

## **MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS**

At a Meeting of the Middle Level Board hosted at the Middle Level Offices  
March on Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020

### **PRESENT**

M E Heading Esq (Chairman)  
J L Brown Esq (Vice Chairman)  
P W Allpress Esq  
C D Boughton Esq  
J R Clarke Esq  
C F Hartley Esq

J E Heading Esq  
M R R Latta Esq  
Mrs D Laws  
W Sutton Esq  
P W West Esq  
H 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 The Lord De Ramsey, S T Raby Esq and S W Whittome Esq.

### **B.3592 Standing Orders**

The Chief Executive 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 Board approve the change.

### **B.3593 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.

Councillor Mrs D Laws declared an interest in all matters relating to planning as she is the Portfolio Holder for Planning with Fenland District Council and is also a town councillor on Whittlesey Town Council.

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

#### B.3594 Confirmation of Minutes

#### RESOLVED

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

#### B.3595 Deaths of former employees

The Chief Executive reported the deaths of two long serving former employees of the Commissioners, viz:- Mr John Moore (former St Germans Pumping Station Engineer) on Tuesday the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and Mr David Phillips (former Chief Engineer) on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2020.

#### B.3596 Payments by the Commissioners

The Board examined and approved payments amounting to £1,872,066.51 made during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

(NB) - The Chairman and Messrs Allpress and Latta declared interests in the payment to Sutton and Mepal IDB.

(NB) - The Chairman and Messrs Hartley and J Heading declared interests in the payment to Manea and Welney DDC.

#### B.3597 Miscellaneous Receipts

The Board examined and approved particulars of receipts amounting to £264,297.58 during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

#### B.3598 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.3599 Rate arrears

Consideration was given to writing off rate arrears amounting to £348.66.

## RESOLVED

That the Commissioners be recommended to write off rate arrears amounting to £348.66.

### B.3600 Contributions from Developers

With reference to minute B.1779, the Chief Executive reported that development contributions amounting to £310.81 had been received by the Commissioners in the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume.

### B.3601 Staff

#### a) Salary Increases 2020/2021

Further to minute B.3552(a), the Chief Executive reported that, in accordance with the decision of the Executive Committee on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019, 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, with a lower limit of 1% and a maximum limit of 3% would be used to determine pay awards for years 2020/2021 to 2022/2023, a salary award involving an increase of 2.91% in respect of the Commissioners' employees took effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

#### b) Travelling expenses

Further to minute B.3552(b), the Chief Executive reported that the travelling allowances payable to Middle Level employees from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 would remain unchanged for 2020/2021.

#### c) Applications for re-grading

The Chief Executive referred to the re-grading applications received from Mr Robert Hill, Mrs Tracy Driver, Mrs Carly Russell and Mr Martyn Isaacson

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

Mr Robert Hill, Mr Martyn Isaacson, Mrs Tracy Driver and Mrs Carly Russell.

#### d) Role of Office Manager/Human Resources Assistant

The Chief Executive reported that Mrs Lorraine Pook had agreed to take on additional responsibilities and perform the role of Office Manager/Human Resources Assistant.

#### e) Senior Engineer's request to investigate reduced hours working

Further to minute B.3563(a), the Chief Executive stated that he had nothing further to report on this matter and would meet with the Senior Engineer to discuss his request for reduced working hours.

f) Plannng Staffing

Further to minute B.3563(b), the Chief Executive reported that Tanya Gravenor had commenced employment in the planning department on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2020.

g) Review of the Mechanical and Electrical Department

Further to minute B.3563(e), the Chief Executive reported on the Departmental Review carried out by one of the Mechanical Engineers which had recommended that the post of one fitter should be removed from the Mechanical and Electrical Department.

Following this a consultation had taken place and one of the fitters had been offered redundancy or alternative employment.

h) Electrical Engineer

The Chief Executive reported on the proposal to advertise the post of Junior Electrical Engineer who will be trained up to ensure continuity of service provision within the Mechanical and Electrical Department. This person will work closely with the Fitter and the Mechanical Engineers.

i) Navigation Officer

The Chief Executive reported that Kevin Russell, former fitter, had agreed to take on the newly created post of Navigation Officer from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Salary award increase be approved.
- ii) That the Executive Committee's recommendations be accepted:-

That Mrs L Pook and Mr M Isaccson be awarded an increase of one spine point.

That consideration of the spine point increases for Mrs T Driver, Mrs C Russell and Mr R Hill be deferred until November 2020.

B.3602 Health and Safety Matters

a) Recorded Accidents/Near Misses

Further to minute B.3564(i), the Chief Executive reported that there had been no recorded accidents, that minor accidents or near misses were recorded at monthly meetings and appropriate action taken.

b) IDB Service Provision

Further to minute B.3564(ii), the Chief Executive reported that the IDB Chairmen were pleased with the level of support being provided by COPE Safety Management. Inspection meetings had been arranged between COPE Safety Management and the Boards but these were currently on hold due the current Government restrictions for COVID-19.

- c) The Chief Executive referred to the ADA Internal Drainage Boards' Health, Safety & Welfare Survey 2018.

#### B.3603 Pension schemes

a) Local Government Pension Scheme Revaluation and future Employer Contributions

Further to minute B.3524(a), the Chief Executive referred to the 2019 Valuation Employer Results Report and reported that that he had attended a meeting at Cambridgeshire County Council and that the actuaries had reviewed the pension investments. The investments had been more successful than anticipated and there was therefore less concern over future investments. The requirements for payments from the Middle Level Commissioners had been reduced to 21.5% for the next three years.

The Chief Executive also reported that the contributions made by the Commissioners in respect of employees in the financial year 2019/2020 was £338,994.96 and that the contribution rate for the year was 36.8%. He also reported that for the financial year 2020/2021, the contribution rate would be 21.5% with contributions to be made by the Commissioners in respect of employees estimated to be in the region of £202,000.00

b) Auto enrolment pension scheme (NEST)

i) Further to minute B.3524(b)(i), 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 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 was £12,416.32 and that the minimum contribution rate was 4%. For the financial year 2020/2021, at the minimum contribution rate of 4%, the contributions to be made by the Commissioners in respect of employees will be in the region of £14,000.00.

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 2020.

It was noted that from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 the minimum employer's Nest pension contribution rate would be 4%.

#### RESOLVED

That for 2020/2021 the Commissioners will pay the employers minimum contribution of 4% plus matching the additional employee contribution above their minimum contribution of 5% up to a maximum of an additional 2%.

#### B.3604 Property

a) 10 Deerfield Road, March

Further to minute B.3565(a), the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk reported that the garage had now been successfully registered with the Land Registry and that the sale was due to complete within the current week.

b) Cardea site

Further to minute B.3565(b), the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk reported that a draft transfer had been prepared for the transfer of the land. However there remained some issues to be resolved with the solicitors acting for Persimmon Homes and recent contact had been difficult because of the restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

c) 33 Sluice Road – tenant issues

Further to minute B.3565(d), the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk updated on the tenancy issues which had arisen with regard to the property.

d) 18 Sluice Road, Wiggshall St Marys

The Chief Executive reported that the daughter of Mrs Moore (John Moore's widow) had asked whether the Commissioners might be prepared to provide a smaller bungalow type of accommodation for Mrs Moore, releasing the house she occupied for sale, if desired.

RESOLVED

That Mrs Moore's position at 18 Sluice Road, Wiggshall St Marys be kept under review and Mrs Moore's request for smaller occupation be considered at a future date.

e) Gates

The Chief Executive referred to a draft policy document he had drawn up with regard to a request from landowners for gates on their properties for security reasons.

RESOLVED

That the draft Middle Level Commissioners' policy on gates be approved.

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

B.3605 Maintenance Work  
Tin Dump Culvert

Further to minute B.3566, the Chief Executive reported on the problems occurring at the weedscreen at Tin Dump which gets blocked with weeds and that an estimate of between £120,000-£150,000 had been allowed to replace the weedscreen with an automated machine.

RESOLVED

That the position at the Tin Dump Culvert be noted and works progressed this year.

B.3606 Plant & Vehicles  
Replacement of Iveco lorry

Further to minute B.3567, the Chief Executive reported that the Iveco lorry would be retained until the Tin Dump improvements had been completed as this lorry was needed until then to clear debris from the weedscreen.

B.3607 Chief Executive's Annual Report

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



# *Annual Report*

Report on Period  
April 2019 to March 2020



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# ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2020

April 2019 to March 2020

## 1. **Health & Safety**

- 1.1 ***Croner Consulting*** – continues to provide the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) and associated Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) with help and advice on health and safety issues at a high level, with Cope Safety consultants providing more practical advice.

Following last year's round of IDB meetings it was agreed by all but one Board to employ Cope Safety Management to supply 'delivery end' advice on health and safety matters. This arrangement is initially for three years and includes two site visits in year one and one in years two and three to every Board. IDBs can also purchase additional ad-hoc advice and support as and when required. Each site visit is backed up by a report with recommendations. This is delivering the requirements of our insurers who have confirmed that we have now delivered upon the three specific requirements on health and safety they had previously stipulated.

It is anticipated that Cope's consultancy services and expertise could be utilised to review and refresh the Commissioners' suite of Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) documents for their varied range of operations.

Accidents and near misses are recorded at the monthly Works Meeting and any actions identified to reduce the risks linked to these occurrences are taken. Good practice is also shared between IDBs as appropriate.

## 2. **COVID-19 Actions**

Following the instructions given by the 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 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. The system security was upgraded to two-factor-authentication when it appeared that someone not employed by the MLC had briefly gained access to one of our machines. This revised arrangement, often used in online banking, involves the generation of continuously changing six figure numbers unique to the PC being connected to at the time of connection.
- The workforce was temporarily sent home but was called to return to work on the 26<sup>th</sup> March when more clarity was obtained on Government advice which stated that where people could not work from home but the NHS guidelines could be applied then they should continue to work.
- With the help of Lorraine Pook, Head of Secretarial Services, arrangements have been made to implement a skeleton rota to ensure that the office phones are manned, post 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 meetings was obtained and arrangements made to hold meetings by telephone and or video. Chairmen were contacted at each stage as Government advice emerged.

- Two, good specification, nearly new laptops and a monitor were purchased to ensure that remote working could be undertaken.
- Four laptops have been configured to allow MLC internet banking to be carried out from home.
- 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 during the initial weeks, was undertaken encouraging them to take proactive action. Of value to us, and as called for, ADA has been able to secure IDBs 'Key Worker' status and has obtained approval from defra for us to move to web/telephone conference Board meetings.
- Arrangements have been made to delay the requirement for vessel licencing until 1<sup>st</sup> September. The boating community has been informed.
- The manned navigation locks have been closed for all but absolutely essential navigation traffic. This is in alignment with the actions of the EA. Notices to this effect have been placed on the website.

### 3. **Clerk's Report**

- 3.1 ***Anglian Water Issues*** – a meeting was held with Anglian Water (AW) on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 to review areas of shared interest and partnership working. One item on the agenda was once again the need for AW to advise developers that consent is required for discharges of treated effluent into MLC and IDB waters (even when they are passed via sewage treatment works). There would normally be another meeting arranged around April to report on but this will be delayed due to COVID-19.
- 3.2 ***Partnership Working and Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs)*** – it is pleasing to be able to report that the use of the MLC PSCA agreement has been extended (with Swavesey IDB's agreement) to include works within the Swavesey area. The maintenance works carried out in 2019 were welcomed by both the IDB and Environment Agency (EA) and are likely to be repeated and extended this year. Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners are also using the MLC PSCA to deliver works for the EA. This is in addition to the dredging works for the EA carried out at Salter's Lode and Denver.
- 3.3 ***Letter from defra on IDB1 analysis*** – at Appendix 12 is a letter received from Thérèse Coffey of defra which details an analysis carried out on the IDB1 returns submitted every year by all Boards. The level of detail within these returns was significantly expanded in 2018 to provide more meaningful information. The conclusion to the report enclosed is a positive one, which is especially important following on from the NAO report issued in March 2017 which was quite critical of IDBs in terms of aspects of governance and transparency. There remain areas where defra feels that more work is required, which include; member training, covering H&S and welfare, finance and communication and engagement. The adoption of the latest model byelaws is also sited, but for the MLC and associated Boards work on addressing this is already in hand.
- 3.4 ***Budget 2020 National Capital spend increase*** – in March 2020 the Chancellor of the Exchequer laid out plans to increase capital investment across government, and in particular within its flood and coastal defence programme, citing the twin pressures of climate change and population growth that require further action to be taken. As part of this the Government proposes to spend £5.2 billion on capital projects over six years between 2021 and 2027 to reduce the risk of flooding to 336,000 homes and non-residential properties. According to EA modelling, this is projected to reduce national flood risk by up to 11% by 2027. This is effectively double that invested during the last six-year spending cycle and hence is welcomed. The Government is also making available £120 million to the EA to repair assets damaged by last winter's storms.

The Budget document also noted the implications of climate change on managing and conserving our water resources. Consequently, the Budget announced £39 million of government investment in the EA's network of water supply and water navigation assets. Stating that this investment will help provide upfront funding for asset repairs, which will ensure that waterways remain open and navigable, while contributing to flood and drought mitigation.

There is no indication that the Government is applying similar foresight to revenue spending by the EA (routine maintenance) which appears likely to continue being assessed on a year by year basis.

- 3.5 Red diesel** – the Chancellor also announced that from April 2022, red diesel will only be available to agriculture and the rail sector. Users of off-highway construction machinery will have to pay the standard tax rate of nearly 58 pence per litre for diesel rather than the subsidised red diesel rate of just over 11 pence per litre.

The 'excepted vehicle' status of tractors and other agricultural/construction plant machinery used by IDBs has previously resulted in differing opinions from VOSA, DVLA and the police. ADA is using this change to seek greater clarity from the Government on this situation going forwards in relation to IDBs' maintenance operations.

- 3.6 Water Resources East (WRE)** – the Chief Executive has taken a place on the Board of WRE. This non-executive position is initially funded by IDBs in the region. The MLC and associated Boards within the MLC district have not been asked to contribute however, as the time spent on this is considered to be those Boards' contribution. The aim of the Chief Executive's involvement is primarily to ensure that the interests of IDBs are placed and remain within the mix of thinking and planning of future water resources in the east of the country. WRE is supportive of such an involvement which it considers is needed to reflect agricultural sectors' high reliance on water.

- 3.7 Board Tour of Inspection** – it was generally felt that the tour of inspection to Boston was successful and that visiting other IDB areas helped members understand both the similarities and differences which exist between Boards, based upon geography and the local economy.

At the November 2019 meeting members agreed to the arrangement of a visit to the new Wolverton and Stow pumping stations and to the site of the Islington pumping station where construction is well advanced, plus St Germans if time permitted. Whilst initial enquiries have been made this inspection has now been cancelled and will be rearranged for 2021.

- 3.8 Badgers and Banks** – following on from the flooding in Lincolnshire in June the Chief Executive wrote to Steven Barclay advising him that he had heard suggestions that badger activity had been a contributory factor in the breach which occurred in the EA managed bank. The response which came back via the EA at the end of September, advised that badger activity was not a contributory factor in the breach. See full response in Appendix 11.

- 3.9 The Agriculture Bill** – it was reported at the November 2019 meeting that this Bill had failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the last session and so had failed. It has however been reintroduced by the new Government. This Bill is essentially "enabling" legislation, providing fairly broad powers to current and future governments to provide financial assistance and make other policy interventions. The 2020 Bill has addressed a large number of the concerns raised by bodies including the NFU. The Bill for example now references good security with the Government being required to report on the state of the nation's food security every 5 years. The Bill also references developing new forms of financial assistance with the requirement to "take regard to the need to encourage the production of food by producers in England and its production by them in an environmentally sustainable way." Also, as expected, the Bill establishes a new system

based on paying public money for public benefit in England as well as a framework for the phasing out of direct payments in England over a 7 year transition period.

**3.10 *Environment Bill 2019-21*** – the Environment Bill makes provision to amend existing environmental legislation and introduce new measures on a range of environmental policy areas within the UK. Given that a large proportion of existing environmental law and policy in the UK derives from the EU, much of the Bill seeks to replace monitoring and enforcement functions currently undertaken by the EU. For IDBs it also contains the powers previously set out in the former River Authorities and Land Drainage Bill 2019 to amend the land valuation process for drainage rate and special levy charges. The Environment Bill was announced in the Queen's Speech in December 2019 and passed Second Reading without division on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The Committee stage and further stages of the Bill have been postponed following the Coronavirus outbreak.

**3.11 *The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA)*** – met on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 for its AGM and again on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November. During the period AINA has responded on behalf of its members on three consultations;

- HMRC consultation on the Implementation of the Court of Justice of the European Union judgement on diesel fuel used in private pleasure craft. This judgment will impact upon boaters who currently use red diesel but only pay duty on the element used for propulsion (ie not heating).
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005: Call for Evidence. AINA is concerned that there is a growing demand for residential boat rentals and that the current fire safety regulations are unclear, allowing some to suggest that their boats are fire compliant when they may well not be safe.
- Air Pollutant Emissions from Domestic Vessels and Inland Waterways.

An AGM was planned for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 but this has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**3.12 *Land Charges Register*** – in response to ongoing fustigation that developers and their agents were not implementing appropriate solutions for managing excess rain water and that the planning authorities neither had the expertise nor staff to ensure a viable solution was implemented, the Commissioners had resorted to requesting that planning authorities placed notes on the Land Charges Register. The aim was to alert potential buyers to problems that they may inadvertently be acquiring with the property. Earlier this year this practice was challenged by a local Land Agent, who sought a barrister's opinion. The barrister concluded that it was not legal to place a land charge linked with an IDB byelaw on the Register (it was never our intention to do this but apparently Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council [KLWN] had done this in error) nor did he consider that notes could be placed on the Register, as it was his opinion that there was no legal mechanism to do so.

It is interesting to note that KLWN has taken the decision to no longer add notes to the Land Charges registry but Fenland District Council effectively continue to do so. Fenland hold a separate set of notes that sits alongside the registry to allow them to alert anyone making an enquiry on Land Charges of a potential issue in relation to surface water or foul water disposal.

**3.13 *The Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Peterborough Flood Risk Management/Water Management Partnerships*** – (Inter Agency Working on Flood & Water Management Issues) met last on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The Chief Executive took the opportunity in the meeting to flag up the issue of soakaway drainage for minor developments, which has been the cause for ongoing concern, particularly since the Agent's challenge to the placement of notes on the Land Charges Register. A separate meeting, to see if an agreed approach could be developed, was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> November but this was poorly attended and failed to conclude any decisive action. The Chief Executive has therefore asked for an agenda item to be added

to the full partnership meeting to see if it will be possible to jointly agree a set of meaningful actions.

- 3.14 Cardea Site** – a plan of the areas to be adopted has been produced and agreed and an external solicitor appointed to liaise with the Persimmon Homes' solicitor to produce a legal agreement. A check has been completed on planning obligations to make sure that any that could be attached to, or associated with, the land which is to be transferred have been discharged; or if not would not put the MLC in a disadvantaged position. Having completed these checks the relevant parties' solicitors are currently in discussion over the detailed wording of the agreement, which will need to define not only what the MLC will be taking on but also most importantly how the various parcels of land can be accessed by plant and vehicles.
- 3.15 Consultations** – the MLC continue to respond to defra consultations either directly or through correspondence with ADA as and when appropriate to do so.
- 3.16 Reform of Water Abstraction Licensing** – defra considers that the current abstraction licencing arrangements are outdated and want to modernise them to enhance and expand the range of digital services available and to simplify regulatory requirements. It believes that this will underpin more widespread work to improve both the environment and access to water by providing a modern and simple service for abstractors. Defra states that its approach has two elements to it, which are as follows:
- modernise the water resources licensing service by upgrading the systems that it depends on and moving paper-based licences into a digital format
  - modernise regulations by moving water resources licensing into the environmental permitting regulations (EPR) and making sure all significant abstractors are regulated

Some of these upgrades are relatively straightforward administrative improvements designed to save time and reduce regulatory burden. Others underpin defra's broader goals of better protecting the environment and improving access to water.

Improvements to the availability of information on river flows and groundwater levels is sited as an example of the links between service upgrade and wider goals. Many abstraction licences currently include requirements to reduce or cease abstraction at particular river flows, river levels or groundwater levels. Defra wants to improve the availability and usability of this information to make it easier and quicker for abstractors to comply with their licences and help them improve the way they plan their water use.

Defra considers that a modern and responsive licensing system is also essential to support water trading. By providing clear information on potential trading partners and by reducing the time it takes to make a trade, modernisation will make trading easier and therefore improve access to water.

The MLC and associated Boards input into these proposals through ADA and representation on the NFU Water for Food Group.

- 3.17 Middle Level Barrier Banks Works** – these works, required for safety reasons under Section 10 (6) of the Reservoirs Act, have resulted in a project to raise the Middle Level Barrier Bank to address changes to the bank crest level caused by settlement. The EA's contractor commenced work in the summer of 2017 on this four-year scheme which protects the Middle Level district and neighbouring Boards from flood risk from the Washes. The EA has reported that due to late design changes and other issues the scheme is now going to take six years instead of four to implement, with a corresponding increase in overall cost. The most recent news report on this scheme, which also covers the impact of COVID-19, is included as Appendix 9.

**3.18 *River Great Ouse Dredging Pilot*** – unfortunately, as reported at the November Board meeting, once again these works were delayed. On that occasion it appeared that staffing shortages and prioritisation of works had been the issue. EA staff members were however in contact with the Chief Executive following criticism of the delays and have provided assurances that this pilot will be progressed without further delay. Most recently it has been proposed by the EA that the pilot be modified to be incorporated into the tactical plans to ‘hold-the-line’. This will cover the period whilst work is undertaken to define a fully costed strategy for FRM for the Cambridgeshire Fens long term. This would embed agitation dredging for the next fifteen years, assuming it shows value in terms of reducing silt levels in the tidal river.

**3.19 *Eel Regulations*** – the EA continues its work on the ChERP project (Changes to Eel Regulation Process) and has issued guidance which now removes the need to prove that an eel screen is uneconomic for pumping stations which do not have a gravity bypass (none of the MLC or associated Boards have stations with gravity bypasses). The requirement is therefore to install fish friendly pumps where doing so is cost beneficial and affordable.

This is encouraging and can be seen as a positive step linked with the IDBs showing their commitment to finding the right solutions for eel movement through financially supporting research. The findings of the three years of research undertaken by HiFi (Hull International Fisheries Institute) have been enlightening but remain incomplete and for this reason ADA asked Boards to consider matching their previous support for a further two years which the MLC did at its November 2019 meeting.

**3.20 *Future Planning for the MLC and Associated Boards*** – the fourth Chairs’ Meeting was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and commenced with a presentation with slides covering the lottery funded ‘Fens Biosphere’ bid. The future vision for the MLC and IDBs was then discussed and it was resolved to ask the individual Boards making up the MLC group to consider their options and report back. 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.

A fifth Chairs’ Meeting was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and 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.

**3.21 *Woodwalton Fen Potential to be reclassified as a reservoir*** – the Chief Executive has formally notified the EA that this flood storage area is believed to be a reservoir and in addition has appointed a Panel Engineer to undertake an inspection and prepare a report under Section 8 of the Reservoirs Act. As part of this process the Panel Engineer will issue a preliminary certificate, after which the reservoir should remain under the supervision of a qualified engineer for a period of three years before a final certificate can then be issued. It is important to note that for any reservoir a Supervising Engineer must be appointed at all times. The fee for the first phase of this work is a lump sum of just under £6K.

**3.22 *The New Rivers Authorities & Land Drainage Bill*** – the second reading of this Bill took place in the Lords in May, but following the proroguing of Parliament for the recent Queen’s Speech the Bill has fallen. There is no advice available at this time on when, or indeed if, the Bill will ever be reintroduced to Parliament.

**3.23 *Environmental & Land Management Scheme Trials*** – members will recall that defra approached ADA, who in turn contacted a number of IDBs, in regard to the possible replacement for Entry Level Environmental Stewardship schemes (ELSSs). Defra was looking

to run trials to road test its new arrangements and it seemed appropriate for the MLC to offer to be involved in this as they have a number of bankside land parcels/bank lots, which they were looking to offer for ELS. The joint submission led by the Welland and Nene IDB was however unsuccessful. We will now continue with plans to secure ELS on the land strips in question once we have registered the land.

- 3.24 Lower Nene Water Resources Planning Group** – this group met on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 22<sup>nd</sup> May (for a workshop) and then again on 11<sup>th</sup> July. The outcome of that round of meetings was firstly to implement computer runs on the Anglian Water (AW) Rutland Reservoir fill model to examine the impacts of releasing consented abstraction water to the MLC and other environmental and agricultural stakeholders during critical periods. This was extremely successful and allowed, for the first time, a significant voluntary release of water by AW which, if the rainfall last summer had not arrived when it did (reducing the drought potential), would have made a huge difference to the growing season. The second strand was to develop a water trading model which will facilitate informed trading in line with the aspirations of defra and the bid for money to push forward with this work has recently been successful. Further meetings of the group are currently on hold due to COVID-19.
- 3.25 Proposal to hold an Open Day** – the ADA Great Ouse branch is encouraging IDBs to consider holding open days to engage with the public. The MLC had intended to do this in conjunction with the Association of Nene River Clubs festival which was to have been held in the MLC's office grounds in May this year. This has of course been postponed and will now take place in 2021.
- 3.26 Tactical Plans for the Fens Agreement** – the EA set up a multi-partner group (FRM for the Fens) to steer work on developing strategic plans for managing flood risk in the lower Great Ouse catchment. This work is considered necessary to address the impacts of population growth and climate change, which are particularly relevant in this area. In Appendix 13 is a request to approve the approach being taken in principle which follows the letter sent in January 2019. The perceived value of this work is that it pre-apportions the benefits (land and property which would flood if not defended) so that applying for grant should be more straightforward and the amount of grant possible clearer. This should give increased certainty and clarity and resolve the issue of double counting benefits where, for example, a property is protected from flooding by both EA and IDB assets. Work on developing the strategy could take up to 15 years though and the proposal also therefore includes a mechanism for allowing grant-in-aided works to progress during this time on a 'hold-the-line' basis. The Board agreed to this approach in principle at its November 2019 meeting.

#### **4. Navigation Registration/Byelaws and Navigation Advisory Committee (NAC)**

Under the Act the Commissioners must appoint people to represent various areas of interest. This was completed at the April 2019 meeting. Below are changes that are proposed to two of the members, as requested by the member organisations. No changes to the organisations themselves or the areas they are representing were presented to the November 2019 Board meeting.

However the following representative changes were approved;

Nathan Arnold replaced Paul Separovic, Kye Jerrom replaced Chris Middleton.

**Members are asked to confirm their support for these changes.**

The final draft of the byelaws was completed following consultation with selected organisations and they were advertised in relevant local and national publications and on the MLC website. After review of all submissions a very minor amendment was deemed necessary which was approved by the NAC and the byelaws submitted to the Secretary of State for sign off to allow them to come into force.



Meetings were held with the EA to discuss registration and reciprocal licencing. The meetings were very fruitful, but the EA stated that due to current work load and other pressures it would not be able to incorporate MLC system vessels into the registration process in time for a 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 launch, should the MLC wish them to administer these arrangements. The MLC officers also approached the Cams Conservators' River Manager to see if they could assist, but the Executive reviewed the cost of what was eventually offered and considered it prohibitive. In the end the Executive approved the appointment of an existing MLC employee, who would otherwise have been made redundant, as the new Navigation Officer tasked with delivering and policing licencing. This new arrangement appeared to be working well and members of staff were gearing up to introduce licencing of vessels from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, delivering this successfully has proven impossible and hence both the NAC and MLC Executive have considered it necessary to approve a delayed introduction. Licencing will now come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 unless any other factors beyond our control come into play.

Through discussion with the EA, the NAC and Executive it had been agreed that the MLC licence fee for the 2020/2021 year would be 75% of what the EA charge for use of their waters in the Anglian region (as approved by the Board at its November meeting). Following the revised arrangements, a reduced rate of 50% of EA charges has been agreed. Applications for licences can be accepted at any time up until 1<sup>st</sup> September, but currently only by cheque, direct debit or telephone payment, due to the need to restrict risk of Coronavirus spread.

A second hand boat, to allow policing of our waters, has been purchased for use by the Navigation Officer.

The Assistant Clerk/Solicitor is drafting the protocol for boat removal which is well advanced and should be in place by the time the byelaws have been approved.

Some work has been carried out on link route facility provision and efforts were made to capture detail on what boats are present within the MLC system as per the information presented at the Board's November meeting.

## **5. Staff**

### **5.1 *Vacancies/Appointments/Departures*** – the Senior Engineer who had asked to move to a two - or three-day week advises that this remains his intention but has yet to define a date when he will move to the reduced hours.

Changes to staff over the year include:

- The resignation of an Assistant Engineer in the summer of 2019. A temporary arrangement was put in place whereby a consultant was employed two days a week to help temporarily fill the void left by that engineer and then on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 a replacement for him commenced employment.
- The appointment of a Navigation Officer, who has been transferred from the workforce, is outlined in the navigation section above (effective 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020).

It is proposed that a junior Electrical Engineer is sought to ensure continuity of service provision within the Mechanical and Electrical department. This person will work closely with the one remaining Fitter and the M&E engineers and is in line with the recommendations of the departmental review carried out last year by one of the M&E Engineers.

**The Board's approval for this new appointment is sought.**

**The Chief Executive has been discussing the possibility of promoting a member of staff who has shown competency in this area to Office Manager/HR Administrator, if implemented she would add these roles to her existing duties.**

**5.2 Pensions** – following a review by the actuary the pension contribution linked with employees in the LGA final salary pension scheme for at least the next three years will fall by over 25%. This will be reported along with the actions recommended by the Executive under financial matters.

**5.3 Spine Point Advancements** – applications for spine point advancement will be discussed at the Executive meeting and any subsequent recommendations brought before the Board.

**5.4 Electronic Timekeeping** – a device has been installed in the reception area which, through the use of key fobs, logs the entry and exit of members of staff. Weekly reports are produced summarising data collected on the monitoring of hours worked and timekeeping. This followed the recommendation of a sub-committee setup to consider how best to deal with concerns expressed by some individuals over timekeeping in general. The use of the OKAlone app allows a similar level of scrutiny to be applied to the workforce.

Currently as members of staff are predominantly working from home the key fobs device is not being used. Members of staff are instead emailing the Head of Secretarial Services with their intended hours of working on any given day.

## **5.5 Sickness**

**COVID-19** - three members of the workforce (23<sup>rd</sup> March – 5<sup>th</sup> April); an Engineer (26<sup>th</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> April); the Conservation Officer (27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> March); the Fitter and Working Foreman (30<sup>th</sup> March – 14<sup>th</sup> April [bank holiday Monday) self-isolated. The Engineer contacted the doctors and was referred to the .gov website where he was given a 7 day isolation note to cover the period mentioned above.

**Staff** – of a total staff of 22, with an approximate expected maximum of 4,725 working days over the twelve-month reporting period, 11 members had 77½ days sickness. The sick leave is broken down as three people taking 27½ days, 15 days and 6 days respectively following operations, one person taking 8 days (with COVID-19 symptoms), the remaining sick leave being broken down between seven members of staff as 5½ days, 4 days, two people taking 3 days, two people having 2 days and 1½ days. The remaining 10 members of staff did not take any time off for sickness. **Note: expected maximum working days are modified to reflect one member of staff leaving and one starting part way through the reporting period and one member of staff working a three day week.**

**Operatives** – during the twelve-month reporting period the workforce of 11 men, with an approximate expected maximum of 2,464 working days, shared 125 days sick leave over 10 men. This is broken down by one of the ten taking a further 30 days following on from the last period (due to a knee injury and recovery from an operation), another taking 45 days (following a road traffic accident) and a third taking 21 days (20 days following an operation), the remaining sick leave being divided between seven members as 6, 5½, 5, 4½, 4, and two people with 2 days respectively. One member of the workforce did not take any time off for sickness.

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

- IOSH Course, 1 member of workforce
- Driver CPC, 1 member of workforce
- NEBOSH Course, 1 member of staff
- Novice Tractor Driving Course, 1 member of staff (postponed due to COVID-19 precautions, to a date to be confirmed)

## 6. **Publicity**

- 6.1 **General** – The Chief Executive and Solicitor/Assistant Clerk accepted an invitation to join a boat trip for councillors passing through March town. This gave rise to an article in the Cambs Times including the following quote referencing the Chief Executive.

"The river is an unexploited resource.

When our byelaws come into force it will mean boat users will be charged for the first time using Middle Level waters. More importantly it will require boats to be insured and have a safety certificate. There will be better facilities too, so it will springboard opportunities to create great tourism in the area. Dredging of the river, which removes silt and other debris from the bottom, could also be an option in the future - but would come at a hefty price."

Mr Thomas continued:

"Dredging is something that is on our radar but it could cost in excess of £100,000 through March. Cutter-suction dredging could be a better solution as it would pump out silt instead, but at the moment we are just concentrating on the short-term opportunities."



Picture: Harry Rutter / ARCHANT

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

9 <sup>th</sup> May 2019	-	Swavesey IDB
23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2019	-	Capita/EA (FRM for the Fens)
25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019	-	UK Irrigation Association (Researchers from India)
5 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	-	Worshipful Company of Farmers
3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019	-	Wisbech District Agricultural Valuers' Association
24 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	-	Members of public following talk given by Chief Executive
6 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	-	Neale Wade Exclusion Unit

- 6.3 **Media** – the Commissioners' 'Twitter' presence now has 371 followers, up 52 from 319 a year ago.

- 6.4 **Web site** – [www.middlelevel.gov.uk](http://www.middlelevel.gov.uk) is updated regularly to deliver information to those who may be interested or who require information. During the year it has been amended to include

a prominent space on the home page to display the latest news plus COVID-19 and navigation related information, in addition to the usual updates.

## **7. ICT Report**

### **7.1 *Hardware*** – TSG continues to provide support for the Commissioners' physical and virtual servers.

Other than the usual ongoing replacement of failed or outdated items, equipment and licences have been made available to assist with dealing with the COVID-19 arrangements. This includes over the year; the purchase of three laptops, a new GIS dedicated machine and several new monitors.

### **7.2 *Software*** – in addition to the usual licence purchases for office software and licence renewal a monthly licence to run remote meeting software has been purchased as detailed earlier in the report under COVID-19 actions.

## **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:

**Middle Level Bank Raising Scheme** – the MLC have been employing a consultant to cover the period when it was without one of its Assistant Engineers, and to subsequently help train his replacement. As these duties are now effectively at an end it is proposed that this consultant continues to be employed, but turns his attention to assisting with the delivery of the Bank Raising Business case. This project will be project managed by an MLC Engineer but, as the consultant has extensive knowledge of business case development of this type, his input is seen to be of high value and an efficient use of the MLC's financial resources.

**The Board's approval to the continued employment of the consultant to assist with the delivery of the Bank Raising business case is sought.**

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

**Outfall Culvert Replacement Crooked Bank** – the Hundred of Wisbech IDB employed the MLC to design and tender for the replacement of a 1.8m diameter culvert with twin culverts of the same diameter. This project, valued at £0.3M, is largely complete but is awaiting the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions to allow the placement of the head walls.

**Holly Bank Culvert replacement** – this scheme follows on from the Crooked Bank scheme and has gone out to tender. It is expected to move to site later this year.

**Stow Bardolph Pumping Station** – this scheme, valued at close to £2M, was designed by the MLC and has been constructed and commissioned. Whilst the design and tendering were carried out in-house the construction was supervised by a consultant employed by the Board in question. The IDB employing the MLC is currently asking that some of the fees be waived as the scheme went over budget. The Chief Executive is currently in discussion over this but at the moment cannot see the justification for any reduction, as the work has been done and

charged for on the normal hourly rates. What is finally resolved will be reported to the Board at its November meeting.

## **8.2 Works Department**

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

#### Spring/Summer 2019

The EA Water Situation Report for August 2019, confirmed a continuing trend of 16 months of below average rainfall for the East Anglia region. Cumulative rainfall figures for the previous 12 months indicated the fourth lowest totals since records began in 1910.

The EA held its Pre-Season Lower Nene Water Resources Meeting in its Peterborough offices on 2<sup>nd</sup> April last year. The Commissioners' attendance at this meeting allowed for a continuation of positive dialogue with colleagues from both EA, AW and other Lower Nene abstractors. Feedback and working progress from the meeting were relayed to the Commissioners' Water Resources Committee meeting which was held the following week.

Most spring sown cropping was established in near perfect seedbed conditions in 2019, which aided germination and early season growth of most crops. Hence early season pressure on water resources in the MLC system remained low.

Additional water supplies from the EA Nene became available during mid-May, while AW undertook essential works on its intake at Wansford, requiring full closure of this structure. This allowed for both intake penstocks at Stanground Lock to be opened to near maximum capacity for 48 hours, almost doubling the normal intake volumes to virtually 225 thousand cubic metres a day (tcmd), during this time. This resulted in both St Germans and Bevills Leam ponds being filled to maximum summer capacity in a shorter period than would normally be anticipated. Text messages were relayed to IDB slacker operators to ensure they maximised any spare water, holding capacity in their own systems while the additional water supply was made available.

The equilibrium of water availability from the EA Nene against abstraction demand was finely balanced during early June. A couple of text messages were sent to the IDB slacker operators during this time, instructing them to close down over weekend periods, when MLC river levels fell rapidly as abstraction pressures outstripped availability. Rainfall of 50mm in the second week of June significantly changed the abstraction requirement, and provided temporary relief to the Commissioners' system, allowing both the MLC watercourses and IDB drains to be fully recharged. The welcome rainfall also increased flows in the EA Nene which proved vital during early July when, once again, abstraction pressure increased.

Twice weekly telecoms were held during the summer abstraction season, allowing the MLC Operations Engineer to have direct conversation with EA colleagues, and possibly more importantly AW. This resulted in AW agreeing to give up an additional 60ml/day for use by Lower Nene abstractors, including the Nene Washes, North Level IDB and the Middle Level. This gesture was most welcome and timely, and allowed for our Stanground Lock intake to be opened up to near maximum intake capacity for 7 consecutive days.

Further rain fell during the last weekend of July. Again, the rainfall was very welcome and came at a point where abstraction requirements in the MLC system was outstripping the EA's restricted intake through Stanground Lock.

As most spring sown cropping had been established in good conditions during the early season last year, in general, abstraction requirements during August were lower than would normally be anticipated and demand was managed quite comfortably.

Some late season 'soil conditioning' irrigation was required to reduce crop losses and quality issues during September. General abstraction rates were low, and the effect on MLC water level management during this time has been negligible.

Continuing the EA's increasingly flexible approach to abstraction last season, the EA issued notice to the 88 licence holders in the MLC system, inviting them to consider filling their farm reservoirs earlier than normal, in order to take advantage of surplus water that was available last September.

#### Autumn/Winter 2019/20

In direct contrast to the relatively dry and settled conditions experienced during the spring and summer of 2019, heavy and prolonged rainfall was evident over much of the UK during the autumn and early winter months.

Water levels within the MLC system during this period were maintained with automated pumping to pre-set parameters at both Bevills Leam and St Germans Pumping Stations. Manual intervention requiring the Commissioners' labour force to attend site to oversee the safe operation of the three diesel pumps at Bevills Leam Pumping Station was necessary when heavy rainfall events were experienced over the catchment area. One such rainfall event in mid-December required all six pumps at Bevills Leam Pumping Station to operate to full Station capacity. As water levels upstream of Bevills Leam Pumping Station continued to rise consideration was given to the operation of the Control Sluice structure. Following pre-agreed protocols with Natural England (NE) for such events, telephone contact was made with NE Reserve staff to advise of the rising river level and the likelihood that excess flows would be diverted into the Reserve, utilising the Commissioners' Control Sluice to 'throttle' water levels between the Control Sluice and the downstream Bevills Leam Pumping Station. Fortunately, within a couple of hours of the call being made by the Operations Engineer, the rainfall abated thus lessening the pressure on the system and negating the need to overspill water from the Great Raveley watercourse into the adjacent NE Woodwalton Reserve storage area.

Pumping activity and hours clocked up on pumps at Bevills Leam and St Germans Pumping Stations have inevitably been in excess of recent winter periods. However, both Stations have operated successfully during this critical pumping period.

The Met Office announced that February 2020 was the 'wettest February ever, and the fifth wettest month since modern records began in 1892'. Widespread press coverage at the time highlighted extensive flooding to farmland, transport links and infrastructure, including industrial and residential properties in the south west, midlands and northern regions of the country. In general terms, East Anglia was not as badly affected by the heavy rainfall as other regions. However more locally, the county of Lincolnshire, was seemingly deluged with rainfall preventing farmers and growers from harvesting root crops during the traditional autumn/winter period.

The 2020 Early Season Lower Nene Water Resource meeting at the EA's Kingfisher House, Peterborough was unavoidably cancelled due to the COVID-19 restrictions. However, a telecon meeting was possible. Comments received from colleagues at the EA and AW were positive and although we will have to wait to see if a summer drought materialises in 2020, all bodies represented at the meeting felt they were starting the season from a good position following the previous heavy winter rainfall and having had water availability in previous months to fill reservoirs to target capacity. The Commissioners will continue to work in close collaboration with the EA, AW and IDB partners to ensure all water made available to them via their Stanground intake from the Lower Nene is fully utilised.

#### Water Transfer Licences

The application for a transfer licence at Stanground Lock was lodged last year and accepted as meeting the minimum application criteria by the EA shortly after, following addressing a

few minor queries. The EA now legally has three years to consider the application and issue the required licence.

### **Banks and Channel Maintenance Dredging and Bank Raising**

Bank raising and levelling works of previously dried dredgings was unavoidably delayed until late June, to prevent disturbance to ground nesting birds and other wildlife in close proximity to Woodwalton Fen Nature Reserve, which Members will be aware is afforded RAMSAR and SSSI status. Works were completed in early July and the banks re-seeded to establish the grass sward.

Aquatic weed clearance was required on three separate occasions during last summer along Pig Water Drain. The first two rounds were undertaken between Farcet Overspill and Yaxley Overspill and the remaining round covered the entire length of Pig Water, from Horsey Toll inlet to Yaxley Overspill.

Programmed maintenance dredging work was undertaken following harvest last year on the Catchwater Drain between the upper extent of Glatton Road downstream to Straight Drove Bridge, Sawtry

Channel clearance works to remove submerged aquatic weed were undertaken during September on Yards End Dyke, from Stilton Attenuation Ponds to Yaxley Overspill.

**Well Creek - Bank Subsidence** – no further correspondence has been received. The affected bank from Church Bridge, Upwell to the British Legion Footbridge remains in an unsatisfactory condition.

**Bank Seepage** – a number of seepage issues have been noted during the previous year. It was therefore necessary to return to site to extend the previously undertaken length of clay puddling work along the north east bank of Yaxley Lode to arrest visible bank seepage.

Monitoring of bank seepage has been required along the east bank of the Old River Nene at Ramsey St Marys, the north bank of New Dyke adjacent to the Great Fen Project depot at Corney's Farm, and to the east bank of Great Raveley Drain near to Green Dyke Pumping Station. No further action was sanctioned as the source of the seepage at all three locations was not visible. All of the aforementioned affected reaches have previous histories of seepage episodes, which seem to only manifest during the summer months when the locally sourced material that the raised banks are generally constructed of dries out, combined with raising water to summer retention level within Bevills Leam pond.

**Herbicide Trials** – no further information has been forthcoming during the last year. It is understood this may be the result of the continuing Brexit implications during this time.

A question posed at a recent NFU/APHA Ralstonia (Potato Brown Rot) Stakeholder meeting in Newmarket, enquired whether it may be possible to obtain a SOLA (Special Off Label Approval) to apply a selective herbicide to MLC grass embankments and reed/conservation margins, in an attempt to effect some control of the bacteria host plant, *Solanum Dulcumara* (Woody Nightshade). Officers present at the meeting were tasked with following up the query and reporting back their findings to NFU Technical Water Specialist, Paul Hammett.

**Navigation** – the summer 2019 navigation season passed without notable incidents occurring. Dense aquatic weed growth during September was widely reported by navigators travelling through the Commissioners' Link Route. The growths of weed have been dealt with and removed from the affected watercourses by the Commissioners' fleet of workboats on a priority basis. Navigation during the winter period has generally remained problem free, with few issues or incidents being reported through the office. A couple of concerned 'live-aboard' boaters made contact with the office during the worst of the winter storms to check on the Commissioners' pumping activities and perceived deliberate lowering of water levels in the St Germans pond. The lowering of levels unfortunately was a direct result of storms Ciara,

Dennis and Jorge 'funnelling' water towards St Germans Pumping Station and hence temporarily lowering water levels at the other end of the system. It should be noted that this natural wind funnelling phenomenon rarely occurs within the Commissioners' system, but nonetheless can prove disconcerting for live-aboard boaters when it does.

**Fly-tipping** – a spate of fly-tipping at Kings Dyke watercourse has been experienced during the reporting period. Numerous sofas and arm chairs have been removed on multiple occasions from Horsey Toll Sluice and Ashline Overspill. It is believed the source may be an unscrupulous house clearance business, operating in the local vicinity.

An abandoned, discarded Citroen car, revealed during the recent maintenance dredging works at Great Raveley drain, was removed from the bankside and transported to the vehicle recycling facility at Floods Ferry. The scrap value of the vehicle was credited to the Commissioners' account.

Builders' rubble and associated debris were recently cleared from the lower bank of the Twenty Foot river, adjacent to Shepperson's Bridge at Creek Fen, March.

Numerous shopping trolleys and bicycle frames have been reported and cleared from the Old River Nene in March town centre since the New Year period.

The Commissioners' labour force has been deployed during the winter to clear debris from banks throughout the MLC system. The resultant debris having been transported back to the Commissioners' March Depot and placed into skips for subsequent contracted disposal at registered waste sites.

**Ralstonia solanacearum in watercourses** – a decision was taken by defra/APHA to undertake one more year's surveying of the Commissioners' watercourses for the presence of *Ralstonia solanacearum*, on a considerably reduced scale. No further sampling of IDB systems was deemed necessary as widespread surveying in 2017 and 2018 had only revealed one positive point of infection in Euximoor IDB. Sampling of the Commissioners' watercourses was limited to those in "reasonably close proximity" to points previously designated as infected. For the 2019 survey, 25 sampling points were selected, 23 of these had previously tested clear, with two known positive infection sites (New Popham's Eau and Forty Foot River at Horseyway Arm) to act as controls. Last season's sampling took place on four consecutive weeks commencing on 31<sup>st</sup> July. APHA intimated the two previously infected control samples had again tested positive on all four weeks. In addition, one new site tested positive for all four weeks and, at the time of reporting in November last year, its location was yet to be disseminated. Defra subsequently added the entire length of the Forty Foot Drain as the new positive test site to the previously designated watercourses. The current total length of MLC controlled watercourses now designated under defra's restriction is 58km, with an additional 17.7km designated within the Euximoor IDB system.

Please refer to Appendix 16 for a site plan showing all current designated MLC and IDB watercourses.

### **8.3 Mechanical & Electrical Engineering Department**

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

Whilst the spring/summer provided a fairly uneventful six months at St Germans, with the only significant issue being the breakdown of the number 4 generator, the winter period has seen a relatively high number of problems which are detailed in item 10.1. Bevills Leam has operated reasonably satisfactorily other than for problems with the telemetry and low level/timer faults.

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



- Routine maintenance and repairs are instigated as and when needed and the 5 yearly electrical condition reports have been carried out.
- Pump and motor repairs have been completed at three IDB pumping stations and a replacement pump is being installed at one other. The Aqueduct pump was lifted and replaced with the spare unit and the removed pump overhauled.
- Portable Appliance Testing has been completed.
- Periodic electrical condition reporting/remedial works are being carried out at IDB installations as and when required.
- Repairs to several automatic weedscreen cleaners have also been carried out together with a major overhaul of the Bevills Leam machine and replacement cabling/trolley repairs following storm damage
- One new automatic weedscreen cleaner has been installed complete with new weedscreen and orders placed for two other units the installation of which is now imminent.

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

Following an EA mid-term GiA review all allocated funding for this scheme has been deferred until 2021 or beyond. Work on developing the business case for bank raising has commenced in a limited fashion but will be accelerated, subject to the Board approving the continued employment of a consultant as referred to earlier in the report.

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

#### **9.1 *Rainfall*** – mean rainfall over the area for the twelve-month reporting period was 724.79mm which is 139.62mm more than the standard average.

April 2019 was a notably dry month. Rainfall was sporadic, and produced only 26% of the Long Term Average (LTA). The EA indicated, at the end of April, the cumulative rainfall for the previous 12 months had been the fourth driest in East Anglia since records began in 1910, and recorded only 71% LTA during that time. This led to the majority of spring cropping being established into well-conditioned, moist ground conditions, a total contrast from the spring of 2018.

The generally dry trend continued through May, and although not as dry as April, it returned precipitation totals of 83% LTA by the month end. Abstraction pressures within the MLC system during this time were met comfortably, without any major issues.

In contrast to the previous two months, June was considerably wetter than average. The majority of the rainfall fell in a seven-day period from 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>. With rainfall totals in excess of 50mm during this period, abstraction pressures dropped dramatically. The opportunity was taken to recharge both Middle Level ponds to maximum summer retention levels whilst water was readily available from the EA controlled River Nene. IDBs were also encouraged to recharge their systems via the text messaging system.

July was a more typical month for rainfall. EA records show the month was classed within the 'normal range' and rainfall totalled 82% LTA by the month end. The dry weather trend continued and intensified into August. Although the dry weather was welcomed by farmers and growers harvesting cereal crops, the same cannot be said for root crop growers who continued with their spray irrigation programmes well into the month. The month returned values of just 68% LTA in terms of rainfall.

September was also remarkably dry, with very little rainfall for the first three weeks of the month. Late season irrigation, to provide soil conditioning by potato growers requiring mechanical damage free samples of produce, was notable. The abstraction demand during

this time was easily met with incoming flows from the EA River Nene via Stanground Lock intake.

Rainfall during October was well above average, totalling 184% of the LTA. November was the third consecutive month with above average rainfall, resulting in 121% of the monthly LTA. Pumping activities during this period increased significantly at IDB pumping stations and the Commissioners' Bevills Leam and St Germans Pumping Stations. This trend continued into December. Rainfall during the month was 143% of the LTA. January was a 'normal month' in terms of rainfall, returning 99% LTA, however the trend to significantly wetter weather returned during February, which received notably high rainfall totals resulting in over double the LTA value at 203%. Worthy of note, the six-month period September 2019 to February 2020, has officially been recorded as the fifth wettest period since records began in 1892.

- 9.2 Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD)** - as dry settled weather prevailed throughout April last year, the SMD value rose approximately 50mm during the month, ending at 81mm. This was remarkably high for the early part of the season, and a direct contrast to April 2018, when values were recorded at the month end in single figures.

Values rose further during May and produced month end totals of 107mm in the Fenland catchment. The SMD value decreased during the second half of June, following significant rainfall mid-month. However, as generally warm, settled conditions were experienced during July, the SMD values rose throughout the month, returning the value to the 'normal' banding. The month end value for July was 115mm. August was another dry month, and this was reflected in higher SMD values, the highest recorded was the week ending 27<sup>th</sup> August at 134mm. Early September was warm, predominantly dry and settled. Again, this was reflected in the 'high' band value, which peaked during the mid-month period at 138mm.

SMD values in the Fenland area decreased significantly during October following rainfall, leading to a month end value of 48mm. Values continued to fall away during November and December and remained classified as 'below normal', as the wet weather prevailed. New Year values dropped to 8mm and continued to fall throughout January resulting in a month end value of 5mm. The SMD value remained low throughout February, the lowest value being recorded as 4mm on two consecutive weeks during the mid-month period. This mirrored the general East Anglia value which averaged just 2mm, indicating virtual saturation point. As drier weather gave welcome relief to many throughout the second half of March, levels remained stubbornly low, with a month end value of 25mm.

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

#### Spring/Summer 2019

Water levels during the spring period last year were maintained within automated pumping parameters at both St Germans and Bevills Leam Pumping Stations. Levels were gradually raised towards maximum summer retention levels during April, as dry weather prevailed. Pressure on water availability from the EA Peterborough Nene intensified during early May, to a point where intake restrictions were imposed on the Commissioners' intake at Stanground Lock, leading to a 5-day voluntary closure of IDB slackers to allow water levels in both St Germans and Bevills Leam ponds to recover. This early stage intervention was required again during the first week of June, to allow water levels to stabilise. Welcome rainfall during the second week of June negated abstraction pressure from the system for the following two weeks, and allowed a period of recharge for the EA Peterborough Nene. IDBs were encouraged during this time to refill their systems to summer retention levels whilst surplus water was available. Water availability on the EA Nene intensified during mid-July. IDB intakes were voluntarily closed for a 4-day period, during which daytime temperatures soared into the mid 30°C.

Although the 2019 abstraction season was not an easy one, early intervention and the voluntary closure of IDB slackers, combined with our close working partnership with

colleagues from both AW and the EA did, without doubt, prevent further irrigation restrictions, as had been experienced during the previous season. In mentioning collaborative working, a particular note of gratitude should be extended to AW, who were able to give up an additional 60 thousand cubic metres a day (tcmd), during an intense pressure period in mid-July. The majority of this additional water was made available to abstractors within the Middle Level area.

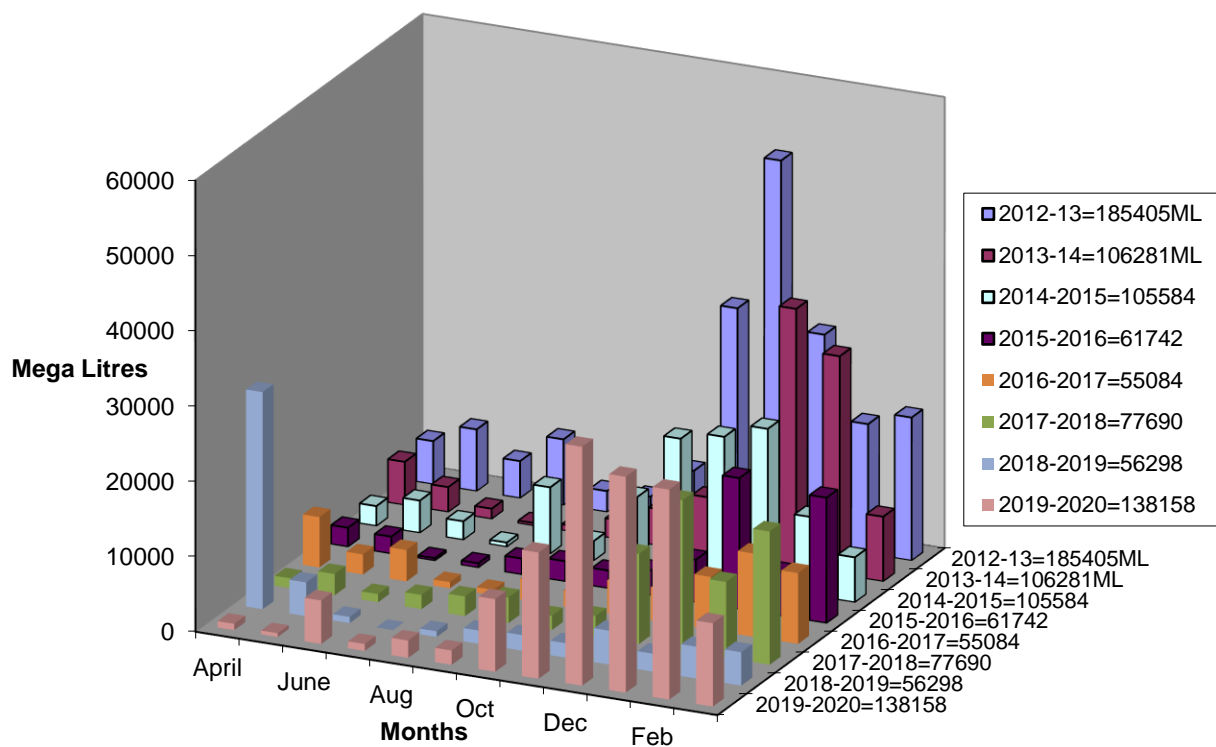
#### Autumn/Winter 2019/20

Water levels in both St Germans and Bevills Leam ponds were gradually lowered during October last year as the requirement for water resources for conditioning soils to assist with the harvesting of potato crops diminished. Pumping in automated mode to pre-set parameters was sufficient to keep levels within the normal winter range during this time. However, reactive pumping during numerous rainfall events in November, December and January was required within both ponds to evacuate water with maximum efficiency. It was necessary to run all six pumps (three electric and three diesel powered pumping units) at Bevills Leam Pumping Station (full capacity), to control water levels on a number of occasions. At the time of reporting (early April) water levels have been raised slightly, and 'mopping-up' from winter rainfall has now reduced to sporadic daily pumping as and when required on automated modes at both of the Commissioners' Pumping Stations.

- 9.4 *Water Levels (Well Creek)*** – water levels were maintained in the Well Creek by pumping water into it from the Main Drain at the Aqueduct to pre-set parameters throughout the reporting period. A pump failure occurred during early summer last year. It is unfortunate to report that following further investigation and subsequent pump removal from the watercourse, by the MLC workforce, it became apparent that an inquisitive otter had become trapped in the pump casing resulting in the failure. A backup pump, having been previously refurbished and dry stored at the Commissioners' March Depot following a previous pump failure incident, was transported to site and swapped with the failed pump. A flap valve has now been fabricated and fitted to the discharge pipework on the Well Creek side to ensure similar situations, regarding wildlife entering the discharge pipework when the pump is non-operational, cannot occur.
- 9.5 *Pumping*** – during the twelve-month period, 138158 and 35970 megalitres of water were pumped at St Germans and Bevills Leam respectively (refer to Appendices 2 and 3).

Pumping October 2019 to March 2020 was the highest it has been since the winter of 2012-13 and, despite minimal rainfall in March, St Germans continued to pump daily as the land continues to drain from the high levels of rainfall that fell in December 2019 and February 2020.

## Pumping 2012-2020



## 10. Maintenance Work

### 10.1 **St Germans Pumping Station** – the last six months has seen a relatively high number of problems at this station:

- Pump 6 ultrasonic level controller failed rendering the pump inoperable. A new controller of a different make was installed, as the old one was obsolete, and the down time was kept to 7 days. It is likely the remaining 8 units on site will need replacing in the next 10 years as the units generally have a 20-year expected design life.
- A major oil leak on penstock tank 1/2 resulted in pump 1 penstock not closing and locking pump 1 at 13 rpm, this is a failsafe in case the flap valve becomes jammed open. This highlighted a major issue as the original programming did not allow a pump to start whilst another pump was shutting down. As pump 1 was in effect “shutting down” this event effectively shut down the whole station. Luckily the problem was spotted remotely and corrective action was taken within hours. The programming has now been changed and there is no longer a risk of this happening in the future.
- During a period of high rainfall (storm Ciara) the level readings at Bodsey failed. Without the level input from Bodsey Bridge the Station cannot react correctly to changing conditions. This is not the first time the levels from Bodsey have been lost and the weakness appears to be with the telephone connection but it is hard to pin this down with certainty. In order to allow for this problem in the future a modification to St Germans software was completed to allow a manual input for the level at Bodsey in the event the connection is lost. This manual input can be done remotely or at the Station and whilst it mimics what would be relayed automatically it does of course require periodic monitoring and updating to ensure the value is correct. Nevertheless, this is a useful addition.

- During storm Ciara the high winds blowing south to north caused the level sensor heads downstream of the weedscreen to become in danger of flooding sending the Station into emergency mode (starting 4 pumps in 30 minutes). A protocol to prevent this from happening again has been issued.
- The main ABB electrical breakers are starting to operate erratically and have therefore been scheduled for a service by the original equipment manufacturer starting 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

In January 2020 a full diagnostic investigation and report was carried on all 6 inverter drives by the manufacturer ABB. The diagnostic did not reveal any significant problems or underlying issues however the drives continue to trip periodically for reasons which are unclear, always resetting without issue.

The elver pass was taken out of service in December and is due to be recommissioned early April. It is hoped draining it down for this prolonged period has helped to remove the Zebra mussels.

A full analysis of the generator coolant was carried out during the period and the results came back positive with no underlying issues. It is hoped that this provides resolution to the issue of corrosion of the generator heat exchangers.

Following the large amounts of weed received at St Germans in late summer 2019 it is pleasing to be able to report the quantities floating down to the station returned to normal in early December. As the cleaners at St Germans are now 10 years old, plans are in place to thoroughly inspect them and carry out a basic overhaul.

As is normal, a thorough deep clean of the Station was carried out over the winter and the Station is back in pristine condition.

As the preventative maintenance regime at St Germans is based around a single person visiting the station on a weekly rota basis this arrangement has not been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **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** - Kew Grass Care continued to provide grass management services to St Germans Pumping Station surrounds, with an extended return period to reflect the grass regrowth rate during the drier summer months experienced during the last two summers. As previously reported, the inter-planted tree areas are no longer mown as part of the mowing contract. The contract and previous service level have been reviewed. In light of the fact that costs are not anticipated to rise this year, and with good service levels from the locally based contractor taken into account, Kew Grass Care has been instructed to continue with the grass mowing requirements at St Germans Pumping Station for the 2020 season.

**Tree Planting Scheme** – species other than affected Ash continue to proliferate. Most trees are reaching semi-maturity in their ninth growing season and provide an effective visual screen from neighbouring residences and properties. It is hoped that a continuation of hedge planting around the fenced boundary of the Pumping Station will carry on next autumn. Most of the original wooden post/rail and wire boundary fencing installed at the time the Station surrounds were landscaped in 2009, is now nearing the end of its life. Replacement of the original fencing with hedging, that can be easily managed by annual trimming utilising the Commissioners' existing flail mowing machinery, will provide a green boundary screen; improve wildlife and habitat on site and provide a permanent screening solution to neighbouring residential properties in the future.

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

**10.4 Bevills Leam Pumping Station** - the Station has operated satisfactorily with only minor issues with the telemetry and low-level protection over the period. However, as has been previously reported, most of the control equipment, at some 37 years old, is now beyond its original design life of 25 years and therefore requires upgrading. The first step would be to replace the starter components.

**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 2021, however their replacement may trigger the Eel Regulations requiring the pumps to also be replaced with a fish friendly type, which would significantly increase costs.

As previously reported the weedscreen cleaner trolley drive developed a fault and, therefore, the assembly was removed for inspection and overhaul. This took place over the summer. Subsequently during the recent storms, the catenary cable and its supporting trolleys were damaged, temporary repairs were effected to allow the unit to function until replacement cabling was obtained. The repair works have now been fully completed.

During July it was discovered that a further theft of some 3000 litres of diesel had occurred, both thefts were covered by insurance.

To address security issues and reduce the likelihood of further thefts two quotations were obtained for active CCTV monitoring. The Executive approved acceptance of the lowest quote and an order was placed with Chubb to enhance their existing system and add new equipment. This was installed and commissioned during early September.

**10.5 Control Sluice** – in late summer 2019 an attempted break in occurred at this site, a CCTV system was therefore installed.

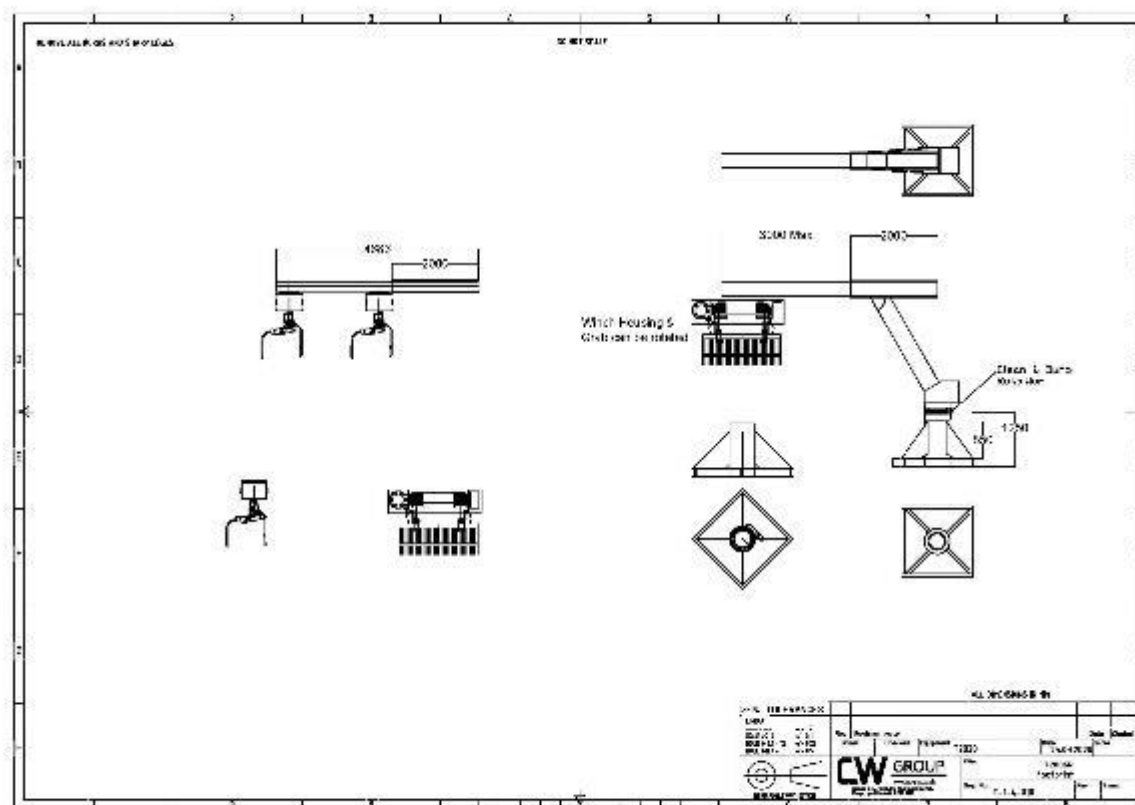


Screen grab from a mobile phone

**10.6 Tin Dump Culvert** – to address the long-standing issues at this site it has been agreed that an automated weedscreen cleaner should be installed.

Due to the large amount of filamentous algae (cott) that builds up on the screen there are some reservations that the traditional weedscreen cleaners might be unable to penetrate and clear the screen. A back raked machine has been investigated, but considered not suitable by two suppliers, however the C W Group has provided an alternative option with a redesigned and rear weighted grab on a pivoting arm which is currently being drawn up. The budget cost of this unit is in the order of £70K. However, the additional costs for civil works, new screen and power supply are likely to result in a full scheme cost of in the region of £120-150K.

Allowance for this level of expenditure has been included within the estimates.



## 10.7 Navigation Structures & Abandoned Craft

**Salter's Lode Lock** – this Lock has operated successfully with the only issue over the period being the failure of the hydraulic hose reel which was replaced. As previously reported, it is now over 10 years old and a detailed inspection of the condition of the seals, guides etc was to be carried out in late spring 2019, together with a full service of the hydraulic power unit. However, due to the early start of the boating season last year the work was postponed. The service work was then awaiting results from a survey of the silt depth because if desilting was required then damming off and dewatering would have been needed to allow easy access to the gate for the detailed inspection and any seal replacement. The survey results did not show a significant silt build up and so the contractor, ACE, was therefore asked to proceed, but was subsequently advised that due to COVID-19 all site work was to be temporarily suspended until further notice.

**Stanground Lock** – the downstream lock gates will require refurbishment soon. Works will be planned for 2021 when an income stream for maintenance will at last be in place.

**Horsey Toll Sluice** - this very old sluice controls the only water resource supply into Bevills pond during dry summer periods. It is suffering from corrosion and, due to its current format, blocks with weed impeding the flow, as can be seen below:





Consideration has been given to replacing the mild steel penstock with a full width tilting gate constructed in stainless steel and HDPE. Two budget prices were obtained, one being £8k supply only, the other being some £30k installed, neither of the prices include for damming off and dewatering which would add considerable additional costs.

As can be seen there is a high-pressure gas main crossing the structure and any work on site would have to be approved by National Grid Gas.

In view of the proximity of the gas main, consideration is now being given to siting the structure further downstream, with works taking place in 2021/22.

**10.8 Cardea Site SuDS adoption** – this is covered earlier in the report.

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

**Rigid Hornwort** – late season growths of this semi buoyant aquatic plant were evident throughout the system. The worst affected channels are the larger arterial watercourses including Bevills Leam, Twenty Foot, Forty Foot, Sixteen Foot, New Popham's Eau and the Main Drain. The weed was cleared from the affected channels using the Commissioners' work boats. The automated weedscreen cleaners at both Bevills Leam and St Germans have dealt with the weed mass during pumping operations successfully.

**Azolla** – no significant infestations of the weed were noted this last year.

**Reed/Lily/Drain Bed Spraying** – emergent aquatic weed growth was treated with an application of Roundup Herbicide during the early summer period last year. The treatment was undertaken under EA licence conditions along the Sixteen Foot, Forty Foot, Twenty Foot, Bevills Leam, New Dyke, Whittlesey Dyke and Old River Nene.

**Weed-cutting (boats)** – the newly acquired Conver boat worked well during its first season. The trailing knives were particularly successful, and have proved themselves to give significant advantage over the 'T Cutters' previously employed. The remaining boats in the fleet also worked successfully with minimal breakdowns or downtime. Priority was afforded to keeping the Commissioners' "Link Route" as clear of the submerged weed mass as possible, but significant late season growths during September proved to be challenging to clear.



**Flail Mowing** – dry weather and good ground conditions provided the opportunity for the Commissioners' flail mowers to operate throughout the spring and summer months of last year. The first round 'Conservation cut' was completed in March/early April. This was followed by a second subsequent health and safety round during late May. The main cut commenced in mid-July. All work was completed following the MLC Operations Manual guidelines.

Following a request from the EA for the MLC to consider some additional flailmowing work under a PSCA (Public Sector Co-operation Agreement) to EA controlled watercourses in the Swavesey area a decision was made, with our own flailmowing works progressing well, to undertake the additional work on a fully rechargeable basis. One of our two Herder mounted flail mowers was therefore dispatched to Swavesey for 6 days' work.

Periodic breakdowns leading to significant downtime of the Spearhead Energreen SPV3 machine have been experienced during the reporting period. A compressor unit on the Deutz engine left the machine in 'limp mode', and obviously unworkable. Eventually, a replacement compressor unit was sourced and fitted, at a quoted cost of £3,200. Fortunately, this was covered by the 5-year extended warranty, but inevitably cost the Commissioners two weeks in downtime and loss of productivity. Latterly the heavy-duty replacement wheel rims, supplied earlier in the season by Spearhead at no cost to the Commissioners, have proved to not have solved the issue of wheel rims splitting. A recent split rim led to lengthy delays while a replacement was sourced from an Italian manufacturer during September, with approximately 3 weeks' work being lost on that occasion.

Bank mowing within the 'main cut' operation continued into December. When bank conditions deteriorated, as a direct result of the wet weather, a decision was made to curtail operations short of completion in an attempt to avoid 'rutting' the bank tops and preserve bank integrity.

The Commissioners' Chief Executive and Operations Engineer met with the Managing Director of Spearhead, Anthony Prince, and Business Development Manager, Mark Raymond, to raise continuing concerns as to the machine's reliability and ongoing component failure last autumn. Following the meeting, a trade-in offer against an SPV2 machine was presented by Spearhead. A subsequent meeting was arranged in December for members of the Executive to meet with Mark Raymond and Brian Cornwell from the local machine dealership, B W Mack (Machinery) Ltd, to further negotiations and discuss replacement machine options that would suit the Commissioners' longer-term flail mowing strategy.

Given the 'bespoke' specification of the Commissioners' SPV3 machine, Executive members present at the meeting agreed that the offer of £100k for the 2015 SPV3 machine was a reasonable one and the decision to trade in the machine for a smaller and more mechanically proven model, the SPV2, was sanctioned. The specification detail was finalised following a trip to the Energreen factory in Northern Italy by the Operations Engineer and Machine Operator in early February, where a number of different boom configurations of the SPV2 model were made available from the production line for demonstration and 'hands on' appraisal/testing, at the purpose-built test facility adjacent to the Energreen factory. The option deemed most suitable for the Commissioners' requirements being an SPV2 110VT (11 metre reach) model. A production slot of 10<sup>th</sup> April had been earmarked for the Commissioners' new machine, however given the implications of the current COVID-19 pandemic throughout Italy, and the lockdown currently in place in the UK, the anticipated mid-April delivery of the new machine is possibly not achievable. Please see Appendix 15 detailing the final specification etc.



**Energreen Factory Testing Facility, Northern Italy**

A slight delay in starting the first round 'conservation cut' this spring was unavoidable as wet grass banks took time to dry sufficiently for the Commissioners' flail mower fleet to operate without causing further rutting to bank tops. Further delays due to the current COVID-19 restrictions and associated down-time will undoubtedly be encountered during the mowing season.

At the time of reporting, in early April, a hire tractor has been procured from a local New Holland dealership and will be fitted with one of the Commissioners' Vortex top mowers, in order to boost mowing productivity, at least until the new SPV2 machine is delivered from the Energreen factory in Northern Italy.

**10.10 Trees, Bushes, Hedge planting and Hedge trimming** - the Commissioners' workforce has been active since the New Year with both reactive and proactive bush and tree cutting throughout the MLC system. A contractor's machine, fitted with a heavy-duty forestry flail head, was used to 'prune' the Commissioners' previously overgrown hedges at sites including Main Drain (at St Peters Drove Bridge), Threeholes and Forty Foot village. An opportunity was also taken, as weather and bank conditions dictated, to plant new hedges along the landward side of a vacant bank lot at Rungay's Bridge, and also along the rear of a grass area at St Germans Pumping Station. Hedge planting to fill in gaps within the mature hedge line at a bank lot at Threeholes was also undertaken. It is anticipated the additional 985m of new hedge planted this spring will help to enhance the Commissioners' current conservation habitat areas, and will complement the proposed environmental management scheme planned for the Commissioners' vacant grass bank lots along the Main Drain later this year.



**Hedge Planting**



Hedge Trimming using a contractor's forestry flail attachment

## 10.11 *Maintenance Works and Machine Cleansing - Banks and Channels*

### Spring/Summer 2019

**Catchwater Drain** – last year's phased programmed machine cleansing works were undertaken along the Catchwater Drain from the upper most reaches of Glatton Road to Straight Road Bridge, Sawtry using a contractor's 18m long reach excavator.

**Pig Water Drain** – machine cleansing was required to remove filamentous algae, (cott) from the water channel on three separate occasions during the summer last year. The entire length of the watercourse required machine cleansing on the third round, to remove dense infestations from the upper reaches between Horsey Toll Sluice and Farcet Overspill. The channel forms a vital link for summer water transfer for subsequent abstraction in the Bevills Leam pond.

The last summer's season proved to be challenging regarding manual weed clearance from the Commissioners' "Tin Dump" weedscreen situated at Great Fen Drove, Yaxley. Of most concern was the inability to clear the weed mass from the weedscreen during the hours of darkness, when additional water had been made available by AW for abstractors' use within the Commissioners' system.

**Old Pophams Eau** - Filamentous algae (cott) clearance works were required in January to clear the problematic submerged weed from the Old Pophams Eau watercourse. A contractor's 18-metre long reach machine fitted with a weed basket was used to remove the weed mass from the watercourse and place it on the east side bank where it will be left to decompose over the summer months.

**Old River Nene, Greenvale Factory (Floods Ferry to Copalder Corner)** – following the last report, Greenvale was contacted again last season to ascertain the availability of material situated on its Floods Ferry site to allow completion of the bank raising programme at this site. No response was forthcoming. It was therefore fortuitous that an offer of free bank raising material, of suitable quality (transported to the site), was received from a local haulage contractor. The offer was taken up, and the material has been stockpiled on-site for incorporation along the remaining length of unraised bank crest during the summer months this year.

**Forty Foot River** – an industrial forklift was spotted last summer partially submerged in the Forty Foot River. The incident was reported to the constabulary. A subsequent drive-by inspection revealed that the forklift had been recovered. No further information has been received from the police.



**Well Creek – Salter’s Lode Spoil Receiving Site** – following completion of Phase V Well Creek Dredging during January and March 2019, a contractor’s machine was employed to bank-up the dried material into the stock pile.

**Phase VI Well Creek Dredging** (*Hawthorn House Nordelph to Salter’s Lode Lock*) - following successful completion of the previous five phases of dredging over the corresponding number of years, a sixth phase commenced in March. A survey of siltation along the river bed of reaches of Well Creek that remain to be dredged was undertaken. The survey indicated minimal variation in the depth of silt between the Boat Basin at Outwell and Salter’s Lode Lock. However, it is probable that the maximum cost benefit can be achieved by dredging to bankside disposal where this is possible, the cost of this method of dredging being already proven to be far less per linear metre than the cost of dredging urban sections nearer the village reaches, where bankside disposal is not afforded.



Well Creek, Salter’s Lode - Silt Removal Works, March 2020

**Budget Estimate - Proposed Future Dredging Works, Old River Nene, (March Town Centre) Royal Smals Dredging UK Ltd** - Royal Smals remain in sporadic contact with the Middle Level Commissioners’ office. The Chief Executive/Chief Engineer and Operations Engineer briefly met with the UK representative at Whittlesey Road recently to discuss the wider benefits of cutter-dredging works required to maintain urban watercourses such as the River Nene in March town centre. Further detailed discussion with Smals can continue when funding streams become available.

#### **10.12 Bank Slips and Seepage**

**Catchwater Drain, A1 Culvert to Cooks Lane** – bank subsidence and slippage has been evident along the aforementioned reach for a number of years. Relatively short lengths of bank revetment, including mid bank and toe board piling having been undertaken in previous attempts to arrest the subsidence and return the bank to its former design profile. Recently, the affected lengths of bank deterioration and slippage appear to have accelerated to a notable level. Whilst the Commissioners can afford, in some cases, to monitor bank slippage areas, to allow ‘self-healing’ and natural regeneration of bankside vegetation to occur, this unfortunately is not the case with the Catchwater Drain, given the ‘flashy’ nature of the channel in the uppermost area of the catchment.

Following the Board’s approval at its last meeting in November, a phased programme of bank stabilisation works has been drawn up. The first phase is planned to commence following the harvest of adjacent cereal crops during autumn this year and has been allowed for within the budgeted figures.

**The Board’s approval to implement the first phase of these works is sought.**

**Yaxley Lode, Yaxley Overspill to Yaxley Lode Railway Bridge** – bank seepage was noted following the raising of summer water retention levels in the Bevills Leam pond last year. Given the previous history of seepage at the site a further 120 tonnes of puddling clay were transported to site from the Commissioners' clay store at Holme. A clay puddle trench was excavated through the centre line of the bank and filled with the imported material. The site will be monitored during the coming months for signs of further seepage.

**Old River Nene, Exhibition Bridge to Bevill's Leam Junction** – following a report from a concerned adjacent land owner/occupier that seepage had been occurring, the site was visually monitored over the summer months last year. Despite initial concerns that the seepage was severe, subsequent inspections revealed this not to be the case. As levels were reduced towards the winter level, the signs of seepage seemed to diminish.

**New Dyke, Charterhouse Farm Bridge to Speed the Plough Junction** – the Great Fen Restoration Manager reported an incident of suspected bank seepage along the north bank of New Dyke. Whilst the Great Fen Manger was not concerned with the relatively small wet area of bankside, a subsequent inspection confirmed bank seepage was evident in close vicinity to Corney's Farm. The site was monitored, and seemed to dry up as water levels in the Bevills Leam pond were dropped, negating further intervention.

Maintenance dredging work to remove a build-up of siltation from the channel bed has recently been undertaken. The resultant dredged material has been left on the north side bank to dry, and will be used as bank raising material when it is dry enough to be re-handled in the late spring months.



Maintenance Dredging New Dyke – February 2020

**Great Raveley Drain, MLC Control Sluice to Speed the Plough Bridge** – a further report of seepage was received from a concerned occupier along the east bank of Great Raveley Drain, near to Green Dyke Pumping Station. The area has a history of bank seepage during the period of higher summer retention levels. Similar to other occurrences of seepage this season, the seepage was monitored and seems to have subsided since water levels have been dropped. Monitoring of the site will be continued.

## 11. Telemetry

It has been decided to replace the Commissioners' Oriel system with an alternative. This follows years of intermittent level of service and questions over ongoing reliability. Investigation into an alternative have been carried out and a Sitewatch system from Lee Dickens seems to be looking like a promising alternative. This company offered to install a trial system at Bevills Leam Pumping Station for our evaluation. Lee Dickens has installed the necessary hardware at Bevills Leam and tested the communications but due to the

weather conditions during January and February the company was asked not to continue with connection of the inputs and outputs, as there was felt to be a danger of impacting upon the existing system. Lee Dickens has since confirmed that it is developing an RTU with an improved control philosophy, which hopefully it will also test at this site.

The Lee Dickens' system would be a hosted one, not requiring any Masterstation/Server in the MLC offices. The company itself is based in Desborough and is therefore quite close for future maintenance. Any move to a new system would have to be staged and initially, at least, it would be planned to draw funds only from the telemetry funding pot identified in the accounts to prove the new system and begin the transition.

If this proves successful the failed obsolete rain gauge at Holme will be replaced, together with the recently failed outstation at Wild Goose Leys.

## **12. Property**

**12.1 *Offices*** – an internal group has been set up to look at environmental steps which can be implemented that, for example, will result in reduced plastic use, more recycling and other small changes that help reduce our carbon footprint.

**12.2 *Electrical Testing*** - Portable Appliance Testing was carried out at the Depot, Office, St Germans, Bevills Leam and Control Sluice sites during September 2019.

**12.3 *10 Deerfield Road, March*** – the house has been sold and now that the land upon which the garage sits has been registered it will be disposed of shortly.

## **13. Plant & Vehicles**

**13.1 *General*** – on the whole the plant and vehicles operated to an acceptable standard during the period, with the exception of the Energreen SPV3 which continued to exhibit problems. It has therefore been agreed to trade it in for a smaller but more robust SPV2 unit. This was due to be delivered from Italy in early May but may now be delayed due to the COVID-19 situation.

**13.2 *Vehicles*** - the Commissioners resolved to permanently address the problems at Tin Dump and once completed the case for retaining the four-wheel drive lorry and Hiab will be diminished, hence it will be sold once this happens.

A new Transit van was purchased during the year and the 2007 pool pickup truck was sold via ebay for £5,352 including VAT.

**13.3 *Mowers*** – see section 10.9 of this report.

**13.4 *Weed Boats*** – the new 2019 Conver weedboat operated well in its inaugural season last year. The trailing knives have been operated extensively throughout the Commissioners' system, and have proved to be successful. Feedback from the boat operator has been positive, with the wider hull giving the boat additional stability. It is envisaged the side cutting arm will be operated during the marginal vegetation cutting operation this autumn. The 2003 Hemos weedboat it replaced within the Commissioners' fleet was successfully sold via the ebay online auction website during early summer for £10,100 including VAT. The purchase of another fleet replacement boat with trailing knives is planned.

## **14. Asset Records**

The Commissioners' planned systematic closure of historic non-operational penetrations through their maintained banks, which in some cases are in poor condition, continues; but as previously reported take up is slower paced than desirable.

## **15. Improvements & Surveys**

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

**15.2 *Bevills Leam Pumping Station*** – the priorities for this station are:

1. Replacement of the main pump control components within the next 5 years.
2. Replacement of the Dorman engines and gearboxes for pumps 4, 5 & 6 within the next 10 years.
3. To review the lack of smoke/heat detection and fire alarm equipment.
4. To permanently stop the rain ingress through the station roof.
5. To facilitate the passage of eels through or past the station.

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

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

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

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

- i. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Flood Warning Planning Group – Chief Executive
- ii. Great Fen Steering Committee – Chief Executive
- iii. Wet Dredgings – Operations Engineer
- iv. British Standards Institute CB501 – Chief Executive representing ADA
- v. EA National Asset Management Technical Advisory Group (AMTAG) – Chief Executive representing ADA
- vi. CIWEM (Chartered Institute for Water and Environmental Management) – FCERM Group – Chief Executive
- 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 Chief Executive
- xvi. March Flood Investigation Group – Planning Engineer
- xvii. EA/IDB Eel Liaison Group – Chief Executive [Co-Chair]
- xviii. Cambs ACRE, New Life on the Old West – Conservation Officer
- xix. Well Creek Trust – Operations Engineer
- xx. Anglian Waterways Group – Operations Engineer
- xxi. NFU Water for Food Group – Chief Executive and Operations Engineer
- xxii. Great Fen Hydrology Working Group – Chief Executive [Chair]
- xxiii. ADA Technical & Environmental Committee – Chief Executive and Conservation Officer
- xxiv. ADA Great Ouse Branch – now administered by the MLC – Chief Executive (Secretariat)
- xxv. Lower Nene Water Resources Planning Group WRE – Chief Executive and Operations Engineer

- xxvi. WRE – Chief Executive (non-exec Director)
- xxvii. EA Lower Nene Water Abstractors Group – Operations Engineer
- xxviii. NFU – 2020 Irrigation Prospects Meeting – Operations Engineer
- xxix. NFU – Potato Brown Rot (Ralstonia) Within MLC Watercourses – Stakeholder Meeting – Operations Engineer
- xxx. Fens Biosphere Bid Steering Group – Chief Executive

## 17. **Planning**

- 17.1 *Planning Applications*** – monitoring of response times for enquiries and issuing of consents is helping to focus efforts but the temporary loss of a planning engineer has had an effect on the speed of progress towards meeting target times.
- 17.2 *Riverside Enhancements Ramsey Basin*** – there appears to be some movement on this and interest is now being expressed by the Town Mayor (who is also an HDC Councillor) who wants to see the scheme progress. The Planning Engineer recently met with Metro Dynamics, employed by HDC to look at bidding for improvements to Ramsey Town. The part that High Lode could play in this was identified at this meeting. The Chief Executive also met with Councillor Steve Corney on site to discuss what was possible. Councillor Corney is pushing hard to see this scheme delivered and the Chief Executive stated that the MLC would offer what help it could.

## 18. **Recreation**

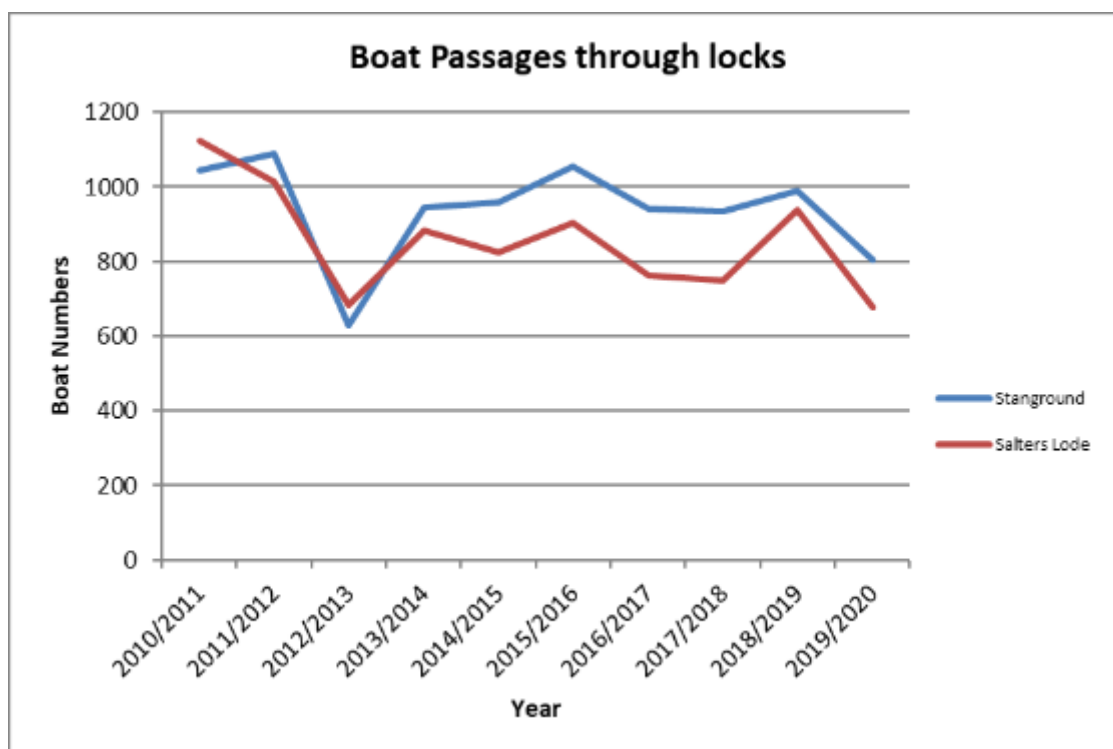
- 18.1 *Navigation*** – MLC specific navigation matters are covered elsewhere in this report.
- 18.2 *Anglian Waterways Group*** – the Operations Engineer attended meetings of this group on the 8<sup>th</sup> May, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
- 18.3 *Passing of EA Navigation Assets to CRT*** – it has been confirmed that no assets will be passed between these authorities at this time and talks are believed to have ceased for the present.
- 18.4 *Well Creek Trust Moorings at Salter's Lode*** – members will recall that the Well Creek Trust offered to part fund some much needed replacement moorings at Salter's Lode. As this contribution will not cover the total cost of installing moorings that will have an extended life it is proposed that the Board considers taking this opportunity to co-deliver these moorings. A figure of £10K has been included within the budget for this.

**The Board's approval is sought for spending up to £10K on moorings at Salter's Lode, subject to this being supplemented by the Well Creek Trust contribution.**

- 18.5 *Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Volunteering*** - the continued programme of volunteering by members of the Peterborough branch of IWA, who had previously undertaken bush and tree cutting works along the Horseway Arm of the Forty Foot River, failed to materialise during the winter months. Future opportunities to continue with the works remain open. Volunteering for decoration works at various navigational lock structures throughout the Commissioners' system, which is of joint benefit to the navigation community and to the Commissioners' navigation budget, also remains available should suitable volunteers be willing and able to take on the challenge. It is the Commissioners' long term aspiration that further volunteer projects such as assistance with relief locking duties at the Commissioners' assisted (manned) locks, and assistance with checking boats and boat licences throughout the system should be explored once the Commissioners' Navigation Bill and the charging system for navigation have become fully embedded with the Commissioners' function.
- 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 – 2019/20				
Month	Salter's Lode Lock		Stanground Lock	
	In	Out	In	Out
April	38 (25)	21 (21)	40 (16)	45 (23)
May	42 (41)	49 (47)	54 (51)	69 (65)
June	51 (65)	61 (88)	73 (103)	62 (94)
July	74 (104)	74 (106)	72 (81)	69 (97)
August	73 (107)	69 (116)	88 (123)	95 (103)
September	47 (94)	42 (46)	57 (39)	54 (85)
October	10 (20)	10 (19)	8 (28)	6 (23)
November	5 (4)	6 (4)	3 (8)	0 (8)
December	0 (1)	1 (1)	1 (3)	1 (2)
January	0 (4)	0 (2)	0 (5)	1 (9)
February	1 (4)	1 (3)	1 (4)	0 (4)
March	0 (8)	1 (3)	2 (4)	4 (10)
TOTAL	(341) (477)	(335) (456)	(399) (465)	(406) (523)



## 18.7 Angling

**National Fishing Matches** – last season's National Pike Angling Championship was held on the Commissioners' waters (Glassmoor Bank and Twenty Foot River), on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019, hosted by Whittlesey Angling Association.

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

A number of fishing clubs have been impacted severely by COVID-19 and this will in turn impact upon their ability to pay for tenancies this year.

## 18.8 Middle Level Waterways Users Committee - the Committee met on the 12<sup>th</sup> April and 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting planned for the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020 was cancelled.

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

**19.1 The Operations Manual** – a review of current operational practice detailed within the current guidelines has been completed. The Operations Manual review and changes to the 2009 document reflect our current practice including the use of trailing knives, which were successfully trialled last year throughout the Commissioners' system to cut submerged aquatic vegetation. It is hoped this method of weed control will go some way to filling the void that aquatic herbicide applications would leave, if and when their approved use in aquatic environments is prohibited in the future. This has already occurred throughout Europe and Ireland.

**19.2 Environmental & Land Management Scheme (ELMS) Trials** – recent correspondence received from defra indicates it considers the Commissioners' joint bid with Welland & Deeping IDB and the York Consortium, in a pilot trial of the ELMS, will not now be possible. The best option now seems to be to opt for a mid-tier ELS application.

Approximately 6.3ha (15.7 acres), comprising of 6 individual bank lots along the Main Drain, have been vacated by tenants in the last couple of seasons. They have been earmarked for and are ready to be packaged together to be included in a suitable environmental management scheme. It is envisaged that an appropriate scheme would offer a degree of flexibility in order to take individual bank lots out of environmental management at reasonably short notice should, for example, a dredging and bankside spoil disposal operation need to take place.

Registering the Commissioners' interest in the vacant bank lots is in hand.

**19.3 The Commissioners' and local Drainage Boards' Biodiversity Action Plans** – the next wave of plans awaits guidance from ADA expected to be issued this year.

**19.4 Conservation Committee** - the Committee met on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 restrictions the meeting planned for 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 was cancelled.

**19.5 Woodwalton Fen Alternative Storage** – whilst there is little to report on progress on getting a scheme in place to provide alternative storage the managers of the site, Natural England, have expressed ongoing concern that water overflows the southern bank of the reserve. This is occurring annually and happens before any intervention through the operation of the Great Raveley gate takes place. As a consequence, the SSSI is suffering damage through the depositing of nutrient rich silt. Following discussions on site the Chief Executive has advised that it is not feasible to raise the southern bank using imported fill without further impacting upon the SSSI, but it may be possible to do something with locally won material. A sum of £50K has been set aside within this year's budget for such works.

**The Board's approval for bank raising at the southern end of Woodwalton Fen using only locally won material is sought.**

**19.6 Great Fen General** – steering committee meetings are held quarterly which the Chief Executive attends. He also continues to chair the project's Hydrology Working Group.

**19.7 Eel Studies** – this matter is covered in detail in item 3.19.

**19.8 Fen Biosphere Project** – a presentation on this was given by the Great Fen Project Manager, Kate Carver, at the Board's November meeting. A copy of the presentation has since been circulated.

## 20. Internal Drainage Board Works

### 20.1 *Weed Control & Channel Maintenance*

**Inspections/advice/assistance** – recommendations were made on aquatic weed control to constituent IDBs last season. Middle Level operatives undertook herbicide applications on a rechargeable contract basis, to 14 IDB/DDCs, including an herbicide application trial, undertaken under EA licence for Downham & Stow Bardolph IDB.

**Maintenance Dredging and Associated Channel Works** – during the reporting period work has been organised and co-ordinated in 17 Board's areas this season.



Environment Agency PSCA works,  
Swavesey Drain – December 2019

#### **Public Sector Co-operation Agreement (PSCA)**

**Works** – flail mowing, bush clearance and channel cleansing works were undertaken last season in partnership with Swavesey IDB. The pre-arranged programme of works to water channels controlled by the EA in the Swavesey village area were completed in December using a combination of the Commissioners' flail mowing machines, MLC labour and our contractors' heavy-duty forestry flail and dredging plant. All the work, including daily monitoring and recording of dissolved oxygen levels at the working site, was undertaken on a fully rechargeable basis. Following a meeting in the New Year with colleagues from the EA and the Swavesey IDB Chairman, the EA has indicated that it would like the Commissioners and Swavesey IDB to continue with the PSCA works for the 2020 season, on a similar basis. A costed works programme for the 2020 season is currently being formulated, pending EA approval.

### 20.2 *Pumping Station Maintenance*

**Service Visits** – the Commissioners' engineers made 350 visits to IDB pumping installations to carry out routine inspections/maintenance and/or rectify breakdowns.

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

Bedlam Bridge Pumping Station  
(Upwell IDB)

- Installation of replacement variable speed drive - complete.

Beezlings Pumping Station  
(Benwick IDB)

- Automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment and replacement weedscreen – complete.

Binnimoor Pumping Station  
(March East IDB)

- Replacement weedscreen – complete.

Broadalls Pumping Station (Benwick IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant repairs – complete.</li> </ul>
Conington Pumping Station (Conington & Holme IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pump construction bolts inspected – badly corroded, replacement delayed due to COVID-19.</li> </ul>
Feltwell Pumping Station (Southery IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of replacement variable speed drive - complete.</li> </ul>
Green Dyke Pumping Station (Ramsey Upwood & Gt Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pump construction bolts inspected – badly corroded, replacement delayed due to COVID-19.</li> </ul>
High Causeway Pumping Station (Swavesey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of level control/monitoring system – complete.</li> </ul>
High Fen Pumping Station (Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtained quotes for weedscreen cleaner, replacement weedscreen and control equipment- installation imminent.</li> <li>Pump overhaul carried out.</li> </ul>
Mepal Pumping Station (Sutton & Mepal IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacement pump procured - installation complete.</li> </ul>
New Fen Pumping Station (Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surge chamber subsidence being monitored. The Board's insurance company has declined to cover the subsidence. Investigations ongoing.</li> </ul>
Nightlayers Pumping Station (Nightlayers IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dam off intake sump for removal of obstruction in pump and repairs to pump drive - complete.</li> </ul>
Nordelph Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metering issues with SSE/UKPN – issue now re-occurred – still ongoing.</li> </ul>
Sawtry Pumping Stations x3 (Sawtry IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtained quotes for weedscreen cleaner at three pumping stations. Board have decided not to proceed at present.</li> </ul>
Stocking Fen Pumping Station (Ramsey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weedscreen Cleaner order placed - installation imminent.</li> </ul>
Upwell Fen Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fencing – complete.</li> </ul>
Various IDB's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automatic weedscreen cleaner repairs - complete.</li> </ul>

**Electrical Condition Reporting** – 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highways England has set back the implementation of its element of this scheme. The IDB element, business case development, remains on hold.</li> </ul>
Crooked Bank Culvert (Hundred of Wisbech IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and tender produced, contract awarded and works on site substantially complete.</li> </ul>

Green Dyke Pumping Station replacement (Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case development instructed but EA has advised that scheme cannot be accelerated in GiA terms so further work is currently on hold.</li> </ul>
Holly Bank Culvert (Hundred of Wisbech IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and tender produced, contract awarded, works currently on hold.</li> </ul>
Inlet Structures – modifications to inlet structures and access platforms. (Hundred Foot Washes IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further phases are expected in future years.</li> </ul>
New Fen Pumping Station replacement (Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme under development to address subsidence at the station.</li> </ul>
Stocking Fen Pumping Station Automated Weedscreen (Ramsey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case for an automated weedscreen approved by EA and grant at 45% of scheme cost issued.</li> </ul>
Stow Bardolph Pumping Station (Downham & Stow Bardolph IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design complete and tenders returned. Works on site complete.</li> </ul>

### **Work organised by the Works Department and carried out by Middle Level Labour**

- assistance and advice has been given with the following:

Benwick IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Install replacement inlet penstock and pipework at Ramsey Mere Pumping Station.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Installation of step at pumping station.</li> </ul>
Breheny Construction Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of new culvert at Binnimoor Road.</li> </ul>
Churchfield & Plawfield IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and dispose of fly tipped material from Board's drain.</li> </ul>
Curf & Wimblington Combined 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>• Provide advice and quotation for perimeter fencing at Finchams Pumping Station.</li> </ul>
Manea & Welney DDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake tree cutting and clearance works at Old Croft, Welney.</li> </ul>
March East IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Install approximately 60m of bank revetment at Binnimoor Road drain.</li> <li>• Install H&amp;S improvements at Latches Fen Pumping Station.</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>• Clearance of fly-tipped materials from Commissioners' drains, including Foxglove Way.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace water control structure at Point 35.</li> <li>• Install approximately 20m of bank revetment at Flaggrass Hill drain.</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>• Fit replacement guttering to Norwood Pumping Station.</li> <li>• Install H &amp; S improvements at Norwood Pumping Station.</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>• Install H &amp; S improvements to Burrowmoor Pumping Station.</li> </ul>
March West & White Fen IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Assist contractor with approximately 350m of bank piling works (double row).</li> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> </ul>
Needham & Laddus IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing and bank reprofiling works to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Arrange for contractor to undertake herbicide application to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Clearance of fly tipped materials from Board's drains.</li> </ul>
Nightlayers IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.</li> <li>• Dam off main drain &amp; de-water pump well at Pumping Station for inspection.</li> </ul>
Ramsey IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake culvert clearance.</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>• Installation of gate at Meggs Drove.</li> <li>• Installation of barrier at Meggs Drove.</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> <li>• Clearance of fly tipped materials from Commissioners' drains.</li> <li>• Install H &amp; S improvements at pumping station.</li> <li>• Clear and dispose of fly tipped material from Coneygree area.</li> </ul>
Sawtry IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install H &amp; S improvements at Sawtry Roughs Pumping Station.</li> <li>• Install H &amp; S improvements at Castle Hill Pumping Station.</li> <li>• Install H &amp; S improvements at Manor Farm Pumping Station.</li> </ul>

Swavesey IDB

- Herbicide application to Board's drains.
- Arrange and oversee PSCA works on EA watercourse in Swavesey on Board's behalf.

Upwell IDB

- Undertake tree cutting and clearance works at Old Croft, Welney.

Waldersey IDB

- Herbicide application to Board's drains.
- Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains.

## 21. **Engineering Fees**

**21.1 Fees** – the fee outlook for this and the next financial year looks likely to be average or below average, with no significant schemes currently in the pipeline. It may not be until 2021 and the new round of GiA allocation that this situation is reversed.

## 22. **ADA**

**22.1 Meetings** - the Chief Executive (secretariat) continues to attend the ADA Technical and Environmental Committee meetings and also continues to represent ADA on the BSi panel and EA/defra – national AMTAG (Asset Management Theme Advisory Group) and the EA/IDB Eel Liaison Group. Most recently the Chief Executive is representing ADA on the board of WRE.

**22.2 The Annual ADA Conference** – the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 1 Great George Street, Westminster, London.

**22.3 NFU** – the Chief Executive represents ADA on the NFU Water For Food Group.

**22.4 Great Ouse ADA Branch** – Branch Executive meetings were held on the 11<sup>th</sup> June and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The AGM was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 at Prickwillow Hall exploiting the successful 2019 format of a workshop in the morning and meeting in the afternoon.

## 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:

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ▪ Downham and Stow Bardolph IDB | Stow Bardolph Pumping Station Replacement |
| ▪ Ramsey IDB                    | Stocking Fen Automatic                    |

## 24. **Renewable Power**

FITs payments linked with the office PV cells installation continue to remain ahead of predictions. As can be seen in Appendix 7 the installation has now paid for itself. For future years the savings will help offset a portion of the office's ongoing running costs.



David Thomas  
Clerk, Chief Engineer & Chief Executive

15 April 2020

## APPENDIX 1

**RAINFALL - April 2018 - March 2020**

Month	Address Region	Age	Height and Weight	Timeline Start to End Date	Monthly Average	Comulative Identity Change	Standard Average	Comulative Standard Change	Percent of total over average average	Comulative difference
2018						Age - Day	Cent - Ave	Age - Day	Cent - Ave	
April	0.0	7.0	12.1	1.0.0	0.00	0.0		0.0		0.0
May	55.0	20.0	48.0	4.0.0	4.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
June	114.0	35.0	100.0	1.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
July	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
August	41.0	20.0	53.0	4.0.0	4.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
September	0.0	0.0	77.0	0.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
October	0.0	0.0	1.0.0	0.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
November	71.0	07.0	0.0	0.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
December	0.0	0.0	71.0	0.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
January	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
February	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0
March	11.0	0.0	11.0	0.0	11.0	11.0		11.0		11.0
2019	71.0	0.0	0.0	0.0.0	0.0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0

**The standards of care** in the current research project (2004-2011).

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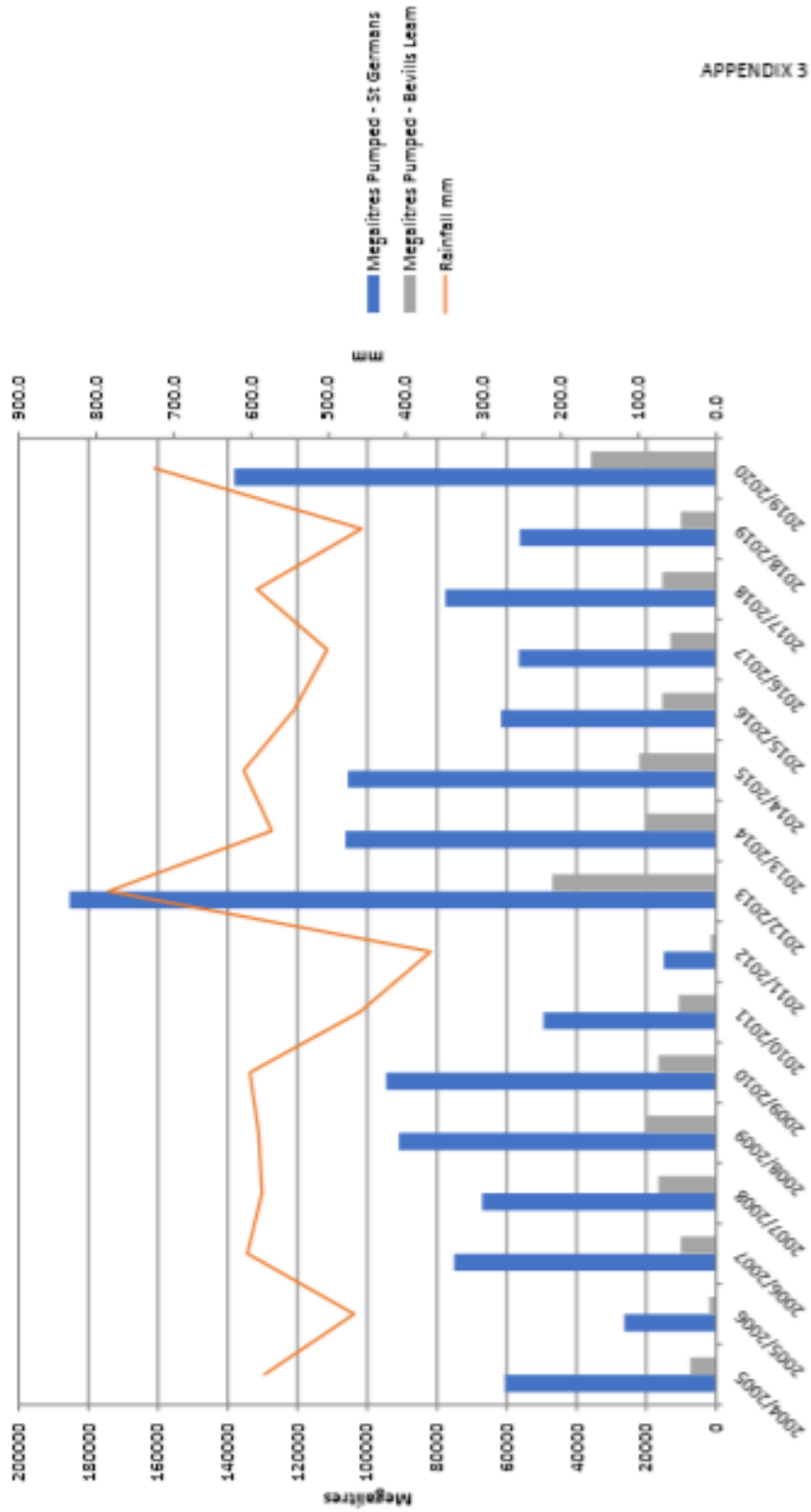
## HYDROLOGIST AND ILLUMINATING - April 2019 - March 2020

Month	Profit/Loss				Business/ Project/ Managing Office	Sales Volume		Price Range		Sampling			Maximum Value (estimated)	
	Monthly change	2-Month change	Capital	Expenses		Units Sold	Monthly (per unit)	Minimum	Maximum	21. Columns		Results (sum of 21 columns)		
										Days	Range (sum of 21 columns)			Days
April	65.80	402.51	32.61		10	871	4	12	1.23	8.01	1.23	2568	80.50	80.50
May	45.80	40.80	4.00		11	1027	3	12	3	5.03	0.30	1.95	80.50	80.50
June	100.00	58.13	58.86		12	98	13	12	0.20	0.00	0.20	8880	80.80	80.80
July	45.50	42.29	4.20		12	115	12	12	5	8.15	1.20	180	80.25	80.25
August	42.80	58.38	18.00		13	194	1	12	1.8	23.03	3.33	624	80.27	80.27
September	17.80	48.28		21.27	18	88	11	8	1	1.008	2.50	175	80.81	80.81
October	27.50	56.59	35.21	20.83	18	48	14	15	26	18.06	13.68	580	80.50	80.51
November	47.20	44.68	44	20.80	14	8	8	14	20	37.112	43.68	80.25	80.25	80.27
December	48.00	48.00	1.75	41.25	5	5	3	18	51	28.108	4.28	1900	80.04	80.05
January	37.80	38.28	41.25		16	28	12	12	28	28.002	48.18	1900	80.01	80.01
February	15.40	36.55	28.67		19	25	11	12	27	13.078	15.68	1575	80.85	80.86
March														
TOTAL	736.79	698.17	158.62						185	185	185	363.03		

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Case	Case 1				Case 2				Case 3				Case 4				Case 5				Case 6				Case 7				Case 8				Case 9				Case 10			
	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Age	Sex	Height	Weight	Age	Sex	Height	Weight				
1	18	M	170	65	22	F	160	55	25	M	180	75	30	F	150	45	35	M	190	85	40	F	140	40	45	M	200	95	45	F	130	35	50	M	210	105	50	F	120	30
2	20	F	165	60	24	M	175	70	28	F	155	50	32	M	185	80	36	F	145	42	40	M	195	90	45	F	135	38	48	M	205	100	52	F	125	32	55	M	215	110
3	22	M	172	68	26	F	162	58	30	M	182	78	34	F	152	48	38	M	192	88	42	F	142	40	42	M	202	98	48	F	132	36	52	M	212	108	55	F	122	28
4	24	F	168	62	28	M	178	72	32	F	158	52	36	M	188	82	40	F	148	44	44	M	198	92	46	F	138	40	50	M	208	102	54	F	128	34	58	M	218	112
5	26	M	174	70	30	F	164	60	34	M	184	80	38	F	154	54	42	M	194	90	44	F	144	42	46	M	204	100	50	F	134	38	54	M	214	110	60	F	124	30
6	28	F	170	64	32	M	180	74	36	F	160	56	40	M	190	84	44	F	150	46	48	M	200	94	48	F	140	42	52	M	210	104	56	F	130	36	60	M	220	120
7	30	M	176	72	34	F	166	62	38	M	186	82	42	F	156	56	46	M	196	92	46	F	146	44	50	M	206	102	52	F	136	40	56	M	216	112	62	F	126	32
8	32	F	172	66	36	M	182	76	40	F	162	58	44	M	192	86	48	F	152	48	52	M	202	96	50	F	142	44	54	M	212	106	58	F	132	38	62	M	222	122
9	34	M	178	74	38	F	168	64	42	M	188	84	46	F	158	58	50	M	198	94	48	F	148	46	54	M	208	104	54	F	138	42	58	M	218	114	64	F	128	34
10	36	F	174	68	40	M	184	78	44	F	164	60	48	M	194	88	52	F	154	50	56	M	204	98	52	F	144	48	56	M	214	108	60	F	134	40	64	M	224	124

# APPENDIX 3



## Plant Replacement Strategy - Revised April 2020

[illegible]

The aim of the plant strategy is to allow financial planning for investment in major items of plant.

The plant strategy is reviewed annually and adjusted based on the factors listed below

- i) MLC requirements
- ii) Plant serviceability
- iii) Plant reliability
- iv) Residual value of existing plant items (ie it may more more economic on balance to sell an item whilst it has a reasonable residual value)

**Plant and Vehicles - March 2020**

		Date of Purchase	Approx. Hours/ Miles	Estimated Insured Value (£)	Present Condition
Votex Mower 2			3820	1200	Fair
Votex Mower		Nov'10	3648	1200	Fair
Massey Ferguson Tractor	AE60 FVF	Oct'10		30000	Fair
		Oct'10	9363	5000	Fair
Massey Ferguson Tractor	AE17 EDO	Mar'17			
Herder Flail		Mar'17	3405	90000	Very Good
New Holland Tractor	AE18 ETF	Jun'18	1290	66000	Very Good
Hemos Weed Lifting Boat		Aug.'04	10989	7000	Good
Hemos Combi Boat		Nov'05	8711	10000	Good
Hemos Combi Boat		Apr'08	8440	13000	Good
Hemos Combi Boat		May'15	2680	20000	Very Good
Conver'19 Weed Boat		Mar'19	1045	70000	Very Good
Nissan Pick-up	AE66 MXJ	Nov'16	40704	12000	Very Good
Mitsubishi L200	AU67 HSE	Sept'17	20667	10500	Very Good
Transit Custom	AG19 KCO	Aug'19	5130	19000	Very Good
Iveco Tipper	BL12 LCZ	Aug'12	25247	12000	Good
Mitsubishi L200	AE13 MDV	Apr'13	61715	8000	Good
Ford Connect	AE63 DHU	Sep'13	64624	4500	Very Good
Mitsubishi L200	AE64 NSN	Sep'14	56921	9000	Good
Toyota Hilux	AO64 ZNV	Feb'15	43580	12000	Very Good
Transit Van	AK16 HYH	May'16	22895	13000	Good
Ford Ranger	AE63 DJY	Nov'13	119350	9000	Good
Nissan Pickup	AE66 MVS	Sep'16	105000	12000	Good
VW Amarok	AF67 YMC	Oct'17	81579	17000	Good
Ford Ranger	EN18 HXA	Jun'18	38031	16000	Good
Ford Iveco Lorry & Atlas Crane	S411 YEW	Jan.'99	159715	10000	Fair
Caterpillar Fork Lift Truck		June '09		1000	Fair
JCB Teleporter	KX56 MHV	March '07		20000	Good

Engineering Fees					APPENDIX 8
Engineering Consultancy Fees - 2018/2020					
					£
Berwick IDB.....					3,866.82
Blunfisham IDB.....					834.00
Churchfield & Plawfield IDB.....					2,763.90
Corington & Holme IDB.....					4,065.78
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB.....					5,024.77
Downham & Stow Bardolph IDB.....					23,132.24
East of Ouse Foker & Nar IDB.....					1,718.86
Ely Group of IDB's.....					420.00
Euximoor IDB.....					207.25
Farmcare.....					92.00
Felddale.....					240.75
Haddenham Level DC.....					148.00
Holmewood & District DDC.....					138.00
Hundred Foot Washes IDB.....					63.00
Hundred of Wisbech IDB.....					20,061.98
Manea & Welney DDC.....					2,148.99
March West & White Fen IDB.....					5,756.40
March East IDB.....					5,738.51
March Fifth DDC.....					3,468.00
March Sixth DDC.....					1,268.43
March Third DDC.....					2,238.87
Needham & Loddus IDB.....					2,450.80
Nightlayers IDB.....					1,868.50
Norfolk IDB.....					255.00
Over & Willingham.....					325.75
Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB.....					3,437.33
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB.....					2,052.77
Ramsey IDB.....					1,077.70
Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) IDB.....					1,422.75
Ransommoor DDC.....					2,046.01
Sawtry IDB.....					2,876.61
Skeggins Fen (Private) DD.....					0.00
Swavesey IDB.....					3,082.59
Sutton & Melpey IDB.....					3,945.04
Upwell IDB.....					5,864.64
Waldesey IDB.....					2,573.19
Whittlesey IDB.....					1,198.25
Warboys Somersham & Piley IDB.....					8,691.59
Woodwalton DC.....					0.00
				Sub total	126,691.07
Above figures do not include:					
Mechanical & Electrical (pumping station maintenance).....					65,513.80
Third party & Pre-application advice.....					16,868.53
Byelaw certificates.....					450.00
Surface water/effluent discharge certificates.....					200.00
				Total	209,753.40

assumes savings of £4K per year.

## Solar Panel Returns - Actual vs Predicted

Year	Reading		Reading		Unit Cost (p)	Total Cost	Savings	Energy Generated (kWh)	Maint. Cost	FITS (p)	FITS earned	Total Saved	Investment Minus Savings	
	Day (kWh)	Unit Cost (p)	Night (kWh)	Unit Cost (p)									Actual	Target
-1	111,500	9.77	29,870	6.01	N/A	N/A								
0	170,507	9.77	49,932	6.01	£6,970.71	£6,970.71	N/A	N/A			£0.00	N/A	£28,215.00	£28,215.00
1	209,556	9.77	66,738	6.01	£4,825.13	£2,145.58	£2,445.58	24,755		12.57	£3,668.69	£5,814.27	£22,400.73	£24,215.00
2	246,485	9.77	83,621	6.01	£4,622.63	£2,348.08	£2,348.08	47,775		12.57	£3,411.95	£5,759.64	£16,641.08	£20,215.00
3	284,232	9.77	99,569	6.01	£4,652.37	£2,318.34	£2,318.34	68,978		12.57	£3,142.38	£5,460.63	£11,180.46	£16,215.00
4	321,300	9.77	114,336	6.01	£4,502.43	£2,468.28	£2,468.28	89,416		12.57	£3,028.91	£5,497.19	£5,683.26	£12,215.00
5	366,244	9.77	131,678	6.01	£5,433.88	£3,736.83	£3,736.83	96,496		12.57	£1,049.36	£2,586.08	£8,994.37	£10,112.00
5*	391,454	9.77	142,951	6.01	£3,140.52	£0.00	£0.00	108,426		12.57	£1,768.03	£1,768.03	£3,915.24	£8,215.00
6	400,199	9.77	148,054	6.01	£1,170.85	£2,459.34	£2,459.34	123,804		12.57	£2,279.02	£4,938.36	£-1,023.12	£4,215.00
6*	427,760	9.77	160,225	6.01	£3,414.42	£35.47	£35.47	131,036		12.57	£1,071.78	£1,107.25	£-2,130.37	£215.00
7					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-1,023.12	£215.00
8					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-3,785.00
9					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-7,785.00
10					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-11,785.00
11					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-15,785.00
12					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-19,785.00
13					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-23,785.00
14					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-27,785.00
15					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-31,785.00
16					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-35,785.00
17					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-39,785.00
18					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-43,785.00
19					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-47,785.00
20					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-51,785.00
21					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-55,785.00
22					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-59,785.00
23					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-63,785.00
24					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-67,785.00
25					£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£-2,130.37	£-71,785.00
Total Units Generated as of 2nd April 2020										131036 kWh				
Predicted income at year 25 (following for say £10K maintenance)										£90K				

\* readings taken when FITS applied for

\*\*\* half year readings as savings will be estimated

Middle Level CommissionersCatchwater Drain – Proposed Bank Revetment ProgrammeScope of WorksA1 Culvert to Footbridge (A)

530m Berm Formation – South & West Banks  
 330m Berm Formation – North Bank (860m total)  
 200m Bank Piling (Toe and Intermediate row) - Adjacent Wooded Area

Footbridge (A) to Footbridge (B)

420m Bank Piling (Toe and Intermediate row) East Bank  
 420m Bank Piling (Toe and Intermediate row) West Bank

Footbridge (B) to Cooks Lane Bridge

400m Bank Piling (Toe and Intermediate row) East Bank  
 300m Bank Piling (Toe and Intermediate row) West Bank

Estimated Costs(Year 1)Proposed Phase i – Footbridge (A) to Footbridge (B)

840m Bank Piling (Toe and Intermediate row) East and West Banks Materials, Contracted Plant Hire and MLC Labour etc	£44,000.00
--	------------

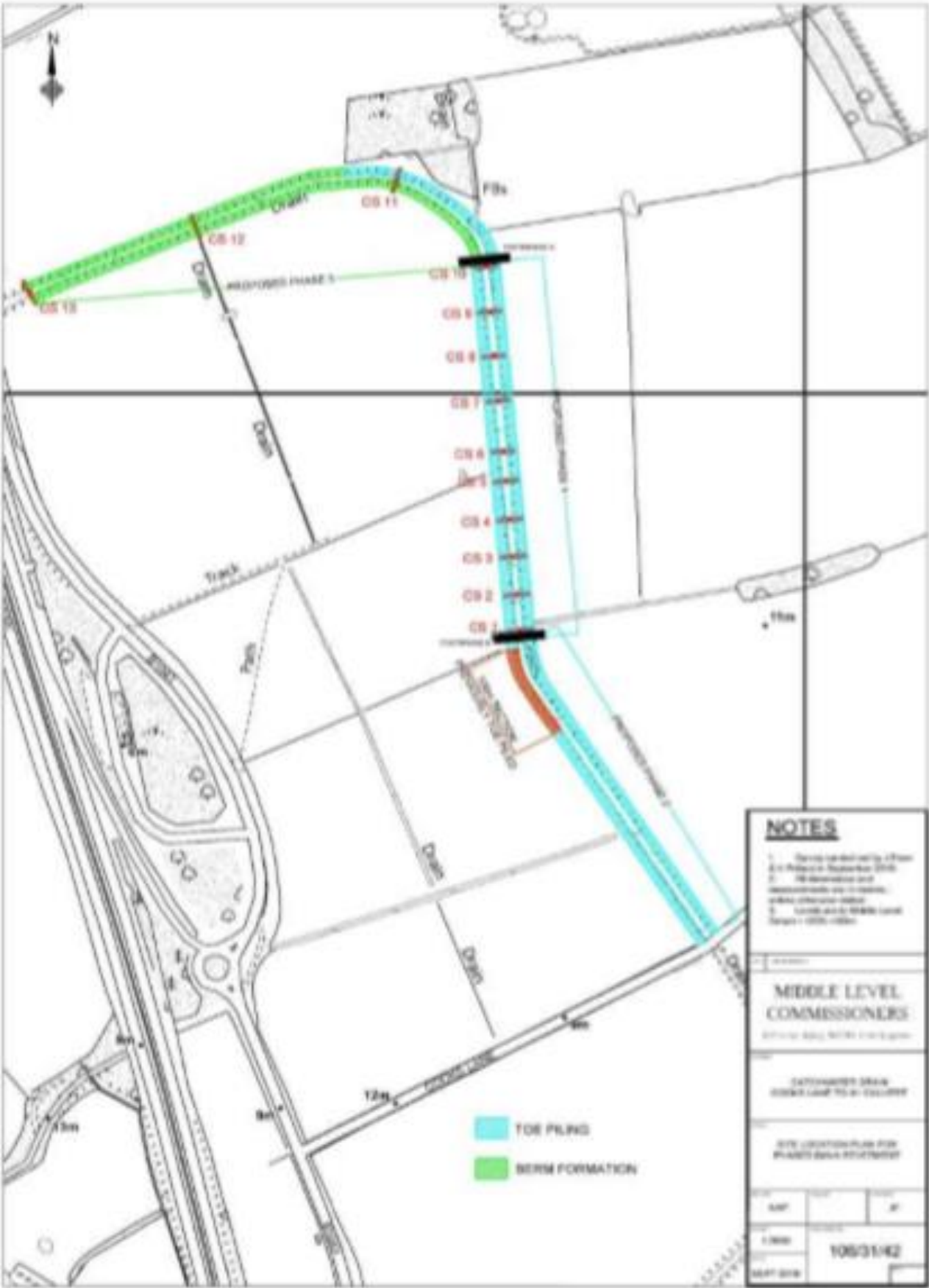
(Year 2)Proposed Phase ii – Footbridge (B) to Cooks Lane Bridge

700m Bank Piling (Toe and Intermediate row) East and West Banks Materials, Contracted Plant Hire and MLC Labour etc	£38,000.00
--	------------

(Year 3)Proposed Phase iii – A1 Culvert to Footbridge (A)

200m Bank Piling (Toe and Intermediate row) North East Bank Materials, Contracted Plant Hire and MLC labour etc 860m Berm Formation (8m wide) North and South Banks District Valuers fee, Freehold land purchase of approx. 0.688Ha Contracted Plant Hire, Temporary Loss of cropping for one season Levelling of arising to adjacent arable fields post-harvest	£78,000.00
---	------------

**Total Estimated Costs    £160,000.00**







## Ouse Washes Section 10 Works

April 2020

### Middle Level Barrier Bank

Coronavirus is causing concern across the country for everyone, both personally and professionally. Our key priorities are to protect the health, safety and well-being of our own staff, the public and the businesses and partners we work with; to prevent loss of life and serious harm to the environment; and to keep our critical operations running.

We are doing this by following the Government guidelines on reducing the risk of Coronavirus; by seeking to act quickly, decisively and proportionately; and by responding flexibly as the situation develops.

In line with Government guidelines on reducing the risk of Coronavirus, we have put in place arrangements where staff and contractors are:

- Working from home and making virtual meetings where possible.
- Working in shifts or staggered work patterns to minimise social contact.
- Continuing to work on site at the Ouse Washes Section 10 project as long as staff are 2 metres apart and communicating via 2-way radios.

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We have been busy over the winter finalising the detailed design for the temporary demountable flood barrier and planning the next phase of works on the Middle Level Barrier Bank. We are still planning to start this year's bank works in June for repairs.

Due to environmental constraints, our construction works can only take place between 15 July and 31 October. However, the project team is in discussions with Natural England to try to agree on an extended working window for this year. We would use this time to do some winter repair work on the bank and haul road before we start the main bank works in July.

Over the next few weeks you will start to see movement on the banks where our ecologists will be undertaking surveys and the grass cutting will be getting underway ready for the works to start. We will be working in a number of areas as detailed below:

### Welney to Railway Bridge

We will return this year to complete the bank works between Welney and the Railway Bridge. We are planning to start construction of the Welney Barrier walls and foundations in 2021, subject to results from the online consultation on the time period preferred by respondents.

### Railway Bridge to Welches Dam

We have completed the haul road widening ready for this year's bank work to start later this year. We will start in this area by removing the bird hides to be able to undertake the bank works. These will be replaced by new hides once the bank work is complete.

### Welches Dam to Mepal A142

We will need to return here to complete a 1.2km section of bank by the A142.

## Earith

We had hoped that the grass might have established enough here, and we could agree to re-open the bank for public use. However, having seen the condition of the crest and shoulders, it is unlikely that we can.

We closed the public footpath to allow the grass to grow, unfortunately the footpath has been accessed and the bank needs to be repaired so that it meets the criteria set out by the Reservoirs Act 1975.

There is little to no grass cover on the crest due to unauthorised access which has resulted in damage to the soil and grass on the crest. There is evidence of vehicle tracks, pedestrian tracks and cycle tracks.

We will access the area as early as possible in the working window, which opens on 15 July, to rectify the damage and reseed. The team are looking at ways to see if or how we can protect the crest while the grass grows allowing us to consider opening the public footpath earlier.

Ultimately it is the reservoir engineer's decision whether the grass cover is acceptable. He is due to visit the first week of June (depending on the Coronavirus). He will not accept the current state of grass cover on the crest and bank and will expect us to do more work to improve it.

**The grass growth plays an important role in the bank stability and we cannot open the public right of way until it is safe to do so.** We are disappointed that the bank has been accessed and damaged. Once the damage is repaired the bank will need to remain closed with further measures put in place to try and keep the public off the bank.

## Sutton Gault Wall

We will be finishing off some bank works on the Mepal side (Three Fishes) of the road to regrade the bank around the existing wall. Access to the haul will be required by staff at various times.

## Public footpaths

We have been granted public footpath closures for the whole length of the works. Our contractor will only enforce closures on areas where they are working and will endeavour to provide a diversion wherever possible. Once sections of the bank have been completed, the public footpath will remain closed until sufficient grass coverage has been established. Regular inspections are undertaken monthly to monitor the grass growth.

We have reopened two areas of the public footpath. Welney Bridge to Welmore Lake Sluice was re-opened in September 2019 and will remain open until we construct the temporary demountable barrier walls in 2021. We will need to close it temporarily as the pedestrian and haul road access will be within the works area and there is no other safe area to gain access.

Closures and diversions are clearly signposted.

Our Public Liaison Officer (contact details below), will keep you and the public informed of when the footpaths will reopen and liaise directly with Parish Councils.

## To find out more and give your views

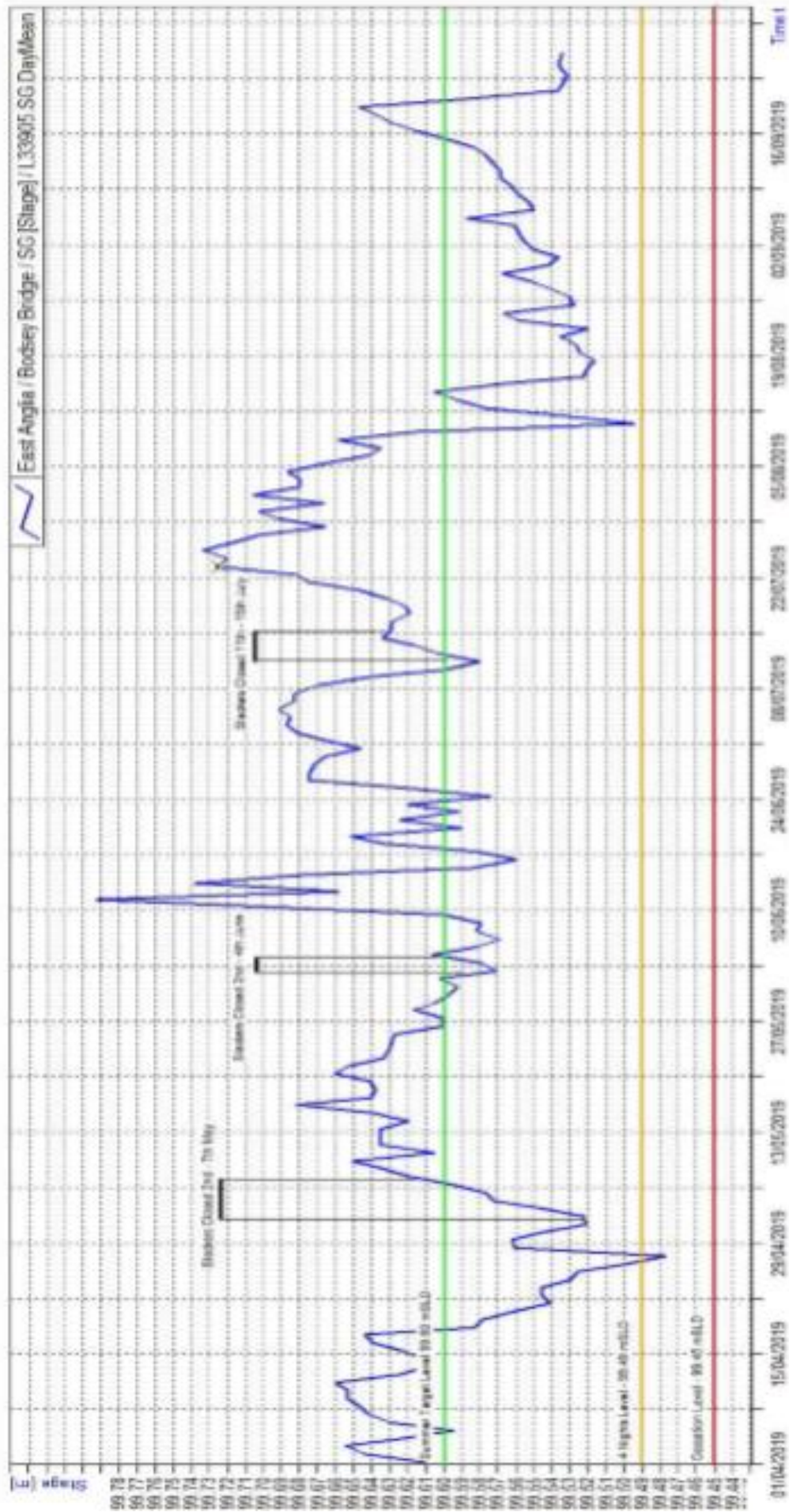
customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

floodline  
0345 988 1188

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

# **Middle Level – Bodsey Bridge – Summer 2019 Water Levels**





creating a better place  
for people and wildlife



David Thomas

[David.Thomas@middlelevel.gov.uk](mailto:David.Thomas@middlelevel.gov.uk)

Our ref: AMC/2019/1684

Date: 1 October 2019

Dear David,

#### **Recent floods in Lincolnshire**

Thank you for your email of 21 June regarding the breach at Wainfleet and its potential causes. I apologise for the delay in responding to your query; the priority for our staff has been the immediate flood response and recovery for the communities affected.

The Steeping River catchment received two and half times the monthly average rainfall in the area over three days between 10 and 12 June, with 130mm of rain being recorded. This significant amount of rain was almost double the rain which led to fluvial flooding across Lincolnshire in 2007. This amount of rainfall led to a volume of water running off the Wolds which exceeded the storage capacity of the Steeping River and Wainfleet Relief Channel. Flood defences do not remove the risk of flooding, they can only reduce it. There will always be a residual risk when defences are overwhelmed.

In the last five years we have spent over £2m in the catchment on works including the refurbishment of Burgh Sluice, toe embankment reinstatements, bank repairs and routine maintenance such as grass cutting, vermin control, weed cutting in channel, clearing large vegetation, alongside mechanical and electrical maintenance of sluice gates,

Maintenance work was most recently completed on this section during May 2019 by Lindsey Marsh IDB on behalf of the Environment Agency. The works in May 2019 were to repair cattle damage and rutting of the bank. Badgers were not a contributory factor in the breach at Wainfleet; the system was overwhelmed by the volume of water running off the Wolds, defences overtopped and ultimately that overtopping caused a breach in the river defence in one location.

Where badgers are identified in flood defences, the Environment Agency has a bespoke organisational licence from Natural England allowing us to manage badger setts, which applies across all areas in England.

We work very closely with partners like the internal drainage boards to keep up a regular programme of works on the banks which includes routinely removing badgers. We identify the setts, and mindful of the law as they are a protected species, we move them out, close the setts and repair the banks.

Bromholm Lane, Brampton, Huntingdonshire, PE28 4NE or Iconi House, Cobham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 8UQ  
customer service line 03708 506 506  
[gov.uk/environment-agency](http://gov.uk/environment-agency)

creating a better place  
for people and wildlife



I trust this has answered the matters raised to your satisfaction. If I can be of further help in this, please do contact me.

Yours sincerely

*SJ Hawkins*

**Simon Hawkins**  
**Area Director**  
**East Anglia Area**  
Tel: 02030 258358

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

Bromholme Lane, Brompton, Huntingdonshire, PE28 4NE or Iconi House, Cobham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 9UD  
customer service line 03708 506 506  
[gov.uk/environment-agency](http://gov.uk/environment-agency)



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

2 Marsham Street,  
London, SW1P 4DF

T: 03459 335577  
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
www.gov.uk/defra

To: The Chairs of all Internal Drainage Boards  
in England

August 2019

Dear All,

Thank you for completing last year's IDB1 reports. From analysis Defra officials have undertaken of these returns, I am pleased to see that you and your Boards have been able to demonstrate continued improvement in many areas, including on governance and accountability. I would like to thank you and reiterate my continued support for the work that you do. I also welcome ADA's work on the Good Governance Guidance. A copy of our summary report is attached for your information.

You will have received IDB1 forms for 2018-19 to be completed and returned to us by 30 September 2019. I encourage you to continue with this upward trend and ensure that you adopt all relevant model governance documents as soon as possible, as well as continuing to address all other aspects of your work. I look forward to seeing this progress continue and I am keen that your boards aim for zero audit qualifications this year.

As you may know, the report from our recent research into IDB membership will be published shortly. I am particularly keen that local authorities are properly represented on your boards and my officials will continue to work closely with ADA and others to ensure that actions to address the findings are taken.

By working together in these areas, I am confident that IDBs can remain on a firm footing to contribute widely to the needs of society in the long-term.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Thérèse Coffey MP



# Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs): Annual report summary and analysis - 2018

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## Introduction

1. In response to the findings of the NAO report into Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) that was published back in March 2017, Defra has been working closely with Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) to address the issues raised with regard to IDBs' governance and accountability.
2. A number of steps have been taken to strengthen IDBs governance, including adding more questions to the IDB1 form. We worked closely with ADA and the IDBs, EA, NE, RSPB, CLA and NFU in updating the form.

### IDB1 forms published annual returns

3. An IDB makes an annual return to the Defra via a standard IDB1 form. This reports on the IDB's finances and confirms that IDBs have performed appropriately over the previous year. There are three parts to the return:
  - Financial information from their internal audit report setting out income (for example, drainage rates, special levy and other contributions) and expenditure,
  - A forecast of next year's levy incomes; and
  - A series of declarations that the IDB has complied with relevant guidance and best practice for the sector during the preceding year.
4. The information collected from IDB1 forms will be used to identify:
  - Broad trends and themes within the sector;
  - Areas where the sector as a whole may require additional support and guidance to come into compliance with expected requirements; and
  - Individual IDBs who may require support.
5. Initial analysis received from all the 113 IDBs as shown in Annex A on some of the key themes is set out in the following sections.

## Policy delivery statement

6. Nearly all boards report that they have in place an up to date policy statement.

Question	Percentage in 2018	Percentage in previous year (2017)
Boards that have an up to date statement	90%	64%

## Biodiversity action plans (BAPs)

7. Nearly all boards report (96%) that they have in place a biodiversity action plan, and in most cases this is available to the general public.

Question	Percentage in 2018	Percentage in previous year (2017)
Boards that have a biodiversity action plan	96%	66%
Boards that have made their plan publicly available	77%	66%
Boards that have reported progress on BAP implementation	49%	39%
Boards that have a biosecurity process	38%	N/A

#### SSSI water management (WLM) plans

8. A small number of IDBs (27%) reported that they are responsible for SSSI WLM plans.

Question	Percentage in 2018	Percentage in previous year (2017)
Boards that are responsible for any SSI WLM plans	27%	N/A

#### Access to environmental expertise

9. The majority of boards (84%) report that they have access to environmental expertise via contracted persons or consultants.

Question	Percentage in 2018	Percentage in previous year (2017)
Boards who have appropriately skilled Board Members (e.g. Board member from an Environmental Body/Authority)	19%	18%
Boards who have Co-opted members	4%	N/A
Boards who have directly employed staff	18%	11%
Boards who have contracted persons or consultants	84%	66%
Boards who have environmental Partners/NGOs	26%	20%
Boards who have other	9%	8%

#### Asset management

10. All boards (100%) report that they have continued to undertake visual inspections and update asset.

Question	Percentage in 2018	Percentage in previous year (2017)
		Different ways of recording
Boards who have ADIS systems/database	35%	
Boards who have Paper records	36%	
Boards who have Other electronic systems	42%	
Boards who have continued to undertake visual inspections and update asset	100%	

#### Health and Safety (H&S)

11. Practically all boards (98%) report that they have a current Health and Safety policy and a good number (86%) of boards have a responsible officer for H&S.

Question	Percentage in 2018	Percentage in previous year (2017)
----------	--------------------	------------------------------------

<b>Boards who have a current Health and Safety policy</b>	98%	Not reported
<b>Boards who have a responsible officer for H&amp;S</b>	86%	Not reported
<b>Boards who have had any reportable incidents in past year</b>	1%	Not reported

## Guidance and Best Practices

12. Nearly all boards have adopted good guidance and best practices recommendations such as: (93%) report that they have adopted a formal scheme of delegation, (92%) boards have reported to have website information current for this year, (98%) have adopted computerised accounting and rating systems, as specified in the IDB Review, (100%) have ensured that environmental impacts are taken into account and Standing Orders and Byelaws are adopted. (99%) boards that have adopted Code of Conduct for board Members, (80%) boards have adopted Anti-fraud and corruption policy.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Percentage in 2018</b>	<b>Percentage in previous year (2017)</b>
<b>Boards that have adopted a formal Scheme of Delegation</b>	93%	64%
<b>Boards that have provided training for members in the last year on Governance</b>	22%	63%
<b>Boards that have provided training for members in the last year on Finance</b>	13%	N/A
<b>Boards that have provided training for members in the last year on Environment</b>	21%	N/A
<b>Boards that have provided training for members in the last year on health, safety and welfare</b>	16%	N/A
<b>Boards that have provided training for members in the last year on communications and engagement</b>	10%	N/A
<b>Boards that have provided other means of training for members in the last year</b>	4%	29%
<b>Boards that have website information current for this year (Board membership, audited accounts, programmes of works, WLMPs, etc.)</b>	92%	67%
<b>Boards that have adopted computerised accounting and rating systems, as specified in the IDB Review</b>	98%	68%
<b>Boards that have published all minutes of meetings</b>	86%	N/A
<b>Boards that have publish approach to maintenance</b>	86%	N/A
<b>Boards that have ensured that environmental impacts are taken into account</b>	100%	N/A
<b>Boards that have adopted Standing Orders</b>	100%	70%
<b>Boards that have adopted Standing Orders that have been approved by Ministers</b>	96%	66%
<b>Boards that have adopted Byelaws</b>	95%	64%
<b>Boards that have adopted the latest set of Byelaws published in 2012</b>	41%	N/A
<b>Boards that have had their byelaws approved by Ministers</b>	88%	66%

<b>Boards that have adopted Code of Conduct for Board Members</b>	99%	70%
<b>Boards that have adopted Financial Regulations</b>	99%	70%
<b>Boards that have adopted Register of member's Interests</b>	100%	70%
<b>Boards that have adopted Anti-fraud and corruption policy</b>	80%	N/A

### Board membership and attendance

13. Nearly all boards (93%) report that they have held elections in the last three years.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Percentage in 2018</b>	<b>Percentage in previous year (2017)</b>
<b>Boards that have held elections in last three years</b>	93%	Not reported
<b>Boards that held elections that comply with requirements</b>	94%	Not reported
<b>Boards that have complaints procedure accessible from their websites</b>	91%	Not reported

### Public Engagement

14. Nearly all boards (97%) report that they have websites in place. IDBs report that the most popular way of engaging with the public is via meetings (82%) and newsletters (77%).

<b>Question</b>	<b>Percentage in 2018</b>	<b>Percentage in previous year (2017)</b>
<b>Boards that have conducted press Releases</b>	8%	Not reported
<b>Boards that have had newsletters</b>	77%	Not reported
<b>Boards that have websites in place</b>	97%	Not reported
<b>Boards that have conducted meetings</b>	82%	Not reported
<b>Boards that have conducted shows/events</b>	40%	Not reported
<b>Boards that have had consultations</b>	38%	Not reported
<b>Boards that display notices</b>	66%	Not reported

### Findings

The following finding are based on comparisons of 2017 and 2018 reports. It is important to note that a number of steps have been taken to strengthen IDBs governance, including adding more questions to the IDB1 form from this year. Therefore, some of the questions were not in the 2016 - 2017 IDB1 form and therefore it is not possible to carry a comparison check on progress.

15. Based on the responses, there are some positive results. It is showing that majority of IDBs are making good use of their websites as a platform to share important information as a way of being transparent. It is also showing that majority of IDBs have adopted good guidance and best practices such as having in place code of conducts, financial regulations and approved statutory instruments such as standing orders and byelaws. IDBs are also ensuring that that environmental impacts are taken into consideration.

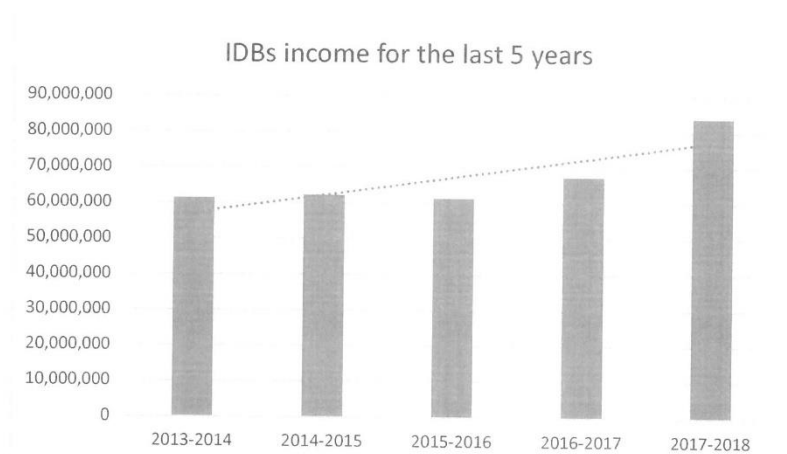
16. Based on the responses, there are some positive results. It is showing that majority of IDBs are making good use of their websites as a platform to share important information as a way of being transparent. It is also showing that majority of IDBs have adopted good guidance and best practices such as having in place code of conducts, financial regulations and approved statutory instruments such as standing orders and byelaws. IDBs are also ensuring that that environmental impacts are taken into consideration.
17. However, there are still some areas which require further improvement, for instance more work needs to be done around providing training on health, safety and welfare for their board members. Training for finance, communication and engagement etc is also on a low side and requires further attention. IDBs also need to ensure that biodiversity action plans are more publicly available. Furthermore, even though majority of the boards have byelaws in place, there is a need for some of the boards to adopt the latest sets of Defra byelaws, but this may depend upon local needs.

## Funding

18. IDBs reported a total income of £83,8m for financial year 2017-2018.

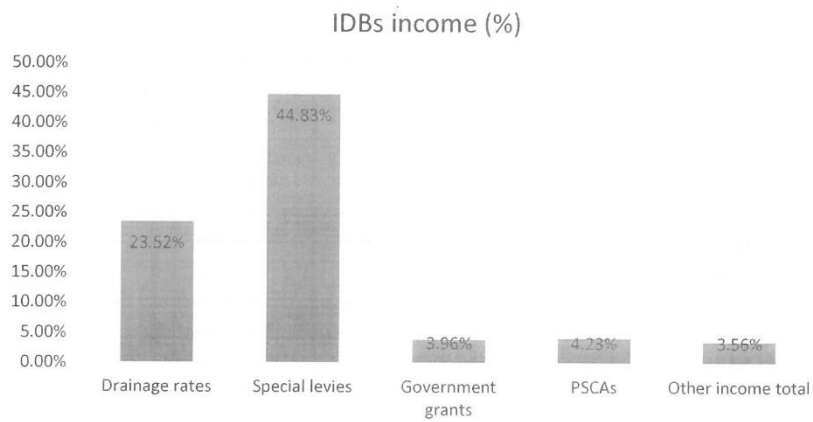
## Trend in funding

19. The sector's reported total income has increased for the last five years and by around 20% in real terms over the last year as the chart below shows.

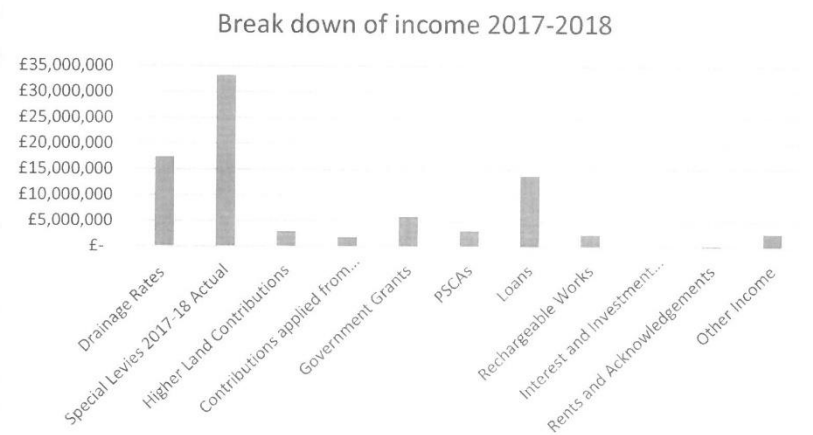


20. 80% of the sector's income comes from special levies (paid by local authorities) and drainage rates (paid by landowners within the internal drainage district). The remainder comes from a variety of sources including government grants and rental income as demonstrated below.

### Income 2017 - 2018

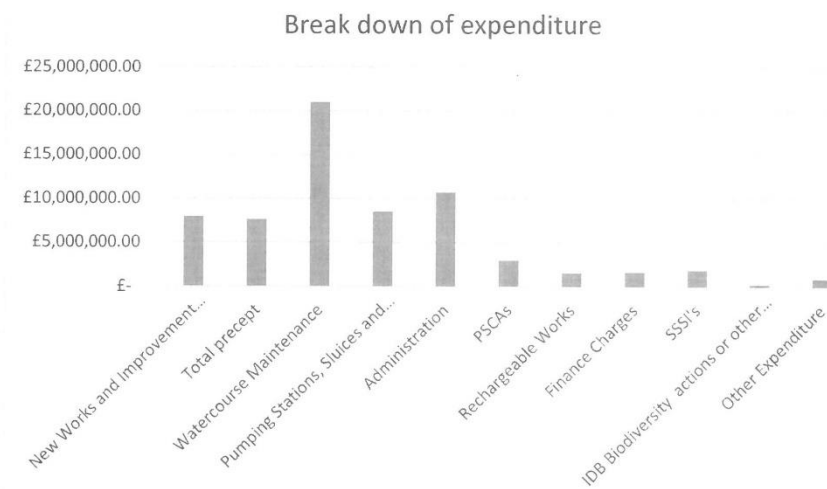
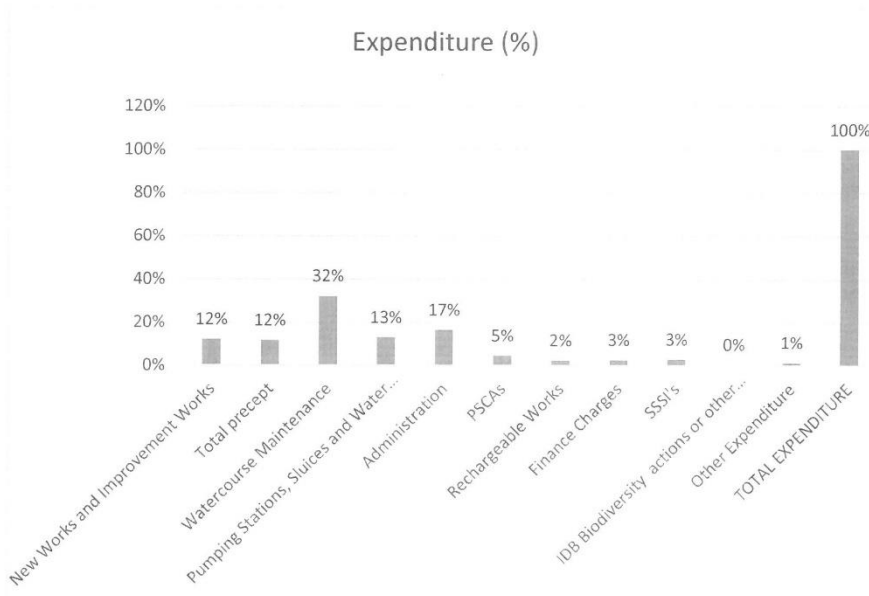


### Breakdown of income



21. In 2017 – 2018 reporting year alone, around 45% of the sector's income came from special levies.

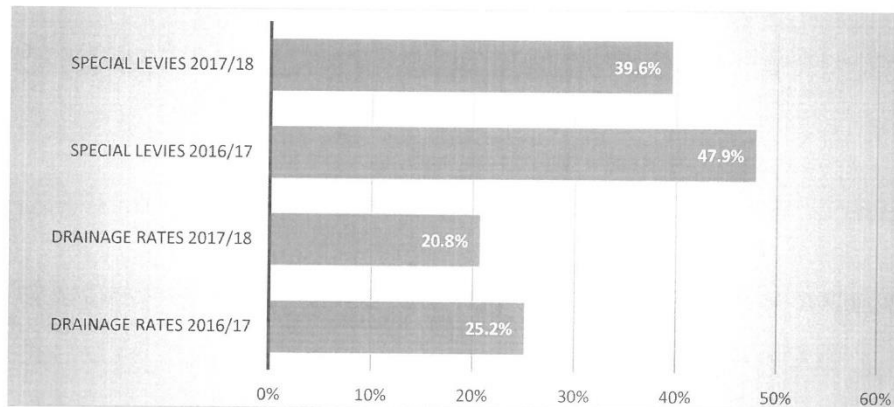
## Expenditure



22. 32% of the sector's is around watercourse maintenance. The remainder is around a variety of activities such as administration costs and new work and improvements.

## Comparison of the major funding

23. Drainage rates have slightly decreased as a percentage of total income from the previous year 25% in 2016-17 to 20% in 2017-18 and special levies have decreased from 47% in 2016-17 to 39% in 2017-18. However, monetary value has increase from the previous year from £16,930,773 in 2016-17 to £17414981 in 2017-18 and special levies has increased from £32215377 in 2016-17 to £33184557 in 2017-18.



## Conclusion

24. Based on the responses from the IDB1 forms, IDBs are showing willingness and good cooperation in addressing concerns that have been raised. However, some areas still need to be addressed.
25. However, there are still some IDBs who are not yet fulfilling some of these requirements. Such as implementation of BAPs and ensuring all of the guidance and best practices are implemented fully.

## Recommendations

26. Defra should continue to work closely with ADA, IDBs and other key players such as EA, NE, RSPB and other public bodies to ensure that IDB guidance that has been published recently is exercised fully by all of the board members. More work is needed such as encouraging IDBs to implement more training for their boards and making their biodiversity plans publicly available. Furthermore, even though the majority of the boards have byelaws in place, there is a need for some of the boards to adopt the latest set of Defra byelaws, but we also need to ensure the byelaws are updated and fit for purpose.



## Annex A

### List of IDBs who submitted IDB1 forms

- 1 Ainsty (2008) IDB
- 2 Airedale DC
- 3 Alconbury and Ellington
- 4 Ancholme Internal Drainage Board
- 5 Axe Brue
- 6 Axeholme & North Notts
- 7 Bedfordshire and River Ivel
- 8 Benwick
- 9 Beverley and North Holderness IDB
- 10 Black Drain DB
- 11 Black Sluice IDB
- 12 Bluntisham
- 13 Braunton Marsh DB
- 14 Broads
- 15 Buckingham and River Ouzel
- 16 Burnt Fen
- 17 Cawdle Fen
- 18 Churchfield and Plawfield
- 19 Connington & Holme
- 20 Cowick & Snaith
- 21 Curf and Wimblington Combined IDB
- 22 Danvm Drainage Commissioners
- 23 Dempster IDB
- 24 Doncaster East
- 25 Downham & Stow Bardolph
- 26 Earby & Salterforth
- 27 East Harling
- 28 East of the Ouse, Polver and Nar IDB
- 29 East Suffolk IDB
- 30 Euixmoor
- 31 Feldale
- 32 Foss IDB (2008)
- 33 Goole and Airmyn IDB
- 34 Goole Fielde
- 35 Haddenham Level
- 36 Holmewood and District DB
- 37 Hundred Foot Washes IDB
- 38 Hundred of Wisbech
- 39 Kings Lynn
- 40 Kyle and Upper Ouse IDB
- 41 Lakenheath
- 42 Lindsey Marsh DB
- 43 Littleport and Downham
- 44 Lower Medway IDB
- 45 Lower Severn IDB(2005)
- 46 Manea & Welney
- 47 March 3rd

48	March 5th
49	March 6th
50	March East
51	March West and White Fen
52	Melverley IDB
53	Middle Fen and Mere
54	Middle Level Commissioners
55	Mildenhall
56	Needham & Laddus
57	Nightlayers
58	Nordelph
59	Norfolk Rivers
60	North East Lindsey
61	North Kent Marshes
62	North Level District IDB
63	North Somerset Levels IDB*
64	Northwold
65	Old West
66	Ouse and Derwent IDB
68	Ouse and Humber
69	Over and Willingham
70	Padnal and Waterden
71	Parrett
72	Pevensey and Cuckmere
73	Ramsey
74	Ramsey 1st (Hollow)
75	Ramsey 4th (Middlemoor)
76	Ramsey Upwood & Gt. Raveley
77	Ransonmoor
78	Rawcliffe DB
79	Rea IDB
80	Reedness and Swinefleet DB
81	River Lugg IDB
82	River Stour (Kent) IDB
83	Romney Marshes Area IDB
84	Sawtry
85	Scunthorpe and Gainsborough WLM Board
86	Selby Area IDB
87	South Holderness
88	South Holland
89	Southery & District
90	Sow and Penk DB
91	Stoke Ferry
92	Strine IDB
93	Stringside
94	Sutton & Mepal
95	Swaffham
96	Swale and Ure
97	Swavesey
98	Thorntree IDB
99	Trent Valley

100	Upper Medway IDB
101	Upper Witham
102	Upwell
103	Vale of Pickering
104	Waldersey
105	Warboys, Somersham and Pidley
106	Waterbeach Level
107	Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland
108	Wellend and Deepings
109	Whittlesey and District
110	Witham 1st
111	Witham 3rd
112	Witham 4th
113	Woodwalton

## Tactical Plans for the Fens

### **Seeking Agreement in Principle and support from each Risk Management Authority for the approach taken.**

In both Defra Policy Statements (Appraisal of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management June 2009 and Partnership Funding May 2011) demonstrating and evidencing a strategic approach to flood or coastal erosion risk is a requirement for every project, to ensure value for money for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid (FCERM GiA).

With climate change projections and many of our assets in the Great Ouse Fens coming to the end of their design life, we now collectively, need to take a more strategic and long term approach. This will enable us all to maximise financial leverage and present a stronger, more considered investment case to funding bodies.

The current approach to flood risk management in the Great Ouse Fens area is one which generally has considered flood risk projects on a case by case basis, when assets require repair or are coming to the end of their life. Evidence and learning from the initial years of the FCERM six year programme, shows that each individual Risk Management Authority (RMA) has tended to consider its programme of work in isolation, not taking in to account the plans and programmes, and importantly the benefits being claimed, of other Risk Management Authorities.

In January 2019 all IDB Chairs and LLFA Chief Executives, in the Fens area were sent a letter, explaining the Fens project and how it fitted with the Strategic Approach as set out in the Partnership Funding Policy.

The approach we have followed is the same benefits apportionment approach as that used for the Isle of Axholme and a recommended method by the National Flood Risk Assessment and Investment team. We have been working with the relevant RMAs over the last year, to produce a plan for each of the South Level, Middle Level, and Tidal areas. For each sub catchment the relevant RMAs have identified the assets, which provide a flood risk benefit. These have then have been ranked depending on the benefit they provide in terms of flood risk and then using this ranking to apportion benefits, Present Value Benefit (PVb) and Outcome Measures, for the area. The rankings and related benefits have been agreed for all the sub catchment areas and we have also ensured this work has linked in with the latest 6 year programme refresh. This approach also ensures there will not be duplication of benefit claiming in the future.

**The headlines from this work show there is a £217.6M investment need for the Fens over the next 15 years, of which £125M would be funded by FCERM GiA and £92.6M partnership funding.** This is based on a raw Partnership funding score of 54%, for the Fens area under current Partnership Funding rules.

We are seeking agreement in principle to the approach by RMAs, so that future investment and the use of FCERM GiA on assets in the Fens can be more easily facilitated and collectively understood.

The agreement to the plans is on the basis that any work in the Fens area will be to maintain the current Standard of Service (SoS)\* for the area, until the Flood Risk Management for the Fens project has set out the preferred direction and options for managing flood risk in the Fens. If RMAs are not able to agree the plans, then the maximum grant rate allowable would be reduced to 45% for any projects in their area, which are requesting FCERM GiA.

The apportionment allocated to assets will be subject to all standard funding and business case rules, when future works on those assets are undertaken using FCERM GiA.

The outputs from the work show those assets which are affordable and cost-beneficial and sets out how many benefits each asset is able to draw upon as each asset business case will need to be assessed at the time of the works.

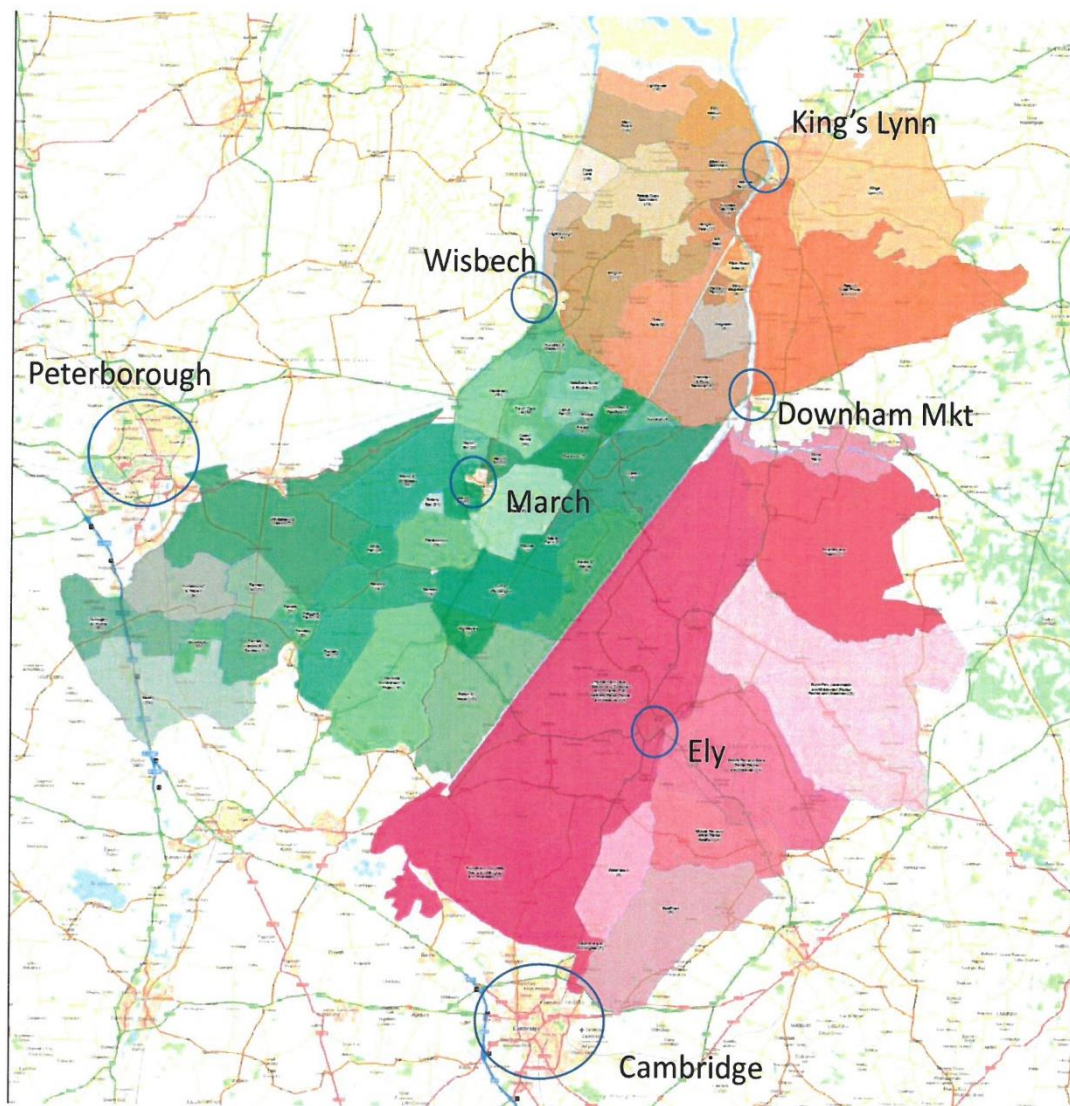
It is essential therefore that each RMA confirms support for the Tactical Plans and the principles of the benefit apportionment for the Great Ouse Fens. Please could you send an email or letter confirming your support to this approach, to Paul Burrows Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, Environment Agency, Brampton Office, Bromholme Lane, Huntingdon PE28 4NE. [paul.burrows@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:paul.burrows@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**\*Definition of Standard of Service (SoS)**

The measurable and objective description of an asset such as the crest level of a wall or pumping capacity and a minimum condition grade.

**Definition of Standard of Protection (SoP)**

The design standard, measured by Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) that an existing asset or proposed scheme provides, based on the current assessment of risk. The SoP changes over time due to climate change impacts and asset deterioration.





Animal and Plant Health  
Agency  
Plant Health and Seeds  
Inspectorate  
Insert CSC – PH Address |

00<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Grower name  
Address 1  
Address 2  
Town  
Post Code

Dear,

#### ***Ralstonia solanacearum* In watercourses**

This letter has implications if you grow potatoes or tomatoes, or may do so in future, so please read it carefully.

I am writing to provide information about our findings of *Ralstonia solanacearum* (RS) in the Middle Level System during our 2019 survey and to inform you of the statutory action that will follow .

From our previous correspondence you will be aware that in 2016 The Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI), part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), and Fera Science Ltd (Fera) 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.

In response to the findings in 2016 we carried out more extensive surveys across the Middle Level System in July and August 2017 and 2018. The positive findings of those surveys have already resulted in the prohibition of direct irrigation of Solanaceous crops (potato and tomato) from a number of designated watercourses, details of which have been notified in previous correspondence.

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>

The 2019 survey has unfortunately revealed one further point of infection of RS on the Forty Foot Drain adjacent to the Nightlayers pumping station at national grid TL409877 . Consequently the previously undesignated length of the Forty Foot from Wells Bridge at TL299881 to the bottom of the Sixteen Foot at TL422874 will shortly be designated and the irrigation restrictions outlined above will then also apply to that stretch of the Forty Foot Drain. A Statutory Notice to confirm the position will be published on the Defra website and will be applicable for crops grown in 2020 onwards.

Having thoroughly evaluated and reviewed the information gathered from the very extensive surveys carried out in 2017 and 2018, and the limited survey this year, we are now in a position to confirm that no further surveying will take place in 2020.

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 in future growing seasons. Although at this point we consider it unlikely that there are as yet undetected points of infection, due to the water management practices within the Middle Levels, we are strongly recommending that all growers, on a precautionary basis, take equivalent measures to those being applied to the current designated water courses explained above.

APHA will continue routine surveillance of 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,

| Jane Barbrook  
Senior Plant Health & Seeds Inspector

[CSC – PH Email address](#)



# SPEARHEAD

## QUOTATION

Middle Level Commissioners  
85 Whittlesey Rd,  
March  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 0AH

Station Road,  
Salford Priors,  
Evesham,  
Worcestershire,  
WR11 8SW,  
England

Date: 10 February 2020  
Quote Ref: MR11/1901/2

Dear Jonathan,

Thank for the opportunity to quote for the exchange of your Spearhead SPV3 for a New SPV2 110VT. The below quotation and specification have been amended to reflect our discussions during our recent factory visit.



Spearhead SPV Range of professional cutting machines use clean and efficient T4F Deutz engines and now incorporate the New Eco Mode helping improve fuel economy. The SPV2's are the most versatile tool carriers and are designed to be cutting machines, providing your operator optimum Hydraulic Performance, exceptional safety and Visibility and Comfort for unrivalled productivity.

Specification based on SPV2	110 VT
Max Weight	14,700 kg
Engine Type	Deutz TCD 4.1
Net Power	115 kW / 155 hp
Travel Speed	40 Kph
Turning Radius	2.15 M
Max Reach Ground	11.11 M
Max Reach Depth	8.3 M
Max Reach Height	11.48 M



# SPEARHEAD

## QUOTATION

### SPECIFICATION AS BELOW - SPV2 Premium

- 155HP DEUTZ ENGINE with Eco-mode,
- 40 Kph 2 Speed Transmission
- Load Sensing pump for precise Boom & Dipper services
- Conveyor Circuit with Proportional control
- Trelleborg T440 650/45 tyres
- Extended Mudguards to suit Trelleborg T440
- SPP — Proportional Boom & Dipper suspension System
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Gear pump activation key
- Excavator Mode Switch
- Floor Mounded Pedals - Instant Reverse & Cutter mode
- Booms Mounted Quick Couplers
- Hydraulic Extending Counterweight extends up to 60cm
- Three Point Linkage With CAT.II bidirectional hydraulic front PTO
- Front Linkage suspension



#### Eco Mode

The Spearhead Eco mode provides efficiency savings when travelling between worksites by lowering engine RPM when traveling at 40 KPH



#### 3 Year Warranty

Extended Warranty, 3 Year or 3000 hrs as standard covering all major components

### OPERATOR STATION - Prestige Cab

- Rotation 0° to 90°
- Rops & Fops tested
- Tilting and adjustable steering wheel
- On-board computer for the control of DEUTZ engine
- Tilting and height-adjustable steering column,
- GRAMMER adjustable air suspension seat.
- Air conditioning
- Adjustable right arm with integrated joystick socket.
- Left Hand Joystick with excavation Function
- Rear tinted windows.
- Front & Side windscreen wipers.
- 2 Rotating Beacons
- 60/40 divisible cab door.
- Emergency glass with hammer.
- 2 kg extinguisher housing space.
- Cruise control.
- Reverse Pedal
- Radio with Bluetooth/DAB.
- Electronic potentiometer for control the cutting head pump.
- Self-retracting sunshade curtain on windshield.
- LED working lights.
- External rear View on left hand side.
- Extra rear view mirror mounted on right side mudguard.
- Safety Camera & Monitor screen
- Kit sunroof with window, grill, sunshade and wiper.



# SPEARHEAD

## QUOTATION

*Productivity and more Productivity - that is what is delivered by the TWIGA SPV 2, combining enhanced comfort, unrivalled visibility, controlled stability, agile manoeuvrability, extreme power, and distinctive versatility to provide you with the ultimate reach mowing machine.*

*The rotating cabin perfectly complements the rotating flailhead allowing bi-directional cutting to take place at equal speeds, whilst the heavy duty flailhead ensures that any type of vegetation is aptly dealt with.*

*When your mowing work is done add an alternative attachment such as a weed bucket or tree shear to provide even further profitability from your machine and even continue through winter.*



### ATTACHMENTS – Included

#### Boom Mounted

- 1.5 m New Speed Cutting Head Fitted with rotator
- Hydraulic Front Opening Hood
- C/W hydraulic Motor
- 14 Hammer Flails
- Working Width 1420mm
- 3000 rpm



#### Linkage Mounted

- Spearhead HD250 Roliflail**
- 2.5m meter cutting width
- Double-spiral rotor
- 110hp bi-directional gearbox
- Double skin body construction
- C Flails
- Rear roller height adjustment
- Replaceable full-length skid kit
- 30-millimeter maximum cutting diameter



#### Safety System

- XWatch XWI Height Control System**
- To suit Boom & Telescopic dipper

**XWATCH**  
SAFETY SOLUTIONS

# SPEARHEAD

## QUOTATION

### QUOTATION

Qty	Model Options & Description	Price +VAT
1	<i>Spearhead SPV 2 110VT Prestige Inclusive of above Specification</i>	<i>£771,000</i>
1	<i>Part Exchange SPV3</i>	<i>£100,000</i>
	<i>Cost to Change</i>	<i>£121,000</i>

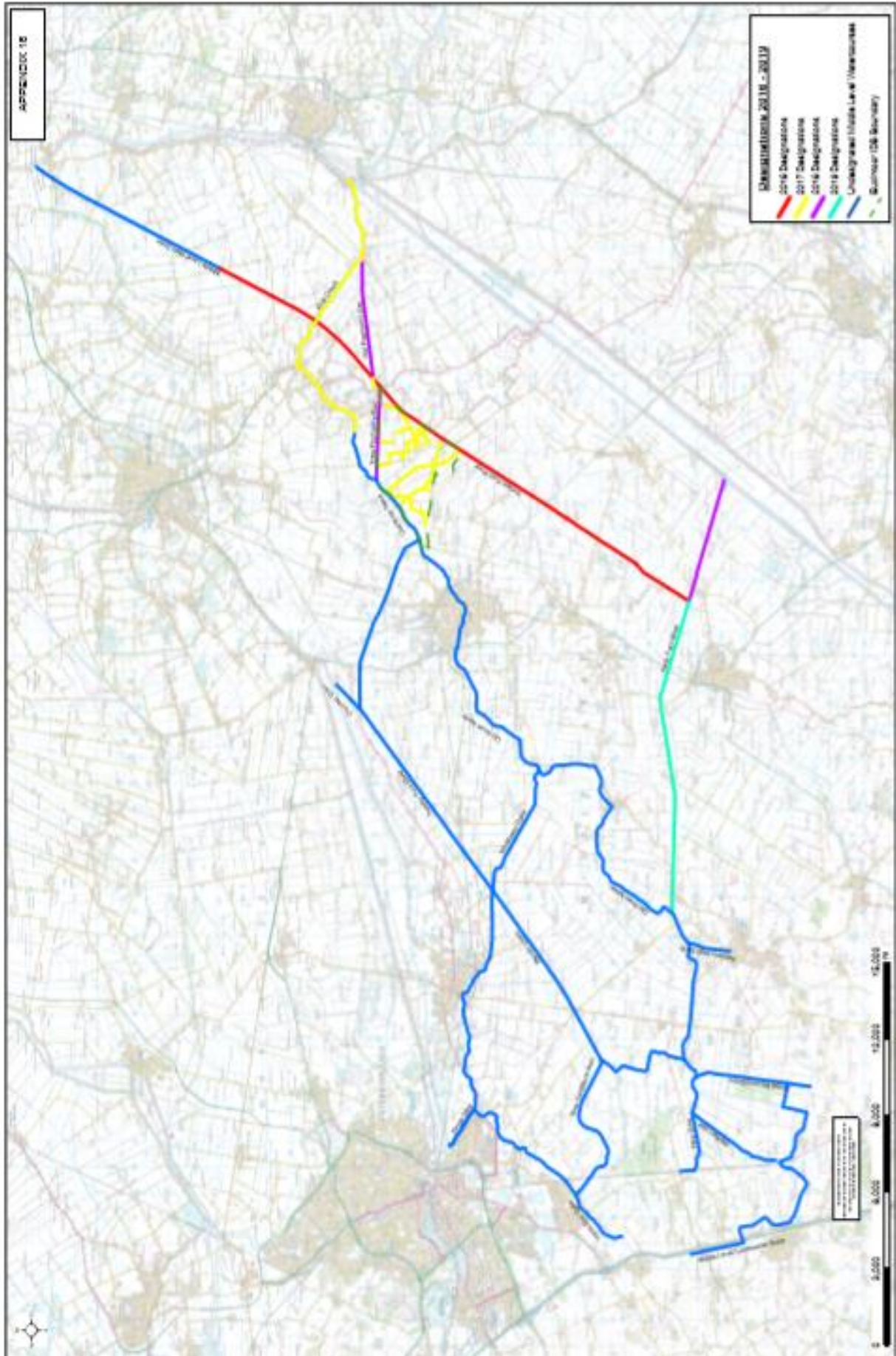
We hope we have interpreted your requirements accurately from our meeting and demonstration and that our quotation meets with your approval. We would welcome an opportunity to meet up and discuss the contents with you.

Yours Sincerely

*M. Raymond*

Mark Raymond  
Business Development Manager (SPV)  
+44 (0) 7721769481





The Chief Executive referred to the Chancellor's announcement that from April 2022 red diesel would only be available to agriculture and the rail sectors and that users of highway construction machinery would have to pay the standard tax rate of nearly 58p per litre for diesel rather than the subsidised red diesel rate of 11p per litre. ADA were currently using this change to seek greater clarity from the Government on the situation going forward in relation to IDB maintenance operations.

The Chief Executive reported that he had now taken a place on the Board of WRE and now that the organisation had been set up the meetings were now looking at the planning of future water resources in the east of the country.

At the last meeting Members had agreed to the arrangement of a visit to the new Wolverton & Stow pumping stations and to the Islington pumping station site and St Germans if time permitted. In view of the current restrictions imposed by COVID-19 it had been decided to cancel this inspection and rearrange it for 2021.

The Chief Executive reported that, under the new Middle Level Act, the Commissioners must appoint persons to represent various navigational interests and this had been completed at the April 2019 meeting. Two changes had now been proposed of Members as requested by their Member organisations; Nathan Arnold to replace Paul Seporavic and Kye Jerrom to replace Chris Middleton.

The Chief Executive reported on the progress that had been made with the Middle Level Bank Raising Scheme and that the consultant currently employed by the Commissioners to cover the post of Assistant Engineer should now be able to assist with the delivery of the Bank Raising Business case. The project would be managed by a Middle Level Commissioners' engineer and as the consultant engineer had extensive knowledge of business case development of this type his services should be retained to carry out this work.

The Chief Executive updated the Board on the progress with Stow Bardolph pumping station. The scheme designed by the Middle Level Commissioners had now been constructed and commissioned. Whilst the design and tendering were carried out in-house the construction was supervised by a consultant employed by the Board responsible for Stow Bardolph pumping station. The IDB was now requesting the Commissioners to waive some of the fees as the scheme went over budget. The Chief Executive reported that he was currently in discussion over this and currently saw no justification in any reduction of the fees.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) That the Board approve the changes in representation on the Navigation Advisory Committee by the Environment Agency.
- iii) That the Board approve the continuing employment of the consultant engineer to assist with the delivery of the bank raising case.
- iv) That no reduction in fees be offered in relation to the work on the Stow pumping station.

#### B.3608 Executive Committee

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

## RESOLVED

That the Executive Committee's minutes and recommendations be approved

### B.3609 The Forgotten Corner of Fenland – Honey Farm Bends – Safety Barriers (LHI)

The Chief Executive referred to an email dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 received from Graham Chappell Chair/Organiser, The Fenland Road Safety Campaign (Charlotte's Way) advising that the funding applied for from Cambridgeshire County Council through the joint Honey Farm Bends-Safety Barriers LHI Bid had been officially approved by Cambridgeshire County Council.

The bid had received the highest rating of all the bids across the county and Mr Chappell wished to convey his thanks to the Executive and Board at the Middle Level Commissioners for supporting the scheme and enabling the works to be approved.

### B.3610 Public Sector Co-operation Agreements (PSCAs)

Further to minute B.3570, the Chief Executive reported that Public Sector Co-operation Agreements had been successfully used at Denver/Salters Lode and for works within the Swavesey and Sutton and Mepal Districts.

### B.3611 Future Planning for the MLC and Associated Boards/IDB Amalgamation proposals

Further to minute B.3571, the Chief Executive advised 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.

### B.3612 Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

Further to minute B.3572, the Chief Executive advised 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 are asked (at this stage) to consider giving its approval in principle to the bid.

## RESOLVED

That the Board 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.

The Chief Executive also advised that a fifth Chair's Meeting was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

## B.3613 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported on the likely out-turn figures for 2019/2020.

The Treasurer referred to the budget out-turn at the end of March 2020 and stated that the main variance had been from the electricity use at the pumping stations and that there had been higher pumping costs from November onwards due to weather conditions.

The Board considered their current system of internal controls.

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

## RESOLVED

- i) That the report of the Treasurer be approved.
- ii) That the Board recommend to the Commissioners the use of £140,000.00 from reserves when setting the rate for 2020/2021.
- iii) That the Board approve their current system of internal controls.
- iv) That the Board approve their current risk management policy and procedures and insured value of properties.

### B.3614 Expenditure estimate 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 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 65.69% and 34.31%.

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 £2,665,603 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
  - c) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in b) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £1,751,081 and £914,522 respectively.
  - d) That a rate of 26.00p in the £ be recommended to the Commissioners and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
  - e) That Special levies totalling £914,522 be made and issued as follows for the purpose of meeting such expenditure if the rate was approved, viz:-

£501,534 to Fenland District Council

£208,523 to Huntingdonshire District Council

£204,465 to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

### B.3615 Risk Management Assessment

The Chief Executive 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. He 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.3616 New Navigation Legislation

Further to minute B.3574, the Chief Executive reported that the implementation of boat registration should be deferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 due to the current restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 situation.



The Chief Executive reported that the new system to be introduced from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 did have a discount arrangement of 50% from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The Chief Executive reported that the introduction of the new licensing system was obviously dependent on what happened with the COVID-19 situation and that currently the locks on the Middle Level system were closed in line with the restrictions that had been introduced by the Environment Agency.

The Chief Executive advised that he had purchased a second-hand boat to assist with future enforcement of boat registration.

## RESOLVED

- i) That the actions taken by the Chief Executive with regard to deferment of boat registration until the 1<sup>st</sup> September be approved.
- ii) That any decisions needed to be approved in respect of boat registration and implementation of the new navigation legislation before the next Board meeting be delegated to the Executive Committee.

### B.3617 Inspection of Works 2020

Further to minute B.3590(iii), the Chief Executive reported that this years' inspection of Works had been postponed due to the COVID-19 situation.

### B.3618 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>
Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways	Erect road safety signs on Sixteen Foot River Bank at Honey Farm Bends – Sixteen Foot River	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019
Richard Moore	Construct a pergola to the east of The Bungalow, Three Acres, Railway Junction South, Creek Road, March – Old River Nene, March	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019
W G Beaumont & Son Ltd	Erect a fully encapsulated access scaffold around gas pipe, remove existing coating, prepare pipework and apply new coating – Twenty Foot River	6 <sup>th</sup> November 2019
Sawtry Parish Council	Creation of an outfall for land drainage scheme at Sawtry Cemetery – Catchwater Drain	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2019
Richard Hawes	Remove existing shed construct concrete slab and new shed - 15 Cotswold Close, March - Old River Nene, March	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2019

Martin Pryke	Construction of 8m long timber landing stage including handrails and steps – river frontage of The Old Pump House, Doddington Road, Benwick – Old River Nene	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2019
Richard Moore	Replace existing manually operated gate with automatic sliding gate in same position. Involving construction of concrete foundations for vertical posts – The Bungalow, Three Acres, Railway Junction South, Creek Road, Road - Old River Nene, March	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
Balfour Beatty Rail	To replace two railway timbers on Beggars Railway Bridge including erection of temporary scaffolding to the underside of the bridge – Twenty Foot River – Old River Nene	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
Mr Fred Clarke	Construction of 5m long timber landing stage, including handrail and steps – Eastwyns, 70 Town Street, Upwell - ~Well Creek	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
Cadent Gas Ltd	Works to access and inspect the Girtford-Horsey Lock high pressure gas main on the eastern side of the Pigwater adj to Horsey Toll Bridge, Toll Road (A605) - Old River Nene (Pigwater)	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
Ramsey Neighbourhood Trust	Installation of an Information Board on the bank of the Forty Foot River adj to the bridge at Ramsey Forty Foot- Forty Foot River	12 <sup>th</sup> March 2020

## RESOLVED

That the action taken in granting consents be approved.

### B.3619 Water Resources Committee

Further to minute B.3576, Mr H Whittome reported that no meeting of the Water Resources Committee had taken place in the current year. He reported on rainfall levels and that because of the very wet winter the reservoirs were currently full, and that the water levels in the River Nene had been maintained throughout the summer.

Mr Whittome reported that due to the current COVID-19 situation the Environment Agency were stepping down some of the visits to farms in respect of abstraction of water.

### B.3620 WRE/Lower Nene Water Resources Group

Further to minute B.3577, the Chief Executive reported that Water Resources East were to address Chairmen of the Boards at the November 2020 meeting. There were funds available to develop a model for Water Transfer which would involve release of part of an Abstraction Licence to allow others to abstract water.

The Chief Executive would advise on any further developments with the proposal.

### RESOLVED

That this report be noted.

### B.3621 Water Transfer Licencing

Further to minute B.3578, the chief Executive reported that the application for transfer licences for the Middle Level Commissioners had been sent and was being processed and appeared to be in order. There were some queries on the applications made on behalf of the IDBs and these were currently being processed.

### B.3622 Smart Level System

Further to minute B.3581, the Chief Executive reported that the introduction of a Smart Level system remained a long term aspiration and would form a bid for financial support via local levy for the 2021/2022 year.

### B.3623 Conservation Committee

The Chief Executive reported that due to the COVID-19 situation the Conservation Committee scheduled to take place on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 had been postponed and referred to the Conservation Officer's Report.

### B.3624 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

The Chief Executive referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, dated December 2019, previously circulated to Members.

Members considered and approved the Commissioners' most recent BAP Report.

### B.3625 Association of Drainage Authorities

The Chief Executive advised:-

#### 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 Chief Executive be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association for any Member 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 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 effective communications with the wider public.

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

### **d) Subscriptions**

The Chief Executive reported that it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% for 2020, viz:- from £629 to £642.

## RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2020.

### B.3626 Emergency Financial Assistance for Internal Drainage Boards

The Chief Executive advised 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 on this matter as a result of this request.

### B.3627 Registration of land on the Old Nene and High Lode

The Chief Executive referred to a note received from Iain Smith, former Chief Executive, concerning the registration of land on the Old Nene and High Lode.

The Board considered the advice received in respect of ownerships along the River Nene.

## RESOLVED

That no further action be taken regarding this matter.

### B.3628 Fisheries

Further to minute B.3589, the Chief Executive reported that the fishing rights on the Twenty Foot River, Bevills Leam, North West Cut, Kings Dyke, New Dyke, Hook's Lode, Monks Lode, Great Raveley Drain, Black Ham, Yaxley Lode, Yards End Dyke and Middle Level Main Drain, for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, had been let.

The Chief Executive referred to a letter received from March & District Angling Association requesting a reduction in rental together with a request from Kings Lynn Angling Association for a 'payment holiday' of their lease of the Commissioners' waters.

## RESOLVED

That no reduction be allowed at the current time however, the Board were prepared to review any requests in future and any future decisions on this matter be delegated to the Executive Committee to review and allow any deductions on a pro-rata basis.

### B.3629 Date of next Meetings

The Chief Executive reminded Members that a meeting of the Board would be arranged towards the end of June to review and approve the accounting statements and Annual Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and that the next scheduled meetings of the Commissioners and the Middle Level Board would be held on Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

### B.3630 AXA Insurers

The Chief Executive reported on a communication from AXA insurers who will no longer provide professional indemnity insurance to the Commissioners. This decision was a result of the problems encountered from flood risk on recent claims. The only cover that could be obtained from an alternative insurer provided a reduced level of cover down from £5million to £2million, was at additional costs and there was also a £10,000 excess for any first claim. There was a 5% increase in fees to cover advice on engineering matters.

### RESOLVED

That the position be noted.