

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Benwick Internal Drainage Board
held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Monday the 8th June 2015

PRESENT

R Pickard Esq (Chairman)	P N Fountain Esq
D R Stokes Esq (Vice Chairman)	M Jackson Esq
D J Caton Esq	P R Lummis Esq
R G Few Esq	R E Stacey Esq
N G Thacker Esq	

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance. Mr Malcolm Downes (Mechanical and Electrical Engineer) also attended for part of the meeting.

Apology for absence

An apology for absence was received from M W Dale Esq.

B.994 Declarations of Interest

Miss Ablett reminded Members of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any individual on the Board.

B.995 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on the 16th June 2014 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.996 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That R Pickard Esq be appointed Chairman of the Board.

B.997 Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED

That D R Stokes Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Board.

B.998 Election of Members of the Board

Miss Ablett reported that, as the number of candidates for membership of the Board did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (eleven), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from the 1st November 2014, viz:-

BURTON Tom
CATON David
DALE Michael
FEW Reginald
FOUNTAIN Philip

JACKSON Martin
PICKARD Robert
STACEY Robert
STOKES David
THACKER Nigel

Miss Ablett reported that there was currently one vacancy in the membership of the Board.

B.999 Filling of vacancy

Consideration was given to the filling of the vacancy on the Board.

RESOLVED

That no action be taken to fill the vacancy at the present time.

B.1000 Land Drainage Act 1991

Board Membership - Huntingdonshire District Council

Miss Ablett reported that Huntingdonshire District Council had re-appointed Mr P R Lummis to be a Member of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

B.1001 Access Road to Broadalls Pumping Station

Newtons Four Hundred Farm

Further to minute B.966, the Chairman advised that Mrs Broadbent was still trying to pass the problem to the tenants, although the damage to the roadway was prior to Mr White taking over the tenancy. The District Officer reported that Mr White did already carry out some repair works to the roadway himself.

The Chairman reported that he had obtained a quotation for resurfacing the roadway from B J Plant, but this amounted to approximately £15,000. He advised that the Board did have the powers to carry out the works and pass the costs on, but of course there was no guarantee that payment would be received.

The Chairman reported that the road was just about passable and that, as resolved at the last meeting, putting planings onto the road surface would probably suffice for now.

RESOLVED

That the District Officer approach Mr Miller again about putting planings onto the road surface.

(NB) – The Chairman, the District Officer and Mr Stokes declared an interest when this item was discussed.

B.1002 Flood and Coastal Defence Funding Review

Further to minute B.929, Miss Ablett referred to a letter from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State dated the 9th February 2015 and indicated that it appeared that no action would currently be required from the Board in consequence.

B.1003 Water Framework Directive

Further to minute B.968, Miss Ablett reported that the draft 2015 River Basin Management Plan had been out to consultation until 10th April 2015 and that the Flood Risk Management Plan had been published by the Agency. The Clerk had identified errors in both plans and had established that some of the facts included were also incorrect. He had continually tried to ensure that no measures for the Boards to undertake, or that may incur costs to the Boards, were included in the plans and it now seemed that this had been successful as no material measures appeared to have been included within the draft Plan. He had formally responded to both plans.

Miss Ablett drew attention to the extensive work carried out by Cliff Carson, the Environmental Officer, on the Biodiversity Action Plan which had helped to contribute to the fact that the Environment Agency seemed satisfied with the actions being taken by the Boards in this regard.

B.1004 Survey of points 53-55 and 55-48

Further to minute B.972(ii), the Chairman recollected that a survey had previously been carried out regarding drainwork improvements to widen the ditch. Mr Lakey advised that the survey results had shown that this was not feasible.

The District Officer advised that electricity costs had increased considerably due to the pumping to Bettys Nose pumping station. However, even if improvement works were carried out the existing culverts would restrict the flow.

Mr Few added that there had been 3 new developments in the area which contributed to the problem, but unfortunately the Board could not do anything about it.

B.1005 Consulting Engineers' Report

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers, viz:-

Benwick I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – May 2015

Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations approved by the Board at the last Annual Meeting.



Following the Board's approval bank trimming works were carried out to the east bank of reach 52-53, to remove the overhanging cliffs, stabilise the bank and return it to its original profile. The soil arising from the bank trimming works was spread across the adjacent arable field using the contractor's hydraulic machine, to allow for it to be incorporated and returned back to arable cropping.

With the Chairman's approval the spoil arising from the previous year's bank trimming works in 2013, along the east bank of reach 89-90, was spread across an adjacent stubble field using a contractor's bulldozer. Unfortunately, it was not possible to complete the spreading works due to an unharvested crop of sugar beet which had not been lifted at the time the machine was on-site. It is recommended that the remaining spoil is spread following the



harvest of the adjacent cereal crop this year. The Board may wish to consider utilising some of the material to create a new access culvert at point 91. This would improve future plant and machinery access to the Lilyholt drain, reaches 91-92-93-94, during machine cleansing and flail mowing works. The current access is through a residential property and requires the contractor's machine to be transported to and from the site, incurring extra costs for low loader transport. The proposed culvert would also help mitigate the risks and hazards associated with loading and unloading a tracked machine on the highway. The Board may also wish to consider the installation of a locked barrier at the culvert to prevent unauthorised access. In anticipation that the Board will wish to proceed with this work, a provisional sum has been allocated within this year's estimated costs for the culvert and locked barrier installation.

An accumulation of decaying weed mass became lodged at the manually cleansed weedscreen during the winter months on the culverted section of reach 13-16 in the Copalder area. With the District Officer's agreement, a contractor's machine was used to mechanically remove the weed mass blockage.

Advanced notices of this year's machine cleansing programme (approved by the Board at its 2007 meeting) have been sent out.

A recent inspection of the Board's drains revealed that they are generally in a satisfactory condition, and being maintained to a good standard. However, the inspection has highlighted signs of bank subsidence along the east bank of reach 14-15 in the Copalder district. It is recommended that the bank is monitored during the summer months for signs of any further deterioration and appropriate action taken, if required later in the year.



Lillyholt Drain, reach 92-93



Dykemoor Drove, reach 18-19

At the time of inspection, stands of reeds and emergent aquatic weed growth are now becoming prevalent and showing signs of active regrowth throughout the district. It is recommended that Roundup herbicide is applied in advance to drains within this year's phased machine cleansing works, and to any other Board's drains where it is deemed necessary to control reed and emergent weed growth. A sum for the cost of Roundup treatment has been included within the estimated costs

Flail mowing in advance of the machine cleansing works will be required to afford the machine cleansing operator maximum visibility. A sum for the completion of this work has been included within the Board's estimated costs.

A provisional sum has been included within the Board's estimated costs for any emergency cleansing, culvert clearance or bank reinstatement works that may be required later in the year.

The estimated costs of this year's recommended maintenance works are as follows:

1 Machine Cleansing (Phased Programmed Works)

Beezlings Area

Reach 1-2-3-4-5	2000	m	@	1.10	£2200.00
Reach 28-3-6-7-8	1800	m	@	1.10	£1980.00

Copalder Area

Reach 25-27-28	2000	m	@	1.00	£2000.00
Reach 12-24-25-26	1400	m	@	1.00	£1400.00

2 Spread spoil reach 90-91	Item	Sum			£2000.00
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3 Provisional Item

Install culvert & barrier	Item	Sum			£1200.00
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4 Allow sum for Roundup application to control reed and emergent aquatic weed growth	Item	Sum			£1000.00
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5 Flail mowing in advance of machine cleansing works	Item	Sum			£4000.00
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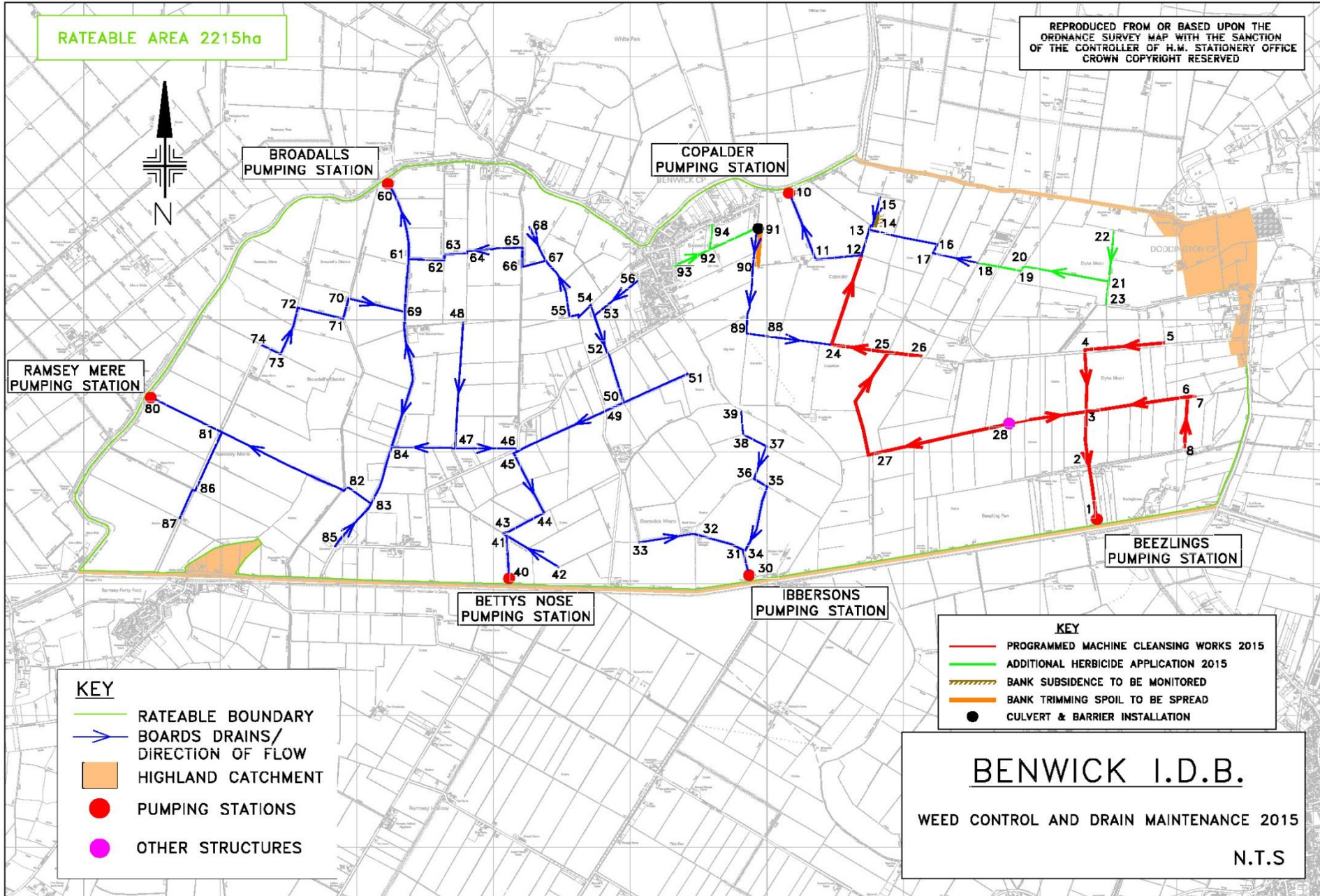
6 Provisional Sum

Allow sum for emergency Machine cleansing, culvert Clearance or bank Reinstatement works	Item	Sum			£2000.00
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7 Fees for the inspection, Preparation & submission of report to the Board. Arrangement & supervision of herbicide applications & maintenance works	Item	Sum			£1900.00
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TOTAL				£	19,680.00
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Orders for the application of herbicides are accepted on condition that they are weather dependant and the Middle Level Commissioners will not be held responsible for the efficacy of any treatments.



Pumping Stations

Other than the matters described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

Beezlings

The weedscreen is becoming badly corroded, particularly beneath its top fixing bar which has pulled away from the concrete. As a minimum this top fixing bar requires replacing, however the Board may wish to consider replacing the entire screen in view of its condition.

The control building barge boards are starting to rot and require attention.

Benwick Mere

At its last meeting the Board requested that we review this installation with regard to refurbishment works this year.

As previously reported in the 2010 asset survey the pumping plant, which was commissioned in 1954, has not been removed for a major overhaul since 1987 and has operated for a further 4258 hours. A recent visual inspection of the external pump fixings and bearings above the drain water level has been carried out and their condition appears to be satisfactory. The pumpset operates well and gives little indication of any major mechanical or electrical problems. However the condition of its underwater and internal components cannot be any more accurately determined unless it is removed for inspection.

Broadalls

The automatic level controller, which has had an intermittent fault for some time, finally failed completely during last autumn. As this model is now obsolete a second hand unit complete with transducer was fitted.

The station access road is very badly rutted and potholed due to farm traffic use and requires attention.

Copalder

As previously reported the main isolating gate valve in the delivery pipework is in a seized condition. Due to the dry weather it has been possible to take the pump out of service and work is currently in hand to return the valve to an operable condition.

In order to prevent nuisance phase failure tripping an additional "true off delay timer" has been fitted to the phase failure trip circuit.

Ramsey Mere

The intermittent problems that have periodically occurred with the ultrasonic unit that controls the automatic operation of the pump have not reoccurred during the last 12 months; however the unit that controls the differential operation of the automatic weedscreen cleaner has now failed and is beyond repair. The machine has been set up to activate on pump start alone and repeat after a dwell time of 15 minutes. This is proving satisfactory in keeping the screen clear of weed; therefore replacement of the controller is not currently deemed necessary.

The pump drive motor winding resistance to earth is very low; as this motor is now in excess of 45 years old the Board should consider making arrangements for the motor to be removed and rewound.

Betty's Nose

Work to repair the leaking delivery pipework, together with steps and hand railing remedial work has been completed.

During last year the submersible pump seal monitor showed the outboard seal to have failed. Voltage readings direct from the pump cable suggested the monitor was working correctly. The inboard seal showed it to be sealing 100% this, coupled with a low winding resistance, indicated the problem was likely to be cable damage or water in the junction box. When water levels in the district were lowered during the autumn, which allowed access to the pump fixings, and with the Chairman's approval the pump was lifted for further inspection. The terminal box cover was then removed on-site which showed water had entered the terminal box, the unit was therefore returned to the manufacturer, Bedford Pumps, who reported the following:

We have removed the terminal box components from the pump and our findings are as follows:-

The pump has had water in the terminal box and is damp. Electrical checks directly off the terminal plate indicated nothing untoward. The terminal plate was removed for inspection of the motor cavity and all appears clean and dry.

To undertake the repair, the following new parts will be required:-

- 1 set Cables
- 1 set Cable gland washers and adjusting washers, sized and machined to suit the new cables
- 1 set Cable gland rubbers
- 1 set 'O' rings for terminal box
- 1 set Instrument cable terminal posts (existing are rusty)

In addition the terminal box and terminal box cover will be cleaned and oven dried.

The cost associated with the above work (labour and parts) is **£1,958.00**, excluding VAT.

An instruction was given to Bedford Pumps to undertake the work required and following the repairs the pump was reinstalled and returned to service.

Pumping Hours between 2005/2006 – 2009/2010

Pumping station	Total hours run 2005/2006	Total hours run 2006/2007	Total hours run 2007/2008	Total hours run 2008/2009	Total hours run 2009/2010
Beezlings	78	305	43	225	171
Benwick Mere /lbbersons	30	133	77	217	220
Betty's Nose	133	70	134	44	424
Broadalls	44	140	47	243	437
Copalder	36	119	137	171	249
Ramsey Mere	3	186	191	152	100

Pumping Hours between 2010/2011 – 2014/2015

Pumping station	Total hours run 2010/2011	Total hours run 2011/2012	Total hours run 2012/2013	Total hours run May 2013/May 2014	Total hours run May 2014/May 2015
Beezlings	3	7	424	210	212
Benwick Mere /lbbersons	209	23	295	211	102
Betty's Nose	186	30	553	629	137
Broadalls	170 *	50 *	500 *	70 *	92
Copalder	104	8	324	205	169
Ramsey Mere	157	1	60	123	15

*revised estimated hours, interpolated from electricity consumption

Mandatory Upgrading of Electricity Meters

Bettys Nose

Following further discussions with Anglia Farmers and the electricity supplier, SSE, regarding mandatory upgrading of the electricity meters to AMR (Smart) Metering, suitable alternative Smart Meters were sourced and have recently been installed at this station. All of the Board's pumping stations are now fitted with Smart meters which are read remotely.

Electrical Retesting

The periodic electrical installation condition report of the fixed electrical equipment at all of the Board's pumping installations, to ensure continued compliance with Electricity at Work Regulations and the new BS7671: 2008 IEE Wiring regulations, have been completed.

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 8 new applications have been received and dealt with since the last meeting:

<i>MLC Ref</i>	<i>Council Ref.</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Location</i>
262	F/YR14/0292/F	Mr R Few	Residence	Forty Foot Bank, Ramsey
263	F/YR14/3051/COND	Mr J Bowling	Residence	Doddington Road, Benwick
264	F/YR14/3073/COND	Mr C Boon	Residence	High Street, Benwick
265	F/YR14/0727/F	Mr J Bowling	Residence	Doddington Road, Benwick
266	F/YR14/0750/F	Mrs G Beecham	Residence	Benwick Road, Doddington
267	F/YR14/0767/F	Leigh Property Investments Ltd	Residential (4 plots)	Doddington Road, Benwick
268	F/YR14/0762/F	Leigh Property Investments Ltd	Residential (2 plots)	High Street, Benwick
269	F/YR14/0813/F	Mr & Mrs A Berridge	Residential (3 plots)	Ramsey Road, Doddington

Planning applications ending 'COND' relate to the discharge of relevant planning conditions

All the developments propose, where applicable and where known, surface water disposal to soakaways/infiltration systems or sustainable drainage systems. All the applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

Residential development on land north east of 13 Doddington Road, Benwick - Harnson Homes Ltd (MLC Ref No 254)

No further correspondence has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agent concerning this development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

Scoping Opinion for Wind Farm at Mere Farm at north of Sunny Cottage, Forty Foot Bank, Ramsey Forty Foot - RES UK & Ireland Ltd (MLC Ref No. 261)

No further correspondence has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agent concerning this development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

Erection of 4 x 2 storey 3 bed dwellings involving the demolition of existing buildings at land east of 2A Doddington Road, Benwick - Leigh Property Investments Ltd (MLC Ref No. 266)

This planning application was opposed on the Board's behalf due to several concerns including the site being within an area where drainage problems have previously been reported; the adverse impacts on the receiving watercourses, including the Board's system; the failure by the applicant to provide an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment that meets the Board's requirements and insufficient consideration being given to the design and future long-term maintenance of the proposed treated effluent/surface water disposal system.

Despite the Board's concerns planning permission was granted by the District Council subject to the imposition of conditions, none of which relate to surface water disposal.

Fenland District Council (FDC) Neighbourhood Strategy

Current developments and the position in relation to the following document are:

(a) **Fenland Local Plan (formerly the Communities Development Plan) – Core Strategy**

Following the end of the public consultations on the proposed 'Main' and 'Minor' modifications to the Local Plan that arose through the Public 'hearing sessions', the Planning Inspector considered all comments received in relation to the 'Main' modifications and issued the Inspector's report in April 2014.

The Inspector found the plan 'sound' subject to the incorporation of the 'main' modifications. This Report was presented to the District Council's Cabinet and subsequently, to its Full Council, on 8 May 2014, where the Local Plan was formally adopted.

(b) **Resource Use SPD**

Following the receipt of some of the comments made within the public consultation during January/February it was agreed at the 24 April 2014 District Council Cabinet meeting that the revised SPD be subject to a further consultation which was undertaken during June.

Some generic responses were made by the Commissioners as part of this consultation. This response advised that some of the strengths of the original version had been removed which, in the Commissioners' opinion, significantly weakens the document.

The SPD was revised following consideration of the comments made during this consultation and was presented to District Council's Cabinet on 24 July 2014. The Cabinet recommended no further changes and the SPD was subsequently adopted by its Full Council later that day.

(c) **Delivering & Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD**

Following a public consultation held during January/February, the SPD was revised following consideration of the comments submitted during the consultation process. Like the Resource Use SPD, this revised SPD was presented to the District's

Cabinet on 24 July 2014 and was subsequently adopted by its Full Council later that day.

Note. *A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a document that provides further details and/or guidance with reference to policies and proposals contained in a Development Plan Document (DPD) or Local Plan.*

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD

One of the proposed 'Main' modifications to the Local Plan that arose through the Public 'hearing sessions' of the Fenland Local Plan was that due to the various states at which the local planning authorities were at in respect of their respective Local Plans, it was considered that a Flood and Water SPD should be produced to clarify and to ensure that all emerging guidance and relevant legislation is considered and adequately addressed in the local decision making process. The final document will be used to further assess planning applications primarily on flood risk and drainage matters.

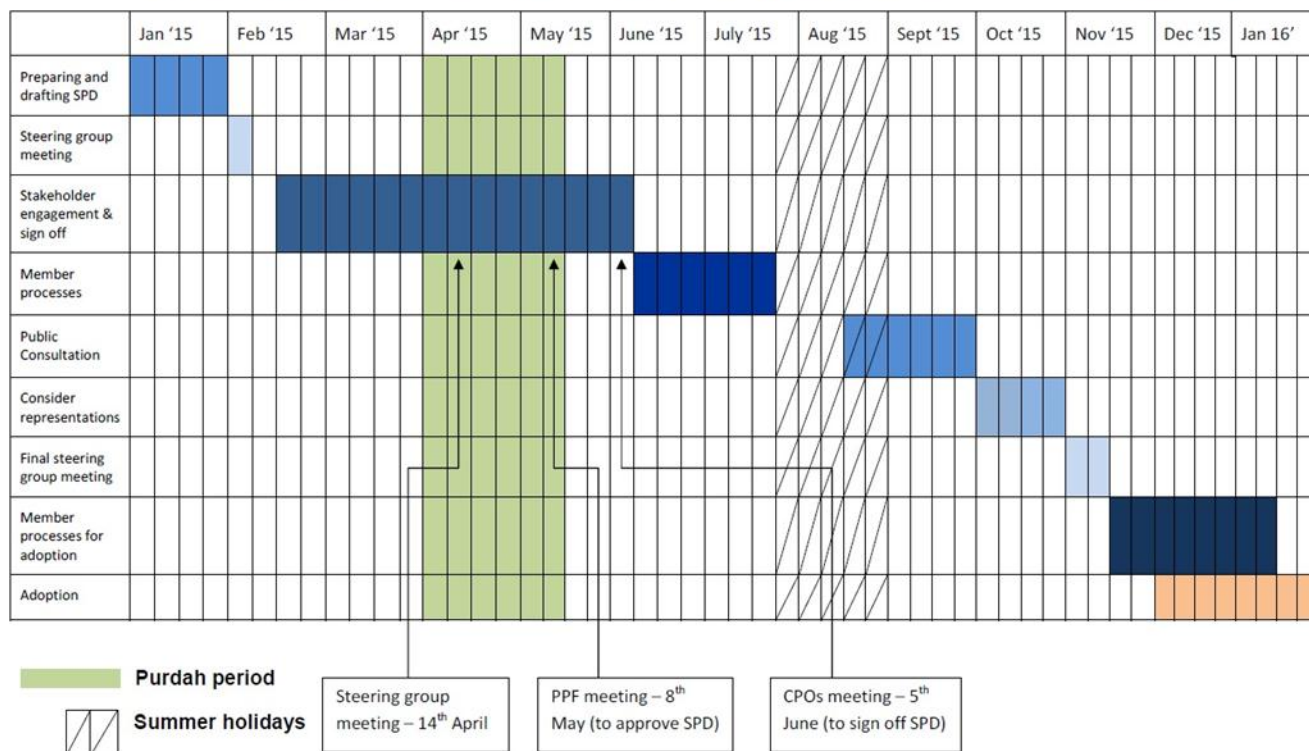
Cambridgeshire County Council volunteered to organise the production of this document via a steering group that involved all the LPAs within the County together with other relevant stakeholders including the Middle Level Commissioners.

The County Council is currently considering the contents of stakeholder comments in respect of the most recent draft which can be used to prepare the next version which, it is hoped, can be presented to the various Councils for consideration prior to a public consultation and adoption toward the end of the year.

Following concerns from the Fenland Developers Forum (FDF), of which the MLC are a member, the District Council was asked to produce an Interim Guidance Note (IGN) to explain how it will consider flood risk issues when determining planning applications particularly with regard to the Sequential and Exception Tests. It is anticipated that this is a short term measure which will be superseded once the SPD is adopted.

The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has represented both the MLC and associated Boards' interests by attending meetings and considering the various draft documents discussed above.

Cambridgeshire County Council Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document – timescales for 2015 (v3)



Note. The Fenland Developers Forum (FDF) is held at Fenland Hall, and aims to meet 6 times a year. Its purpose is to be a key development stakeholder in Fenland, as well as a recognised consultative body for a range of development matters. It encourages a collaborative partnership approach between all stakeholders who have an interest in the development of Fenland, delivering sustainable growth across the district.

Members of the forum include local developers, agents and architects, some statutory consultees and officers from Planning, Planning Policy and Building Control.

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Local Development Scheme (LDS)

Further to the last meeting, the Commissioners, on the Board's behalf, have been consulted and provided responses in respect of the following documents:

- (a) Adoption of the Wind Energy in Developments in Huntingdonshire 2014 SPD
 The main purpose of this document concerns the provision of wind turbines within the landscape, associated sensitivity and cumulative impact, however, a generic response was made concerning the related flood risk/byelaw consent related issues, Biodiversity and Wildlife Issues

- (b) Water Cycle Strategy (WCS)
 As detailed previously the majority of the proposed growth within Huntingdonshire is outside of the catchment of both the Commissioners and its associated Boards. However, further comment has been made on the revised document, primarily in respect of discharges from Anglian Water (AWS) Waste Water Treatment Works.

(c) Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

The District Council requested that the Commissioners and relevant associated Boards provide further comment on the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 as part of a targeted consultation.

Generic responses specifically relating to waste water management, the water cycle study, strategic flood risk, biodiversity and strategic expansion locations were made.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Thomas', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Consulting Engineer

27 May 2015

Benwick(303)\Reports\May 2015

The Chairman reported that points 90-91 had been machine cleansed in 2013 and that the Board intended to install a culvert at point 91 which would be carried out in conjunction with spreading of spoil. He advised that £8,000 had been put aside for the works.

Mr Lummis commented that the map on the website differed from that in the Consulting Engineer's report in that points 48-47 were not on the website map. The District Officer advised that this had been de-maimed approximately 3 to 4 years ago and was no longer a Boards drain.

Mr Downes joined the meeting.

Mr Downes reported that the top fixing bar on the weedscreen at Beezlings pumping station required replacing. However, in view of its badly corroded condition, the Board may wish to consider replacing the entire screen. He also reported that the control building barge boards were starting to rot and required attention. Miss Ablett enquired of the cost of the works to which Mr Downes advised approximately £1,000 for both the fixing bar and the barge boards.

The Chairman advised that in his opinion both should be replaced and Members agreed.

Mr Downes reported that the access road at Broadalls pumping station was very badly rutted and potholed due to farm traffic use and required attention.

The Chairman advised of the quote received and of the work to be carried out, as reported in minute B.1001, and commented that if the road were to deteriorate any further the necessary work would be carried out and recharged. Mr Downes advised that he thought that this had been included in a previous Grant-in-Aid scheme, which stipulated that the access road should be maintained.

Mr Downes reported that the pump drive motor winding resistance at Ramsey Mere pumping station was very low and that, as the motor was in excess of 45 years old, the Board should consider arranging for this motor to be removed and rewound. Miss Ablett enquired of the cost of the works which Mr Downes confirmed would be in the region of £2,500.

With regards to the development at Benwick Road, Doddington (MLC Ref No 266), the Chairman expressed his dis-satisfaction as, despite the Board's concerns, the District Council had granted planning permission

With regards to the Boards flail mowing requirements, Mr Stokes enquired whether Mr R Ashman was still trading. Mr Lakey advised that he had gone bankrupt but had set up a new business in his wife's name. Miss Ablett reported that the only concern at present was whether Mr Ashman had adequate insurance cover in place to satisfy the Board. Mr Lakey advised that this had been requested.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

That the works referred to in the Report be undertaken.

- iii) Beezlings Pumping Station

That the top fixing bar on the weedscreen cleaner be replaced together with the barge boards.

iv) Ramsey Mere Pumping Station

That the motor be removed and rewound.

v) That Mr Lakey advise the Chairman of Mr Ashman's insurance details, when received, and that he be authorised to contract the services of Mr Ashman if satisfied that all was in order or to make such other arrangements for this season, if necessary, as the Chairman felt fit.

B.1006 Pumping Station Insurance Valuation

Miss Ablett reported that the pumping stations were currently valued, for insurance purposes, at £433,269, with a premium of £287.47, but that recent advice from the Consulting Engineers was to the effect that a total replacement of the stations would cost in the order of £3,606,000.

Miss Ablett advised that to insure at £3,606,000 would involve an additional premium of approximately £2,390.

RESOLVED

That the insurance valuation be increased to £3,606,000 which the Members felt provided adequate cover for those items at high/medium risk.

B.1007 Proposed works to South Barrier Bank – Nene Washes

Further to minute B.970, Miss Ablett referred to the latest Environment Agency newsletter dated April 2015.

B.1008 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme be approved in principle.

B.1009 District Officer's Report

The Board considered the Report of the District Officer.

The District Officer reported that, as advised in the Consulting Engineer's report, the District was in good order with little work to be done. He confirmed that the recently installed dams had worked well.

RESOLVED

That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved and that the Officer be thanked for his services over the preceding year.

B.1010 Environmental Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

Miss Ablett referred to the Environmental Officer's newsletter which had previously been circulated to members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

B.1011 Maintenance and supervision duties in connection with pumping stations and drains

- i) Members reviewed the District Officer's honorarium for 2015/2016.
- ii) With reference to minute B.263, the Board reviewed the payments made in respect of supervision duties at the pumping stations.
- iii) Agreements relating to District Officer's and pumping station duties

Further to minute B.976, Members considered the proposed agreements relating to District Officer's and pumping station duties.

The District Officer confirmed that he would arrange for the pump attendants to sign their agreements.

RESOLVED

- i) That Mr D Caton be appointed as District Officer and that the honorarium paid for 2015/2016 remains unchanged.
- ii) That for 2014/2015 the annual payments made remains unchanged at £450 per station.
- iii) That the agreements be accepted and approved

(NB) – The District Officer, Messrs Few and Thacker declared a financial interest when this item was discussed.

B.1012 Maintenance work in the District

The Chairman considered that this had been covered in the District Officer's Report. He advised that the Benwick Board was not a district that could plan works, but that it was beneficial to have a basic works programme in place. He reminded Members that if anyone identified a problem within the District they should report it to the District Officer.

B.1013 State-aided Schemes

Consideration was given to the desirability of undertaking further State-aided Schemes in the District and whether any future proposals should be included in the capital forecasts provided to the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.1014 Environment Agency – Precepts

Miss Ablett reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2015/2016 in the sum of £7,595 (the precept for 2014/2015 being £7,595).

Miss Ablett reported that, due to the lodging of the appeal by this and other IDBs the Environment Agency had responded by introducing a new style of working with IDBs and had agreed to allow IDBs much more say in where the precept monies should be spent. She reported that the Anglian Region RFCC had agreed to introduce a six year programme where the IDB monies could be discussed and agreed that it could be spent in part on watercourses which the Environment Agency would otherwise regard as low priority.

Miss Ablett added that in the circumstances, the reason for lodging of the precept appeal appeared to have been met by the Environment Agency and recommended that the Board now withdraw their appeal.

RESOLVED

That the appeal against the precept be withdrawn.

B.1015 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

a) Miss Ablett reported that the sum of £43.09 (£510.63 less £467.54 paid on account) (inclusive of administration) had been received from the Environment Agency based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for the financial year 2013/2014 together with the sum of £637.42 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2014/2015.

(b) Further to minute B.980(b), Miss Ablett referred to the discussions with the Environment Agency over the monies available to fund highland water claims.

RESOLVED

That the position be noted and the situation kept under review.

B.1016 Association of Drainage Authorities

Miss Ablett reported:-

a) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities would be held in London on Wednesday the 11th November 2015.

Miss Ablett referred to the Clerk's e-mails to the Chairman dated 29th January and 6th February and to the letters from the ADA Chief Executive and his replies and to his meeting with the new ADA Chief Executive Innes Thompson.

Miss Ablett reported that the Clerk had received a letter from Henry Cator, the ADA Chairman, requesting donations from Boards for a gift to mark Jean Venables' retirement and the Chairman had authorised a donation of £20.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Clerk be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association if a Member wishes to attend.
- ii) That the donation to mark the retirement of the ADA Chief Executive, authorised by the Chairman, be approved.
- b) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

On the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association held in Prickwillow, Ely on Tuesday the 17th March 2015.

- c) Subscriptions

That it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 4% in 2015, viz:- from £557 to £580.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2015.

B.1017 Health and Safety Audits

Miss Ablett reminded the Board of their need to ensure that working practices were safe, particularly around the pumping stations and reminded the Board of the arrangements with Croner.

B.1018 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Update

Miss Ablett reported that the major topics which had been discussed at recent meetings were road flooding; the flood event of 8th August 2014 which had affected many properties; the non-implementation of SUDS and Defra's alternative to proceed through the planning system; Cambridgeshire County Council's proposal to establish a limited company to perform the SUDS role in conjunction with the local planning authorities; tidal river and agitation dredging; Ouse Washes section 10 inspection as a reservoir and surface water management plans.

B.1019 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £87,321.20 which had been made during the financial year 2014/2015.

It was noted that the payment to D J Caton should show District Officer's fee and Pumping Station duties.

(NB) – The District Officer, Messrs Few and Thacker declared an interest in the payments made to them.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest (as a Middle Level Commissioner) in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners.

B.1020 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2013/2014

- a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2014.
- b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2014.

B.1021 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2014/2015

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts for the year ended on the 31st March 2015 and considered the completion of the Annual Governance Statement as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2015.

B.1022 Review of Internal Controls

Members considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of Internal Controls.

Members considered the appointment of the Internal Auditor and the proposed Audit Strategy and Audit Plan.

RESOLVED

- i) To engage Whiting & Partners for the next three years (2015/2016 – 2017/2018).
- ii) To approve the Audit Strategy and Audit Plan.

B.1023 Risk Register

Miss Ablett reported that it was necessary every 4-5 years to consider the formal Risk Register and in between times to judge the risks when considering the Consulting Engineer's and other reports and when setting budgets and rates/special levies. She advised that these risks had been analysed by the use of the Risk Matrix and added that, although the risk registers for IDBs very rarely changed, they would/could change over time and it was important for Boards to consider formally and that consideration was due this year.

Members considered the Board's Risk Register.

RESOLVED

That the Risk Register be approved and kept under review and the policy to review risk between formal reviews be continued.

B.1024 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2015/2016

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2015/2016 and were informed by Miss Ablett that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 68.78% and 31.22%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved, subject to the provision made for insurance being increased by £2,100.
- ii) That a total sum of £81,704 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £56,202 and £25,502 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 16.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v)
 - a) That a Special levy of £23,544 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
 - b) That a Special levy of £1,958 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.1025 Display of rate notice

RESOLVED

That notice of the rate be affixed within the District in accordance with Section 48(3)(a) of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

B.1026 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

- i) That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Monday the 6th June 2016 at the Ramsey Golf Club.
- ii) That prior to the meeting an Inspection of the District will take place followed by luncheon.

iii) That the Middle Level Commissioners' Consulting Engineer and Environmental Officer be invited together with the Parish Council Chairman.