

Tuesday 7th October, 2025

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MINUTES – of a meeting of the East of the Ouse, Polver and Nar Internal Drainage Board, held at The Runcton Holme Social Club, School Road, Runcton Holme on Tuesday 7th October, 2025 at 2.30 pm

PRESENT: Mr. P. Towler (Chairman)
Messrs. D. Caley, J. Caley, T. Coates, P. Devulapalli, D. Harrison, A. Holmes, M. Little, B. Long, J. Moriarty, S. Nichols, E. Pope, R. Rockcliffe and C. Rose.
Mr. A. Newton (General Manager)
Mr. M. Bussens (Operations Manager)
Mrs. J. Heading (Clerk)
Ms. L. Morgan (Administrative Assistant)

APOLOGIES – Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. S. Bearshaw, C. Crofts, A. Dickinson and J. Kirk.

DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS – No Member declared an interest in any item on the Agenda.

ELECTION DECLARATION – The Clerk reported that the Election Declaration as advertised on the Board's website and Notice Board at the Drainage Office was presented to the Board. There was one change to be noted, with the passing of Mrs. Bunkall, leaving a vacancy on the Board.

MINUTES – The Minutes of 10th June, 2025, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman. It was unanimously resolved that the Minutes be confirmed.

Matters arising – (Page 524) The General Manager raised more information regarding the access track to the Puny Pumping Station, in West Winch. Following on from the last meeting of the Board there had been further investigation, with Messrs Brown & Co and Fraser Dawbarns, and it appeared that although the process to register the land was started this had not been completed. Fraser Dawbarns had stated that the cost involved in completing this was £1500, per case, with there being four cases. However, as it was a historical issue that this was not originally completed, they were halving the cost to £750, per case. The Board currently had an agreement with Cadent, regarding the use of the pumping station access road, which the Board was currently being financially compensated for. Cllr. J. Moriarty requested clarification on who Cadent were, and why they required access. The General Manager stated that they were a gas company who required to use the access of the pumping station roadway for their larger vehicles to access their nearby site. Their request for access had highlighted the issue with ownership. The Chairman confirmed that the Board had no issues with access to the pumping station.

The General Manager requested the Board's approval to move forward with the Land Registry process. Cllr. C. Rose proposed, seconded by Mr. D. Caley, and unanimously agreed by Members.

Mr. R. Rockcliffe informed Members that he was still in contact with the Project Manager at Cadent if any issues arose.

Cllr. B. Long asked how long ago the issue of ownership was first raised, and Cllr. P. Devulapalli also questioned why was this not completed at the time. The General Manager stated that the solicitors had not completed the paperwork, and this is why they were offering the discounted rate. He also stated that this was before he was involved with the Downham Market Group, as it dated back to at least 2014.

HEALTH & SAFETY – The General Manager suggested that the Board’s Health and Safety Advisor’s report should be taken as read.

Matters arising –



The General Manager updated Members that following further overhead cable training (SHOC), operatives were now able to self-certify for working under cables. An app had been developed for staff to record this, and a record of the same was kept in the office.

The General Manager also informed Members that whilst he was on leave, the Operations Manager for the Ely Group had received a visit from an HSE inspector. He had spent two hours speaking to him regarding the Boards’s operations, and had also spoken to Lisa, the Board’s Health and Safety consultant over the telephone. The inspector was happy with the Board’s procedures, and the fact that it was working with Lisa to implement new procedures. This showed the Board’s investment into its Health and Safety had been a good decision.



OPERATIONS MANAGERS REPORT – The Operations Manager presented his report, which was adopted.

Matters arising thereon: - The Operations Manager stated that following the Health and Safety investigation the Board were a person down. His remaining workman was currently learning to operate the excavator and that maintenance would soon be back on track. The Mill Fen weed screen had now been repaired, but this had not yet been properly tested due to the dry weather, meaning that the pump was not yet running.

The Hitachi Excavator was now getting old, and the Operation Manager had been advised that this would need replacing in the near future. The General Manager stated that quotes would be obtained and brought to the next meeting of the Board.

The New Holland tractor's issues had now been resolved. Whilst other repairs had taken place, he was able to see that there were two loose earth bolts. These had now been tightened and there had been no more issues with the indicators on this vehicle.

A welder had been purchased to make some repairs following a break in at the Nar pumphouse. The cost of the repairs would have been more than the cost of the welder, and the Board now had a welder available for any other repairs or projects. A new strimmer had also been purchased, as the previous one was very old. The new strimmer also had an anti-vibration handle, which met Health and Safety guidance. The General Manager added that Health and Safety vibration testing had recently taken place on equipment. Cllr. C. Rose stated that vibrations could cause serious disabilities and was happy that this had been taken into account.

Mr. M. Little asked if the Nar pumphouse break in was an isolated incident and did the person responsible have to make a lot of effort to gain access. The Operations Manager stated that, yes, the padlocks on the door, and that Mr. N. Elsom had had previous issues with locks being broken on the access road to the pumphouse. Mr. N. Elsom stated that yes, the locks on the gate have previously been ground off, and on one occasion the gates themselves had been taken. Mr. M. Little asked if the Board had reported this. The General Manager stated that he did report to the Police if we needed to make an insurance claim, as we required the case number. Cllr. P. Devulapalli asked if it was worth considering installing signage stating, 'nothing of value left inside building'. Cllr. J. Moriarty stated that this was a valid point and worth looking into.

Cllr. J. Moriarty asked if the Operatives were fully trained to use the welder. The General Manager stated that, yes, they were fully trained, and had also completed refresher courses and medical paperwork in order to use the welder.

GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT – The General Manager presented his Report, which was adopted.

Matters arising thereon: The General Manager wished to provide further information regarding the DEFRA consultations on funding. This was to be in place from 1st April 2026, and there were different funding scales as outlined in his report. There was also funding available for 100% asset replacements.

Regarding how this would affect the Board, the General Manager had met with Stantec, who were the consultants working on replacing the Polver Pumping station, the previous week. Stantec could not, at that time, justify the cost of replacing the pumps in relation to the benefits. The Board were looking at replacing the current pumps with 'fish-friendly' flaps and syphons. As it stood, the Board would have had to make a sizeable contribution towards any replacements.

Regarding the DEFRA funding as a whole, the General Manager did not believe that the amount of funding available would be any higher than it currently was, but that it would have to cover many more projects. As an example of the funding situation, the Environment Agency had submitted a bid for £24 million in projects and had only received funding for £4.5 million. Priority had been given to projects that were ready to start.

Cllr. B. Long stated that he had attended a previous meeting regarding this matter and did not have a favourable outlook on the future of funding, noting that the EA had not received enough funding for their maintenance project list and that less than a third of these projects were now able to progress.

The General Manager stated that he would keep the Board informed of developments going forward. Regarding the Board's project, it was found that the Board did not have any drawings, but these had since been made available by the Board's former engineers, the Middle Level Commissioners.

The General Manager stated that he wished to introduce an IT policy. This was for good governance and had been recommended by ADA for the Group to consider. It was a policy that the General Manager wanted all Boards in the Group to adopt.

Mr. A. Holmes asked about data management security and the policies regarding system back-ups and password protection. The Clerk stated that back-ups were completed nightly and stored off-site by the external IT support company, as were back-ups of passwords.

Mr. M. Little asked if there were any cyber security risks relating to the operation of the pumping equipment. The Operations Manager stated that the pump settings could only be changed manually and that computers were used solely for monitoring the equipment's data.

Mr. A. Holmes proposed the adoption of the IT policy, seconded by Mr. N. Elsom, with all members of the Board in agreement.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REPORT – The Internal and External Auditors' Reports on the Board's Accounts for the year ended 2024/25 were received and confirmed.

The Clerk stated regarding the comments made in the Internal Auditor's report regarding transparency. The Board would now be publishing all payments made over £500 and would be exploring the possibility of an upgrade of the Board's accounting software automatically input invoices.

CROPPING RATES – The Clerk stated that the cropping compensation rates for the previous year were £396 per hectare equal to £160 acre. No compensation has been paid in the previous few years. The Board were in agreement to maintain the current rate.

CORRESPONDENCE – The General Manager wished to make the Board aware of a consultation he had had with Richard Jackson regarding the Kings Lynn travel hub. The Board had not heard anything back from this consultation since July, but it had received a £34,686 contribution fee, in line with the new policy.

The General Manager gave details of a consent granted over the period: -

Anglian Water Services Ltd in respect of drainage works in association Directional drill of a 90mm water main under the Board's Pig Pipe Main Drain

PLANNING – The report on Planning Comments submitted on behalf of the Board, was adopted.

Cllr. J Moriarty asked for clarification on the standard comments, outside of the area letters, and if these were required if they were outside of the Board's District. The General Manager stated that although these plannings may be outside of the Boards rateable area, they were within areas that drain into the District. Therefore the Board would comment on the run-off from these sites.

SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS – Resolved that the Schedule of Payments, supported by the list of the Clerk's payments, totalling £182,609.07 be confirmed.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 3.25pm

Chairman :

Date :