

## **MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS**

At a Meeting of the Middle Level Board held at the Middle Level Offices  
March on Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018

### **PRESENT**

M E Heading Esq (Chairman)	C F Hartley Esq
J L Brown Esq (Vice Chairman)	J E Heading Esq
P W Allpress Esq	S T Raby Esq
G Booth Esq	W Sutton Esq
The Lord De Ramsey	P W West Esq
S W Whittome Esq	

The Chief Executive/Chief Engineer, the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk and the Treasurer were in attendance.

### **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from C D Boughton Esq, R C Brown Esq, J R Clarke Esq, D J Fountain Esq, S Garratt Esq, R W Groom Esq, M R R Latta Esq, and H W Whittome Esq.

### **B.3474 Declaration of Interests**

The Chief Executive reminded the Board of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any of them.

Mr Sutton declared an interest in all planning matters as a member of Fenland District Council.

### **B.3475 Confirmation of Minutes**

### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on the 26<sup>th</sup> April and 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

### **B.3476 Death of Mr John Childs MBE**

The Chief Executive referred to the death of Mr John Childs on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

The Chief Executive reported that Mr Childs had been a Commissioner since 1965, had served as Vice Chairman and Chairman and had also served on the Works Committee until 1986.

The Commissioners stood in silence as a mark of respect for Mr Childs.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Commissioners' appreciation of the services rendered by Mr J Childs be recorded in the minutes.

B.3477 Land Drainage Act 1991  
Board Membership

The Chief Executive reported that:-

- a) Huntingdonshire District Council had appointed Councillor J R Clarke to be a Member of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

The Chief Executive also reported that Councillor D Watt was not re-appointed.

- b) Fenland District Council had re-appointed Councillors G Booth, S Garratt and W Sutton to be Members of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

B.3478 Annual Report for the year 2017/2018

The Board considered and approved the Annual Report for the financial year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 for submission to the Commissioners.

B.3479 Payments by the Commissioners

The Board examined and approved payments amounting to £2,199,379.00 made during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

(NB) - Councillor Sutton declared an interest in the payments to Fenland District Council.

(NB) - Messrs Hartley and Sutton declared an interest in the payment to Upwell IDB.

B.3480 Miscellaneous Receipts

The Board examined and approved particulars of receipts amounting to £103,248.97 during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

B.3481 Determination of annual values for rating purposes

The Board considered the recommendations for the determination of annual values for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

- i) That the determinations recommended be adopted by the Commissioners.
- ii) That the Chief Executive be empowered to serve notices and to take such other action as may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements.
- iii) That the Chairman and the Chief Executive be empowered to authorise appropriate action on behalf of the Commissioners in connection with any appeals against the determinations.

#### B.3482 Rate arrears

Consideration was given to writing off rate arrears amounting to £228.28.

#### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners be recommended to write off rate arrears amounting to £228.28.

#### B.3483 Contributions from Developers

With reference to minute B.1779, the Chief Executive reported that development contributions had been received by the Commissioners in the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume.

#### B.3484 Staff

##### a) Mechanical and Electrical Engineer – Mr Malcolm Downes

Further to minute B.3447(d), the Chief Executive reported that the new arrangements for the provision of mechanical and electrical engineering services were now in place and were working well.

##### b) Environmental Officer Post

Further to minute B.3447(e), the Chief Executive referred to the appointment of Peter Beckenham as Conservation Officer on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018 and that he was settling in well and getting to know the area.

He advised that Peter had organised the IDB BAP meeting for Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at the Oliver Cromwell Hotel in March and Members may get a further opportunity to meet him on this occasion.

##### c) Operative off work with stress related issues

The Chief Executive reported that the operative had now returned to work on a phased three day week for two weeks and was to recommence full time working again on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

##### d) Lone Worker Software Trial

The Chief Executive reported that he was trialling an OKAlone software application on a pilot basis for the month of December which was to be used by all members of engineering staff and the manual workforce.

He added that risk assessments for the manual workforce has identified lone working as an issue and the use of this software application, if successful, would go some way to meeting the employer's obligations for lone workers.

e) Applications for re-grading

The Chief Executive reported on Martyn Isaacson who had applied for an increase in April 2018 but this review had been deferred as he had not completed a year with the Commissioners at that time. Martyn was currently on Spine Point 13 which puts him behind most of the other operatives.

The Chief Executive also recommended that Ashley Barber receive a spine point increase.

RESOLVED

- i) That Martyn Isaacson receive a salary rise increase of one spine point to Spine Point 1.
- ii) In view of increased responsibility, Ashley Barber receive a salary rise increase to Spine Point 16.

B.3485 Health and Safety Matters

i) Recorded Accidents/Near Misses

The Chief Executive reported that a boater member of the public had tripped over at Salters Lode Lock and hit his head and that further handrails had been installed as a precautionary measure following this incident.

ii) IDB Service Provision

The Chief Executive reported on the increased attention on health and safety brought about by Defra trying to raise its profile and give it a higher priority with internal drainage boards, which is also being mirrored by the Commissioners' insurer AXA who are trying to reduce their exposure to risk. These insurers had identified three requirements for future insurance which included evidence of training for pump attendants and inspections being carried out at pumping stations. The Chief Executive advised that health and safety had appeared on all recent IDB agendas and whilst some boards had appointed a Health and Safety Officer the general consensus seemed to be from most boards that they needed extra support. He was therefore exploring an option of employing a consultant to provide this extra level of expertise or alternatively employing an extra member of staff, possibly on a part time basis.

B.3486 Pension schemes

Auto enrolment pension scheme (NEST)

Further to minute B.3448(ii), Members gave consideration to the future contribution rate payable by the Commissioners in respect of employees in the auto enrolment pension scheme.

The Chief Executive reported that as from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the minimum employer contribution rate will be 4%. However, it was noted that this is a minimum contribution and the Commissioners would look at introducing a variable scheme with employer contributions of up to 10% to match employees' contributions.

RESOLVED

To consider the figures involved and review the contributions at the April board meeting.

#### B.3487 Property

a) No 10 Deerfield Road, March

Further to minute B.3449(a), the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk reported that the sale had not yet been completed because of a problem proving title to the garage. This was now being considered by the Land Registry. She advised that the purchaser was still very interested in the property and it was hoped to complete the sale of the house before Christmas.

b) Failure of solar inverter

The Chief Executive reported that the solar inverter had failed just inside of the warranty period and had now been repaired accordingly.

c) Breakdown of the on-site package treatment plant

The Chief Executive reported that the on-site package treatment plant had broken down and on investigation had proved to be of a poor design which had now been rectified and that the plant was now operating successfully.

d) Over winter tractor store

The Chief Executive reported that the order for the store had now been placed and it was anticipated that the new building would be erected just after the Christmas period.

#### B.3488 Chief Executive's Annual Report

The Board considered the Report of the Chief Executive, viz:-



# ***Annual Report***

Report on Period  
April to September 2018

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# ANNUAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2018

April to September 2018

## 1. **Health & Safety**

- 1.1 ***Croner Consulting*** – continue to provide the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) and associated Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) with help and advice on Health and Safety issues.

This year efforts have again been made to raise the profile of Health and Safety with the IDBs and to ensure that all policies and arrangements are in place to meet the legal requirements placed upon them as employers. The responses have been positive and this will be a matter on the agenda for the next Chairs' meeting. Some Boards have also appointed a single Board member to coordinate and report on health and safety matters. This is a pro-active action which will help evidence the Boards commitment to safe operations.

For some time, consideration has been given to how lone working can best be managed. This has recently been reviewed and a smart phone software application called OKAlone trialled. This trial has proved successful and the software is being rolled out to all the workforce and members of staff who lone work in situations considered to include higher levels of risk, such as working near water or at remote unmanned sites. To facilitate this all mobile phone contracts now include data provision and smart phones are to be supplied to those who do not already have them.

## 2. **Clerk's Report**

- 2.1 ***Anglian Water Issues*** – a meeting was held with Anglian Water (AW) to discuss areas of shared interest. Within the items covered was the need for AW to be more diligent about advising developers that consent is required for discharges of treated effluent into MLC and IDB waters that are passed via sewage treatment works. A follow up meeting will be held this autumn.
- 2.2 ***Partnership Working and Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs)*** – the MLC have carried out dredging works for the Environment Agency (EA) on a rechargeable basis using the PSCA as a contractual mechanism. The PSCA allows one FRM authority to carry out work for another without the need to obtain competitive quotations. This has been shown to be very effective when IDBs carry out works for the EA.
- 2.3 ***Government EA Outcome Measure Targets Review*** – we are currently half way through the six year spending cycle linked with the £2.3 billion of committed government national capital expenditure. The EA was concerned that the targets linked to this might not be delivered, hence it carried out a refresh of where funds were allocated, the aim of which was to refocus its efforts on achieving the agreed aims. Unfortunately, as a result of this many new schemes came forward and a number of schemes which were being pursued by the MLC, for themselves and their administered IDBs, have now been deferred until beyond the end of this current spending cycle, ie until 2021 or later. This includes the MLC bank raising scheme. Consequently a decision has been made not to progress with further development of an accelerated business case. Members will be aware that this was being channelled through the EA's PDU (programme delivery unit) which it was thought might have a premium attached but had the potential to lever Grant-in-Aid (GiA) in this cycle. This is clearly not now going to be possible, hence looking for alternative quotations will be considered and a new time frame for delivery developed. There may be value in getting the business case approved so that a scheme is ready to go ahead once grant is once again allocated.



- 2.4 Pilot Shared Resource and Closer Working with Cambridgeshire County Council** – this pilot scheme is underway and whilst not dramatically changing the way planning advice is being delivered it is pleasing to see closer working and sharing of information improved. Training has been given to Cambridgeshire County Council staff and a student studying for a FRM degree under the EA foundation scheme.
- 2.5 National Audit Office Review/IDB1 updating** – the revised IDB1 has been issued and was used for the first time this year for annual returns. Whilst generally the MLC tick the necessary boxes, which defra might expect them to, there are several which in my opinion will need to be addressed over the next two years. These are member training on specific topics (including Governance, Finance, Environment, Health, safety and welfare and Communications and engagement) and updating of the byelaws to include entries relating to powers which the Commissioners can utilise in relation to dealing with environmental infringements. The latter is required to bring the byelaws into line with the changes brought about by more recent legislation. On member training the Chief Executive has asked that ADA develop a scheme of shared training which will ensure best value for money for the industry as a whole.
- 2.6 Board Tour of Inspection** – this year's inspection was due to be based around a visit to the Boston Barrier project. Unfortunately it has not been possible to arrange the visit and hence efforts will be made to put together something along these lines in early summer next year.
- 2.7 The Agriculture Bill** – this Bill was introduced to the House of Commons on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September. The Government wishes the Bill to provide the legal framework for the UK to leave the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and establish a new payments system for the farmers and land managers based on public money for public goods.

Measures to reduce flooding are cited, alongside others like environmental protection, public access to the countryside, and improving air quality, as public goods for which future payments may be made. Specifically, if enacted subsection 1(d) will enable the Secretary of State to provide financial assistance in the future for activities undertaken to mitigate or adapt to climate change, whilst subsection 1(e) would enable financial assistance for activities undertaken to prevent, reduce or protect from hazards to, or caused by, the environment. By way of example the Government states that this could be used to reduce flood risk by incentivising good soil management, leading to a reduction in soil compaction.

- 2.8 Committees** – the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) met on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018 to discuss responses to proposed revisions to the Boat Safety Certificate scheme. They will meet again on the 18<sup>th</sup> October to discuss general navigation authority matters. Should anything particularly relevant to the Commissioners come out of this meeting a verbal report will be made.

The Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Peterborough Flood Risk Management/Water Management Partnerships met on the 31<sup>st</sup> July and reported that level 1 and level 2 SFRAs were being prepared for the county simultaneously. The level 2 report is being designed to be area specific and to be guided by pre-assessed risk. The Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP) also met during the period.

It was pleasing to be able to report at the last meeting that the Cambridgeshire ACRE Heritage Lottery Fund Project bid 'New Life on the Old West' has passed through the first stage, releasing funding to develop a fully detailed final bid. Work on this is progressing well and a meeting with CambsACRE was recently held in which this and other areas of shared interest were discussed. One such area is the setting up of volunteer worker projects. CambsACRE has an excellent track record for doing this and is willing to assist the MLC in setting up two groups, one for conservation monitoring and one for volunteer work on navigation. The latter has in mind the increased expectations that boaters will have for the services provided by the Commissioners once the Navigation Bill is passed. The use of volunteers should help to control the likely increased costs.

- 2.9 SuDS Review** – the Government’s review of the application and effectiveness of planning policy for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) has been published. It finds that whilst planning policy is driving SuDS in new developments, only 30% of local authorities are monitoring actual delivery post-planning, and more worryingly that 70% of applications have no provision for maintenance.

The Chief Executive agrees with ADA’s view that the failure to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2020 has limited the ability of local authorities to dedicate the resources needed to this important aspect of flood risk management in England.

The report found that the typical reasons cited by developers against the inclusion of SuDS were not justified. In the majority of cases these were a combination of land-take and economic reasons. In addition, developers’ understanding of their requirements for maintenance was judged to be ‘inconsistent’. Officials, from both LLFAs and local planning authorities, suggested that specific concerns around adoption and maintenance (specifically the costs) were given as reasons for applicants not to include SuDS in their planning proposals.

The Report concluded that arrangements around sharing good practice and innovation can positively influence the uptake of SuDS in new developments. It said that there was ‘potential for industry bodies to address skills and knowledge gaps through streamlined and updated industry guidance’. However, it is hard to believe that guidance alone will be the solution, and it is clear that more clarity is needed regarding SuDS within planning policy, particularly with regards to adoption and maintenance arrangements. Ultimately this lack of clear direction is putting new and existing developments at potential future flood risk and without a properly executed plan little is expected to improve in the short term at least.

- 2.10 Consultations** – the MLC continue to respond to the defra consultations either directly or through correspondence with ADA as and when appropriate to do so.
- 2.11 Review of Water Abstraction Licensing** – the prolonged dry period spanning much of the peak irrigation period resulted in a ban on abstraction in excess of three weeks this year, making it the most challenging one in over a decade. Concerns have been expressed that not all irrigators were abiding by their licences, either irrigating when they should not be or taking more water than their licence allowed. Whilst the MLC have no powers to police abstraction they did take a significant number of calls from members of the farming community who were frustrated by the apparent lack of enforcement taking place. The Water Resource Committee has met with the EA to discuss this and other matters linked with the management of water but it is clear that without adequate and timely enforcement a fair system cannot be delivered, particularly if some abstractors have no intention of operating within the scope of their licences. The NFU and MLC will be issuing a joint statement on this topic.
- 2.12 Middle Level Barrier Banks Works** – the EA’s contractor commenced work in the summer of 2017 on this four year scheme to raise and strengthen the barrier bank which protects the Middle Level district and neighbouring Boards from flood risk from the Washes. The most recent news report on this scheme is included as Appendix 7.
- 2.13 River Great Ouse Dredging Pilot** – unfortunately whilst the MMO licence was issued earlier this year works have yet to commence. We are currently awaiting a full briefing but it appears that the EA has not been able to procure a contractor to start to deliver this long awaited pilot.
- 2.14 Eel Regulations** – the EA is working on a new project entitled Changes to Eel Regulation Process (ChERP) and they hope to release a new Regulatory position statement following feedback from a range of operators covering all sectors. The Agency has now accepted that current best practice solutions are not feasible at all sites, particularly in relation to water intakes and Agency FCERM staff often find themselves in the same challenging position as the IDBs at pumping stations in relation to meeting the regulations’

requirements. The new approach will aim to identify 'best achievable eel protection' (BAEP) for assets falling under the Eels Regulations taking account of feasibility and affordability.

In July several members of MLC staff attended a workshop in which the outputs of a project "Fish & eel easement at flood and water level management infrastructure" were reviewed. The project was born from issues including;

- Uncertainty, when there is a lack of clarity or outdated guidance
- Delivering wider cost benefits (ecosystem services), when not included within Cost Benefit Analysis
- Financial implications of mitigation hierarchy in context of delivering FRM and land drainage operations
- Ongoing research particularly on fish/eel behaviour and independent trialling of new technology

This development of a guide and decision support tool has been built upon, earlier work including;

- Review of guidance currently available in UK and Netherlands
- Desk study assessment of recent research
- Workshop of practitioners and fisheries scientists to identify key issues
- Gap analysis between information needs and available guidance
- Site visits and interviews with those managing structures
- Detailed case studies
- Development of an intuitive Decision Support Tool to help identify the most suitable option

The tool, once signed off, is intended to support decision making in high level optioneering, so will not replace the existing decision-making process; the appropriate advice will be included in the accompanying Guide. This will help reduce working up detail for options that would never be progressed.

**2.15 *Future Planning for the MLC and Associated Boards*** – a second Chairs' meeting has been planned for the 17<sup>th</sup> October. A verbal report will be given at the meeting.

**2.16 *Woodwalton Fen Potential to be reclassified as a reservoir*** – the Chief Executive now has the form to complete for this and will submit it to the EA accordingly. There seems little doubt that it will be classified as a reservoir and that the MLC will be defined as the statutory undertaker either in part with Natural England or in full without.

### **3. Navigation Bill**

On June 25<sup>th</sup> the Bill went before the House of Lords' Opposed Bill Committee. Three part days and one full day were set aside for this but in the event a further part day was required to conclude the process. It would be fair to say that the Lords were challenging and were not content to accept that the Bill had been fully scrutinised during its passage through the Commons. As a consequence further changes had to be made to the Bill and undertakings made to the Lords before they would allow it to progress. It is considered that these changes do not impact on delivery of services, improved safety for navigators and of course the much needed income stream required supporting investment. Several of the agreed changes in fact put in place some of the intended commitments the Board would have in all probability effected, but had considered better driven by the soon to be formed Navigation Committee. Amendments/commitments included, but are not limited to, the following;

- Investing a minimum of 25% of income in the provision of facilities as recommended by IWA guidance on the link route

- Preparing a strategy for provision of permanent and transitory residential moorings, in liaison with the planning authority and other relevant bodies. It is accepted however that as the Commissioners are not in a position to deliver such things on their own the strategy will aim to be a guidance document for others to utilise
- A requirement for the Board to advise the Navigation Committee on the reasons why any proposals they put forward have been rejected
- A mechanism for dispute resolution should the Navigation Committee and Board not be able to reach agreement. This would only be likely to come into play if the Committee fail to accept the reasons given by the Board in relation to the above and an impasse is reached
- The requirement to define a small vessel in the byelaws
- The requirement to charge residential boats, kept entirely within marinas, a reduced rate to reflect the fact that they do not enter the main MLC navigation and hence do not call upon the services and facilities the MLC provide

As the Bill attracted further revision in the House of Lords it had to pass back to the House of Commons for a future reading and debate. This could result in further amendment but this is considered unlikely and it is hoped that by the time the Board meet the Bill will be approved and will only require royal assent to bring it into UK law. This is expected to occur before Christmas and the next steps will then be to set up the Navigation Committee and progress with production of the byelaws. Iain Smith, who has been assisting the Commissioners with the Bill, has agreed to complete the first updated draft of the byelaws but is anticipating that this will be his final involvement in the process. Talks with the EA and CRT will also be needed to help us to find the best mechanism for charging registration fees.

The Chief Executive was invited to attend a reception at the launch of the IWA festival held this year in St Neots. At the reception the IWA thanked all involved in the lead up and in particular the EA for their close cooperation which helped lead to a successful event.

It continues to be the case that getting the Bill through the parliamentary process has required significantly more capital investment than was originally anticipated and it drew heavily upon the time resources of both the Commissioners' Assistant Clerk/Solicitor and Chief Executive as it passed through the Lords.

#### **4. Staff**

- 4.1 *Long Service Award*** – Paul Grodkiewicz, the Salter's Lode Lock Keeper, completed 25 years' service with the Middle Level Commissioners on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
- 4.2 *Vacancies/Appointments/Departures*** – Cliff Carson, the Environmental Officer, retired in June this year. Peter Beckenham was appointed as Conservation Officer and joined the Commissioners' staff on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018. Cliff is assisting Peter on an occasional ad-hoc basis as a consultant. This arrangement will probably continue until the end of 2018. This is to ensure that Peter has all the information he needs to further develop the Commissioners' conservation plans in a structured way.
- 4.3 *Pensions*** – there is nothing further to report on this matter at this time.
- 4.4 *Spine Point Advancements*** – two applications for spine point advancement have been made by members of the workforce. These will be discussed at the Executive Committee Meeting and any subsequent recommendations brought before the Board.
- 4.5 *Health Screening/Medical Fitness Assessment*** – the Board agreed to offer voluntary health screening on three year cycles for any employees who wish to be included. The Chief Executive has looked at some options but has yet to find one which would be a good

fit with the Commissioners' aims and which will offer benefits to staff over and above what is available from the NHS.

#### **4.6 Sickness**

**Staff** – of a total staff of 23, with an approximate expected maximum of 2436 working days over the six month reporting period (due to cross over of staff), 7 members had 65½ days leave. The leave is broken down as one person taking 32 days following a major operation (this leave will be ongoing into the next reporting period), one person taking 25 days following eye surgery, four others took 7.5 days between them. The remaining 16 members of staff did not take any time off for sickness.

**Operatives** – during the six month reporting period the workforce of 11 men, with an approximate expected maximum of 1210 working days, shared 70½ days sick leave over 4 men (one taking 64 of these days); the remaining 7 members of the workforce did not take any time off for sickness.

#### **4.7 *Training was provided as follows:***

- IOSH Course, 1 member of staff
- ACAS Mock Industrial Tribunal Course, 1 member of staff.
- Chainsaw working, 1 member of the workforce

### **5. Publicity**

**5.1 *General*** – The Chief Executive was invited to present in a panel debate at the 2018 Flood Expo on the 12<sup>th</sup> September. The title of the debate was “Visions of a Flood Resilient UK”.

**5.2 *Visits*** - the following visitors were received at St Germans Pumping Station:

23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2018	-	Wildlife Trust
12 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	-	Peterborough U3A
22 <sup>nd</sup> June	-	ICE President
24 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	-	Isle of Ely Federation Women's Institute
29 <sup>th</sup> August 2018	-	Isle of Ely Federation Women's Institute
27 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	-	Isle of Ely Federation Women's Institute

The visits from the Isle of Ely Federation Women's Institute were arranged following a talk given by Richard Lloyd.

**5.3 *Media*** – the Commissioners' 'Twitter' presence now has 288 followers, up from 259 six months ago and 229 a year ago.

Spring Watch filmed the installation of an otter halt which aired on 11<sup>th</sup> June.

**5.4 *Web site*** – [www.middlelevel.gov.uk](http://www.middlelevel.gov.uk) is updated regularly to deliver information to those who may be interested or who require information.

### **6. ICT Report**

**6.1 *Hardware*** – TSG continue to provide support for the Commissioners' physical and virtual servers.

Our workstations, which are now seven years old, are being replaced as and when work load permits (approximately 30% completed to date). All hardware has been purchased.

- 6.2 Software** – operating system software on all workstations will be on Windows 10 by the end of 2019.

## **7. Engineering Executive Commentary**

This section broadly summarises the key activities of each of the three engineering departments serving the MLC and client IDBs. It is intended to provide an overview of work carried out during the above period and that planned for the future.

A brief summary of progress on the Middle Level Strategic Improvement Scheme and progress on GiA applications is also included.

### ***7.1 Technical Services Department***

The work carried out by the Technical Services Department during the last six months can be briefly summarised as follows:

#### **On a consultancy basis:-**

**Land Drainage Channel Improvement Works South of the A47** – there has been no progress on this scheme which is awaiting Highways England's revised timetable for culvert replacement under the A47.

**Stow Bardolph Pumping Station** – the in-house design for this replacement station has been progressed and tenders issued and returned. The scheme value has increased to £1.9M and it is expected that the civils contractor will start work on site within the next six weeks, with completion targeted for the end of this financial year.

**Green Dyke Pumping Station Replacement** – the Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley IDB wished for this scheme to be accelerated but the recent EA GiA refresh did not include this project. Work will be done on business case development with a view to getting it into the next spending cycle which starts in 2021.

### ***7.2 Works Department***

#### **Water Resources and Control of Water Levels**

##### **Spring/Summer 2018**

The driest summer for 100 years? Almost. Statistics indicate it was the driest June on record for the Fenland area, and the second driest May to July period since 1921.

Early season water resource pressure on the Commissioners' system was negligible, following the 'Beast from the East' which led to an extended period of cold, wet conditions prevailing into late spring. Establishment of spring cropping was unavoidably delayed until much later than would normally have been anticipated whilst field conditions improved sufficiently for planting and sowing to commence.

The EA hosted the annual Summer Liaison Meeting at its offices in Peterborough during mid-April. The EA proclaimed 'prospects for water supply for water abstraction within the Lower Nene catchment remained good for the coming season'.

Generally warm dry weather prevailed during May and June. Gradual pressure on MLC water resources intensified through to the end of June when tighter EA intake restrictions at Stanground lock necessitated IDB slacker closure and statutory 4-night irrigation restrictions to conserve falling MLC water levels.

On the back of the cool wet early spring weather, AW agreed to reduce its reservoir filling intake from the EA Nene, and in doing so made an additional 20mld, (million/litres/day), available for abstractors downstream in the Lower Nene catchment. AW's offer extended until the 9<sup>th</sup> July, a period of 11 days. Following this, with soaring temperatures, drought conditions were inevitable. With little immediate prospect of any significant rainfall forecast, and water levels continuing to recede in the EA Lower Nene, a full irrigation ban within the MLC catchment (other than supported abstraction from farm reservoirs etc) was imposed by the EA. The ban lasted a total of 24 days.

As the drought continued, and with concerted pressure from both the MLC and North Level IDB at the twice weekly EA hosted teleconference sessions, AW conceded 20mld of water from their intake supply to support agricultural abstractors in the Lower Nene catchment and ecology in the Nene Washes. The additional water supply was extremely welcome within the MLC catchment, and enabled 4-night irrigation to re-commence.

The summer drought finally broke during the second week of August, with heavy thunder storms prevalent throughout East Anglia. The rainfall had an immediate effect. Abstraction and irrigation requirements fell away from this point, allowing water levels within the Middle Level and IDB systems to gradually recover.

No further abstraction restrictions or voluntary closures of IDB slackers were required during the latter part of the abstraction season.

Following further rainfall in mid-September, water levels in the Middle Level system have gradually been reduced to winter retention levels.

As there had been a prolonged restriction on irrigation in the Middle Level area the EA sent a briefing note to Stephen Barclay MP which can be seen at Appendix 4.

**Banks and Channel Maintenance Dredging and Bank Raising** - bank raising and levelling works using material gained from dredging during the winter months have been undertaken on the Old River Nene from Herbert's Bridge to Speed the Plough Junction. The crest of the banks has subsequently been re-seeded to establish a grass sward.

Machine cleansing of a short upper-most reach of Monks Lode was undertaken to facilitate effective field drainage via an 'abandoned' privately owned and maintained culvert.

Programmed maintenance dredging work was undertaken following harvest on the Catchwater Drain/South Drain between Manor Farm Bridge and South Drain Junction.

Channel clearance works have been undertaken along the Black Ham between Yaxley Lode Railway Bridge and Conquest Lode Pumping Station.

Aquatic weed clearance was required on two separate occasions along the Pig Water Drain between Farcet Overspill and Great Fen Drove culvert (Tin dump).

**Well Creek - Bank Subsidence** – no further correspondence has been received. The affected reach of the Well Creek from Church Bridge, Upwell to British Legion Footbridge will be omitted from future phased programmed dredging plans, until effective bank stabilising works are undertaken by 'other authorities' to the Commissioners' satisfaction. The likelihood of exacerbating the current fragile condition of the bank by desilting the channel along the affected reach remains high.

**Bank Seepage** – two incidents of bank seepage have been reported and dealt with during the reporting period. A re-occurrence of seepage along the Old River Nene at Chalderbeach Farm, Ramsey St Marys and seepage through the west bank of Monks Lode both required the Commissioners' intervention.

**Herbicide Trials** – no further information has been received regarding alternative herbicides that may become licenced for ‘trial stage’ in aquatic situations. It should be noted that licencing for glyphosate for use in aquatic situations has been outlawed in a number of European countries, including Holland, France and Germany.

**Navigation** – a particularly busy navigation season has passed with only minor incidents occurring. The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) festival was held at St Neots over the August bank holiday weekend. The event marked an influx of summer navigational passages through the Commissioners’ system, as many boats attending the event opted to navigate the Commissioners’ Nene-Ouse Link Route as their preferred route both to and from the event.

Two incidents involving abandoned boats, both situated along the Nene–Ouse Link Route, have been dealt with. The first, a partially sunken grp constructed day cruiser, was re-floated and lifted from Well Creek at Marmont Priory Corner. The second, an ex-sea-going grp constructed small sailing dingy, was lifted from the Old River Nene at March Town Bridge. The hull and contents of the latter craft remain in secure storage in the Commissioners’ Depot at the present time.

**Fly-tipping** – three separate incidents of fly tipped asbestos roof sheeting have been experienced on land owned by the Commissioners adjacent to the Main Drain, during the reporting period. A contractor with suitable accreditation was sought to clear and dispose of the material in sealed skips to a specialist waste disposal facility.

**Ralstonia solanacearum in watercourses** – APHA returned to the Middle Level system on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and undertook a water sample survey of 109 sample points within both the MLC and constituent IDB systems. The water sampling followed the same format and used the same location points for sample collection as last year. All 109 sites were revisited weekly for four consecutive weeks. At the time of reporting, no official update of further contamination has been received by the Commissioners’ office. It is understood a briefing document detailing the findings of the survey will be published by APHA/Defra imminently.

### **7.3 *Mechanical & Electrical Engineering Department***

Along with MLC work, major overhauls and maintenance of IDB pumping plant have been completed during the period.

A brief description of the works carried out over the past six months, together with recommendations for future works, follows:

- It has been a fairly relaxed six months at St Germans, with no major breakdowns. The replacement of generator coolant with a waterless variant has been completed on all six units together with replacement of the main engine batteries. Routine maintenance and repairs are carried out as and when needed.
- Major plant and motor overhauls have been completed at two IDB pumping stations and replacement pumps installed at two others.
- Portable appliance testing has been completed.
- Periodic electrical retesting/remedial works are being carried out at IDB installations as and when required.
- Repairs to several automatic weedscreen cleaners have also been carried out together with one major overhaul.
- Two new automatic weedscreen cleaners have been installed complete with three new weedscreens.



## **7.4 Middle Level Strategic Improvement Scheme**

Following an EA mid-term GiA review all allocated funding for this scheme has been deferred until 2021 or beyond. For this reason, the use of the EA PDU team has been withdrawn and alternative, hopefully more competitive quotations will be sought. This has released the funds identified for Phase V of the Well Creek dredging which were subject to confirmation that no more than £100K would be spent on development of the bank raising business case.

## **8. Water Resources & Control of Water Levels (see Appendices 1 & 2)**

### **8.1 *Rainfall*** – mean rainfall over the area for the six-month reporting period was 221.98mm which is 78.49mm less than the standard average.

April was a relatively wet month with rainfall totals above normal levels. This resulted in a cumulative rainfall total for the previous 12 month period being 100mm greater than the long-term average for the same period in the Fenland area.

Both May and June were predominantly much drier and led to a prolonged drought period this summer. June 2018 has been recorded as the driest June since records began in the Fenland area. The lack of rainfall created a surge in abstraction demand, with farmers and growers irrigating crops to prevent crop failures of later established root crops such as potatoes and onions. As the irrigation season peaked, and with a lack of rainfall in the upper reach of the EA Nene, water irrigation restrictions in the Commissioners' system were inevitable at the end of the month.

July was the third consecutive month with below average rainfall. The Long-Term Average (LTA), amounting to 48% by the month end. Water resources during July proved challenging to manage.

In terms of precipitation, August received average rainfall, and the total by the end of the month equalled the combined rainfall totals from the preceding three-month period.

Rainfall during September was very light and variable throughout the Middle Level catchment. This resulted in some late season 'soil conditioning' irrigation on certain soil types, to allow potato crops to be harvested with minimal damage.

### **8.2 *Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD)*** – from the first week in April, the SMD value was recorded in single figures. The deficit value rose slightly through to the month end, peaking during the third week at 28mm. As would normally be anticipated the SMD continued to rise during the drier months of May and June, with month end values recorded as 66mm and 135mm respectively. With no further significant rainfall, the value continued to rise during July, peaking at 156mm for week ending 24<sup>th</sup> July. Some sporadic rainfall from thunderstorms was welcomed during mid-August. However, the SMD value fluctuated very little during the month, culminating with a month end value of 150mm. At the time of collating this report (during late September), the SMD remains extremely high. The current value is 153mm, only 3mm lower than the highest recorded value this season.

### **8.3 *Water Levels (Main System)***

Spring/Summer 2017

Water levels during the late spring were maintained within automated pumping parameters at both St Germans and Bevills Leam Pumping Stations. Levels were gradually raised as the winter pumping season finally came to a close in May.

The effects of the well documented cold, late spring led to wet field conditions delaying the onset of spring crop establishment. This subsequently delayed abstraction and early

season irrigation requirements. As the weather settled, water availability from the EA Nene slowly came under pressure. It became necessary for the EA to impose restrictions on Stanground Lock intake from mid-June, as flows upstream in the EA Nene reduced. The dry weather in June turned into a full drought and became a nation-wide issue. Daily news reports followed. As temperatures soared demand from abstractors in the Middle Level system intensified. Consequently, water levels could not be sustained with stringent intake restrictions, resulting in 4-night irrigation during the last week of June. AW's offer of an additional 20mld (million/litres/day) at this point was gratefully accepted by all Lower Nene abstractors. The additional water was shared between Middle Level, North Level IDB and Nene Washes. As the drought continued to intensify abstraction demand peaked, and the AW offer was withdrawn after 11 days.

With no sign of any rainfall forecast and continuing high abstraction demand from both AW and Lower Nene abstractors from the Peterborough Nene, a statutory irrigation ban was sanctioned on irrigators in the Middle Level system by the EA on 9<sup>th</sup> July. The ban did not include supported abstraction from on-farm reservoirs which was able to continue. Micro-management of the Middle Level system was vital during this intense period in the season to ensure every litre of water made available to the Commissioners was fully utilised. Twice weekly teleconferences were held for the first time. This provided an excellent communication channel and kept the relevant water resource bodies up to date with the latest availability and requirements. It also provided a useful link for communication with the AW team, giving them confidence to concede the 20mld to both agriculture and the Nene Wash ecology when it was most needed.

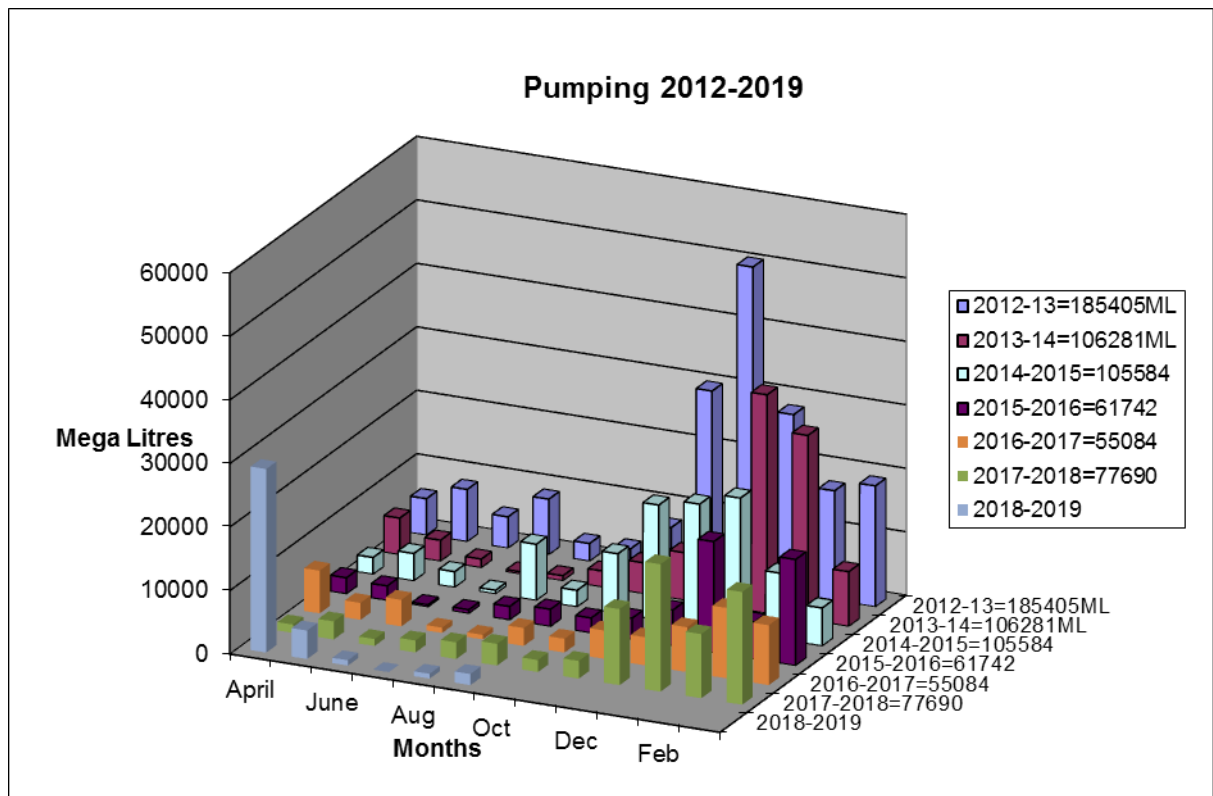
The abstraction ban lasted a total of 24 days and was finally lifted on 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Water levels during this time did fall below the summer cessation level resulting in statutory navigation being curtailed for a number of deeper drafted boats in some of the shallower watercourses.

AW was able to assist at this difficult time and offered 20mld to Lower Nene abstractors for a second occasion. The additional water combined with rainfall during the first week of August curtailed the full irrigation ban. Water levels recovered sufficiently to provide abstractors with 4-night irrigation, and from 11<sup>th</sup> August all abstraction restrictions were lifted. Following localised rainfall during mid-September water abstraction requirement diminished. Levels in both Bevills Leam and St Germans ponds are now gradually being reduced towards winter retention levels.

**8.4     *Water Levels (Well Creek)*** – water levels have been maintained in the Well Creek by pumping water into it from the Main Drain at the Aqueduct to pre-set parameters throughout the summer. There was an issue with this pump which, as stated, is needed to retain acceptable levels for navigation in the Well Creek This necessitated temporary pumping arrangements for a period. However, the problem was quickly rectified and the system is again fully operational.

**8.5     *Pumping*** – during the six month period, 36719 and 7823 megalitres of water were pumped at St Germans and Bevills Leam respectively (refer to Appendix 2).

The reporting year started with an extremely wet April followed by a very dry May to August, somewhat different from the preceding 6 years.



## 9. Maintenance Work

- 9.1 *St Germans Pumping Station*** – given the predominantly dry summer it is perhaps not surprising that pumping at the Station has been uneventful over the period with the Station reacting as required and meeting the needs of the system at all times. The only gap in this situation occurred when the routers at Bodsey and St Germans stopped communicating, resulting in a week when a manual input would have been required in the event of heavy rainfall to ensure the Station operated correctly. The issue seems to have been a protocol update by BT which the 8 year old industrial routers would not accept, a cheap router upgrade was all that was required and no such failure has been repeated.

All six main engines and the auxiliary engine have now been converted to Evan Waterless Coolant and, so far, all engines are responding favourably to the new coolant.

The elver pass has kept running over the summer but there are clear signs the delivery line is again blocking up with fresh water mussels. It is the M&E Engineers' intention to sit down with the new Conservation Officer before Christmas and discuss possible options to resolve this problem and their associated costs.

In the last report the issue of the aging SCADA PCs was raised, the latest situation is that following the removal of the corrupt files and freeing up of storage space the PCs have been working well. The situation will continue to be monitored, but whilst they perform satisfactorily no upgrade is recommended.

The replacement of all of the main generator engine batteries was completed in June of this year and it is hoped the replacements will last as long as the original set (around 8 years).



Following approval, the construction of the first weed deposit compound on the west side of the station was constructed in September; this new construction makes the separation of non-green waste easy on a weekly basis. The green waste will be removed periodically and disposed of locally by MLC staff. One of the 30 yard skips will now be “Off Hired” and following trials work will begin on the east side if approved. The weedscreen rakings will be removed using the recently purchased silage grab fitted to the New Holland tractor fore-end loader as and when required and placed along the grass bank top of the reed bed to the east side of the Station. The material can be left to decompose naturally and should provide an ideal habit/nesting site for reptiles that are known to be present on site.

**The Board’s approval is sought to install a second identical structure on the east side of the station, to mirror the west side structure. The cost of all materials, fabrication and construction on site will be in the region of £7.5K**

Work to increase the robustness of the level control system by removing one of the discharge level sensors from the Auxiliary PLC and transferring it to the Master PLC was completed in September.

In August another internal window pane spontaneously shattered making this the third or fourth to shatter since the Station was built. There is a hope that although the previous insurance claim had been rejected there is a chance that this one might be processed as we have new insurers in place.

## **9.2 Main Drain/Station Intake and Surrounds:**

**Bed Level** – no dredging or re-profiling has been required and none is planned for at least the next few years.

**Grass Cutting** - Kew Grass Care has continued to provide the Commissioners with contracted grass mowing services at St Germans this year. It is proposed the mowing contract be amended next season to omit the inter-planted tree areas. This should provide a significant financial saving on the mowing budget.

**Tree Planting Scheme** – most species of trees planted on site have continued to proliferate well. Gaps where ash saplings have died back are gradually being filled as canopies from other adjacent species fill the voids. There are no plans to re-plant or renew any of the failed specimens.

## **9.3 Aqueduct Bridge** – there is nothing further to report at this time.

## **9.4 Bevills Leam Pumping Station** - the station has operated satisfactorily with only very minor issues over the period.

**Engine Overhaul Programme/Inspections** – as previously reported it is currently anticipated that the three diesel engines should provide adequate service for a while. This is to be reviewed in 3 years' time, ie in 2021.

The catenary cable that provides power and control to the automatic weedscreen cleaner trolley is getting very worn due to its age and the many thousands of cycles of operation it has undertaken, a replacement cable has been obtained and its fitting is in hand.

**9.5 Control Sluice** – there is nothing to report under this item.

#### **9.6 Navigation Structures & Abandoned Craft**

**Salter's Lode Lock** – this lock has operated successfully and without particular issue over the period.

**Horseway Lock** – the Peterborough branch of IWA is assisting with decorative maintenance at this lock as is mentioned elsewhere in this report.

The Commissioners have dealt with two abandoned boats during the reporting period. The first was an abandoned GRP day boat which had sunk at Marmont Priory Corner during June. As the boat was partially blocking the important Link Route, and leaking oil/fuel, the Commissioners' workforce was instructed to re-float the craft and remove it from the channel. It was later reclaimed by the owner from safe storage in the Commissioners' March Depot.



An ex-sailing dinghy, which had been left abandoned for several weeks, was removed from the Old River Nene in March town centre. The boat had been illegally moored, latterly with the contents of the cabin strewn across the bankside. The boat was lifted and transported back to the Commissioners' Depot along with the bankside debris. At the time of reporting, the boat and contents remain unclaimed.

**9.7 Cardea Site SuDS** – the Chief Executive had heard nothing from Persimmon Homes and hence chased for an update on progress with reviewing the commuted sum proposals. It appears that just as happened before the contact we had has moved on. The new name provided has yet to respond.

#### **9.8 Weed and Grass Control on Banks & Channels**

**Rigid Hornwort** – has again been prevalent throughout the Middle Level system this year. This problematic weed now requires the Commissioners' concerted efforts annually to clear main arterial watercourses prior to the autumn pumping season. The worst affected channels include the Sixteen Foot, Twenty Foot and Forty Foot Rivers, Old Nene and Well

Creek. The weed has been cleared utilising the Commissioners' work boats and left on adjacent banksides to decompose.

**Azolla** – no significant infestations of the weed have been noted this season. Some arterial IBD drains continue to be affected however.

**Reed/Lily/Drain Bed Spraying** – favourable weather conditions afforded the Commissioners an ideal opportunity to apply Roundup herbicide applications to watercourses where emergent lily and reed growth were prolific. The Sixteen Foot, Forty Foot and Twenty Foot Rivers, Bevills Leam, New Dyke, Whittlesey Dyke, Yards End Dyke, Catchwater Drain and Old River Nene were included within the application programme this year.

**Weed-cutting (boats)** – the extremes in weather this summer led to high water temperatures providing ideal conditions for a prolific growth of aquatic weed throughout the Commissioners' system. Priority was given to the worst affected channels. Care was taken to preclude weed cutting and clearance in channels where the dissolved oxygen levels were found to be low during the warmest weeks, for fear of ecological damage. At the time of reporting, most channels are reasonably clear of submerged weed mass. Attention will now be switched to cutting back marginal vegetation along water channels.

**Flail Mowing** – as has been previously reported, the first round 'Conservation' cut was postponed by approximately a month this year, due to wet bank conditions and a lack of spring growth. A subsequent single 'Health & Safety' round followed in June.

The 'Main Cut' commenced on the 16<sup>th</sup> July.

Unfortunately a build-up of grass/debris residue around the exhaust/catalytic converter on the first morning's cutting resulted in the 2017 Massey Ferguson/Herder Cavalier unit catching fire. The operator was able to deploy the in-cab fire extinguisher and summoned the fire brigade for further assistance to ensure the fire was fully extinguished. Aesthetically little damage was sustained. However, the intensity of the fire caused serious harm to electrical wiring under the cab, and following inspection by the Commissioners' insurers loss adjuster, the unit was transported back to the Massey Ferguson dealership, Thurlow Nunn Standen, at Littleport for further inspection and in the end complete renewal of the tractor's wiring loom. Following internal consultation post event, it was agreed to suspend flailmowing activities until cooler/damper weather prevailed for fear of similar incidents with other flailmowing equipment. It is anticipated that all related costs will be covered by insurance.

Following flail head damage to the Long Reach Energreen, a replacement flail rotor shaft had to be sourced from Italy. The damage was sustained by a concrete structure on the bankside that was obscured from the operator's view by dense reed growth.

An unrelated stress fracture on the second section of the main boom (see photograph overleaf) led to the machine being taken back to the Spearhead factory in Evesham to allow for the affected boom section to be replaced. Following the machine's return from Evesham, a cracked wheel rim was identified. A replacement wheel rim has been ordered from Italy and delivery is imminent. The view of the Operations Department is that both the cracked boom and wheel rim should be covered by the extended warranty; however, early indications are that Spearhead does not share this view.





**9.9 *Trees and Bushes*** - tree and bush clearance works have been necessary during the reporting period along the following channels;

- **Ramsey High Lode** – overhanging branches obstructing navigational traffic were removed during the summer months from the east bank, adjacent to the Golf Course.
- **Monks Lode** – self-sown bushes and brambles were cleared from the east bank of Monks Lode to facilitate bank access for machine cleansing works in the channel.
- **Well Creek** – a wind-blown willow tree stump was found to be blocking navigational passage opposite to Mill Rigg, March Riverside. The stump was removed from the channel to the adjacent bankside using one of the Commissioners' workboats

#### **9.10 *Maintenance Works & Machine Cleansing, Banks and Channels***

**Catchwater Drain** – this year's phased programmed machine cleansing works have been undertaken along the Catchwater drain from an upstream extent of Manor Farm Bridge, downstream to the South Drain/Great Raveley Junction using a contractor's 18m long reach excavator.

**Pigwater Drain** – machine cleansing was required to remove filamentous algae, (cott) from the water channel on two separate occasions. The channel forms an important link for summer water transfer for subsequent abstraction in the Bevills Leam pond.

A build-up of cott and rigid hornwort directly upstream of Farcet overspill required one of the Commissioners' work boats to be deployed to remove the mass of aquatic vegetation from the channel during August.



A contractor's machine was required during early September to remove emergent and submerged aquatic weed from the Pigwater drain between Horsey Toll Sluice and Horsey Toll Bridge.

The opportunity was taken following harvest this year to remove accumulations of previous years' dredgings from the bank crest along approximately a 500 metre length of Pigwater drain. The works were undertaken in conjunction with an adjacent land owner/occupier who offered to transport the material free of charge and deposit it on his adjacent field. The levelled bank was subsequently sown with grass.

The spring and summer seasons have proven to be particularly challenging regarding manual weed clearance from the 'Tin dump' weedscreen, situated at Great Fen Drove, Yaxley. Daily deployment of Middle Level labour, including weekend working, has been required to keep water flowing into the Bevills Leam pond.

**The Board is requested to consider approving an initial site survey and project costing for future improvements at the site which could include an automated weedscreen cleaning solution if this can be shown to provide a long-term financial saving.**



**Monks Lode (Catchwater Terminus – Connington Fen Bridge)** – it was necessary to clear self-sown bankside bushes and emergent vegetation from the watercourse along a short section of Monks Lode at the Catchwater terminus. The works were required to allow improved drainage for the adjacent landowner, where a 'wet-spot' of approximately one hectare was evident following early spring rainfall.

**Black Ham/New Cut** – machine cleansing works were undertaken during early August to remove a heavy growth of lillies and submerged vegetation from the channel before the vegetation became problematic downstream of Bevills Leam Pumping Station weedscreen cleaner.

**Old River Nene, Ramsey St Mary's (Herbert's Bridge to Speed the Plough Junction)** - material that was dredged along the working site in winter 2018 was left to dry on adjacent embankments over the summer months. Once dry enough to be re-handled a contractor's machine was employed to 'open up' the silt to allow uniform drying of the lower layers. Subsequently, where banks had previously been surveyed and shown to be low, the material was utilised to raise and strengthen these lengths. A contractor was employed to 'power harrow' the bank crests to provide an adequate tilth to allow for grass seeding, completing this phase of the work.

**Old River Nene, Greenvale Factory (Floods Ferry – Copalder Corner)** – it is disappointing to report, following two previously successful phases of bank raising and strengthening works, Greenvale were not able to facilitate the availability of free bank raising material as they had done in the last two seasons. The reason for this remains unknown. Further discussion with Greenvale regarding the matter will be sought.





**Well Creek – Salters Lode Spoil Receiving Site** – following completion of Phase IV Well Creek Dredging earlier this year, a contractor's machine was employed to bank-up the dried material into a stock pile. The dried material is suitable for future bank raising works, and it is anticipated the material can be utilised within the Commissioners' Bank Raising scheme works.

**Phase V Well Creek Dredging (Proposed)** – following successful completion of the previous four phases, it is proposed to undertake a fifth phase during early 2019, which would link-in with the previous four phases, and complete the dredging operation from Marmont Priory Lock to Wisbech Road, Outwell, including the Boat Basin.

The proposed reaches are:

- i) Thurlands Drove Junction to Priory Corner (approximately 215m).
- ii) Newbridge, Upwell downstream to an extent of approximately 150m).
- iii) Isle Bridge, Outwell to Wisbech Road, Outwell, including the Boat Basin (approximately 110m).

Please refer to the location plan shown opposite.

**Budget Estimate - Proposed Future Dredging Works, Old River Nene, (March Town Centre) Royal Smals Dredging UK Ltd** - Royal Smals has stayed in contact with the Commissioners during the reporting period and remain keen to provide any further advice, assistance or budget up-dates the Commissioners require in future years.

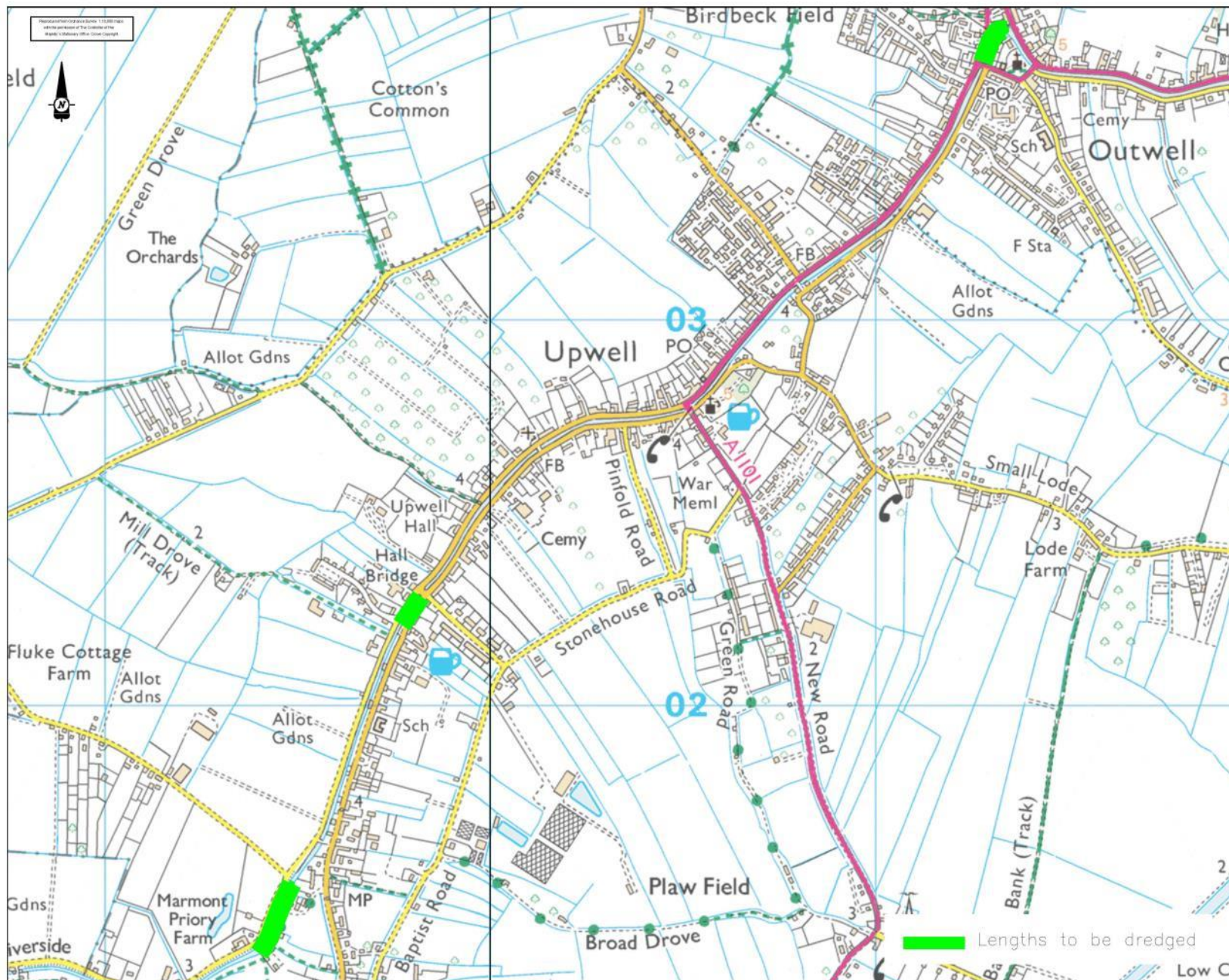
## 9.11 ***Bank Slips and Seepage***

### **Old River Nene – Chalderbeach Farm**

- bank seepage was evident along the west bank of Old River Nene at Chalderbeach Farm. As the previous attempt to seal the bank by clay puddling had only been partially successful in previous years, a decision was taken to accept some seepage and install a 50 metre length of perforated pipe along the landward toe of the raised embankment, outfalling into an adjacent private watercourse.



**Monks Lode, Connington Fen Bridge – Former Poles Bridge Site** - it was necessary to undertake clay puddling works along a short reach of approximately 50 metres of the western bank near to the former site of Poles Bridge to arrest bank seepage. Approximately 80 tonnes of puddling clay were delivered to site and placed in a puddle trench through the centre of the bank to seal the source of the seepage.



Lengths to be dredged

AMENDMENTS		
<b>MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS</b> D. Thomas B.Eng. M.I.C.I. Chief Engineer		
SCHEME <b>WELL CREEK</b> PROPOSED DREDGING PHASE 5		
TITLE <b>LOCATION PLAN</b>		
DRAWN BY <b>KAP</b>	DESIGN <b>JF</b>	CHECKED <b>JF</b>
SCALE <b>NTS</b>	DRAWING No. <b>106/29/72</b>	
DATE <b>SEPT 2018</b>		

## 10. **Telemetry**

The Holme rain gauge telemetry outstation has recently failed again. This outstation is now some 25 years old and no more spare components are available, therefore an order has been placed with Oriel Systems for a new low power outstation which will be continuously online and will be the starting point of the implementation of a cloud-based system called WebWAX as a backup for critical sites. This will provide a redundancy measure in that all sites will send data through to the WebWAX server as well as to the Master Station ensuring that in the event of Master Station failure the critical sites will still be transmitting data which will be viewable on a web browser.

Oriel has asked the MLC to enter into a service level maintenance contract. Whilst this might be seen as beneficial the Chief Executive has advised that he would not look at such an agreement until all outstanding works have been completed to our satisfaction. Also, as confidence in the service and response capabilities of Oriel have been low for some time they would need to provide firm evidence that improvements have been made in this area before any contract is entered into.

## 11. **Property**

**11.1 *Depot*** – the quotation in the sum of £20K for the supply and erection of an agricultural type building was approved by the Board at its last meeting. This new structure will be capable of storing the Commissioners' fleet of three tractors and associated mowers, self-propelled SPV3 mower, two dump trailers and the Commissioners' Iveco lorry under cover and dry. The quotation did not allow for excavation of foundation holes or fitment of the holding down bolts in the foundations or supply and fitting of vertical timber hit and miss cladding, as installed on the St Germans' log store. These additional items are to be dealt with by the Commissioners' workforce at an estimated added cost in the region of £8K. An order has been placed and works are likely to commence around Christmas time.

**11.2 *Offices*** – the meeting room and the board room have been painted during the period.

The on-site sewerage treatment plant required repair, needing a significant number of replacement parts, hours of labour and numerous tanker loads of effluent removal from site whilst repairs were effected. This has therefore been quite an expensive matter to address. Design changes to the system, undertaken during the repairs, should however reduce the risk and potential impact of any re-occurrence.

**11.3 *Electrical Testing*** - Portable Appliance Testing was carried out at the Depot, Office, St Germans, Bevills Leam and Control Sluice sites during September 2018.

**11.4 *10 Deerfield Road, March*** – an offer was made in the sum of £180K which was accepted. Since this time several matters have come to light. The first was an apparent error when the purchase of 6 Deerfield Road was made, in that documents indicated that the land on which the garage now serving number 10 was both included and not included. This has been addressed but more recently a property survey has identified a number of issues requiring attention. In an attempt to move the sale forward, the Chief Executive has offered a reduction of £2.5K to the agreed price. This has been made because concerns exist that the Commissioners are having to continue to pay council tax on the building and we are entering the winter period which could exasperate any pre-existing damp problems.

**11.5 *Salter's Lode Lock House*** - the Lock Keeper was paid to carry out window sealing works around the property in his own time, using materials and scaffolding supplied to him. This arrangement has saved the Commissioners money and has ensured that a reasonable standard of workmanship has been achieved.



## 12. Plant & Vehicles

- 12.1 General** – on the whole the plant and vehicles operated to an acceptable standard during the period, with the exception of the Energreen SP3 and tractor fire which are detailed in section 9.9 of this report.
- 12.2 Vehicles** – the 2012 Ford Ranger, used by the Conservation Officer, suffered an engine seizure. As the vehicle is of a fairly high specification and in good condition a reconditioned engine is being installed to retain the vehicle's value.
- 12.3 Mowers** – see section 9.9 of this report.
- 12.4 Weed Boats** – all boats have generally operated satisfactorily with only the usual maintenance requirements and repairs to the cutting heads being necessary. In the plant replacement strategy the 2003 weedboat was identified for replacement in this financial year. Recently the Operations Engineer and Mechanical & Electrical Engineer visited Ireland to view a new wider hull designed Conver boat. This boat has two arms allowing it to be operated as either cutter or lifter without the requirement to change components, which gives a degree of flexibility we believe to be advantageous. A quotation in the sum of £90K has been supplied, with confirmation that once an order is placed the price will be fixed, irrespective of fluctuations in the exchange rate. As this figure is in line with the plant replacement strategy approved by the Board at the April meeting it is intended that an order will be placed.
- 12.5 Replacement Tractor** - following the Board's approval a New Holland T6 155 tractor, to replace the 2008 New Holland 50/60 tractor, has been purchased and was delivered in August. The new tractor provides a favourable power/weight ratio and has been factory fitted with front linkage/pto, and a fore-end loader. Early indications show it is much better suited to on-road and transport duties than the previous New Holland 50/60 tractor.

## 13. Asset Records

The Commissioners planned systematic closure of historic non-operational penetrations through their maintained banks, which in some cases are in poor condition, continues, but at a slower pace than is perhaps ideally desirable. Selection is driven by opportunity and urgency and in many cases is in the hands of IDBs whose assets they are.

## 14. Improvements and Surveys

- 14.1 St Germans Pumping Station** – with settlement finally agreed on the one remaining claim, the project is now deemed to be closed for expenditure again construction.
- 14.2 River Works** – the extent of bank raising works is described elsewhere in this report.
- 14.3 Bevills Leam Pumping Station** – the priorities for this station are:
1. Replacement of the main pump control components within the next 10 years.
  2. Replacement of the Dorman engines and gearboxes for pumps 4, 5 & 6 within the next 10 years.
  3. To review the lack of smoke/heat detection and fire alarm equipment.
  4. To permanently stop the rain ingress through the station roof.
  5. To facilitate the passage of eels through or past the station.

## **15. Environment Agency (EA) Studies/Works/Plans**

**15.1 *Ouse Washes Reservoir Works*** – this is covered elsewhere in the report.

**15.2 *Cranbrook Drain/Counter Drain (Welches Dam Pumping Station) Strategy Study*** – the EA is revisiting and updating its strategy and will be liaising with the MLC as the study progresses.

**15.3 *Stakeholder Representation and/or Consultation*** - is maintained in respect of the following:

- i. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Flood Warning Planning Group – Chief Exec
- ii. Great Fen Steering Committee – Chief Exec
- iii. Wet Dredgings – Operations Engineer
- iv. British Standards Institute CB501 – Chief Exec representing ADA
- v. EA National Asset Management Technical Advisory Group (AMTAG) – Chief Exec representing ADA
- vi. CIWEM (Chartered Institute for Water and Environmental Management) – Rivers and Coastal Group Committee – Chief Exec [Chair]
- vii. AINA Wet Dredgings Group – Operations Engineer
- viii. Huntingdonshire Local Plan & SFRA – Planning Engineer
- ix. Fenland Local Plan – Planning Engineer
- x. Peterborough Flood & Water Management Partnership – Planning Engineer
- xi. KL&WN Local Plan & SFRA – Planning Engineer
- xii. East Cambs Local Plan, SFRA & WCS – Planning Engineer
- xiii. Peterborough Local Plan, SFRA & WCS – Planning Engineer
- xiv. South Cambs Local Plan – Planning Engineer
- xv. Fenland Developers Forum – Planning Engineer and Assistant Engineer
- xvi. March Flood Investigation Group – Planning Engineer
- xvii. EA/IDB Eel Liaison Group – Chief Exec [Co-Chair]
- xviii. Cambs ACRE, New Life on the Old West – Chief Exec and Environmental Officer
- xix. Well Creek Trust – Operations Engineer
- xx. Anglian Waterways Group – Chief Exec
- xxi. NFU Water for Food Group – Chief Exec
- xxii. Great Fen Hydrology Working Group – Chief Exec [Chair]
- xxiii. ADA Technical & Environmental Committee – Chief Exec & Environmental Officer
- xxiv. ADA Great Ouse Branch – now administered by the MLC
- xxv. WRE (Water Resource East) – Operations Engineer

## **16. Planning**

**16.1 *Planning Applications*** – work continues on improvements to the service provided by the Commissioners to planners, developers and their agents. It remains frustrating however that the quality of applications presented are often poor, even though the requirements are clearly laid out and often are well known.

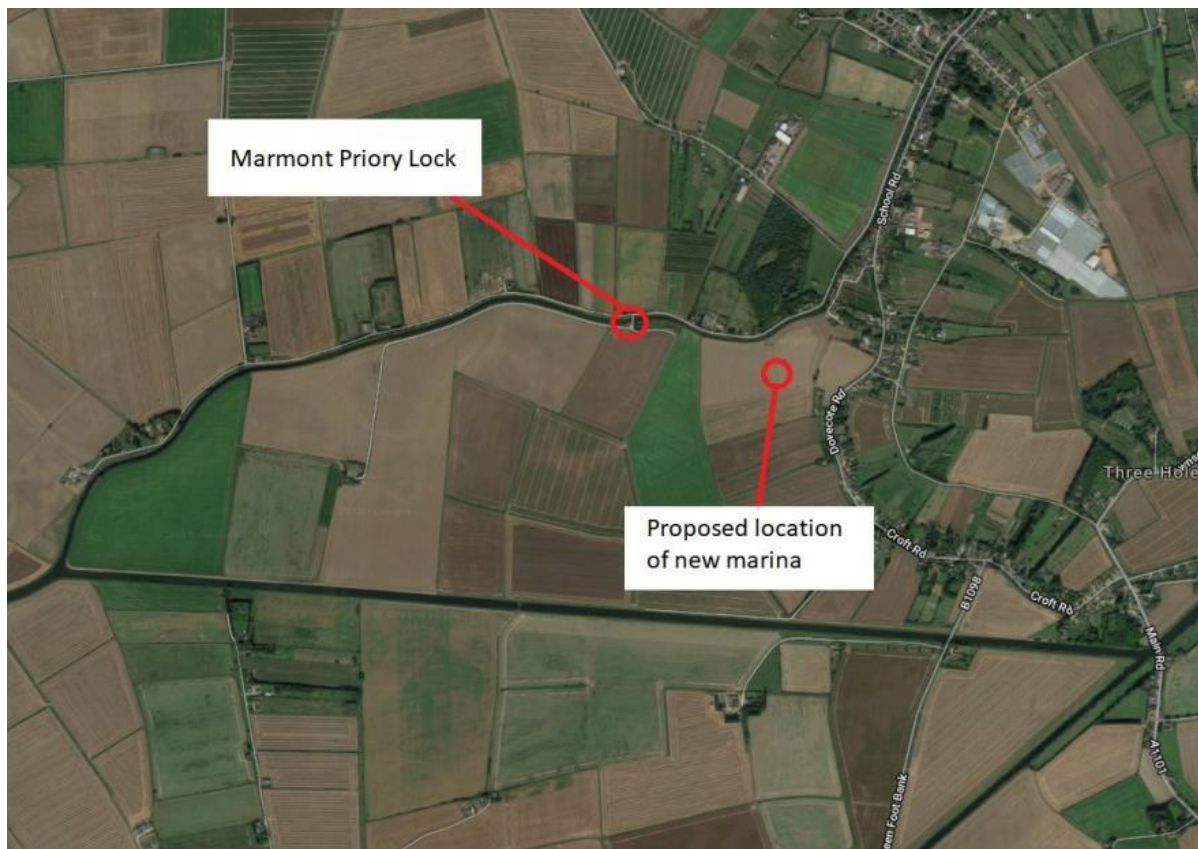
**16.2 *Riverside Enhancements Ramsey Basin*** – there is nothing further to report on this project at this time.

**16.3 *Cambridgeshire County Council/MLC Pilot*** – this is covered earlier in the report.

## **17. Recreation**

**17.1 *Navigation*** – the Chief Executive attend a drop-in session at Upwell village hall to view development proposals which might be included in the evolving neighbourhood plan. Included within the outline possibilities is the creation of a new marina located as per the plan below. Obviously, once the Commissioners are able to licence craft there will be an invested interest

in supporting projects such as this, which will increase the potential income that can be recovered from navigation.



- 17.2 **Anglian Waterways Group** – the Chief Executive attended meetings of this group on the 10<sup>th</sup> May and 16<sup>th</sup> August.
- 17.3 **Passing of EA Navigation Assets to CRT** – nothing further has been reported on this nationally but it is believed that it remains a long term wish of both the EA and CRT that some assets will be transferred.
- 17.4 **Well Creek Trust Moorings at Salter's Lode** – further actions of this will be guided by the Navigation Committee, once set up.
- 17.5 **Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Volunteering** - a joint site meeting will be held later this year with members of the Peterborough branch of IWA, to identify the scope of bush and tree cutting works that may be achievable within the Commissioners' system this coming winter. The meeting will also seek to identify any further decorating works that are required at Horseway Lock, following on from last year's work at the lock site, including applying a coat of wood preservative to the wooden lock doors.
- 17.6 **Boat Passages** - boats movements through Stanground and Salter's Lode Locks were as shown below (figures for the previous year are shown in brackets):

Boat Passages – 2018				
Month	Salter's Lode Lock		Stanground Lock	
	In	Out	In	Out
April	21 (36)	21 (32)	16 (29)	23 (46)
May	41 (34)	47 (53)	51 (65)	65 (73)
June	65 (62)	88 (54)	103 (72)	94 (77)
July	104 (86)	106 (92)	81 (90)	97 (93)
August	107 (89)	120 (69)	123 (95)	103 (102)
September	94 (48)	46 (40)	39 (60)	85 (43)
TOTAL	<b>432 (355)</b>	<b>428 (340)</b>	<b>413 (411)</b>	<b>467 (434)</b>

## 17.7 **Angling**

**National Fishing Matches** – the 2018 National Pike Angling Championship is to be held on the Commissioners' waters on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November, and hosted by Whittlesey Angling Association.

**Club Reports** – no club or match reports have been received during the reporting period.

**17.8 Middle Level Waterways Users Committee** - the Committee met on the 20<sup>th</sup> April and will meet again on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

**18. Conservation** – this is covered in detail in the Conservation Officer's Report.

**18.1 The Operations Manual** – this is reviewed annually.

**18.2 The Commissioners' and local Drainage Boards' Biodiversity Action Plans** – the next wave of plans is being prepared and continue to be likely to have a heavy emphasis on data gathering and monitoring.

**18.3 Conservation Committee** - the Committee met on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and are due to meet again on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

**18.4 Woodwalton Fen Alternative Storage** – there is nothing further to report on this item at this time.

**18.5 Great Fen General** – steering committee meetings are held quarterly which the Chief Executive attends. He also continues to chair the projects Hydrology Working Group. Recently work has commenced on the development of the third evolution of the memorandum of understanding. As part of this the question has been raised over the fact that unlike the MLC the four other project partners make a direct financial contribution, as well as staff time which the MLC does supply.

**The Commissioners are asked to consider if they would wish to make an annual direct financial contribution to the project, either now or at some point in the future.**

**18.6 Eel Studies** – this matter is covered in detail in item 2.14.

**18.7 Fen Biosphere Project** – funding of £9,950 has been received from **Heritage Lottery Funds** to research what is necessary to bring Biosphere Reserve status to the Cambridgeshire Fens. The project led by the Wildlife Trust working with CambsACRE will focus on defining what is needed to achieve this international UNESCO status for the Cambridgeshire Fens. Whilst this status does not carry a statutory designation it does aim to reflect on the uniqueness of the land within the biosphere and would, of course, seek to encourage joined up thinking when looking at the way land use interacts. The Chief Executive has attended a number of meetings

and can see how the MLC and IDBs are likely to play a significant role should the status be obtained. This is because the Biodiversity Action Plans already serve to provide a structured approach to conservation in the area.

## **19. Internal Drainage Board Works**

### **19.1 *Weed Control & Channel Maintenance***

**Inspections/advice/assistance** – during the reporting period recommendations were made on weed control and Middle Level operatives undertook herbicide applications on a contract basis, as weather conditions allowed, on 13 Internal Districts, including one private district.

**Maintenance Dredging and Associated Channel Works** – during the reporting period work has been organised and co-ordinated in 9 Board's areas with 3 areas still to complete once adjacent root crops have been harvested to allow access.

### **19.2 *Pumping Station Maintenance***

**Service Visits** – the Commissioners' engineers made 165 visits to IDB pumping installations to carry out routine inspections/maintenance and/or rectify breakdowns.

#### **Other Maintenance Works:**

Beezlings Pumping Station (Benwick IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment and replacement weedscreen - tenders obtained, order placement imminent.</li></ul>
Bensons Pumping Station (Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replacement pump - installation complete.</li></ul>
Binnimoor Pumping Station (March East IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pump replacement and telemetry installation – complete.</li></ul>
Cock Fen Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Automatic weedscreen cleaner - installation complete. Hard standing and security fencing is to be installed.</li></ul>
Hilgay Pumping Station (Southery IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motor overhaul and control equipment replacement supervision.</li></ul>
Mill Fen Pumping Station (East Of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replacement ultrasonic control system installed.</li></ul>
Moat Farm Pumping Station (Sawtry IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gearbox removed for seal replacement.</li></ul>
Moores Pumping Station (March West IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plant overhaul complete awaiting suitable water levels for reinstallation of telemetry.</li></ul>
Nar Valley Pumping Station (East Of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replacement ultrasonic control system installed.</li></ul>
New Fen Pumping Station (Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surge chamber subsidence being monitored. The Board's insurance company has declined to cover the subsidence.</li><li>• Boreholes and trial holes recently carried out.</li><li>• Resolution of metering issues with SSE/UKPN – issue now re-occurred – ongoing.</li></ul>
Nordelph Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	
Polver Pumping Station (East Of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pump overhaul ongoing.</li></ul>



South Brink Pumping Station (Waldersey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security System/fault dial out alarm installed.</li> </ul>
Stonea Fen Pumping Station (Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weedscreen cleaner overhaul – complete.</li> <li>• Gearbox removed for seal replacement.</li> </ul>
Upwell Fen Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic weedscreen cleaner/pump control equipment replacement – installation complete. Hard standing and security fencing to be installed.</li> </ul>
Various IDB's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic weedscreen cleaner repairs.</li> </ul>
West Fen Pumping Station (March West IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant overhaul complete awaiting suitable water levels for reinstallation of telemetry.</li> </ul>

**Periodic Electrical Testing** – re-testing of fixed equipment and remedial works at IDB pumping stations continue as and when required.

### 19.3 **Improvement Works**

#### **IDB Projects - progress is as follows:**

Catchment Improvement Works at A47 (Hundred of Wisbech IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways England has set back the implementation of its element of this scheme. The IDB element, business case development, has therefore been put back accordingly.</li> </ul>
Green Dyke Pumping Station replacement (Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case development instructed but EA has advised that scheme cannot be accelerated in GiA terms so further work is currently on hold.</li> </ul>
Inlet Structures – modifications to inlet structures and access platforms. (Hundred Foot Washes IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further phases are expected.</li> </ul>
Stocking Fen Pumping Station Automated Weedscreen (Ramsey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case for an automated weedscreen drafted and EA comments being dealt with.</li> </ul>
Stow Bardolph Pumping Station (Downham & Stow Bardolph IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design complete and tenders returned. Works to commence on site shortly.</li> </ul>

**Work organised by the Works Department and carried out by Middle Level Labour** - assistance has been given with the following:

Benwick IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> </ul>
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's Drains.</li> <li>• Assist contractor with approximately 100m of bank piling works.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's Drains.</li> </ul>
March East IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> </ul>

March Fifth DDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains.</li> </ul>
March Sixth DDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and undertake flail mowing works to Commissioners' drains.</li> </ul>
March Third DDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains.</li> </ul>
March West & White Fen IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Assist contractor with approximately 20m of bank piling works (double row).</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> </ul>
Needham & Laddus IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Arrange for contractor to undertake herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Grass seeding re-profiled drain sides.</li> </ul>
Nightlayers IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> </ul>
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> </ul>
Ransonmoor DDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains.</li> </ul>
Swavesey IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Replacement of concrete bagged headwall.</li> </ul>
Waldersey IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> </ul>

## 20. **Engineering Fees**

- 20.1 Fees** – the fee outlook for this next financial year again remains steady, with the largest income generators remaining the design of the new Stow Bardolph Pumping Station scheme and Green Dyke Pumping Station. The deferral of the GiA scheme is unlikely to impact heavily on income over the next few years as business cases will need to be developed ready for the next funding round.

## 21. **ADA**

- 21.1 Meetings** - the Chief Engineer (secretariat) continues to attend the ADA Technical and Environmental Committee meetings. The Chief Engineer also continues to represent ADA on the BSi panel and EA/defra – national AMTAG (Asset Management Theme Advisory Group) and the EA/IDB Eel Liaison Group.

- 21.2 The Annual ADA Conference** – the next conference will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 1 Great George Street, Westminster, London. Speakers will include Sue Hayman MP (Shadow Secretary of State for EFRA), John Curtin (Director of FCRM) and Sarah Hendry (Director for Floods and Water at defra).
- 21.3 GIS Work** – the work commissioned by ADA with the MLC to assist in the creation of a complete digital dataset of all IDB boundaries throughout the country has been successfully completed.
- 21.4 NFU** – the Chief Engineer represents ADA on the NFU Water For Food Group and has attended one meeting over the period.
- 21.5 Great Ouse ADA Branch** – a Branch Executive meeting was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and a further one is scheduled for the 30<sup>th</sup> October. The annual local branch conference will be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> March at Prickwillow village hall at the usual time and follow the usual format.

## **22. EA Sanctioned Project List**

- 22.1 A list of the EA ‘Sanctioned Project List’** follows, covering all MLC and MLC consultancy projects for 2018 - 2021:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ▪ Downham and Stow<br>Bardolph IDB | Stow Bardolph Pumping Station Replacement   |
| ▪ Ramsey IDB                       | Stocking Fen Automatic Weedscreen (assumed) |

## **23. Renewable Power**

At present the savings and FITs payments linked with the office PV cells installation remain ahead of predictions, however, the inverter did fail during the period and had to be replaced. Although the inverter was just inside the warranty period, hence the cost was borne by others, there was a period of a month or so when no electricity was generated. Unfortunately, this happened to coincide with the prolonged dry period referred to earlier in the report.



David Thomas  
Clerk, Chief Engineer & Chief Executive

16 October 2018

**APPENDIX 1**  
**Rainfall 2018**

**RAINFALL - April to September 2018**

Month	Abbots Ayrton	March	Stanground Lock	Teddies Bridge/ Bevitts Leam	Monthly Average	Cumulative Monthly Average Apr - Sept	Standard Average	Cumulative Standard Average	Excess of rainfall over standard average	Cumulative difference
2018						Apr - Sept		Apr - Sept		
April	72.9	58.5	75.3	55.5	65.55	65.6	42.51	42.5	23.0	23.0
May	52.4	47.0	44.7	45.5	47.40	113.0	50.34	92.9	-2.9	20.1
June	1.6	0.0	10.8	0.0	3.10	116.1	45.13	138.0	-42.0	-21.9
July	15.3	27.5	29.1	23.0	23.73	139.8	57.29	195.3	-33.6	-55.5
August	51.5	60.0	58.8	55.5	56.45	196.2	58.94	254.2	-2.5	-58.0
September	28.1	26.0	25.9	23.0	25.75	222.0	46.26	300.5	-30.5	-78.5
TOTAL	221.8	219.0	244.6	202.5	221.98	222.0	300.47	300.5	-30.5	-78.5

The standard average is for the current standard reference period 1995-2017.

**Average summer rainfall in recent years**

April 2018 - September 2018	222.0
April 2017 - September 2017	301.3
April 2016 - September 2016	274.6
April 2015 - September 2015	233.7
April 2014 - September 2014	319.1
April 2013 - September 2013	217.4
April 2012 - September 2012	430.6
April 2011 - September 2011	191.9
April 2010 - September 2010	273.2
April 2009 - September 2009	273.7
April 2008 - September 2008	329.2
April 2007 - September 2007	324.2
April 2006 - September 2006	291.8
April 2005 - September 2005	291.1
April 2004 - September 2004	362.3
April 2003 - September 2003	214.3
April 2002 - September 2002	275.4
April 2001 - September 2001	354.7
April 2000 - September 2000	353.1
April 1999 - September 1999	312.1
April 1998 - September 1998	401.9
April 1997 - September 1997	211.4
April 1996 - September 1996	234.3
April 1995 - September 1995	195.3

**HYDROLOGY AND PUMPING - April to September 2018**

Month	Rainfall				Estimated Potential Evapotranspiration mm	Soil Moisture Deficit (month end) mm	Rain Days		Pumping				Minimum Water Level (m A.D.)
	Monthly Average mm	Standard Average mm	Deficit mm	Surplus mm			Area Average	Standard Average *	Days	Mega Litres pumped	St Germans Equivalent Run-off mm	Bevills Leam pumped	
April	65.53	42.51		23.04	34.05	20	16	12	30	28361	41.50	6625.75	100.14
May	47.40	50.34	2.94		86.00	65	8	12	23	4486	6.40	675.00	99.74
June	3.10	45.13	42.03		71.90	135	3	12	6	826	1.20	162.80	99.65
July	23.73	57.29	33.56		39.73	151	5	12	0	0	0.00	57.77	99.58
August	56.45	58.84	2.49		54.35	150	12	13	4	780	1.10	203.55	99.61
September	25.75	46.26	20.51		23.25	83	8	11	11	1757	2.50	88.53	99.61
TOTAL	225.98	300.47	78.49				52	72	74	36719	52.70	7823	

\* Standard average (1968 - 2017) rain days taken from available information

**Mega Litres Pumped at St Germans**

April 2018 - Sept 2018	36719
April 2017 - Sept 2017	13266
April 2016 - Sept 2016	17981
April 2015 - Sept 2015	10469
April 2014 - Sept 2014	21319
April 2013 - Sept 2013	14061
April 2012 - Sept 2012	33300
April 2011 - Sept 2011	2851
April 2010 - Sept 2010	8688

**Mega Litres Pumped at Bevills Leam**

April 2018 - Sept 2018	7823
April 2017 - Sept 2017	3311
April 2016 - Sept 2016	4538
April 2015 - Sept 2015	3811
April 2014 - Sept 2014	3868
April 2013 - Sept 2013	802
April 2012 - Sept 2012	12520
April 2011 - Sept 2011	208
April 2010 - Sept 2010	1877

Solar Panel Returns - Actual vs Predicted

assumes savings of £4K per year.

Year	Reading		Reading		Unit Cost (p)	Night (KWh)	Unit Cost (p)	Total Cost	Saving	Energy Generated (KWh)	Maint. Cost	FITS (p)	FITS earned	Total Saved	Investment Minus Savings	
	Day (KWh)	Unit Cost (p)	Day (KWh)	Unit Cost (p)											Actual	Target
-1	111,500	9.77	29,870	6.01	N/A		N/A								£28,215.00	£28,215.00
0	170,507	9.77	49,932	6.01	£6,970.71		NA			N/A			£0.00	N/A	£28,215.00	£28,215.00
1	209,556	9.77	66,738	6.01	£4,825.13		£2,145.58			24,755		12.57	£3,668.69	£5,814.27	£22,400.73	£24,215.00
2	246,485	9.77	83,621	6.01	£4,622.63		£2,348.08			47,775		12.57	£3,411.56	£5,759.64	£16,641.08	£20,215.00
3	284,232	9.77	99,669	6.01	£4,652.37		£2,318.34			68,978		12.57	£3,142.28	£5,460.63	£11,180.46	£16,215.00
4	321,300	9.77	114,326	6.01	£4,502.43		£2,468.28			89,416		12.57	£3,028.91	£5,497.19	£5,683.26	£12,215.00
5	366,244	9.77	131,678	6.01	£5,433.88		£1,536.83			102,187		12.57	£1,892.66	£3,429.49	£2,253.78	£8,215.00
6					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£4,215.00
7					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£215.00
8					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£3,785.00
9					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£7,785.00
10					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£11,785.00
11					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£15,785.00
12					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£19,785.00
13					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£23,785.00
14					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£27,785.00
15					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£31,785.00
16					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£35,785.00
17					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£39,785.00
18					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£43,785.00
19					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£47,785.00
20					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£51,785.00
21					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£55,785.00
22					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£59,785.00
23					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£63,785.00
24					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£67,785.00
25					£0.00		£0.00		£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£2,253.78	£71,785.00
Total Units Generated as of 17th October 2018															102,187 KWh	
Predicted income at year 25 (allowing for say £10K maintenance)															£90K	

\* readings taken when FITS applied for  
 \*\* half year readings so savings will be estimated

## Constituency Briefing



### Briefing for Stephen Barclay, MP for North East Cambridgeshire Sept. 2018

#### Improved water levels in the Middle Level Area

##### Purpose of this briefing

I would like to inform you that, after a very hot and dry summer, water levels in the Middle Level System have now recovered.

##### Background

Due to the very hot and dry summer period experienced through June, July and the early part of August 2018, irrigation was restricted in the Middle Level from 28 June to 10 August 2018. During this period, a complete ban on irrigation existed from 9 July to 2 August 2018. Only irrigation in the form of stored water in reservoirs was allowed to continue unrestricted during this period (please refer to Fig 1 for map).

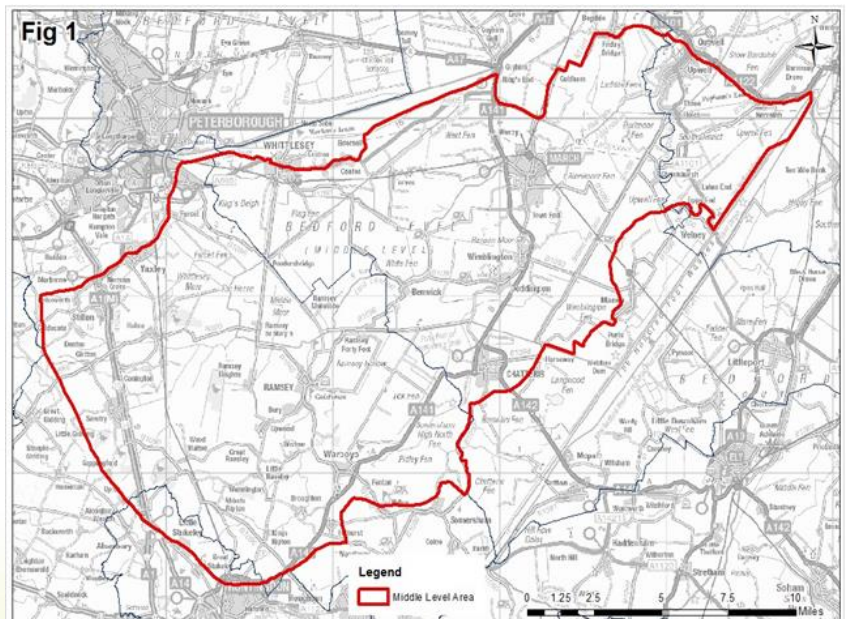
The rain that fell during the second half of August has now improved this situation. Coupled with the reduction in demand for irrigation, this has meant that water levels are now back to normal.

##### What we are doing

We will continue to work closely with the Middle Level Commissioners and other partner organisations, including Anglian Water Services, to improve the way the Middle Level system is managed.

##### Working with your constituents

The Middle Level Commissioners recently hosted a water resources advisory committee meeting where the decisions and actions taken over the summer were reviewed by all parties involved. The meeting generated a good number of ideas and ways that everyone involved can work together and communicate more efficiently. Should your constituents have any questions about the management of the Middle Level System during this summer, they can call either Andrew Chapman on 02030 251786 or Iain Page on 02030 251851. They will be able to provide more information.



##### If you would like more information

Dr Charles Beardall OBE, East Anglia Area Director  
Iceni House, Cobham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 9JD or  
Brampton Office, Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4NE

Email: [Areamanagercorrespondence.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Areamanagercorrespondence.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk)

More information can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency)







# ‘Wat-er good deal!’ Anglian Water shares millions of litres of water with local farmers to bolster crop yields

Anglian Water has put in place an agreement to ‘share’ more water with farmers on the River Nene to allow them to take extra water for their crops, in a bid to combat the effects of the recent dry weather.

The water company has just finalised an agreement with the Environment Agency and local drainage board meaning they will take less water from the river to use for drinking water, which in turn will allow local farmers to use more water to irrigate their crops.

20 million litres of water a day – equivalent to the domestic use of 150,000 customers – will be available for local farmers to use from the south and east of Peterborough over to the north of Cambridge. The agreement is currently in place for the next two weeks and is the second arrangement of its kind for Anglian Water this year, with the first taking place earlier in July.

Just 28mm of rain fell across the East of England during July, around half the amount expected for this time of year, leaving local farmers hard hit, and facing parched crops and depleted yields this harvest time.

Nick Walters, Ground and Surface Water Manager for Anglian Water said: “Despite the recent dry weather, we know our water resources are in a good place for this time of year – our reservoirs are 85% full and groundwater levels are healthy.

“This isn’t just down to luck, but a combination of the wet winter, the fact that we store lots of water in preparation for when it’s dry, and our industry leading stance on tackling leakage, together means that our supplies are secure this year.

“Agriculture makes up a huge part of our local economy and water is a vital part of supporting that. We know local farmers are concerned about their crops this year, which is why we’re redirecting this precious resource to areas that need it most.

“The East of England is the driest region in the country, so conserving and managing our water resources to serve customers, local businesses and balance the needs of the environment is what we do everyday.”

Last month Anglian Water announced the official launch of the Water Resources East (WRE) project. The collective is made up of representatives from the water companies, the Environment Agency, local authorities, as well as the agricultural, education and research sectors. The focus is simple – to tackle the threat that climate change and population growth is having on the East of England’s finite water supply.

Nick added: “We recognise that the impact of climate change and population growth in our region will pose a significant challenge to the water resources we have available. This means that we need to work with other organisations to come up with new ways to make use of the water we have available. This is what WRE is here to do.

“Part of WRE’s plan will be to develop longer standing ‘water trading’ arrangements like these in the future as well as considering new ways of storing and sharing water so we can manage our water resources together, and make severe drought restrictions a thing of the past.”

Manfai Tang, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency said:

“We have worked closely with Anglian Water on this project and welcome the innovative approach which should leave more water in the river helping wildlife and the environment, and give farmers access to more water. We encourage other water companies across the country to work with us at the Environment Agency on similar projects.

“We are committed to supporting farmers who have had a dry few months by allowing them to flex their abstraction licences where we are satisfied there won’t be any adverse effects on the environment.”



# Ouse Washes

August 2018

## Middle Level & South Level Barrier Bank Works

### Progress

Bank works on all workfaces are progressing well and on schedule.

#### Middle Level Barrier Bank

##### Welmore Lake Sluice to Welney

We are continuing on from last year and have two workfaces in this section this season. We are now at the half way point in Welney, which has received over 250 lorries delivering 4850 tonnes of clay.

##### Earith and Mepal (A142)

#### Great News!!

The temporary bridge over the Counter Drain at Earith has been installed and approval has been granted to our sub-contractor, so clay deliveries are now using this route. We are pleased to say that no clay deliveries will use the roads in Earith.

There are two workfaces in this section, one at Mepal working towards Earith and another at Earith working towards Mepal.

#### Welches Dam Pumping Station works at RSPB Reserve, Manea

Top soil has been stripped and excavation is complete for the south side floodwall at the pumping station. Installation of the new floodwall has started which is expected to take four weeks.

We will be replacing the existing bridge in front of the pumping station in October.

There will be no access to the public footpath and bird hides north of Welches Dam during the works. The footpath and hides south of the works will remain open this season.

#### South Level Barrier Bank

##### Sutton Gault to Chain Corner

Works are continuing on here from last season. This section is 50% complete and received 325 lorries delivering 6500 tonnes of clay and granular material.

A road sweeper is in operation along the B1381, Chain Causeway, to ensure the highway is kept clear of debris.



*Cutting a bench layer on the SLBB at Sutton Gault*

During the very dry weather that we experienced during July and August, the team worked hard to keep dust to a minimum using a tractor and bowser at each workface.

### Traffic management

#### Welmore Lake Sluice to Welney

The material is being delivered to the site access from the quarry in Mepal using the A142, A10 and A1101.

#### Earith to Mepal (A142)

The lorries are using the temporary access road and bridge which has been installed direct from Bridge Farm quarry to the bank to avoid using the local roads through the villages.

#### Sutton Gault to Chain Corner

Material deliveries will be delivered from the quarries in Earith and Mepal to the Sutton access off the B1381, using the B1050 towards Chatteris, A142 to Sutton to the B1381, Chain Causeway.

Regular vehicle monitoring is undertaken using GPS trackers which are installed in each lorry.

### Our environment

Whilst we undertake the works regular ecological surveys are carried out to ensure that we do not disturb any protected species and local wildlife.

The bank works are being carried out during the summer months to avoid disturbing the over wintering and ground nesting birds on the Washes

customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

floodline  
03459 88 11 88

## Public footpath diversions

A public footpath closure has been granted for the whole length of the works. However, the footpath is only closed or diverted where works are being carried out. Diversions and closures are clearly signed.

### Welmore Lake Sluice to Welney

The footpath here is diverted along Low Bank.

### Welney to Railway Bridge

This remains open only as far as the railway bridge as there is no through route to Welches Dam while we are working here.

### Railway Bridge to Welches Dam, RSPB Reserve

The footpath and bird hides here are closed with no alternative route available.

### Welches Dam, RSPB Reserve to Mepal (A142)

The footpath and bird hides here remain open.

### Mepal (A142) to Earith

The footpath here is closed with no alternative route available.

Once sections of the bank have been completed, the public footpath will remain closed until sufficient grass cover has been established. Grass is really important on the reservoir bank. As the grass grows, the roots help to stabilise the bank and reduce erosion. We use a mixture of different seeds to get a variety of different grass species. Regular inspections will be undertaken between October 2018 and May 2019 to monitor the grass growth.

## Trespass and vandalism

We have been experiencing trespass and vandalism during the working day and out of hours. The security fencing and gates are being vandalised which provides access to site. Materials from site have been thrown into the watercourses resulting in our staff having the tricky task of retrieval. Plant operators have been subjected to abuse and rocks have been thrown at them and their machinery.

All construction sites are dangerous places with many hidden hazards and we are working hard to keep our security fencing secure and will do all we can to protect the community. We urge that you speak with your youngsters to explain the dangers that they are putting themselves and our operatives in.



## Improving the image of construction

The Considerate Constructors Scheme was set up to improve the image of the construction



industry. The scheme aims to encourage best practice beyond statutory requirements and show the industry to be considerate. Our site has signed-up to the scheme again this year and our visit from the scheme monitor has been arranged for mid-August. We will bring you the results in our next issue.

Site reference: 110850 / Freephone: 0800 783 1423

## The Ouse Washes rock hunt

We have hidden 20 rocks throughout Earith and Welney for you to find. Each rock has been painted and a number is on the reverse, remember the number and re-hide the rock for the next person to find. To find out more about your rock and the Ouse Washes reservoir come along to the drop-in surgeries that we are holding in Earith and Welney. A prize for every rock found. Here's an example of what to look out for.



## How to find out more

The weekly surgeries that we have been holding for you to come and speak with our Public Liaison Officer, Monica have been very popular. These will continue until 31 October 2018.

## Surgeries – when and where?

These are held between 10.00am and 12.00pm

- Wednesdays in Earith at Rectors Hall.
- Thursdays at the RSPB reserve, Manea.
- Fridays in Welney at the project site office.

Notice boards are located on the bank near Earith Sluice, in the Anchor Inn car park at Sutton Gault, at Welches Dam on the RSPB Reserve and near the old parish hall at Welney.

## Our Public Liaison Officer

If you have any questions or comments about the project, please contact Monica Stonham:

Telephone: 07534 457348

Email: [OusewashesProjectEA@gmail.com](mailto:OusewashesProjectEA@gmail.com)

## Working in partnership

The project is being carried out by JacksonHyder on behalf of the Environment Agency with support:



middle level  
commissioners



Cambridgeshire  
County Council



customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

floodline  
03459 88 11 88

[www.gov.uk/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)

The Chief Executive reported on the Environment Agency's review of its six year spending cycle for flood risk and capital works for flood protection. As there was only 2½ years left to deliver on Government targets, the Environment Agency were carrying out a refresh of where funds were to be allocated to achieve the agreed aims. This has meant that a number of schemes which were being pursued by the Commissioners themselves and their associated IDBs have now been deferred beyond the current spending cycle, ie until 2021 or later and this included the Commissioners' bank raising scheme.

The Chief Executive explained that the Agriculture Bill had been introduced into the House of Commons in September. The Bill was to provide the legal framework for the UK to leave the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and establish a new payments system for farmers and land managers based on public money for public good. Specifically, if enacted, it will enable the Secretary of State to provide financial assistance in the future for activities undertaken to mitigate or adapt to climate change.

The Chief Executive reported that the Government had published a review of the application and effectiveness of planning policy for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and that the review had found that there was little monitoring of SuDS systems post planning and that 70% of planning applications had no provision for maintenance detailed within them. ADA were in discussions with local authorities and were raising the issue of SuDS schemes in planning proposals. ADA were also setting up a new association called The Association of SuDS Authorities (ASA) to raise the profile of sustainable urban drainage and drainage engineers and this was to be rolled out at Floodex in Peterborough 2019.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) That the £100,000 allowed in the budget for the Bank Raising business case be rolled into next year's budget.

#### B.3489 Executive Committee

Members considered the minutes of the Meetings of the Executive Committee held on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

#### RESOLVED

That the Executive Committee's minutes and recommendations be approved

#### B.3490 Anglia Farmers

Further to minute B.3434, the Chief Executive confirmed that the level of service provided by Anglia Farmers had improved and these arrangements would be kept under review.

He added that in view of the significant increase in prices observed a utility specialist was approached and like for like prices at the time of tender, for a sample of meters, were requested in order that a comparison could be made with the prices obtained by Anglia Farmers. Although some savings may have been made, overall the current prices obtained from Anglia Farmers were found to be generally competitive.

## RESOLVED

That, the Board remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

### B.3491 Public Sector Co-operation Agreements (PSCAs)

Further to minute B.3453, the Chief Executive reported that the Commissioners had previously signed up to a PSCA with the Environment Agency and were carrying out works on behalf of the Agency.

Works were once again expected to be carried out at Salters Lode and Denver under this agreement in the New Year.

### B.3492 Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

Further to minute B.3454, the Chief Executive reported that a second Chair's meeting was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and that discussions centred around meeting Health and Safety legislative requirements and the possible options for increased efficiency in delivery of IDB/DDC services. Outline detailed proposals on the latter are to be brought before the next Chair's meeting for consideration.

### B.3493 Financial Update

- a) Members considered the report of the Treasurer.

The Board reviewed their risk management policy and procedures and approved the current insured value of properties.

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls.

The Treasurer referred to the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 which had been approved by the Board and the now completed Annual Return and the comments of the auditors.

The Board considered the internal auditors report and the Treasurer referred to the comments concerning assets and asset management and approved to continue with the current policy and for the Chief Executive and Treasurer to further review registers, balances and valuations.

The Treasurer referred to the current policy of monitoring expenditure monthly by staff, quarterly by the Executive committee and half-yearly by the Board, which the Board gave consideration to and approved to be sufficient.

The Board considered the budget monitoring and forecasting together with the notes concerning the out-turn and the Treasurer detailed the out-turn for the period to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and the assessment of likely expenditure for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. The Treasurer referred to the expenditure in relation to the Navigation Bill being above the budget allocation and that the forecast did not include expenditure for the bank raising business case development which although the allocation of grant aid had been deferred by the



Environment Agency, the Board had now resolved to ring fence the budget expenditure for future scheme development. The Board approved the monitoring forecast.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the Treasurer's report be approved.
  - ii) That the Auditors reports and comments be approved.
  - iii) That the present policies concerning risk management, budget monitoring and insured value of properties be continued.
- b) The Chief Executive referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2017/2018, which the Board noted and approved.

#### B.3494 Middle Level Navigation Bill

Further to minute B.3457, the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk reported that the Bill received Royal Assent on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018 and was now an Act of Parliament. During the progress of the Bill through Parliament in both the House of Commons and House of Lords, a number of undertakings had been given and these had now been published on the Board's website. The Act gave the Commissioners powers to make Byelaws and these were currently being drafted and would be sent out for wider consultation. The anticipated date for the introduction of the new arrangements was the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. Discussions needed to take place with the EA, Canals River Trust and the Cambs Conservators to discuss the registration process and the fixing of fees. An advisory committee needed to be set up as soon as possible with representatives from the Commissioners and the various boating associations and water users.

#### RESOLVED

That a letter be sent to Kevin Foster MP, thanking him for his support for the Bill during its progress through Parliament.

#### B.3495 Inspection of Works 2018

Further to minute B.3458, the Chief Executive reported that no Inspection had taken place in 2018 and that he was working on a forthcoming visit to a neighbouring board outside of the Middle Level system.

#### B.3496 Water Resources Committee

- a) Further to minute B.3460, the Chairman reported on behalf of Mr H Whittome who could not attend the meeting.

He reported that there had been pressure on irrigation due to the dry summer and the efforts of Jon Fenn and Hugh Whittome in maximizing the amount of water into the system at Stanground and then balancing the available supply against demand for as long as possible were noted.

The Chairman advised that, on the 9<sup>th</sup> July, the EA had however imposed a total irrigation ban within the Middle Level area but expressed disappointment and concern that some

landowners had ignored this ban. The Environment Agency did not have the resources to do effective enforcement and also if and when court action is pursued the penalties are relatively small in comparison to possible losses in cropping. A joint letter was sent by the National Union of Farmers and Middle Level Commissioners reminding abstractors about their licences and abstraction and the need to abide by them.

b) Water Resource Situation

The Chief Executive advised on the situation with regard to water storage for irrigators and navigators. He stated that he would re-investigate the possible provision of a reservoir to maintain water levels within the Middle Level system, however, this was incidental to the Commissioners' flood risk management function and therefore could not be funded by the Environment Agency.

B.3497 Water Transfer Licences

Further to minute B.3461, the Chief Executive reported that the Commissioners have until the end of next year to apply for a licence for water transfer. Only one licence at a cost of £1,500 would be needed by the Commissioners and he would be applying for this in Spring 2019.

B.3498 Ralstonia Solanacearum – Brown Rot

Further to minute B.3462, the Chief Executive reported that further testing had been carried out in July 2018 but despite promises to the contrary there had been no formal results received yet from Defra.

B.3499 Byelaws

Further to minute B.3465(d) the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk reported that as this matter affects all Boards, and to ensure efficiency and to minimise costs, work on revising the Byelaws has been held until all Boards administered by the Middle Level Commissioners have determined their wishes. Now that this objective has been achieved work is commencing and a bulk submission of revised Byelaws will be submitted for consideration by Defra accordingly, probably in the New Year.

B.3500 Policy Statement

Further to minute B.3465(e), the Board reviewed and approved their Policy Statement which had been updated following the publication of the National Audit Office (NAO) report on IDBs in March 2017.

RESOLVED

That the revised Policy Statement be adopted.

B.3501 Requirements for a Biosecurity Policy

Further to minute B.3466, the Board considered their Biosecurity Policy.



## RESOLVED

That the Biosecurity Policy be adopted.

### B.3502 Conservation Committee

Members considered and approved the minutes of the meeting of the Conservation Committee held on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

### B.3503 Conservation Officer's Report

The Board considered and approved the Report of the Conservation Officer.

### B.3504 Association of Drainage Authorities

#### a) Annual Conference

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities would be held in London on Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

#### b) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch

The Chief Executive reported that the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association would be held in Prickwillow, Ely on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and since the last annual branch meeting there had been two meetings of the branch executive which had proved to be a useful forum. The Chief Executive reported on a proposed Environment Agency workshop which would be held on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 prior to the Annual Conference.

#### c) Floodex 2019

The Chief Executive reminded Members that Floodex 2019 will be held at the Peterborough Arena on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

### B.3505 Planning Responses and Charging

The Chief Executive outlined the improvements that had been made to the system for responding to planning applications but this was very much a work in progress and there were further improvements which he intended to introduce.

### B.3506 Adverse Possession Claim – Main Drain, Three Holes

The Solicitor/Assistant Clerk advised Members of an application that had been made for adverse possession of the Commissioners' land adjacent to the Forty Foot River at Three Holes and that this was still under consideration by the Land Registry.

### B.3507 Applications for byelaw consent

The Chief Executive reported that the following applications for consent to undertake works in and around watercourses had been approved and granted since the last meeting of the Board, viz:-

<u>Name of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Works</u>	<u>Date consent granted</u>
UK Power Networks	Installation of a 11Kva underground cable from an existing H Pole – Kings Dyke	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2018
Cambridgeshire County Council - Highways	Removal of existing reinforced concrete bridge deck – Boots Bridge, Manea Road (B1039) and construction of new bridge deck and edge protection along abutments	2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2018
Network Rail	Construction of 20 metre length of steel sheet piling as bank revetment downstream of railway bridge pier on east bank – Kings Dyke	10 <sup>th</sup> August 2018

### RESOLVED

That the action taken in granting consents be approved.

### B.3508 Middle Level Main Drain Bank Lots

The Chief Executive reported that:-

a) Bank Lot 24

Mr D J Forth had relinquished his tenancy on Bank Lot 24 and that Mr P Clabon had taken on the tenancy from March 2018 at a rental of £95.00 per annum.

b) Bank Lots 16 (South) and 17

M Secker & Sons had relinquished their tenancy on Bank Lots 16 (South) and 17 and that Oakley Farms had taken on the tenancy from April 2018 at a rental of £105.00 per annum.

c) Bank Lots 25 and 26

R A Deptford Ltd had relinquished their tenancy on Bank Lots 25 and 26 and that Allpress Farms had taken on the tenancy from October 2018 at a rental of £895.00 per annum.

### B.3509 Rental of Grass Banks

With reference to minute B.3436, the Board considered arrangements for the hiring of the Commissioners' grass banks in 2019.

The Chief Executive reported on the position regarding vacant Bank Lots which were grass banks watercourses let on short term grazing licences only.

The 2018 lettings being as follows:-

<u>Bank Lot</u>	<u>Hirer</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Rental</u>
1	In hand	3.5	-
3	Vacant	4.9	-
4	Vacant	3.1	-
5	Mrs S Scott	4.1	185.00
10	Vacant	3.1	-
12	Herbert & Son (Farmers) Ltd	1.05	35.00
15	Smart Bros	10.45	365.00
26 (Nth)	N/S J Russell	6.22	210.00
27	N/S J Russell	6.1	210.00
39	I and K Shipp	2.4	57.00
47(pt)	Mr P Savory	0.5	65.00
47(pt)	In hand	4.4	-
Twenty Foot River (Chain Bridge)	Mrs M Van Der Gaag	0.1	5.00

#### RESOLVED

That no change be made in the rents for the hiring of the grass banks in 2019 and that the present hirers be offered a licence in 2019.

#### B.3510 Date of next Meetings

#### RESOLVED

That the next meetings of the Commissioners and the Middle Level Board be held as follows in 2019, viz:-

- i) Thursday the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019
- ii) Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019
- iii) That the Inspection be held on a date to be arranged.

#### B.3511 Smart Metering System

As the bank raising project did not now get grant aid from the Environment Agency and was to be deferred until 2021 or beyond, the Chief Executive was instructed to undertake a desk study on the introduction of a smart level management system and the feasibility of using this over the entire internal drainage board area and to report on progress at the April board meeting

#### B.3512 GPS Survey Kit

The Chief Executive advised that this was presently hired as and when required but that it would be possible to purchase a second-hand kit for £8,000 with ongoing costs of £2,000. This purchase

could be justified because of the need for more information on levels needed for the above item and for the bank raising project.

## RESOLVED

That a GPS Survey kit be purchased.

### B.3513 New Weedboat

The Chief Executive reported that a new weedboat had been ordered and that £90,000 had been allocated to the cost of the boat as per the plant replacement strategy approved at the April board meeting. The new boat will have the advantage of being both a cutter and lifter as it has two arms which would improve productivity and allow lone working on occasions.