

## MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Middle Level Board held at the Middle Level Offices  
March on Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### PRESENT

M E Heading Esq (Chairman)	R W Groom Esq
J L Brown Esq (Vice Chairman)	C F Hartley Esq
P W Allpress Esq	J E Heading Esq
G Booth Esq	M R R Latta Esq
C D Boughton Esq	S T Raby Esq
R C Brown Esq	W Sutton Esq
D J Fountain Esq	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 G P Bliss Esq, The Lord De Ramsey, Councillors S Garrett and D Watt and H W Whittome Esq

### B.3439 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded the Commissioners 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.

Mr Fountain declared an interest in Agenda item 31.

### B.3440 Confirmation of Minutes

### RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

### B.3441 Payments by the Commissioners

The Board examined and approved payments amounting to £2,026,463.78 made during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

(NB) – Mr 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.

(NB) – Mr Latta declared an interest in the payment to Latta Hire Ltd.

#### B.3442 Miscellaneous Receipts

The Board examined and approved particulars of receipts amounting to £242,537.26 during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

#### B.3443 Marner case settlement offer

The Chief Executive reported that the Commissioners at their Executive Committee meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 had considered an offer from the Solicitors acting for Mrs Marner to make a payment of £18,000 in full and final settlement of her liability to the Middle Level Commissioners for legal costs.

The Chief Executive reported that this sum had now been received and that the entry on the Land Charges Register had been removed.

#### B.3444 Determinations of annual values for rating purposes

The Board considered the recommendations for the determinations 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.3445 Rate arrears

Consideration was given to writing off rate arrears amounting to £1,316.49.

#### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners be recommended to write off rate arrears amounting to £1,316.49.

#### B.3446 Contributions from Developers

With reference to minute B.1779, the Chief Executive reported that development contributions amounting to £958.94 had been received by the Commissioners in the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume.

## B.3447 Staff

### a) Salary Increases 2018/2019

Further to minute B.3386(c), the Chief Executive reported that, in accordance with the decision of the Executive Committee on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016, a formula consisting of 50% RPI and 50% AWE, each index being calculated as the average of their published monthly values from January to December in the previous year, had been used to determine pay awards for years 2017/2018 to 2019/2020, a salary award involving an increase of 2.58% in respect of the Commissioners' employees took effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

### b) Travelling expenses

Further to minute B.3386(d), the Chief Executive reported that the travelling allowances payable to Middle Level employees from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 would remain unchanged for 2018/2019.

### c) Applications for re-grading

Following the recommendations of the Executive Committee the following applications for re-grading were considered:-

Katie Hunt, Kate Pollard and Vince Richardson be awarded a salary rise of one spine point

Four applications were not approved but these posts were to be kept under review.

#### Treasurer – Mr R Hill

The Chief Executive reported that due to a heavy workload and the need to prepare the end of year accounts, Mr Hill had been unable to take his full leave entitlement.

## RESOLVED

- i) That the Salary award increase be approved.
  - ii) That the Executive Committee's recommendations be accepted; Mrs K Hunt, Ms K Pollard and Mr V Richardson be awarded an increase of one spine point.
  - iii) That a one-off payment in lieu of holiday be made to Mr Hill on this occasion.
- d) Mechanical and Electrical Engineer

Further to minute B.3420(a), the Chief Executive reported that Malcolm Downes would be commencing a 3 day week from the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 and that the normal standby cover would continue. Mr Downes would be flexible as to the days worked to cover operational needs.

e) Environmental Officer Post

Further to minute B.3420(b), the Chief Executive reported that the Environmental Officer had recently been ill but was making a very good recovery and that it was still his intention to retire at the end of June 2018. An advertisement had been placed in several environmental journals with a closing date of the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Interviews were scheduled

to take place the following week and although due to timescales it would not be possible for a handover period some support and a handover to the new Conservation Officer would be provided on a consultancy basis until the end of August 2018.

## RESOLVED

That the Board's good wishes and thanks be passed on to Cliff Carson.

f) Operations Engineer – Mr Jonathan Fenn

Further to minute B.3420(c), the Chief Executive reported that Jon Fenn had now taken on additional duties including abstraction licences, consent processing, managing bank lots and chairing the Middle Level Users group and had also taken the lead on health and safety.

These new arrangements had been put in to place and Mr Fenn is contractually providing an on-call service.

g) Assistant Operations Engineer – Mr Morgan Lakey

Further to minute B.3420(d), the Chief Executive reported that because of the additional duties being undertaken by Mr Fenn some of the engineering duties would be delegated to Mr Lakey.

### B.3448 Pension schemes

a) Local Government Pension Scheme

The Chief Executive reported that members of the Executive Committee had met with members of the Pension scheme and it had been decided to continue with the Local Government Pension Scheme for the financial year 2018/2019.

Further to minute B.3329(i), the Chief Executive reported that the contributions made by the Commissioners in respect of employees in the financial year 2017/2018 was £299,877.69 and that the contribution rate for the year was 33.4%. He also reported that for the financial year 2018/2019, the contribution rate would be 35.1% with contributions to be made by the Commissioners in respect of employees estimated to be in the region of £310,000.00

b) Auto enrolment pension scheme (NEST)

i) Further to minute B.3329(ii), the Chief Executive reported that the enrolment in the NEST scheme commenced in October 2015 and that the contributions made by the Commissioners in respect of employees in the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 was £6,843.66 and that the contribution rate was 3%. For the financial year 2018/2019, at the contribution rate of 3%, the contributions to be made by the Commissioners in respect of employees will be in the region of £7,500.00.

ii) Members gave consideration to the contribution rate payable by the Commissioners in respect of employees in the auto enrolment pension scheme as from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

It was noted that from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the employer's Nest pension contribution rate would be increasing to 4%.

## RESOLVED

To monitor generally what was happening in the market when reviewing future employer contributions.

### B.3449 Property

#### a) 10 Deerfield Road, March

Further to minute B.3421(i), the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk reported that the property was currently being marketed with a valuation for the property of £185,000.00 and that the acquisition of the right of access at the back of the property had now been completed in order that it could be sold with the property.

#### b) Backup Power for the Offices

Further to minute B.3421(c), the Chief Executive reported that the installation of the backup generator had now been completed and was being tested on a monthly basis.

### B.3450 Association of Drainage Authorities - Further Research on Eels

Further to minute B.3400(e), the Chief Executive reported on the progress being made with the eel research and the contributions from Internal Drainage Boards to the funding of this research.

The Board considered making a further contribution towards the research on eels.

## RESOLVED

That the Board contribute an additional £500 towards further research on eels for 2018/2019.

(NB) –Mr J Heading (as an ADA Director) declared an interest when this item was discussed.

### B.3451 Chief Executive's Annual Report

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



# ***Annual Report***

Report on Period  
April 2017 to March 2018

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**APPENDIX 1** - *Rainfall 2017/2018*

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**APPENDIX 13** - *Replacement of New Holland T5060 Tractor*

# ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2018

April 2017 to March 2018

## 1. Health & Safety

### 1.1 **Croner Consulting** – continue to provide the MLC and associated IDBs with help and advice on Health and Safety issues.

Croner have visited the offices several times early in the period and have been assisting with our internal review and update of all our internal risk assessments, to ensure they are fully compliant and up to date. They are due to visit again on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018 to provide tailored advice to several individual IDBs.

Ian Benn of JBA Consulting acts as Health and Safety adviser for ADA and passes information to them; this is then passed on to all member organisations. For the Boards administered by the MLC these are screened and passed on to Board Chairmen when considered relevant.

In addition to risk assessments one area reviewed over the period was the provision of welfare facilities. The review concluded that no change to our present arrangements were required at the time, but that we must be prepared to react to any change in circumstances and indeed, at the meeting referred to below, members of the workforce felt that the provision of toilet facilities for boaters and stand-in lock keepers would be welcomed, which may fit in well with the requirement to provide improved boater facilities once pleasure boat registration and charging commences.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018 a full workforce group meeting was held to discuss and review Health and Safety provision, this gave a forum for open two-way dialogue. Action points came from this meeting and are being dealt with. It is currently proposed to introduce two such meetings per year.

The safety and health of staff and workforce are considered the highest priority and hence are covered by the first item at every monthly works progress meeting.

## 2. Clerk's Report

### 2.1 **Anglian Water Issues** – we continue to receive monies from developers in respect of the discharge of treated sewage effluent flows to our system but do from time to time need to remind Anglian Water of what has been agreed. It is intended to arrange to meet again over the summer in this respect.

### 2.2 **Partnership Working and PSCAs** – the Chief Executive is striving to increase our partnership working with all flood risk management organisations. This includes holding meetings with planning authorities and encouraging catchment based cross council boundary consistency in approach to dealing with flood risk. On Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs) a meeting with Ian Russell of the EA has led to a proposal to produce a joint PSCA with the MLC and all interested MLC administered Boards who have Main River within their district and may be prepared to do work for the EA on a cost recovery basis. An EA seminar was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November to show what can be achieved through PSCAs. These non-agreements simply provide a mechanism to facilitate one FRM body to do work for another without the need for extensive paperwork where both parties agree there is mutual interest and or benefit. This has been evidenced by the EA who has reported that the value of the works completed through PSCAs to date totals over £7.8 million. The combined national efficiency saving from this has been calculated as 16%, equating to a saving of £1.25 million. Feedback from PSCA users indicates that the key reasons for cost savings are:



- continuity of work programmes, eg working on main river whilst in vicinity of a partners' existing works,
- reduced travel time, eg proximity to undertake structure maintenance and obstruction removal,
- local knowledge, such as of suitable access routes,
- timing of works, eg to suit cropping patterns, and
- effective landowner negotiations of cost-effective rates.

One previous issue in relation to PCSAs has been the requirement to have Professional Indemnity Insurance in place, which in the past the MLC have had but the IDBs they administer did not have it (or indeed really require it). Our current insurers have however offered to extend our current insurance to include nominated IDBs at no extra cost thus removing this barrier.

To date the MLC and Sutton and Mepal IDB have entered into PCSAs and Upwell IDB, Manea & Welney DDC, Haddenham Level DC and Swavesey IDB have advised they would also be prepared to enter into one.

**Government EA Outcome Measure Targets** - the EA is concerned that the FRM industry is now three years into a six year period in which schemes must be delivered that reduce flood risk to 300,000 properties nationwide, and that not enough progress is currently being made to be absolutely sure that this will be achieved. In this region much of the target delivery is down to IDB schemes (see Appendix 8). The MLC are therefore working closely with the EA local teams to ensure that we do all we can to deliver what we are aiming to.

**Pilot Shared Resource and Closer Working with Cambridgeshire County Council** – an approach has been made asking if the MLC would like to enter into a closer working relationship with Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to planning matters. If agreed this would include a pilot where resources were shared where appropriate and jointly badged responses given to planning applications issued. Whilst the authorities are not perfectly aligned in terms of roles and even interests there is a good degree of overlap and hence currently duplication can and does occur. As part of this process we would be seeking to improve our effectiveness in responding to planning and consenting matters.

**The Board's agreement to entering into such a pilot is requested. The pilot to be reviewed after twelve months or terminated at an earlier point if found not to be workable.**

**Fenland Developers Forum** – the Chief Engineer has been asked to attend a Fenland Developers Forum meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> April and will report further on this at the meeting.

**2.3 Potential Changes in Rating Valuation** – no further information has been received by this office in relation to this matter but it is clear that local councils remain concerned that changes in the payments to them from central government to help cover the IDB special levy demands will be reduced and eventually axed altogether. On this matter the Chief Executive met with the leader and others from the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk to discuss the concerns they have and to agree that in terms of special levy demands a 'no surprises' approach would be helpful. The Chief Executive agreed to this and went through what was potentially on the horizon in terms of capital works which might give rise to above inflation rate rises.

**2.4 National Audit Office Review/IDB1 updating** – the most notable impact for IDBs arising from the National Audit Office Review currently appears to be defra's requirement to receive significant additional detail within the annual IDB1 return. To ensure that the data collected has value and is meaningful defra set up a committee with representation from ADA, IDBs and the EA. The Chief Executive was invited to be involved in this and has, through emailed correspondence and attendance at meetings, been able to make a

valuable contribution into this process. The new forms have been settled and should allow defra to collect data which will, for the first time, produce a dataset which reflects the extent and value of the works undertaken by IDBs whether for flood risk or environmental enhancement benefit. It is considered that this will be helpful in increasing the potency of the voice of IDBs in any future national debate on FRM and associated matters. In return it will remind IDBs of those matters of transparency and governance which defra wish to see in place and maintained over the long term. This latter point is aimed as a call for some of the less progressive Boards to move forward, which is not considered an issue for the MLC or its administered Boards who are already generally in compliance.

**2.5 Board Tour of Inspection** – this year’s inspection was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> June and had navigation as its theme. The feedback from this event was very positive.

**2.6 ADA/EUWMA Hamburg Trip** – the Chief Executive travelled to Hamburg at the invitation of ADA. This visit was EUWMA’s second technical meeting and focused upon efficiencies. At the meeting the Chief Executive presented and answered questions upon the St Germans Pumping Station. In addition, he spoke about the use of solar cells on the office roof and the principle of generating electricity when demand was highest made more sense on site than on domestic properties where the property was generally empty.

The visit was interesting and the Chief Executive learnt that many of the issues we face are mirrored by the Water Management Boards in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Holland. Also, that the use of chemicals to control weed and reed in aquatic environments is banned in France and Spain and possibly Germany as well.

It was interesting to note that in Germany there appears to be no requirement for fish and eel friendly pumps and that the Board visited did not employ or contract the services of a conservation officer.

The visit included opportunities to view a pumping station, which simultaneously served two catchments holding two different water levels, where pumps were being replaced but in which the mantra was clearly to keep things as simple as possible. The second visit was to the site of one of three newly erected Drainage Board owned wind turbines in an area where over 900 turbines have been erected. Each of the three 200m high turbines produces 3MW and to set them up the Drainage Board had created a wholly owned limited company.

Various presentations were made on power generating and load balancing schemes and options and it is clear that Europe is well ahead of the UK in terms of renewable adoption and planning.

**2.7 Pilot Main River Transfers** – earlier this year defra gave the green light to a number of pilot projects which involve “de-maining” certain sections of main river across the country. The process involves investigating the passing of river maintenance and operational activities from the EA to IDBs where there is mutual agreement. If successful, the pilots will lead to the permanent passing of these activities to the IDBs concerned and if de-maining is supported by the local communities, defra and the EA have indicated that they may consider the same approach for other areas.

The catchment areas and IDBs concerned by these pilots are;

1. *Norfolk and Suffolk Rivers, East Anglia (Norfolk Rivers IDB, East Suffolk IDB, Broads IDB)*
2. *Isle of Axholme, East Midlands (Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board)*
3. *South Forty Foot Drain Catchment, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire area (Black Sluice IDB)*

4. *Wormbrook and Allensmore Brook, Herefordshire, West Midlands (River Lugg IDB)*

5. *River Stour Catchment, Kent & South London area (River Stour (Kent) IDB)*

Within the Middle Level catchment there is only the Bury Brook which is designated as Main River, however, there are other lengths within IDBs administered by the MLC which might become the centre of further talks if these pilots prove successful.

**2.8 Good Ecological Potential in Fenland Waterbodies** – water has always been at the heart of the Fens, and its management is vital to the life and livelihoods of the communities that live there. ADA has therefore led on the production of a Guide, which was published this year to help identify mitigation measures for water level managers to improve Fenland watercourses such that they might be modified towards achieving Good Ecological Potential as defined by the Water Framework Directive. The Guide takes account of the special nature of Fenland watercourses containing slow-flowing water, usually contained behind sluices and pumping stations. The Guide, which was written with collaboration between the Environment Agency (EA), ADA, Internal Drainage Boards (including the MLC) and Cambridgeshire ACRE has an accompanying Brief Introduction which can be downloaded from the ADA website.

**2.9 Committees** – the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) met on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 to discuss issues relating to operational navigation authorities. Matters covered included amongst others; wet dredging guidance, boat safety and issues with rented boats where the landlords were taking advantage of legal and operational loopholes.

The Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Peterborough Flood Risk Management/Water Management Partnerships have continued to meet periodically throughout the period and the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP) was given a guided tour around the St Germans Pumping Station by the Chief Executive to help provide some context to the unique challenges and opportunities arising from the artificial management of surface water in this area.

The MLC are partners in the Cambridgeshire ACRE Heritage Lottery Fund Project bid for conservation enhancements including within IDB water corridors. The bid entitled 'New Life on the Old West' is for areas outside the Middle Level District, just beyond the south east corner of the Ouse Washes. It was however felt that some of the excellent work done by the MLC can be mirrored here. To date the project team has been successful in getting the proposal through the first stage which releases funding to be used to develop a fully detailed bid.

**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** – to implement the changes defra is keen to take forward would require primary and secondary legislation changes. It is understood, not perhaps surprisingly, that legislative matters arising from Brexit are demanding all available legislation development time and it may therefore be a while before the desired changes are fully implemented.

**2.12 Middle Level Barrier Banks Works** – the EA's contractor commenced work in the summer of 2017 on this three/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. It is understood that the scheme, once complete, will almost guarantee that for the foreseeable future this bank cannot be overtopped in any return period event. This is because there is ultimately a finite limit on how much water can actually discharge into the Washes.

In the most recent report the EA indicated that whilst solid progress had been made the scheme is currently behind the original three year programme. The EA's contractor has stated that there is opportunity to catch up with the programme but it is expected that it will be more likely that works will extend into year four. This is not considered a major problem and will not breach the requirements laid down by the Reservoirs Act Panel Engineer.

**2.13 River Great Ouse Dredging Pilot** – after a delay of nearly two years it is pleasing to be able to report that the EA has finally obtained a Marine Management Organisation (MMO) licence. Members will be aware that the Middle Level and associated Boards have been supportive of this project and have agreed that precept money can be used on it. Accordingly, it is now expected that the first pass by a contractor agitating silt within the Stow Hump area will go ahead this autumn.

**2.14 Eel Regulations** – the Eel Regulations continue to be a challenge and during the period two telephone conferences and a face to face meeting have been held with the IDB/EA Eel Liaison Group. Through these discussions the Chief Engineer has raised the following points;

- *Pumping stations are not like water resource intakes in as much as the aim at pumping station sites should be to facilitate eel passage not to bar it.*
- *There remains confusion over what 'proportionality' means in terms of spend on eel passage as part of total asset refurbishment or replacement costs.*
- *The DEFRA/EA position statement was retracted and whilst it is to be replaced the date for this is uncertain (certainly not in the near future).*
- *The approach to replacement structures differs from refurbishment and hence there is a risk that schemes could be skewed towards refurbishment over renewal, irrespective of what might be most beneficial to eels.*
- *With limited funds available it seems wrong that the focus on spending on eels seems to be opportunistic rather than targeted which it is believed is leading to poor value for money, ie there is the potential to spend large sums of money on low priority sites and nothing on high priority sites.*
- *The bar is being set too high. What if it was possible to get 80% of eels safely around obstacles at 100 sites instead of 100% of eels around say just 10 sites for the same investment?*

On the basis of the above arguments the EA has conceded that the current approach needs to be reviewed and that it will be discussing this internally with a view to revisiting how the eel problem is dealt with going forward. This may take some time to filter through and as a consequence it has been suggested that we should assume that the current approach will continue over the remainder of this grant funding cycle, ie for the next three years. After this time, with the hope that the research currently underway will help steer us, we should be able to provide simpler and better solutions.

**2.15 Future Planning for the MLC and Associated Boards** – the Board was asked at the November meeting to consider how it might wish the MLC to develop and evolve to meet the changing circumstances and demands of the area over time. It was agreed that any future discussions on this matter should include representation from all administered IDBs as they will, of course, have a vested interest. To this end a Chairman's Meeting was held on 8<sup>th</sup> March and Innes Thompson, the ADA Chief Executive, was invited to give a presentation on the arrangements other Boards have for service delivery. The meeting appeared to be received positively and it has been agreed to hold a further meeting in the autumn in which the chairs will be invited to contribute towards development of the agenda. Issues discussed at the meeting included; barriers to amalgamation, challenges within

some Boards and member attendance, potential loss of local knowledge and legislative requirements such as GDPR.

**2.16 *Woodwalton Fen Potential to be reclassified*** – the EA has approached Natural England as occupiers of Woodwalton Fen asking to meet to discuss the possibility that Woodwalton Fen should be classified as a reservoir under the 1975 Reservoirs Act. The Chief Executive believes that if classified under this Act the MLC and not Natural England will be considered to be the Statutory Undertakers for the reservoir as they created it, operate the control sluice that triggers its use and maintain the banks around the Fen which contain the water. Under the Act it is a requirement to appoint a qualified Panel Engineer who will inspect and report on the condition of the reservoir's key components and recommend any remedial works he/she considers will be required. To an extent the degree of scrutiny and expected performance level of a reservoir for various storm events will depend upon the reservoir's classification. The more likely there is to risk to life should failure occur, the higher the standard required. It is expected that there will be costs attached to this item but at this early stage these cannot yet be estimated.

**2.17 *Engineering Insurance*** – The Commissioners' new insurers AXA/HSB now include Engineering Insurance cover within the policy for sudden and unforeseen breakdown of pumping plant. However, two recent claims for administered IDBs were rejected as AXA/HSB noted that many pump manufacturers recommend that units should be lifted for inspection and service on a 5 yearly cycle. This is currently being challenged by the MLC as it is not industry practice for land drainage pumps and the company's further consideration is awaited. At present both Bevills Leam and St. Germans have engineering cover of £500,000 per any one claim. Whilst the renewal was due on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, HSB/AXA have extended the existing terms until the end of April 2018, while they review the policy and also consider our request to increase the cover for St. Germans to £1,000,000. It is also worth noting that our cover has been extended to cover accidental damage to both bridge and lock structures.

### **3. Navigation Bill**

At the April 2017 meeting it was reported that the Bill had passed the Second Reading stage and it should then have progressed to the Committee stage to consider more formally the objections of the Petitioners.

Due to the General Election in June 2017, Parliament was dissolved on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May and business did not resume until 13<sup>th</sup> June and then only sat until 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 before the summer recess, there was therefore very little parliamentary time available to progress the Bill.

The Chief Executive and Solicitor used the extra time to meet individually with all the Petitioners to examine in detail their objections to the Bill. This was a very useful exercise and, although there remained objections to the Bill, the principle of registration of boats and boats having Safety Certificates and insurance seemed to be generally accepted. One of the Petitioners withdrew his Petition as a result of these meetings.

The summer recess ended on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and almost immediately the Conference season started so no parliamentary business was conducted until the 9<sup>th</sup> October.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> October the bill was revived and then between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018 the opposed bill committee stage was held chaired by Julian Knight MP with the remainder of the committee made up of Tulip Siddiq MP, Alex Soble MP and Giles Watling MP. The Chief Executives, both immediately past and present, gave evidence and we were supported through this stage by Neil Cameron QC. The petitioners also gave evidence and upon guidance from the committee, the parliamentary agents and Council we agreed to several amendments. In summary these relate to the make-up of the navigation committee which will be formed following the bill receiving royal assent, the requirement to have regard

to the needs of boat dwellers, the requirement to develop a protocol in regard to removal of boats from our waterways and a restriction that would prevent the Commissioners from making a profit from its navigation interests. In addition, a set of undertakings was given to parliament by the Chief Executive relating to the inclusion of a transitional period following issue of new byelaws and that certain powers linked to joint EA/CRT/MLC licencing agreements be used in a limited manner. These are not considered overly onerous and do not change the essence of the bill.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> February the bill received its third reading in the House of Commons and from there passed and was presented to the House of Lords. At this point it was open to petition for the period 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 until 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March it had its second reading without debate. The next stage will be the Lord's Opposed Committee stage (as once again petitioners have objected to the bill) which is expected to occur during the last week of June.

The Chief Executive was invited to attend a dinner hosted by the IWA on the 6<sup>th</sup> March in which a parliamentarian of the year award was presented to Wendy Morton MP. She spoke in favour of the Middle Level bill at its third reading. At this dinner the Chief Executive met with Lord German who had received last year's IWA award and was successful in persuading him to sponsor our bill if it became necessary as it passes through the Lords.

It must be noted that the process has required more capital investment and drawn upon the time resources of both the Commissioners' Assistant Clerk/Solicitor and Chief Executive in a way that was not fully anticipated at the outset of this process.

#### 4. Staff

- 4.1 **Cycle to Work Scheme** – the Executive Committee agreed that the MLC could offer a cycle to work scheme. This government promoted scheme has tax advantages to employees and employers. In essence the MLC purchase a bicycle and associated equipment up to £1K in value and the employee then leases it back, purchasing the equipment at its residual value at the end of the lease period. The incentive is that this arrangement offers tax free savings and of course also encourages employees to lead more healthy lifestyles and reduce carbon emissions. To date one member of staff has signed up to the scheme and obtained a new bicycle.
- 4.2 **General Staff Matters** – three staff meetings have now been held and it seems from these that around three per year will be the ideal balance between avoiding too much repetition and keeping staff informed on what is happening inside and outside of the organisation, plus of course encouraging discussion and feedback. The second meeting was followed by a team building event that went well and was attended by both staff and workforce representatives. The summer meeting will be followed by a BBQ if weather permits.
- 4.3 **Vacancies/Appointments/Departures** – a new operative, Martyn Isaacson, joined the workforce on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and has settled in well. Lucy Stoddart has been working with the Environmental Officer as a temporary employee for six months. This has been longer than originally anticipated but reflects the need to get all conservation objectives as up to date as possible prior to hand over to the new Environmental Officer when appointed.
- 4.4 **Pensions** – the Executive Committee met with the County Council scheme administrators on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018. During the meeting the options available to the Commissioners were outlined as were the reasons for the currently elevated employer percentage contributions. The Executive were satisfied with the responses given and felt the meeting was a useful one. They also concluded that the arrangements currently in place best served the Commissioners' interests and that whilst the matter would remain under periodic review they would not be proposing any changes at this point in time.

- 4.5 Spine Point Advancements** – applications for spine point advancement have been made by a number of employees. These will be discussed at the Executive Committee Meeting and any subsequent recommendations brought before the Board.
- 4.6 Retirement and Replacement of the Environmental Officer** – the Environmental Officer has confirmed that he will be retiring in June this year. As per the instruction given at the November 2017 Board meeting the Chief Engineer is making arrangements to advertise the post.
- 4.7 Health Screening/Medical Fitness Assessment** – the benefits of medical fitness assessments have been raised by ADA's Health and Safety Technical Advisor. Having considered this it is noted that if the MLC were to introduce mandatory assessments then this would be considered to be a contractual change, requiring internal consultation and employee agreement. At the moment the only medical screening that occurs is when an employee first starts work. One alternative, which would not require any contractual change but would help to promote good health and wellbeing, would be to offer voluntary health screening. This might be accessible on three year cycles for any employees and would cost in the region of £150/£200 per person per visit plus their time. Although unlikely to be the case should all employees take up this offer, then the annual cost would be around £2K.

**The Board's opinion and instruction is sought on this.**

#### **4.8 Sickness**

**Staff** – of a total staff of 22, with an approximate expected maximum of 4928 man days over the twelve month reporting period, 12 members had 73 days leave. The leave is broken down as 28 days following a road traffic accident (as reported during the previous period), 10 days, 6.5 days, two with 6 days, 5 days, 3.4 days, 2.5 days, two with 2 days, 1 day and 0.6 day. The remaining 10 members of staff did not take any time off for sickness.

**Standby Cover** – several members of staff asked for standby payments to be considered by the Board at its November meeting. Having considered the Board's response that such payments would not be appropriate a further request was made for time off in lieu to be considered where standby coincides with bank holidays.

**The Board's views on this are sought.**

**Operatives** – during the twelve month reporting period the workforce of 11 men, with an approximate expected maximum of 2464 man days, shared 44.5 days sick leave between 8 members; the remaining 3 members of the workforce did not take any time off for sickness. The sick leave is broken down between the operatives as 10 days, 9 days, 7.5 days, 7 days, 5 days, 3 days, 2 days and 1 day.

The Office for National Statistics advise that in the UK last year on average people are absent from work for 4.3 days a year hence we are close to that average for the workforce but overall, taking all employees into account, below this figure. It was unfortunate that a cold/flu virus made its round which was the major factor in the increased figures over last year.

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

- Teleporter Training 1 member of staff + 5 members of workforce
- RYA PB2 Course – 1 member of workforce
- RYA VHF Radio Operator Course – 5 members of workforce (EA – Feb 2018)

## 5. **Publicity**

5.1 **General** – it is pleasing to report that the Environmental Officer had an hour long interview with BBC radio and that most recently Spring Watch filmed the installation of an otter halt which is expected to be aired in May. We also had a brief mention in the local press in relation to a boat moored for an extensive period on short stay moorings referred to elsewhere in this report and the Chief Executive spoke to the March WI on the work of the Commissioners.

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

20 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	-	Probus 87 Club
13 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	-	Ford Y & C Model Owners Club
16 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	-	University of the Third Age (U3A)
4 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	-	Ramsey Internal Drainage Board
9 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	-	Cllr Des Watt (new Board member)
24 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	-	Tina Starling EA
6 <sup>th</sup> September 2017	-	CFRMP
12 <sup>th</sup> September 2017	-	Jennifer Rayner and friends
5 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	-	Wisbech District Valuers
9 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	-	Fenland District Council
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	-	Downham Market 41 Club and Round Table

The visit from Ms Rayner was arranged following a talk given by Richard Lloyd.

5.3 **Media** – the Commissioners' 'Twitter' presence now has 259 followers, up from 229 six months ago and 212 a year ago. The recent increase may be down to interest in the IWA festival to be held this August in St Ives.

5.4 **Web site** – [www.middlelevel.gov.uk](http://www.middlelevel.gov.uk) - the site continues to be developed.

## 6. **HMRC Visit**

The Treasurer and Chief Executive have, with the assistance of Whiting and Partners, been fielding queries on employee tax. All but one of the questions raised by HMRC was dealt with to their satisfaction. The remaining item was one in relation to pumping attendants required to reside in Board owned property. This last item could, depending upon outcome, have a more wide-reaching impact upon IDBs in general and as a consequence ADA is being kept informed.

## 7. **ICT Report**

7.1 **Hardware** – TSG was contracted to provide support for the Commissioners' physical and virtual servers and, so far, appear to be dealing with any issues that arise in a proactive manner.

Our workstations, which are now seven years old, are to be replaced. All hardware has been purchased and phased installation of the new units is underway.

The laptop used by the Environmental Officer was replaced.

7.2 **Software** – operating system software on all workstations will be on Windows 10.

7.3 **Mobile Phones and Land Lines** – following a review a tender process land line provision (excepting broadband which remains with TML) has been moved to BT. Staff and workforce mobile phone lines are with EE but the contract is currently being reviewed. The telemetry mobile lines remain with Vodafone.



7.4 **Telemetry Master Station** – this unit, which was around eight years old, has been replaced and runs on a Windows 10 platform.

## 8. **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 Grant in Aid (GiA) applications is also included.

### 8.1 **Technical Services Department**

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

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

**Land Drainage Channel Improvement Works South of the A47** – Highways England had last year reaffirmed that it intended to carry out a scheme comprising the enlargement of a culvert under the A47 near Wisbech and the EA had also confirmed that this was sufficient to develop a business case for downstream. The MLC were subsequently instructed by the Hundred of Wisbech IDB to proceed with the required work to develop a business case which is therefore underway. Most recently however, and of concern, Highways England has indicated that the culvert replacement scheme has been removed from its immediate programme of works and gave no indication of when works might proceed. The Chief Engineer managed to track down a consultant working for Kier who is dealing with this project and a meeting was held where it was confirmed that records on this scheme have been mislaid by Highways England. The consultants have since confirmed that the scheme remains on the list of programmed works and have advised that it has been set back with no delivery date currently identified.

**Stow Bardolph Pumping Station** – the MLC developed a business case on behalf of Downham and Stow Bardolph IDB for the replacement of a 1950s pumping station and were successful in obtaining approval for 100% GiA. Scheme design and tender document production were delayed by nearly a year as the EA has required a comprehensive assessment of what can economically be done to facilitate eel passage. This extra piece of work has been completed and detail design and tender document production is underway. It is the aim to go out to tender this spring with a view to works commencing on site in early summer.

**Green Dyke Pumping Station Replacement** – the Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley IDB asked for a report on the likelihood of GiA for the replacement of Green Dyke Pumping Station. The economics were tested and found favourable and the Board has instructed the development of the business case for the new station. The business case development will be progressed later in this financial year with scheme design following on in 2019 should the EA confirm that funding can be made available.

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

##### Spring/Summer 2017

Predominately drier than average weather conditions prevailed for much of last winter. Early season irrigation was required to get some spring sown cropping established. This irrigation requirement was met comfortably with reasonable water availability from the EA controlled Peterborough Nene. The early season irrigation activity was curtailed fairly abruptly by rainfall in mid-April.

The EA arranged and hosted the annual Summer Liaison meeting at its offices in Peterborough during early May 2017. The Commissioners' presence at the meeting allowed the opportunity to reinforce the Commissioners' summer abstraction requirements, and for the continuation of dialogue and collaborative partnership working moving forward from the previous season. With SMD indices relatively high at this time, two separate text messages were sent during the early spring to encourage constituent IDBs to fill their systems to summer retention levels in readiness and preparation for the main abstraction season. Compliance with the request was generally good. It is, therefore, unfortunate that an abstraction pressure period then developed during a heat wave in June. Anglian Water was unable, or at least not prepared, to cut back on its own licenced off-take from the Peterborough Nene. Subsequently 4 night irrigation restrictions were imposed within the Middle Level system on 21<sup>st</sup> June. Water levels within the Middle Level system were 'micromanaged' during this period with IDB slackers reopened when water flows were made available from the EA controlled Nene, and closed when levels dropped below the threshold parameters. The 4-night irrigation restriction remained in place until 10<sup>th</sup> July. The remainder of the abstraction season was managed without other restrictions being needed.

Compliance with the voluntary text messaging scheme remains the key to success with water management within the Commissioners' system and, more importantly, the vital compliance with closure of slackers when water levels in both Middle Level ponds drop below pre-set thresholds. Please refer to the EA Bodsey Bridge Level Summary Summer 2017 at Appendix 10.

It is apparent that without Anglian Water's co-operation in cutting back on its own off-take during relatively short periods of the peak abstraction season, we should expect to experience more frequent and longer abstraction and irrigation restrictions within the Middle Level system during future years. The 2018 Summer Liaison Meeting is due to be held this year on 19<sup>th</sup> April at the EA's offices at Kingfisher House, Peterborough.

#### Autumn/Winter 2017/18

Water levels with both St Germans and Bevills Leam pond were gradually reduced last autumn, as the abstraction season drew to a close. No significant rainfall was experienced during the autumn months within the MLC catchment, and pumping was managed by reactive pumping to pre-set parameters at St Germans and Bevills Leam Pumping Stations. Significant rainfall during the Christmas period required two of the three diesel powered pumps at Bevills Leam Pumping Station to be called on to run. Other than this the three electric pumps at the station have maintained water levels to the winter pre-set parameters this season.

**Banks and Channel Maintenance Dredging and Bank Raising** – previously reported bank raising works were completed during the summer months along the Old River Nene between Lodes End Lock and Nightingales Corner.

During late August bank raising works along the east bank of the Old River Nene were undertaken. This followed an opportunity arising to source the bank raising material, free of charge, from the nearby Greenvale Factory site at Floods Ferry.

The 2017 summer maintenance dredging programme included phased dredging of the Catchwater Drain between Straight Drove Bridge and Manor Farm Bridge and Great Raveley Drain between Finlay's Bridge and South Drain Junction. Aquatic vegetation clearance was undertaken along Monks Lode from the Catchwater Terminus to Connington Fen Bridge, and on two separate occasions on the Pigwater Drain, between Farcet Overspill and Yaxley Overspill, to facilitate water transfer into Bevills Leam pond for water abstraction purposes.

Phase IV Well Creek dredging was undertaken during January this year. The latest phase measured 770 linear metres from Upwell British Legion Footbridge to Isle Bridge, Outwell. Resultant spoil was transported to the Commissioners' field at Salter's Lode where it has been left to dry.

This year's phased maintenance dredging was along the Old River Nene between Herbert's Bridge and Speed the Plough junction. Work on the reach commenced mid-December and was completed in early March. The arisings from the dredging work have been left on the bank top to dry, and will be subsequently levelled into the existing embankments, providing an economic solution to bank raising along this channel later in the spring/early summer.

Maintenance dredging to remove a heavy growth of filamentous algae (cott) was required along the Old Pophams Eau watercourse during January. The dredging works were undertaken along a reach from Main Drain Junction to Nordelph Pumping Station.

A budget estimate has been procured for the Commissioners for Cutter Dredging works to remove siltation and sediment from the channel bed along the Old River Nene through March Town Centre. Although considerable additional costs would need to be accounted for while undertaking such a project, the estimate serves as a good indication of expenditure that will need to be allocated to dredging the Old River Nene in future years (see Appendix 12).

**Well Creek - Bank Subsidence** – no further correspondence has been received and no remedial bank stabilisation works have been undertaken by the relevant authority, Norfolk County Highways, during the reporting period. It is understood that the Highways Department has not prioritised this work as the road surface has yet to be compromised, although it is visually apparent lengths of the tarmac surface and curbing are gradually subsiding. The bank does not pose a flood risk or navigational issue at the present time and therefore the affected length of Well Creek, Church Bridge Upwell to British Legion Footbridge, will probably not be dredged until such time that the bank has been stabilised to the Commissioners' satisfaction.

**Ramsey High Lode – Bank Subsidence** – damage arising from bank subsidence, as a result of a fire in an adjacent factory unit at the Stocking Fen Industrial Estate, reported to the Board at their last meeting, has been repaired. Attempts to claim for the cost of repairs, from the property owner's/occupier's insurance company, were unsuccessful.

**Black Ham/Yaxley Lode – Bank Seepage** - was evident on two separate sites during the reporting period. Both sites required the Commissioners' intervention to address the issues.

**Herbicide Trials** – the licence for the use of Glyphosate, (Roundup Pro Biactive) has been renewed for five years. However uncertainty remains over the continued longer term use of glyphosate in both arable and aquatic sectors after this time. It is suggested that during the interim period the Commissioners and constituent IDBs lobby ADA in the strongest possible terms to take up the challenge in representing the aquatic industries' concerns regarding the continued longer-term licencing of glyphosate products for controlling aquatic vegetation within our water channels and ditches. No further information has been received regarding alternative herbicides that may be trialled for use in aquatic situations.

**Navigation** – it does appear that the number of 'live aboard' boats within the Middle Level System continues to rise and that some of these are likely to be deemed unsafe. Whilst not linked there have also been a few incidents of anti-social and threatening behaviour, one involving a small cruiser type boat deliberately veering into the path of an oncoming narrow boat travelling along the Old River Nene towards March town centre. This was reported to the Commissioners' offices and subsequently passed onto the local constabulary. Both these issues help to underpin the real need for the MLC to have powers to insist that boats are registered to allow the navigation to be effectively policed.

A joint site inspection of the Well Creek Trust owned mooring at Salter's Lode Lock has been held. It was apparent once the timber and GRP decking sheets had been removed that the substructure had deteriorated to a point where it was no longer structurally sound. This has led to the closure of the structure, and an offer from the Well Creek Trust for £3k

towards the cost of a proposed replacement structure, to be installed and maintained in perpetuity by the Commissioners, has been made. Following the Board's consideration at its last meeting the Well Creek Trust has been informed that at the present time the Middle Level Commissioners are not minded to allocate funding to a project to renew the failed mooring on site, but that they will be happy to review this once we have a navigation linked income stream.

**Fly-tipping** – increasingly more resources, both in terms of labour allocation and financial spend, are being taken up dealing with fly tipped debris discarded along banks and in channels. Of more recent concern is a marked rise in animal carcasses, including sheep, calves and foals, that have required the Commissioners' intervention including the cost of legal disposal. It has also been noted that recent invoices for waste disposal from the Commissioners' contractors, Glazewing have significantly increased. This appears to relate to 'contaminated' waste consignments, from both St Germans Pumping Station trash screen and for general waste from the Commissioners' depot at Whittlesey Road. In order to reduce these charges it is proposed to curtail the skip hire and exchange contract charges at St Germans site and, alternatively, fabricate bunded receiving areas where the waste skips are currently positioned. These can be cleared of debris as required using the Commissioners' own plant and labour. The green waste material derived can be composted on site, and the usual extraneous debris, such as gas cylinders, wheels and tyres, white goods and timber products can be transferred back to the Whittlesey Road depot, bulked up into larger consignments to be transferred on to waste recycling facilities. This will avoid the excessive charges for 'mixed contaminated waste' arising.

#### **Ralstonia solanacearum in watercourses**

Following the Board's last meeting, further designations of watercourses contaminated with the bacterium that can affect irrigated potato crops has been announced. The additional watercourses are the entire length of Well Creek (Marmont Priory Lock – Salter's Lode Lock) and a short section of Old Pophams Eau from the former Red Hart Pub to the junction with Main Drain. A designation of all Boards' drains within the entire Euximoor IDB catchment area is now in force. It is understood that defra will be undertaking water sample works again this year from the week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> July for four consecutive weeks. Please see Appendix 11 showing the Stakeholder letter and a letter of thanks addressed to the Commissioners for help and assistance provided to defra last year.

### **8.3 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 twelve months, together with recommendations for future works follows:

It has been a fairly relaxed twelve months at St Germans, with no major breakdowns. The replacement of generator coolant with a waterless variant continues in a phased manner and routine maintenance and repair is carried out as and when needed.

Major plant and motor overhauls have been completed at two IDB pumping stations and replacement pumps have been ordered for two others.

One of the upstream paddle hydraulic actuators at Stanground failed during the late summer and required urgent refurbishment.

Portable appliance testing has been completed.

Periodic electrical retesting/remedial works are being carried out at IDB installations as and when required.

A large outfall isolation penstock/flap valve assembly has been obtained and installed for one station.

Repairs to several automatic weedscreen cleaners have also been carried out together with one major overhaul.

Two new automatic weedscreen cleaners have been installed and two others ordered together with three new weedscreens.

Telemetry equipment has been installed at two pumping stations and new level control equipment at two others.

Discharge pipeline subsidence repairs have been carried out at one installation and delivery surge chamber subsidence is being monitored at another.

#### **8.4 Middle Level Strategic Improvement Scheme**

Peter Brett Associates (Formally Hannah, Reed) have completed their review of the Middle Level Strategy and the next step will be to develop the business case. GiA cannot be sought for this stage unless the business case is approved and a scheme progressed. A budget estimate will be presented at the Board meeting. The EA now has a mechanism to accelerate projects using a dedicated team. If the MLC choose to employ this team it would be anticipated that scheme works would commence in 2019 and be phased over three or four years.

### **9. Water Resources & Control of Water Levels (see Appendices 1, 2 & 3)**

#### **9.1 *Rainfall* – mean rainfall over the area for the twelve-month period was 592.5mm which is 7.29mm more than the standard average.**

The rainfall statistics show that we entered the reporting period with the driest ten month period, until the end of April, since the much documented drought year of 1976. The only exception to this dry trend was November 2016, which had above average rainfall. The predominantly dry weather ended abruptly however in mid-May following 50+mm of rainfall in some areas of the Commissioners' catchment over two days. The rainfall was significant enough to raise the rainfall total for the month end to 114% of the LTA (Long Term Average). After an unsettled start to the month, June turned dry and became very hot, this period of dry weather came to an end on the 27<sup>th</sup> when approximately 40mm of rain fell in a 24 hour period. July was a wet month, receiving 76mm of rainfall, equating to 155% of the LTA. Although the rainfall provided a welcomed reduction to the Soil Moisture Deficit value, and reduced abstraction requirement significantly, the intensity of some of the rain storms nearer the month end were not welcomed by farmers and growers hoping for an early grain harvest. July's wet weather continued into August making August the fourth successive month with above average rainfall. September was the fifth consecutive month with above average rainfall.

Drier than average conditions then prevailed throughout October and November 2017. The combined aggregate rainfall for the two months equating to just 57% of the LTA. The prolonged dry period delayed the start of the groundwater recharge season, which was reflected in the notably high soil moisture deficit figures returned at the end of November. Conversely, December proved to be wetter than average, returning 160% of the LTA. The majority of this rainfall was experienced at the end of the month with a significant rainfall event occurring on 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> December. Following this, rainfall for both January and February was slightly above average, returning 107% (48mm) and 106% (40mm) respectively. Much colder weather conditions have been experienced during March. The 'Beast from The East' being much publicised by the media. The cold easterly winds brought snow showers during the first half of the month, but produced very little in the way of rainfall.

#### **9.2 *Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD)* - following a reasonably 'mild and open' winter, April continued predominately dry throughout. May, in contrast to the majority of the previous ten months, was slightly wetter than average and, in response to the wet weather, the SMD returned to near normal values giving a month end value of 64mm. This average SMD**

trend continued throughout June and July, as heat waves mixed with localised heavy rain storms returned a month end value of 96mm. Above average rainfall in August saw the value decrease to 80mm mid-month, but rise again during more settled weather towards the month end. With above average rainfall the SMD value oscillated during September between 84mm and 93mm. Dry, mild weather prevailed throughout the final three months of 2017. This dry trend was mirrored by the SMD value, which peaked at the end of October at 133mm, being unseasonably high, and a value that would normally be anticipated in July. The Christmas holiday period brought with it heavy rainfall and SMD values fell so that by the end of December it had reached 41mm. This downward trend continued, as would be normally anticipated during the winter period, to the end of March. The lowest value during the first three months of 2018 was recorded mid-March at 11mm.

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

#### Summer 2017

Early summer season water levels, in both Bevills and St Germans ponds were maintained relatively comfortably at maximum retention levels, with both respective pumping stations set on automated pumping modes. A wet spell of weather during mid-May delayed the onset of the peak abstraction/irrigation season and helped conserve dwindling water supplies coming into the Commissioners' system via Stanground Lock from the EA controlled River Nene. Water levels continued to fall during mid-June, to a point where it was necessary to impose a voluntary closure of IDB inlets. Intake flows were restricted at Stanground Lock by the EA at this time, due to low water levels and low upstream flow rates within the EA Nene. This resulted in water levels falling rapidly in the MLC system to a point where on 21<sup>st</sup> June, it was necessary to impose a 4-night irrigation restriction. The restriction was in place for a week.

All restrictions were subsequently lifted following 40mm of rainfall on 28<sup>th</sup> June. A further spell of warm summer weather led to a second peak in abstraction demand during the first week of July. This peak coincided with a reluctance from Anglian Water to reduce its licenced off take from the EA Nene below its projected recharge curve, and hence further restrictions were imposed by the EA on intake flows at the Commissioners' Stanground Lock. As abstraction requirements dropped, the pressure point passed and the remaining weeks of the season were not problematic. The second peak only required closure of IDB inlets. No irrigation restrictions were required.

#### Winter 2017/18

Water levels have been held comfortably throughout the system during the reporting period. Pumps at St Germans have reacted and operated in automated control. No manual mode pumping has been required. Likewise, at Bevills Leam Pumping Station, other than telemetry issues, the station has reacted satisfactorily, as anticipated, in automated control mode, other than during the significant rainfall event on 27<sup>th</sup> December, when one of the three diesel powered pumps was called into operation. This required the mobilisation of on-call operatives to be present on site while the single diesel engine was required to run for a six hour period.

**9.4 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. An incident at Marmont Priory Lock involving the lock door penstocks being left open overnight, resulted in the water levels in Well Creek dropping significantly. The reason for the incident remains unknown, but highlighted a need to provide the means for securing the penstocks and lock doors during the hours of darkness, to prevent reoccurrence. Lockable shrouds have therefore now been fitted on the penstock actuator windlass spigots and will be left locked by the resident lock keeper/lock caretaker during the overnight period in future.

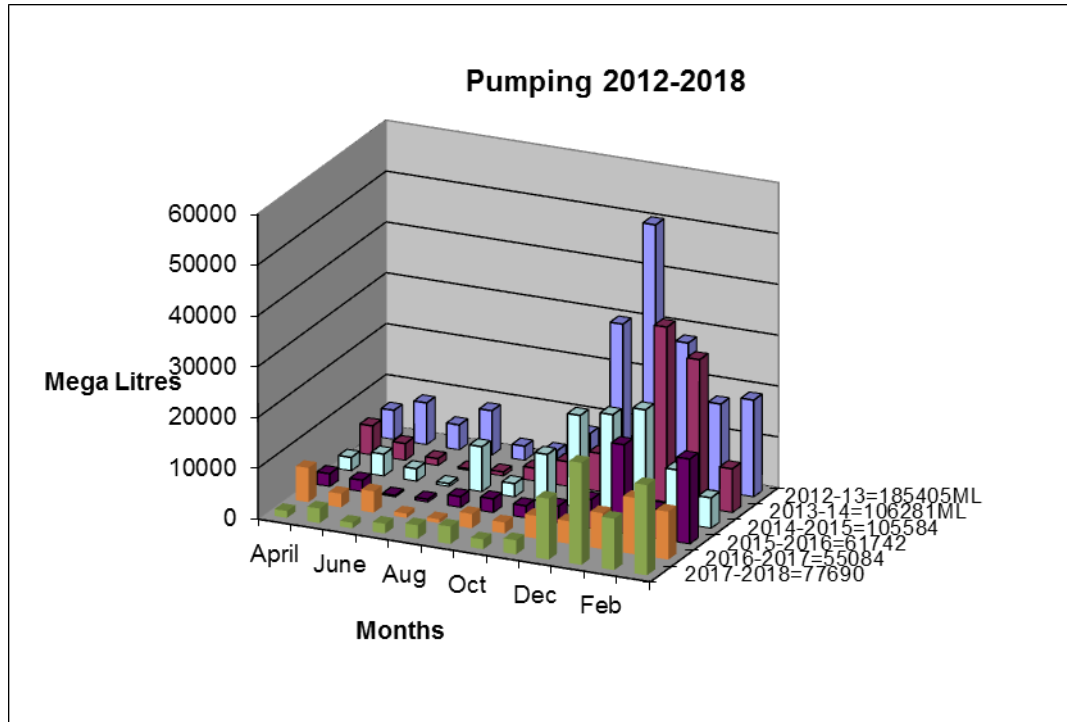
The EA advised the office that water may be transferred from the Old Bedford into Well Creek following two separate rainfall events during the winter period. Although the EA

provided the 'heads-up' in a timely manner, the levels in the Old Bedford did not rise sufficiently to overtop the overspill structure on site on either occasion.

**9.5 Pumping** – during the twelve month period, 77690 and 15478 megalitres of water were pumped at St Germans and Bevills Leam respectively (refer to Appendices 2 & 3).

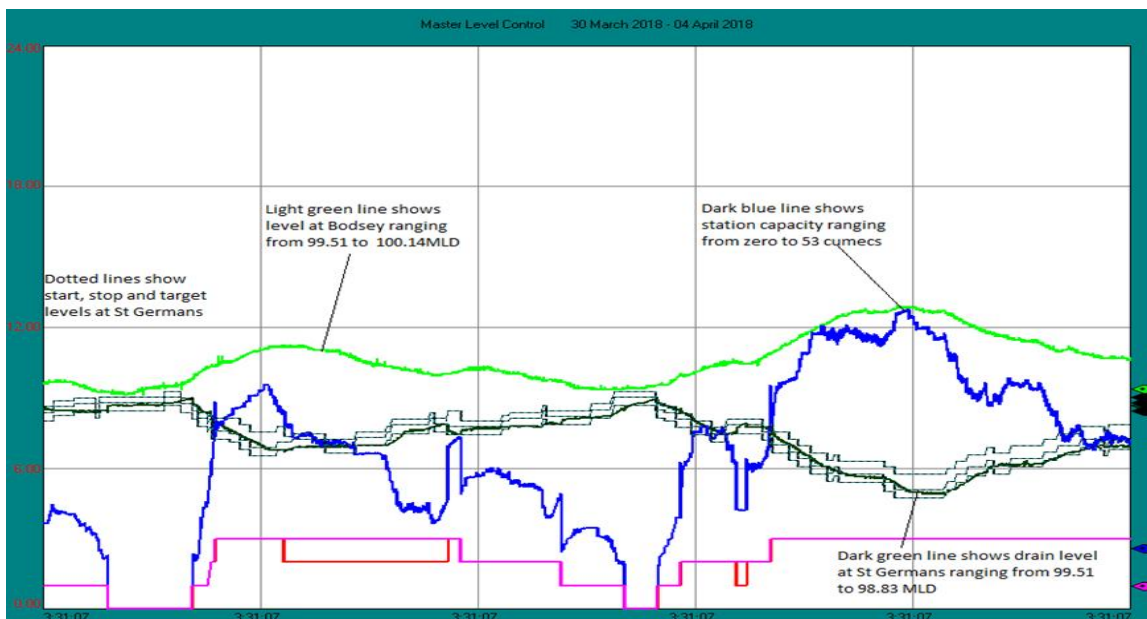
A number expressed in this way does not sit well with the human brain and a more interesting way would be to say

“The volume of water pumped is equal to all the water in the Serpentine 33 times over”



The period up to March 2018 was fairly uneventful with only one minor rainfall event in January however the Easter period (Good Friday to Eater Monday) saw significant rainfall resulting in some noteworthy pumping at St Germans to stabilise the system.

An extract from the historical logs at St Germans from the 30<sup>th</sup> March (Good Friday) to the 4<sup>th</sup> April clearly shows how the station reacts under heavy rainfall conditions, note how the level at Bodsey (light green line) mirrors the level at St Germans (dark green line).





## 10. Maintenance Work

**10.1 St Germans Pumping Station** - the coolant conversion to Evans Waterless, on engines 4 & 6, was completed as scheduled and the final three engines 2, 3 & 5 will be converted in April/May this year. The conversions have gone well so far and the cost for all six engines is expected to be under the original budget.

The elver pass was turned off at Christmas with no decision being made at that time on how to overcome the mussel infestation problem clogging the inlet pipe over the long term. On re-commissioning on 29<sup>th</sup> March flows seemed adequate, which may suggest some success using the measures previously taken to remove them. Hence the aim is now to monitor the situation and see how we go, as the alternatives left to the MLC to address this matter are expensive ones.

Following the removal of corrupt files and increasing the storage space for the historical files the two SCADA PCs have worked faultlessly over the period and whilst they are undoubtedly on borrowed time, at approaching ten years old, they are serving us well at the moment.

In May of last year the starter motor on engine No 5 failed after the solenoid burnt out. This may have been caused by the batteries being in a poor condition (now replaced). **Note:** these are the original batteries fitted to the engines in early 2010 and so are considered to have performed well to last over eight years. To prevent further failures the remaining engines will have their batteries replaced.

September saw an explosion of weed at St Germans resulting in the need for both of the large skips to be emptied. Up until that point the skips, which had been there for two years, had only been one third full.



It has been noticeable that the cost of waste disposal at the St Germans Pumping Station weedscreen cleaner has increased significantly. In an attempt to control these costs, various alternative methods of waste disposal have been considered. It seems the preferential option would be to replace the two 'hired in' skips by constructing receiving cells on site that would be emptied as required utilising the Commissioners' plant and workforce.

The vast majority of the waste produced at the site comprises green aquatic weed material. This would be removed from the receiving cells and deposited in a secluded area behind the main station, where it could be composted. The other debris, including white goods, tyres and gas bottles etc, would be transported back to the Commissioners' March depot, where it can be bulked up and stored prior to delivery into waste transfer facilities in the most cost- efficient manner.



In order to implement the waste management change, a budget estimate has been produced for the purchase of material and to construct the receiving cells. The estimated cost for this would be in the region of £6k plus construction costs. A quotation has also been obtained for the purchase of a 'silage grab' that can be fitted onto the Commissioners' tractor and fore-end loader to load and remove the waste material. The cost of the grab would be in the region of £1550.00

In late November an unusual but extreme failure occurred at the station. A relatively low-cost component (an uninterruptible power supply unit) failed in the auxiliary board, this device keeps the auxiliary PLC supported during power cuts or change over to generator. Without this device the auxiliary PLC cannot operate, this in itself should not be a problem as it does not affect the pumps or the master PLC. Unfortunately all the discharge level sensors are routed through this PLC and with no discharge head to calculate pump speed the whole station was rendered inoperable leaving only pumping in "hand" available. A spare unit had already been purchased for just this event and was fitted within hours and the station returned to full operation. Clearly this cannot be allowed to happen again so one of the discharge level sensors will be moved to the Master PLC and whilst the normal triple validation will not be available the station will continue to operate in the future with such a battery failure. Approximate cost of change is £2k-£3k.

St Germans relies heavily on lubricating oils needing over 6500 litres to operate, the recommendation from the manufacturers is to replace every year/1000hrs. This policy would have significant cost implications as well as environmental ones, therefore the policy has been to test the oils for quality and contamination on a regular basis. So far all oils have been certified as "good" and have not as yet been replaced.

## **10.2 *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.

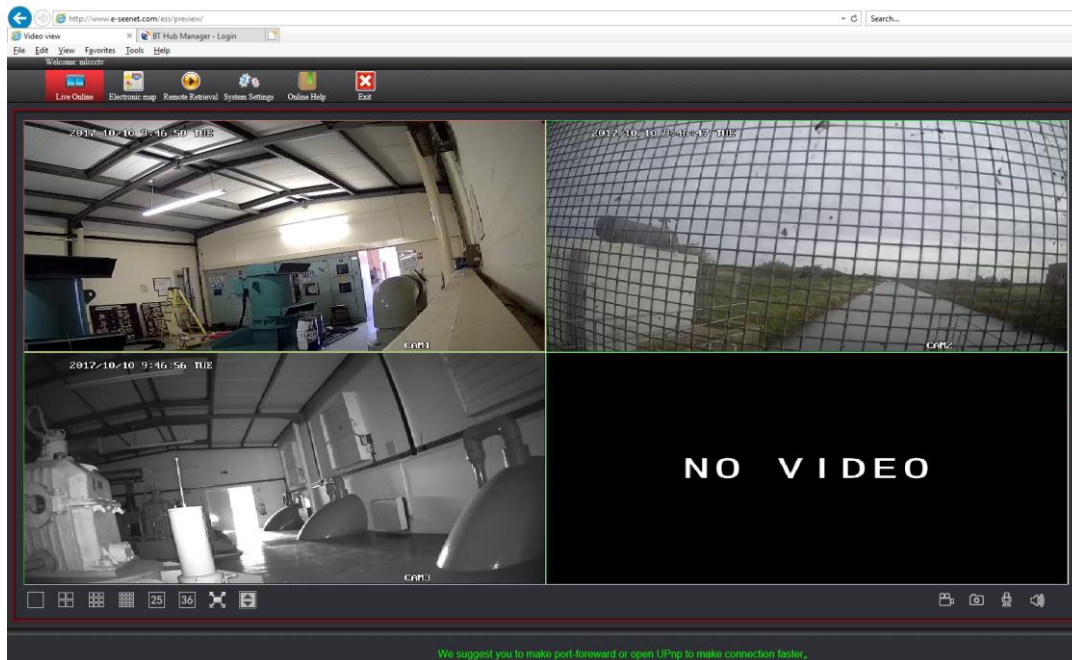
**Grass Cutting** - the grass mowing contract was undertaken by local contractors, Kew Grass Care, last season. Quotations have recently been received to undertake the mowing contract for the 2018 season from Id Verde and Kew Grasscare. With the quotes being almost identical in cost, Kew have again been awarded the contract for the 2018 season. The Commissioners will continue to undertake mowing of the steep side slopes and river banks at the site in-house using their long reach flail mowers, as and when required, to maintain the site in good condition.

**Tree Planting Scheme** - the trees on site continue to proliferate, having benefitted from a reasonable growing season last summer. An inspection of the tree planted areas is planned for the early autumn, and should determine if inter-mowing of these areas (and the steep tree planted north-west embankment at the rear of the station) is required this year to control injurious weed growth. Should the inter-mowing not be necessary, a considerable financial saving on this season's grass mowing contract would be anticipated.

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

## **10.4 *Bevills Leam Pumping Station***

**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. Over the period the No 5 pumpset starter motor failed and required replacement, these inertial type starters are obsolete therefore a spare to hold in stock has been obtained. CCTV cameras have been fitted around the pumping station which will record live images to a 2TB HDD and can be viewed via a PC or mobile phone app. See image below.



Two of the three electric pump main isolators were becoming very difficult to operate and being 35 years old they were obsolete. Their replacement, together with some minor control improvements, has been undertaken.

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, its replacement together with refurbishment of its supporting trolleys is planned for the summer.

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

#### **10.6 Navigation Structures**

**Salter's Lode Lock** – this lock has operated successfully and without particular issue over the period. The Environmental Officer has spoken with the lock keeper about lock operation at key times to allow eel and elver passage as per the requirements of the Eel Regulations.

**Stanground Lock** – during August 2017 the seals on one of the upstream penstock hydraulic rams failed and was removed and refurbished.

**Horseway Lock** – the Peterborough branch of IWA was approached and was keen to undertake decorating work to the metal door sweeps and associated iron works on the lock in order to retain the lock in a good visual condition at no cost to the Commissioners, other than providing paint and consumables for the voluntary work. The work was completed to a good standard. It is probable that further phases of work suitable for the IWA volunteers to undertake will be programmed for the future.



**Marmont Priory Lock** – as can be seen on the photograph (left), the March Town side lock gates appear to be deteriorating hence they will need further investigation/repair in the near future.

**10.7 Cardea Site SuDS** – all works commissioned by Persimmon Homes to bring the SuDS for this site back up to an adoptable standard were completed. With the assistance of the ADA Chief Executive (through the writing of a letter to Persimmon Homes CEO) it was possible to set up a meeting with them to discuss the potential for adoption of the key SuDS infrastructure. This meeting resulted in them making an offer to pass on ownership of a house to the MLC in lieu of a commuted sum. This was rejected as insufficient, since which time Persimmon Homes have made no further contact.

**10.8 EA Tidal Entrance, Salter's Lode Lock, Old Bedford Tidal Entrance and Denver Lock Desilting** – a request to undertake emergency silt clearing on the tidal entrance to Salter's Lode Lock was received from the EA in January. Siltation levels on the tidal side had built up significantly during the autumn and winter months to a point where locking was not possible on all but the highest tides. The works were undertaken by the Commissioners' contractor using a 15m long reach machine on a fully re-chargeable basis. A further request for more extensive silt clearance works was received for the Old Bedford inlet/outfall, Salter's Lode lock tidal outfall and along the tidal mooring at Denver Lock. The Commissioners accepted the three site contract, and agreed to undertake the works under their newly acquired PSCA agreement. A 22m extra-long reach machine was hired in to undertake the desilting operation.



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

**Rigid Hornwort** – was experienced in abundance again throughout the majority of the Commissioners' main watercourses last season. The Commissioners' weed clearing boats were deployed along the Forty Foot and Sixteen Foot rivers to intercept and clear the semi-buoyant weed before it reached the weedscreen at St Germans Pumping Station. Growths of the weed mass along the Main Drain from Aqueduct Bridge to St Germans Pumping Station were removed by operating the pumping station's weed screen grabs in a shallow draft mode during autumn pumping sessions. The colder winter water temperatures had a significant effect on the weed mass, and there is very little sign of it at the time of reporting.

**Duck Weed** – was much in evidence again last season. Its arrival during mid-July directly correlated to warm water temperatures at that time. During the early winter the majority of the weed mass in the larger channels was displaced by wave action and reactive pumping, although some growths of the floating mass remained lodged in the marginal vegetation.

**Azolla** – significant azolla growth within the Middle Level system has been apparent again this season. Although the visual impact seems to be initially concerning, combined autumn pumping and wave action seem to have dispersed the growth. It is yet to be seen if the colder spell of weather experienced during March will have been sufficiently cold to prevent the growths of azolla (that are currently present throughout the Commissioners' system) from proliferating again this year.

**Reed/Lily/Drain Bed Spraying** - the Commissioners continued to make best use of Roundup Pro Biactive herbicide, approved for use in aquatic situations for the control of emergent vegetation within rivers and watercourses. Channels treated last season include the Sixteen Foot, Forty Foot, Twenty Foot, Bevills Leam, Old River Nene and Whittlesey Dyke.

A favourable weather window during the late spring and summer months last year allowed for herbicide treatment of lilies and emergent aquatic weed to be made. Channels treated include the Sixteen Foot, Forty Foot, New Pophams Eau and Main Drain.

Marginal vegetation was spot treated with Roundup Pro Biactive herbicide to reduce the width of reed beds and other emergent vegetation along the margin corridors of the Sixteen Foot, Twenty Foot, Forty Foot, Old River Nene, Well Creek, Bevills Leam and Whittlesey Dyke where required.

Drain beds were treated with herbicide to control emergent aquatic vegetation along Catchwater Drain and Yards End Dyke during the summer months last year.

**Weed-cutting (boats)** – the Commissioners' five weed cutting and collecting boats worked their way around the system on a priority basis last season. The boats were divided into two working gangs consisting of a weed cutter attended by a lifting boat, predominantly used in smaller watercourses and a weed cutter attended by two lifting boats for larger, deeper watercourses. Later in the season the boats were deployed to cut back marginal aquatic vegetation. The works were completed in time for the Christmas break

**Flail Mowing** – following the Board's approval at its April meeting last year, an order for a spare Herder flail head was placed and delivered by Mastenbroek. The spare head is interchangeable with either of the Commissioners' Herder mowers, and should further reduce machine downtime when damage is sustained to flail heads in the future.

The Commissioners' programmed conservation cut commenced in mid-March last year and was complete by early April. The Health & Safety cut followed and was completed in early June. A decision was taken not to undertake a second Health & Safety round last year, as vegetation growth slowed during the warm weather. The Main cut commenced in mid-July. Work progressed satisfactory given the dense vegetation growth on banksides. With prior consultation and agreement with the Commissioners' Environmental Officer, the first round



Conservation cut for 2018 has been delayed by approximately one month, due to a lack of spring grass growth attributed to the cold wet weather conditions experienced during most of March.

Unfortunately breakdowns were experienced with the 2017 Herder machine last year. Initially there was an electronic relay fault with the Prolec Height Restrictor that intermittently cut out and later on a fault with the Herder mower electronic circuitry proved difficult to find, but this was eventually rectified with the installation of a replacement controller pad.

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

**Forty Foot River Horseway Arm** – clearance of diseased and decayed trees has been undertaken along lower berm of south bank.

**Great Raveley Drain** – a wind-blown tree has been cleared from the watercourse adjacent to Natural England's Woodwalton Nature Reserve.



**Kings Dyke Briggate East** – a wind-blown tree was removed from the watercourse (see photograph left) and two dead thorn trees removed from the bankside adjacent to Manor Leisure Centre field.

**Main Drain Neep's Bridge** – willow trees were pollarded on the Commissioners' owned land.

**Old River Nene** –

- *March Town Centre* – contracted tree cutting and removal work has been carried out on behalf of Fenland District Council (FDC) to clear dangerously overhanging trees from the watercourse adjacent to the George Campbell Leisure Centre, on a fully re-chargeable basis. In addition, canopy trimming works to clear low/overhanging branches from the water channel between March Bypass Bridge and March Railway Bridge were completed.
- Trimming works to low branches of weeping willow trees situated at Marylebone Bridge, restricting clear passage for boats navigating along the river, was undertaken.

- *Ramsey St Mary's* – clearance of self-sown bushes and pollarded trees at Old Decoy Farm and Speed the Plough junction were carried out in advance of maintenance dredging works.

**Sixteen Foot River Day's Bridge** – the willow tree canopy was cut back to allow bank access for the Commissioners' plant and machinery.

**Well Creek** – trees along Nordelph bank were re-pollarded and canopy trimming works to willow trees for safe navigation reasons were undertaken.

**Pigwater Drain** – an overgrown willow tree was cleared from the bank of the Pigwater Drain

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

**Catchwater Drain** – last year's phased programmed machine cleansing works were undertaken after harvest and commenced at Straight Drove Bridge, Connington and completed at Manor Farm Bridge. The cleansing work was undertaken using a contractor's 18m long reach machine.

**Pigwater Drain** – once again, during the summer months, significant algal and submerged weed growth occurred in the Pigwater channel and required removal by a contractor's machine on two separate occasions.

**Great Raveley Drain (Finlay's Bridge – South Drain Junction)** – stands of emergent aquatic vegetation were removed from the channel following harvest in 2017. The dredged material and plant matter was left on the adjacent bank sides to dry and decompose.

**Monks Lode (Catchwater Terminus – Connington Fen Bridge)** – emergent, abundant submerged vegetation was removed from the channel during August. The works were necessary to facilitate the conveyance of water during the winter months.

**Old River Nene, Ramsey St Mary's (Lodes End Lock to Nightingales Corner Junction)** – material that was dredged from the working site in winter 2017 was left to dry on adjacent embankments over the summer months. Once dry enough to be handled a contractor's machine was employed to 'open up' the silt to allow uniformed drying of the lower layers of silt. Subsequently, where banks had previously been surveyed and shown to be low, the material was utilised to raise and strengthen these lengths. Where the material was not required for bank raising it was spread thinly on adjacent fields. The newly raised lengths of bank have been grass seeded, completing this phase of the work.

**Old River Nene, Greenvale Factory (Floods Ferry – Copalder Corner)** – following on from the first phase of bank raising and strengthening works undertaken along the rear of the Greenvale factory at Floods Ferry in autumn 2016, a second phase was undertaken last August. Approximately 1150m of bank were raised in the second phase, giving a combined total of 1620m over the two years. A third phase is proposed this year, subject to the Commissioners' approval and the continuing availability of free bank raising material from the Greenvale factory site.



**Phase IV Well Creek Dredging (British Legion Footbridge, Upwell – Isle Bridge, Outwell)** – plans were finalised to undertake the fourth phase of channel clearing and de-silting works from the British Legion Footbridge to Isle Bridge, Outwell, in January 2018. Approval was sought and granted from Norfolk County Highways for a contractor's long reach excavator to work along the A1101 under traffic light control, as adjacent bank access from Lowside, Outwell was only partially available due to trees and residential garden areas adjoining the river.

The dredged material was transported to the Commissioners' receiving site at Salter's Lode, using five tractor/trailer units, three units provided by the contractor, and two by the Commissioners.



**Phase V Well Creek Dredging (Proposed)** – following successful completion of the previous four phases, it is proposed to continue dredging works along the Well Creek in early January 2019.

The proposed reaches would be:

- i) Thurlands Drove Junction to Priory Corner (approximately 215m).
- ii) Newbridge, Upwell downstream to an extent of approximately 150m).
- iii) Isle Bridge, Outwell to Outwell boat basin (approximately 110m).

**The Board's instructions on whether or not it wishes to proceed with these works is requested**

**Old River Nene, (Herbert's Bridge – Speed the Plough Junction)** - following on from previous machine cleansing phases, works commenced in mid-December last year to undertake maintenance dredging works along the aforementioned reach. A contractor's 18m long reach machine was employed to dredge the Old River Nene along this length. It was necessary to dredge from both side banks as the width of the channel was too wide to be reached from one side only. The resultant silt and sediment has been left along the bank top to dry out sufficiently to be re-handled and used to level and strengthen the existing embankments of the channel.



**Old Pophams Eau, (Main Drain Junction – Nordelph Pumping Station)** - an autumn site inspection of Old Pophams Eau indicated the necessity to undertake cott cleansing works to remove the weed mass from the statutory navigation. A contractor's 18m long reach machine was employed to remove the weed mass from the watercourse in January this year. The weed has been left to dry and decompose along the southern bank.

**Budget Estimate - Proposed Future Dredging Works, Old River Nene, (March Town Centre) Royal Smals Dredging UK Ltd** - following an invitation to visit two sites last summer where Cutter Dredging works were being undertaken, at South Forty Foot Drain in Lincolnshire, and the Brightlingsea Harbour in Essex, a budget quotation has been procured from Royal Smals to give the Commissioners some indication of the costs involved with dredging the Old River Nene through March Town Centre. Please see Appendix 12 showing the budget estimate in detail.

It is considered that the Cutter Dredger method of removing siltation through the Old River Nene, is the most practical and cost-efficient method, as bank side machine access along the entire length of watercourse in March is negligible.

It is important to recognise that there would be considerable additional costs to factor into such a project, including securing the use of land at either end of the dredging length to form temporary lagoons/receiving areas, and associated costs with clearing larger items of debris from the watercourse in advance of the dredger's progress.

## **10.12 Bank Slips and Seepage**

**Ramsey High Lode** - bank slip repair works were undertaken last year to reinstate a length of bank subsidence at the rear of a fire damaged industrial unit on Stocking Fen Industrial Estate. The work required a contractor's machine to install timber toe piles, dredge slipped bank material from the watercourse and re-instate the side slope to match the original bank profile.

**Yaxley Lode (North-East Bank)** - a contractor's machine was deployed to arrest bank seepage by clay puddling approximately 30m of the raised embankment of Yaxley Lode, upstream of the East Coast main line. Sixty tonnes of blue puddling clay was transported to site and placed in a puddle trench through the centre of the bank. At the time of reporting, the bank remains sealed

**Black Ham** – bank seepage was evident along the north east bank of Black Ham, immediately upstream of Lord's Pumping Station. The site had shown evidence of suspected seepage for several years and, due to its ability to self-seal periodically, no



earlier intervention was required. It was considered that due to the extremely deep black peat seams on site the best, and most cost-efficient, option was to excavate a soak dyke to provide a permanent solution.



## 11. Telemetry

The existing Telemetry Master Station which was in excess of 10 years old and running on the Windows XP operating system, which is no longer supported, has been replaced with an up to date unit running Windows 10.

As previously reported the planned replacement of the older telemetry outstations is being put in hand as these units fail. These stations are considered beyond end of life and can no longer be repaired or relied upon over the short or medium term.

It is proposed to install a cloud-based system called WebWAX as a backup for critical sites which will provide a redundancy measure in that all sites will send data through to the WebWAX server as well as to the Master Station. This would ensure that in the event of Master Station failure the critical sites will still be transmitting data which will be viewable on a web browser. Following further discussions and clarification with Oriel Systems it became evident that the existing Webwax software would not fulfil our requirements and a bespoke form of the software would need to be developed, at a significantly higher cost, we are therefore discussing and considering this matter further.

The critical sites that were identified are as follows:

- Abbey Farm
- Bevills Leam
- Control Sluice
- Ransonmoor
- St Germans
- Burrowmoor
- Wild Goose Leys Rain Gauge
- Holme Rain Gauge

The Aqueduct and Holme rain gauge telemetry outstations failed during the summer. The Aqueduct unit, which controls the Well Creek top up pump, was replaced with a GPRS Oriel RTU which provides live data and this site has also now been fitted with a rain gauge. The Holme outstation, which is some 25 years old, was fitted with a used motherboard and is currently operating satisfactorily.

An ultrasonic river level sensor and a rain gauge have been fitted to the new telemetry outstation at Burrowmoor Pumping Station, which is situated some 200m from our offices, and being GPRS will provide us with live data. Following its commissioning the Creek Cottage outstation was deemed to no longer be required and has been decommissioned and its redundant GRP enclosure transferred to the depot to house the wash bay pressure washer.

## **12. Property**

- 12.1 *Depot*** – the automated entrance gate has been exhibiting intermittent faults and may require a motor unit and control equipment overhaul.

The gas heating boiler unit failed and has been replaced.

CCTV cameras have been fitted to the building which record live images to a 2TB HDD and can be viewed via a PC or mobile phone app.

At the present time, all mowing machinery is stored out-doors all year round, as we have no suitable dry winter storage space. This has led to some of the sophisticated hydraulic and electronic components suffering from water and moisture ingress leading to downtime and additional expenditure. The current open bay building on-site does not give adequate protection to machinery, due to its eave height, nor does it provide adequate floor space in which to store the most vulnerable machinery and keep it dry over the winter period. It can, however, continue to be utilised to store other pieces of plant and equipment that are less prone to winter weather conditions. A quotation has been obtained in the sum of £20K (see Appendix 9) for the supply and erection of an agricultural type building that would 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 does not allow for excavation of foundation holes or fitment of the holding down bolts in the foundations. Vertical timber hit and miss cladding, as installed on the St Germans log store, would also be fitted by the Commissioners' workforce to prevent ingress of driving rain from the rear and side elevations. A budget cost for this extra work would be in the region of £8k.

As per the Board's instructions at the November 2017 meeting a planning application was submitted to FDC for the erection of an agricultural type building, and the cladding of the Commissioners' existing open bay building on site (to cover future plans). Full planning permission has been granted without conditions.

### **The Board's further instructions are required in relation to progressing this scheme.**

- 12.2 *Offices*** – it was agreed that subject to Executive Committee approval the 2017/18 budget would include for expenditure on a backup generation unit that can be used to power emergency lighting, phones and key computers during a power failure. Quotes were obtained and the Executive Committee duly sanctioned the placing of an order with Rands.

Following Executive approval, an order was placed with Rands and the installation of the generator was successfully carried out in December 2017 with commissioning following during January 2018.

***New fencing*** - during the period a fence has been erected along the office side base of the River Nene Old Course raised embankment. This was to address the increasing

trespassing problem, with members of the public using not only the public footpath but also the Middle Level office surrounds for amenity. There have also been a number of cases of the bank top being used for vehicular access, which has been linked with several cases of attempted theft.

- 12.3 *Electrical Testing*** - Portable Appliance Testing was carried out at the Depot, Office, St Germans, Bevills Leam and Control Sluice sites during September 2017.
- 12.4 *6 Deerfield Road, March*** – the sale of this property completed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- 12.5 *10 Deerfield Road, March*** – this property was occupied by a retired MLC employee who was allowed to live in the building rent free until his demise. He however chose during the period to move permanently out of the property to live with his siblings. In accordance with the Commissioners' general policy to dispose of property which they no longer require for logistical or operational reasons, this house is being sold through advertisement, using local estate agents. There were a few issues relating to the property which needed to be dealt with first; these related to the garage, which is not attached to the property, and the property rear access which needed to be formalised. At the time of report no offers have been received and it may be necessary to lower the asking price to attract interest.
- 12.6 *Salter's Lode Lock House*** - approximately £800 has been spent on further modifications to the wood fired heating system.

### **13. Plant & Vehicles**

- 13.1 *General*** – on the whole the plant and vehicles (with the exception of the 2017 tractor/flail) operated to an acceptable standard during the period although the 7 tonne Iveco required a replacement ABS unit.
- 13.2 *Vehicles*** – orders were placed through Anglia Farmers for two new 4x4 pickup trucks; one was delivered during September the other, for use by the Operations Engineer, was delivered in November.
- 13.3 *Mowers*** – faults have been experienced with the 2017 Herder machine as recorded earlier in this report. Whilst both faults were covered under the manufacturer's warranty downtime has been experienced on both occasions.

The 2010 Massey/Herder-Grenadier unit and the self-propelled Spearhead Energreen SPV3 machine have proven to be more reliable this season, with only occasional issues with electronic/hydraulic circuitry caused by water ingress.

- 13.4 *Weed Boats*** – all boats have generally operated satisfactorily with only the usual maintenance requirements and repairs to the cutting heads being necessary. In accordance with the plant replacement strategy the 2003 weedboat was originally due for replacement and it was planned to place and order for a new Hemos boat in this financial year. However a new Conver boat at the Mastenbroeuk works in Boston MLC has recently been inspected which may be an alternative option. It is therefore proposed to wait until these new units have been delivered to their client and then to see a working demonstration of them before making a final decision.
- 13.5 *Dump Trailers*** – the Commissioners' 11 tonne Marshall general purpose tipping trailer, purchased in 2007, was traded-in against a 14 tonne Marshall 'shop soiled' dump trailer. An order for a second larger 16 tonne Marshall dump trailer was placed with Ernest Doe, Littleport and delivered in time to be used for Phase IV of the Well Creek Dredging scheme in early January this year.

The combined total cost of both dump trailers, including the trade-in allowance for the old trailer, came in below budget.

**13.6 Replacement Tractor (New Holland 50/60)** – following the Commissioners’ approval of the current plant replacement strategy at their meeting in April 2017, quotations have been sought for a replacement for the New Holland T50/60 tractor which is now 10 years old. Various tractors have been appraised in order to undertake a benchmarking exercise of the models available. In general, the exercise indicates that although the retail price of many tractor manufacturers has risen sharply in the last 18 months, this has been more than offset by the buoyant second-hand tractor market as reflected in the dealer’s trade-in value for the Commissioners’ New Holland T50/60 tractor. Please see Appendix 13 showing detail of the New Holland 50/60 tractor replacement strategy.

**14. Asset Records**

The Commissioners plan closure of historic non-operational penetrations through their maintained banks which, in some cases, are in poor condition. Where one or more of these identified structures is owned by an IDB they are being contacted and asked to discuss the best course of action. An annual sum for dealing with these penetrations is included within the estimates. However, to date, action by IDBs has been limited. It is therefore proposed that the MLC offer to contribute towards such works as, irrespective of the historical reasons for such penetrations to exist, there is seen to be mutual benefits to dealing with them.

**The Board’s instruction in relation to the proposal to offer contribution is requested.**

**15. Improvements and Surveys**

**15.1 St Germans Pumping Station** – it was previously reported that the District Valuer had contacted the Chief Executive and proposed that the last land compensation claim be closed as there had been no recent correspondence. As can often be the way with such matters a request to settle from the landowner’s agent came out of the blue shortly after the April meeting. It appeared that the landowner/occupier wished to effect a quick settlement and had decided to accept the DV’s assessment of losses. This matter is in hand and will shortly be closed following payment of the now agreed sum. Some promised fencing works demarking the occupier’s land have also been undertaken to replace that lost during the pumping station scheme works.

**15.2 River Works** – the extent of bank raising works is described elsewhere in this report.

**15.3 Bevills Leam Pumping Station** – the priorities for this station remain:

1. The 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. Review the lack of smoke/heat detection and fire alarm equipment.
4. Permanently stop the rain ingress through the station roof.
5. Facilitate the passage of eels through or past the station.

**15.4 Embankment Raising Works** – to underpin the business case for a bank raising scheme it was necessary to commission a refresh of the Middle Level Strategy. This work is complete and the consultant’s fees came just inside the estimated cost of £50K, 50% of which has been recovered through GiA. The next step is to develop the business case itself. The EA has advised that this can be done by their Pipeline Delivery Unit (PDU) who work closely with national scheme approvals personnel. The purpose of the new PDU is to accelerate key schemes to facilitate early project delivery. The PDU is currently working on an estimate which it is hoped will be available for consideration at the Board meeting.

**The Board's approval is sought to progress with business case development through the commissioning of the PDU to deliver it.**

**15.5 *Woodwalton Fen Access Bridge*** - a contribution of £5K has been paid towards the cost of increasing the bankside height of the new bridge installed at this site. This ensures that when the bank raising scheme is implemented this bridge will be at the correct level.

**15.6 *Bevills Leam Survey (Bevills Leam Pumping Station - Chapel Bridge)*** – a channel bed survey was undertaken in-house last spring. The survey covered a 5km length immediately downstream of Bevills Leam Pumping Station with both hard and soft bed levels recorded. The survey results indicate the reach does have build-up of sediment and siltation along the channel bed, as would normally be expected given the number of years since dredging last took place, and suggests the reach would benefit from future programmed dredging to help alleviate the excessively high water levels that are commonly experienced downstream of the station when more than 50% of the station's total pumping capacity is called to run. Any dredging would need to be carried out with care as gravel seams exist and if the skin of the channel bed were to be breached then significant leakage onto low lying adjacent land would be expected.

**16. Environment Agency (EA) Studies/Works/Plans**

**16.1. *Ouse Washes Reservoir Works*** – this is covered in item 2.12.

**16.2 *Cranbrook Drain/Counter Drain (Welches Dam Pumping Station) Strategy Study*** – there is nothing further to report at this time.

**16.3 *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

## 17. Planning

- 17.1 *Planning Applications*** – the aim over the period has been to start the process of facilitating closer working between the MLC and the planning authorities, with meetings held and further ones planned. On consenting, to provide increased clarity, one significant change has been the tightening of the process which is helping all parties better understand what is required by introducing minimum standards for submissions which are otherwise objected to. This avoids the problems previously experienced with outstanding consent submissions, where for example extra details were being awaited, hence leaving those applications undetermined but open with consent application payments attached to them. A seminar/workshop for developers and agents was organised and the response was positive with all allotted 25 places being taken. The event commenced with an outline of who the MLC are, how they fit with the IDBs and what their interests are. This was followed by descriptions of what our requirements are and why they are needed. After a coffee break there was a workshop which allowed us to take those attending through a set of examples.
- 17.2 *Riverside Enhancements Ramsey Basin*** – the planned works for installation of a 180m length of piling along the southern end of High Lode to create new moorings on the eastern bank remains outstanding with no date of commencement fixed.
- 17.3 *Cambridgeshire County Council/MLC Pilot*** – this is covered earlier in the report.

## 18. Recreation

- 18.1 *Navigation*** – the Board was advised at its last meeting that officers were working with FDC to find the most appropriate and fair way of persuading the owner of a narrow boat, which had been moored on a public mooring in March Town for many months, to move on. The Board's solicitor served notice on the boater with the hope that this would prompt action which with the input of FDC seemed to finally pay off. However since this time another boat has now set up camp on MLC land nearby and again a notice has had to be served on the vessel. A progress update will be given at the meeting.
- 18.2 *Anglian Waterways Group*** – the Chief Executive has attended two meetings of this group over the period.
- 18.3 *Passing of EA Navigation Assets to CRT*** – Thérèse Coffey Minister for the Environment reported to Parliament that no navigation assets would be transferred at this time from the EA to the CRT. She has however left the door open for assets to be transferred at a later date and it is believed that the major barrier to transfer was funding related.
- 18.4 *Well Creek Trust Moorings at Salter's Lode*** – a joint inspection with the Chief Engineer and Operations Engineer was held with representatives from the Well Creek Trust at Salter's Lode mooring last autumn.

Following the Board's last meeting, the Trust was advised that the Commissioners were not minded, at the present time, to allocate expenditure to replace the mooring, albeit that the Commissioners realise the importance of the structure at the site and should the Middle Level Bill be passed then this decision would be reviewed.

Subsequently the Chief Engineer and Operations Engineer accepted an invitation in early February to attend the Well Creek Trusts AGM, at which the Chief Engineer restated the Commissioners' position.

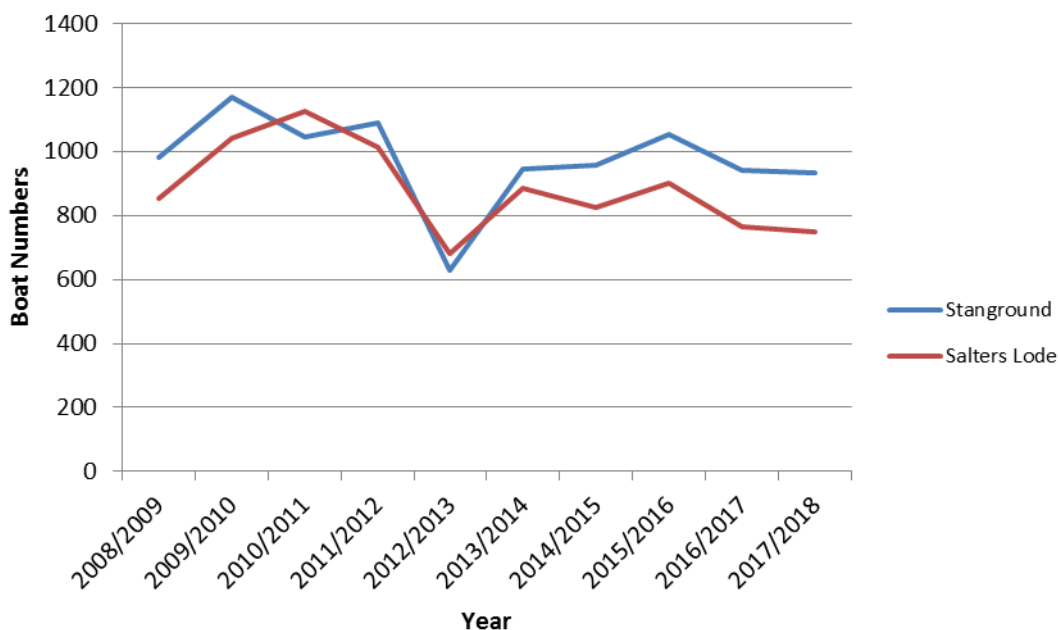
- 18.5 *Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Volunteering*** - a joint site meeting was held to plan for a third season of voluntary bush and tree cutting works in collaboration with the Peterborough branch of the IWA last autumn. The meeting identified the scope of the bush cutting works along the north bank of the Horseway Arm of the Forty Foot River for the coming winter months. It was also proposed at the meeting that the IWA volunteers may be

able to assist the Commissioners with some decorating work at Horseway Lock, including repainting of the lock door sweeps and associated ironwork. Further correspondence indicated that the IWA would be pleased to undertake decorating works at the lock, with the Commissioners supplying consumable such as paint and cleaning-up requisites, pending approval from the Commissioners' Environmental Officer with regards to timing. Both the lock decoration and bush cutting works were undertaken during the winter months. All the work that was completed last season was to a good standard, reinforcing that through close partnership working, it is possible for volunteering to achieve positive and financially beneficial outcomes for both the IWA and MLC organisations.

**18.6 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 – 2017/2018				
Month	Salter's Lode Lock		Stanground Lock	
April	36 (26)	32 (32)	29 (39)	46 (44)
May	34 (46)	53 (44)	65 (42)	73 (63)
June	62 (50)	54 (61)	72 (70)	77 (57)
July	86 (77)	92 (85)	90 (84)	93 (82)
August	89 (86)	69 (70)	95 (94)	102 (113)
September	48 (66)	40 (65)	60 (81)	43 (50)
October	12 (13)	18 (19)	33 (41)	26 (24)
November	4 (2)	8 (6)	6 (6)	4 (4)
December	0 (1)	0 (2)	4 (2)	1 (3)
January	0 (2)	2 (2)	3 (4)	0 (3)
February	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (1)	2 (1)
March	8 (14)	0 (8)	1 (14)	10 (20)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>379 (383)</b>	<b>369 (395)</b>	<b>458 (478)</b>	<b>477 (464)</b>

**Boat Passages through locks**



**18.7 Angling**

**National Fishing Matches** – the 2017 National Pike Angling Championship was held on the Middle Level Commissioners' waters on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November, and hosted by Whittlesey Angling Association. Two hundred anglers competed on the day, landing a total



of 51 fish. The largest single specimen weighed in at 25lbs 8oz, which was also the winning match weight.

**Club Reports** – no club or match reports have been received during the reporting period. A fish survey which was undertaken last year by the EA, indicates that a generally good healthy stock of most common species of course fish are present throughout the Commissioners' system.

**18.8 Middle Level Waterways Users Committee** - the Committee met on the 21<sup>st</sup> April and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and is due to meet again on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

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

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

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

**19.3 Conservation Committee** - the Committee met on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017 and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**19.4 Woodwalton Fen Alternative Storage** – during the period discussions were held with the AgReserves farm manager on the possible use of land to the south and west of Woodwalton Fen for alternative flood storage to that currently provided within Woodwalton Fen. In addition the EA Project Delivery Unit (PDU) was asked to look at developing the business case for a scheme. The PDU has suggested that there would first need to be a discreet piece of work carried out to identify the information gaps which would need to be filled to underpin such a business case. It was hoped that the £10K cost of this first piece of work could be covered by GiA. However sign-off for this funding by the EA local team is being held up pending the outcome of discussions on whether or not Woodwalton should be classified as a reservoir, as referred to elsewhere in this report.

**19.5 Great Fen General** – steering committee meetings have recently moved to being quarterly and the Chief Executive chairs the Hydrology Working Group. The current key aim of the Hydrology Group is to seek to ensure that water resources and flood risk are built into the design of all Great Fen schemes.

**19.6 Eel Studies** – the Chief Engineer continues to sit on the EA/IDB Liaison Group on behalf of ADA which was tasked with looking into the matter of eels and IDB pumping stations that have been identified as priority sites. The impact of these regulations has been quite significant for a number of boards now, delaying capital schemes and increasing their cost and as mentioned elsewhere this matter has been raised at a national level. It should be noted however that IDBs are sympathetic to the plight of the eel and have nationally collectively committed in excess of £20K towards a research project to investigate eel behaviour and provide guidance on asset design which it is hoped will ensure future investment is more focussed on solutions which can be shown to deliver the necessary outcomes.

## **20. Internal Drainage Board Works**

### **20.1 Weed Control & Channel Maintenance**

**Inspections/advice/assistance** – recommendations on weed control were made to 13 Internal Districts.

Middle Level operatives also undertook herbicide applications on a contract basis during 2017, as weather conditions allowed, on 14 Internal Districts, including one private district.



**Maintenance Dredging and Associated Channel Works** – work was organised and co-ordinated in 13 Board's areas.

## 20.2 **Pumping Station Maintenance**

**Service Visits** – the Commissioners' engineers made 300 visits to IDB pumping installations to carry out routine inspections/maintenance and/or rectify breakdowns.

**Other Maintenance Works** – carried out, or in progress, at pumping stations:

Various IDB's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Automatic weedscreen cleaner repairs.</li></ul>
Binnimoor Pumping Station (March East IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pump replacement and telemetry installation – installation postponed due to poor access conditions.</li></ul>
Burrowmoor Pumping Station (March Third DDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Telemetry system – complete.</li></ul>
Cock Fen Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Automatic weedscreen cleaner. Manufacture almost complete. Installation to be carried out when access conditions improve.</li></ul>
Copalder Pumping Station (Benwick IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replacement of discharge isolation valve and flap valve – complete.</li></ul>
New Fen Pumping Station (Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surge chamber subsidence being monitored. Boreholes and trial holes recently carried out.</li></ul>
Nordelph Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resolution of metering issues with SSE/UKPN – issue now re-occurred – ongoing.</li></ul>
Over Pumping Station (Over & Willingham IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Automatic weedscreen cleaner equipment and security fencing modifications - complete.</li></ul>
Upwell Fen Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Automatic weedscreen cleaner/pump control equipment replacement - manufacture almost complete. Installation to be carried out when access conditions improve.</li></ul>
Westmoor Pumping Station (Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Site fencing – complete.</li></ul>
White Fen Pumping Station (March West & White Fen IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replacement automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment – complete.</li></ul>
Bensons Pumping Station (Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replacement pump order placed. Installation postponed due to poor access conditions.</li></ul>
Mill Fen Pumping Station (East Of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refurbishment of subsidence damage to delivery pipework - complete.</li></ul>
Rings End Pumping Station (Waldersey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weedscreen cleaner overhaul.</li></ul>

Conington Pumping Station  
(Conington & Holme IDB)

- Replacement weedscreen - complete.

Daintree Pumping Station  
(Ramsey Fourth IDB)

- Pump removed for repair – complete.

Broadalls Pumping Station  
(Benwick IDB)

- Pump overhaul - complete.

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

### 20.3 **Improvement Works**

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

Catchment Improvement Works at A47  
(Hundred of Wisbech IDB)

- 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.

Inlet Structures – modifications to inlet structures and access platforms.  
(Hundred Foot Washes IDB)

- Further phases are expected.

Green Dyke Pumping Station replacement  
(Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley IDB)

- Business case development instructed but EA has advised that scheme cannot be accelerated in GiA terms so further work is currently on hold.

Stow Bardolph Pumping Station  
(Downham & Stow Bardolph IDB)

- Business case development for a replacement pumping station completed and grant approval received. Design work restarted now eel regulations issues resolved. Target is for construction to commence this summer.

Stocking Fen Pumping Station Automated Weed Screen  
(Ramsey IDB)

- Business case for an automated weed screen drafted and EA comments being dealt with.

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

Benwick IDB

- Herbicide application to Board's drains.
- Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.
- Assist contractor with providing dam at Copalder Pumping Station.

Churchfield & Plawfield IDB

- Assist contractor with bank revetment works.

Conington & Holme IDB

- Supply and install Health & Safety signage at Pumping Station.

Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB

- Herbicide application to Board's Drains.
- Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.
- Assist contractor with bank piling works.

Euximoor IDB

- Herbicide application to Board's Drains.

Hobbs Lot (Private District)

- Herbicide application to district drain.

March East IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flail mowing Pump Drain.</li> <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> <li>• Supply and install Health &amp; Safety signage at Pumping Station.</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> <li>• Install steps at gravity outfall.</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> <li>• Supply and fitment of access gates at Gaul Road.</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 bank piling works.</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>• Repair to Board's water control structure.</li> </ul>
Nightlayers 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> <li>• Assist contractor to install piled revetment works.</li> <li>• Supply and install Health &amp; Safety signage at Pumping Station</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> <li>• Assist contractor with piling and culvert clearance works.</li> </ul>
Ramsey, Upwood & Great Raveley IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply and install Health &amp; Safety signage at Pumping Station.</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>
Sawtry IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flail mowing Board's drains.</li> </ul>

Swavesey IDB

- Herbicide application to Board's drains.
- Arrange, oversee and assist contractor with bank revetment works.
- Undertake culvert repair works.

Waldersey IDB

- Herbicide application to Board's drains.
- Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.
- Assist contractor with culvert clearance works.
- Supply and install Health & Safety signage at Pumping Station

## 21. **Engineering Fees**

**21.1 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.

## 22. **ADA**

**22.1 Meetings** - the Chief Engineer (secretariat) and Environmental Officer continue 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 most recently the EA/IDB Eel Liaison Group.

**22.2 The Annual ADA Conference** – in 2017 was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> November at One Great Georges Street, Westminster. This year the Chief Executive attended the ADA 'Think Tank' held the evening before the conference. Speakers at the conference included Thérèse Coffey MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment & Rural Life Opportunities, Defra, Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive, EA, and Councillor Derek Antrobus, Lead Member for Planning & Sustainable Development, Salford City Council

**22.3 GIS Work** – ADA commissioned the MLC to assist in the creation of a complete digital dataset of all IDB boundaries throughout the country. This has included the requirement to digitise approximately sixteen boundaries for Boards who still only possess a paper record. This will allow ADA to steer all future enquires to the correct IDB and to share accurate information on IDBs with other Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs).

**22.4 NFU** – the Chief Engineer represents ADA on the NFU Water For Food Group and has attended several meetings over the period.

**22.5 Great Ouse ADA Branch** – with the sad passing of Anthony Morbey (the previous branch chair) it was felt that it may be time to review the arrangements for administering the branch. Following this review the MLC have now taken over the role from the Ely Group with the Board's Chief Executive acting as secretariat. It is hoped that it will be possible to get the branch to be more active and with this in mind and in addition to the usual annual conference the branch's Executive Committee will now meet two or three times a year to discuss issues pertinent to the catchment and the RMAs that operate within it.

## 23. **EA Sanctioned Project List**

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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ▪ Great Fen                             | Water Level Management Restoration Scheme |
| ▪ MLC                                   | Bank Raising and Strategy Review          |
| ▪ MLC                                   | Woodwalton Flood Storage                  |
| ▪ Downham and Stow<br>Bardolph IDB      | Stow Bardolph Pumping Station Replacement |
| ▪ Hundred of Wisbech IDB                | A47 downstream channel improvements       |
| ▪ Ramsey, Upwood<br>& Great Raveley IDB | Green Dyke Pumping Station Replacement    |
| ▪ Ramsey IDB                            | Stocking Fen Automated Weedscreen         |

#### 24. **Renewable Power**

At present the savings and FITs payments linked with the office PV cells installation remain ahead of predictions.

A car charging facility has been added to the car park at the offices.



David Thomas  
Clerk, Chief Engineer & Chief Executive

13 April 2018

**RAINFALL - April 2017 to March 2018**

Month	Abbots Riford	March	Stanground Lock	Tributes Bridge/ Bevilas Leam	Monthly Average	Cumulative Monthly Average		Standard Average	Cumulative Standard Average		Excess of rainfall over standard average	Cumulative difference
						Apr - Sept	Oct - Mar		Apr - Sept	Oct - Mar		
2017/2018												
April	16.0	14.5	8.7	14.5	13.88	13.9		42.51	42.5		-26.6	42.6
May	57.9	71.0	67.5	73.5	67.48	81.4		50.34	82.9		11.1	-11.5
June	38.3	48.5	35.4	29.5	37.93	119.2		45.13	138.0		-7.2	-48.7
July	72.6	110.0	98.2	108.5	87.33	266.6		57.29	195.3		40.0	37.3
August	24.9	36.0	47.7	37.5	37.28	303.9		58.94	254.2		-21.7	-0.3
September	48.2	62.5	63.5	37.5	52.42	305.2		48.26	303.8		6.2	6.8
October	18.0	30.0	18.8	15.0	17.95		308.2	61.45		308.9	-43.5	-97.7
November	48.4	59.5	41.7	39.5	47.53		376.8	55.89		472.8	-6.4	-66.0
December	80.6	77.0	83.1	73.5	78.55		400.2	46.05		488.5	21.9	-14.2
January	47.8	53.0	45.7	45.0	47.88		488.2	48.05		536.5	4.2	-14.9
February	33.2	27.0	23.2	24.5	26.98		585.2	36.26		582.8	4.9	-30.7
March	72.2	46.5	81.8	63.5	67.25		582.4	36.35		582.2	50.8	7.9
TOTAL	557.9	631.5	616.3	564.0	532.45	305.2	582.5	515.07	303.5	582.2	7.9	7.9

NB: Chertels data no longer provided from September 2017

The standard average is for the current standard reference period April 1995 - March 2018.

Average rainfall in recent years

April 2017 - March 2018	592.5mm
April 2016 - March 2017	274.6mm
April 2015 - March 2016	544.9mm
April 2014 - March 2015	603.7mm
April 2013 - March 2014	573.4mm
April 2012 - March 2013	784.0mm
April 2011 - March 2012	451.8mm
April 2010 - March 2011	481.8mm
April 2009 - March 2010	603.9mm
April 2008 - March 2009	590.3mm
April 2007 - March 2008	596.1mm
April 2006 - March 2007	605.1mm
April 2005 - March 2006	467.1mm
April 2004 - March 2005	592.8mm
April 2003 - March 2004	514.4mm
April 2002 - March 2003	660.0mm
April 2001 - March 2002	621.1mm
April 2000 - March 2001	793.3mm

**HYDROLOGY AND PUMPING - April 2017 - March 2018**

Month	Rainfall			Estimated Potential Evapotranspiration mm	Soil Moisture Deficit (month end) mm	Rain Days		Pumping			Maximum Water Levels 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	Bovissey Bridge
April	13.88	42.51	28.63	12.17	70	10	16	1427	2.05	350	99.65	99.60
May	67.48	50.34	17.14	62.81	85	12	13	2865	4.10	1008	99.73	99.61
June	37.93	45.13	7.20	39.65	110	7	12	1083	1.55	390	99.71	99.60
July	97.33	57.29	40.04	86.78	129	15	12	1887	2.70	572	99.74	99.60
August	37.28	58.94	21.06	37.80	135	11	12	2623	3.76	470	99.68	99.53
September	52.42	46.26	6.16	1.54	125	18	12	3411	4.90	521	99.65	99.53
October	17.95	61.45	43.50	20.75	133	8	12	1899	2.72	101	99.55	99.47
November	47.53	55.89	8.36	43.31	110	15	13	2774	3.98	7	99.59	99.49
December	78.55	46.68	31.87	60.68	52	19	11	11968	17.19	2049	99.96	99.65
January	47.88	48.05	0.17	19.02	23	20	14	19934	28.68	3192	99.69	99.55
February	26.98	36.28	9.30	12.43	20	11	15	10094	14.50	3257	99.57	99.52
March	67.25	36.35	30.90	29.77	8	22	14	17736	25.48	3561	99.87	99.54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>592.46</b>	<b>585.17</b>	<b>7.29</b>			<b>168</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>77701</b>	<b>111.61</b>	<b>15478</b>		

\* Standard average taken from 1998-2018

**Mega Litres Pumped at St Germans**

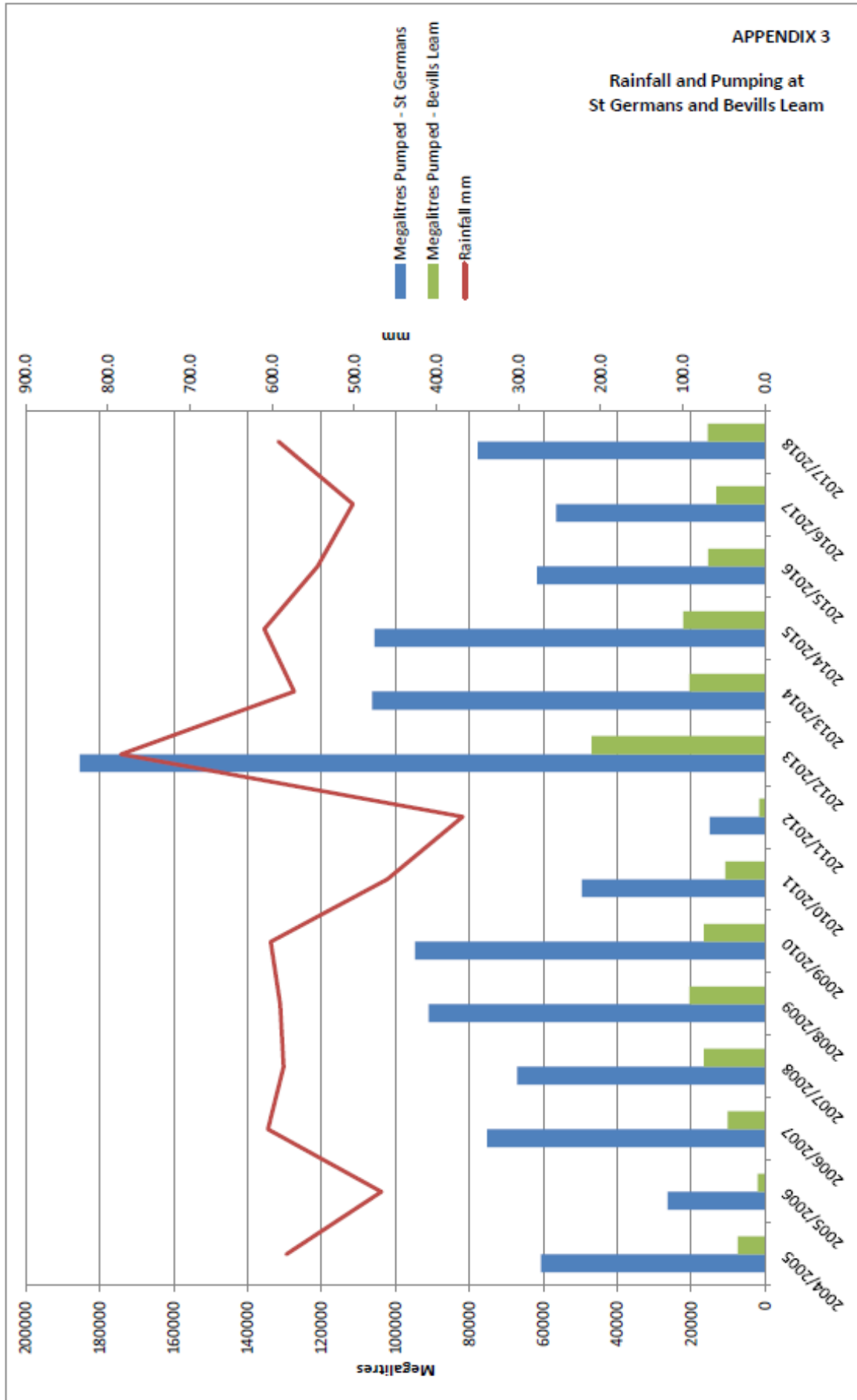
April 2017 - March 2018	77701
April 2016 - March 2017	56549
April 2015 - March 2016	61672
April 2014 - March 2015	105688
April 2013 - March 2014	106280
April 2012 - March 2013	185408
April 2011 - March 2012	149600
April 2010 - March 2011	495663

**Mega Litres Pumped at Bevilis Leam**

April 2017 - March 2018	15478
April 2016 - March 2017	13146
April 2015 - March 2016	15362
April 2014 - March 2015	22047
April 2013 - March 2014	20422
April 2012 - March 2013	46951
April 2011 - March 2012	1960
April 2010 - March 2011	10773



Rainfall and Pumping at St Germans and Bevills Leam





**Plant and Vehicles - March 2018**

		Date of Purchase	Approx. Hours/ Miles	Estimated Insured Value (£)	Present Condition
New Holland T5060 Tractor	AE08 LMU	Aug'08		22000	Very Good
Votex Mower 2			3376	2000	Very Good
Votex Mower		Nov'10	2955	2000	Very Good
SPV 3		Sep'15	1883	150000	Very Good
Massey Ferguson Tractor	AE60 FVF	Oct'10		30000	Very Good
		Oct'10	7325	10000	Good
Massey Ferguson Tractor	AE17 EDO	Mar'17			
Herder Flail		Mar'17	1228	122000	Very Good
Hemos Weed Lifting Boat		Aug.'03	9181	7000	Fair
Hemos Weed Lifting Boat		Aug.'04	9465	7000	Good
Hemos Combi Boat		Nov'05	7200	10000	Good
Hemos Combi Boat		Apr'08	7676	13000	Good
Hemos Combi Boat		May'15	1922	35000	Very Good
Hilux pick-up	AK57 UFH	Sep.'07	104343	4000	Fair
Nissan Pick-up	AE66 MXJ	Nov'16	19508	13000	Very Good
Mitsubishi L200	AU67 HSE	Sept'17	3487	14500	Very Good
Iveco Tipper	BL12 LCZ	Aug'12	19766	14000	Good
Mitsubishi L200	AE13 MDV	Apr'13	45498	9000	Good
Ford Connect	AE63 DHU	Sep'13	46688	6500	Very Good
Mitsubishi L200	AE64 NSN	Sep'14	35742	9000	Very Good
Toyota Hilux	AO64 ZNV	Feb'15	26538	12000	Very Good
Transit Van	AK16 HYH	May'16	11700	16000	Very Good
Ford Pickup	AM58 MWG	Dec'08	132818	1500	Very Poor
Ford Ranger	AE63 DJY	Nov'13	92981	10000	Good
Nissan Pickup	AE66 MVS	Sep'16	47232	16000	Very Good
VW Amarok	AF67 YMC	Oct'17	13403	22000	Very Good
Ford Iveco Lorry & Atlas Crane	S411 YEW	Jan.'99	155342	12000	Fair
Caterpillar Fork Lift Truck		June '09		1000	Fair
JCB Teleporter	KX56 MHV	March '07		20000	Very Good

**APPENDIX 6**  
**Engineering Fees**

	£
Benwick IDB.....	3,476.42
Bluntisham IDB.....	700.39
Churchfield & Plawfield IDB.....	2,713.76
Conington & Holme IDB.....	1,717.97
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB.....	4,220.62
Downham & Stow Bardolph IDB .....	20,244.95
East of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB.....	2,571.20
Ely Group of IDB's .....	0.00
Euximoor IDB.....	233.70
Farmcare .....	21.00
Feldale .....	448.50
Haddenham Level DC .....	0.00
Holmewood & District DDC.....	189.00
Hundred Foot Washes IDB.....	139.00
Hundred of Wisbech IDB.....	7,642.33
Manea & Welney DDC.....	1,429.15
March West & White Fen IDB	6495.25
March East IDB.....	6,151.75
March Fifth DDC.....	2,317.45
March Sixth DDC.....	708.75
March Third DDC.....	3,244.11
Needham & Laddus IDB	
.....	1,883.00
Nightlayers	
IDB.....	3,455.53
Nordelph IDB.....	74.00
Over & Willingham .....	1,351.45
Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB.....	2,853.19
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB.....	2,278.59
Ramsey	
IDB.....	1,372.27
Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) IDB.....	1,168.61
Ransonmoor DDC.....	1,848.56
Sawtry IDB.....	1,686.19
Skeggins Fen (Private) DD .....	21.00
Swavesey IDB.....	2,198.63
Sutton & Mepal IDB.....	2,245.45
Upwell	
IDB.....	3,768.29
Waldesey IDB.....	2,026.88
Whittlesey IDB.....	1,403.83
Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB.....	3,009.26
Woodwalton DC.....	541.00
	<hr/>
Sub total	97,851.03
	<hr/>
Above figures do not include:	
Mechanical & Electrical (pumping station maintenance) .....	48,400.20
	<hr/>
Third party & Pre-application advice .....	8,772.63
Soakaway certificates .....	800.00
Surface water/effluent discharge certificates .....	400.00
	<hr/>
Total	156,223.86
	<hr/> <hr/>

APPENDIX 7  
Solar Returns

Solar Panel Returns - Actual vs Predicted *assumes savings of £4K per year.*

Year	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)	Reading											Actual	Target	
-1	111,500	9.77	6.01	29,870	6.01	N/A									
0	170,507	9.77	6.01	49,932	6.01	£6,970.71	N/A	N/A			£0.00	N/A	£28,215.00	£28,215.00	*
1	209,556	9.77	6.01	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	6.01	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	6.01	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	6.01	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	**
4.5	351,365	9.77	6.01	125,819	6.01	£3,628.08	£764.30	96,496		12.57	£1,049.26	£1,813.55	£9,366.91	£10,112.00	**
5						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£8,215.00	
6						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£4,215.00	
7						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£215.00	
8						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-3,785.00	
9						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-7,785.00	
10						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-11,785.00	
11						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-15,785.00	
12						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-19,785.00	
13						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-23,785.00	
14						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-27,785.00	
15						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-31,785.00	
16						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-35,785.00	
17						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-39,785.00	
18						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-43,785.00	
19						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-47,785.00	
20						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-51,785.00	
21						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-55,785.00	
22						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-59,785.00	
23						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-63,785.00	
24						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-67,785.00	
25						£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£5,683.26	£-71,785.00	

89416 kWh  
£90K

Total Units Generated as of 10th April 2018  
Predicted income at year 25 (allowing for say £10K maintenance)

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



## **FCRM Capital Programme**

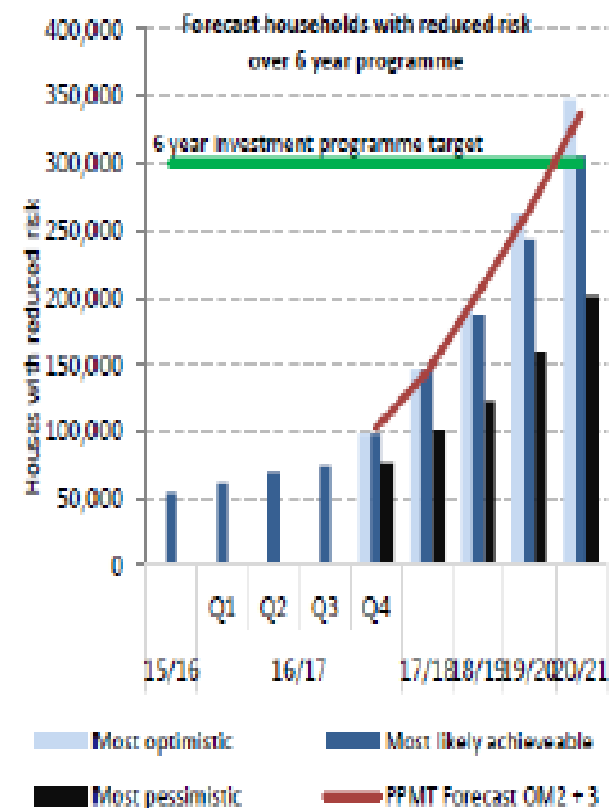
**Gt Ouse IDB & EA Strategic Group, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

# FCRM GiA Capital Settlement Conditions

- ➔ 300,000 houses at reduced flood risk
- ➔ £230m worth of efficiencies
- ➔ £345m of partnership funding
  
- ➔ Delivery by all Flood & Coastal Risk Management Authorities
  
- ➔ Now at start of Year 3 of 6

74,700      98,439      92,500

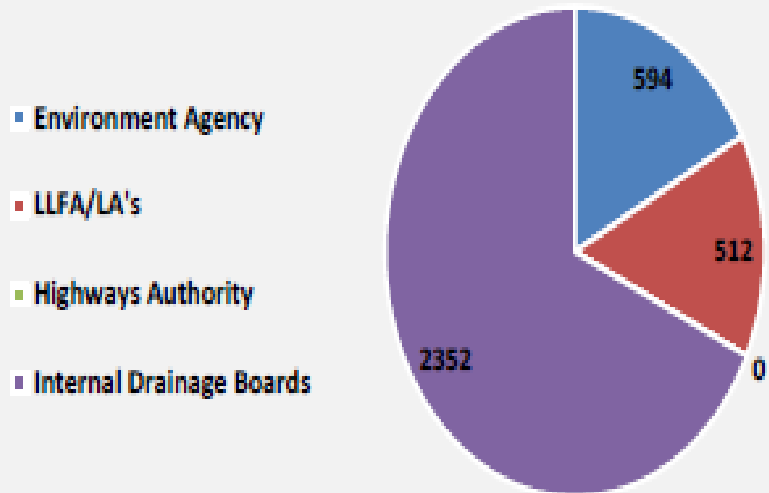
actual to date      16/17 end forecast      16/17 end target



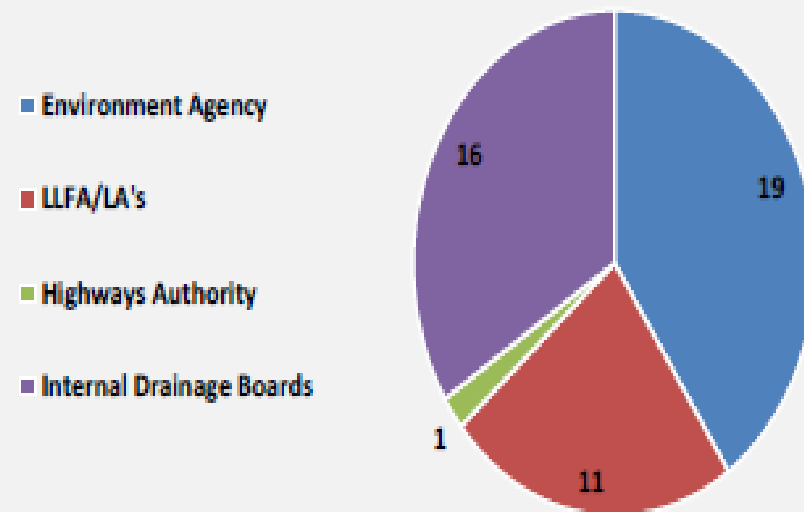


# Local picture

### Forecast OM2s within 6-Year Programme



### Number of schemes per RMA



## Successes so far:

- Increased our support focussed on IDB projects
- Improved training and new portal to access the programme
- Allocating local levy strategically and for local priorities – open to IDBs
- Starting to look at shared benefits and benefit apportionment
- Progress being made on major IDB schemes
- Starting to see FCRM GiA above the traditional 45% rate

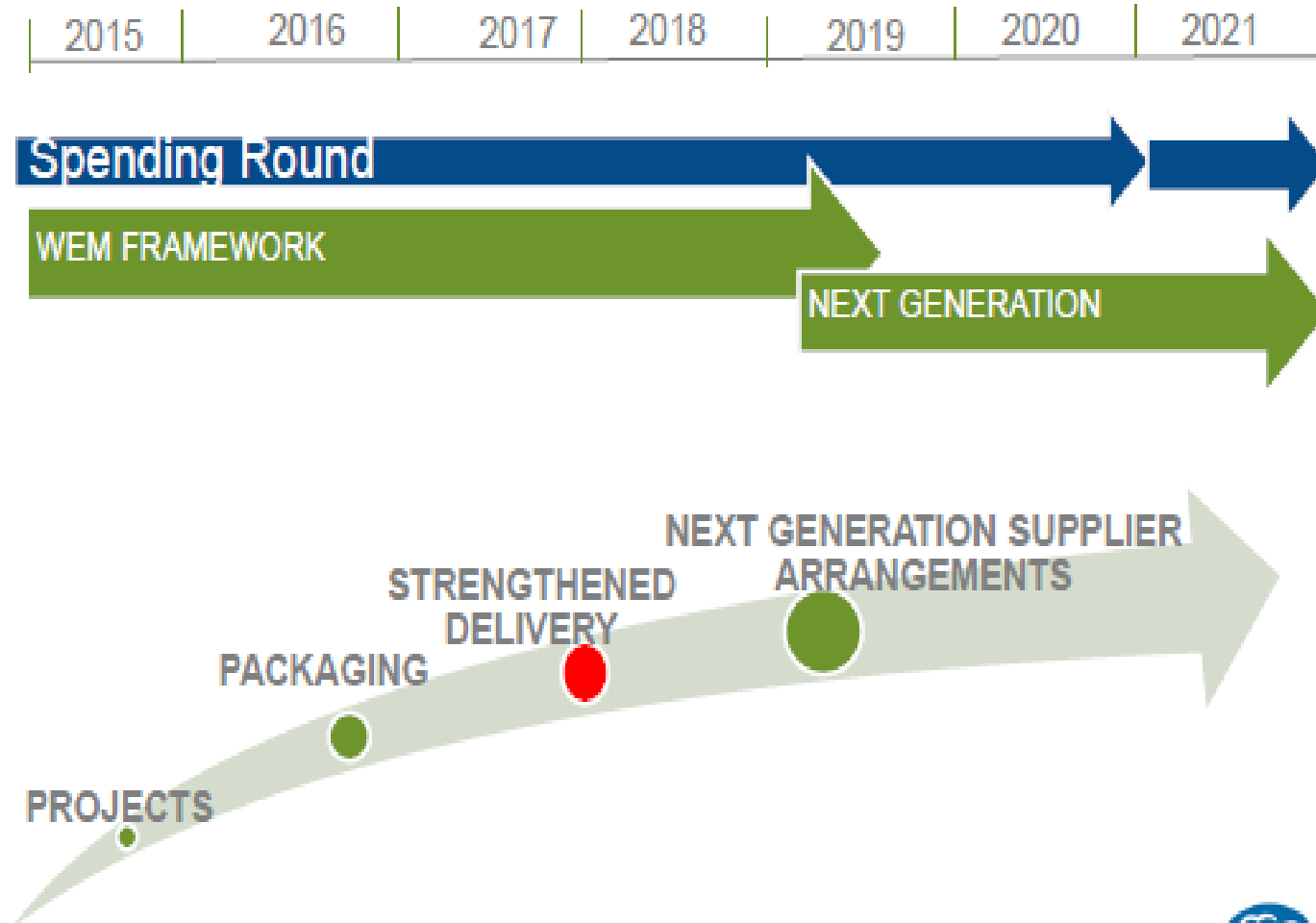


## Observations:

- ⇒ Sustaining support is challenging and is diverting resources from strategic investment planning and our own pipeline development
- ⇒ Early planning and appropriate resourcing of project delivery is crucial
- ⇒ Engagement and appraisal early re Eels Regulations
- ⇒ Partnership Funding beyond traditional GiA:IDB split
- ⇒ Demonstrable Local Authority engagement if seeking Public Works Loan.
- ⇒ Importance of management information



# Delivery Evolution



# Opportunities:

- Focus resource on Gt Ouse Strategic Investment Planning, starting with 'the Fens' – we'll need IDB input & support
  
- Encourage IDBs to consider options for improved capital programme development & delivery – How can we help further?
  
- National 'Strengthening' approach:
  - Project Delivery Units – Integrated team approach
  - Available for IDBs
  - Increased focus on pipeline development





Mill Lane Works  
Roston, Ashbourne DE6 2EE

Telephone: 01335 324302

Fax: 01335 324568

Email: info@devilleandlear.co.uk

**ALL TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL & INDUSTRIAL STEEL FRAMED BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT THE UK**

Contractors to County Councils And Major Estates

## QUOTATION

Middle Level Commissioners,  
85, Whittlesey Road,  
March,  
Cambs.  
PE15 0AH.

FE/412/18

10<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

### Proposed Agricultural Building.

Size. 30m long in 6 bays of 4.3m and one bay of 4.2m x 10m overall span 6m high to eaves and having a roof pitch of 15 degrees. Steelwork designed to BS 5502 Class 2.

Construction. 254 x 146 UB stanchions carrying 203 x 133 UB rafters having 200 x 75mm pressure treated timber eaves beams and intermediate galvanised zed purlins in the roof. An intermediate 254 x 102 UB stanchion fitted in each end. 5 lines of pressure treated timber sheeting rails fitted in each gable end and 4 lines of timber sheeting rails fitted in one side ready to take your cladding. Tubular bracings fitted in the building and steelwork to be shot blasted and painted two coats of paint.

Sheeting. The roof area clad with 0.7mm thick Slate blue box profile plastisol coated steel sheeting and the ridge to have plastisol ridge flashings and fillers. Barge boards would be left on site for you to fit when you have done your vertical cladding.

Gutters. Each side the building to have 170mm half round PVC gutters with 110mm PVC downpipes.

Contract. We ask for the foundations holes to be dug in accordance with the foundation drawing and holding down bolts that we will provide if favoured with the order. We would then erect and sheet the building as specified above. The removal of the excavated soil away from the site to be done by others before we commence work on the building.

**PRICE. Due to increases in the cost of Steel which are forecast, our price is based on the cost of materials at the date shown on the quotation and may be subject to alteration.**

THE COST OF THE BUILDING ERECTED AND COMPLETE AS SPECIFIED WOULD BE £20,438.00 plus VAT.

Extras. If the roof cladding was to be in natural colour profile 6 fibre cement sheets there would be a saving of £242.00.

If the roof cladding was to be in Slate Blue coloured profile 6 fibre cement sheets there would be an extra charge of £317.00 plus VAT.

p.p.DEVILLE & LEAR LTD

## CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

All orders are accepted subject to the following terms and conditions notwithstanding any other conditions which may be on clients order forms or letters.

### ERRORS

Clerical errors and omissions are subject to correction.

### DETAILS

All specifications, drawings and literature are intended to give a fair description of the contract but DeVille and Lear Ltd. reserve the right to vary the specification (in the event of supply difficulties or other reasons) subject always to the understanding that we would advise the customer of any such variations and that such variations would not be structurally or functionally detrimental.

### AUTHORISATIONS

It is the responsibility of the Customer to comply with all requirements for permission to go ahead with the contract such as Planning Consent, Building Regulations, Landlords approval, etc. The Customer indemnifies DeVille and Lear Ltd. against any action which may result from a failure to obtain such permissions.

### DELIVERY

DeVille and Lear Ltd. will do everything possible to adhere to delivery promises given but regret that they cannot under any circumstances accept any liability for loss caused by failure to deliver or erect within a specified time whatever the cause of the delay.

### PRICE VARIATIONS

This Quotation is made subject to the prices of materials, labour and transport in force at this date. Should there be any changes in the costs of these elements calling for an amendment to the contract price DeVille and Lear Ltd. undertake to advise the Customer in writing of any such amendment prior to starting any work on the contract.

### SITE CONDITIONS

**It is of vital importance that the site and the approach to it should be sufficiently hard in all weather conditions to support heavy transport and a heavy wheeled Crane, and it is the responsibility of the Customer to see that this is so. Any extra cost incurred by DeVille and Lear Ltd. for labour or Plant Hire due to unsatisfactory site conditions will be charged to the Customer.**

### DELIVERY OF MATERIALS

If any materials are delivered to site when our Erectors are not present the Customer shall offload without charge to DeVille and Lear Ltd.

### CUSTODY OF MATERIALS

**The Customer is responsible for the safe keeping of all materials deposited on site and will be charged for any goods stolen or damaged when our men are not present.**

### FOUNDATIONS

Whether the foundations are excavated by DeVille and Lear Ltd. or by the Customer the Customer should be responsible for the removal from the immediate surrounding area of the spoil taken out of the holes.

### ERECTION

- a. DeVille and Lear Ltd. reserve the right to use Sub-contract labour.
- b. The site is to be kept clear of stock or other obstructions during the time of erection.
- c. A supply of Water and Electricity adjacent to the site is to be made available if required.
- d. If any change in the specifications are required by the Customer after the work has started the Customer must contact our Office to discuss such matters. Our Erectors have no authority to vary the work they do from the original drawings without further instructions from DeVille and Lear Ltd.
- e. It is normal for a small quantity of spare materials to be delivered with each contract. Such items remain the property of DeVille and Lear Ltd. and will be removed from the site after the building is completed.

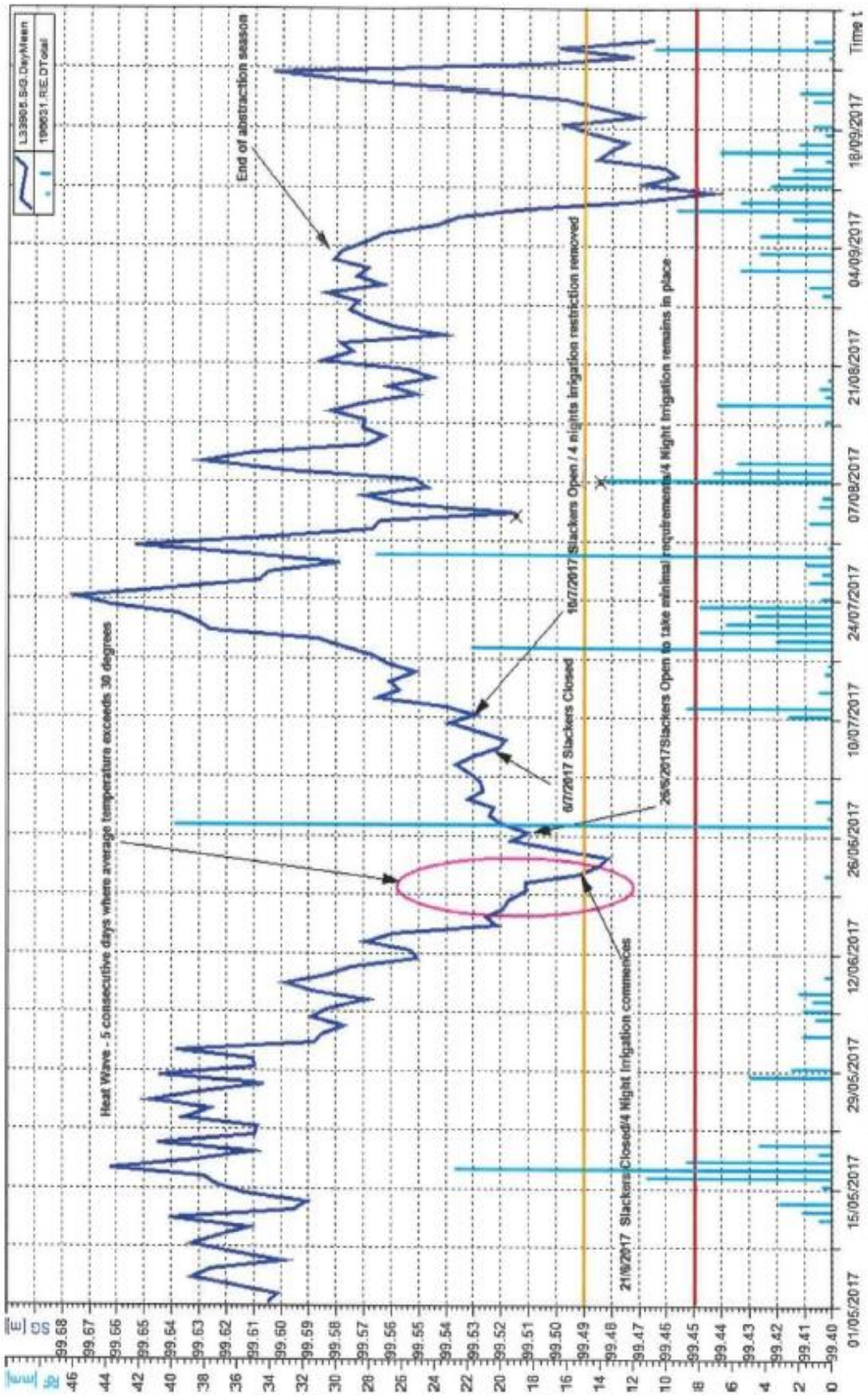
### FAULTS

Should the Customer consider there to be any faults in the completed building he shall notify DeVille and Lear Ltd. in writing within 14 days of completion (or of delivery if self erected), otherwise under no circumstances will any complaint be considered.

### TERMS

The Terms stated in the quotation or otherwise agreed shall be strictly adhered to. Extended credit is not available.





Middle Level – Bodsey Bridge Level Summary Summer 2017 (01/05/2017 to 27/09/2017)

**Ralstonia Solanacearum (Potato Brown Rot) Water Sampling**

Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Sand Hutton  
York  
YO41 1LZ

T: 03459 335577  
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

Mr D T Thomas  
Chief Executive Officer  
Middle Level Commissioners  
85 Whittlesey Road  
March  
PE15 0AW

**Date** 13 November 2017

Dear Mr Thomas,

**2017 Middle Level *Ralstonia solanacearum* water sampling survey**

I am writing to put on record Defra's sincere thanks for the assistance you and your team provided this summer in relation to our survey of watercourses for the organism which causes potato brown rot.

As you are aware, we found the bacteria that causes brown rot (*Ralstonia solanacearum*) in the Middle Level Main drain and Sixteen Foot drain during the course of our routine national watercourse survey in 2016.

The purpose of this year's survey, carried out by the Animal and Plant Health Agency, part of Defra, was to determine the extent of possible contamination in the other parts of the Middle Level system and the associated Internal Drainage Board's drains and channels.

The findings were clearly going to be of considerable interest to a number of stakeholders and the consequences could have a potentially severe impact on local potato growers who are reliant on irrigation water abstracted from the main drains and IDBs. Thus from Defra's perspective this survey was a high profile piece of work. It has been highlighted to me by my APHA colleagues that the facilities and services that your team of staff so generously provided, both during the planning stage and the four week survey period, played a significant part in the delivery process. I also know that despite the inconvenience that our personnel, and their array of equipment, must have caused, they were made to feel very welcome and everything that was needed was willingly provided. The provision of mapping and printing, office space, a 4x4 vehicle with driver, and not least a wealth of local knowledge were all invaluable.

This collaboration resulted in an efficient process which allowed the survey to be completed on time and meeting its objectives.

We will be repeating the survey in July and August next year and I've learnt that you have already offered to help us again in a similar way, which is much appreciated.

So once again thank you so much for the assistance you gave this year and we look forward to working with you again in 2018.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Spence', written in a cursive style.

Professor Nicola Spence  
UK Chief Plant Health Officer  
Defra

T: +44 (0)208 026 2480

M: +44 (0)792 002 1168

[nicola.spence@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.spence@defra.gsi.gov.uk)



00<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Grower name  
Address 1  
Address 2  
Town  
Post Code

Dear,

### ***Ralstonia solanacearum* in watercourses**

I am writing to provide information about our findings of *Ralstonia solanacearum* (RS) in the Middle Level System during our 2017 survey and to inform you of our survey plans for summer 2018 in response to these new findings. This letter has implications if you grow potatoes or tomatoes, or may do so in future, so please read it carefully.

From our previous correspondence you will be aware that The Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI), part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), and Fera Science Ltd (Fera) have confirmed the presence of the bacterium *Ralstonia solanacearum*, that causes brown rot, a notifiable disease of potatoes, in the Sixteen Foot Drain and the Middle Level Main Drain of the Middle Level System, which runs across the Cambridgeshire Fens. This was detected during APHA's 2016 annual watercourse surveillance programme for this organism.

These watercourses have now been officially designated as contaminated, which means there are implications for growers of potatoes and other solanaceous crops. The designation of contaminated watercourses has been applied to the entire length of the Sixteen Foot Drain between TL422874 and TL496994 and the entire length of Middle Level Main Drain between Cotton's Corner Bridge TL 496994 and Neep's Bridge TF551069. Water abstracted for irrigation of potatoes and other solanaceous crops is now prohibited from these designated watercourses, but irrigation for non-solanaceous crops is permitted. Irrigation of solanaceous crops will only be permitted if abstracted water is winter extracted for tank/reservoir storage and inspected and approved by PHSI before being used for irrigation directly from that tank/reservoir. Please see the further details published at: <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/factsheets/irrigation-guidelines-factsheetformat-2017-final2.pdf>

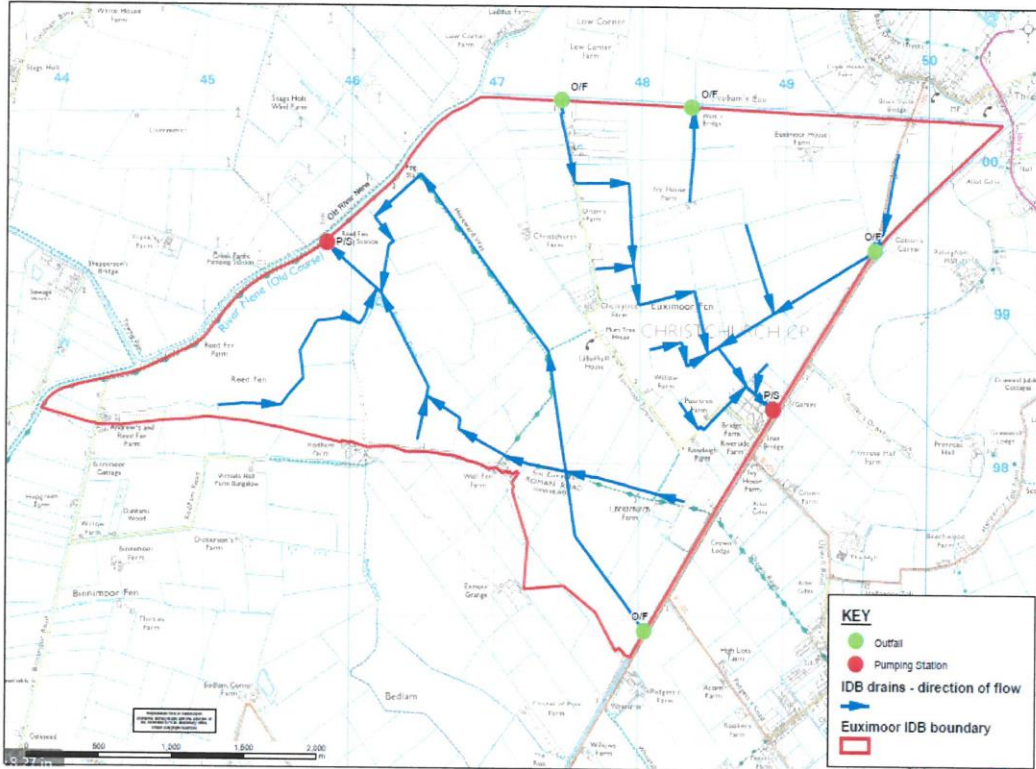
In response to the findings in 2016 we carried out a more extensive survey across the Middle Level System in July and August 2017. Three samples were taken from each of the main drains and the various independent Internal Drainage Board (IDB) networks of channels that make up the Middle Level System. In total 135 sampling points were identified and samples were taken from the majority of these for 4 weeks in August giving a total of 530 samples from a possible 540.

Following this survey RS has been confirmed in two additional main drains; Well Creek and a section of Old Pophams Eau between OS Grid Ref: TF 50466 00487 and OS Grid Ref: TF 50806 00533, as indicated by points A and B in Map 1. RS has also been confirmed in one IDB; Euximoor, indicated in Map 2.

**Map 1:**



Map 2:



The section of Old Pophams and the entire length of The Well Creek, from Marmont Priory lock to Salter's Lode lock, plus all the drains in the Euximoor IDB will be designated as contaminated and the same irrigation and spraying restrictions will apply as described above. Statutory Notices to confirm the position will be published shortly on the APHA website and will be applicable for crops grown in 2018 onwards.

Following these new findings in 2017 APHA are going to carry out another extensive survey of the Middle Level system in 2018. We need to do this to be sure we have a clear picture on the extent of infection across the Middle Level System. The 2018 surveillance programme will be a repeat of the survey carried out this year consisting of up to 140 samples and will include all Main Drains and IDBs. This survey will begin on 23/07/2018 and will involve taking samples from each of the estimated 140 sampling points for four consecutive weeks.

We are writing to you because records indicate that you grow ware potato crops in the area and therefore may intend to use water to irrigate potato crops from other currently non-designated parts of the Middle Level water system and associated IDBs during the 2018 growing season. Due to the water management practices within the Middle Level water system there is the possibility that other drains and IDBs could also be contaminated.

The timing of this surveillance programme is determined by when the water temperature is high enough for the bacterium to be detectable. We realise that this will leave you with a period of uncertainty, but based on previous findings, we anticipate that there could be further confirmations of contaminated watercourses, so you should prepare yourself for the possibility of further designations in 2019.

We are therefore strongly advising growers in the vicinity of such watercourses to take equivalent measures to those being applied to the current designated water courses explained above on a precautionary basis. APHA's surveillance will include potato crops in these areas and the presence of brown rot will result in statutory restrictions having to be applied.

If you have any questions please contact our help line number: [CSC – PH to add number](#)

Yours sincerely,

Ian Sanders  
Senior Plant Health & Seeds Inspector


[CSC – PH Email address](#)



## Budget Estimate for Desilting Old River Nene – Royal Smals



Middle Level Commissioners  
 Attn. mr. J. Fenn  
 85 Whittlesey Road  
 March, Cambs. PE15 0AH  
 United Kingdom

**Date** : 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2018  
**Project number** : GB175585  
**Our reference** : RvdZ / NB / 0027-2018 / 1.42  
**Initial** :   
**Subject** : Desilting of the Nene river – Proposal w. budget estimate

Dear Mr. Fenn,

With reference to your meeting with our commercial manager Farhat Ben Amor and Tender manager Charles Moreu in December, we are pleased to herewith provide you with our proposal with budget estimate for desilting the Nene river section running through March Town Centre.

This budget estimate is based on the following main assumptions:

- Desilting a 10m1 wide strip over 3163m1 of the Nene river by hydraulic dredging;
- Thickness of dredging layer approximates 70 cm. Prior to the dredging operations the complete trajectory will be, preferably jointly, in-surveyed to verify layer thickness, volumes, soil type variations, debris, etc.
- Dredge material consists of fine and non-cemented silt. Courser material (sand and gravel) can be dredged as well, as long as the particles are no bigger than 80 mm and they represent not more than 5% of the pumping mixture (to prevent the risk of pipeline clogging);
- Vegetation, weed, algae and debris have been removed from dredging area, by Client, prior to start of the dredging works;
- Dredging operations are permitted during Monday – Sunday, between 7 and 19hrs;
- Your quay side (as appointed further in this letter) will be made available (free of charge), for positioning of a telescopic crane (130T) during mobilisation and demobilisation;
- Construction of dewatering lagoons to be arranged by client, based on a Dutch design by Smals. Smals will supply 4 wooden dewatering boxes;
- As Smals is not aware of legislative requirements which apply in the UK, safety / security arrangements, such as fencing, required by UK law, as well as all permits and/or approvals required by UK law, will be arranged by Client.

Smals Dredging UK Ltd., a company of Koninklijke Smals NV  
 registered in England and Wales under Companies House No 9788917  
 vat 226426615 bank GB33FTSB40625220018477 bic FTSBGB2L  
 Registered Office Fletcher & Partners, Crown Chambers, Bridge Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 2LZ phone +44 1926 402703  
 headoffice Keersluisweg 9, 5433 NM Cuijk, The Netherlands phone +31 485335170 mail info@smals.com internet smals.com





### 1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the Middle Level Commissioners' ongoing dredging programme, desilting works are planned at the Nene river section which runs through the March Town Centre. Commonly within the UK, these desilting works are executed by means of mechanical dredging.

With this letter, Smals offers an alternative dredging method, by means of a 10" cutter suction dredger. We propose to dredge the sediments from the riverbed and pump them through a 10" HDPE sinker line into the Client's dewatering lagoons which are to be constructed onshore at both ends of the river section subject of the desilting works. The design of the dewatering lagoon depends on the volume of dredged sediments subject of dewatering. An in-survey is hence required prior to the dredging works.

Smals has ample experience with this dredging method on projects in the Netherlands and abroad.

### 2. BRIEF METHOD OUTLINE

Smals proposes to dredge the river section by use of a 10" (road transportable) small-scale cutter suction dredger. The dredger will remove the sediments (silt) from the riverbed and pump them to the proposed dewatering lagoons located on the East and West side of the dredging area. The maximum pumping distance involved will hence measure approximately half the length of the river section subject to the desilting works (approximately 2,000 m).

The exact locations of the dewatering lagoons are subject to client preference. Indicative locations for the dewatering lagoons are shown in the figure below.

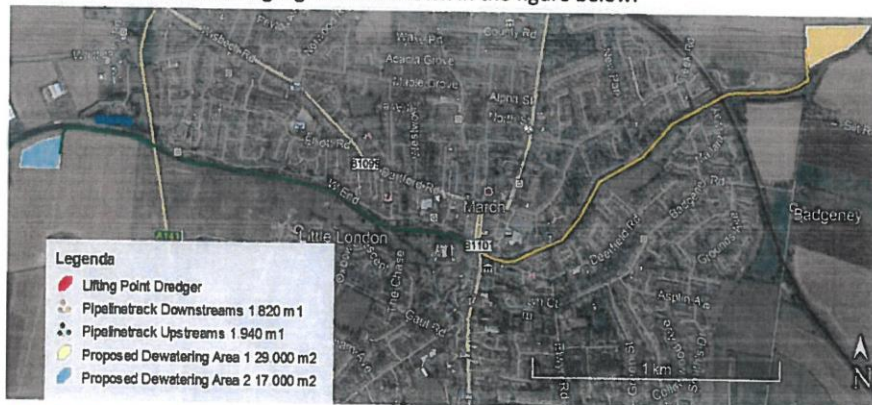


Figure 1: Overview of the Nene waterway section for planned desilting works and proposed dewatering lagoons



Smals, being a specialist dredging contractor, has excluded the construction/dismantling works for the dewatering lagoons from this proposal (earthworks).

Upon assignment of a dredging contract, Smals will assist Client with the design of suitable dewatering lagoons, to be constructed by a local civil works contractor.

#### **Dredger operations**

The cutter suction dredger uses an articulated swing ladder which and positions itself by means of two spud poles at its front side and 1 spud (in a spud carriage pontoon) on its aft. The dredger can also position itself by means of wires, winches and anchors (when dredging larger areas, e.g. lakes or basins).

The dredger uses biological degradable hydraulic oil. Noise levels are normally below 65 dB(A) at 50m distance.



Figure 2: 10' Cutter Suction Dredger at the 40ft drain project, Boston (Swineshead), UK



Figure 3: Dewatering lagoon at the 40ft drain project, Boston (Swineshead), UK

#### **Pipeline trajectory**

By opting for two dewatering lagoons, located at each end of the dredging area, the maximum pumping distance is reduced to half the length of the dredging area. Therewith the number of pipelines required (and hence the (de-)mobilisation costs) are kept to a minimum. These pumping distances remain well within the capacity range of the pump on-board the dredger, and no booster pump will be needed for pumping the sediments into the dewatering lagoons.

The pipeline is transported to site by dedicated lorries which are outfitted with a special crane for connection of the pipe line.

#### **Survey**

Smals envisages a hand survey to be performed prior to – and after the dredging works to determine the dredge volumes. An example of a survey profile is shown below.



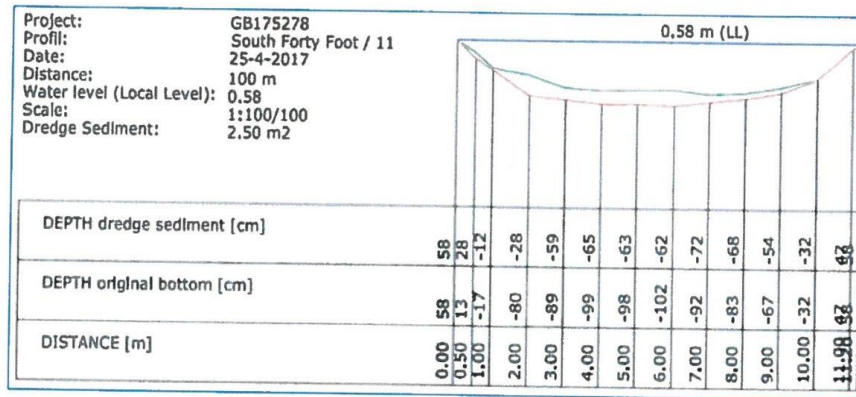


Figure 4: Example of a survey profile



Figure 5: Special pipe trailer used for installation of the pipelines

#### Mobilisation/demobilisation

Smals will arrange / supply a telescopic crane to lift the dredger into and out of the water.

Client will arrange availability of a suitable quay behind office Middle Level Commissioners, free of charge, for positioning of a telescopic crane (130T) during mobilisation and demobilisation. This proposal is based on lifting the dredger in and out of the water from the location indicated in the figure below.

Any permits / approvals required for loading / unloading / lifting will be arranged by client.



Figure 6: Assumed lifting location (crane position) at installation / de-installation

#### Dredge Monitoring System

The dredger is equipped with a Dredge Monitoring System (DMS). This system is controlled and supported by the on board RTK GPS positioning system, and presents the dredger's position in Ordinance Survey Great Britain (OSGB) coordinates. The dredge design will also be uploaded into this system.

The Dredge Monitoring Systems is highly accurate (within cm's ) and presents the following information to the dredge master online:

- Position of the dredger in XYZ (OSGB + tide) (in top and side view)
- Position of the cutter head XYZ (OSGB) (in top, front and side view)
- The top of the dredge layer (with water depths)
- The realised dredged layer (continuously updating)
- The required dredging depth (design profile)
- The dredging history (XYZ in a 0.50 x 0.50 meter DTM)

With this system the dredger is capable of efficient and accurate dredging. From our offices in the UK and Netherlands we can log into the system and check the daily progress of the dredger. Also survey updates and other important information (e.g. position of pipelines,



cables, obstructions, etc.) can be uploaded by using the internet. All black box data is logged for recalculation purposes.

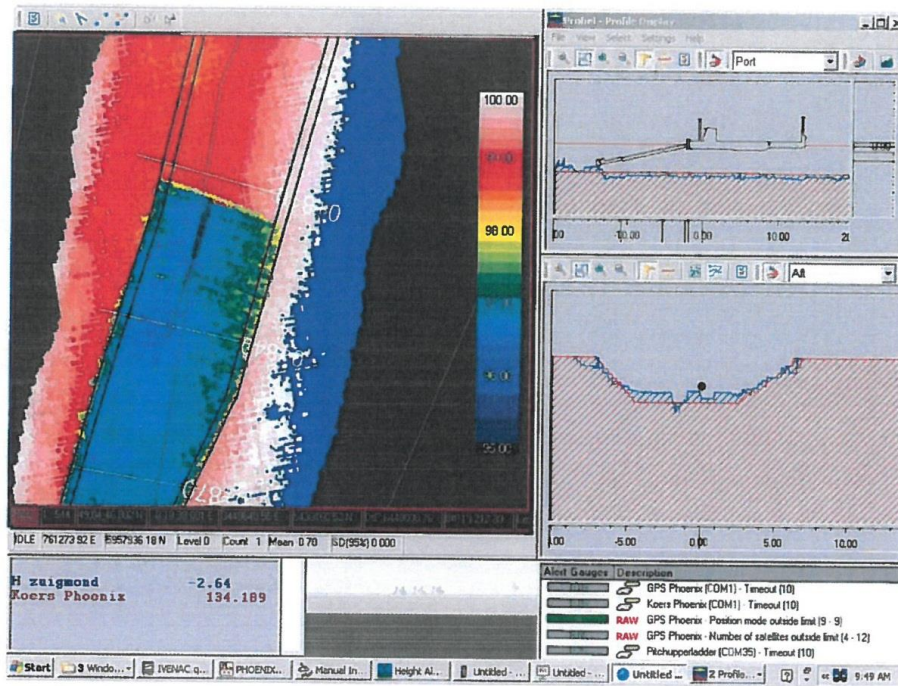


Figure 7. Dredge Monitoring System on board with actual depth, design depth (model) and dredging history

### Planning

On headlines the execution of the our activities from arrival until exiting project site, can be divided in the following activities (based on dredging 12 hrs / day, during 7 days / week):





Activity	Duration (weeks)	
	Dredging	Mob / demob
Mobilisation and installation		0.5
Dredging Eastern section	2.0	
Pipeline re-installation	0.5	
Dredging the Western section	2.0	
De-installation and demobilisation		0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.5</b>	

### 3. BUDGET ESTIMATE (IN GBP EXCL. VAT)

Based on the foregoing we have calculated a budget estimate as per below breakdown.

Activity		
1	Mobilisation and demobilisation	£ 20,000.--
2	Installation and de-installation	£ 16,000.--
3	Telescopic Crane Hire for lifting the dredger into / out the water	£ 14,000.--
4	Maintenance dredging of Nene river	£ 79,000.--
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£ 129,000.--</b>

The above budget estimate is based on the received information, and should be interpreted as indicative and is to be used for budgeting and planning purposes only. An in-survey is mandatory to verify underlying assumptions and update this budget estimate into a proper quotation, including our general terms and conditions (ref. <http://www.smals.com/downloads/>).

We trust this budget estimate meets your expectations and leaves a decent impression about our company and proposed work method. Above all, we look forward to any opportunity to provide our services to your organization. In case any questions remain, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With kind regards,

Smals Dredging UK Ltd

René van der Zweep  
Director Operations + Dredging Department



**Replacement of New Holland T5060****Replacement of New Holland T5060 Tractor**

The Commissioners' current plant replacement strategy, approved by the Board at their April 2017 meeting, includes estimated expenditure of £60k in the 2018 financial year for the replacement of the 2008 New Holland T5060 tractor.

Although the Commissioners' NH T5060 has operated generally satisfactorily during the last 10 years, without major faults or prolonged periods of downtime, the limitations of the tractor have centred around inadequate power output at the PTO and stable road operation whilst undertaking tractor/trailer work. Although the compact size and relatively short wheel base of the H T5060 has been advantageous with bank mowing and fore-end loaderwork, the same has caused issues whilst being driven along roads. The tractor has an unfortunate tendency to continually bounce/nod at road speeds. Various methods have been trialled in an attempt to prevent this occurring, such as removing the fore-end loader when it is not required, adding front wafer weights and lowering/raising tyre pressures etc, but the issue persists.

Consideration has been given to replacement models offered by five 'mid-market' tractor manufacturers for replacement tractors, which would provide more engine and PTO horsepower when required. The greater power output is considered necessary to give greater fuel efficiency while undertaking bank top mowing and for powering the Commissioners' high capacity wood chipper. The additional horsepower is also required for the safe operation of the larger capacity 14 and 16 tonne dump trailers that were purchased by the Commissioners in 2017. (It was necessary to undertake a short-term hire of a large New Holland tractor to safely operate the 14 tonne dump trailer to assist with the latest dredging works at Well Creek, Upwell/Outwell earlier this year).

The tractor specification handed to local dealerships was to provide a 'best value' quotation for a basic, standard specification tractor within the 130-150 horsepower range, with manual controls as opposed to electronic cab controls where this is an option. The quote is to include a fore-end loader, compliant with the Commissioners' current euro-8 attachments.

Front linkage and front PTO have also been specified. The linkage and PTO will allow for the Commissioners' Vortex top mowers to be operated on the front of the power unit rather than the rear. Which will, in turn, improve the quality of the bank mowing by negating the rolling effect of the uncut grass sward by the tractor wheels prior to mowing and will also give improved working visibility of the bank top area adjacent to watercourses, reducing fatigue of the tractor operator, which is of paramount importance to the Commissioners to comply with their Health and Safety obligations.

The five manufacturer/model options that were sought and have been appraised as possible replacements to the NH T5060 are:

- New Holland T6 155
- Case Maxxum 135
- Massey Ferguson 6713S
- Class Arion 610 CIS

The five brands fell within the budget estimate and met the majority of the basic requirements that were originally specified.

Following the appraisal process, and further internal departmental discussion, it is considered that the New Holland T6 155 would deliver good value for money, provides the best value specification of the

models reviewed, comfortably meeting the Commissioners' criteria. Additionally, the Commissioners' past experience with previously owned New Holland tractors has been generally good.

It is recommended that the Commissioners' NH T5060 is traded against and replaced with a NH T6 155 tractor. The 5 year/4000 hour extended warranty cover, as detailed in the quotation below, falls within the £60k budget allocation for the replacement. It is therefore recommended that the extended warranty offer be taken up as part of the overall deal.

Customer Offer #0009008520 - Version - I - Valid-to Date 31/03/2018



Unit Pricing	Amount
RRP	£97,949.00
<u>Discount</u>	<u>£24,799.00</u>
<b>On Farm Price</b>	<b>£73,150.00</b>
<u>Less Trade In New Holland T5060 with Loader</u>	<u>£20,000.00</u>
<b>Balance To Pay</b>	<b>£53,150.00</b>
Serving to cover the warranty ie 7 visits	£6,120.00

The above machine will come with **1 + 4 Years 4000 Hours** New Holland Platinum extended warranty cover. This will also include a DOETRAC tracker system for the extended warranty period free of charge to the customer.

**0 % Finance** is available on this machine for 1+2 Annual payments based on 50% of the machines RRP.

We trust our price is of interest to you and look forward to your valued instructions. Assuring you of our best interest at all times we remain,

Yours sincerely

**ERNEST DOE & SONS LTD**

**Richard Perry**  
**Area Sales Manager**

The Chief Executive reported that Croner Consulting would continue to provide the Commissioners and associated IDBs with help and advice on health and safety issues and that they had recently visited on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018 to provide tailored advice to several individual IDBs.

The Chief Executive advised that a meeting was to be arranged with representatives from Anglian Water to discuss the arrangements for the discharge of treated sewage effluent flows into the Commissioners' and Board's systems.

The Chief Executive reported that a number of Boards had now signed up to the use of Public Sector Co-operation Agreements (PSCAs) to carry out work for the Environment Agency on a cost recovery basis. He added that one previous issue in relation to PCSAs was the requirement to have Professional Indemnity Insurance in place and this was proving very costly for individual IDBs. However, the Commissioners' current insurers have now offered to extend the current insurance to include nominated IDBs, at no extra cost, thus removing this barrier.

The Chief Executive outlined the approach that had been made from Cambridgeshire County Council to enter into closer working with the Commissioners in relation to planning matters. The proposal involved a pilot where resources would be shared and jointly badged responses given to planning applications.

The Chief Executive reported that the Environment Agency had approached Natural England as occupiers of Woodwalton Fen to discuss the possible classification as a reservoir under the 1975 Reservoirs Act. The Chief Executive advised that if there was a classification under this Act then the Commissioners would be the Statutory Undertakers for the reservoir. There would be costs associated with this classification but at this stage it was too early to estimate those costs.

Some consideration had been given to the introduction of health screening/medical fitness assessments for the Commissioners' employees. Various options had been considered by the Chief Executive. An alternative which would not require any contractual change would be the introduction of voluntary health screening once every three years for any employees at a cost of £150-£200 per person.

The Chief Executive reported that, at the November meeting, the Board considered standby payments and that, having considered the Board's response, a further request had been made for time off in lieu to be considered where standby coincides with bank holidays.

The Chief Executive reported that, following a review of the tender process, landline provision has now been moved to BT. The staff and workforce mobile phone lines were with EE but the contract was currently being reviewed and data was to be added to the contract for operatives to use in the line of their work.

## RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) Pilot Shared Resource and Closer Working with Cambridgeshire County Council

That approval be given to the pilot scheme which would be reviewed after twelve months or terminated at an earlier date if the pilot scheme proved to be unworkable.

- iii) Health Screening/Medical Fitness Assessment

To support the option of voluntary health screening if individual employees would like to take up this offer.

iv) Standby Cover

That the request for time off in lieu be refused in these circumstances.

v) Mobile Phones and Landlines

That data be included on phones for operatives.

B.3452 Executive Committee

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

RESOLVED

That the Executive Committee's minutes and recommendations be approved

B.3453 Public Sector Co-operation Agreements (PSCAs)

The Chief Executive reported that the Commissioners have signed up to a Public Sector Cooperation Agreement with the Environment Agency and were at that time carrying out dredging works at Salters Lode on behalf of the Agency.

B.3454 Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

The Chief Executive reported that a meeting of the Chairmen of all of the Middle Level Commissioners' administered Boards had been held on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 to discuss the challenges facing Boards. Innes Thomson, Chief Executive of ADA, had been invited to give a presentation on the arrangements adopted by other Boards around the country for service delivery.

Matters raised included:-

- 1) Advantages, disadvantages and barriers to amalgamation.
- 2) Future meetings and the opportunity for Boards to request items be added to the agenda.
- 3) Reviewing Board membership numbers.
- 4) Frequency of Board meetings.

The meeting had been received with some positivity and a further meeting was to be arranged in the autumn.

B.3455 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported on the likely out-turn figures for 2017/2018.

It was noted that due to the amount of development in the area a number of the larger developments will increase the special levy for local councils and this would change the status of land from agricultural to land subject to the special levy.

## RESOLVED

That the report of the Treasurer be approved.

### B.3456 Expenditure estimate and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2018/2019

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2018/2019 and were informed by the Chief Executive that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 65.87% and 34.13%.

The Executive Committee recommended that the rate remains at 26.0p.

## RESOLVED

- i) That the following recommendations be submitted to the Commissioners, viz:-
  - a) That the estimates be approved.
  - b) That a total sum of £2,659,576 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
  - c) That a rate of 26.00p in the £ be recommended to the Commissioners and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
  - d) That Special levies totalling £907,653 be made and issued as follows for the purpose of meeting such expenditure if the rate was approved, viz:-
    - £496,776 to Fenland District Council
    - £207,283 to Huntingdonshire District Council
    - £203,594 to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk
- ii) That the Improvement Works as detailed for Bank Raising be approved.

### B.3457 Middle Level Navigation Bill

Further to minute B.3426, the Chief Executive reported that the Bill had received its third reading in the House of Commons on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and from there passed and was presented to the House of Lords. At this point it was open to petition for the period 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 until the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and, following the receipt of further petitions, it had received its second reading without any further debate.

The Chief Executive reported that the next stage would be the Lords Opposed Bill Committee stage to hear the petitions that had been made against the Bill and it was expected that this Committee would convene during the last week of June. The Chief Executive reported that the process of the Bill through the House of Commons and now the House of Lords had required more capital investment and had drawn upon the time and resources of both the Commissioners' Solicitor/Assistant and the Chief Executive and it was noted that there would be additional legal costs associated with the hearing before the Lords Opposed Bill Committee as it would be necessary to again instruct Queens Counsel to represent the Commissioners.

### B.3458 Inspection of Works

The Chief Executive reported that the Inspection of Works would occur on a date to be arranged later in the year and would be likely to include a visit to another IDB group.

### B.3459 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>
Mr & Mrs R Herbert	Construction of detached dwelling, erection of a boundary wall and temporary protective barrier to the ash tree – land east of The Hollies, 42 St Peters Road, Upwell – Well Creek	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2017
Mr T I Doe	Construction of timber landing stage, dredging of river to moor boat and landscaping – River frontage at 6 Ashbeach Road, March – Old River Nene, March	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2017
Mr M Pryke	Construction of timber landing stage including handrail and steps - River frontage of The Old Pump House, Doddington Road, Benwick – Old River Nene, March	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2018
Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways	Demolition and reconstruction of bridge parapets at Cottons Corner Bridge, Sixteen Foot Bank (B1098), Christchurch – Sixteen Foot River	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
Stanford & Roberts	Widening of the existing access to 40 & 42 St Peters Road, Upwell – Well Creek	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
Norfolk County Council	Remove old railings and install new railings and provision of new safety signage – Well Creek	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
Blanche Scott	Erection of timber post and rail fence including 6 mete wide gate, Ashbeach Road, March – Old River Nene, March	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
Mr Andrew Dean	Erection of 4 dwellings – foundations, paths, boundary treatments/fences, trees and landscaping. Install foul water effluent water discharge pipeline and headwall – vehicular access. Hollow Road, Ramsey Forty Foot	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2018

### RESOLVED

That the action taken in granting consents be approved.

#### B.3460 Water Resources Committee

Further to minute B.3429, and in the absence of Mr H Whittome, Mr S Whittome reported that the biggest issue for the Committee was the ability to take water from the River Nene in times of water shortage.

He reported that Anglian Water and the Environment Agency would develop an agreement with the Commissioners to take an agreed capacity of water out of the River Nene and that this allowance would need to be balanced and adjusted based upon Anglian Water's requirement to transfer water to Rutland Water.

As the early part of the year had been wet and there was higher than average rainfall, early irrigation had been required in a shorter, more intense period.

#### B.3461 Water Transfer Licences

The Chief Executive reported on the requirement to licence water transfers which became effective as of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018. The Commissioners will only require a single licence for the Stanground intake at a cost of £1,500 and this licence will run for a period of 12 years.

#### B.3462 Ralstonia Solanacearum – Brown Rot

Further to minute B.3430, the Chief Executive reported that he had received no further update on this matter but that Defra would be coming back to re-test in July 2018.

#### B.3463 Conservation Committee

Members considered and approved the minutes of the meeting of the Conservation Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

The Board particularly noted the problem elsewhere with floating pennywort and the need to be vigilant and implement control measures quickly if it is found in the Commissioners or IDB systems.

#### B.3464 Environmental Officer's Report and BAP Report

The Chief Executive referred to the Environmental Officer's Newsletter, previously circulated to Members.

Members considered and approved the Report of the Environmental Officer and the Commissioners' most recent BAP Report, together with the information sheets about floating pennywort.

#### B.3465 Association of Drainage Authorities

The Chief Executive reported:-

a) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities would be held in London on Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

RESOLVED

That the Chief Executive be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association for any Member who wishes to attend.

b) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

On the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association held in Prickwillow, Ely on Tuesday the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and the fact that the administration of this branch has now been passed to the Commissioners.

The Chief Executive advised that the new members elected to the Branch's Executive Committee included the Commissioners' Operations Engineer, Jonathan Fenn and the Chairman, Marc Heading who was appointed Vice Chairman (with Harry Raby of the Bedford Group being appointed Chairman). He added that the agreed aim of this reworked branch will be to be more pro-active and accordingly it was expected that the Executive Committee will meet periodically to discuss catchment wide issues and will then report back to the Branch at its Annual Conference on what it has achieved over the year.

c) Subscriptions

That it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 1% in 2018, viz:- from £609 to £616.

RESOLVED

That the increased ADA subscription be paid for 2018.

d) Updating IDB Byelaws

The Chief Executive referred to a letter received from ADA dated the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

He reported that most of the IDBs in the area have a set of Byelaws which were made under Section 34 of the Land Drainage Act 1976 for the secure and efficient working of the drainage system in their area.

Defra have now suggested that the Byelaws which have been adopted by the Commissioners and the IDBs should be updated to include within their purpose powers in relation to environment matters. To do this it will be necessary to update the current Byelaws in line with the standard model byelaw published in October 2012.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk be requested to draft new Byelaws to include compliance with the environment regulations for consideration by the Board at their next meeting.



e) New Model Policy Statement

The Chief Executive referred to the publication of the new model Policy Statement issued in late April 2018 by ADA.

RESOLVED

That the Chief Executive be requested to draft a new Policy Statement for consideration by the Board at their next meeting.

f) Floodex 2019

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

B.3466 Requirements for a Biosecurity Policy

The Chief Executive reported that, from 2018, Board's will be required to advise (through the IDB1 returns) whether they have in place a Biosecurity Policy. This is considered necessary following increased concern over the spread of alien invasive weeds from one waterbody to another, possibly through the use of contracted or shared plant which can carry elements of such plants if not properly cleaned after being moved from contaminated locations. ADA have stated that they support the principle of having a policy in place and, conscious that for most boards the policy requirements will be identical, they are producing a model document. The Board were asked to confirm that they were content to adopt a policy as long as it is suitable and will not include overly onerous steps which might restrict their activities.

RESOLVED

That the draft policy be reviewed by the Board at their next meeting.

B.3467 The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Chief Executive referred to the Guidance Note on the implementation of the GDPR and that all organisations must become fully compliant by the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

RESOLVED

That Miss Lorna McShane, Solicitor and Assistant Clerk be appointed the Board's Data Protection Officer.

B.3468 Charging for Environmental Permits

The Chief Executive reported on the consultation on charging for Environmental Permits which closed on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018. It is suggested within the consultation that charging should be designed to recover costs and as such there may be significant increases in the charges for obtaining Environment Agency permits for some IDB activities which require such consents. ADA have responded on behalf of the industry and their response is available on their website, [www.ada.org.uk/2018/01/ada-responds-environment-agency-charge-proposals-2018](http://www.ada.org.uk/2018/01/ada-responds-environment-agency-charge-proposals-2018).

### B.3469 Fisheries

a) Further to minute B.3437(a), the Chief Executive referred to the fishing rights for Lots Nos 5, 6A, 6B, 7, 9 and 10 being let on a long term agreement to the Whittlesey Angling Association and that, in accordance with Clause 6 of the Agreement, a rent review had taken place and the rental for the three years from April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 increased by 3% to £1,000 per annum.

b) Further to minute B.3347(b), the Chief Executive reported that the fishing rights on the Forty Foot and Sixteen Foot Rivers, for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, had been let, viz:-

<u>Description</u>	<u>Lot No</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Angling Club</u>
Forty Foot River from Wells Bridge to Puddock Bridge	22	£300	Ramsey Angling Club
Forty Foot River from Puddock Bridge to Childs Bridge	23	£75	The Chatteris Working Mens Angling Club
Forty Foot River from Childs Bridge to Horseway Lock	24	£75	The Chatteris Working Mens Angling Club
Sixteen Foot River from Forty Foot Junction to Boots Bridge	26A	£50	Parkfield Angling Club
Sixteen Foot River from Boots Bridge to Bedlam Bridge	26B	£200	Mr R M Field

(NB) – Mr Fountain declared an interest in Whittlesey Angling Association.

### B.3470 Date of next Meetings

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the next meetings of the Commissioners and the Middle Level Board would be held on Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018.