

Minutes of a meeting of the Woodwalton Drainage Commissioners held on Tuesday 21st January 2020 at the farm office of D & J Papworth & Co, Middle farm, Conington at 9.30am

Apologies for Absence L Parker, Cllr S Bywater,

Present J R Papworth (Chairman), J S Papworth, S Papworth, A W Lensen (Attended from item 198/20), J Rule, R Wright (Clerk), R L Price, A Price

195/20 Declaration of members Pecuniary Interests

S Papworth declared an interest for any discussion regarding the Old Pump House.

J R Papworth declared an interest in any discussion regarding drain works.

196/20 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th September 2019 were correctly recorded and that they be signed as being a true record.

197/20 Future Administration of Board – Further to minute 192/19(b) the Chairman reported that the Clerk wished to retire and that future arrangements for the administration of the Board should be in place and agreed by the end of January 2020. The Clerk was appointed on the 21st February 2007 and was thanked for the services rendered to the Commissioners.

The Clerk referred to the decision of the Whittlesey & District IDB: -

Following the advertising undertaken for the CEO replacement one applicant had withdrawn and the following options were available: -

George Dann – self-employed Drainage Consultant – BSC, MCIWEM CWEM

Kenneth Pratt – Senior/Principle Engineer WSP Lincoln – BSc, CEng, CEnv, CEWM etc.

Richard Price/PDSM Ltd – Operations Engineer Whittlesey & District IDB

Middle Level Commissioners – part or full administrative duties

The Committee scrutinized the applications and after careful consideration felt that the preferred option would be to appoint Richard price as Clerk/Operation manager with support from PDSM Ltd in the administrative role. The use of Middle Level Commissioners as Consulting Engineers for planning and maintenance of weed screen cleaners, South Holland IDB for plant hire for weed cutting and North level & District IDB for general assistance would continue for the present time.

Middle Level Commissioners have quoted £1,400 for Finance rating only and Admin/finance/rating £2500 with office expenses of £300. The current administration charges are £3,000.

Richard and Andy Price gave a presentation on their background and how they would administer the Commissioners affairs.

RESOLVED – that R price be appointed as Clerk to the Commissioners as from 1st February 2020 with an annual salary of £500.00. PDSM Ltd be appointed to provide administrative services to the Commissioners at an annual fee of £2,000.00 as from 1st February 2020.

198/20 Matters Arising

a) Old Pump House – Further to minute 192/19(a) – The Chairman reported that monies had been received and works to seal the outfall needed to be organised. RESOLVED – that the Middle Level Commissioners needed to be approached regarding any works to seal the outfall. R Price reported that he would speak to J Fenn of the MLC regarding the proposal to seal the outfall. It was agreed to inspect the site at the conclusion of the meeting.

b) Bap report – The Clerk report upon the 2018-2019 Bap report from the Environmental Officer. The report was accepted.

c) Badgers- It was reported that Badgers had return to the banks of Monk Lode and concern was registered that it could damage the stability and cause flooding to the adjoining land. RESOLVED – that the matter be taken up with the Middle Level Commissioners. R Price would speak to the Operation Engineer of the MLC J Fenn.

199/20 Maintenance of Channels

The Chairman reported that 25 hours of flail mowing had been undertaken but that drain works were on going and to date lengths 1-2-3-4-5-14-15-22-23 had been completed.

Great Fen

Lorna Parker provided a brief Great Fen update – We are pleased with how wet the eight fields now under Wildlife Trust management have been this winter. Natural England have put new boards in an existing control structure allowing them to reduce water levels on Darlows but retain water on those fields. We hope to do some relatively small reprofiling works and additional water management in the coming years to improve them even further for breeding and wintering birds and the grazing management will now be more extensive, bringing it into line with that on Darlows. Recent bird sightings there include duck, marsh harrier, stonechat and raven.

200/20 Pumping Station

The Chairman reported that the pump was in good order and he had no issues to report. He reported that to date 22062 hours had been recorded and the electricity readings were Low 239417 Normal 082131.

201/20 Payments – The Commissioners considered and approved the following payments made during 2019/2020

Vouchers 1 – 12 £5,527.93 inclusive of vat

202/20 Estimates of Income and Expenditure

The Clerk reported that to date income of £19,775.95 had been received whilst expenditure of £4,552.86 had been incurred. The Clerk presented the bank statement that showed the balance as at 31 December 2019 as £48,831.20.

203/20 Security of Woodwalton Fen

Further to minute 194/19. The matter of security to properties within the Woodwalton Fen was once again discussed as an incident occurred which raised security and health and safety issues. The Commissioners were concerned that damage to the pumping station would have disastrous implementations to the infrastructure of the Fen. RESOLVED that a contribution of £3,000.00 towards the siting of security gates to entrances into the Woodwalton Fen be made.

204/20 Date of next meeting

The AGM would be a date to be arranged in May 2020 at the Admiral Wells, Station Road, Holme.