

GOUTHWAITE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

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

MINUTES of 2025 AGM

Held on
Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at 2.00pm
Council Chamber, Pateley Bridge

1. **Welcome.**

The Chair welcomed Board Members.

2. **Attendance:**

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| Chris Hawkesworth - Chair (CH) | Glasshouses Mill |
| Dave Gotto - Vice Chair (DG) | NYC |
| John Goodliffe (JG) | NAC |
| Karan Main (KM) | Mill Farm, Kirk Hammerton |
| Jason Ball (JB) | YW, York Water Company |
| Newman Booth (NB) | YW, York Water Company |
| Pamela White (PW) | EA |
| Andrew Murday (AM) | NYC |
| Hannah Gostlow (HG) | Knaresborough Town Council |

Observers:

| | |
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| Roger Wensley (RW) | Clerk, NPP |
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Apologies:

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|----------------|----------------------------|
| Dave Mann | Low Laithe |
| Caroline Hall | New York Mills |
| Graham Hampson | Castle Mills |
| Kevin Young | Canal & Rivers Trust |
| Kathryn Davies | Knaresborough Town Council |

Abbreviations:

| | |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| Cumecs | Cubic meters per second |
| MI/d | Megalitres per day |
| LTA | Long Term Average |
| YW | Yorkshire Water |
| EA | Environment Agency |
| GB | Gouthwaite Board |
| NAC | Nidderdale Angling Club |
| NYC | North Yorkshire Council |
| KTC | Knaresborough Town Council |
| NPP | Nidderdale Plus Partnership |

3. **AGM 2024 minutes**

The minutes were approved as a true and correct record, other than an amendment needed for Stan Lumley who was recorded as representing NAC instead of NYC (now corrected).

4. **Matters Arising**

NB - Actions were to complete a commissioning plan for the siphon, and to notify interested parties about testing the siphon, which discharges a maximum volume of 14 cumecs.

NB said that the plan had been produced, and commissioning the siphon was scheduled for next week. NB was not concerned with the volume of water discharged downstream, which tests showed would be equivalent to a short thunderstorm. CH said this would only produce a rise in level of 4 to 5 inches in Knaresborough. NB has a list of downstream abstractors and other interested parties, which he will notify, including KTC.

RW - Action to move some funds to a higher interest account as deemed fit. RW had identified a suitable savings account (Easy Access, currently paying 4.1%), but hadn't moved any funds yet due to some concern about the longevity of the GB.

There were comments about difficulties experienced when changing accounts at Barclays.

RW will transfer some funds in consultation with CH.

RW – Action to contact the owner of Scotton weir about its current status. Action completed. Viscount Mountgarret confirmed that the weir has been removed, that the votes should be expunged, and the levy ceased.

RW – Action to offer to Knaresborough Town Council the votes formerly belonging to Harrogate Borough Council.

Action completed. KTC resolved to take up the voting rights, and Kathryn Davies and Hannah Gostlow were appointed as representatives.

CH said that HG would be an observer at this AGM, but that on payment of the levy the KTC representatives would be full voting members at future AGMs.

RW said that as a new Town Council is currently being set up for Harrogate, there may need to be an additional transfer of votes.

5. **Chairman's Report**

CH said there was nothing to report this year.

If any votes were needed, CH proposed 'one person one vote'. However, this could be changed to the 'one vote per foot of the fall' basis if requested.

6. **Environment Agency Report**

Rainfall and River Flow

Rainfall at Sar House was above average during the 2023-24 winter, which continued until May 2024. Rainfall was below average in summer 2024, and also for much of the 2024-25 winter. The first 4 months of 2025 have been drier than usual, especially March which only had one third of LTA rainfall. April's first three weeks of rainfall across Yorkshire was typically 10% to 20% of monthly LTA values.

River flow at Birstwith was above LTA during the 2023-24 winter, reflecting the rainfall. Flows were close to average through the summer, as the water from the wet winter came through the system and due to the drawdown releases for the siphon works. Flows were average in autumn, and low again in February and March 2025.

Reservoir Level and Compensation Releases

It has been agreed with the Board that this year YW will report on the detail of reservoir levels, operations and releases.

In summary, following the drawdown to allow the final phase of siphon installation, releases were maintained at 40 MI/d to support Glasshouses fish farm. In early August, with reservoir levels declining, YW contacted the EA to advise a planned reduction in release rates to the statutory 28 MI/d to preserve compensation stocks and also to facilitate works by the owner of Glasshouses fish farm weir. This was approved as both prudent and still in line with operating rules.

The reservoir filled in September, and since then, releases have tracked requirements closely.

The EA is satisfied that YW has operated the reservoir with regards to downstream water users and to the river environment, within the constraints of the necessary reservoir safety works.

PW commented that the difference between the lower release bands at the EA's gauging station at Gouthwaite was only 13 mm, and that windy conditions at the location below the dam complicated the recording of the exact height of the water level.

The EA report was accepted by the Board.

7. Yorkshire Water report

The reservoir safety programme required a 2.7m drawdown, starting in May. Normal compensation release rules were suspended from late March until September. During this period, releases were increased to achieve the required drawdown to complete the siphon installation. When the required drawdown was achieved, for much of summer 2024 the water stock fell within the 28 MI/d required release zone. The actual releases made at this time were generally higher (at 40 MI/d) to maintain the level required by the drawdown and also to support Glasshouses fish farm in June/July. When reservoir levels continued to

fall, the release was decreased to 28 MI/d. The storm event September re-filled the reservoir, and since then, releases have been in accordance with the rules. January to April (so far) in 2025 has been much drier than average, resulting in a decline in the Gouthwaite water stock compared to previous years. This has resulted in a reduction in compensation releases, particularly in April.

The YW report was accepted by the Board.

8. **The accounts for 2024-25**

The Scotton weir has been removed, so their levy is no longer paid. All the other levies were paid, but two payments were received after the financial year-end, so they don't appear in the Current Account part of the accounts.

The leaving-do at last year's AGM cost £377, and this cost appears in this year's accounts.

Total assets are £4,277, plus £195 debtors for the levies received after the year-end.

The net movement in funds during the year is minus £476, which is due to the delayed levy payments, last year's leaving-do, and the removal of the Scotton weir.

The 2023-4 Accounts were accepted by the Board.

9. **The levy for 2025-26**

With the removal of the weir at Scotton, total levies are now almost the same figure as the clerk's remuneration, excluding any one-off expenditure.

Current assets, as mentioned above, are £4,277 plus £195 debtors. The Board needs to keep £500 to cover the 'Excess' on any insurance claim, and CH recommended having an additional £500 for contingencies. The funds are currently sufficient, and RW therefore proposed that the levy should remain at £6.50.

This was approved by the Board.

10. **Future of the Board**

CH said the Board was a useful buffer, representing the public.

AM said there was some advantage to having some public scrutiny of water management.

CH said that anomalies have developed over time. If a mill is demolished, the weir is the basis for their votes, so NAC have the votes for the ex Pateley Bridge mill. At Scotton, there is a mill building but no weir.

RW said that the Act of Parliament was written for 19th century mill owners, and was ill-suited for the 21st century. Some mills have been demolished, and although many mill buildings still exist, they are not 'mills' and there are no 'mill owners' in the meaning of the Act. He asked if YW's legal team could consider whether there is any way that, if needed, YW could take over the powers of the Board, continuing to fulfil the *purpose* of the Act, even though the *process* is

necessarily different, given the absence of mill owners and the changes in the statutory bodies.

DG said that the GB operated on goodwill rather than applying strict criteria. CH took the pragmatic view that as it works, why change it?

DG proposed that Board should just 'agenda' this topic every few years, and CH said it would not be an agenda item at next year's AGM.

11. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

CH was unanimously elected Chair for 2024-5.

DG was unanimously elected Vice Chair for 2024-5.

12. AOB

No other business was raised.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm.

The next AGM will be in April 2026, date and time TBA.