

# WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## MINUTES

of the proceedings of the **Works Committee** at a Meeting held at the Board's Offices, 47 Norfolk Street, Boston on Wednesday **22 November 2017**.

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Present: P. Richardson (Committee Chairman)

Messrs: C. Brotherton  
H. Drake  
C. Hardy  
R.Hall-Jones  
A. Harrison  
J.E. Grant (Chairman)

### 1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were received from:-

Messrs: Mrs. M Dennis  
A. Saul  
J. Woods

### 2. **ENGINEERING MANAGER'S ESTIMATES 2018/2019**

#### 2.1 **Weed Control Estimates**

The Engineering Manager presented his estimates to the Board:-

<b>Details</b>	<b>2018/19 £</b>	<b>2017/18 £</b>
Sewer Spraying	35,000	36,000
Roundup	21,000	20,500
Drain/Sewer Flailing	240,000	239,000
Drain/Sewer Cutting	445,000	441,000
Cotting	20,000	20,000
Hand Roding	6000	10,000
Weed Cutting Boat	18,000	18,000
General	1000	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>786,000</b>	<b>785,500</b>

Note – Sewer Spraying includes the total weed control supervision costs

The Engineering Manager confirmed that there were no significant changes other than he had worked on the assumption that we would not be successful with the application to use Reglone. £35,000 in respect of Drain Spraying had been added to drain/sewer cutting as there was no spraying work being done.

*A.Harrison asked if the additional costs shown in the total included the weed baskets. The Engineering Manager confirmed that it did.*

*The Chairman added that these were the wider baskets.*

2.2 **Cleansing/Mudding Estimates additional costs**

Details	2018/19 £	2017/18 £
General	52,000	50,000
Sewers/Improvements	100,000	100,000
Drains	68,500	9,000
Revetment	10,000	17,000
Vermin Control	1000	1,000
Cowbridge Sluice & Lock	4000	5,000
Slip Repairs	45,000	45,000
Surveys	1000	2,000
Bushing (50% of annual cost)	18,000	18,000
Faggot Making (50% of annual cost)	12,000	12,000
Total	311,500	259,000

Note – General includes the total Cleansing supervision costs

The Engineering Manager advised that the mudding of the Fodderdyke was well under way and the increase shown was in respect of phase 2 of the mudding out programme. Revetment had reduced simply because there was not enough time to complete this work as priority was being given to bushing works as a lot of the banks are over-grown.

3. **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY/ PCSA WORKS**

The Engineering Manager confirmed that this was really the main news he wanted to deliver. Just one week before the budget had been prepared we were advised of a substantial increase in work that the EA would like the Board to undertake on their behalf. This is as a result of the Public Sector Co-operation Agreements (“PCSA”) between IDBs and the EA which have resulted in a 16% saving nationally.

The estimated PCSA workload updated since the report to the Works Committee was sent out is:-

Weeks of work	Total
Tracked excavator/weed-basket	10
Flail batters	3
Flail raised embankments	3
Weed boats	28
Spraying	1
Total	45

The EA are unable at the present time to provide definite written confirmation of the works but high-level discussions have intimated that this will be the case. The EA wish to focus more on emergency response work and we have received the strongest indications that the work will be forthcoming.

However, if we are to undertake to do this work we need to ensure that the Board is well placed to deal with it efficiently. The Engineering Manager and the Assistant Engineer have given this careful consideration and believe that to do this work well and up to a high standard replacement of old excavators and purchase of weed boats will be required. The following works are required by the EA:-

- East Fen Catchwater – basket, flail and weed boat.
- West Fen Catchwater – basket, flail and weed boat.
- Stonebridge Drain – weed boat
- Maud Foster – weed boat.

An additional employee will also be required as at present we do not have sufficient employees to operate the plant. One additional employee will enable us to meet the tight programmes but following discussion with the two Foremen, the team are up for the challenge of delivering this additional work. However, this would be essential upon the correct staff and reliable machinery being in place. The Engineering Manager asked the Board if they would be willing to undertake this additional work on behalf of the EA. The Engineering Manager added that if we were not prepared to do this work that another local IDB would be willing to deliver the service. The Chief Executive added that this was exactly what the IDB Community had been pushing for over the next 5 years and the Chairman added that it was also an excellent way to manage the whole catchment area, as these water courses come into our District and was a real chance for the Board to give a better service which would benefit everyone.

The Assistant Engineer confirmed that the work would entail approximately 37km of hydraulic weed cutting work, 48km of weed boat work and 86km of flailing/mowing work. This work needs to be incorporated but not to the detriment of our existing workload and obligations. The work will equate to approximately £90,000 across the whole season. The Chairman asked about recompense and the Assistant Engineer confirmed that the costs would be passed on together with a 10% administration charge.

*R.Leggott asked if the Board would be able to find the right employee to meet these needs.* The Engineering Manager confirmed that recruitment was an issue but if the right salary was offered he did not think this would cause a problem. We have recently recruited two very good employees and we currently have drivers on the 360 machines carrying out our own work. EA. We have taken on one younger man and he has good experience and knowledge of boats and sailing and this could be encouraged with regard to the weed boat.

*P.Bedford asked if there was any indication that the Board may simply be used to de-main sewers rather than main rivers.* The Chief Executive said no and that there had been very high level discussions about the East and West Catchwater drains. The Chairman added there would be no de-maining where there was considerable public risk. The Chief Executive said that there are pilot schemes to see how things will work out.

*H.Drake stated that consideration needs to be given to the effect all these changes will have on the Board's finances.* The Chief Executive confirmed that there would be no loss to the Board as the EA would be charged for each item of work undertaken on their behalf. *H. Drake added perhaps a separate note of the charges and expenditure should be kept for further consideration.* The Assistant Engineer confirmed that the EA would want to measure efficiency as well.

The Chief Executive added that with regard to the East and West Catchwater that we may be able to consider additional rating. *C. Crunkhorn said that if the Board was not efficient then we would lose out.* The Assistance Engineer added that we would make sure that we were efficient.

*R. Hall-Jones voiced concern that with minimal maintenance the risk of flooding increased.*

The Chairman confirmed that the expenditure was not yet finalised as we had only been aware of the additional work for a week but he appreciated that the Board needed to move quickly.

*R. Hall-Jones asked if we needed the additional rates.* The Assistance Engineer confirmed that if the work was funded in this way it would give us an opportunity to ensure that the works were done to the Board's standard before possible de-maining in the future.

*C. Hardy asked if the EA would draw up the specification of works.* The Assistant Engineer confirmed they would and that we needed to adhere to it. The Engineering Manager confirmed that the men currently doing the EA work completed it to our standard and that the people at the delivery end are very happy with the work we are doing.

*C. Hardy asked if one additional man would be sufficient. The Committee Chairman confirmed that this would be dealt with at the Plant and Machinery meeting later.*

The Engineering Manager said that he was asking for the Committee's recommendation at present as to whether they would like to take on the additional work for the EA at this time. The Chairman added that the Engineering Manager would take this further through the other committees and at present he believed that we could cope with the work and was simply outlining what he might need to do the work. The Committee Chairman added that at this time there was nothing confirmed in writing and it was just an indication.

*R. Hall- Jones proposed that the Board should be positive and the additional work be undertaken with economic consideration.*

*P. Bedford seconded the proposal.*

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that the proposed estimates in respect of watercourse for 2018/2019 be adopted

i)	Weed Control	£786,000
ii)	Cleansing/Mudding	£311,500

4. **ALTERNATIVE TO DIQUAT**

The Engineering Manager confirmed that through ADA, consideration is being given to trials of alternatives to Diquat for weed control. The Engineering Manager asked if the Board would be willing to participate in these trials. The alternatives are hydrogen peroxide and a barley straw extract. The Chairman said he would be interested in the comparison against Diquat.

*P. Skinner said he was aware that this had been used successfully in lakes for water-skiing etc. The Chairman said that was the actual bales but this was just extract.*

After further discussion it was:

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that the Board would be willing to participate in the trials for an alternative to Diquat.

5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed.

**Chairman**