

# GOUTHWAITE BOARD OF MANGEMENT

Incorporated by Act of Parliament - Bradford Corporation Waterworks Act 1890 for the management of Gouthwaite Compensation Reservoir, River Nidd

## MINUTES of 2019 AGM

Held on  
Thursday April 11th 2019 at 2.30pm  
Council Chamber, Pateley Bridge

### AGENDA

1. Welcome. The Chair welcomed board members. The Board thanked Peter Bancroft the retiring Reservoir Keeper and Mrs Veronica Hawkesworth, retiring as Clerk to the Board.

2. Attendance:

Chris. Hawkesworth - Chair	Glasshouses Mill
John Shillcock - Vice Chair	Chris Robinson - Low Laithe Weir
Tom Watson	Harrogate Borough Council
Miranda Foster	Yorkshire Water
David Gotto	NYCC
Richard Maxted	Environment Agency
John Goodliffe	Nidderdale AC – Pateley Bridge Weir
Andrew Hobson	Yorkshire Water

Observers:

Sarah Turnbull	Clerk
Tom Wheelwright	Gouthwaite Sporting Rights
Josh Riddell	Swinton Trout

Apologies:

Karan Main	Mill Farm, Kirk Hammerton
David Lindsay	Environment Agency
Cllr Phil Ireland	Harrogate Borough Council
Cllr Stan Lumley	HBC/NYCC
Newman Booth	Yorkshire Water

Abbreviations:

AMP	Asset Management Plan
AONB	Area of Outstanding Beauty
EA	Environment Agency
PB	Pateley Bridge.
KFC	Knarborough Flood Committee
NAC	Nidderdale Angling Club.

NYCC  
HBC  
YW  
GB  
NPP

North Yorkshire County Council  
Harrogate Borough Council  
Yorkshire Water  
Gouthwaite Board  
Nidderdale Partnership Plus

The voting system was explained and confirmed.

3. The 2018 Minutes were approved by the meeting.

4. Matters Arising:

JS pointed out that in the 2018 AGM Draft Minutes, there was an apparent gap highlighted in the report of the discussion of the Yorkshire Water Report (Section 8). The YW representative had explained that the new syphon which was to be fitted during 2020 or 2021 following on from the recently completed works on the Gouthwaite Reservoir dam was not intended for a quick drawdown in the case of an impending flood as this might exacerbate local flooding. The syphon would only operate in an emergency such as a threat to the stability of the dam whereupon it was envisaged that there would be a limited release of 10-12 cu mecs in order to relieve the pressure on the dam. Hence though the paragraphs in Section 8 appeared to be contradictory, they were both correct and if read together were complementary to each other.

However, Councillor Lumley's follow-up question as to which parts of the Dale would be impacted if such a drawdown did occur had not been answered.

Discussion ranged around the possible effects if the projected amount of water were released. It was pointed out that this was a relatively small amount, and its effect on the river further down the valley in the case of a large flood event would be negligible as the river boundaries were wider. It would also prevent the dam from damage, the effects of which would be much greater than those of the small planned release.

It was agreed that JS and ST would liaise to provide the wording of a clearer explanation to be included in the 2018 minutes.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chair stated that since the last meeting in October 2018, there was little to report. It had been a very dry period, but there had been no alteration of the rules for releases from the reservoir.

6. There was no correspondence to report.

7. Environment Agency report:

### Rainfall:

The period since last April has been dominated by single rainfall events. There have been very few months of rainfall greater than the average, generally the result of one or two days' downpour rather than sustained rainfall.

### River Flow:

Mean flow measurements show that although the early part of the year was above average, there was a sharp fall between May and October, and there have only been 3 months of above average flow since last March 2018. The underlying trend is for short responses to rainfall before flows return to drier than normal for winter/spring.

Rivers have been under ecological stress since last summer. They are able to withstand such periods if these are relatively short, but if they last longer, this will lead to problems.

### Reservoir level:

Measurements reflect the rainfall pattern, so after a limited period of spills prior to April 2018, there was a steady decline. There was a 3 week instrument outage in August 2018. Levels recovered from September to December with short periods of overspill in December.

Although reservoir levels have declined from May 2018, the decline is much less steep than that experienced in 2003, a previous drought year.

### Compensation releases:

These have been normal. In early 2018, there was greater release than required by current rules. Since then, releases have closely mirrored the required compensation.

MF (YW) pointed out that reservoir works took place in 2017/18 so the EA report shows compensation drawdown higher than normal. This was to be able to start work at 50% capacity.

CH stated that local springs had dried up and grass was not growing in some places locally. RM (EA) explained that gritstone is slower to feel the effects of a dry period, but once it has started to dry out, it takes time for it to recover. What was needed was a sustained period of drizzle, rather than heavy rain.

### 8. Yorkshire Water report:

The report illustrated the fact that, due to rainfall patterns, it had not always been possible to maintain 50% drawdown in 2017; in contrast, it highlighted how low reservoir levels had been in the dry summer of 2018.

Modelling also showed that if the same rules had been applied as in 2003, the consequentially higher levels of release would have impacted the reservoir

much more severely than releases under the current rules. This is encouraging, since it is the first time these rules have been tested since their adoption.

Gouthwaite Reservoir safety works: The first cycle of works have been successfully completed to programme. The second phase of the syphon will need to be installed under the next budget cycle, so probably not until 2021. It may be possible to complete the construction without lowering the reservoir level, but this depends on the final design of the works. In any event, YW will need to break through the embankment to connect it, so the reservoir level may need to be reduced. The plan is to do this at a time when the reservoir water level is low, to minimise disruption.

Discussion: Several attendees raised the issue of lack of consultation by YW with interested parties, e.g. those with sporting rights, parish councils, or the angling club. Sporting rights on the reservoir and the river had been impacted for 2 years, and there appeared to be a lack of fish due to the works. Local councillors had also received very little information, and it looked bad if residents raised the issue and councillors couldn't respond. It was requested that YW liaise thoroughly and in a timely way with all interested parties prior to commencing further works.

AH (YW) apologised and promised to take these concerns back to YW so that they would be addressed.

TW asked whether, if the drought continued, water would be released into Gouthwaite from Scar House and/or Angram. The response was that this was unlikely to happen, and that the modelling showed that under the new rules, the reservoir had much more resilience than in the past. Also, in the event that Gouthwaite is depleted, the upper reservoirs would also be low, and this drinking water would be required elsewhere.

RM (EA) said that the tops were wetter than they had been and we were in the same position as in April last year. We would be able to get through a dry summer, though might struggle with a dry period of 2 years.

CH asked how low the reservoir level would need to be when making a hole in the dam. AM replied that it depended on the design as to whether the reservoir level would have to be lowered.

#### 9. Accounts:

The Chair apologised for the fact that the accounts had not yet been prepared as the new Clerk still needed to be made a signatory to the bank account in order to access the accounts. This was more problematic than had been foreseen. The accounts to the end of March 2019 were expected to be

prepared before August, although there would be no further meeting until this time next year unless there was a drought.

Levy:

The Board was now using the services of NPP, and it had been agreed that the Gouthwaite Board should be included in the NPP website in the interests of visibility and accountability. In addition, a laptop had been purchased, and there were ongoing costs of virus protection and back-up. Clerking services, including the cost of maintaining the website, would have to go up from £1000 to £1150 per year. This should come out of revenue, though the cost of setting up the website (£800 + VAT) should come out of reserves.

JS will liaise with Helen Flynn of NPP who is getting the website constructed. JS will circulate any written text produced. It should contain an explanation of what we do, why we do it and who are the beneficiaries.

Discussion:

TW stated that there should be a second meeting in the current year to ratify the accounts. This was generally agreed, the date to be announced at the Chair/Vice Chair's discretion.

It was recommended that the laptop be backed up. Cloud-based computing was recommended, if GDPR compatible. This may add extra costs.

The meeting discussed a rise in the Levy vs leaving it as it is. Too high a rise would be unacceptable, especially if it were higher, as a percentage, than the local Council Tax rise. However, if the Levy were maintained at its current level, it might not be enough to cover expenses. There would also be little scope built in for emergency or unexpected expenses.

It was decided to raise the Levy for 2019 – 2020 to £6.30. This would raise £1,222.20 [194 votes x £6.30], just about covering the coming year's revenue budget and would be an acceptable percentage rise. Moreover, if there needed to be a future rise to £6.50, it would not represent an unacceptably large increase.

10. CH and JS were elected unopposed as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. CH stated that he was representing Glasshouses 123 Ltd. but that when the Mill development had finished, he would not be available as Chair.
11. Exchange of Information – nothing to report.
12. The next meeting will be in early October, date and time TBA.