

CONINGTON AND HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board
held at the Admiral Wells Inn, Holme on Tuesday the 14th June 2016

PRESENT

P A Davies Esq (Chairman)
C J Allen Esq
P J Davies Esq
D R Elmore Esq

R Elmore Esq
J Racey Esq
J S Watt Esq
T R West Esq

The Clerk to the Board was in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Miss Wilding, C P Bliss Esq and P G Mitchell Esq.

B.861 Declarations of Interest

The Clerk 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.862 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 9th June 2015 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.863 Pumping Station Breakdown Insurance

Further to minute B.839, the Clerk advised that the Board did already have breakdown insurance for the pumping station.

B.864 Clerk to the Board

The Clerk informed the Board that he intended to stand down from the office of Clerk of the Board at the end of 2016, that the Middle Level Commissioners would be taking appropriate steps to appoint his replacement and that he would keep the Board informed.

The Chairman expressed thanks to Mr Smith.

B.865 Election of Board Members

The Clerk reported that the term of office of the Members of the Board would expire on the 31st October 2016 and submitted the proposed Register of Electors applicable to the 2016 election.

RESOLVED

That the Register be approved.

B.866 Board Membership

The Clerk reported that Savills UK Ltd (formerly Smiths Gore) had nominated Miss Marja Wilding as their representative on the Board in place of Mr David Cannie.

RESOLVED

That Miss Wilding be co-opted to membership of the Board.

B.867 Land Drainage Act 1991 Huntingdonshire District Council

The Clerk reported that Huntingdonshire District Council had re-appointed Messrs C J Allen, P G Mitchell and J S Watt to be Members of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

Mr Allen reported that this would be his last meeting as he would be leaving Huntingdonshire District Council at the end of the year. He also reported that it appeared that the Council would be looking to appoint Councillors only from this year.

RESOLVED

That the Board's appreciation of the services rendered to the District by Mr Allen be recorded in the Minutes.

B.868 Great Fen Project

Further to minute B.835, the Clerk reported that work was progressing and referred to the 'reservoir' water holding works at Engine Farm. Water had been held at Rhymes Reed bed with had seen a number of short eared owls.

The Clerk advised that the last of the "Meres Trails" footpaths had been opened and considerations were being given to a car park north of Holme Fen.

He added that the Woodwalton Fen Water Level Management Plan was being reviewed and proposals for water storage were being considered. Water quality was still of concern.

Jackson Bridge was being assessed.

Mr Allen referred to the Memorial Service for the Spitfire Pilot to be held in September.

The Clerk advised that Phillipa Crooke was now Senior Reserve Manager and Katie Smith was day to day on site at Woodwalton.

Mr Allen referred to the visitor centre which was still under consideration and that a major centre would be costly.

B.869 Water Framework Directive

Further to minute B.837, the Clerk reported that the Anglian River Basin Liaison Panel of which he was a member have considered the draft updated River Basin Management Plan revision and the regional programme of projects funded by Defra for WFD. He reported that he had also been advised that the statutory Plan to be sent to Ministers would be a "high level" generalised document and not contain the list of local "measures" which appeared in the many schedules to the 2009 Plan. Whilst this made the 2009 Plan rather cumbersome, it did at least set out the measures expected in relation to a water body, whereas the present framework leaves the relevant measures to be discussed locally. Part of the ongoing work is to settle what "mitigation measures" are appropriate to the artificial and heavily modified water bodies of the Fens to ensure that they satisfy the requirement to reach Good Ecological Potential. The Middle Level Commissioners' Environmental Officer, Cliff Carson, is a member of a Group, looking at reasonable mitigation measures for such bodies, which are likely in fact to correspond with what was already in our Biodiversity Action Plans and therefore require, as previously advised, little additional work.

The Clerk advised that he had commented on the revised plan but had to date received no feedback on either this or on the earlier flood risk management plans despite promises from the Environment Agency that this would occur.

The Clerk reported that he had, however, continued discussions with the Environment Agency's local Water Framework Directive teams. For IDBs in the MLC area, it has been accepted that the Middle Level area will be designated as one water body for the purposes of the 2015 Plan and that, with the exception of Bury Brook, the whole of the "water body" will be designated as artificial; the exception being Bury Brook which is classed as heavily modified. The Clerk confirmed that the River Basin Management Plan had been confirmed by Government.

B.870 Water Transfer Licences

The Clerk reported that Defra have advised that they propose to bring into force the changes to the water abstraction licensing system, which were outlined and enacted in the Water Act 2003. Successive proposed implementation dates have, however, come and gone. Most significant amongst these changes is the requirement that abstractions simply transferring water from one watercourse to another by IDBs become subject to licensing.

The Clerk reported that the Environment Agency have however also now consulted on a proposed charging regime for transfer licences. This following correspondence with Rory Stewart MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, appears to be a "one off" charge of £1,500 imposed to "recover the Agency's costs of considering the grant of the Transfer Licence", rather than an annual charge but he had continued to object to it on the basis that, since water is transferred to serve licences granted to end user abstractors by the Agency, the costs of administering such licences should already be met. He had also taken the opportunity to raise this matter during the Ministerial Visit to Denver, as did representatives of the Downham and Ely IDB Groups. It was also pleasing to report that ADA, after inaction on the matter, appeared at last to be taking this up with Defra.

The Clerk reported that the Defra consultation appeared in December but was then withdrawn hours later. It was however, formally reissued in January with a period for responding lasting until 8th April. Despite what had previously been stated, the consultation proposes that Transfer Licences may well have a volumetric quantity based on what has been taken in the previous 4 years. Members will be aware that the water transferred into IDBs in this area is mainly to serve irrigation licences granted by the Environment Agency and the costs in relation to which have already been recovered by the Environment Agency.

The Clerk reported that it also appears from Defra that their longer term aim, as part of the Water Abstraction Review, would be for IDBs to be given the power to take over water resources management within their catchments, from the Environment Agency. This was an interesting concept and discussion proposals, which would enable IDBs to deliver the abstraction licensing system and recover costs, were awaited. Defra are therefore keen that nothing in this present consultation will prejudice such an outcome and may well be willing to discuss more fully, the effect of the Transfer Licence proposal.

The Clerk reported that where a Board had more than one inlet, a separate licence would be required at a proposed "one off" charge of £1,500 imposed to recover the Agency's costs of considering the grant of the Transfer Licence, rather than an annual charge, where the abstraction took place from different watercourses.

The Clerk reported that within the proposals was an exemption for ports abstracting below the tidal limit and that he had queried why this was not also an exemption for IDBs.

Following discussions with Defra, he felt it possible that this exemption could also be granted to IDBs.

B.871 East Coast Main Line Level Crossing Closure Programme

Further to minute B.838, the Clerk referred to a letter dated 22nd June 2015 from Network Rail.

Members commented that no further information had been heard locally from Network Rail.

RESOLVED

That the matter be kept under review.

B.872 Consulting Engineers' Report

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

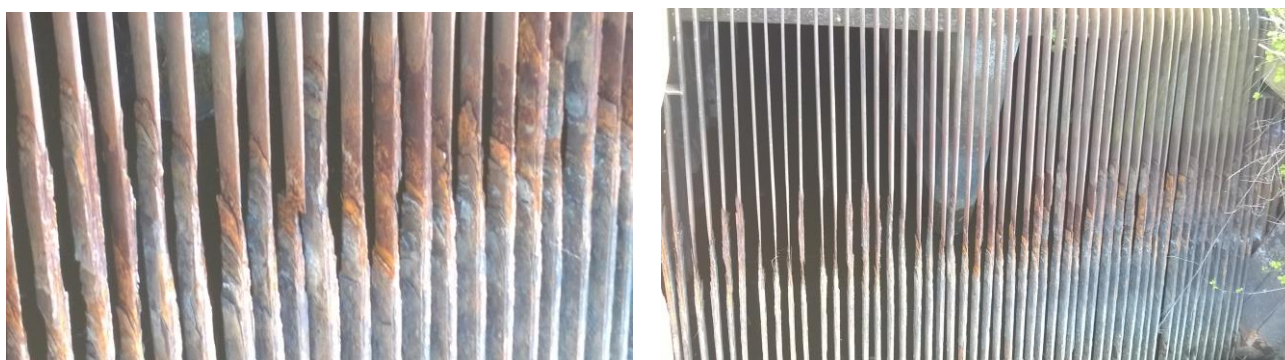
Conington & Holme I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – June 2016

Pumping Station

Other than any matters described below and that previously reported to the Board, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

As has previously been reported the intake sump weedscreen is suffering from extreme corrosion and some of the bars have now corroded through as can be seen below:



Should the pumps be required to pump in anger during a rainfall event and a build-up of weed occurs the screen is likely to collapse into the sump. It is recommended therefore that it should be replaced.

The input shaft of pump no 1 lubrication pump is leaking and requires attention.

Pumping Hours

Conington Pumping Station	Total hours run Mar 12-Apr 13	Total hours run Apr 13-Apr 14	Total hours run Apr 14-Apr 15	Total hours run Apr 15-Apr 16
No 1	289	116	59	41
No 2	599	412	593	196

Mandatory Upgrading of Electricity Meters

Anglia Farmer/SSE have again been asked to upgrade the 100 Amp Smart meter, currently installed at this installation, to a 160 Amp unit.

Changes to Planning Procedures

Further to the introduction of the previously discussed pre-/post-application discussion process other procedures have been introduced, currently on a trial basis. These include, where relevant,

a fixed fee basis for some services which has arisen from discussions and agreement with applicants, agents and engineering consultants.

These include the following:

- (a) In respect of relatively simple enquiries the Commissioners are currently offering a free Development Control and Consent “Surgery” on the third Tuesday of the month. Appointments are limited to 15 minutes during which applicants are able to discuss their proposals and at which it can be determined whether pre-/post-application discussion is required for Discharge/Byelaw Consent issues.

To date the up take has been limited, but the service has helped to improve consent applications and thus ensure that they can be processed smoothly and quickly.

- (b) A soakaway certification and checking service has been introduced. A number of enquirers have undertaken this service to ensure the acceptability of soakaways/infiltration devices in compliance with the Land Drainage Act and the Commissioners'/Boards' byelaws where it can properly be shown to attenuate flows/volumes.
- (c) Completing the “Acceptability of Surface Water and Sewage Effluent Discharge” form. This is a simple form where responses are made to four questions related to surface water/treated effluent disposal.

Following an initial surge in requests for this procedure demand has recently slowed. We have had to advise some enquirers that this is not a consent document nor does it confirm agreement that a water level/flood risk management strategy has been agreed.

The responses from these procedures have been positive and will continue for the foreseeable future, to be reviewed at a later date.

Initial internal discussions concerning the introduction of fixed fees for some types and sizes of development covered by the pre-application procedure have commenced.

Responses to Planning Applications

One of the complaints aimed at the Commissioners relates to the failure to provide responses to planning applications in a timely manner. The main reason for this is because some LPAs, not just Huntingdonshire District Council, add planning applications to validation lists in week four or later. Unfortunately, the Middle Level Commissioners do not have the resources to check all the lists on a weekly basis (a potential total of 64 lists per week). Therefore, to maximise the number of planning applications captured the week 4 list is normally used.

Members will be aware that neither the Middle Level Commissioners nor the Board are statutory consultees and, therefore, do not actually have to provide a response to the planning authority, and receive no external funding to do so. The main reason for supplying responses is to protect the Commissioners' district and ensure that any byelaw consents are sought.

More timely responses would be of benefit to all parties and discussions have been held with the leading Planning Authorities including the County Council and Fenland District Council but none are prepared to contribute to funding to improve resources. The now former Head of Planning at Fenland District Council advised in a letter dated 7 December that ".....the Council is not in a position to consider providing additional resourcing". As a result, the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has been instructed to concentrate on responding to pre-/post-application related issues and resultant planning applications as a priority with responses to other planning applications being dealt with when time permits, with greater reliance being placed upon our "Standing Advice". This particular document may require further strengthening if this arrangement is to continue over the long term.

However, the Council's letter does advise that it "will continue to encourage applicants and agents to engage directly with yourselves at pre-application stage which clearly has benefits of providing at an early stage greater certainty to developers of your requirements". Whilst there has been an increase in enquiries concerning prior discussion these have, to date, primarily been just prior to or just following the submission of a formal planning application.

Despite the Planning Authorities' position the Middle Level Commissioners are requested to respond to planning applications that may potentially be contentious and informal requests have been received from Fenland's Planning Officers to reinstate the weekly surgery session that occurred between late 2009 and late 2013. However, as the Board is not a statutory consultee it is considered that whilst the comments provided by the Middle Level Commissioners on the Board's behalf would be of benefit to the Planning Authorities in making informed decisions, this request is not followed up.

Following the decision to "stand back" from the planning process standard letters are currently being sent to applicants to remind them of their responsibilities and duties under the Land Drainage Act and associated Byelaws.

Planning Applications

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

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
168	H/15/00128/FUL	Mr M Braid	Residence	Church Road, Conington
169	H/15/00797/FUL	Mr P Haynes	Residence (garage)	Mill Hill, Glatton
170	H/15/00990/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Sullivan	Residence	Church Road, Conington
171	H/15/02047/FUL	F Bliss Ltd	Agricultural	Glatton Ways, Glatton
172	H/15/02226/FUL	Mr & Mrs Vella	Residential	Crease Road, Sawtry
173	H/16/00221/PMBPA	Mr P Davies	Residential	Infield Road, Glatton
174	H/16/00328/AGDET	Mr B Branson	Agricultural	Bullock Road/ Infield Road, Glatton
175	H/16/00601/CLED	Castle Erectors Ltd	Commercial	Washingley Lane, Washingley

From the information provided it is understood that all the developments propose to discharge surface water to soakaways, or similar infiltration systems.

Development Contributions

Contributions received in respect of discharge consent will be reported under the Agenda Item – ‘Contributions from Developers.’

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

No further correspondence has been received from HDC concerning the LDS and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board’s/Commissioners’ interests.

Huntingdonshire SFRA Update

The Commissioners have been contacted by JBA Consulting concerning an Update to the current SFRA.

A response was made by the Commissioners on behalf of itself and the respective Boards within the District Council’s area. It is understood that this response, which included concerns previously raised with the District Council in regard to the current SFRA, are being considered.

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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*.

Further to the last meeting report, the draft Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD was the subject of a public consultation from Friday 4 September to Friday 16 October 2015.

A response to the County, in respect of the SPD, was submitted on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards/Commissioners and, in addition to advising on some basic errors, identified the following:

- Like the NPPF and PPS/G25, and the associated guidance documents, the SPD is generic and does not appreciate the special circumstances of water level/flood risk management within The Fens. Therefore, it is considered that further guidance is required to assist all parties involved within the planning process of the specific issues that are different to other parts of the Country, and must be considered when making planning decisions.
- The current document is “wordy” and is likely to become ineffective. A set of guidance notes for the target audience would assist and provide a more effective “journey” for users of the document.
- The document fails to readily identify the difference between the Environment Agency and the IDBs, our differing concerns and requirements and even differences between individual IDBs. The overriding impression given is one where the role, function and governance of the IDBs appear not to be clearly understood.
- Whilst the Commissioners and associated Boards/Commissioners appreciate that the use of SuDS does have a place within water level/flood risk management, particularly the discharge into managed watercourses, it is considered that, despite the significant emphasis placed on such facilities, the use of attenuation devices in The Fens is not always the correct or most appropriate solution. Therefore, care needs to be taken to ensure that resources and funds are not wasted by seeking to impose attenuation solutions when a direct discharge is acceptable to the local drainage authorities.
- The water resource issues raised predominantly refer solely to potable water supply but other water resource issues which exist within the study area, for example, agricultural use, navigation, amenity, biodiversity, were not fully considered, particularly if drought conditions, like those recently experienced, become more regular, and if the impact of climate change becomes a reality.

The response advised that IDBs may therefore not be able to accept the principles and policies which accommodate a County wide “broad brush” approach, which are not consistent with the more detailed requirements of their local areas, and went on to advise that:

- a. In the flood risk areas managed by IDBs, development proposals are too often granted subject to planning conditions to allow LPAs to reach their targets, without sufficient regard to IDB comments on flood risk.
- b. LPAs receive fees for dealing with planning applications, IDBs do not; unless the developer chooses to follow an IDB pre-application procedure. Too often our advice is ignored and we

are expected to provide a subsidised service for planning authorities to enable them to meet their targets, which the Boards/Commissioners are not prepared to do.

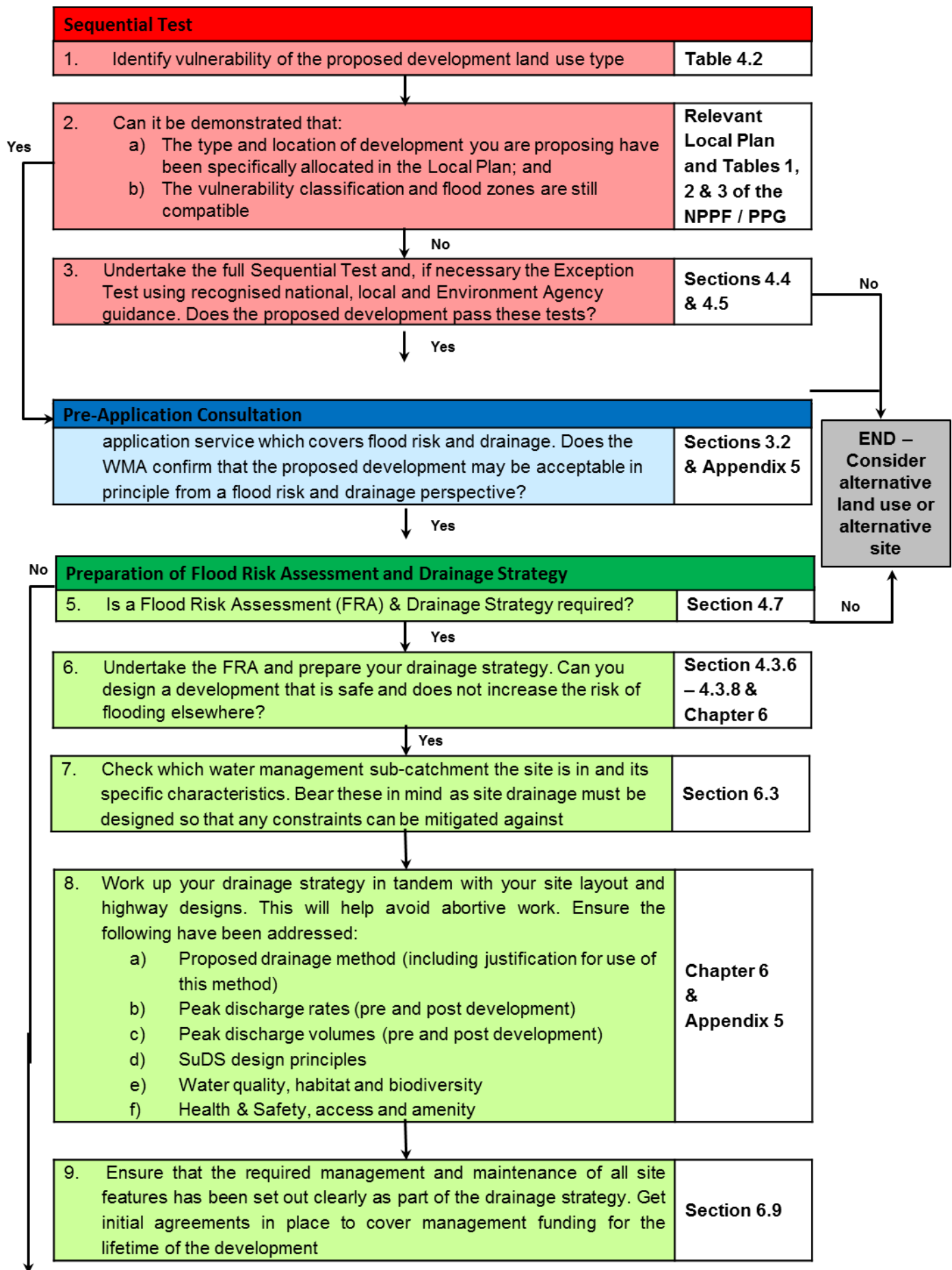
- c. We wish to encourage LPAs to, in turn, encourage developers to adopt the pre-application procedure. In the absence of the developer doing so, we can give no guarantee that, under the present arrangements, we will be able to respond to the Council's request for advice on flood risk.
- d. When dealing with issues related to our byelaws and consent procedures the Middle Level Commissioners and associated/administered Boards/Commissioners will promote and require continued adoption of and compliance with the relevant principles contained within PPS25 and the associated Practice Guide together with the provision of a FRA that meets their own requirements ie detailed assessments on the impacts on the respective water level/flood risk management systems and the provision of adequate evidence to prove that a viable scheme for appropriate water level/flood risk management exists, and that it could be constructed and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

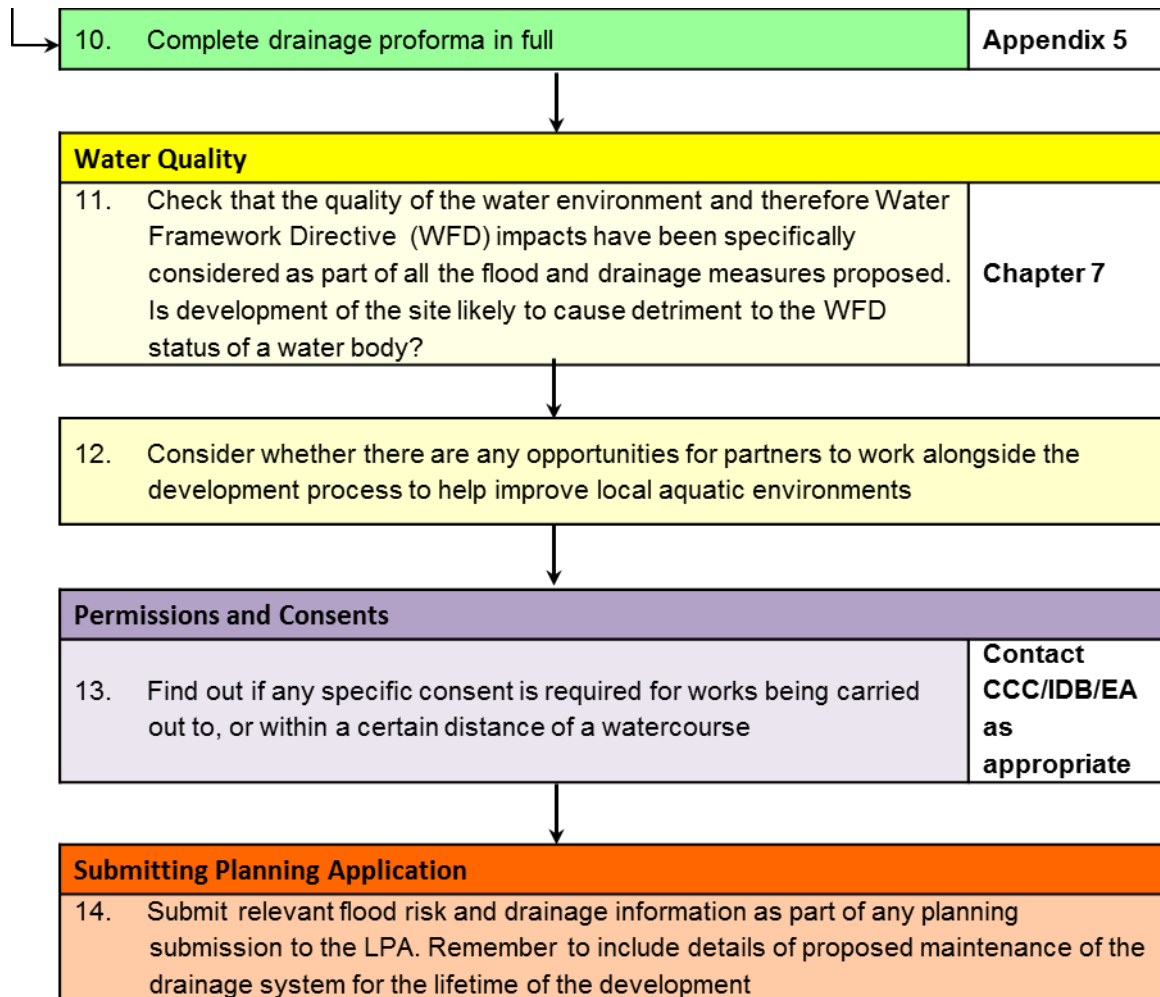
The responses received during the consultation were analysed and reviewed and a Steering Group meeting held in December to discuss the main issues raised.

Following the meeting a flow chart (see overleaf) illustrating the process that it is considered that developers will need to complete when making a planning application was produced. This flow chart is considered to be overcomplicated but more importantly from the Commissioners' perspective the first contact with the RMA, that is likely to receive the discharge concerned, is in step 13 just prior to the submission of the planning application. The refusal by the Board/Commissioners to issue consent for either byelaw or discharge can, in the correct circumstances, be an obstacle to further progress. In addition, some of the answers required to complete steps 5-10 will require the RMAs involvement. Therefore, in order to ensure that the Board/Commissioners are involved at an early stage it is considered that any initial consultation with an RMA should be at least at step 4.

Sections of a revised draft document have been issued to the Steering Group for further consideration and comment and these are currently being considered.

In respect of SuDS the content disappointingly conforms to the generic contents of the NPPF rather than realising that this does not accommodate the special circumstances that occur within the Fenland situation.





In addition, emphasis is made to reducing flood risk but fails to consider other issues such as viability, sustainability, carbon footprint, land use, water resources etc all of which should also be considered. Failure to do so could have adverse impacts and actually reduce “growth” in the area.

The County Council currently hopes that the SPD will go before the County Committee on 9 June and subsequently be adopted by each of the Cambridgeshire local planning authorities.



Consulting Engineer

6 June 2016

C&H(307)\Reports\June 2016

In response to Mr R Elmore, the Chairman thought that the weedscreen was approximately 40 years old and felt that a figure of £8,000, including galvanising at approximately £1,500, would probably suffice.

The Chairman and District Officer felt that early autumn would be the best time to carry out this work.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) That the weedscreen be replaced in early Autumn 2016 and the Consulting Engineers be asked to liaise with the Chairman.
- iii) That the lubrication pump to pump no 1 be monitored.

B.873 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme be approved in principle and kept under review.

B.874 Proposed works to South Barrier Bank – Nene Washes

Further to minute B.842, the Clerk referred to the latest Environment Agency newsletter dated September 2015 and reported that the scheme was reaching a conclusion.

B.875 Environmental Officer's Press Releases and BAP Report

The Clerk referred to the Environmental Officer's Press Releases dated December 2015 and April 2016, previously circulated to Members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

B.876 Report on maintenance work in the District

a) Gravity Area

Further to minute B.844(a), Mr D Elmore referred to the trees at Glatton Brook, which he felt could be arranged to be removed without cost by a local contractor, in return for the wood. There were 2 patches of 8-10 trees (Elms) in each bunch. In response to the District Officer's query regarding the roots, Mr Elmore suggested that the trees could be cut off close to the bank, with the roots being left. The roots could also be considered after the works were carried out.

Mr Racey referred to a slippage on the Middle Level Catchwater Drain which he felt had been made worse by the flailmower. He also referred to the Network Rail fence which was preventing access and that he would speak to the Network Rail contact.

b) Pumped Area

Mr West reported on the works to Points 22-26, which the Clerk had previously corresponded with Network Rail about, but was concerned that the pipe laid at Point 22 would cause water to flow back onto his land. He felt that this would make the situation worse. He also wondered whether the culvert at Point 6 had been raised.

Mr West referred to the BT posts that had been put in at Points 22-24, which had no line but would shortly be superseded by a fibre optic cable, and which were, however, in the way and would restrict the Board's access,

c) Flail Mowing

The Board discussed flail mowing undertaken since the last meeting and considered the arrangements satisfactory.

RESOLVED

- i) That Messrs Davies and Elmore be authorised to undertake flail mowing operations for the Board and that the rate of £39 per hour be allowed for 2016/2017.
- ii) That the Chief Engineer of the Middle Level Commissioners be requested to look at the slip on the Middle Level Commissioners' Catchwater Drain.
- iii) That the Clerk write to Network Rail to seek the removal of the pipe at Point 22.
- iv) That the Clerk write to BT regarding the poles at Points 22-24.
- v) That Mr D Elmore be authorised to discuss the tree removal with the local contractor and to arrange for the work to be done if the terms are favourable.

(NB) – The Chairman, District Officer and Messrs D and R Elmore declared an interest when this item was discussed.

B.877 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 Defra.

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.878 Environment Agency – Precept

- a) The Clerk reported that the precept for 2016/2017 would remain unchanged at £1,894

b) Local Choices Update

Further to minute B.847, the Clerk referred to the Environment Agency's newsletter dated April 2016 and reported that because of the appeals against the precept lodged some two years ago by the Board (and other Boards) the Agency had introduced a Local Choices Precept Programme which involved a far greater input from IDBs and IDBs being much more able to influence the Agency on the works on which the precept would be spent.

The Clerk updated the Board on the recent Environment Agency/IDB Strategic Meeting.

B.879 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

(a) The Clerk reported that the sum of £177.87 (£1,072.40 less £894.53 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for the financial year 2014/2015 together with the sum of £770.81 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2015/2016.

(b) Further to minute B.848(b), the Clerk 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.880 Contribution from Developers

With reference to minute B.180, the Clerk reported that the following contribution towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume had been received, viz:-

<u>Contributor</u>	<u>Amount</u>
J Hadfield	£200.00 (gross) £180.00 (net)

B.881 Association of Drainage Authorities

The Clerk reported:-

a) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities would be held in London on Thursday the 17th November 2016.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association if a Member wishes to attend.

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 8th March 2016.

c) Subscriptions

That it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 5% in 2016, viz:- from £510 to £536. [The increase in 2015 was 4%]

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2016.

B.882 Health and Safety Audits

The Clerk drew attention to the continuing need to ensure that the Board complied with Health and Safety Requirements and reminded Members of the arrangements with Croner.

B.883 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Update

Further to minute B.851, the Clerk reported that the main recent items discussed were the County Council's project to install more rain gauges in Cambridgeshire; the impact of the A14 Project; Surface Water Management Plans and the new Supplementary Planning Document on flood risk, which the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer is involved with. The Clerk advised that the Planning Engineer does not feel that this document is yet in a suitable state commenting in particular, that it is too generic, does not really apply to the special needs of the Fens or properly set out the roles and functions of IDBs.

B.884 Information regarding Asbestos

The Clerk reported that the Board had a duty to provide details of any asbestos in their installations, especially pumping stations, to be recorded in a Register so that these were known and any contractors could be made aware.

RESOLVED

That the Register record no asbestos present.

B.885 Banking Arrangements

a) Changes to the bank mandate

The Clerk reported that due to his impending retirement relevant changes to bank mandates to name his successor would be required in due course.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to make the necessary changes to the Board's bank mandates.

b) Changes to the National Savings Accounts signatories

The Clerk reported that it was necessary to update the signatories on the National Savings Accounts.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman and the Clerk be the authorised signatories on the National Savings Accounts.

B.886 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2014/2015

- a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2015.
- b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2015.

B.887 Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England

The Clerk referred to the recently issued Practitioners' guide to proper practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory Annual Accounts and Governance Statements which will apply to Annual Returns commencing on or after 1st April 2016.

B.888 Budgeting

The Clerk referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2016.

B.889 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.890 Risk Management Assessment

The Board considered their current Risk Management system.

The Clerk reported that the Board had in place a Risk Management Policy which was last reviewed in 2015.

He reported that the Board had in place operational, financial and governance policies and considered all of their key risks and how to mitigate against them at each scheduled meeting, at which operational and environmental risks were discussed, based upon engineer's reports, officer reports, budgets and costings covering the short/medium and longer term issues. Budgets were prepared and approved by the Board.

The Clerk reported that insurances were in place that confirmed the cover was appropriate to the business. Budgets/year-end forecasts were reviewed at intervals by the Board. This was

deemed adequate for the size of the business and the District system was monitored on a regular basis to identify new/emerging areas of risk.

The Board considered this current policy/strategy to be appropriate in between carrying out more substantial, periodic formalised reviews of risk assessment/management and met the requirements that they were assessed by.

B.891 Appointment of the External Auditor

The Clerk reported that, as had been previously mentioned, the recent Local Audit and Accountability Act changes the audit requirements for smaller public bodies including IDBs and such bodies as the MLC and Parish Councils.

The Act abolished the Audit Commission from 1st April 2015 and, from that date, responsibility for external auditor appointments has transferred to a new body, Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. Most contracts with existing external auditors will however continue until they expire after completion of the 2016/2017 audits.

The Clerk reported that from April 2017, smaller authorities will also be legally responsible for the appointment of their own external auditor and that this appointment must be made before the 31st December before the audited year, eg by 31/12/2016 for 2017/2018. The Clerk advised that the Secretary of State can however, appoint a body with power to appoint auditors for such smaller bodies which must then opt out from an appointing body. This has now been proposed, with a body proposed to procure audit services "en bloc" for these bodies. The new body is also supported and being funded by DCLG. The new arrangements will operate for a period of 5 years initially but is likely to run on 5 year cycles. It is likely that the procedures for opting out of this sector led body arrangement and appointing an external auditor individually will not be worthwhile for smaller authorities since this will involve the authority establishing an auditor panel and following a statutory appointment process and it is also likely that audit fees will be higher than under the "en bloc" arrangement.

The Clerk advised that all IDBs had to decide by 31st January 2016 whether they were going to opt out of the new sector body arrangements and that the position can be reviewed during the first five year cycle. The Chairman had, in view of this, agreed that the Board would opt in to the Sector Led body.

The Clerk also reported that from 2017/2018 smaller public bodies (Boards with income or expenditure less than £25,000) would not be required to undertake a formal audit but would need to have greater publication requirements in place. He advised that it would also be necessary to question the effect of "one off" payments such as development contributions taking the Board above the £25,000 limit, in a particular year.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve the actions of the Chairman to join the Sector Led Auditor Appointment body.

B.892 Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk referred to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

B.893 Annual Governance Statement – 2015/2016

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2016.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2016.

B.894 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £11,829.85 which had been made during the financial year 2015/2016.

Mr Allen wondered if less flailing had been done. Mr D Elmore felt not but that some may not have been charged for.

(NB) – The Chairman and District Officer declared an interest in the payment made to Davies Contracting.

(NB) – Messrs D and R Elmore declared an interest in the payment made to Elmore & Sons.

B.895 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2015/2016

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2016 as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2016.

B.896 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2016/2017

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2016/2017 and were informed by the Clerk 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:-

	<u>Area 1 (Gravity Area)</u>	<u>Area 2 (Pumped Area)</u>
Drainage rates	54.10%	97.56%
Special levy	45.90%	2.44%

The members considered whether it would be appropriate for Area 2 to borrow from the Area 1 AIM Development fund to fund the replacement weedscreen. The Clerk reported that this could be done so long as the monies were borrowed for a period during which they would not be required by Area 1 and that an appropriate rate of interest was paid.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved, subject in Area 2 being permitted to borrow the amount required for the replacement of the weedscreen from Area 1 Development A1 Fund over a period of 10 years at a rate of 1%.
- ii) That a total sum of £15,797 be raised by drainage rates and special levy (Area 1 - £7,371; Area 2 - £ 8,426).
- 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:-

	<u>Area 1</u>	<u>Area 2</u>
Drainage rates	£3,988	£8,220
Special levy	£3,383	£206

- iv) That drainage rates be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District as follows:-

<u>Area 1</u>	<u>Area 2</u>
6.0p in the £	17.00p in the £

- v) That a Special levy of £3,589 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 levy referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levy by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.897 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.898 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday the 13th June 2017.