

Minutes of a meeting of the Holmewood & District Internal Drainage Board held on Thursday 9th February 2017 at 11.00 am at the Addison Arms, Sawtry Road, Glatton

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

Apologies for Absence M Davis

254/17 Membership – The Clerk reported that Natural England have appointed a replacement Manager of the Reserve. His name is Chris Evans and he has come down from Durham where most of the sites he was involved with had steep inclines but previously he had worked for many years in the Humberhead Levels and so he has some experience of working with IDBs around Doncaster and the East Riding of Yorkshire. The Chairman welcome Christopher to his first meeting and he duly completed his acceptance of office.

Ruairi Hollins has left the employment of Farcet Farms Ltd who in turn have sold the land at Yaxley to a Spanish Mining Company. RESOLVED – that Toby Stimpson be approached to ascertain whether he would be prepared to be co-opted onto the Board.

255/17 Confirmation of Minutes – RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2016 were correctly recorded and that they be signed as being a true record

256/17 Matters Arising

a) Water control Yaxley Fen – Further to minute 236/16(a) – Safety works have been completed and J Mears was investigating into the provision a safety gate to prevent walkers from straying across control.

257/17 Pumping Stations

a) Whittlesey Mere

The Chairman reported upon the condition of pump was in reasonable order – Shoebridge have overhauled the valve and motor on No 2 Penstock

Vulcan inspection Services inspected the lifting equipment on 21st November – “One reed crab tine was found to be distorted/bent and requires suitable repair” This fact was noted but was considered immaterial in safety and operational functions.

Weed screen cleaner – the cleaner has developed a fault which the current Engineer Phil Camplin is investigating. New cables costing £786 have been purchased and are awaiting fitting.

The Chairman is concerned of the escalating cost of repairs and felt that future work should be tendered out. Shoebridge Engineering and CW Engineering were two possible sources. The pendant controller was faulty and a replacement would cost about £500. Whittlesey & District IDB had loaned one so that checks could be undertaken.

Remote Monitoring Project:

1. Monitoring of digital and analogue values by SMS text messaging requests from any mobile phone. Can also include notification of alarm conditions via SMS. £4,200

2. Monitoring of digital and analogue values by a putting them on a web/email server, accessible over the internet. £5,300/£5,800

3. Monitoring the station and/or weed screen by means of camera(s) that can be viewed over the internet. £3,700

4. Monitoring of digital and analogue values and camera(s) that can be viewed over the internet.
£6,200

RESOLVED – that G Bliss investigates the provision of a mobile phone and sim card as an alternative option to provide a monitoring system.

Flap Valve

The Board considered a quote from Drake Towage in the sum of £2,789.32. The damage was thought to be a result of a collision by a weed boat belonging to the Middle Level but proving would be an issue. It was felt that the quote was rather high and the Clerk was asked if he could contact Dive In of Whittlesey who previously repaired the flap.

b) Yaxley

J Mears reported that other than the comments made by Vulcan all was well with the pump. Upon condition of pump.

Vulcan Inspection Services - The lifting equipment was inspected on 21st November 2016 and the following observation was listed “The identification number should be clearly marked in accordance with a test certificate. The encastre beam was showing evidence of a settlement crack propagating down from the left-hand side (above light, this should be investigated and repaired accordingly.”)

The Clerk reported that he had a maintenance person who may be interested in small jobs at the pumping stations. RESOLVED – that the Clerk contacts the person accordingly.

258/17 Maintenance of Channels

a) The Chairman reported that Fen Ditching Co had undertaken 197.5 hrs work at £39 per hour = £7852.50 on drain works for 2016/2017. To reduce costs some of the re-profiling was left until next time.

b) The Clerk reported that D & G Beaton may not be able to undertake flail mowing next year, but Robert Dale a former employee had since purchased a machine and would charge £42 per hour. It was also reported that Mick the driver for Fen Ditching would be retiring this year.

The use of a weed cutting basket was considered as was the rotational period for drain works. The Board were unsure whether a two or three-year rotation was best. It was agreed to give the matter further thought but in the mean while G Bliss would speak to Paul Davis regarding his availability to undertake works within the district.

J Davis felt that the lengths 50-52 and 51-60 in the Yaxley area should be mowed every year. Some lengths in Holme Fen required mowing now and D J Collett agreed to report back the Clerk once he had a chance to inspect the drains.

b) Great Fen Project –

i) Lorna Park reported upon the Great Fen Project

- Old Decoy Farm
- New Decoy Farm – works scheduled to begin February 2017. Drawings showing the 600mm Penstock in the drain that enters the district drain at point 14 was approved in principle but no works were to be undertaken on it until the remainder of the system had been dug and the Board would then decide after a site inspection.
- Corney’s Farm - any further works being dependent upon new drain being successful.

- Engine Farm – subject to funding the pond works may be undertaken.
- Rymes - Car park – subject to funding works on the entrance and a height barrier may be undertaken.
- Clay stockade – now being used.

c) Embryo Habitat – The Clerk reported of a meeting with a representative from E H propose to create deeper areas throughout the lake to improve conditions for the fish. It was suggested that the water be retained in the district drain 38 – 39a.

259/17 **General Matters**

a) Planning Matters – the Board considered a letter from Consulting Engineers regarding planning applications.

b) Consents - none

c) (i) Risk Management - Control and Risk Management – A review of SO, Systems of Internal Control & Financial Regulations was made and no changes considered at present.

The Clerk reported that the WMP needed to be updated and would be considered with the Great Fen & Natural England at a date to be agreed.

(ii) The Health & Safety arrangements continue to be updated.

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.

e) Water Abstraction –

RH and MJ Lambert applied to vary their existing licence to add further abstraction reaches and increase the area of land occupied by the licence holder. All existing abstraction reaches currently on the licence are to be retained. The licence permits abstraction for spray irrigation between April and October. The licence is subject to the summer Bodsey cessation condition.

The licence holder is currently permitted to abstract:

23,638 cubic metres per year 534 cubic metres per day 95 cubic metres per hour

At an instantaneous flow rate not exceeding 26.3 litres per second.

These abstraction rates are not proposed to change under this variation. The existing reaches are located in the Ramsey Upwood & Gt. Raveley and Ramsey 4th Internal drainage districts. The proposed new reaches fall within the Holmewood & District Internal drainage district.

G R & P Easton – removes abstraction from Corney's Farm and Halfway Farm

260/17 Payments

2016/2017		
ADA	Subscription	£36.00
Haven Power	Whittlesey Mere	£474.66
Bt	Phone	£80.28
Addison Arms	Meeting expenses	£152.10
Middle Level Commissioners	Fees	£104.70
Shoebridge Engineering	Valve overhaul Penstock 2	£398.40
ADA	Subscription	£643.20
Haven Power	Whittlesey Mere	£863.90
Shoebridge Engineering Ltd	Whittlesey Mere Motor penstock No2	£1447.20
Haven power	Whittlesey Mere	£794.93
SSE	Yaxley Fen	£707.68
Middle Level Commissioners	Flail mowing main drain	£603.88
P Camplin	Weed screen repairs	£269.46
A J Speechley & Son	E.I.C.R	£192.00
J Ayres	Chairman expenses	£900.00
J Mears	Attendants expenses	£225.00
Fen Ditching Co	Machine hire	£9423.00
L R Boon & Sons Ltd	Two rakes	£189.60
G & D Beaton	Flail mowing	£2,908.20

261/17 Estimates of Income and Expenditure

The Clerk referred to the Income & Expenditure schedule for 2016/2017 that was circulated to all members. The flail mowing costs were increased to £3,386.73, drain works to £7,852.50 and maintenance at Yaxley to £203.00 which increased total expenditure to £31,653.97.

The Clerk reported that all rates except a small balance of £10.65 had been paid and overpayments of £59.04 received.

262/17 Date of Next Meeting 2017

Thursday 1st June 2017

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12.38 pm and thanked the members for their attendance.