

UPWELL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Upwell Internal Drainage Board
held at the Lamb and Flag Public House, Welney on Monday the 18th May 2020

PRESENT

K Goodger Esq (Chairman)	R S Means Esq
P Clabon Esq (Vice Chairman)	A Quail Esq
H G Bliss Esq	J Quail Esq
R D Gladwin Esq	C N T Rose Esq
C F Hartley Esq	D Scott Esq
J Kirk Esq	W Sutton Esq

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Carl Nunn (District Officer) were 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 G W Gowler Esq, B Rackley Esq and B Scott Esq.

B.1858 Standing Orders

Miss Ablett reported that to allow the Board 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. Members 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 Board approve in principle.

B.1859 Declarations of Interest

Miss Ablett reminded Members of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any individual on the Board.

Messrs Hartley and Means declared an interest in minute B.1864.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman declared interests in minute B.1882.

Councillor Sutton and Mr Hartley declared interests (as Members of the Middle Level Board) in any matters relating to the Middle Level Commissioners.

Councillor Sutton declared an interest in all planning matters as a member of Fenland District Council's Planning Committee.

Mr Gladwin declared an interest in planning applications (MLC Ref Nos 409, 412 & 414) received for P J Farms Ltd.

B.1860 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 20th January 2020 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1861 Election of Board Members

Miss Ablett reported that the term of Office of the elected Members of the Board would expire on the 31st October 2020 and submitted the proposed Register of Electors applicable to the 2020 election.

RESOLVED

That the Register be approved.

B.1862 Amendments to the Constitution

Further to minute B.1832, Miss Ablett reported that a letter had been sent to the Environment Agency who had consulted on the proposed changes. She further reported that the Environment Agency would now prepare the amendment, submit it to Defra for approval, and Defra would then make an order to amend the Constitution.

Miss Ablett advised that it had been resolved at the last meeting to reduce the quorum to 7 Members. However, in order for the quorum to be changed, the Standing Orders would have to be amended and Miss Ablett advised that it was not clear whether this could be done by the existing Board or whether the re-constituted Board would have to authorise the change. She enquired whether, if the existing Board was able to make the change, and in order to save time, the Board would authorise the Clerk to amend the standing orders once DEFRA had agreed the amended number of Members.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk be authorised to amend the Standing Orders to reduce the quorum to 7 Members, if the existing Board is able to do so, as and when Defra agree to the re-constitution,.

B.1863 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank Works

Further to minute B.1834, Miss Ablett referred to a Newsletter from the Environment Agency dated April 2020.

B.1864 Worlds End Farm, Nordelph

Further to minute B.1835, Miss Ablett confirmed the outstanding rates had been paid in full. She reported that the occupier had submitted a claim to the County Court for the amount of compensation for loss of crop as per his initial request and that the claim had been defended on behalf of the Board. The response from the court was to request that the matter should proceed initially by way of arbitration and she advised that the Chairman had agreed to such mediation. She further advised that neither side was bound by the Arbitrators determination and could still elect to proceed to court should they wish.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman's actions to agree to mediation be approved.
- ii) That the Chairman be authorised to take such action as he feels necessary on behalf of the Board.

B.1865 Hales Drove, Old Croft River

Further to minute B.1836, Miss Ablett reported that the Clerk had met on site with both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman to discuss the options available. She advised that it had also been agreed that the trees would be removed and the cost of this would be shared between the Board and Manea & Welney DDC.

Miss Ablett further reported that the Clerk had contacted Stantec to get an idea whether wet dredging passed the cottages, dropping in a pipe and backfilling whilst wet would be a solution. However, although their preliminary response was that they thought that this could be done, Stantec had advised that they would look into the matter further and advise accordingly.

B.1866 Contravention of Byelaws – Maywood Bungalow (Pole and Wire Fence adjacent to Old Croft River)

Miss Ablett reported that, following his telephone call to the office, another letter had been sent to Mr Hall advising that the Board were willing to consider some temporary arrangement but, as the fence was unauthorised, and in contravention of the Board's Byelaws, formal consent was required. She added that the necessary consent application forms had been sent to Mr Hall for his completion.

B.1867 Joint Maintenance Works – Old Croft River

- a) Rubbish and Debris in the drain at Sandgate Corner

Miss Ablett reported that Manea and Welney DDC had sent a letter to the occupiers at 1-2 Sandgate Terrace, Bill and Lisa Forrest, requesting that they remove the rubbish and debris from the drain as soon as possible to prevent formal action from being taken.

- b) Overhanging Trees – Copes Hill Farm

Miss Ablett reported that, in agreement with the Landowner, any overhanging branches or trees that were restricting drain maintenance works had now been removed by the Middle

Level Commissioners' workforce on a rechargeable basis to Upwell IDB and Manea and Welney DDC.

c) Contravention of Byelaws – Maywood Farm

Miss Ablett reported that Manea and Welney DDC had sent a further letter to Mr Smith at Maywood Farm requesting the hedging planted on the edge of The Old Croft river within the 9 metre wide easement strip be removed, as soon as possible, to allow for access to carry out essential flood risk maintenance along the river as and when required.

B.1868 Site of Former Shrub House, 46 Church Road, Christchurch – Planning Application F/YR15/0104/F

Further to minute B.1837, Miss Ablett reported that, following the last meeting, the Planning Officer had chased MTC Engineering, the applicant's consultants, and requested payment of the outstanding contribution.

Although MTC had responded disputing that any further contribution was due, she advised that the Planning Officer was of the opinion that the discharge contribution was outstanding and was still pursuing payment.

B.1869 Roadway to Nordelph Pumping Station

Further to minute B.1838, Miss Ablett reported that a letter had been sent to Duncan Slade of Norfolk County Council on the 10th March 2020.

B.1870 Complaint regarding the administration of the Board

Further to minute B.1840, Miss Ablett reported on the response received from the Ombudsman in relation to the complaint surrounding consenting and other member related matters in the area of The Croft, Christchurch and advised that the response was only a draft response and the complainant had until the 15th May to respond to their decision.

B.1871 Structure under the Road at the Sixteen Foot River

Further to minute B.1841, the Chairman advised that there was nothing further to report since the last meeting of the Board and it still remained for him to contact both Alan and Jonathan Quail, and the Middle Level Commissioners' Operations Engineer, to arrange for the work to commence after harvest.

B.1872 Upwell Fen Pumping Station

Further to minute B.1844, Miss Ablett reported that the necessary work on the roadway had been carried out by Waldersey Farms.

Miss Ablett advised that the Middle Level Commissioners held no records regarding ownership of the roadway and as it had now been repaired she enquired whether the Board wished for the Clerk to continue to make enquiries with the Land Registry concerning ownership.

RESOLVED

That, as the road had been repaired, Members did not consider it necessary to establish ownership at this time.

B.1873 Potential Amalgamation Discussions – Sutton & Mepal IDB, Manea & Welney DDC and Upwell IDB

Further to minute B.1847, the Chairman reported that this had not been progressed and there had been no further meetings.

B.1874 Cock Fen Pumping station Tank Scout

Further to minute B.1857, Miss Ablett reported that the tank scout had been successfully installed in March and had been set up to automatically request a top up with the trigger set at 30%. Due to the remoteness of the site, and there being security gates, it had been arranged that the District Foreman would be notified before any delivery was made

The Chairman advised that neither he nor the District Foreman were receiving any daily emails from the system and asked Miss Ablett to contact Anglia Farmers to get this rectified.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk contact Anglia Farmers to request they investigate why daily notifications were not being received and ask for these to be sent to both the Chairman and the District Foreman.

B.1875 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett advised:-

i) COVID-19 Actions

That following the instructions given by government on 23rd 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 25th 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

That a fifth Chair's Meeting was held on the 10th March 2020.

Topics discussed included health and safety, effective communications with the public, the move to electronic agendas, consideration of the level of planning information included in reports, planning fees and the work of WRE.

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 Board continue with the current arrangements.

iii) Application for byelaw consent

That the following application for consent to undertake works in and around watercourses had been approved and granted since the last general meeting of the Board:-

<u>Name of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Works</u>	<u>Date Consent granted</u>
Loyd Homes Limited	Removal of existing access culvert and replace with 8m long culvert, headwall and retaining wall units – Old Croft River between Points 110-111	18 th December 2019

RESOLVED

That the action taken in granting consent be approved.

iv) Association of Drainage Authorities

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 3rd March 2020.

The meeting 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 2nd March 2021.

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

Further to minute B.1842(vi), Miss Ablett reported that 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.

B.1876 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

Upwell I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – May 2020

Pumping Stations

Other than the matters previously reported at the December 2019 meeting and that described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out.

Bedlam Bridge

At the end of October pump number 2 starter failed. A new inverter was installed on 2nd December 2019 and has worked faultlessly over the winter period.

During the routine inspection in April the weedscreen cleaner was found to be in need of repairs (see routine inspection 15th April), in addition a small number of pipe work flange bolts were found to need replacing on pump No 1.

It has also been noted that the new electricity meter fitted has been set up with only one “rate” and needs updating to a two-rate tariff. The MLC will be contacting Anglian Farmers to correct this.

Cock Fen

The station has worked without issue over the wet winter period. As instructed MLC will make repairs to the flap valves this summer.

Nordelph

The electricity meter remains faulty. The MLC continue to try to resolve the issue with the meter operator and supplier but to date without success.

Padgets

As instructed by the Chairman the MLC will replace the rusting guide rails in 2020 when the COVID-19 restrictions are amended such that this can safely take place.

Upwell Fen

As requested by the Chairman MLC will remove and repair the outfall flap valve, which is in a very poor state, in 2020 when the COVID-19 restrictions are amended such that this can safely take place.

During the routine inspection in April it was noticed there was a leak from the pump discharge thrust block (see routine inspection 15th April 2020). The leak is not excessive and it may be desirable to monitor it rather than undertake extensive works to establish the cause of the problem at this time.

Flood Risk Management (FRM) for the Fens Technical Group [previously reported as the Future Fenland Project]

The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has represented both the Middle Level Commissioners and their associated Boards on the Technical Group since the last Board meeting.

A Draft Baseline Report is currently being prepared.

Planning Procedures Update

Further to the last Board meeting the Clerk to the Board has received invitations and attended meetings held by both Fenland District and King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough (KL&WN) Councils' Developers Forum and the latter's Inter-Agency Flood Group.

The use of Infiltration Devices

At the last Inter-Agency Working on Flood & Water Group meeting the issue of minor developments (less than 10 houses) not having adequate safeguards in place where infiltration (soakaway) drainage is proposed was raised, as no authorities are prepared to accept responsibility for checking the adequacy of designs or to police their effective implementation. This matter has now been added to the agenda for future meetings.

Local Land Charges Register (LLCR)

A challenge to the legality of the requests by the Middle Level Commissioners to place notes on the Land Charges Registry was raised. This has resulted in KL&WN Council ceasing adding any such notes. Interestingly the stance being taken by Fenland District Council differs from this and it has advised that it holds notes on file which are passed on whenever a Land Charges Registry enquiry is made. In this way it can rightly assert that the notes are not on the Registry but are held separately.

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 3 new development related matters have been received and, where appropriate, dealt with since the last meeting:

<i>MLC Ref.</i>	<i>Council Ref.</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Location</i>
496	20/00190/PACU6	Mr R Johnson	Leisure (flexible use wedding venue)	Silt Road, Wisbech
497	F/YR20/0133/PNC04	R A Deptford Ltd	Residential (5 plots)	Mumbys Drove, Three Holes
498	20/00289/F	Mr T Venni	Storage (shed)	Main Road, Three Holes

Planning applications ending 'PACU' relate to notification for Prior Approval for change of use of agricultural building to a flexible use (leisure, wedding venue)

Planning applications ending 'PNCO' relate to prior notification change of use issues

From the information provided it is understood that all the developments propose to discharge surface water to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

Some of the above may discharge treated foul water effluent into the Board's system either via private treatment plants or Christchurch Water Recycling Centre (WRC).

A discharge consent application for a site outside of the Board's District but with the point of discharge for both surface and treated effluent water in Upwell IDB has been received during the reporting period.

No further correspondence has been received from the applicants or the applicants' agent(s) and/or Board decision/instructions are required concerning the following development. No further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

- *Erection of 4 bedroom farmhouse and garages replacing the farmhouse that was destroyed by fire at Mill House, Boothes Road, Nordelph – Mr Denis Pearcey (MLC Ref Nos 338 & 485)*
- *Erection of 6 dwellings at land south west of Syringa House, Upwell Road, Christchurch - Mr J Stittle & Miss R Watson (MLC Ref No 437) & Mr B Dawson (MLC Ref No 476)*
- *Proposed residential development (4 dwellings) at former Three Tunns Public House, Main Street/Bedford Bank (East) Welney – Elgood & Sons Ltd (MLC Ref No 475)*

In view of the absence of recent correspondence and any subsequent instruction from the Board it will be presumed, unless otherwise recorded, that the Board is content with any development that has occurred and that no further action is required at this time.

Erection of 4 dwellings with detached garages, comprising of 2 x 2-storey 4-bed dwellings and 2 x 3-storey 5-bed dwellings at the site of the former Shrub House, 46 Church Road, Christchurch – P J Farms Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 409, 412 & 414)

Discussions are continuing with the applicant's consultant in respect of the discharge consent application.

Construction of 2 dwellings at Chapel Farm, Silt Road, Nordelph – Mr D Russell (MLC Ref Nos 426, 472 & 481)

Further to the last Board Meeting Report, additional detailed information on the proposed soakaway design was provided by the applicant's agent, Distinct Designs Ltd, as part of the on-going post-application consultation.

The design provided was checked and found to meet current design specifications and the Board's requirements, being sufficient to accommodate the worst case event up to the 1% AEP, the 1 in 100 year event, together with a 40% allowance for climate change. The developer also agreed to reposition the soakaways to the landward side of the properties to maximise the distance from Well Creek.

Proposed residential development of 17 units to the north west of The Grange and south east of North Road, Welney – Loyd Homes (Client of JPP Consulting) (MLC Ref No 462)

The consent applications for works in and adjacent to The Old Croft River (OCR) have been recommended for approval.

An application for discharge consent has been submitted and is currently being processed.

Assistance has been given to the Clerk's Department in respect of issuing notices of entry to undertake maintenance works on the OCR.

Retrospective planning application for the change of use of residential garden for use of dog kennels and runs at The Cottage, Welney Road, Lakes End – Mrs S Millington (MLC Ref No 492)

Detailed information was originally supplied by the applicant's agent, Trundle Design Ltd, in respect of this development for which it was proposed that both surface and treated foul effluent water from the kennels would be served by an existing septic tank.

The applicant's agent was advised that the Board was unable to accept the submitted Infiltration Devices self-certification (Option 1) application because the size and scale of the development exceeds the scope of the self-certification process.

Planning permission was refused by the Borough Council during February due to the significant adverse impact on the amenity of the residential neighbours.

No further correspondence or instruction has been received in relation to the above therefore it is assumed no further action is required.

Fenland District Council (FDC)

FDC Liaison Meeting

Another meeting is currently being organised but will have to be delayed until the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) working restrictions are lifted.

Emerging Local Plan and Level 1 SFRA & WCS documents

No further consultation has occurred since the last meeting.

Response to 2020 Revision of Local Validation Guidance

During February comments were sought on its Local Validation List which details the documents that are required to 'validate' planning applications.

A similar response to that sent to Cambridgeshire County Council in April 2019 was issued to the District Council for consideration. However, rather than the more promising response received from the County Council the District Council simply advised that:

“The project group have met to consider your comments, and concluded that they relate to the quality of information submitted, and therefore sits with the decision making process rather than the validation process.”

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan

Local Plan review 2016-2036

No further consultation has occurred since the last meeting.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Flood Risk Management Partnership (C&PFRMP)

The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has represented both the Middle Level Commissioners and their associated Boards since the last Board meeting.

Fenland Flooding Issues Sub-group

The meeting due to be held during April has been postponed until the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) working restrictions are lifted.

Upwell Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2038

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local

people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

Both the draft and revised versions of the plan have been considered as part of public consultations held between 5 April – 24 May and 18 November – 13 January.

The plan is very Upwell Village centric and the response made on behalf of both the Middle Level Commissioners and the associated Boards for whom we provide a planning consultancy service within the Upwell Parish was largely generic. Items of interest to the Board within the submitted document include Economic development including Housing – Scale and Location; Tourism, Leisure, Recreation, and Marina; Open Community Space including Local Green Spaces; the Natural Environment; Flood Risk and Prevention including maintenance of flood defences.

General information on Risk Management Authorities (RMA); Watercourses protected by the LDA and relevant RMA Bylaws; Consultation during the planning process; Early engagement and the better design of infrastructure; River setting and corridors/Green Infrastructure; Biodiversity and protected habitats and species; Flood risk and water level management including hazard mapping and development within the floodplain, open watercourses and Water Resources was also provided.

General Advice

Assistance has been given, on the Board's behalf, in respect of the following:

- (a) Waldersey Farms – An application for byelaw consent to install an inlet and pipework in the district watercourse, between Points 71 and 77 and adjacent to the water storage reservoir to the south of Upwell Pump Station, was recommended for approval.

Consulting Engineer

7 May 2020

Miss Ablett referred to the Engineer's comment regarding a leak from the pump discharge thrust block at Upwell Fen Pumping Station following an inspection in April. The District Foreman reported he had been monitoring the situation for the past 6-7 weeks and the leak had not been getting any worse.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) That the District Foreman and the Consulting Engineer continue to monitor the leak from the pump discharge thrust block at Upwell Fen Pumping Station.

(NB) - Mr Gladwin declared an interest in planning applications (MLC Ref Nos 409, 412 & 414) received for P J Farms Ltd.

B.1877 Finance Committee Report

The Chairman referred to the Inaugural meeting of the Finance Committee held on Monday the 3rd February 2020 and to the notes of the meeting held on the 6th May 2020, which mostly dealt with the electrification of Cock Fen pumping station and gave a brief outline to the Councillors who were new to the Board and may not be familiar with Cock Fen pumping station.

The Chairman reported that the Finance Committee considered that of the three options presented to them, as provided by the Consulting Engineer, option 3 was the preferred option. He advised that all three options included the requirement to upgrade from a single phase to a 3 phase electricity supply to the site.

The Chairman also reported that the Finance Committee recommended the project be financed by applying to the Public Works Loan Board for a £300,000 loan over a maximum term of 30 years.

The Chairman advised that the Finance Committee had discussed the implications of the electrification of Cock Fen pumping station on the Board's drainage rate and considered an increase to the rate this year would be appropriate and that this would be discussed later in the agenda.

The Chairman further advised that Mr S Hartley had enquired whether he could join the Finance Committee. In view of Mr Hartley's knowledge of the Cock Fen area, the Chairman invited him to attend the Committee Meeting and advised that the Finance Committee recommended that he be appointed.

Members discussed the three options presented relating to the electrification of Cock Fen pumping station, together with the financing of the project by way of a Public Works Loan and to the appointment of Mr Steven Hartley to the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED

- i) That the notes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on the 6th May 2020 be approved.
- ii) That the Board approve the recommendations of the Finance Committee save as to the rate and the annual accounts as these would be considered later in the agenda.

- iii) That option 3 for the electrification of Cock Fen pumping station, as provided by the Consulting Engineer, be approved.
- iv) That an amount not exceeding £300,000 be borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board to finance the electrification of Cock Fen pumping station repayable over a maximum period of 30 years.
- v) That Mr Steven Hartley be appointed to the Finance Committee

B.1878 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future Capital Improvement Programme.

RESOLVED

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

B.1879 Maintenance Work in the District

- a) District Work Report – January – May 2020

The Board considered the District Work Report.

RESOLVED

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

- b) Drainworks Programme 2020/2021

With reference to minute B.407, the Board gave consideration to maintenance work required in 2020/2021.

The Chairman advised that the drainworks programme would mostly be in the Christchurch area this year, although some emergency work had to be carried out on the Old Croft River in Tipps End. He also considered it was important for work to be carried out through Welney, which would be done when the road was closed for the bridge works, assuming these works would be carried in the summer.

The Chairman requested that if any member had or was made aware of any issues within the District, they advise either him, the Vice Chairman or the District Foreman so these could be resolved.

RESOLVED

That the programme be approved and the District Officers be authorised to undertake the necessary maintenance work.

B.1880 District Labour
Board's Employee's Wages

Miss Ablett reported that during the financial year 2019/2020 overtime payments had been made as indicated on the Supplementary Schedule.

B.1881 Chemical Weed Control of District Drains

With reference to minute B.1802, the Chairman reported that there were no plans for chemical treatment works at the present time.

B.1882 District Officers' Fees

- a) The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's fees for 2020/2021.
- b) The Board gave consideration to the expenses payable to Mr Goodger and Mr Clabon.

RESOLVED

- i) The Board agree that the sum of £3,500.00 be allowed for the services of the District Officers for 2020/2021.
- ii) That the Board agree that a sum of up to £900.00 for expenses be allowed and split between the District Officers as necessary.

(NB) – The Chairman and the Vice Chairman declared interests when these items were discussed.

B.1883 Conservation Officer's BAP Report

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

RESOLVED

That, as no mink had been seen in the area, no action be taken concerning mink traps at this point. However if mink were identified a trap would be purchased at a later date.

B.1884 State-aided Schemes

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

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.1885 Charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work

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

Flail mower

Present charge - £35 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages)

RESOLVED

That the hire charges remain as at present.

B.1886 Environment Agency – Precepts

Miss Ablett reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2020/2021 in the sum of £55,928.00 (the precept for 2019/2020 being £54,563.80).

B.1887 Contravention of Byelaws – British Telecom Poles

Miss Ablett reported that several letters had been sent to British Telecom regarding the telecom poles erected in contravention of the Board's Byelaws. British Telecom had responded advising that as the Board was not a land owner it could not use protocol under the Telecommunications Act. Miss Ablett advised that it appeared that telecommunications had more powers under the new act, which override the Boards' byelaws.

Miss Ablett reported that the Assistant Clerk would be making further enquiries at the ADA Policy & Finance Committee meeting to ascertain whether this was an issue for other Boards.

B.1888 Health and Safety

- a) Further to minute B.1852, the Chairman referred to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their visit to the District on the 6th February 2020.

The Chairman reported that both he and the Vice Chairman had met with the Cope Health and Safety Officer on two occasions. He advised that several items had been identified for the Board to address, most of which had been dealt with. He also advised of the works still outstanding at Upwell Fen pumping station, being the paving slabs and steps leading to the station and a hole in the floor. The Chairman reported that the District Foreman would attend to these items.

The Chairman also advised the Board 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 Board's insurance policy from becoming invalid.

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

B.1889 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.1890 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.

Members considered the Board's 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 Board considered and approved the insured value of their buildings and considered having a professional revaluation of the Board's real estate assets, for insurance purposes.

RESOLVED

That no changes be made to the valuation at this time and for the matter to be reviewed again at the next annual meeting.

B.1891 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.

B.1892 Annual Governance Statement – 2019/2020

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2020.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2020.

B.1893 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £257,029.72 which had been made during the financial year 2019/2020.

Councillor Sutton queried why the cost of the EE mobile phone contract was so expensive if it was for just one telephone and enquired whether more favourable terms at a reduced cost could be obtained when the contract was due for renewal.

The Chairman explained that this was the best contract price available at the time and confirmed that when the contract was due for renewal he would attempt to obtain more favourable terms.

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

(NB) – Mr Bliss declared an interest in the payment made to H G Bliss Farms Ltd.

(NB) – Councillor and Mr C Hartley declared interests (as Members of the Middle Level Board) in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners.

B.1894 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2019/2020

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2020 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2020.

B.1895 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2020/2021

The Board 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 75.89% and 24.11%.

Miss Ablett referred to the review carried out by the Finance Committee and their recommendation to setting a 21.0p rate.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £197,244 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 £149,683 and £47,561 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 21.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) a) That a Special levy of £28,389 be made and issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

- b) That a Special levy of £19,172 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.1896 Display of rate notice

RESOLVED

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

B.1897 Dates of next Meetings

RESOLVED

That the next Meetings of the Board be held as follows in 2021, viz:-

- i) Monday the 18th January 2021 at 6.00pm
- ii) Monday the 17th May 2021 at 5.30pm
- iii) That an Inspection of the District be held if the Government allows.