2019 and the Annual Accounts.
- c) The Clerk reported that the Audit of the Accounts has been fixed. The period of exercise of public rights will be from 17th June 2019 to 26th July 2019 and the appropriate notices have been displayed. I Cooper a retired Finance Officer of Fenland District council has agreed to undertake the internal audit for 2018/2019. The Internal auditor reported that there were no specific issues for the period that he had to draw to the attention of the Board.
- d) To consider estimates for year ending 31st March 2020
The Clerk reported that an advertisement for his role as CEO to Whittlesey & District IDB had been placed. He had spoken to both North Level & Middle Level regarding services. Middle Level had quoted Finance/Rating only £2800. Admin/Finance/Rating £5100. Telephone, postages and stationery £476. Currently the board are paying Clerk £2850, Secretary £1275 pension £450. And £309 for telephone, postages & stationery. North Level had since declined to tender for the work.

The Clerk would give a presentation to the Board once all applicants had been considered and failing to find a suitable replacement may mean that the Board would have to seek a quote from the MLC for the entire role.

The Board underspent by £6,534 during 2018/2019, mainly attributable to savings of £1,900 on fuel, £670 on drain work, £1078 on admin plus an increase in highland water contribution of £1024 and other minor adjustments.

In 2018/2019 the Board levied a rate of 15p in the £.and raised £45,881.40 from Agriculture and £1,897.50 from Special Levies. The General Fund Account as at 31st March 2019 stands at £65,542.88 and the Development Account at £870.00.

328/19 Rate and Levy Requirements

Under section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Board must be met for 2017/2018 is: -

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| a) | Proportion to be met by Agricultural Sector | 96.03% |
| b) | Proportion to be met by Special Levy issued to Huntingdonshire District Council | 3.97% |

It was agreed that the net estimated expenditure of £54,300 in 2019/2020 that is equivalent to a rate of 17.05p be approved but as a surplus was made last year the Board would not have to levy a 17.05p rate.

RESOLVED --

- a) A rate in the 15p on agricultural land & buildings to raise £45,881.40
- b) A special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £1,897.50
- c) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the Record of rate
- d) That the Clerk be empowered to recovery any outstanding rate through the appropriate court.

329/19 **Date of next meeting** - Thursday 7th November 2019.

The members to meet at the Village Hall car park, Short Drove at 9.00am. The Board to undertake an inspection of the district to include the new cut to replace the drain through Corney's Farm to ascertain whether it should be adopted and the drain through Corney's given up. It was agreed that the new system would be flailed in order to view the drain sides. A meeting would be held at the Addison Arms at 11.00am following the inspection.