

## HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners  
hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Thursday the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

### PRESENT

M Church Esq (Chairman)	W Dennis Esq
G L P Wilson Esq (Vice Chairman)	R J Lee Esq
S G Cheetham Esq	P Mappedoram Esq
A W J Darby Esq	N E Tebbit Esq
Mrs M E Darby	R B Waddelow Esq
R J Darby Esq	N Wright Esq
J Dennis Esq	A Yarrow Esq

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Commissioners) was in attendance.

The Chairman enquired whether ALL Board members were happy for the meeting to be recorded. All members were in agreement.

### Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from A Lensen Esq and G R W Wright Esq.

### C.306 Declarations of Interest

Miss Ablett 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.

The Chairman declared interests in minute nos. C.321 and C.334.

Mr Mappedoram declared an interest in minute no. C.312.

Messrs J and W Dennis declared interests in minute no. C.314.

Mr N Wright declared an interest in minute no. C.334.

Mr Yarrow declared an interest in minute no. C.339.

### C.307 Standing Orders

Miss Ablett reported that to allow the Commissioners to modify the manner in which they hold meetings (for a temporary period) whilst special arrangements are in place to deal with COVID-19, Defra have agreed to the adoption of modified standing orders. The Commissioners considered the adapted set of the new model orders, as supplied by ADA, which include two extra clauses at the end of them which include a change to the way in which meetings are held to allow remote attendance.

### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve in principle.

### C.308 Confirmation of Minutes

#### RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

### C.309 Appointment of Chairman

#### RESOLVED

That M Church Esq be appointed Chairman of the Commissioners.

### C.310 Appointment of Vice Chairman

#### RESOLVED

That G L P Wilson Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Commissioners.

### C.311 Culverting of a watercourse at Catchwater Drain at Aldreth – W Mappedoram & Son

Further to minutes C.243 and C.256, Miss Ablett reported that consent had been granted on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018 for Mr Mappedoram to install a culvert in the Catchwater Drain and that one of the conditions of the consent was the reinstatement of a boundary hedge/fence, as soon as possible. It appeared that this has still not been undertaken, despite Mr Mappedoram being advised to do so at every meeting since and him advising the Commissioners that it was in hand. This lack of action was in breach of the conditions of the consent and therefore the Commissioners were able to take further action should they wish.

Mr Mappedoram advised that, due to the current circumstances, the work had not been carried out but he would get it done.

Miss Ablett advised that this was of particular concern regarding governance as Mr Mappedoram was a Commissioner and could be seen to be receiving preferential treatment if no action was taken.

The Commissioners expressed their dissatisfaction with the continued delay and enquired of Mr Mappedoram when he anticipated carrying out the work. The Vice Chairman enquired whether Mr Mappedoram would ensure that the work was completed within 12 months and before the next meeting of the Commissioners. Mr Mappedoram assured the Commissioners that the boundary hedge/fence would be re-instated by then and this was accepted by the Commissioners who added that further action would be considered if this was not the case.

#### RESOLVED

That Mr Mappedoram re-instate the boundary hedge/fence within 12 months and before the next meeting of the Commissioners or further action would be considered.

### C. 312 Proposal to culvert at Third Bridge Farm, Hillrow, Causeway

Further to minute C.292, Miss Ablett reported that the Clerk had written to both Rebecca Saunt at East Cambridgeshire Planning Authority and to Jean Heading, Clerk of the Ely Group of Drainage Boards, requesting that any planning applications relating to the Commissioners should be sent to either the Chairman or the Clerk at the Middle Level Commissioners. The Chairman confirmed that he was receiving planning applications.

### C.313 Construction of Irrigation Reservoirs – Willow Hall Farm

Further to minute C.293, Miss Ablett reported on behalf of the Chairman that, after the last meeting, the Environment Agency had confirmed their support for the Commissioners' position and would continue to object.

The Chairman reported that, on behalf of the Commissioners, he had attended a meeting on 18th February 2020, hosted by the Environment Agency at Brampton, at which three members of the Agency, two members of the County Council Planning Department, and Peter Danks of Reading Agricultural Consultants were also present. He advised that Mr William Dennis and his two Consultants had also joined the meeting later.

The Chairman also reported that the Council had received a revised planning application from the applicants the day before the meeting, which removed many farmers land, previously included, resulting in water need being greatly reduced and hence the area for gravel extraction also reduced. He confirmed the application had been resubmitted.

The Chairman advised that the Commissioners only had until the 3<sup>rd</sup> May to respond to the revised application and, as the Commissioners' meeting was being held by telephone conference, he had sent a letter dated 7th April to all members seeking their comments. He confirmed that the Commissioners were only able to comment on three areas and should therefore concentrate on; the de-watering, the levels at the filling of the reservoir and letting water out in the summer.

Mr Lee advised that, due to the need to have the facility of summer water, he considered the Commissioners should support the application. In the event of the Old West slackers being closed it would be beneficial to all ratepayers, not only the applicant, because it would maintain water availability in the District, which was important to everyone.

Mr Wright advised that neighbouring farmers were neither for or against the principle of the reservoir but just needed to be told in an easy to read report that would show all Commissioners that, when the building of the reservoir commenced, and once it was finished, farming businesses would not be affected.

Mr W Dennis reported that during construction there would be a recharge trench around the outside that would stop any de-watering on the outside of the site and confirmed there would also be boreholes to monitor the water levels.

The Chairman enquired whether Mr Dennis would be prepared to put more boreholes in the area, some on neighbouring farmers land, if landowners were in agreement, up to 1,500 metres away from the site and for these to be monitored for two years.

Mr W Dennis agreed this could be done, with landowners' consent, and Mr Wright confirmed he was happy to have some on his land.

Mr Lee advised that, as well as satisfying the neighbours, he thought it very important that the Commissioners ask the applicant to ensure that level boards be put in, at his expense, wherever the Commissioners felt it right, because parts of the District had very different levels which can get too high in the summer. It was a condition that should be placed upon the applicant for him to fund them and for the Commissioners to decide where they would be most beneficial for everyone.

The Chairman reported that this was one of the questions put to the Commissioners by the applicants' consultants and they had guaranteed they would not go above summer levels.

Mr W Dennis agreed to this request and was happy to pay for the level boards and the boreholes. He advised that he could not give a timescale of when this would be done but hoped it would be within the next two months, depending on what was growing on the land.

The Chairman enquired whether it would be possible for Mr W Dennis to prepare a simple report on the four areas that were of concern to the Commissioners, which could be sent to all Commissioners and that they then email their comments in response to the Chairman within a couple of weeks of receiving the information. Mr W Dennis agreed to prepare a report.

Councillor Cheetham suggested the Commissioners ask Cambridgeshire County Council for a short extension to allow them to review Mr Dennis' report and to pass comment before responding to the Council.

The Chairman confirmed he would request an extension immediately, but in the meantime he would respond to the Council and copy in Mr Dennis, so that he could arrange to carry out further borehole testing and produce his report. He added that once the report was available and comments had been made the Commissioners would have another meeting to discuss it.

Mr W Dennis agreed to get the report to the Chairman within two weeks and enquired when he was likely to get a response from the Commissioners.

Mr Lee suggested having an emergency meeting by telephone conference and both the Chairman and Mr W Dennis agreed that this was the way forward.

Councillor Cheetham requested that the Chairman inform the Commissioners of the date of the extension, when agreed with Cambridgeshire County Council.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman request Cambridgeshire County Council grant an extension to the date by which the Commissioners have to respond to the application.
- ii) That Mr W Dennis produce a simple report for the Commissioners showing how neighbouring farms would be protected.
- iii) That Mr Dennis' report be sent to all Commissioners to review and send their comments to the Chairman.
- iv) That Mr W Dennis arrange to carry out further borehole testing on the land of neighbouring farmers and install level boards, at his own expense.
- v) That an emergency meeting be called to discuss the report before the Commissioners respond to Cambridgeshire County Council.

## C.314 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and Level South Barrier Bank works

Further to minute C.295, Miss Ablett referred to the Newsletters from the Environment Agency dated December 2019 and April 2020.

### C.315 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett advised:-

#### i) COVID-19 Actions

That following the instructions given by government on 23<sup>rd</sup> March the following list of actions have been taken (this list is not exhaustive);

- Arrangements were made for all MLC staff to have the facility to work from home. This included access to email, and in most cases full remote access to work computers. This was implemented and fully operational by Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March.
- MLC operatives continue to attend work but in a more restricted manor following NHS guidelines.
- A skeleton rota to ensure that the office phones are manned has been put in place, post is received and processed and letters sent out where necessary.
- Other temporary arrangements have been implemented to help support the continued operation of the office whilst the COVID-19 government restrictions remain in place, this includes allowing more flexible hours of work, allowing access to the office as and when required to collect or deposit papers making arrangements for the post to be collected and delivered to a safe location outside the office.
- A licence to run video conferencing meeting was obtained and arrangements made to hold meetings by telephone and/or video. Chairmen were contacted at each stage as government advice emerged.
- A policy statement was issued via the MLC website stating the actions the MLC were taking.
- Consultation with ADA on more or less a daily basis were undertaken in the first few weeks encouraging them to take proactive action. Of value to us (and as called for) ADA have been able to secure IDBs 'Key Worker' status and have obtained approval from Defra to move to web/telephone conference meetings.

#### ii) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

One option for future Board arrangements discussed at the second and third meetings was the subject of a briefing paper.

That a fourth Chair's Meeting was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

The meeting commenced with a presentation with slides covering the lottery funded 'Fens Biosphere' bid. This UNESCO designation would have no statutory backing but instead aims to draw attention to the unique nature of the area. Good practice sharing would be facilitated and a framework of support for positive action developed. The idea is to frame the application around the Cambridgeshire peat lands and the IDB districts which provide a network of interconnecting watercourses. As this designation would not lead to a set of actions which would be enforced but could have a positive impact on the area the Board were asked (at this stage) to consider giving its approval in principle to the bid.

## RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve support for the Biosphere bid in principle

Health and Safety discussions followed and it was agreed that the new arrangement with Cope Safety Management was working well.

The future vision for the MLC and IDBs was discussed and is covered as a separate agenda item.

On member training, after discussion, it was agreed that members would benefit from training on 'communications and engagement' as it was felt that Boards generally had challenges in getting messages across to the public.

The only other item covered in any detail was in relation to Board agendas and minutes. It was resolved that the Chairs supported the move to reducing the amount of paper leaving the MLC offices and it was also agreed, for reasons of efficiency, that Chairs be provided with an action points list as soon as practical after the meetings but in advance of issuing draft minutes.

### Planning and Consenting

One of the agreed actions from the last Chair's meeting was that each Board be asked to consider the degree of delegation and reporting they require on planning and consenting matters. This was in response to several queries over the extent of detail being reported on such matters and the delays in issuing responses due to the number of people being consulted. I have outlined several possible options below to assist the Board but of course there are many other permutations and it is for the Board to decide which suits its interests best.

- a) Remain with the current arrangements.
- b) Continue to delegate all commenting on consent applications and relevant planning matters to the Chairman and in his absence (or where he has an interest) to the Vice Chair. The Chair to have the power to decide if a matter should be raised at the board meeting for its consideration where legal timeframes permit this. All matters however to be reported generally more briefly within the Board report, ie number of applications responded to and number of consents issued or refused.
- c) As above but leaving the Clerk with the power to determine the appropriate responses to consent applications and planning matters without reference to the Chair or Vice Chair.

## RESOLVED

That the Commissioners continue with the current arrangements.

### iii) Future Meetings Agendas

That as meeting agendas are getting larger, to include more information to meet legal requirements and ensure members are well informed on issues that might concern them in their role as a Board Member, the Middle Level Commissioners are considering moving close to a paperless arrangement. It is therefore proposed that (for those members that have given email addresses) we will issue the agenda in electronic PDF format. The email will ask for confirmation of receipt of the document but will offer to issue a paper duplicate, but only upon

request. The aim of this change is to reduce paper wastage, reduce cost and to reduce the carbon footprint of the office.

Miss Ablett further advised that the Clerk was also investigating a better document management system, which would make reading of electronic agendas easier, as is used by the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk.

## RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve receiving future agendas in electronic format and that the Clerk investigate more 'user friendly' formats to make electronic reading easier.

iv) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Association had been held at the ICE building in Westminster on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

The conference was very well attended and the speakers this year were:-

**Stuart Roberts - Vice President National Farmers' Union** – an arable and livestock farmer who has also worked for Defra and Flood Standards Agency – who shared his views on the need for more radical and bold thinking on flood risk management and the supply of water for agriculture.

**Bryan Curtis – Chair Coastal Group Network – Chartered Engineer and a member of CIWEM and ICE.**

Bryan is Chairman of the Coastal Group Network. This is a network of Councils, Ports, Government bodies who provide a collective voice for the coast and management of the shoreline.

**Robin Price – Interim Managing Director – Water Resources East (WRE)**

Water Resources East is a partnership from a wide range of industries including water energy, retail, the environment, land management and agriculture who are working in collaboration to manage the number of significant risks to the future supply of water in the East of England. The NFU and ADA (via the David Thomas) have membership on the Board of WRE.

The conference was introduced by Robert Caudwell who asked all present to mark their appreciation of the work being done in the north east of England to respond to and manage the impacts of the floods. He stated his opinion that warnings at previous ADA conferences over the lack of river maintenance had fallen on deaf ears and that the flooding taking place at the time was clear evidence of the need to better balance capital investment with maintenance spending. He then went on to outline ADA's intention to lobby all parties throughout the general election. This included sharing the 7-point plan detailed below;

### **1. Long term investment horizons in the face of climate change challenges**

Flood risk management delivers enduring benefits and authorities involved need to be able to plan ahead financially over multiple years and need to receive a sensible balance of capital and revenue funding, spread across the river catchments, in order to find efficiencies through climate change adaptation and resilience, and attract business investment.

## **2. Promote co-operation and partnership working to manage the water environment and reduce flood risk**

Close cooperation between flood risk management authorities, water companies, communities, business and land managers needs the continued strong support of government to deliver adaptive and resilient flood risk maintenance and similar activities more efficiently and affordably.

## **3. Total catchment management**

Total catchment management is now the widely accepted approach to managing our water and now is the time to increase and empower local professionals and communities to manage and operate these catchments together.

## **4. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)**

The next government needs to fully implement Schedule 3 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010, to ensure future development can keep pace with the challenges of the changing climate, by ensuring that SuDS are maintained over the lifetime of a development.

## **5. Support local governance in flood and water level management decision making**

In some parts of England there is an appetite for greater local maintenance delivery on watercourses and flood defence assets than that currently afforded from national investment. This can be achieved via the careful transfer of some main river maintenance to local bodies or the expansion of areas maintained by those local bodies, such as Internal Drainage Boards, where there is local support and transitional funding.

## **6. Local Government Finances**

It is vital that Special and Local Levy funding mechanisms for drainage, water level and flood risk management continue to be part of this funding landscape to maintain the democratic link with local communities affected.

## **7. Brexit: Ensuring a resilient regulatory framework for the water environment**

The next government needs to provide clear policy messages about how they wish to make the delivery of environmental improvements to the water environment easier and more effective as we transition from European legislation such as the Water Framework Directive.

Unfortunately, because the conference was held during the pre-election period sometimes known as Purdah, which restricts certain communications during this time, there were no representatives available from the Environment Agency or Defra which significantly restricted the debate on flood risk management, funding and maintenance issues. However, there was considerable support from the floor of the conference for the view that lack of maintenance had significantly contributed to the recent problems with the River Don and the flooding of Fishlake village.

Officers of the Association were re-elected, including Lord De Ramsey as President and Robert Caudwell as Chairman.

Subscriptions to ADA would be increased by 2% for the following year.

b) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held in London on Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association for any Commissioner who wishes to attend.

c) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association was held on Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

The format was as per the 2019 conference with a workshop in the morning and the conference in the afternoon. Topics covered were control of invasive species, water resources, planning and effective communications with the wider public.

That the date of the next meeting is Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

d) Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Board Members

That whilst in East Anglia we have not had the unprecedented levels of rainfall which have occurred further north and in the west of the county in recent years this by no means equates to there being no risk of it occurring here. ADA have written to DEFRA seeking to formalise a mechanism for IDBs providing support to the EA in a major event to recover costs. An update will be given should there be any substantive movement from DEFRA

v) Water Resources East (WRE)

That the Middle Level Commissioners' Chief Executive has been appointed as ADA's area representative on the Board of WRE. He will act as spokesman for IDBs who have an interest in the future management and provision of water in the East of England. This is particularly important as government consider plans to make the area more resilient and as the impacts of climate change start to bite in an area of rapid housing growth.

To facilitate a place on the Board requires a modest financial contribution from all IDBs within the area covered by WRE. The MLC contribution is their Chief Executive's time spent representing the Boards. For this Board the requested annual contribution is £52.11.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve the requested annual contribution of £52.11.

vi) Vision for the Future of Boards administered by the MLC

That Members will be aware that the Chair's meetings hosted by the MLC has had an item on the agenda for the last few meetings on future planning of administration and delivery of operations for the Board's collectively. As part of this process it has been agreed that members thoughts should be sought on what they envisage the collective future can and should

look like to ensure the most resilient, delivery focused approach that can be achieved. Members should when developing their vision of water management in the fens in 2030 consider the challenges of maintaining representation, improving financial resilience, reducing duplication of work, the potential for cost savings, advantages and disadvantages of the various options available, the impacts of technology and sharing of resources and knowledge.

The general feeling of the Boards so far was that they recognised there could be problems with Boards and the need to amalgamate possibly ten years down the road but most seemed to be happy to continue with their current arrangements. However, this should remain under review and where appropriate amalgamations between Boards supported.

#### C.316 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Update

Further to minute C.297, Miss Ablett referred to the most recent matters raised by the Partnership.

#### C.317 Asset Survey of the Commissioners' Pumping Stations

Further to minute C.300, Miss Ablett referred to the Asset Surveys of the Commissioners' Pumping Stations carried out by the Consulting Engineer and specifically to his comments regarding an overhaul of the weedscreen cleaner, repairs to the pump flange bolts and to the condition of the sheet piling at Sutton Gault Pumping Station.

The Chairman considered that as the weedscreen cleaner was operational at the moment it should be monitored and an overhaul discussed at a later date. He added that although not all the sheet piling was of concern he considered that a structural engineer should be asked to inspect it before any decision was made on the pump repairs. This was agreed by the Commissioners.

#### RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to arrange for a structural engineer to inspect the sheet piling.

#### C.318 Capital Improvement Programme

The Commissioners reviewed their future capital improvement programme and requested it be updated to reflect the engineer's assessment. It was agreed that the amended programme be discussed again at the next meeting, together with the structural engineer's report.

#### RESOLVED

That the Capital Improvement Programme be updated to reflect the engineer's assessment and discussed at the next meeting, together with the structural engineer's report

#### C.319 Planning Issues – Garden Close/Mepal Road

The Chairman reported that most of the planning applications received relating to the District were not too large and he was able to deal with them. He advised there were 2 applications that had been made; 1 at the Old Airfield where 70 houses were already being built for which the Developers had outline planning permission for 170 more and, although this was not directly within the District,

the water would eventually find its way to the Catchwater Drain. The other related to the site at Garden Close, Mepal and although this was on the edge of the District the surface water would eventually again enter the Commissioners' system.

As the Chairman considered these applications too large for him to deal with, and to ensure that any concerns or issues were identified, he had asked the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Officer to deal with these, on behalf of the Commissioners. The Planning Officer had recently advised that both applications were at the preliminary stage.

The Chairman enquired whether the Commissioners were happy to authorise the Planning Officer to continue dealing with these matters on their behalf. This was agreed by the Commissioners.

### RESOLVED

That the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Officer be authorised to continue to assist the Chairman with planning applications, especially any applications submitted by Linden Ltd and Abbey Developments.

### C.320 District Work Report

i) The Chairman reported that, due to the very wet weather experienced since the last meeting, more pumping had been necessary which had resulted in the actual cost exceeding the budget.

The Chairman advised that for many years he had been concerned about the amount of surface flooding of fields alongside the Earith to Sutton road every winter and, although the Commissioners had maintained the low level in the Division Drain as in previous years, this winter the surface water standing on fields had increased. He advised that, unfortunately, the Environment Agency's response did not offer any solution and he had written to Haddenham Parish Council, outlining the Commissioners' concerns, asking for their support. He further advised that the Parish Council had written to the Environment Agency on two occasions but had received the same response. However, the Parish Council had contacted Lucy Fraser, MP for South East Cambridgeshire, who had agreed to meet with the Chairman, the District Engineer and Councillor Steve Cheetham on the 14<sup>th</sup> March. Unfortunately this meeting was cancelled but he hoped that it would be rearranged when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

The Chairman reported that the normal planned flailing and slubbing programme had been carried out together with work for the Over and Willingham Board and other work outside the District. He added that some work had been carried out for the Environment Agency who had indicated that they would like the Commissioners to do some more work in the future.

The Chairman advised that the normal drain maintenance programme will be carried out for 2020/21 and no major capital work is planned.

### RESOLVED

That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved and the Chairman in conjunction with the District Engineer be authorised to arrange for the District work programme to be undertaken.

ii) District Officer's fee

Mr Church advised that he had been notified by the Clerk that a benefit in kind should be declared and tax paid by him on any private use of the telephone landline provided by the Commissioners. He enquired of the most appropriate action to take regarding this matter.

Miss Ablett advised that the telephone line should be changed to a residential line in the name of the Chairman and not that of the Commissioners and that they reimburse him for any business use. This action was agreed by both the Chairman and the Commissioners.

The Chairman declared an interest and the Vice Chairman took the Chair.

The Commissioners gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2020/2021.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Commissioners agree that the sum of £2000.00 be allowed for the services of the Chairman for 2020/2021, together with all legitimate expenses.
- (ii) That the Chairman submit half yearly invoices to the Commissioners in respect of his fees.
- (iii) That the Commissioners agree that 45p per mile be allowed for travelling expenses incurred on behalf of the Commissioners by Mr Church.
- (iv) That the Chairman transfer the telephone landline into a residential line in his own name and that the business use of the telephone be reimbursed by the Commissioners.
- (v) That the service agreement be amended to reflect this, if required.

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The Chairman resumed the Chair

(NB) - The Chairman declared an interest when this item was discussed.

C.321 District Labour  
Employees' Contract of Employment and Benefits in Kind

Miss Ablett reported that in their latest audit the internal auditors had taken a closer look at the P11d benefits in kind provided by all Boards in relation to the supply of residential property and vehicles, together with telephones, utility charges etc.

She advised that in previous years instruction had been taken from the Boards, but following points raised by the HMRC and the internal auditor it was felt necessary to carry out a review of potential benefits and how these were to be dealt with as part of the end of year declarations. She added that whilst it was up to each individual Board to decide how they remunerate their employees, they must ensure that relevant legislation was complied with.

Miss Ablett advised that the District Engineer was provided with the following benefits in kind:-

A residential property – (BIK calculated using the 1973 gross rating value if this can be obtained)

A motor vehicle

Council tax and telephone expenses

Miss Ablett referred the Commissioners to the employee's Contract of Employment that had been drafted based on current information and requested they review the contract, together with the Benefits in Kind received by the District Engineer.

The Chairman was in agreement with the contract and the benefits in kind but was mindful of the tax implications this would have for District Engineer.

Mr Lee advised that the Commissioners must look after Mr Jordan, as good employees within the agricultural sector were hard to find and therefore they should make sure that the changes had no financial impact on him. This was agreed by all Commissioners.

#### RESOLVED

That the Chairman and Vice Chairman liaise with the Middle Level Commissioners to ensure that the Commissioners' employee does not suffer financially once all benefits in kind have been declared.

#### C.322 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

Miss Ablett referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, dated December 2019, previously circulated to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

#### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners agree to fund one mink trap.

#### C.323 Charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work

Consideration was given to whether any revisions were necessary in the Commissioners' charges for hiring plant for private work (last reviewed – April 2019).

#### Atlas 360 Wheeled Excavator

Present charges - £25.00 per hour in the District ) inclusive of operator's wages and  
£37.50 per hour outside the District ) travelling time

#### RESOLVED

That the hire charge for the Terex 360 Wheeled Excavator be increased to £26.00 per hour when working in the District and be increased to £38.50 per hour when working outside the District.

### C.324 State-aided Schemes

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

#### RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

### C.325 Environment Agency – Precepts

Miss Ablett reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2020/2021 in the sum of £35,953.00 (the precept for 2019/2020 being £35,076.49).

### C.326 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Miss Ablett reported that the sum of £8,095.15 (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency (£8,854.15 representing 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2019/2020 less £759.00 overpaid in respect of the financial year 2018/2019).

### C.327 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

Miss Ablett reported that it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% in 2020, viz:- from £629 to £642.

#### RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2020.

### C.328 Health and Safety

a) Further to minute C.301, the Chairman referred to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their second visit to the District on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

On behalf of the Chairman, Miss Ablett reported that all warning signs had been installed as requested and that COPE Safety Management had produced an overall risk assessment for pumping stations and would follow up with machine operation shortly. She also advised that the Chairman had confirmed that he had found COPE to be most helpful and supportive.

Miss Ablett reminded the Commissioners that they are responsible for ensuring they are compliant with all Health and Safety legislation and are adequately insured. In view of this, all points for action raised by its' Health and Safety consultant must be implemented so as to avoid the Commissioners' insurance policy from becoming invalid.

b) Miss Ablett referred to the ADA Internal Drainage Boards' Health, Safety & Welfare Survey 2018.

### C.329 Review of Internal Controls

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

### C.330 Risk Management Assessment

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

The Commissioners considered their Risk Register.

### RESOLVED

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

b) The Commissioners considered the insured value of their buildings and gave consideration to having a professional valuation of the Commissioners' real estate assets, for insurance purposes.

### RESOLVED

i) That a quotation be obtained from the insurers to insure the pumping stations at the Consulting Engineer's values and the Chairman be authorised to take any action necessary.

ii) That the insured sum for the residential property be approved.

### C.331 Exercise of Public Rights

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

### C.332 Annual Governance Statement – 2019/2020

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

### RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Commissioners, for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

### C.333 Payments

The Commissioners considered and approved payments amounting to £348,377.77 which had been made during the financial year 2019/2020.

#### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners be provided with a schedule net of VAT.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest in the payments to him.

(NB) – Mr Wright declared an interest in the payments made to A G Wright & Son??

### C.334 Annual Accounts of the Commissioners – 2019/2020

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 as required in the Audit Regulations.

#### RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Return, on behalf of the Commissioners, for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

### C.335 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2020/2021

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2020/2021 and were informed by Miss Ablett that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 64.41% and 35.59%.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £187,039 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £120,476 and £66,563 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 37.00p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £66,563 be made and issued to East Cambridgeshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Commissioners be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

C.336 Display of rate notice

RESOLVED

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

C.337 Date of next Meeting

Miss Ablett reminded the Commissioners that the next meeting will be held on Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

C.338 Application to install pipes into the Main Drain at Wilburton

The Chairman advised that a consent application had been received from Mr Yarrow requesting permission to install pipes into the main drain at Wilburton. He confirmed that it was only a small scheme of 5-6 pipes and enquired whether the Commissioners were happy to approve this application.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the consent application submitted by Mr Yarrow.

(NB) – Mr Yarrow declared an interest when this item was discussed.