

RANSONMOOR DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Ransnmoor District Drainage Commissioners
hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Wednesday the 13th May 2020

PRESENT

C D Boughton (Chairman)	R E Mason Esq
M W Dale Esq (Vice Chairman)	G Wakeham Esq
C Boughton Esq	R Wicks Esq

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Commissioners) and Messrs Malcolm Downes and Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

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

Apology for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Connor.

C.1184 Standing Orders

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

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve in principle.

C.1185 Declarations of Interest

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

The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests in minute nos. C.1194, C.1203 and C.1212.

Mr Dale declared an interest in flailmowing and in matters relating to the District Officer.

C.1186 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 8th May 2019 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.1187 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That C D Boughton Esq be appointed Chairman of the Commissioners.

C.1188 Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED

That G Wakeham Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Commissioners.

C.1189 Bank mandate

RESOLVED

That, in addition to Mr Boughton, Mr G Wakeham, be authorised to sign cheques and authorise payments on behalf of the Commissioners.

C.1190 Appointment of District Officer

RESOLVED

That M W Dale Esq be appointed District Officer to the Commissioners during the ensuing year.

C.1191 Land Drainage Act 1991

Miss Ablett reported that Fenland District Council had re-appointed Councillor D Connor and appointed Councillor R Wicks to be Commissioners under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Wicks who was attending his first meeting of the Commissioners.

C.1192 Water Transfer Licencing

Further to minute C.1115, Miss Ablett reported that the relevant licences have been applied for for the MLC and associated Boards and that these were due to be validated before the end of December 2019 and then the EA have 3 further years to determine them. She also advised that it was worth noting that the EA have confirmed that only MLC system to IDB transfers do not require a separate licence.

C.1193 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett advised:-

i) COVID-19 Actions

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

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

ii) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

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

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

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve support for the Biosphere bid in principle

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

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

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

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

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

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

Planning and Consenting

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

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

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners continue with the current arrangements.

iii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 82nd Annual Conference of the Association had been held at the ICE building in Westminster on Wednesday 13th 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 11th November 2020.

RESOLVED

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

c) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

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

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

That the date of the next meeting is Tuesday the 2nd March 2021.

d) Further Research on Eels

Further to minute C.1117, ADA have advised that the valuable research work being carried out by Hull University on eels and eel behaviour in pumped catchments will be continuing for at least another two years. ADA consider that the financial support to the project

to date provided by the IDBs has been positive and noted by the regulator (EA), leading to positive engagement on finding practical solutions at pumping station sites. They therefore consider that it would be useful if IDBs could consider whether they would be willing to continue their annual contributions to this research over that period.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners contribute £60 per year for the next 2 years towards further research on eels,

e) Emergency Financial Assistance for Internal Drainage Boards

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.

iv) Environment Agency consultation on changes to the Anglia (Central) RFCC

That a consultation is taking place on the constitution of three RFCCs following a formal proposal for two new unitary authorities to be formed in Northamptonshire (West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire) has been submitted to the Government for consideration. If approved these authorities would come into existence on the 1 April 2020.

In Buckinghamshire the decision to create a single unitary authority replacing the existing five councils has been made by the Government, subject to Parliamentary approval. It would come into existence on the 1 April 2020.

Each new authority will be a unitary authority, delivering all local government services in their respective areas, including their functions as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFAs).

The membership of Thames RFCC, Anglian (Central) RFCC, and Anglian (Northern) RFCC currently includes representation from one or both of the existing county councils. To reflect the changes proposed the membership of all three RFCC will need to be varied before 1 December 2019.

At the same time to better reflect a catchment-based approach it is proposed to change the name of Anglian (Central) RFCC to Anglian (Great Ouse) RFCC. ADA has stated that it supports the naming revision.

v) Tactical Plans for the Fens Agreement

That the Environment Agency have 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. The EA is requesting approval to the approach being taken in principle and 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 resolves

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.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve in principle

vi) Water Resources East (WRE)

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

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

That Members will be aware that the Chair's meetings hosted by the MLC has had an item on the agenda for the last few meetings on future planning of administration and delivery of operations for the Board's collectively. As part of this process it has been agreed that members thoughts should be sought on what they envisage the collective future can and should look like to ensure the most resilient, delivery focused approach that can be achieved. Members should when developing their vision of water management in the fens in 2030 consider the challenges of maintaining representation, improving financial resilience, reducing duplication of work, the potential for cost savings, advantages and disadvantages of the various options available, the impacts of technology and sharing of resources and knowledge.

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

C.1194 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

Ransonmoor D.D.C.

Consulting Engineers Report – May 2020

Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations approved by the Commissioners at their last annual meeting.

Following the Commissioners' agreement at their last annual meeting, reaches 6-15 and 10-44-45 were included in the annual flail mowing programme to allow improved access for a second inspection to be carried out. The subsequent joint inspection with the District Officer revealed that a majority of the vegetation had been cleared from the bankside and there was very little vegetation within the watercourse; therefore, no machine cleansing was deemed necessary. Both reaches will be monitored this season to ensure the aquatic vegetation does not migrate into the watercourse and appropriate action taken if required to maintain a satisfactory standard.

An application of Roundup was made last autumn to district drains where it was required to control growths of emergent aquatic vegetation.

Cases of illegal fly tipping significantly reduced within the Ransonmoor district last year. However, this issue still remains a general concern in the March area and, in the current situation with recycling centres closed, rural areas have already seen an increase in fly tipping activities. As with previous years, a provisional sum has been allocated to allow fly-tipped debris to be cleared, on the basis that the Ransonmoor area has been targeted in past years and unfortunately is likely to be targeted again.

Following the recent Health & Safety inspection by the Commissioners' appointed advisers, Cope, a number of remedial works were identified to ensure current regulations are met. These included replacement signage and improvement works to the steps and handrails at the inlet. These are currently being addressed. However, the main point of concern was the damaged asbestos roof on the Station building. At the Chairman's request a



Damaged Asbestos Roofing at the Pumping Station

quote has been procured for an approved contractor (see page 5 of this report for copy of quote) to remove the existing asbestos roof and replace with steel box profile roofing sheets and plastic

guttering. The cost of the works is £14,300. The Commissioners may wish to take this opportunity to discuss their options and decide how they wish to proceed.



Coneywood Road, reach 27-28

A recent inspection of the Commissioners' district drains has been undertaken and it was found that the majority of drains are currently in a satisfactory condition and are being maintained to a good standard.

The inspection did however highlight dense stands of reed and aquatic vegetation along the Hospital Road drains, reach 24-25-26-27-28-29-30 and the Coneywood Road drains, reach 24-33-34-35-36-37-38. It is recommended these reaches be treated with an application of Roundup herbicide, followed by machine cleansing after harvest this year.

The District Officer has indicated that he will be available to undertake the Commissioners' flail mowing requirements for the coming season. It is recommended that flail mowing is undertaken in advance of the machine cleansing works to afford the operator sufficient visibility of the working area. Clearance of numerous bramble patches within the Commissioners' drains will also be included in this year's flail mowing programme to prevent any further colonisation. Provision has been included within the estimate for this work to be undertaken.

A provisional sum has also been included within the estimate to allow for any emergency machine cleansing, culvert cleansing or emergency cott clearance works that may be required later in the year.

The estimated cost of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain Maintenance programme is as follows:

						£
1.	<u>Provisional Sum</u>					
	Allow sum to remove fly tipped materials from District drains as required	Item	Sum			400.00
2.	<u>Machine cleansing</u>					
	<u>Hospital Road Area</u>					
	24-25-26-27-28-29-30	1350	m	@ 1.10		1485.00
	27-32	350	m	@ 1.10		385.00
	<u>Coneywood Road Area</u>					
	24-33-34-35	1000	m	@ 1.10		1100.00
	34-38	200	m	@ 1.10		220.00
	36-35-37	500	m	@ 1.10		550.00
3.	Roundup application to control emerging aquatic weed growth in District drains.	Item	Sum			1000.00
4.	Flail mowing in advance of machine cleansing and to control bramble on banks, where required.	Item	Sum			2000.00
5.	<u>Provisional Item</u>					
	Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing, culvert clearance and emergency cott removal works	Item	Sum			1000.00
6.	Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Commissioners, arrangement and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance works	Item	Sum			950.00
TOTAL						£9,090.00

Orders for the application of herbicides are accepted on condition that they are weather dependant and the Middle Level Commissioners will not be held responsible for the efficacy of any treatments.

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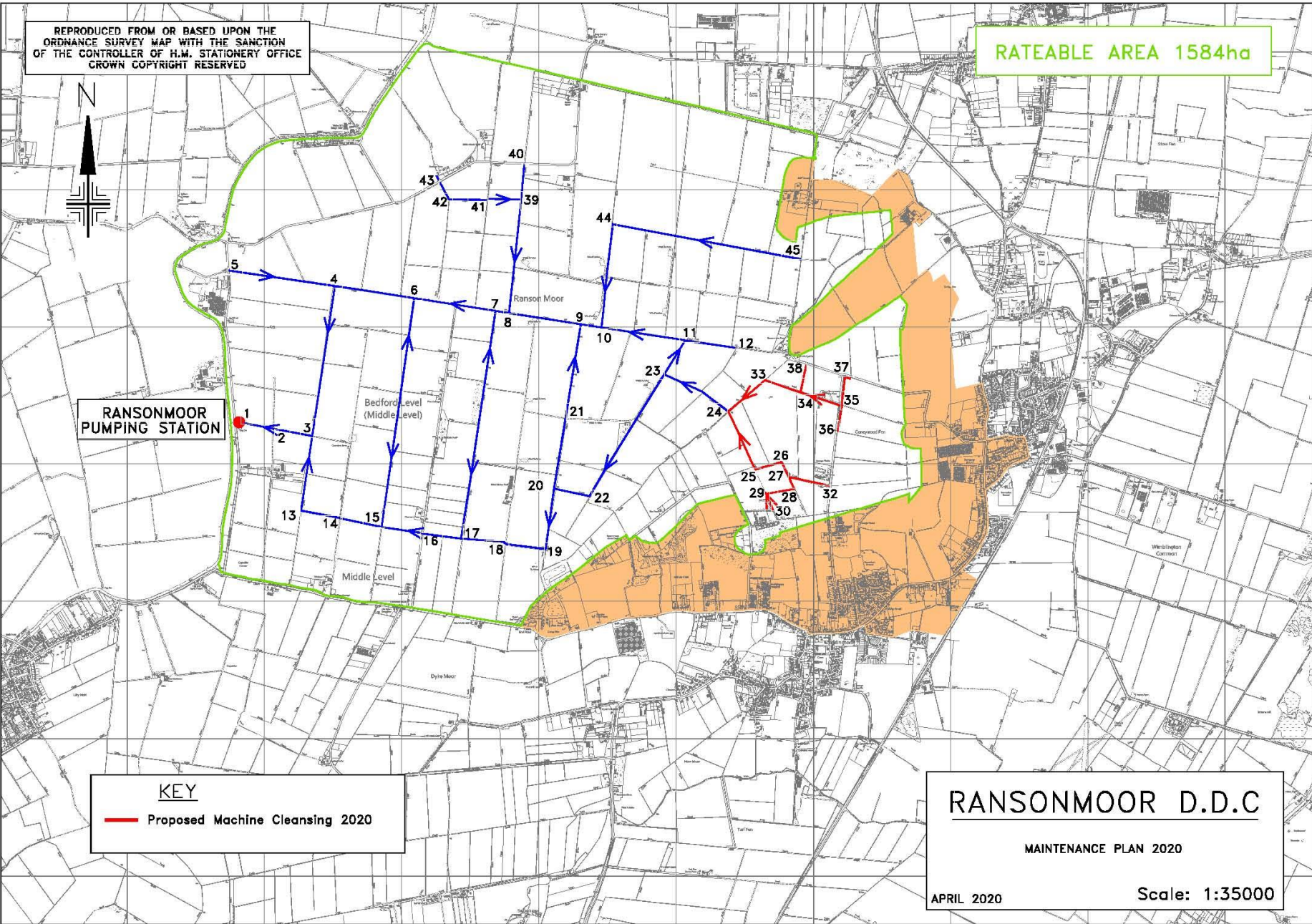
RATEABLE AREA 1584ha



1
RANSONMOOR
PUMPING STATION

KEY
— Proposed Machine Cleansing 2020

RANSONMOOR D.D.C
MAINTENANCE PLAN 2020
APRIL 2020
Scale: 1:35000





**B J Plant Hire Ltd
Rose Cottage
Rands Drove
Marshland St James
Wisbech
Cambridgeshire
PE14 8HA**

Middle Level Commissioners
Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambs
PE15 0AH

Date: 8th April 2020

Quotation BJP2522

Ref: Replacement Roof Ransonmoor Pumping Station

Attend site. Erect safety fencing to secure site. Carry out overhead survey to identify any services. Erect scaffolding around entire perimeter of building including handrail, plus access ladder for safe access for works to be carried out on roof. Remove existing asbestos sheets and side cladding. Place into asbestos approved skip supplied by B J Plant Hire Limited. Re-clad roof and sides with box profile plastic coated sheets, including all flashings. Supply and fit new wooden barge board. Supply and fit new guttering. Remove scaffolding on completion and leave site clean and tidy.

£ 14,300.00 plus vat

The quotation above includes plant, labour and materials



Pumping Station

Other than matters previously reported only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant appears to be mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

As instructed by the District Officer an order was placed for a service of the diesel-powered pump with E Rand, who carried out the original installation. This work has now been completed.

The District Officer also confirmed that he did not currently wish to proceed with fitting an exercise timer to the diesel-powered pump.

During the recent storms a major malfunction of the weedscreen cleaner occurred, possibly due to an electrical surge, causing failure of power supply units, the main PLC and some mechanical components. A replacement identical PLC was no longer available and hence a suitable replacement was obtained and the software converted. The unit was fitted, together with other control components, by the original control equipment manufacturer.

The Middle Level Commissioners' workforce carried out the mechanical repairs to get the machine operational but some additional repairs are still required and will be dealt with when the current lockdown restrictions are lifted.

It was found that the differential control signal has also been affected and the machine is now operational on pump start only which should not cause a problem and will be further investigated.

It has also been noted that there is a slight rattle from the electric pump and this will be investigated at a later date.

Pumping hours

Pump Hours Run	April 16 - April 17	April 17 - April 18	April 18 - April 19	April 19 - April 20
Electric	159	328 (487)	158 (645)	575 (1220)
Diesel	73	3 (76)	48 (124)	21 (145)
Total	232	331		596

Pump Hours Run	May 09 – April 10	April 10 – April 11	March 11 – March 12	March 12 – March 13	March 13 – April 14	April 14 – April 15	April 15 – April 16
Electric	484	219	176	835	386	527	245
Diesel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	484	219	176	835	386	527	245

Planning Procedures Update

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

The use of Infiltration Devices

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

Local Land Charges Register (LLCR)

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

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 5 new applications have been received and dealt with since the last meeting:

MLC Ref.	Council Ref	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
361	F/YR19/0379/F	Mr & Mrs Hall	Residence (Extension)	Wood Street, Doddington
362	F/YR19/0398/F	Mr & Mrs Boughton	Residence	Benwick Road, Doddington
363	F/YR19/0440/PNC04	Mr A Mason	Residence	Hospital Road, Doddington
364	F/YR19/0589/F	Mr A Carter	Residence (Garage)	Parsons Land Drove, Doddington
365	F/YR19/0667/O	Mr & Mrs Cutteridge	Residential (2 plots)	Hospital Road, Doddington

Planning applications ending 'PNC0' relate to prior notification change of use issues

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

Some of the above are likely to discharge treated effluent into the Commissioners' system either via private treatment plants or Doddington Water Recycling Centre (WRC).

An application for development outside the Commissioners' natural surface water drainage catchment but which discharges treated effluent into the Commissioners' system via AWSL's Doddington WRC has been received during the reporting period.

Mr A Carter chose to use the infiltration device self-certification process for surface water disposal from a garage at Parsons Land Drove, Doddington (MLC Ref No 364) and, in doing so, agreed that if the device was to fail in the future, he would be liable for discharge consent.

No further correspondence has been received from the applicants or the applicants' agents concerning the following developments and no further action has been taken in respect of the Commissioners' interests.

- *Proposed Residential Development of 37 units to the west of 17-37 Wood Street, Doddington - Construct Reason (MLC Ref Nos 316 & 334)*
- *Erection of up to 7no dwellings on land to the north of 12-28 Wimblington Road Doddington - Mr & Mrs Pollington (MLC Ref No 343)*

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

Erection of 10 dwellings at land east of Askham House, 13 Benwick Road, Doddington – Mr C Boughton (MLC Ref Nos 301, 304, 325 & 336)

Members will recall that concerns were raised about the original proposals for this development. However, a review of the supplied information was undertaken in August 2019.

The final solution proposed by the developer for dealing with surface water is that all properties drain to soakaways using Wavin Aquacell units installed within the gardens of each property.

Foul drainage from the development discharges from a dedicated pumping station located within the site boundary and connects to the existing Anglian Water Services Ltd (AWSL) foul sewer located in Benwick Road near the hospital.

The previously supplied Discharge Consent was recommended for approval.

Waste transfer, processing and treatment facility at Lodge Farm, Knights End Road, March – Ferry Group Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 250 & 274) & - Goldstar Metal Traders Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 310, 349 & 358)

Further to the last Meeting Report planning permission Council Ref F/2012/18/CW (MLC Ref No 358) was granted by the County Council, in its role as the Waste Planning Authority, subject to the imposition of conditions, during May 2019. None of the conditions are relevant to the Commissioners' functions.

No recent consultation has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agents concerning this development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Commissioners' interests.

Developments at Fields End Water Caravan Park, Benwick Road, Doddington – Mr C Boughton (MLC Ref Nos 233, 332, 333 & 357)

Further to previous Meeting Reports planning permission was granted by the District Council subject to the imposition of conditions, during May 2019. A condition relating to surface water disposal was included.

However, despite this no subsequent consultation has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agents concerning this development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Commissioners' interests.

Development Contributions

Contributions received in respect of discharge consent will be reported under the Agenda Item – *'Contributions from Developers.'*

Fenland District Council (FDC)

FDC Liaison Meeting

A meeting was held at the end of March. Issues discussed included navigation related matters, notes on the LLCR, the Wisbech Garden Town, the FRM for The Fens project, the Future High Street Fund bid for March etc.

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

Emerging Local Plan 2019-2040

Fenland District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2019-2040 which, when adopted, will replace the current Fenland Local Plan (May 2014). The Local Plan is an important document which will “determine what the district will look like in the future and how it will become an even better place to live, work and visit.”

‘Live’ Timetable for Production of the Fenland Local Plan (October 2019)

No.	Stage	Description	LDS Target	Actual dates
1	Consult on a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) scoping report	The SA scoping report sets out the sustainability objectives proposed to be used to appraise the economic, social and environmental effects of the emerging Local Plan policies. The SA scoping report is subject to consultation.	N/a	Consultation 11 th October to 21 st November 2019
2	Public participation (Regulation 18)	Opportunity for interested parties and statutory consultees to consider the options for the plan before the final document is produced. This stage may involve one or more public consultation rounds. We intend two rounds for the new Local Plan.	October 2019 & May 2020	Issues and Options Consultation Document Cabinet 18th September Consultation 11 th October to 21 st November 2019
3	Pre-Submission Publication (Regulation 19)	The Council publishes the Local Plan which is followed by a 6 week period when formal representations can be made on the Local Plan.	February 2021	
4	Submission (Regulation 22)	The Council submits the Local Plan to the Secretary of State together with the representations received at Regulation 19 stage.	May 2021	
5	Independent Examination Hearing	Held by a Planning Inspector into objections raised on the Local Plan.	From the day it is ‘submitted’	
6	Inspector’s Report	This will report whether if the Plan is ‘Sound’ or ‘Not Sound’. The Inspector may make recommendations to make the plan ‘Sound’.	January 2022 (estimate – could be earlier or later, and subject to the examination)	
7	Adoption of DPD (Local Plan)	Final stage, the Council will formally need to adopt the Local Plan and it will then be used in making planning decisions.	February 2022 (estimate - could be earlier or later, and subject to the examination)	

Issues & Options Consultation

Between 11 October and 21 November 2019, the Council undertook a Public Issues & Options Consultation, held a ‘Call for Sites’ exercise, requested nominations for Local Green Spaces, and invited views on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

The consultation was in a questionnaire type format most of the content of which did not directly relate to navigation, water level and flood risk management matters or questions are not relevant to our duties and functions.

Where the questions raised were not specifically relevant to us but may be related to issues upon which we would like to make a remark we made a “comment”.

Question 8: Renewable Energy

A comment was made concerning the location of the nearest appropriate grid connection and the potential detrimental effect that the export cable/main connecting into it may cause for example, channel crossings, transport routes and associated remedial works, the

formation/uprating/reconstruction of access culverts/roads, and other works to accommodate specialist construction machinery and associated infrastructure the impacts of which are not generally considered as part of the planning process.

Question 11: Minimise Carbon Losses from Wider Activities

Should the Local Plan:

11a) Set out a specific policy on the loss of peat-based soils, and the carbon impacts of it?

Guidance was given concerning the Lowland Agricultural Peat Taskforce when launched by Defra and the East Anglian Fens peat pilot managed by Natural England.

Question 12: Other Proposals to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Question 22: Transport

12b) Should the Local Plan make provision of cycle and footways, which are designed in a way so that they become the natural choice to use for short journeys, rather than the car?

The response advised that, where possible, footpaths, cycleways, street lighting, and/or other street furniture should be positioned outside of any protected watercourse and the associated maintenance access strip.

Question 13: Design and Amenity

13c) Are there any specific local issues which need to be addressed through design policies?

Issues specifically referred to were the retention of on-site open watercourses and the provision of adequate maintenance strips beside water level and flood risk management systems, including protected watercourses, within the development's design.

Question 14: Optional Standards

14a) Do you think the Local Plan should include any of the following optional standards (subject to need and viability testing)? If so why?

ii) Water efficiency of new homes

The implementation and management, including enforcement, of water efficiency measures for residential, business and other users of potable water. Proposals should include suitable schemes which minimise the need to abstract water from the Main River system to ensure that it is available for other potential water resource uses ie agricultural irrigation, biodiversity, navigation, leisure and tourism etc.

Question 16: Gypsy and Travellers & Question 17: Park Homes and Houseboats

16b) What other suitable locations for Gypsy and Traveller pitches are there?

17) Is there a need for moorings for houseboats or sites for caravans in Fenland? Any evidence to support your comments would be welcome, or suggestions as to how such need could be identified in Fenland

In respect of the Middle Level Commissioners' interests, comment was made that in addition to the normal caravans and "bricks and mortar" sites, suitable locations may need to be considered for "house boats".

Question 24: Natural Environment

How do you think the Local Plan should protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment?

The Conservation Officer advised that the Plan should include recreational and wildlife spaces being created as part of new residential developments and the incorporation of relevant biodiversity measures.

Question 26: Flood & Water Management

Do you have any views on how new development could reduce flood risk?

Our comments included but were not limited to the following:

- The extent of the Environment Agency's (EA) Indicative Floodplain and the constraint that this imposes on “growth” in the District.
- All relevant development proposals must be discussed with the relevant RMA including the appropriate Internal Drainage Board at the earliest opportunity, preferably at the pre-application stage.
- In addition to the requirements of the NPPF and associated technical guide, all applications for relevant developments must include a drainage strategy to demonstrate that:
 - (a) Suitable consideration has been given to the disposal of both surface and treated waste water flows and should detail any mitigation required;
 - (b) Appropriate arrangements have been made for developments adjacent to watercourses; and
 - (c) Issues of long-term ownership, funding and maintenance of the water level and flood risk management system are addressed.
- All proposals should have regard to the guidance and byelaws of the relevant RMA including the Internal Drainage Boards. Where appropriate the contents of hydraulic models and studies, such as the Middle Level Strategic Study must be considered.

Question 27: Any Other Issues

Is there anything else you would like to raise – has anything been missed, or are there any general comments you would like to make?

It was suggested that the retention and improvement of the rivers, their settings and associated corridors in the District for navigation, environmental, leisure and tourism through the provision of related facilities together with the provision of a Water Space Strategy should be considered.

Question 28: Your Priorities

28b) Please identify any other top priorities.

The response advised that the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards'/Commissioners' priorities were:

- To fund, maintain, protect and improve existing and make further provision of viable and appropriate water level and flood risk management infrastructure and systems to reduce the likelihood of harm to people and damage to the economy, environment and society.
- The implementation and management including enforcement of water efficiency measures for residential, business and other users of potable water.
- The retention and improvement of the rivers, their settings and associated corridors in the District for navigation, environmental, leisure and tourism through the provision of related facilities.
- To maintain, protect and improve the existing and make further provision of net gains to achieve environmental benefits to the waterways in the district.

Question 29: Neighbourhood Planning

The Council was advised that the “Neighbourhood Area” designation should not unduly affect the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards/Commissioners adding that even

though a neighbourhood area may have been designated, compliance with the provisions of the appropriate Acts and the relevant RMA's byelaws would still be required.

Level 1 SFRA & WCS documents

Royal Haskoning DHV has been appointed to update the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Water Cycle Study (WCS) for Fenland District Council as part of the evidence for the new Local Plan.

An Inception Meeting has been held and an information request is currently being processed.

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)

Cambridgeshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) document

No further correspondence has been received in respect of this document.

2019 revision of the Local Validation Guidance List & Local Validation Check List for planning applications for the County Council's own development & for waste development

A report detailing the proposed revisions and the public responses which included responses from various interested parties including the Commissioners, several Parish and Town Councils, and various County Council departments went before the County Council on 16 May.

A copy of the report can be found on the Council's webpage by using the following link and searching for "Review of the Local Information Requirements for the Validation of Planning Applications":

https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/232/Committee/8/Default.aspx

However, the relevant items, as far as the Commissioners and relevant associated Boards/Commissioners are concerned, are summarised below.

“3.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

3.10 Middle Level Commissioners – Middle Level Commissioners have made a number of comments:

1. The contents of the Middle Level Commissioner's response of 2017 remain relevant.
2. The Commissioners are pleased to note that the reference in the introduction on page 2 of the 2019 LVL Guidance notes to the use of relevant and competent technical specialists and encourage this.
3. The commissioners and associated boards promote meaningful preapplication advice and work with CCC colleagues to ensure that any issues concerning flood risk, water level management, navigation and environmental issues are dealt with prior to the planning application process, which offers more certainty in the decision making process. The

Middle Level Commissioners would be pleased if applicants and/or agents could be advised to contact the Middle Level Commissioners for advice within their jurisdiction. A web site link is given to their pre- and post-application procedure: <https://middlelevel.gov.uk/consents/>.

4. The Commissioners request that applicants and/or agents are reminded that should planning approval be given by Cambridgeshire County Council, to remind the applicant(s) agent(s) that any matters requiring consent under the requirements of the Land Drainage Act, the Highways Act, the Water Industry Act, the Flood and Water Management Act and/or the Middle Level Act 2018, which relates to navigation related issues, must be complied with before any work is commenced on site.
5. It is requested that any drawings that are submitted to County Council be to a recognised engineering scale including a scale bar and advice on what size of paper the drawing should be printed on.
6. The Commissioners are pleased to note that the reference in the introduction on page 2 of the 2019 LVL Guidance notes to the use of relevant and competent technical specialists and encourage this.
7. The Biodiversity Survey and Report (Paragraph 4) includes reference to the Middle Level Biodiversity Manual (2016), on page 5 - this remains current on 10 April 2019.
8. The Statement of Sustainable Design and Construction (Paragraph 5) includes or the provision of both a foul drainage strategy and water conservation strategy, on pages 6 and 7. This is supported but it is suggested that the latter should be applied County wide and not just applied to the South Cambridgeshire District Council's area.
9. The Flood Risk Assessment (Paragraph 7) gives a list of application types that is appropriate to provide a Flood Risk Assessment for. The last bullet point (on page 8) refers to developments of: "Less than 1 hectare within flood zone 1 which has critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency." Unless the area is identified within a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment) the Environment Agency are unlikely to be involved. Drainage is the responsibility of several stakeholders, including Internal Drainage Boards and your Council's Flood Risk and Biodiversity Team. The latter are more likely to be aware of and have to resolve "critical drainage problems". It is reassuring to note and we applaud the inclusion of a reference and a link to our "Planning Advice and Consent Documents" webpage on page 9.
10. Additional Plans and Drawings (including cross-sections where required). (Paragraph 22), the inclusion of the section detailing other plans and drawings and suggesting suitable scales for these is noted and supported."

"4.0 Consideration of the Consultation responses

4.10 Middle Level Commissioners –

1. Noted with thanks. No changes required.
2. Pre application advice - References to Middle Level guidance will be retained, so no changes required.
3. References to Middle Level guidance are retained and it is recommended that the Middle Level Commissioners are added to the list of other bodies who provide pre-application advice.
4. Consent under the requirements of the Land Drainage Act is covered when necessary by informative at decision stage.
5. Drawings - This is covered by national guidance, so no changes required.
6. Technical specialists' reference - Noted with thanks. No changes required.
7. Biodiversity survey - Noted with thanks. No changes required.
8. Statement of Sustainable Design and Construction - This is already covered across all districts based on the relevant adopted policy guidance. The reference to South

Cambridgeshire is only made as their requirements are stricter through adopted policy. Therefore no changes are required.

9. Flood Risk Assessment - Officers acknowledge that drainage is the responsibility of several stakeholders and have noted the acceptance to the Middle Level Commissioners planning advice pages. This will be retained on the new guidance and therefore no further changes are required.
10. Additional Plans and drawings - Noted with thanks. No changes required.”

A copy of the Planning Committee Minutes can be viewed via the following link by searching for “Minutes – 16th May 2019”:

https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccs_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/232/Committee/8/Default.aspx

The final published versions of both the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Local Validation List and Guidance Notes can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/planning-applications/submitted-a-planning-application/>

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Flood & Water (C&P FloW) Partnership

The Middle Level Commissioners’ Planning Engineer has represented both the Middle Level Commissioners and their associated Boards since the last Board meeting. The main matters that may be of interest to the Board are as follows:

Future Meetings

Following the successful “joint” approach future meetings will involve both the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP) and Peterborough Flood & Water Management Partnership (PFLoW). The MLC are stakeholders in both partnerships.

Draft National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy for England

A public consultation on the draft FCERM Strategy for England document was held between May and June 2019.

Members of the partnership generally considered that amongst other matters the consultation could have been more ambitious; sought greater RMA involvement; and that surface water flooding should have been included.

Following the consideration of the responses it is intended to publish the final national FCERM strategy for England in 2020.

Local FRM Strategy

Both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Strategies are due to be reviewed soon and may be a joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough response.

The Environment Agency's Joint Assurance Group

This group provides support to the RMAs on the delivery of Grant-in-Aid (GiA) funded projects and meets on a monthly basis to discuss business cases.

Partnership members generally agreed that it would be beneficial to understand what the EA, in its role as the approval body, would like to see in business cases and requested suitable good examples that could be used as guidance.

The EA advised that:

- (i) The lack of sharing of suitable business case examples may be for GDPR/commercially sensitive/economic reasons and advised that whilst the EA cannot 'circulate' these, other RMAs can.
- (ii) Due to the specialist nature of projects within The Fens it may not be possible to find enough suitable projects.

Property Flood Resilience Pathfinder Project

A £700k grant bid was made by a consortium of LLFAs. Confirmation of a successful bid is awaited.

Further details on the project can be found in Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder Evaluation Final Evaluation Report October 2015.

Further information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/29-million-extra-funding-to-boost-action-on-making-homes-more-resilient-to-floods>

Riparian Responsibilities

In order to raise awareness of and instigate discussion on an issue that causes difficulties for RMAs, including the Boards, primarily due to increased workload and costs, the County Council's Flood Risk and Biodiversity Team prepared an "Issues and Options Briefing Note" seeking changes to current practices that are inefficient and create inconsistency across the county in the use of public resources to address the issues associated with riparian assets. The document is currently being considered by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Cambs County Council Capitally Funded Highway Drainage Schemes

Schemes have been assessed and prioritised based upon level of flooding reported, ie high priority - is property flooding or risk to life or low priority - is highway only flooding, and will be developed to provide estimated costs and prioritised to be delivered to available budget. There is an annual

highway drainage budget of £1m, which needs to cover all staff, investigation, design and construction costs and, therefore, not all the schemes will be delivered in the current financial year.

The majority of investigation and design is delivered through Skanska or its supply chain, and managed by the County's Highways Projects team. Priority and funding are confirmed by its Asset Management team.

There are currently 22 schemes ongoing within the County, six of which are within the Fenland district but none are within the Board's area.

District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) & Water Cycle Study (WCS) documents

Most of the SFRA and WCS documents are considered old and have not been updated as initially intended. All will require reviewing as supporting evidence when the respective District Council's Local Plans are updated.

A 'joint' County-wide document was suggested but was not considered possible due to the differing states of the various Local Plans across the County.

No reference was made to the funding arrangements for the provision of the updated documents.

Good Governance for Internal Drainage Board Members

In March and April 2019 ADA ran a series of five Good Governance Workshops for IDB Members. The recordings from these events are available as a series of training modules via the ADA website.

A copy of the slides used at the presentation can be found at the following link:

https://www.ada.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Good_Governance_Workshop_Slides_2019.pdf

Public Sector Co-operation Agreements (PSCA)

Following a problem encountered within North Level District IDB which required close liaison with Peterborough City Council, in its role as the Highway Authority, the possibility of arranging PSCAs with IDBs and Councils was raised but has not yet been concluded.

Updates on Highways England (HE) Scheme

The former areas 6 and 8 now form the East Region and the new term contractor is Ringway. The previous short-term Asset Support Contracts (ASC) have been replaced by a 15-year Road Investment Strategy (RIS) contract in order to ensure a consistent long-term approach.

Anglian Water Services Limited (AWSL) Price Review 2019 (PR19)

OFWAT like what is being proposed but not the associated costs. AWSL contends that it is trying to be “proactive and not reactive”. **Note: In order to reduce charges on its customers AWSL currently appears reluctant to incur any unnecessary additional costs beyond what it is obliged to accept.**

Requests have been made for suitable applications to be submitted to its project funding programme. It is hoped that a meeting with AWSL’s Flood Partnership Manager will be arranged soon.

Fenland Flooding Issues Sub-group

Meetings were held in April and October 2019. The next meeting was due to be held during April but has been postponed until the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) working restrictions are lifted.

No new “wet spots” have been identified within the Commissioners’ district.

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

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

An article detailing the project was included on page 16 of the Summer edition of the ADA Gazette. This can be found at <https://flickread.com/edition/html/index.php?pdf=5d1efbbc0a48b#16>

The project is further discussed under a separate Agenda item.

Consulting Engineer

4 May 2020

Ransonmoor (329)\Reports\April 2020

Mr Lakey advised that two quotations had been obtained regarding the roof repairs, both using similar materials. He further advised that the quotations were quite high as the potential of there being asbestos present had to be taken into account.

The Commissioners discussed whether further quotations were required, and if so from whom, and it was agreed that the Consulting Engineer should obtain two further quotes.

The Chairman enquired whether it had been possible submit an insurance claim.

Miss Ablett reported that she had informed the insurers and once the work had been completed and an invoice received then this would be submitted to them. She advised that although there was a case for the roof repair, in view of the significant amount of betterment, she was unable to quantify how much of the claim would be settled and that this would have to be negotiated.

There were further discussions amongst the Commissioners regarding whether asbestos was present and whether a test was required.

Councillor Wicks advised that the Commissioners had a duty of care to ensure that any potential asbestos present, however small, was dealt with correctly. He added that the extra quotations should be requested on the basis that asbestos was present and the roof repaired as soon as possible.

Mr Downes reported there had been a problem with the weedscreen cleaner which occurred around the time of the storms and although there was no guarantee the voltage surge caused the problem, it was most likely.

Miss Ablett advised that a claim had already been submitted to the insurers and once a response had been received she would advise the Chairman.

The Chairman enquired whether any additional surge protection had been installed, to which Mr Downes confirmed it had not but he could investigate this further.

The District Officer referred to the comment in the Report regarding the slight rattle from the electric pump and enquired if this would cause problems in the short term. Mr Downes advised that at this point in time he was not too concerned but the pump should be monitored going forward.

The Chairman advised that he was happy with this approach as if there was a problem with the electric pump the Commissioners still had the diesel engine which would be able to cope.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) Weed Control and Drain Maintenance
 - a) That the recommended works be undertaken.
 - b) That M W Dale be authorised to undertake the flail mowing operations in advance of machine cleansing works.
- iii) That 2 further quotations be obtained for the pumping station roof repairs, taking into account the likely presence of asbestos,.

iv) That, once the quotations are received, all 4 quotations be sent to the Chairman and Vice Chairman and they be authorised to take such action as they deem necessary.

v) That the Consulting Engineer investigates adding additional surge protection for the weed screen cleaner.

(NB) – The District Officer declared an interest when the item concerning Weed Control and Drain Maintenance was considered and took no part in the decision.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests in planning application (MLC Ref Nos 362) for Mr & Mrs Boughton.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests in planning applications (MLC Ref Nos 223, 301, 304, 325, 332, 333, 336) & 357 for Mr C Boughton.

C.1195 Capital Improvement Programme

The Commissioners considered their future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

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

C.1196 District Officer's Report

The District Officer considered that all significant matters had been covered in the Consulting Engineer's Report but added that in view of the amount of rain experienced the pump had coped very well.

RESOLVED

That the Officer be thanked for his services over the preceding year.

C.1197 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

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

The Commissioners considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve the purchase of one mink trap and for the Conservation Officer to liaise with the District Officer.

C.1198 State-aided Schemes

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

Update on the EA grant-in-aid position

Miss Ablett reported that the EA undertook a 'refresh' of its grant allocation schedule and optimised it to increase the likelihood of meeting the government outcome measure targets. As part of this some schemes were deferred in favour of those which could be delivered within the next two years with certainty and the programme has, as a consequence, become financially oversubscribed. This effectively means that there will be little or no chance of receiving grant for any new schemes between now and 2021 (at the earliest). This date marks the end of the six-year funding commitment and whilst it is understood that the EA are pressing hard to have another six-year settlement and, if agreed to by treasury, for this to be larger than the previous one to help address the increasing investment required to tackle climate change driven impacts. At this point in time we do not know what will happen and changes could be made in any event to the funding model, what outcome targets are or the process of securing grant. What is clear is that the further ahead that IDBs collectively plan their investment needs the more likely whatever grant is available will be accessible by them.

Miss Ablett reported that an asset survey had not been carried out since 2009 and enquired that as 10 years had now passed whether the Commissioners wished for this to be revisited. This was discussed by the Commissioners and it was agreed not to revisit the asset survey at this time.

Miss Ablett reported that the pumping station had been valued 5 years ago by the Consulting Engineer and enquired whether the Commissioners wished for this to be revalued.

Mr Downes reminded the Commissioners that if a new pumping station was required it would have to be both fish and eel friendly and it was unlikely that diesel engines would be permitted, which would increase the cost compared to that calculated 5 years ago. He advised that a pumping station that had just been constructed with 2 smaller pumps had cost £2 million.

The Vice Chairman advised that the pumping station should be revalued as the Commissioners have to ensure their asset is adequately insured as if not it would have an impact on any claim made.

RESOLVED

- i) That no proposals be formulated at the present time.
- ii) That no action concerning the asset survey be carried out.
- iii) That the Consulting Engineers be requested to recalculate the pumping station valuation.

C.1199 District Officer's honorarium

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

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners agree that the sum of £650.00 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2020/2021.

(NB) – Mr Dale declared a financial interest when these items were discussed.

C.1200 Environment Agency – Precept

Miss Ablett reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2020/2021 in the sum of £6,005.00 (the precept for 2019/2020 being £5,858.58).

C.1201 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Miss Ablett reported that the sum of £239.47 (£2,266.49 less £2,027.02 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency based on the Commissioners' actual expenditure on maintenance work for the financial year 2018/2019 together with the sum of £1,886.00 in respect of 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2019/2020.

C.1202 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

Miss Ablett reported that it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% in 2020, viz:- from £553 to £565.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2020.

C.1203 Contribution from Developer

With reference to minute C.377, Miss Ablett reported that a contribution towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume had been received.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests when this item was discussed.

C.1204 Health and Safety

a) Further to minute B.1130(i), in light of the appointment of Cope Safety Management, Miss Ablett reported on the requirement to appoint a member to take on and report to the Board matters relating to Health and Safety.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be appointed as the nominated representative to deal with and report on Health and Safety matters with the assistance of the Vice Chairman and the District Officer.

b) Further to minute C.1171, the Chairman referred to the reports received from Cope Safety Management following their two visits to the District on the 4th October 2019 and the 24th February 2020.

Mr Downes reported that there were a couple of points identified by Cope Safety Management during their visits; one of which referred to the crane as not being in use. He

confirmed that the crane was used to lift out pumps, when necessary, and that, under the Engineering Inspection insurance policy, this was inspected every year by HSB Engineering.

The Chairman reported that there was work to be done to the outfall and platform and enquired whether this had been included in the Consulting Engineer's programme of works.

Mr Lakey advised that nothing had yet been done due to guidelines of safe working in view of COVID-19 but he hoped it would be carried out in the next couple of weeks. He further advised that the warning sign for the outfall point had been delivered and was ready for fitting.

The Chairman asked that this be done as soon as possible as due to the current condition of the inlet barrier there was a risk of the public falling into the water.

Mr Lakey confirmed that he would get this prioritised now that Middle Level Commissioners' staff were not in lockdown.

The Chairman enquired of the position regarding the fire extinguisher, raised by COPE Safety Management, and of the view of the insurers.

Miss Ablett advised that as long as all health and safety legislation was adhered to then they were satisfied and insurance would be valid.

This was discussed by the Commissioners and it was agreed that the District Officer should remove the fire extinguisher from the pumping station.

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

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

C.1205 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Commissioners – 2018/2019

a) The Commissioners considered the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2019.

RESOLVED

i) That, after fully considering the internal controls put in place by their appointed administrators and the checks carried out by their appointed internal auditors, the Commissioners were satisfied that, in all significant respects, the internal control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.

ii) That the present policies concerning risk management, budget monitoring and insured value of properties are adequate for the size of the business and that they be continued.

iii) That the Clerk and responsible financial officer review the internal audit strategy with the internal auditor to ensure the most appropriate method is in place to ensure the Commissioners

continue to comply with the Internal control objectives to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.

b) The Commissioners considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2019.

C.1206 Defra IDB1 Returns

Miss Ablett referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2018/2019 and to the letter from the Minister and Annual report summary and analysis received from Defra dated August 2019.

C.1207 Budgeting

Miss Ablett referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2020.

C.1208 Review of Internal Controls

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

C.1209 Risk Management Assessment

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

The Commissioners considered their Risk Register.

RESOLVED

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

b) The Commissioners reviewed the insured value of their buildings.

The Chairman enquired whether the insurance was index linked to which Miss Ablett confirmed that it was not at present but could be if the Commissioners wished.

RESOLVED

i) That the insured value of the Commissioners' building be approved from 1st April 2020.

ii) That the Consulting Engineers be requested to revisit the pumping station valuation.

iii) That the insurance value be amended to the revised Consulting Engineers' valuation, when received, and the insured value be index linked.

C.1210 Exercise of Public Rights

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

C.1211 Annual Governance Statement – 2019/2020

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

RESOLVED

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

C.1212 Payments

The Commissioners considered and approved payments amounting to £30,730.52 which had been made during the financial year 2019/2020.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest (as a Member of the Middle Level Board) in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests in the payment made to Ransonmoor Farms Ltd.

(NB) – The District Officer declared an interest in the payments made to him.

C.1213 Annual Accounts of the Commissioners – 2019/2020

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

RESOLVED

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

C.1214 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2020/2021

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2020/2021 and were informed by Miss Ablett that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 76.75% and 23.25%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.

- ii) That a total sum of £36,467 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £27,989 and £8,478 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 11.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £8,478 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Commissioners be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levy referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levy by such statutory powers as may be available.

C.1215 Display of rate notice

RESOLVED

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

C.1216 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next General Meeting of the Commissioners be held on Wednesday the 12th May 2021.