

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE WAVENEY, LOWER YARE AND LOTHINGLAND
INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD HELD ON 16TH JUNE 2016 AT 2 O’CLOCK AT HADDISCOE VILLAGE HALL**

Present:

- Mr B G Collen (Chairman)**
- Mr H Carrie (Vice Chairman)**
- Mr R Basey-Fisher**
- Mr H Budgen**
- Mr P Cargill**
- Mr J Fiennes**
- Mr M Gooch**
- Miss R Hipperson**
- Mr A Kerkhof**
- Mr W Slater**
- Councillor B Lawn (GYBC)**
- Councillor C Gould (SNDC)**
- Councillor J Savage (SNDC)**
- Councillor C Rivett (WDC)**
- Councillor G Nurden (Broadland)**

Apologies:

- Mr R Beevor**
- Mr D Burroughs**
- Mr M Caston**
- Mr R Cundy**
- Mr C Mutten**

In attendance: **Mr B Blower (Clerk)**

20.1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of Board held on 4th February 2016 were unanimously approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

20.2 Matters Arising

Minute 17.5.1 Mr Basey-Fisher enquired what progress had been made in sorting out the Highland Water contribution. The Clerk reported that he had been in regular contact with the Environment Agency and had only this morning received an email from the Agency indicating that they did not know how to deal with the calculation and that they were going to be using a consultant to do this for them. The Clerk had been told that he would be advised next week as to when this work would be undertaken.

Minute 17.5.3 As the Agency are denying that the overtopping on the south side of Reedham Ferry is a regular problem he has asked the surveyor Andrew Wright to keep an eye on this and to make a written record of each occasion on which there is overtopping in this area so that the Clerk can then go back to the Agency or Norfolk County Council in order to try and persuade them to deal with this.

Minute 17.5.5 The Clerk reported that BESL had offered dates for a meeting to hand over control of the penstock in the new cross wall dividing off Peto’s Marsh. He was trying to establish exactly what

the Agency are looking to hand over. It was agreed that the Board did not wish to take on responsibility for the structure unless absolutely necessary and only wanted control over its operation.

20.3 Approval of Accounts

Copies of the accounts for the Board for the year ended 31st March 2016 had been circulated with the draft annual return as completed by the internal auditor with a summary of the comparisons between estimated and actual expenditure for each level. Board members had considered the figures. Some concern was expressed at the difference between the estimated and actual expenditure on the Waveney Valley level and the Clerk said that he had queried this with the surveyor and the reason partly was that some work had been deferred and some work had been found not to be necessary. It was unanimously agreed that the accounts be approved.

20.4 Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2016

The Board considered the annual return and in particular the annual governance statement at section 1. It was unanimously agreed that the content of the annual return be approved and the Chairman and the Clerk were authorised to sign them.

20.5 Internal Auditor's Report

The internal auditor's report had been circulated and the Clerk invited the Board to consider the recommendations and the following matters were discussed:-

1. The tendering process for routine work was considered and it was acknowledged that although tenders were rarely sought for routine dyke maintenance for the same work surveyors nevertheless ensured that the contractors they used were competitive. This was achieved by using different contractors for different areas so that rates were always being compared. It was agreed that tendering was not appropriate and that this procedure as outlined was satisfactory. It was suggested that paragraph 2 of the Financial Regulations be amended to reflect this.
2. The assets which scored 3 or lower on the asset register were the Askews pump, the Caldecott pump house, the second pump at Langley Peat and North Cove pumping station. Of these the Askews pump was being replaced under the scheme previously approved. The Caldecott pump house problems had been addressed (see Minute 20.8 below). The second pump at Langley Peat was the next project on the Board's capital programme. The North Cove pump had been replaced.
3. The purpose of the purchase order arrangement appeared to have been misunderstood by the internal auditor. The reason these had been introduced was to avoid the need for the Clerk's office to check with surveyors on each occasion that a contractor's invoice was received. Where a purchase order was not forthcoming the Clerk's office invariably checked the invoice with the relevant surveyor which meant that the necessary checks were being undertaken. An appropriate amendment to paragraph 2 of the Financial Regulations would be made to reflect this.

The suggestion that a quotation from Hunts should be tested once a year was considered and the Clerk reported that whenever another pump contractor had been used there had been problems. It was acknowledged that the lack of a viable alternative to Hunts meant that obtaining an alternative price was not feasible. On this basis it was agreed that the Hunt quotation for pump servicing just received by the Clerk be accepted and that Hunt be instructed to carry out the servicing required.

20.6 Benacre Pumping Station

The Clerk reported on the problem with coastal erosion at the Benacre pumping station and circulated some photographs to illustrate the gravity of the problem. The loss of the pumping station was imminent and to avoid this the Agency had indicated that they were going to carrying out some emergency works moving the existing rock revetment to provide protection for as long as it was expected to take to develop a scheme for replacing the existing station. Representatives of the Board had met the Agency and a group comprising Kessingland Parish Council and other stakeholders to formulate a scheme. The result of this was that the Board had been asked to take the lead on this project. The principal reason for this was that the Board was better placed than anybody else to obtain access to the various sources of funding. Karen Thomas of the Water Management Alliance had been engaged to advise the Board. The current position is that she is ready to submit an application for grant funding to cover the cost of carrying out the modelling required to come up with suitable options for replacing the existing structure. All members agreed that it was appropriate that the Board should take on this role and it was acknowledged that no scheme could be progressed until appropriate funding was in place.

20.7 Askews/Pettingills Pump Scheme Update

The Clerk had circulated the latest budget figures for the scheme which were considered. He reported that Askews Marshes partnership had agreed to contribute a one off payment of £140,000.00 to the scheme which has enabled it to get off the ground and the Board expressed its thanks to them for this contribution. The Clerk reported that he had been advised by the Agency that the scheme had been approved in principle and the letter signing it off was close to being issued. As soon as this was received along with the £140,000.00 contribution the new equipment would be ordered.

20.8 Caldecott Pumping Station

Following on from the discussion at Minute 19.4 the Clerk had enquired of Mr Roberts the pump attendant as to what he proposed to do to secure the electrical equipment and make the health and safety improvements that had been recommended. The Clerk reported on the email that he had received from Mr Roberts dated 30th March. Miss Hipperson reported that it was likely to be some two years before the allocation of the Broads Authority lottery funding for repairs to mills was decided and therefore the long term works were likely to be delayed. However, in view of the assurances given by Mr Roberts in his email to Mr Blower of 30th March it was agreed that no further action was required.

20.9 Health and Safety Report

In Mr Mutton's absence the Clerk reported that he had heard from Mr Mutton that there were no matters to report, no accidents and no near misses and that his inspections were continuing.

20.10 Mink Project

The Board had considered the information received from the Norfolk mink project and after some discussion it was agreed to make a contribution of £1,000.00 towards the project's work. This would be split between the districts in Norfolk as the project's activity was confined to Norfolk. Mr Gooch indicated that Penny Hemphill of Suffolk Wildlife Trust was happy to assist individual land owners with any mink control measures they may wish to take.

20.11 ADA Eastern Branch Meeting 11th November 2016

The Chairman advised Board members that the next branch meeting would be on 11th November 2016 at Breckland District Council's offices. He encouraged as many people as possible to attend that meeting.

20.12 Any Other Business

20.12.1 The Clerk advised the Board that the latest direction from the Environment Agency on compliance with the Eels Regulations was that instead of having to replace all pumps within five years the recommendation now is only to replace equipment with eel friendly pumps when the pumps have come to the end of their normal life. This information was welcomed.

20.12.2 Billingford Common. The Clerk outlined a problem that had occurred on Billingford Common and the request from Sir Rupert Mann for the Board to create a new relief channel to avoid flooding in certain gardens adjoining the Common. He outlined the surveyor's view on this and the problems that might be associated with digging a new relief channel on the Common and the Board agreed that it was appropriate to follow the surveyor's advice and no such relief channel should be constructed. It was suggested that the surveyor might investigate possible means of reducing the run off rate from the Thelveton Estate upland area.

20.12.3 Water Management Alliance. The Clerk invited the Board to consider again the formation of a closer relationship with the Water Management Alliance. He said that the increasing complexity of funding streams meant that being part of a larger organisation with its greater resources was likely to be beneficial. In addition discussions were now starting with the Environment Agency as to what was going to happen at the end of the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project. One option that had been suggested was for the Agency to hand back responsibility for river walls to adjoining landowners. The Water Management Alliance have sought negotiations with the Agency over this with a view possibly to their taking on responsibility for assets currently maintained by BESL. Their negotiating position would be significantly improved if WMA were able to speak for the whole of Broadland and our Board is the only part that is missing. After some discussion it was agreed that consideration should be given to the terms upon which we could form an association with the Water Management Alliance that would be mutually beneficial.

20.12.4 The Clerk asked all Board members to let him know if there were any changes that needed to be made to the register of interests that they had completed last year.

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be the 2nd February 2017