

HUNDRED FOOT WASHES INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Hundred Foot Washes Internal Drainage Board
held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Tuesday the 11th April 2017

PRESENT

S A Calton Esq (Chairman)	S Davis Esq
L J Marshall (Vice Chairman)	P Harrington Esq
C Carson Esq	J Taylor Esq

Miss Lorna McShane (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance. Mr D Tough also attended the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from R S Martin Esq.

B.1086 Declarations of Interest

Miss McShane 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.

Messrs Harrington and Marshall declared interests in item 23 - Wash Superintendents' Fees.

B.1087 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 12th April 2016 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1088 Clerk to the Board

a) Further to minute B.1049, Miss McShane reported that Mr David Thomas had been appointed as Clerk to the Board and that she had been appointed Solicitor/Assistant Clerk.

Miss McShane reported that the Chairman had authorised a donation of £100 towards the gift to mark Iain Smith's retirement and that Mr Smith had asked that his thanks be passed on to the Board for their generous contribution towards his retirement gift and would like it recorded that it had been a pleasure for him to serve the Board and that he wished it all the best for the future.

b) Changes to Bank Mandate

Further to minute B.1071, Miss McShane reported that, as most invoices raised came through the engineering department, the Internal Auditor had advised that David Thomas should not be named on the bank account and that the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer of the Middle Level Commissioners should be the officers authorised to make payments of

authorised accounts and that in pursuance of minute B.1071, the Chairman has authorised the appropriate changes to the mandate.

B.1089 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That S A Calton Esq be appointed Chairman of the Board.

B.1090 Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED

That L J Marshall Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Board.

B.1091 Election of Board Members

Miss McShane reported that the term of Office of the elected Members of the Board would expire on the 31st October 2017 and submitted the proposed Register of Electors applicable to the 2017 election.

RESOLVED

That the Register be approved.

B.1092 Board Membership

Miss McShane reported that as David Hoccom had taken up a new role within the RSPB he had resigned from the Board.

Miss McShane also reported that since Mr Shaun O'Driscoll was no longer employed by the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust, Mr David Tough had been appointed as his replacement.

RESOLVED

- i) That once the RSPB replacement for Mr Hoccom was known they be co-opted to membership of the Board in Area 3.
- ii) That Mr David Tough be co-opted to membership of the Board in Area 3.
- iii) That a copy of the Register of Electors be sent to all Board members.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Tough.

B.1093 Ouse Washes Land Managers Group

Further to minute B.1052, Members considered the minutes of the Ouse Washes Land Managers Group dated the 15th March and 13th September 2016.

B.1094 Ouse Washes Habitat Group (Ouse Washes Strategic Group)

Further to minute B.1053, Miss McShane referred to the Action Notes from the meeting held on 9th December 2016 and these were noted.

B.1095 Water Framework Directive

Further to minute B.1054, Miss McShane reported that there had been no further developments, apart from Mr Paul Sharman being appointed as the IDB representative following the retirement of Mr Iain Smith, but advised that, due to the Environment Agency no longer being able to support it, the River Basin Liaison Panel had since been disbanded. She also reported that the Clerk was satisfied that there were other partnerships in place and would continue to update Members when required.

B.1096 Water Transfer Licences

Further to minute B.1055, Miss McShane reported that ADA had met with Defra officials, including Sarah Hendry, on the 11th October to discuss the Water Transfer Licences and it appeared that the Minister was keen to avoid over regulation. ADA had proposed certain points to Defra, including that ADA would hold one licence for the industry or that the opportunity should first be given for the information which the Environment Agency allege that they do not have to be provided other by regulation but perhaps through a form similar to the present IDB1. Defra officials had, it was understood, agreed to consider these proposals.

Miss McShane gave a brief update on the current position in relation to proposed licensing changes and made it clear that unnecessary bureaucracy and unfair charging would be resisted.

B.1097 Culverts/Tunnels connecting to the Header Ditch – Mr R Riches

Miss McShane advised that due to the confidential nature of the issues concerning Mr Riches, it was necessary to pass a formal resolution to exclude the public.

RESOLVED

That in pursuance of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting when the above matters are being considered by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

B.1098 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Inspection

Further to minute B.1057, Miss McShane referred to a briefing note from the Environment Agency dated July 2016.

B.1099 Consulting Engineers' Report

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

Hundred Foot Washes I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – March 2017

Asset Survey

As an essential part of our work in seeking to reduce flood risk, the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) have surveyed all MLC and third party owned penetrations through MLC river banks and embankments and recorded and uploaded these to our GIS (Geographical Information System). The condition and likely continuing use or otherwise of these penetrations (generally pipes or culverts) has been assessed. Should the Board wish for a similar exercise to be carried out on their own district assets this can also be arranged. Such a survey would assist the Board with future budgeting in ensuring that smaller but strategically/locally important assets such as culverts, slackers and adjustable and fixed weirs are not overlooked.

Eel Regulations

The latest guidance suggests that spending of FCRM money on schemes just to facilitate eel movements will not be required. However, plans for improvements, modifications or replacement of structures which have been identified as a barrier to movement should be seen as a trigger for considering such works. There is a further test to be included and that is one of proportionately, ie the additional cost of eel passage should not be disproportionate to the overall scheme cost.

The IDBs and ADA have been pushing for further research to better understand eel movement and explore all options in relation to providing methods which would allow the mature (silver) eels to escape closed systems and hence travel to their breeding sites in the most cost effective manner. ADA has asked if IDBs would join with the EA in funding this project and so far the response has been positive. The Board is therefore asked if it would wish to offer some financial support over one or two years. Other Boards have committed between £50 and £1000 for either one or two years.

Development within the Floodplain

The floodplain, its definition, derivation and extents have been an issue not only for the Commissioners and associated Boards but other IDBs since its introduction. This has become of more concern since the elevated importance of the Sequential Test in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The matter of development within the floodplain has been discussed at several sites within our areas of interest, and the Clerk to the Commissioners/Boards has advised that the definition and extents of a “floodplain” are matters for the planning authority to resolve with the relevant authority who prepared the hazard map, be it the Environment Agency (EA) for its various flood maps, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), for its SFRA, and/or the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for its

SWMP. It is acknowledged that whilst there may be specific issues relating to future proposed aspects of development within our catchment we will not oppose it simply because it is within the floodplain. The Commissioners/Boards have policy statements, available on the Middle Level website, which set out the Standard of Protection (SoP) that they will seek to provide, floodplain or not.

In short, the Commissioners and associated Boards do not agree with the generic content of the NPPF and argue that “The Fens” is a special case and should be considered as such.

The main purpose of an IDB is to aim to manage flood risk up to an appropriate SoP. Above this SoP there will be a residual flood risk which must be accounted for.

Internal Consultation with the Board

To ensure that our limited resources are maximised and to enable more timely responses to pre-/post-application consultation and applications for byelaw consent, and occasionally discharge consent, we have introduced a defined process of “internal consultation” between the Commissioners and the Board, usually, but not always, with the Chairman and/or District Officer to seek the Board’s comments and thus aid the decision making process.

Members are reminded that if a response, ideally in writing by post or email, has not been received within fourteen days from the request being issued then it is considered that the Board does not wish to comment and is content for the Commissioners’ staff to process and make a recommendation on the respective consent application/discussion procedure based upon information to hand.

Changes to Planning Procedures Update

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

Pre- and Post-Application Consultation

Despite an increase in the number of planning applications being processed and planning enquiries received it appears that the number of Pre- and Post- Application Consultation discussion requests has reduced over previous years. The reason for this is unknown but as detailed later in this report “developers” are failing to maximise the benefits of this procedure and Boards are failing to encourage its use and thus are incurring unnecessary additional costs which could be paid by the developer.

Notes/Informatives on planning decision notices

Following a concern raised by one of the Boards administered by the Commissioners, a brief review of a random, yet representative, sample of planning application Decision Notices made by

the Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) that have primarily been granted in the last two years has been undertaken.

Many of the relevant decisions within HDC's area made during 2016, and to a lesser degree during 2015, relate to the Prior Approval of agricultural building to dwellings or Prior Notification applications which, on the whole, do not include conditions or refer to notes/informatives, possibly because of the nature of the application. In a similar manner most of the other decision notices found did not, with a few exceptions, include notes/informatives either.

As a result a letter was sent during December to all the planning authorities that the Commissioners deal with, both directly and on behalf of its administered Boards, requesting that the use of informatives could be (re-) introduced on future notices "in order to make applicants aware of other consents which may be required in addition to Planning Consent and prevent them being in breach of the Boards' Byelaws"

It is understood that the principle of using notes/informatives on Planning Decision Notices is based on the Court of Appeal which remarked following the case of Slough Borough Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and Oury [1995] "The general rule is that, in construing a planning permission, regard may only be had to the permission itself, including the reasons stated for it."

The decision and its reason(s) is the primary document, with the informatives no more than non-binding additional information which lack a statutory basis. Planning Conditions, on the other hand, may impose mandatory requirements for the carrying out of development and have statutory authority.

The purpose of a note in respect of a condition is to provide the applicant with further information and an informative is to provide relevant guidance to the applicant without having to impose relevant conditions. The Planning Circular 11/95: use of conditions in planning permission advises how these can be used to bring the applicants' attention to certain matters, such as, reminding an applicant to obtain further planning approvals and other consents but should not establish mandatory requirements with which an authorised development must comply.

However, it is further understood that there are a limited number of exceptions to this rule which could lead to a challenge to the permission which may result in a decision being "quashed" but this is outside of our interest on this occasion.

Local Land Charges Register (LLCR)

As previously advised requests are made to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), when relevant, to make an entry on the LLCR to highlight that the requirements of the relevant authority have not

been met. This process is providing results, particularly within the Fenland District Council (FDC) area, but enquiries from other LPAs are low, however, these areas of interest are smaller than that of FDC and feature smaller urban areas.

Previously enquiries were only received from local Solicitors but more recently enquiries are also being sought from independent search providers who offer specialist conveyancing services, such as Index Property Information, who undertake local authority searches, drainage and water reports, environmental reports etc.

Whilst researching and processing such enquiries have cost and time implications it protects the parties involved and is believed to have been a significant contributing factor in moving forward a long standing issue associated with the Cardea development at Stanground to the west of the Commissioners' catchment.

Treated effluent discharges from Anglian Water Services (AWS) Water Recycling Centres (WRC) or from the Public Sewerage System

Developers are becoming increasingly aware of the Supreme Court's decision that any connection to a public sewer under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991 or agreement to construct a public sewer under Section 104 of that Act also requires our consent where our systems would be affected. Therefore, in addition to any permission from the LPA, the EA and AWS, the consent of the Board/Commissioners is also required for the acceptance of any increased flows or volumes to our system. Such consent will not be given unless we consider that the discharge can be properly dealt with within our system and the costs of accommodating that discharge are met.

Local Plan Consultations

Further to the last meeting, the Commissioners have been involved in/responded to the following on the Board's behalf.

East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) Local Plan

ECDC Level 1 SFRA

During April the Commissioners' Planning Engineer attended an Inception Meeting and supplied information to the District Council's Flood and Water consultant, JBA Consulting, on this document which will replace the Level 1 SFRA originally published in February 2011.

A review of the draft document was commenced but the unrealistic timescale for providing a response, presumably imposed by the District Council, and the need to respond to other time related matters meant that a formal response was not possible.

Fenland District Council (FDC) Local Plan

No further correspondence has been received from FDC concerning the Local Plan and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

Fenland District Council's (FDC) District Wide Level 2 SFRA

In the absence of funding no further progress has occurred with this project.

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

Responses were made to the following:

- a) Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA): Additional Sites Consultation
- b) Wind Energy Developments
- c) Design Guide 2016

The documents associated with consultation do not specifically involve the Board.

Huntingdonshire SFRA Update

The HDC SFRA has been the subject of an Update, also by JBA Consulting, but again unrealistic timescales for providing a response meant that a formal response was not possible.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan

Responses were made to the following:

- (a) CIL Consultation 2016 – Draft Charging Schedule & Statement of Representation
- (b) Site Allocations & Development Management Policies document (SADMP) - Proposed Main Modifications to the SADMP Document
- (c) Call for Sites and Policy Suggestions Consultation

None of the consultation documents specifically involve the Board.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution Deal

All councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, as well as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), have now signed up to the devolution deal with government. The deal will secure an additional £770 million of investment for the area, including a £600 million transport fund and money for affordable housing.

Norfolk Minerals Site Specific Allocations DPD - Single Issue Silica Sand Review.

The purpose of the Review is to address the predicted shortfall in the quantity of silica sand extraction sites allocated in the Plan, by designating specific sites and areas of search which would be suitable to meet this shortfall.

It is predicted that around 750,000 tonnes of silica sand will be extracted from Norfolk per year and that no more than 1 or 2 additional specific sites will need to be allocated over the plan period (to 2026) to meet the shortfall.

A response made on behalf of the Commissioners and our relevant associated Boards, within Norfolk, in response to a public consultation held between 16 May and 27 June, advised that the above documents have been considered and the proposals were found to be outside the respective catchments and, therefore, no specific comments were made.

In December 2016 Norfolk County Council, in its capacity as the Mineral Planning Authority, formally submitted the Review to the Planning Inspectorate, to enable it to carry out an independent examination. The Planning Inspector's task is to consider the soundness of the document, based on the criteria set out in paragraph 182 of the NPPF, and also consider whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate and meets the appropriate legal and procedural requirements.

The Hearing Sessions for the Examination will be held on 14-15 March 2017.

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.*

The SPD was endorsed by the County Council and the completed document was circulated to the relevant planning authorities and risk management authorities (RMAs) for adoption where appropriate. The SPD was adopted by ECDC on 16 November and FDC's Full Council on 15 December 2016.

Consulting Engineer

13 March 2017

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RESOLVED

That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.

B.1100 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Capital Programme be approved in principle and kept under review.
- ii) That the Middle Level Commissioners' Senior Engineer be requested to liaise with the Washes Superintendents when carrying out the Inspection for the current year.
- iii) That consideration be given to a device to keep out Floating water Pennywort and the creation of Kingfisher sites on the slackers, where appropriate.

B.1101 National Flood Resilience Review

Miss McShane referred to the publication of the above review by the Government in September 2016 and to the response from ADA.

B.1102 Washes Superintendents' Reports

The Board considered the Reports of the Washes Superintendents.

Mr Harrington reported that a leak had occurred in Common Wash Slacker.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Reports and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) That the Reports be forwarded to the Area Manager Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Area.
- iii) That the Middle Level Commissioners' Senior Engineer be requested to include the leak in Common Wash Slacker in his inspection.

B.1103 Environmental Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

Miss McShane referred to the Environmental Officer's Newsletter dated December 2016, previously circulated to members.

Mr Carson asked that he be notified of anyone using eel nets.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

B.1104 Cleaning of culverts – 2016/2017

Miss McShane reported that the RSPB and WWT had carried out cleaning of the culverts as in previous years and would invoice the Board for the work.

RESOLVED

That a payment of £10 continue to be made in respect of each culvert.

(NB) – Messrs Harrington and Taylor declared an interest (as employees of the RSPB) in the payment made to the RSPB.

B.1105 Washes Superintendents' Fees

The Board gave consideration to the Washes Superintendents' fees for 2017/2018.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £1,310 be allowed for the services of the Washes Superintendents for 2017/2018.

(NB) – The Vice Chairman and Mr Harrington declared a financial interest when this item was discussed.

B.1106 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.1107 Slubbing and Spreading work

a) Slubbing work

The Board considered the tender received from Fen Group to undertake slubbing work on behalf of the Board in 2017/2018.

RESOLVED

That the tender received from Fen Group in the sum of £39 per hour to undertake slubbing work in 2017/2018 be accepted by the Board.

b) Spreading work

Members considered the question of the undertaking of spreading work within the District.

RESOLVED

i) That the Washes Superintendents carry out a survey and the Chairman be authorised to take any further action he considers appropriate.

ii) That the Clerk contact Natural England to see if a further consent is required for the spreading work.

B.1108 Environment Agency – Precept

a) Miss McShane reported that the precept for 2017/2018 had been set at £1,214.

b) Local Choices Update

Further to minute B.1065(b), Miss McShane referred to the Environment Agency's newsletter dated October 2016.

B.1109 Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

Miss McShane reported that the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities would be held in London on Thursday the 16th November 2017.

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

Miss McShane reported on the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association held in Prickwillow, Ely on Tuesday the 7th March 2017.

c) Subscriptions

Miss McShane referred to an e-mail received from ADA dated the 16th December 2016 and reported that the Clerk had been advised that subscriptions for 2017 will remain unchanged at £536.

RESOLVED

That the requested ADA subscription for 2017 be paid.

d) Floodex 2017

Miss McShane reported that Floodex 2017 will be held at The Peterborough Arena on the 17th and 18th May 2017 and referred to the free Health and Safety Seminars that will also be taking place.

e) Further Research on Eels

Miss McShane referred to an e-mail received from ADA dated the 15th November 2016 and the research specification from the Environment Agency regarding the eel research proposed over the next 2 years.

Members discussed the ongoing eel research and the request from ADA seeking contributions.

RESOLVED

That the Board contribute £100 per year over the next two years towards further research on eels.

B.1110 Governance of Water Level Management in England

Miss McShane referred to the publication of the National Audit Office's (NAO) Report on Internal Drainage Boards, available on their website, www.nao.org.uk/report/internal-drainage-boards; to the Report Summary and to the response from ADA.

B.1111 Tidal River Action Plan Scoping Workshop

Further to minute B.1067, Miss McShane reported that there had been no developments regarding agitation dredging except to say that trial works were likely to be carried out next year.

B.1112 Health and Safety Audits

Miss McShane 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 and that if the Board had any issues they could seek advice from Croner via the Middle Level Commissioners.

Miss McShane reported that the Middle Level Commissioners had put together a pack consisting of a practical guide, templates and examples relating to health and safety requirements, which they hoped would assist Boards with their health and safety responsibilities.

RESOLVED

- i) That a set of Health and Safety templates be sent to the Washes Superintendents.
- ii) That the Board avail themselves of assistance from Croner on Health and Safety matters.

B.1113 Cambridgeshire and Norfolk Flood Risk Management Partnership Update

Further to minute B.1069, Miss McShane reported that the main issues considered by the Partnership were:-

1. The proposal to extend the provision of rain gauges in catchment.
2. Discussions over the maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).
3. The provision of Community flood kits. The LLFA are sourcing funds to provide kits to certain groups, i.e. March town council, but certain criteria are having to be met.
4. Work on the A14 project has now commenced.
5. The Supplementary Planning Document on flood risk has now been endorsed by Cambridgeshire County Council.
6. An update on the surface water management plan. Requesting quotes for surveys to be undertaken for property level protection (PLP).
7. Partner projects were discussed including Embankment raising in the Middle Level (MLC) and in the Ouse Washes (EA).

B.1114 Authorisation to appear in court to obtain distress warrants

RESOLVED

That under the provisions of section 54 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, in addition to Mr R Hill and Miss S Ablett, Miss Lorna McShane be authorised generally to institute or defend on behalf of the Board proceedings in relation to a drainage rate or to appear on their behalf in any proceedings before a Magistrates' Court for the issue of a warrant of distress for failure to pay a drainage rate.

B.1115 Potential Changes in Rating Valuation

Miss McShane reported the consideration presently being given by ADA and Defra to possible changes in the way in which drainage rates and special levies may be calculated in future. She advised that the present system, under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Internal Drainage Board (Finance) Regulations, provides for agricultural property to be valued at a notional rental value for that property as at 1st April 1988 with non-agricultural hereditaments being valued at the "average acre" rate, calculated by reference to pre-1988 development within the District of the individual Board. The current legislation does however require that properties that existed before 1st April 1988 are valued according to their old rateable values, records for which may no longer exist and this causes problems for IDBs which are looking to extend their boundaries and particularly where there are proposals to create new IDBs. Miss McShane understood however, that, at present, Defra are unlikely to progress the issue urgently and that some further consideration will have to take place before any change is proposed. In addition, as a change to primary legislation would be required, Parliamentary time would have to be found for this. At this stage Miss McShane wished therefore to simply alert the Board to these discussions and further reports will no doubt be made to the Board in the future should legislative amendment be proposed.

B.1116 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2015/2016

- a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2016.
- b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2016.

B.1117 Budgeting

Miss McShane referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2017.

B.1118 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.1119 Risk Management Assessment

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with their current Risk Management Policy.

B.1120 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

Miss McShane 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. She 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.

B.1121 Exercise of Public Rights

Miss McShane 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.1122 Annual Governance Statement – 2016/2017

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2017.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2017.

B.1123 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £29,666.83 which had been made during the financial year 2016/2017.

(NB) – The Vice Chairman and Mr Marshall declared an interest in the payments made to them.

(NB)– Mr Carson declared an interest (as an employee of the Middle Level Commissioners) in the payments to the Middle Level Commissioners

(NB) – Messrs Harrington and Taylor declared an interest (as employees of the RSPB) in the payment made to RSPB Sales Ltd.

B.1124 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2016/2017

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2017 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 2017.

B.1125 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2017/2018

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2017/2018 and were informed by Miss McShane 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 99.39% and 0.61%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £20,641 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 £20,515 and £126 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 20.00p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v)
 - a) That a Special levy of £119 be made and issued to the Borough Council for Kings Lynn and West Norfolk for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
 - b) That a Special levy of £7 be made and issued to East Cambridgeshire 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.1126 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.1127 Date of next Meeting

Members considered a letter from the Chief Executive of the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk dated the 19th July 2016 concerning the Board meeting dates and the setting of drainage rates and special levies.

RESOLVED

That no change be made to the meeting date and that the next scheduled Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday the 10th April 2018.

B.1128 Water Quality

The Vice Chairman reported the presence of nitrates and phosphates in the water and that, although the Board had no responsibility, as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, he would like to continue Natural England's work in testing the water quality.

RESOLVED

That the Vice Chairman investigate using the kit used by the Old Bedford and Middle Level Watercare Partnership.