

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 2022 AGM

Held on
Tuesday April 5th 2022 at 2.30pm
Council Chamber, Pateley Bridge

1. Welcome.

The Chair welcomed board members and pointed out that because of upcoming changes to constituency and HBC/NYCC Council boundaries, some members would be likely to lose their membership of the Board after April 2022.

2. Attendance:

Chris. Hawkesworth - Chair	Glasshouses Mill
John Shillcock - Vice Chair	Chris Robinson - Low Laithe Weir
Stan Lumley	Harrogate Borough Council
Miranda Foster	Yorkshire Water
David Gotto	NYCC
Pamela White	Environment Agency
John Goodliffe	Nidderdale AC – Pateley Bridge Weir
Newman Booth	Yorkshire Water

Observers:

Sarah Turnbull	Clerk
Roger Wensley	Nidderdale Plus

Apologies:

Karan Main	Mill Farm, Kirk Hammerton
David Lindsay	Environment Agency
Cllr Phil Ireland	Harrogate Borough Council
Martin Walton	Canal and Rivers Trust

Abbreviations:

AONB	Area of Outstanding Beauty
EA	Environment Agency
PB	Pateley Bridge.
KFC	Knaresborough Flood Committee
NAC	Nidderdale Angling Club.
NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council
HBC	Harrogate Borough Council

YW
GB
NPP
LTA

Yorkshire Water
Gouthwaite Board
Nidderdale Partnership Plus
Long Term Average

The voting system, as per the “2016 – 194 votes listing” was explained and confirmed.

3. **2021 Minutes**

Item 9: Future of the Board

The Chair stated that the meeting would return to a discussion of this after Item 9 of the current Agenda.

Item 11: Information Exchange

1) River drying event

JS stated that he had not been able to establish why the river had stopped flowing overnight on 4th March 2021. However, this had appeared to be a temporary event, not repeated, so it was agreed that no further action was necessary.

2) Collapsing culvert at Ramsgill

MF said there was ongoing liaison between YW and those affected. Councillor Lumley said that Highways had repaired where the water crossed under the road, but some work on the edges and in adjacent fields still needed to be done.

4. **Matters Arising**

JS reported that the contractors working on the installation of the new syphon had not communicated with NAC as promised. As work was scheduled to recommence, it was to be hoped they would be more communicative. This was important, as anglers could be in the water when a water surge occurred. If the contractors informed NAC, the latter could easily inform their members.

NB stated that the contractors had engaged initially, but that this had not been maintained. He could not answer for the contractors, but YW would take action to ensure better communication in future.

The 2021 Minutes were approved by the meeting.

5. **Chairman’s Report**

Would take place after discussion of Agenda Point 9.

6. **Correspondence not on the Agenda**

Pollution Event

The Clerk reported that after consultation with the Chair, in order to inform the public, a report had been put on the NPP website.

7. Environment Agency report 2021-2

Rainfall:

There was a great deal of variability in 2021. A very dry April, with only 14% of the LTA recorded at Scar House, was made up for by an extremely wet May – the third wettest on record. Rainfall was average in July and August, low in September and above average in October. After that there was relatively low rainfall until February 2022, the third wettest on record. Since then, conditions have settled.

River Flow:

The highest flows were in January and February; thereafter, despite fluctuations, flows declined steadily, and in April, were well below average, so reservoir releases were necessary. There was a fluctuation due to high rainfall in May, but overall, there were few spills from June to October, as the reservoir had been drawn down due to the syphon works.

Peak flows were moderate from November to January, but base and peak flows increased dramatically in February, due to Storm Franklin, then declined in late February and March 2022.

Reservoir level: This reflected the rainfall pattern until Late May/early June, when water was drawn down to facilitate Phase 2 of the syphon works. Levels continued to decline, despite a wet spell in early August, until they were at 40% of capacity during a dry September. Thereafter, they varied, in general, with rainfall.

Compensation releases: These were according to the rules, but the graph illustrated how average flows were disproportionately affected by high flow peaks at times of heavy rainfall.

During the drawdown of the reservoir in late May/early June 2021, releases were greater than average, but were held steady after the silt release on June 4th. After a brief spill event in November, releases were lower than would be expected while tests were carried out by YW to see if sediment had built up behind the valves. Since then, releases have returned to normal, but there were many spills during the recent named storms in February 2022.

8. Yorkshire Water report

2020-21: The report highlighted the dry end of spring and summer 2020, to the extent that applications for Drought Permits were being prepared. However, fortunately, rain in June fully refilled the reservoir.

2021-2: After a dry spring, the reservoir refilled by the time of the drawdown. Initially, 300 megalitres per day were released, but this was reduced to 40

megalitres per day after the June 4th release of poor quality water. After this, the works were halted and a constant release, somewhat higher than that envisaged for the drawdown, was maintained in order to minimise disturbance. Following tests for silt build-up behind the flow valves, normal operation was resumed in December 2021.

MF pointed out that it had been necessary to review options for installing the upstream pipe in order to minimise cutting and digging. This had meant further planning constraints, as the plans now differed from the original ones. The aim was to recommence the project in April or May 2013, with appropriate consultation.

Discussion:

JS asked whether the EA had found out exactly what had been disturbed in the 4th June release. There was a mismatch in his opinion, between the type of material being excavated, and what was flowing out. He would like to know in order to be able to report to NAC.

NB stated that as YW were in dispute with the company carrying out the works, it was impossible to say. However, YW would put mitigations in place for when the work recommenced in 2023.

MF said that YW had now installed a turbidity meter, so there was better monitoring now in place.

PW had received communication about 3 flooding incidents on a property near Ramsgill. The EA would look into this and other flooding events and would provide the property owner with the information gathered.

CH observed that the alluvial fan often dammed up the river and caused the road to flood above the bridge.

MF pointed out how difficult it was to plan for water resources when there were huge variations at play.

9. Accounts

RW reported that all levies had been paid. Expenditure had been slightly less for the year in question, while estimated costs had remained the same. There was therefore no need to increase the levy, and he suggested that this should remain at £6.50. This was unanimously approved by the Board.

Chair's Report

The Chair said that following on from last year's, the issue of the future of the Board was again up for debate.

Neither he nor the Vice Chair could continue indefinitely, but the means by which a solution could be found were complicated: if the Board were to continue, the role of Chair would have to go to the Member with the most

votes, thus, to the Mill at Glasshouses, which would soon pass from the development company, Glasshouses 123 to a Management Committee.

However, the ManCo might have little interest in participating, as they had no stake in managing the river. On the other hand, for the nearby fish farm – which had no votes - the management of the river held great importance. There were few riparian owners with votes who had any interest in the management of the river. Whether it would be legal to transfer votes to those, such as a fish farm, who had an interest was not clear, and it would be costly to investigate the legality of this.

It was, however, pointed out that this had already happened as a *fait accompli* with Pateley weir, whose votes were now with NAC.

Discussion then centred around the repairs needed at Glasshouses weir – and who would be paying for this - and the need for repairs under the Mill to be completed before the goit can be filled up and the feed of fresh water restored to the dam. CH said that the repairs to the Mill should be finished in the next 12 months and the dam filled to heritage levels.

CH said that possible solutions to the future of the Board were to do nothing, or to abolish the Board. However, he would like to leave something to progress into the future. CH's suggestion was that, with the benefit of being able to consult with their legal departments, YW and the EA form a subcommittee to discuss how to proceed.

There was further discussion regarding possible precedents in other parts of the county. However, MF said that, though there were other similar Acts governing other reservoirs, the release rules were not similar, and there were no other comparable sitting committees. She would investigate with YW, but spending large amounts on the legalities would not be possible.

PW said she would talk to the Co-ordinator for the Nidd Catchment unofficially. If a more official response was required, an email would be needed.

After long discussion, it was finally decided that the status quo was acceptable.

10. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

CH and JS were elected unopposed as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

11. Exchange of Information

Pollution incident – dealt with under 6 above.

Councillor Lumley stated that NYCC had commissioned a Rural Report for North Yorkshire to look at the many aspects of challenges in a rural county; amongst other things, energy. However, it had not looked in depth at hydro-electric power. He himself was keen to exploit this supplementary source of energy.

The general consensus was that the flow rate and level of fall on the weirs would not be enough to generate much power, and that the cost of development might not be made up for by the amount of energy generated. A better investment would be putting pv tiles on roofs.

Nevertheless, Councillor Lumley pointed out that the accumulated energy produced by exploiting several weirs would help to supplement the national supply, and he would continue to investigate this.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm.

12. The next AGM will be in April 2023, date and time TBA.