

Minutes of a meeting of the Holmewood & District Internal Drainage Board held on Monday 6th June 2016 at the Addison Arms, Sawtry Road, Glatton at 7.00 pm.

Present J Ayres (Chairman), M Davis, J Davis, M Davis, R Hollins, J D Wright, R Wright (Clerk)
Mrs M A Wright (Secretary)

Apologies for Absence G Bliss J Mears

235/16 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2016 were correctly recorded and that they be signed as being a true record.

236/16 Matters Arising

a) Water control Yaxley Fen – Further to minute 228/16(a) – No report was available.

237/16 Pumping Stations

a) Whittlesey Mere

The Chairman reported that the pump had been switched off and the water levels were building up naturally. The pump was in good operational order and the weed screen cleaner was also reported as being in good working condition.

b) Yaxley

No report from J Mears upon the condition of the pump was submitted.

238/16 Maintenance of Channels

a) The Chairman reported that R Hollins, J Davis and M Davis had inspected the Yaxley area and submitted a plan showing the proposed drain works for 2016/2017. At the time of inspection some areas were overgrown and could not be assessed. A problem with a build-up of soil due to blow around point 53 that prevented water from the Holmewood area reaching Yaxley pump would be addressed. RESOLVED – that the programme be adopted. The Chairman reported that the Whittlesey Mere main drain had not been touched for two years and could require works on lengths 1 – 4.

The Clerk reported that he had spoken to D & G Beaton who stated that they would be prepared to undertake flail mowing for 2016. The lengths 50-51-60-52 in the Yaxley area were considered to be needed to be flailed every year. The Chairman felt that the Holmewood area 24-25 was now in order and an assessment of works would be made later in the year.

It was felt that where water levels were high weed growth was less and consideration to water retention may have to be investigated.

b) Great Fen Project –

i) The Chairman reported that at present monthly meetings have been held with representatives of the Great Fen Project to discuss and progress works had not taken place.

ii) Lorna Parker submitted a full report upon the Great Fen Project from 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016 that had been circulated to all members and posted on the web site.

- Old Decoy Farm – the pool construction was on hold
- New Decoy Farm – planning application pending on new drain
- Corney's Farm – planning application pending on new drain
- Engine Farm – eastern section complete. Pond had clay lining and 2-3 feet of water accumulated. Western section in progress.
- Rymes – Planning application for Car park approved, starting with entrance. Issue with Bird

watchers parking on road should be assisted.

- Clay stockade – legal problems with Crown Estate over lease.
- Water Abstraction – Pre licence application in progress. A plan showing existing abstraction from drain lengths 1-3-12-13. 13-23. 23-22 plus proposed 14-20. 6-34-35. 17a-17-16-15 was submitted and no objections were raised. The control of water into the district would be maintained by the Board but water would be used to top up pond and ditch levels.

J Davis thought that in time water from the western section would not reach Whittlesey Mere pump and may have to be drained via the Yaxley pump.

The Chairman reported that the leaking structure at Holme Lode Farm had been sealed.

239/16 General Matters

a) Planning Matters - The Clerk reported that the Consulting Engineer had written regarding the provision of Engineering Services on a Consultancy Basis. The matter was noted.

b) Consents

44 Wildlife Trust BCN – Kester’s Docking new Car parking area

c) (i) Risk Management - Control and Risk Management – The Clerk reported upon policies and procedures in place and a review of Internal controls was made and no revision to existing ones were made.

(ii) The Health & Safety arrangements continue to be updated. And the Clerk presented a Water & Flood Awareness document from Defra. He explained the hazards and preventive measures the members should take when working near to water.

d) DEFRA – The Annual Return was near completion and would be posted on the web site and sent to the appropriate authorities.

e) Water Abstraction - F I Bliss Ltd

The areas where the board has difficulty building up water is the Caldecote Dyke and the adjacent drains marked 6, 7, 8 and 9 on the map. As F. I. Bliss Limited are already authorised to abstract from the Caldecote Dyke and no additional water is requested, the extended reach 9 will not place any extra pressure on the other abstractor from the dyke. The reaches marked 6, 7 and 8 are often dry and therefore may not provide water when needed. Mr. Bliss is aware of this potential problem, however, there are no other abstractors from these drains that could be impacted.

Accordingly, the board has no objection to the additional reaches (1 to 9) being added to the licence until 31 March 2025 and do not require that a gauge board is installed and that a hands of level is imposed on the new reaches.

f) Rate Determination – K C Williams 9 Askews Lane – Removal of 0.511a of agricultural land to the Special levy section. Land value £90 to Special Levy £69. RESOLVED – that the rate determination be approved

240/16 Payments

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|--------------|------------------|-----------|
| 2015/2016 | | |
| Addison Arms | Meeting expenses | £35.10 |
| Haven Power | Whittlesey Mere | £1,575.56 |
| Bt | Phone | £75.56 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| F I Bliss Ltd | Removal of weed | £600.00 |
| Middle Level Commissioners | Fees | £725.300 |
| Mrs M A Wright | Secretaries duties | £1,085.89 |
| Cambs County Council | Pension contributions | £61.75 |
| R Wright | Clerks expenses | £2,571.40 |
| | | |
| 2016/2017 | | |
| Haven Power | Whittlesey Mere | £1,815.30 |
| Swalec | Yaxley Fen | £274.82 |
| NFU Mutual | Insurance | £2,067.15 |
| Middle Level Commissioners | fees | £48.00 |
| Ivan Cooper | Internal audit fee 2015/2016 | £100.00 |
| Environment Agency | Precept 2016/2017 | £4,242.00 |
| Edf Energy | Metering charge – Whittlesey Mere | £432.00 |
| Haven Power | Whittlesey Mere | £870.46 |

The above payments were approved by the Board.

241/16 Estimates of Income and Expenditure

a) The Clerk presented the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31st March 2016.

RESOLVED – that the AGS be approved and signed by the Clerk and Chairman.

b) The Clerk presented the Annual Accounting Statement return for the year ended 31st March 2016 and the Annual Accounts. RESOLVED – that the AAS and Annual accounts be approved and signed by the RFO and Chairman.

c) The Clerk reported that the Audit of the Accounts has been fixed. The period of exercise of public rights will be from 13^h June 2015 to 22th July 2016 and the appropriate notices have been displayed on the web site. I Cooper a retired Finance Officer of Fenland District council had undertaken the internal audit for 2015/2016. RESOLVED – that I Cooper be appointed Internal Auditor for the period 2016/2017

d) The Board considered estimates for year ending 31st March 2017.

The Board had underspent by £18,190 during 2015/2016, mainly attributable to savings of £7,700 on fuel, £6,623 on drain work and £3,350 on maintenance. An additional £1,000 was recovered on high land water contributions. The net result increased the revenue balance by £14,173.90 a rate of 4.4p.

In 2015/2016 the Board levied a rate of 15p in the £.and raised £45,904.65 from Agriculture and £1,887.15 from Special Levies. The General Fund Account as at 31st March 2016 stood at £54,116.49 and the Development Account at £870.00.

RESOLVED that the estimates as presented be approved.

242/16 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 2016/2017 is: -

- 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%

In 2016/2017 a rate of 1p together with corresponding special levy would raise £3,185.91

The estimated net expenditure of £52,240.00 in 2016/2017 is equivalent to a rate of 16.40p.
RESOLVED: -

- a) A rate in £ of 15.00p on agricultural land & buildings to raise £45,891.15
- b) A special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £1,897.50
- c) the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rate and special levy
- d) That the Clerk be empowered to recover any outstanding rate through the courts.

243/16 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 17th November 2016 at 11.00am followed by lunch.