

NOTES OF WHITTLESEY & DISTRICT IDB FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING – THURSDAY, 4 JUNE 2020 AT 10.00 AM BY ZOOM

PRESENT:

Robert Brown	(RB)	Tim Martin	(TM)
Rodney Fletcher	(RF)	Roger Easton	(RE)
Peter Tingey	(PT)	Andrew Price	(AP)
Eric Butler	(EB)	Richard Price	(RP)
M Fisher	(MF)		

1. **Declaration on pecuniary interests** – None
Apologies for Absence – None

2. **General Administration**

a) Confirmation of Minutes, Accounts 2019/20 and Audit Reports

The minutes of meeting on 12 February were agreed as a fair record, and the accounts and audit reports agreed. Approved by RE and MF.

b) Update on new Administration of the Board

RP reported that due to the changeover of signatories, the Board is unable to access online banking. Attempts to rectify this have been ongoing for several months with cheque payments being made in the interim. Hopefully this problem will be resolved within the next couple of weeks. RP will continue to pursue Barclays Bank. RB thanked the Price family for their patience.

c) Maintenance of Pumping Stations, Inlets and Controls

2019/20 has been a hard year and several issues need addressing. The weed screen cleaners will need servicing and could incur extra costs due to the additional hours they have worked.

A major concern is a potential cost of the refurbishment of the outlet pipe at Goosetree pumping station. There is a leak somewhere in the outlet pipe which runs into a counter drain that goes under the road and a gas main. Angus McDonald from the National Grid will be consulted. Currently it is difficult to cost; it could be anywhere between £2,000 and £100,000.

RP produced a map indicating the problem area and explained in more detail.

Two syphon breakers require servicing at Glassmoor Bank and Tebbits Bridge. All weed screen cleaners require servicing due to the heavy season. Water controls are not in a good condition. After the drain works new concrete structures will be installed; they will last a lot longer than the current galvanised.

RP ran through the Budget sheet. The auditors' costs have been accounted for on the budget but not yet paid. Some insurance costs require refunding from other boards. The Ironsides office budget remains at £500 with no real improvement required, only electric and emptying the septic tank. A new website will be set up for WCIDB to include Standing Orders in line with governments guidelines. Operations Engineer budget will now include pension contributions.

This year's drain works will involve flail mowing and basket cutting the entire district. Robert Dale has increased his flail mowing prices by £1 per hour; this is still a lower rate than other providers.

William Morfoot Drainage have been contracted with surveying all pumping stations and water controls to install ODNs. They have allowed two days to carry out said works.

RB noticed a lot of weed growing in the water courses this year and a good clean through the whole district will be a good thing. PT stated that doing yearly cleansing, and jetting culverts have given us a bigger storage capacity.

Roy Hales has had the diesels running and tested.

Pumping station fuel is over budget due to the unprecedented weather.

d) Setting of the drainage rate

RB and RF recommended that in these unprecedented times it may be best to retain the rate of 12p in the pound for this year, although long term this is not sustainable (rate held since 2008/09). Middle Level have also retained the same rate. It was agreed that ratepayers should be warned that the rate will be increased by at least 1p in June 2021. A note to this effect will be included on the 2020/21 invoices. The Finance Board agreed that the rate should be kept the same.

3. **Operation Engineer**

a) Drain works 2020

Covered above.

b) A605 Kings Dyke Level Crossing Overpass – improvement scheme

Jones & Jones have been given the contract. RP has been in contact with Graham Moore at Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) who are yet to be consulted on a drainage system.

RB indicated that we need to liaise with Jones & Jones and Cambs County Council to protect the Board's interests. RP is looking at what other boards charge and will put this on the agenda for the meeting on 7 July. No matter what people put into our system we should increase the rate.

c) Environmental – Fly tipping

There have been a lot of incidents within the Board's area. Fenland and Huntingdon councils have been very accommodating in these difficult times. RB showed an example of fly tipping in the area.

d) Irrigation going forwards

MLC have been proactive in dealing with the EA and Anglian Water in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the water supply. It looks like it is going to be a difficult season.

4. **Estimates – 2020/2021**

Covered above.

5. **Any Other Business**

TM reported that accidents at Ponders Bridge were becoming a regular occurrence. The overgrown vegetation on the river bank was obscuring the drivers view when turning on to the B1040. RP contacted Highways and MLC to address the issue. As the issue was a matter of urgency RP contracted Robert Dale to clear the area. This was out of common courtesy rather than our responsibility. TM offered to do it himself if necessary, as a safety precaution. RP will keep in touch.

Next Board Meeting

It was agreed that attendees print off their own copy of the agenda and supporting notes to enable everyone to see each other during the meeting if Zoom is used (press the gallery button to do this).

The next Board meeting will take place at 2.30 pm on 7 July 2020.