

## MARCH WEST AND WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the March West and White Fen Internal Drainage Board  
hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020

### PRESENT

J L Brown Esq (Chairman)	M Cornwell Esq
M J Mottram Esq (Vice Chairman)	C Miller Esq
Miss E Alerton	H W Whittome Esq
T E Alerton Esq	R Wicks Esq

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

The Chairman welcomed Miss Alerton and Councillor Wicks who were both attending their first meeting of the Board.

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

### Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from, D J Fountain Esq, J A Neal Esq and D G West Esq.

### B.171 Standing Orders

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

### RESOLVED

That the Board approve in principle.

### B.172 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Cornwell declared an interest (as a part time employee) in the planning application (MLC Ref. Nos 435 & 712) received for Fenn Holidays Ltd.

The Vice Chairman and Mr Whittome declared interests in matters relating to pump attendants.

### B.173 Confirmation of Minutes

#### RESOLVED

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

### B.174 Election of Board Members

Mr Hill reported that the term of Office of the elected Members of the Board would expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 and submitted the proposed Register of Electors applicable to the 2020 election.

#### RESOLVED

That the Register be approved.

### B.175 Land Drainage Act 1991 Board Membership – Fenland District Council

Mr Hill reported that Fenland District Council had re-appointed Councillor M Cornwell and appointed Councillor R Wicks to be Members of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

Mr Hill also reported that Councillors Court and Pugh had not been re-appointed.

### B.176 Water Transfer Licencing

Further to minute B.90, Mr Hill 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. He 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.

### B.177 Proposed Retail Park to the west of Hostmoor Avenue, March – Brossman Mills Ltd

Further to minute B.137, the Chairman referred to the comments made by the Consulting Engineer in his report and informed Members that he and the Vice Chairman had been dealing with the matter and there was nothing further to report at this stage.

### B.178 Fish Harvesting at Pumping Stations

Further to minute B.138, the Chairman reported that the matter had been monitored by the Consulting Engineer and there was nothing further to report.

### B.179 Bank Slip – Whittlesey Road, March

Further to minute B.141, Mr Hill reported that a letter together with photographs had been sent to Cambridgeshire County Council Highways but there had been no response from them and the slip had also not been attended to.

#### RESOLVED

That the Consulting Engineer continue to monitor the situation.

### B.180 Proposed works to the rear of the Tesco site

Further to minute B.144, Mr Alterton reported that he had continued to be in contact with Anglian Water who did not consider they had an issue in the vicinity and he had carried out a chlorine test on the water which had proved inconclusive. He confirmed that crops were now growing on the area and currently it did not appear to be an issue.

With regards to future access he considered getting machinery in and out would be a problem and the Board could need another access. This would require a culvert to be put in but if carried out properly he did not consider it to be a major issue.

#### RESOLVED

That Mr Alterton continue to monitor the matter.

### B.181 Proposed works at Turves Point 106

Further to minute B.170, the Chairman reported that he had discussed the matter with the Vice Chairman and they did initially engage Fen Ditching to carry out the works. However, they had delays getting to the site and then the weather had made it impossible to carry out the works. He advised that the Vice Chairman had been in contact with a different contractor to obtain another quotation.

#### RESOLVED

That the Chairman and the Vice Chairman be authorised to take any further action they consider necessary.

### B.182 Clerk's Report

Mr Hill advised:-

#### i) COVID-19 Actions

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

- Arrangements were made for all MLC staff to have the facility to work from home. This included access to email, and in most cases full remote access to work computers. This was implemented and fully operational by Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March.

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

ii) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

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

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

RESOLVED

That the 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.

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.

### Planning and Consenting

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

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

### RESOLVED

That the Board continue with the current arrangements.

#### iii) Applications for byelaw consent

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

Simon Rutterford	Erection of UK Power Network electricity pole - Laying of plastic duct together with electricity cable from pole to adjacent buildings and hardstanding area	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2019
International Procurement and Logistics Ltd	Formation of a hardstanding at IPL	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2019

### RESOLVED

That the action taken in granting consent be approved.

iv) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **3. Total catchment management**

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

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

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

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

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

### **6. Local Government Finances**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### b) Annual Conference

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

## RESOLVED

That the Clerk be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association for any 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 and effective communications with the wider public.

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

### d) Further Research on Eels

Further to minute B.92, 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 Board contribute £100 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.

### v) 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 coming 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.

vi) 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 straight forward 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-aided works to progress during this time on a hold-the-line basis.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve in principle

vii) 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.

viii) 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.

B.183 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

## March West & White Fen IDB

### Consulting Engineers Report – April 2020

#### Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

##### March & Whittlesey Area

The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations which were approved by the Board at its last annual meeting.

Following the Board's resolution in 2007 to implement a phased programme of bank revetment works within the Board's system, last autumn approximately 360 metres of toe board and piling works were undertaken along the western bank of the Beggars Bridge main pump drain. The bank revetment works included a continuation of the ongoing use of re-cycled aggregates (brick bats), as used at other sites.



Division Dam at Point 69

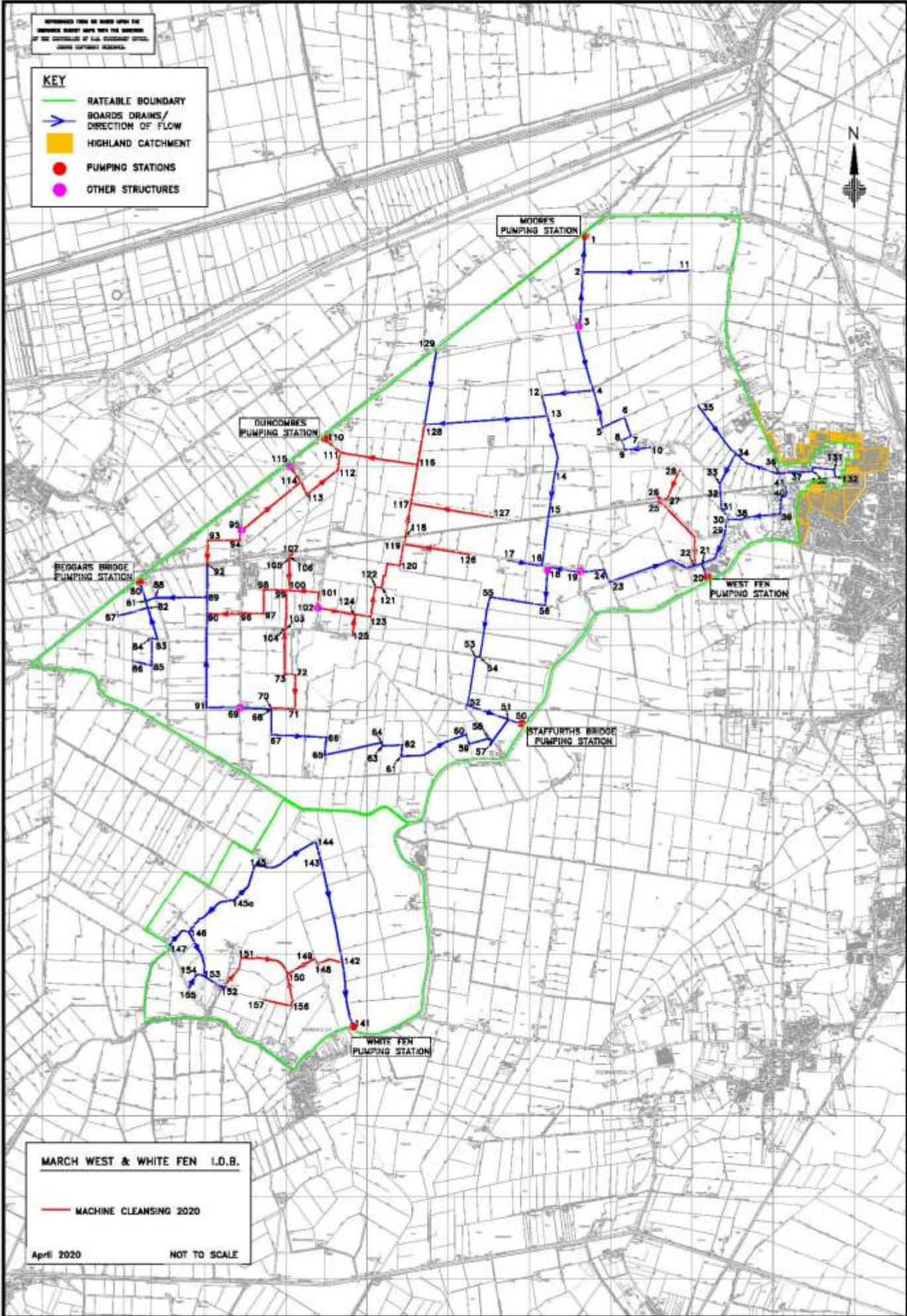
The long dry summer highlighted that the division dam at Point 69 was leaking and reducing the Board's ability to retain differential water levels in the Staffurths' and Beggars' catchments. Following a request from the Chairman new dam boards were installed to ensure both systems could operate independently.

Provisional notices for this year's intended machine cleansing works have been sent out. The extent of this year's phased programme of maintenance works is shown on the following site plan.

INFORMED FROM AN AERIAL PHOTO THE  
 DRAINAGE MAPS WERE THE PROPERTY  
 OF THE COMMISSIONER OF LAND REVENUE OFFICE.  
 DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR.

**KEY**

- RATEABLE BOUNDARY
- BOARDS DRAINS/  
DIRECTION OF FLOW
- HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
- PUMPING STATIONS
- OTHER STRUCTURES



**MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN I.D.B.**

— MACHINE CLEANSING 2020

April 2020                      NOT TO SCALE



As the Board's annual meeting falls during the early part of the growing season, it is proposed that an inspection of the Board's drains be undertaken during the summer months to identify areas of bank subsidence and to prioritise the worst affected reaches to be dealt with as a continuation of the phased programme of bank revetment works. In this respect, a sum has been allocated in the Board's estimated costs to allow for toe board and piling works to be undertaken to stabilise and return the side sloping banks to their original profile.

A recent inspection of the Board's District drains has revealed that the majority are in a generally satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. The inspection indicates that many of the District drains that fall within this year's phased machine cleansing programme, will only require light machine cleansing to retain their good status.

An allowance has also been included within this year's estimated costs to allow for a Roundup herbicide application to be made in advance of the programmed machine cleansing work, and in any other district drains identified as requiring herbicide treatments, to control emergent weed and reed growths following the Board's inspection later in the summer months.

The Board's flail mowing requirements were undertaken by Mr R Dale last year and he has indicated he is available to undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements again this year. A sum has been included within the estimated costs for flail mowing of district drains to be undertaken this year.

A provisional sum has been allocated within the Board's estimated costs to allow for any emergency machine cleansing, cott (filamentous algae) removal or culvert clearance works that may become necessary later in the year.

The estimated cost of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain maintenance works is as follows. Please refer to the previous site plan for locations.

1. Machine cleanse the following reaches:

					£
<u>Beggars Bridge Catchment Area</u>					
90-96-97-98-99100-101-102	1900	m	@	1.10	2090.00
70-71-72-73-104-99-100-105-106-107	2500	m	@	1.10	2750.00
92-93-94-95	850	m	@	1.10	935.00
<u>West Fen Catchment Area</u>					
22-25-26-27-28	1650	m	@	1.10	1815.00
<u>Duncombes Catchment Area</u>					
110-111-116-128	1750	m	@	1.20	2100.00
111-112-113-114	900	m	@	1.10	990.00
95-114-115	1200	m	@	1.10	1320.00
116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-101	2900	m	@	1.10	3190.00
124-125	300	m	@	1.10	330.00
119-126	850	m	@	1.10	935.00
117-127	1050	m	@	1.10	<u>1155.00</u>
<b>Carried forward</b>					<b>17610.00</b>

	<b>Brought forward</b>		<b>17610.00</b>
2. <u>Provisional Item</u> Allow sum for bank reinstatement works	Item	Sum	15000.00
3. Roundup herbicide application	Item	Sum	1200.00
4. Flail mowing of District Drains	Item	Sum	9000.00
5. <u>Provisional Item</u> Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing, Cott removal or culvert clearance	Item	Sum	2000.00
6. Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of the report to the Board, arrangement and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance	Item	Sum	2500.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£47,310.00</b>

### **White Fen Area**

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

Provisional notices of this year's intended machine cleansing works, in accordance with the phased maintenance programme approved at the 2009 annual meeting, have been sent out. The extent of this year's phased programme of maintenance works is shown on the previous site location plan.

Roundup Pro Biactive herbicide was applied to reaches in advance of the phased programmed machine cleansing works.

As the Board's annual meeting falls during the early part of the growing season, it is proposed that a detailed District inspection be undertaken during the summer months to identify any additional works or herbicide applications that may be required.

The Board's flail mowing contractors, Messrs Ashman, have indicated they will be available to undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements this year. In anticipation of the Board's agreement a £2,000 flail mowing budget has been allocated within the estimated costs for this year.

Provision has been included within the Board's estimated expenditure to allow for a Roundup herbicide application to be applied to drains included within this year's phased machine cleansing programme, and to any other district drains where an herbicide treatment is required, to control reed stands or substantial growths of emergent aquatic vegetation.

A provisional sum has been included within the Board's estimate to allow for emergency machine cleansing, cott removal, culvert clearance or bank revetment works that may be required later in the year.

The estimated cost of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain maintenance works is as follows. Please refer to the previous site plan for locations.

1. Machine cleanse the following reaches

142-148-149-150	800	m	@	1.20	960.00
150-151-152	1150	m	@	1.20	1380.00
150-156-157	750	m	@	1.20	900.00

2. Allow sum for Roundup application                      Item        Sum                                      600.00

3. Allow sum for flail mowing in advance of machine cleansing works                      Item        Sum                                      2000.00

4. **Provisional Item**

Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing Cott removal, culvert clearance or bank revetment works	Item	Sum			1000.00
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5. Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Board, arrangements and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance works                      Item        Sum                                      700.00

<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>£7,540.00</b>
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Orders for the application of herbicides are accepted on condition that they are weather dependant and the MLC will not be held responsible for the efficacy of any treatments.

**Pumping Stations**

Other than the matters described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the Stations appears to be mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

**Duncombes**

Pump number 2 continues to operate with a faulty seal/chamber leakage sensor. Monitoring of the motor for signs of moisture ingress will continue to be carried out until the pump is removed for a full inspection and overhaul. A recent test of the motor windings showed no indication of any moisture ingress into the motor.

## **White Fen**

As previously reported the V J adaptors on the delivery pipes below the intake sump covers will, at some point, require replacement; this however is not urgent. The outfall flap valve is also badly corroded and will need overhaul in the next 2 years.

Pump-on motor overloads are occurring regularly and are considered likely due to debris on the propeller blades which is washed off when the pump stops. It may be possible to modify the panel to make these trips auto resetting, the likely cost for this is expected to be in the region of £2000.

The 5 year electrical condition report has been carried out and no remedial works were identified as being required.

## **Pumping Hours**

### Beggars Bridge

Hours Run	March 2018 - March 2019	March 2019 - March 2020
Total Hours	153 (12175)	348 (12523)

Hours Run	April 2012 - April 2013	April 2013 - April 2014	April 2014 - April 2015	April 2015 - February 2016	February 2016 - February 2017	February 2017 - March 2018
Total Hours	519 (11386)	112 (11498)	94 (11592)	133 (11725)	110 (11835)	187 (12022)

### Duncombes

Hours Run	March 2018 - March 2019	March 2019 - March 2020
No 1	269 (8115)	122 (8237)
No 2	114 (8014)	1114 (9128)
Total Hours	383	1236

Hours Run	April 2012 - April 2013	April 2013 - April 2014	April 2014 - April 2015	April 2015 - February 2016	February 2016 - February 2017	February 2017 - March 2018
No 1	528 (7081)	131 (7212)	183 (7395)	94 (7489)	72 (7561)	285 (7846)
No 2	737 (7047)	144 (7191)	207 (7398)	74 (7472)	141 (7613)	287 (7900)
Total Hours	1265	275	390	168	213	572

### Staffurths Bridge

Hours Run	March 2018 - March 2019	March 2019 - March 2020
No 1	173 (9628)	451(10079)
No 2	282 (9830)	53 (9883)
Total Hours	455	504

Hours Run	April 2012 - April 2013	April 2013 - April 2014	April 2014 - April 2015	April 2015 - February 2016	February 2016 - February 2017	February 2017 - March 2018
No 1	23 (7847)	259 (8106)	666 (8772)	77 (8849)	466 (9315)	140 (9455)
No 2	996 (8536)	525 (9061)	60 (9121)	154 (9275)	112 (9387)	161 (9548)
Total Hours	1019	784	726	231	578	301



### Moores

Hours Run	March 2018 - March 2019	March 2019 - March 2020
Total Hours	84 (3518)	194 (3712)

Hours Run	April 2012 - April 2013	April 2013 - April 2014	April 2014 - April 2015	April 2015 - February 2016	February 2016 - February 2017	February 2017 - March 2018
Total Hours	48 (2940)	152 (3092)	132 (3224)	7 (3231)	99 (3330)	104 (3434)

### West Fen

Hours Run	March 2018 - April 2019	April 2019 - March 2020
Total Hours	618 (13050)	353 (13403)

Hours Run	April 2012 - April 2013	April 2013 - April 2014	April 2014 - April 2015	April 2015 - February 2016	February 2016 - February 2017	February 2017 - March 2018
Total Hours	504 (11228)	225 (11453)	371 (11824)	121 (11945)	200 (12145)	287 (12432)

### White Fen

Hours Run	April 2015 - February 2016	February 2016 - February 2017	February 2017 - March 2018	March 2018 - April 2019	April 2019 - April 2020
No 1	140 (2707)	364 (3071)	74 (3145)	30 (3175)	95 (3270)
No 2	24 (1603)	1 (1604)	11 (1615)	436 (2051)	543 (2594)
Total Hours	164	365	85	466	638

## **Planning Procedures Update**

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

### The use of Infiltration Devices

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

### Local Land Charges Register (LLCR)

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

## **Planning Applications & Development Related Matters**

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 31 new development related matters have been received and, where appropriate, dealt with since the last meeting:

<b>MLC Ref.</b>	<b>Council Ref.</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Type of Development</b>	<b>Location</b>
730	F/YR19/0272/F	Ms M Patrick	Residence	Wisbech Road, March
731	F/YR19/0351/PNC04	Bank Farm Ltd	Residential (5 plots)	Whittlesey Road, Benwick
732	F/YR19/0364/F	Goldstar Metal Traders Ltd	Erection of a workshop and office for haulage use	Thorby Avenue, March
733	F/YR19/0352/F	Dawe Developments	Residential (3 plots)	Elliott Road, March
734	F/YR19/0420/F	Diocese of Ely	Residence	Whittlesey Road, Benwick
735	F/YR19/0422/RM	Mr N Jones	Residential (2 plots)	Burnthouse Road, Turves*
736	F/YR19/0457/F	Mr G Podd	Microbrewery	March Road, Turves
737	F/YR19/0501/F	Ms N Gill	Residential (5 plots)	Norwood Road, March
738	Enquiry	Client of JBA Consulting	Not identified	Wisbech Road, March
739	Public Consultation Document	This Land	Residential (52 plots)	Norwood Road, March
740	Enquiry	Mr D Betts	Residence	Marina Drive, March
741	F/YR19/0542/F	Mr C Bates	Residence	Beggars Bridge, Coates
742	F/YR19/3074/COND	Mr D Creese	Residential (2 plots)	Norwood Road, March
743	F/YR19/0602/RM	Guy James Ltd	Residential (9 plots)	Wisbech Road, March
744	F/YR19/0650/F	Mr J Scott	Residential (2 plots)	Norwood Road, March
745	Enquiry	Anthony White	Residence	Whittlesey Road, March*
746	F/YR19/3090/COND	Guy James Ltd	Residential (9 plots)	Wisbech Road, March
747	F/YR19/0739/RM	Brossman Mills	Retail	Wisbech Road March
748	F/YR19/0734/CERTP	International Procurement & Logistics Ltd	Formation of a hardstanding	Wisbech Road, Westry*
749	F/YR19/0759/F	Mr J Mason	Change of use of land to mixed use (domestic (C3) and builders' yard (B2)) involving the erection of dog kennels, pigeon coop, 2 sheds, chicken run, poly tunnel and the siting of 3 x static caravans and 9 x storage containers (retrospective)	Whitemoor Road, March
750	F/YR19/0832/F	Mr Horwood & Ms Cleere	Residence	Wisbech Road, Westry
751	F/YR19/0913/F	Mr Rutterford	Industrial	Whittlesey Road, March
752	F/YR19/0895/F	Mr Fletcher	Residential (2 plots)	March Road, Turves
753	Pre-application Request	Mr & Mrs D Betts	Residence	Whittlesey Road, March
754	Pre-application Request	Mr & Mrs R Webb	Residence	West End, March

755	F/YR19/1009/F	Mr & Mrs Agland	Residence (Extension)	Whitemoor Road, March
756	F/YR19/1049/F	Mr M Earl	Residence	Burnthouse Road, Turves
757	F/YR19/1093/F	Amherst Ltd	Erection of a 2-storey drive-thru restaurant/takeaway	Wisbech Road/Hostmoor Avenue, March*
758	F/YR19/2055/CCC	Local Generation Ltd	Digester Storage Tank	Wisbech Road, Westry*
759	F/YR20/0029/PNC04	Bank Farm Ltd	Residential (5 plots)	Whittlesey Road, Benwick
760	F/YR20/0134/F	Mr J Harrison	Residence (Extension)	Wisbech Road, March

***Entries ending 'PNCO' relate to prior notification change of use issues***  
***Entries ending 'RM', 'REM' or 'RMM' relate to reserved matters***  
***Entries ending 'COND' relate to the discharge of relevant planning conditions***  
***Planning applications ending 'CERTP' relate to Certificate of Lawful Use (Proposed)***  
***Planning applications ending 'CCC' relate to Cambridgeshire County Council***

Developments that propose direct discharge to the Board's system are indicated with an asterisk. The remainder propose, where applicable and where known, surface water disposal to soakaways/infiltration systems or sustainable drainage systems. All the applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

Creese Homes Ltd selected to use the infiltration device self-certification process for surface water disposal (MLC Ref Nos 719 & 742). However, a letter was sent on 28 February in response advising that the site exceeded the scope for self-certification.

The following applications are for development where the discharge is attenuated before it reaches the Board's system:

- (i) Ms N Gill (MLC Ref No 737)
- (ii) Mr J Scott (MLC Ref No 744)
- (iii) Brossman Mills (MLC Ref No 747)
- (iv) Amherst Ltd (MLC Ref No 757)

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 Board's interests.

- *Residential development including the formation of vehicular accesses on land south of 710 Whittlesey Road, March - R Green (MLC Ref Nos 430, 502 & 504), Ideal Prestige Properties (MLC Ref Nos 570 & 572) and Prestige Properties Turves (MLC Ref No 717)*
- *Various developments at West Fen Farm, Whitemoor Road, March – Hetherington Properties Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 448, 569 & 724), Client of Cannon Consulting Engineers (MLC Ref No 680), R H & R W Clutton LLP (MLC Ref No 690) + RKE Biogroup Ltd (MLC Ref No 725)*

- *Erection of Grain Store Building with associated Gas Tanks and Hardstanding at Agricultural Building at Wades Farm, Grandford Drove, March – J C & M A Martin (MLC Ref Nos 621 & 637)*
- *Re-development of 1-3 Hostmoor & 1 Martin Avenue, March – Client of MTC (MLC Ref No 624) & Harrier Developments Ltd (MLC Ref No 632)*
- *Erection of 4 poultry barns with associated structures and biomass boiler(s), formation of a lagoon and erection of an agricultural dwelling and site office at land west of 405 Whittlesey Road, March – St Lawrence Hall Farms Ltd (MLC Ref No 626)*
- *Proposed extension at Marina Drive - Mr G Harding & Ms D Wilson (MLC Ref Nos 629 & 630)*
- *Change of use of an agricultural building to 3 x 2-storey 3-bed dwellings at the Old Dryer, White Fen Farm, Whittlesey Road, Benwick – Mr G Burton (MLC Ref Nos 634 & 651 previously White Fen MLC Ref No 039)*
- *Erection of 3 x 2-storey 4-bed dwellings and 1 x 2-storey 5-bed dwelling and detached garage with playroom/gym above at land east of Silver Street, March - Mr & Mrs Edgoose (MLC Ref Nos 639, 640 & 667)*
- *Erection of a 2-storey 3-bed dwelling with attached garage on land south west of Phoenix House, 341 Wisbech Road, Westry – Ms C Dean (MLC Ref No 643)*
- *Proposed residential development at Crazy Acres, off Chase Road, Benwick - Client of Stirling Maynard and Partners Ltd (MLC Ref No 661) & Mr A Smith (MLC Ref Nos 671 & 715) [previously White Fen, MLC Ref Nos 025 & 026 - Mr A Smith]*

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

*Agricultural buildings and warehousing – MBM Produce (MLC Ref Nos 135 & 267) and Erection of 2 x warehouse extensions to existing building and the erection of a 2.4m high (max height) palisade fence to boundary – Ken Thomas Warehousing Ltd (MLC Ref No 693) on land and buildings at Glenthorn Farm, 133 Whittlesey Road, March*

Further to Minute B.146 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters (v):

“That the Consulting Engineers:-

MLC Ref No. 693

Write to advise the applicant that the 2.4m fence should be 9 metres from the drain.”

The Chairman of the Board subsequently instructed the Board's Solicitor to write to Ken Thomas Ltd to advise that any encroachment within the Board's 9.0m wide maintenance access strip requires the Board's prior consent in writing.

No subsequent correspondence has been received within the Commissioners' Technical Services Department from either the applicants or the applicants' agents concerning this development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

*Residential development and associated parking at Baxter's Dairy and land south of Peas Hill Road, March – D J & N R Baxter; D J & G W Tuffs & J Helmer (MLC Ref No 238) & CGT Developments (MLC Ref Nos 328 & 443); Mr G Wilding (MLC Ref Nos 599, 601 & 627) and Dawe Developments (MLC Ref Nos 671 & 733)*

Further to the Board's May 2018 meeting report a further planning application was validated by the District Council in late April 2019 (MLC Ref No 733) for the erection of 3no three bed dwellings on land to the west of 126 - 128 Elliott Road. This was on the same site that had previously been refused planning permission in July 2015 (MLC Ref No 601) and August 2017 (MLC Ref No 671) for nine and four plot developments.

It is proposed that surface water disposal will be to infiltration devices. However, as discussed previously, given the poor permeability of the soil in the area and the lack of available space to locate such devices, it is considered unlikely that they can be installed to meet current design guidelines and the Board's requirements.

Planning permission subject to the imposition of planning conditions was granted by the District Council in July. None of the imposed conditions referred to surface water disposal but a Drainage Advisory Notice was included on the Decision Notice.

#### *Developments at 366 Wisbech Road, Westry*

- (a) *Food processing facility – Fenmarc Produce Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 284 & 373) and International Procurement & Logistics Limited (MLC Ref No 748)*

During August an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness was submitted to the District Council to confirm whether planning permission was required for the proposed construction of an area of concrete hardstanding to locate various items associated with the undertaking of the business on an existing gravel car

park. The District Council subsequently decided that it constituted permitted development and, therefore, did not require planning permission.

Following discussion with the applicant, as a result of receiving a copy of the Board's "Standard Response" letter, an application for the disposal of the increased surface water run-off was submitted and consent has subsequently been issued.

It is presumed, but not known, that the enquiry received from JBA Consulting (MLC Ref No 738) in respect of a Provision of Flood Risk Information request was associated with this development.

- (b) *Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facility - Local Generation Ltd* (MLC Ref Nos 446, 460, 508, 585, 589, 604, 619, 625 & 758)

Further to previous meeting reports a planning application was submitted to the County Council, in its role as the Waste Planning Authority (WPA), in March 2019.

The proposed development includes the installation of a gas upgrading plant and associated propane tanks, in place of the previously approved but not built water scrubbing tanks, toward the northern boundary of the site.

Although no direct consultation with the applicant has been undertaken it is understood that all surface water within the site boundary will be collected and recycled within the digestion process. Any excess surface water will discharge into the Board's system for which there is an existing consent.

Planning permission was granted by the WPA in June. The Decision Notice includes both a surface water condition and an informative advising the applicant of the need to contact the Board in order to establish any requirements.

*Erection of office building, four bay coach garage and 2m high palisade fencing to west and north boundaries with associated parking at 49 Whittlesey Road, March - Fenn Holidays Ltd* (MLC Ref Nos 435 & 712).

Further to the last meeting the previously submitted Discharge Consent application has been considered.

As a result of an internal consultation both the Board's Chairman and Vice-Chairman expressed concern about the adequacy of the drainage serving the adjacent fields which have featured surface water ponding for most of the winter. Following some further investigation, the Vice-Chairman subsequently identified a culvert that had been blocked by a "builder's bag". This was removed thus enabling water to flow freely. As a result, both the Board's Chairman and Vice-Chairman were content that the consent could be processed. A recommendation to issue consent has been issued to the Clerk to the Board.

*Agricultural buildings at Burnthouse Farm, Burnthouse Sidings, Turves – Royston Farms Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 455 & 714)*

Further to Minute B.146 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters (v):

“That the Consulting Engineers:

MLC Ref Nos. 455 & 714

Write to the applicant to check the position on the soakaways by enquiring if they have been installed and checking if they are adequate.”

It is confirmed that the current position is being ascertained with the applicant's agent, **Swann Edwards Architecture Ltd.**

*Residential development on land north of 35 Whittlesey Road, March - Greene King PLC (MLC Ref Nos 525, 544 & 561), Client of Caldecote Group (MLC Ref No 566) & MJS Construction (March) Ltd (MLC Ref No 708)*

Further to the last Board meeting initial discussions, concerning the re-development of this site, were held with a representative from MJS Construction albeit "in passing" whilst dealing with an enquiry in a neighbouring Board.

A request to confirm the current position has been made to MJS but, at the time of writing, a response has not been received. The prime concerns (related to encroachment within the Board's 9.0m wide maintenance access strip) can initially be summarised as follows:

- (a) Whether the Board would reduce its 9.0m wide maintenance access strip,

- (b) Whether parking or general hardstanding areas within the 9.0m wide maintenance access strip would be consented,
- (c) The type and location of any boundary treatments, security fencing etc,
- (d) Any conditions associated with the above.

In order to assist the Board with making its decision MJS has also been asked to confirm the following points:

- (i) The likely use of the site,
- (ii) How many plots are likely to be involved?
- (iii) Whether the site would be developed by MJS Construction as a whole or as a phased development, or whether it would be sold as smaller parcels of land to individual developers.

The representative from MJS Construction was advised at the meeting that any further discussion would need to be the subject of a detailed pre-application consultation procedure. A response and/or further instruction is currently awaited from MJS.

*Commercial development to the west and south of Hostmoor Avenue, March*

- (a) *Westry Retail Park to the west of Hostmoor Avenue, March - Brossman Mills Ltd*  
(MLC Ref Nos 591, 611, 704 & 747)

Further to the last meeting a Reserved Matters planning application relating to detailed matters of appearance, landscaping and scale pursuant to the outline aspect of the hybrid planning application F/YR15/0640/F (MLC Ref No 611) and subsequent non-material amendment F/YR18/0954/NONMAT for the erection of retail units (Class A1) was validated by the District Council in August. According to the relevant page on the District Council's Public Access a decision is pending on this application.

With the exception of a brief discussion with one of the applicant's agents, no further discussion has occurred with either the applicant or its engineering consultant, MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltd [MTC], concerning the Retail Park proposal since the last Board meeting.



- (b) *Commercial development involving works to Phase One, Hostmoor Balancing Ponds to the south east of Wisbech Road/Hostmoor Avenue, Westry [McDonalds site] - Bright Edge Ltd (MLC Ref No 405), Client of MTC (MLC Ref No 716) and Amherst Ltd (MLC Ref No 757)*

Further to the last Board Meeting Report a site meeting attended by Dentan Williams, the applicant's agent, the Middle Level Commissioners' Assistant Operations Engineer and Planning Engineer was held in January concerning the proposal for a McDonalds Drive through.

During the discussions it was confirmed that:

- 1) There was a contract with McDonalds to supply the drive through.
- 2) The calculations prepared by MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltd, Dentan Williams' engineering consultant, concerning the storage within the balancing pond have been signed off by AWSL.
- 3) Any previous right of way through the gate off Hostmoor Avenue, to the west of the filling station, used to gain access to the Board's Drain, has been closed.

Dentan Williams offered an alternative access point off Westry Avenue to the east of the Tesco store's site and near Howdens Joinery. This would require the Board crossing land owned by Anglian Water Service Ltd (AWSL) and thus presumably entering an agreement with it. This is achievable and in respect of loading and off-loading maintenance machinery it is a much safer and more appropriate location, however, it is not ideal. The access is currently heavily overgrown, the embankment that impounds the southern side of the pond is narrow and travelling along it with heavy maintenance machinery and equipment will lead to further deterioration of this important structure and possibly adversely affect the profile of the Board's Drain. It is also understood that there is an outfall pipe which crosses the proposed access area.

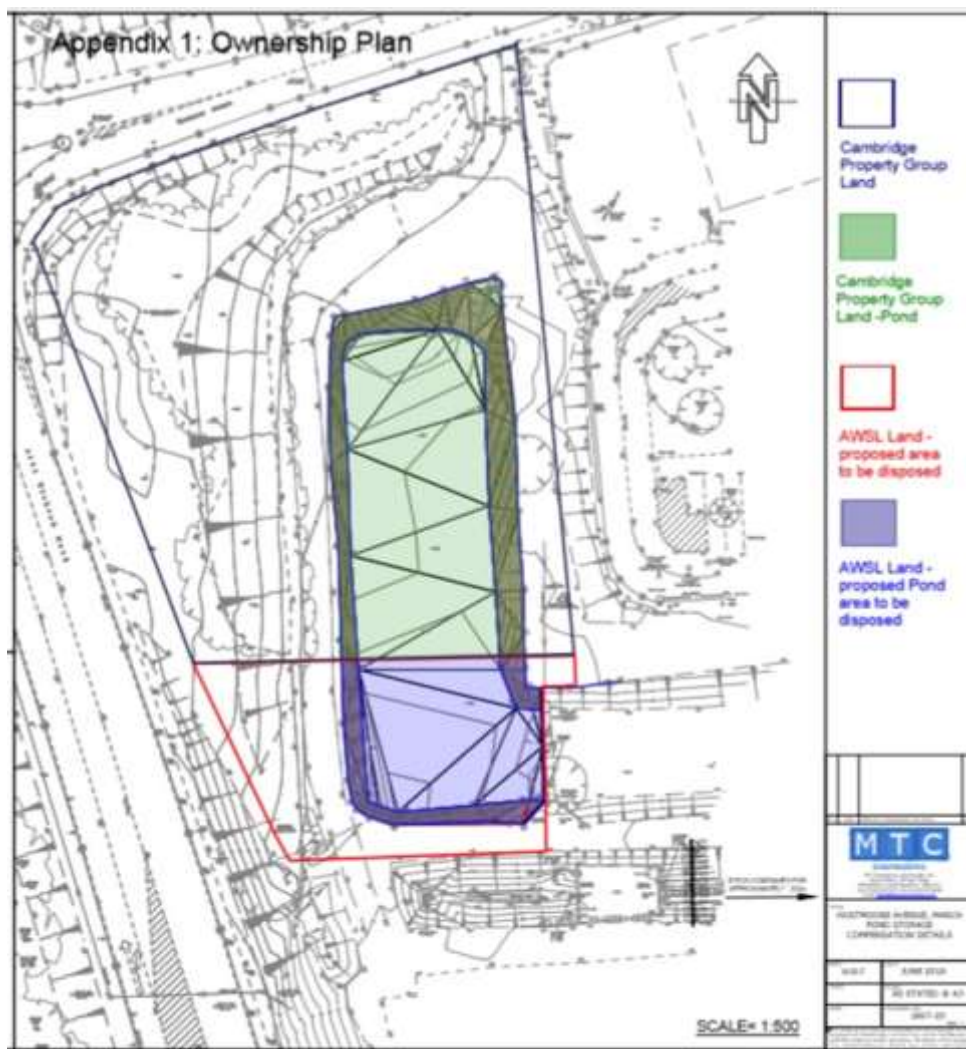
It should be noted that discussions with AWSL can be difficult and slow.

As can be seen from the photograph below this location can be subject to vehicles parking on the unused road spur.



View of the suggested alternative access to the Board's Hostmoor Drain viewed from the entrance into Howdens Joinery

Subsequent to this the "developer" has verbally intimated that he would like to purchase the remainder of the pond at the western end of the site adjacent to the outfall into the Board's system, as shown on the plan below.



Plan from MTCs Report Ref. 1867-BPA-July 2018-Rev. B identifying the land ownership and potential future area to be disposed of – Please note that the land transferred is now owned by Amherst Ltd

He also advised that the above-mentioned calculations, prepared by MTC, would be forwarded to the Board for its consideration but a letter of confirmation from AWSL may not be possible.

A submission was subsequently received from MTC at the beginning of March and the associated report Ref. 1867-BPA-July 2018-Rev. B, which includes hydraulic calculations, is currently being considered. However, the covering letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> February includes the following text:

“I also note that similar comments were made during the meeting of the March West and White Fen Internal Drainage Board held on Tuesday 7th May 2019, as per the extract of the meeting minutes attached.

As per the attached email correspondence with Anglian Water we have asked for the following points to be confirmed in order to satisfy the requirements of the board:

- The removal of the section of the balancing pond owned by Cambridge Property Group PLC does not give rise to a risk of flooding and is therefore acceptable to Anglian Water
- The removal of the additional section of balancing pond owned by AW should not give rise to a risk of flooding and is therefore acceptable in principle to Anglian Water.”

And

“In relation to point 1, Anglian Water confirmed to us that, whilst – they do not have access to the relevant report in question, the impact would have been assessed at the time the land was disposed of therefore they have no objection to the section of pond sold being filled in.

Anglian Water have also confirmed having undertaken their own analysis, that removal of the additional section of pond would not give rise to a risk of flooding and is therefore acceptable in principle to Anglian Water.

I additionally attach a copy of the relevant pond analysis carried out by MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Limited (which was reviewed by Anglian Water’s own modelling assessment) which gives details of the proposed infilling and confirms that the pond would continue to have sufficient capacity and as such would not cause detrimental impact to the Anglian Water system.”

It is disappointing to note that as a key stakeholder involved in water level and flood risk management and a partner in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Flood and Water (FloW) Partnership that the potential adverse impacts on either

the Board's system or surrounding area appear not to have been considered by AWSL.

No request has been made for the Board to reconsider the contents of its resolution made at the last meeting, item (vi) of Minute B.146 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters.

**In order to assist further discussion, the Board is asked to consider the proposal and provide instruction on how it would wish us to proceed.**

### **The future of the Phase 1 Balancing Pond**

As a result of this development, in view of the Board's historic concerns and AWSL's apparent and continuing disregard for the maintenance and operation of the pond, a discussion has taken place with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman concerning the pond's future both for the benefit of the Board and the development that it serves.

Several alternatives were discussed including:

- (a) The designation of the pond using the powers within the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, thus making the pond part of the Board's system.

Discussions with the Clerk to the Board have concurred that this is a potential solution.

- (b) The purchase of the pond and its associated infrastructure by the Board for a nominal sum.
- (c) Undertaking regular maintenance of the pond and associated infrastructure by the Board on behalf of Anglian Water.

It was considered that the Board did not wish to increase its current liabilities, such as the impounding embankment which may require works to ensure that it is stable and meets current design requirements, or place further financial burden upon its ratepayers. However, it would be prepared to undertake more regular maintenance on behalf of AWSL, perhaps on a similar basis to the PSCA arrangements that many IDBs operate on behalf of the Environment Agency.

It was agreed that:

- (i) The ponds are in poor condition but once in a good condition will be easier to maintain.
- (ii) A phased approach may be required to achieve a good standard,
- (iii) The improvement of the condition of the pond to a good standard would be expensive, particularly if any spoil has to be disposed of to an off-site tip,
- (iv) All liability and expense should remain with AWSL with no additional liability or financial burdens placed on the Board or its rate payers.

In view of this it is suggested that the Board begin discussions with AWSL to improve the condition to a good standard with the intention of the Board entering into an agreement to undertake future routine maintenance on AWSL's behalf.

**In order to guide further discussion, it would be beneficial to receive the Board's opinion and further instruction.**

*Residential development on land west of 450 March Road, Turves – Cobb Construction (MLC Ref Nos 622, 623, 656, 657, 696 & 697)*

Consent for the proposed culvert under March Road and associated works was granted at the end of March.

No subsequent correspondence or contact has occurred with either the applicant or ESP Ltd concerning this site.

*Erection of two pig rearing buildings and feed stock storage area; an anaerobic digester plant and process building; formation of digestate lagoon and construction of 2.0 metre high earth bunding on land to the south of Bates Farm – Client of Roy Lobley (MLC Ref No 666) & J Bates & Son (MLC Ref Nos 675 & 706)*

Further to the Board's last meeting an application to discharge conditions, FDC Ref No F/YR18/3084/COND (MLC Ref No 706), which included Conditions 6 and 7 that relate to surface water disposal, was received by the Council. In respect of these planning conditions the Decision Notice advises that:

“Details shown on drawing Nos. 234K/03 Rev A; 234K/07 Rev A; 234/04 Rev C and Drainage Report Rev B are acceptable to the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Therefore the submission element of condition 7 is agreed. The development to be undertaken in accordance with these details.”

It is disappointing to report that despite the Board being a “partner” on the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Flood & Water (FloW) Partnership the LLFA did not consult with the Board before responding to the District Council.

No further correspondence has been received from the applicants or the applicants’ agents and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board’s interests.

**Therefore, in order to resolve this potential issue and guide further discussion it would be beneficial to receive the Board’s opinion, further instruction and approval to initially write to the parties concerned.**

*Erection of up to 118no dwellings involving demolition of 147a Wisbech Road on land north of The Green and north of 145-159 Wisbech Road, March – Mr T Knowles (MLC Ref No 681)*

Further to the last meeting an enquiry was received in November from Partner Construction who was advised that any further discussion would need to be as part of the pre/post-application consultation procedure. To date no further correspondence or instruction have been received.

In early January correspondence was received from a group of residents who were concerned with the above development. It was clear from the incoming message that they were not in favour of the development or familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the authorities involved. Many of the issues raised were outside the Board’s jurisdiction, and it appeared the correspondence was potentially seeking for support to oppose the planning application. Conscious of the general feeling against this development within the area, and the role of social media, a written response was made advising on the Board’s involvement in such matters and its responsibilities.

Subsequently, the office was contacted by a rather spirited representative of the group who was reminded of the extent of the Board’s responsibilities and involvement within both the planning system and water level and flood risk management arena.

The planning application was granted outline planning permission by the District Council in January. Planning conditions imposed as part of the permission include those associated with surface water disposal, the condition suggested by the LLFA;

environmental and biodiversity; and the provision of an additional approach lane at Peas Hill Roundabout along Wisbech Road (this involves the slight widening of the existing road and, presumably, will require discharge consent). The Decision Notice also includes a Drainage Advisory Notice which reminds the applicant that it has a separate legal obligation to comply with the requirements of the relevant Internal Drainage Board in the area.

No further correspondence has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agents concerning this site and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

*ormation of a vehicular access and piping of drain at Fenn Lodge, 37 Whittlesey Road, March – Mr & Mrs M Griffin (MLC Ref Nos 691 & 723)*

The works associated with this site have now been completed.

*Change of use of the former agricultural building to residential at Bank Farm (formerly Benwick Goods Yard), Whittlesey Road, Benwick – (MLC Ref Nos 721, 731 & 759) [Formerly White Fen DDC, Client of Swann Edwards Architecture (MLC Ref No 033); Bank Farms Ltd (MLC Ref No 035) and Mr G Burton (MLC Ref No 039)]*

Further to White Fen DDCs 2016 Meeting Report, the site has been the subject of three Prior Notification planning applications seeking Change of Use from agricultural to five dwellings.

The first of these applications, FDC Ref No F/YR19/0023/PNC04 (MLC Ref No 721), was validated by the District Council in January 2019. However, this was refused planning permission in March due to concerns about the structural integrity of the building and as the proposal was larger than the existing curtilage.

A subsequent application, FDC Ref No F/YR19/0351/PNC04 (MLC Ref No 731), was validated in May and subsequently refused because it was considered that:

“...the works necessary to improve the structural integrity of the building would go beyond what could reasonably be described as conversion.”

and

“...the development would result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point.”

Not content with this an appeal was submitted to The Planning Inspectorate which was subsequently dismissed in January.

A further planning application, FDC Ref No F/YR20/0029/PNC04 (MLC Ref No 759), was submitted to the District Council and was granted “Prior Approval” in early March subject to the imposition of planning conditions. None of the imposed conditions refer to surface water disposal but a Drainage Advisory Note was included on the Decision Notice.

It is interesting to note that in its initial response to the planning consultation the Environment Agency advised that:

“We have no objection regarding flood risk from the main river. The site is located within Flood Zone 3 however the principle flood risk in this location is likely to be from the local drainage network and as such, we recommend that the White Fen Internal Drainage Board [sic] are consulted on flood risk grounds.”

But most recently has advised that:

“We consider that the main source of flood risk at this site is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB). As such, we have no objection to the proposed development on flood risk grounds. However, the IDB should be consulted with regard to flood risk associated with watercourses under their jurisdiction and surface water drainage proposals.”

Neither the Board nor the Commissioners have been contacted in respect of this proposal since 2016.

*Erection of a workshop and office for the use as a haulage yard for HGV parking including repairs, body building and preparation for sales and including 2.4 metres high palisade fence at land east of 30 Thorby Avenue, March – Goldstar Metal Traders Ltd (MLC Ref No 732)*

According to the Board’s District Plan this site is within both the Board’s “highland” area, land within the catchment that is not rated, and the rateable area of the neighbouring March Sixth DDC. However, Members will be aware that following negotiations with EEDA, carried out on the Commissioners’\Board’s behalf, circa 2005, changes were made to the previously agreed drainage arrangements for Phase 3 of the Hostmoor Industrial Estate. As a result, the area covered by Phase 3A, essentially



the northern part of the Thorby Avenue estate, will discharge into the March Sixth DDC system.

*Residential development on land in the vicinity of St Marys Church, Woodville, and Gipsy Lane, off Wisbech Road, March*

(a) *Inter-catchment transfer*

Members will be aware from previous reports of the re-development of the former St Marys Rectory site, Church Gardens, by Mr A Dean. Subsequent to this, planning permission has been sought for further development in this area.

According to the respective District plans this area is within “highland” (land within the catchment that is not rated) of both the Board and neighbouring March Sixth DDC. There is an absence of readily available suitable points of discharge. It is understood that a private and largely piped system of unknown condition and capacity is within the north eastern verge of Wisbech Road and discharges into the Board’s Westry Drain via other private connections. The discharge into the March Sixth system is via a private open watercourse which has, in the past, been poorly maintained and flooding has been experienced in this area. It should also be noted that the southern end of this system is connected to the Hostmoor Phase One balancing pond via an adopted sewer and thus into the Board’s system.

Certain conditions may determine which receiving watercourse is chosen and may require an inter-catchment transfer. The design of the respective water level and flood risk management system is based on the area and land use that it serves. The change of land use can also, but not on this occasion, have an adverse impact on payments received from ratepayers. Therefore, an inter-catchment transfer requires the approval of both the Board and March Sixth DDC.

**In order to assist further discussion and the issuing of consents the Board is asked to consider whether it would permit inter-catchment transfers and provide instruction on how it would wish us to proceed.**

(b) *The disposal of treated foul water effluent*

Members may be aware that the nearest adopted foul water sewer is at Hostmoor Avenue, to the south of Cobblestones, with all existing properties up to and beyond Westry Hall disposing of treated foul water effluent via septic tanks or direct into open watercourses via private water recycling plants.

In view of this some developers have requested that the disposal of such effluent is discharged into the local watercourses and NOT into an adopted sewer.

When such discharges from one or two properties are proposed it is possible to justify receiving “additional” water, particularly if a connection to an adopted sewer is some distance away and not viable in economic terms. However in addition to transferring the “additional” water, which places an increased “load” on the receiving systems and the rate payer, other issues associated with the disposal of treated effluent water from non-adopted systems include the increased risk of pollution and odours as a result of “spills”, possibly due to the lack of maintenance of the units; potential detrimental effect on the water environment etc.

Whilst it is accepted that there is some distance between the proposed sites and the nearest adopted foul water sewer it is considered that the number of properties involved may make the installation of a new foul water sewer preferable. This would also be of benefit to future developments in the area.

In order to assist further discussion and the issuing of consents **the Board is asked to consider whether it would require the installation of a new connection into the existing foul water sewer system or would continue to consent such discharges, provided they met its requirements, and provide instruction on how it would wish us to proceed.**

*Residential development on land to the north of Woodville, Wisbech Road, March Prudential Property Investments Managers Ltd (MLC Ref No 263, 335 & 399) and Guy James Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 743 & 746)*

Further to previous meeting reports a Reserved Matters planning application, FDC Ref No F/YR19/0602 (MLC Ref No 743), was submitted to the District Council in May 2019.

The County Council, in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), is currently objecting to the attenuated discharge of surface water and the disposal of treated foul

effluent water into the open watercourse that forms the southern boundary of the site which is believed to flow into the neighbouring March Sixth DDC system.

According to its Public Access webpage the District Council has recommended an extension of time until the end of May to enable discussion with the IDB to resolve any drainage issues.

A Discharge of Planning Conditions application, FDC Ref No F/YR19/3090 (MLC Ref No 746), was submitted to the District Council in April 2019 but was not validated until August.

Conditions relating to Archaeology, the Construction Management Plan and Ecology were all discharged but the others, including the four conditions relating to surface and treated foul effluent water disposal, were not discharged.

An enquiry has recently been received from the applicants' consultant, Andrew Firebrace Partnership Limited. Further discussion will only occur as part of post-application consultation and will be guided by the Board's/Commissioners' decision in respect of the items relating to the inter-catchment transfer and the disposal of treated foul effluent water as raised above.

### ***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.

### ***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 <sup>th</sup> October to 21 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> October to 21 <sup>st</sup> 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 Councils 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](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 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 – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019":

[https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccc\\_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/232/Committee/8/Default.aspx](https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccc_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:

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## **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](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 and no new "wet spots" have been identified within the Board's district.

The next meeting was due to be held during April but this is likely to be delayed until the current coronavirus (COVID-19) working restrictions are lifted.

### **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

16 April 2020

March West & White Fen (316)\Reports\April 2020

The Vice Chairman enquired about the continued use of brick-bats for the revetment works as when future slubbing works are carried out some will end up on the bank side and he queried if it would be better to just use toe-boarding.

Mr Lakey informed the meeting that the District had a high range between low and high water levels which allowed water to get behind toe-boarding and erode the bank and the use of brick-bats, which he considered to still be the most suitable, resists this type of erosion. He further reported that this method is currently not used on the smaller drains, but in time the banks become eroded behind the toe-board leaving the timber in the middle of the watercourse.

With regard to planning applications:-

MLC Ref Nos. 591, 611, 704 & 747 (Westry Retail Park) and MLC Ref Nos. 675 & 706 (Pig rearing units)

The Board approved the actions taken by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and that they be authorised to liaise with the Consulting Engineer and take any further actions they consider appropriate.

Residential development on land in the vicinity of St Mary's Church - Inter catchment transfer

The Board approved in principle that further discussions take place and that the Chairman and Vice Chairman be authorised to take any further actions they consider appropriate.

Disposal of treated foul water

Without having full information concerning the capacity and condition of the watercourses at Wisbech Road, the Board did not feel able to make an informed decision at this time but approved in principle for the Consulting Engineer to investigate the options available and for the Chairman and Vice Chairman to be authorised to take any further actions they consider appropriate.

## RESOLVED

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

ii) Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

That the recommendations contained in the Report be adopted.

iii) That R Dale undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements in the March and Whittlesey area for the ensuing year.

iv) That G Ashman undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements in the White Fen area for the ensuing year.

## B.184 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

## RESOLVED

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

### B.185 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

Mr Hill referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, dated December 2019, previously circulated to Members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

## RESOLVED

That no action be taken concerning mink traps at this point.

### B.186 Pumping Station duties

The Board gave consideration to the payments in respect of pumping station duties for 2020/2021.

## RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £5,780.45 be allowed for the provision of pumping station duties for 2020/2021.

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

### B.187 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

Mr Hill 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.

Some members will recall that in 2009 asset surveys were carried out on all IDB pumping stations. As ten years has now passed it might be timely to revisit and update these to reflect any changes that might have occurred and for this updated information to be used to plan for future investment needs. Similarly, as it is five years since these assets were valued for insurance reasons, it is also considered worthwhile revising the rebuilding estimates to reflect construction cost inflation.

Mr Hill reported on the assets survey refresh as indicated. In response to the Chairman he considered, based on the costs for other Boards, that the cost would be in excess of £1,000. The Chairman reported that the Board had recently increased their insurance valuations which they considered adequate.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That no proposals be formulated at the present time.
- ii) That no action concerning the asset survey be carried out at the present time but the situation be reviewed in 2 years' time.
- iii) That no action concerning the rebuilding estimates for insurance purposes be carried out at the present time.

#### B.188 Inspection of the District

Further to minute B.151, the Chairman reported that he had carried out an Inspection of the District with the Vice Chairman and Cope Safety Management and had found the Board's assets to be in good condition. There were some minor points raised which were being attended to.

#### RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to make arrangements for an Inspection in 2021 if he considers it appropriate.

#### B.189 Environment Agency – Precept

Mr Hill reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2020/2021 in the sum of £16,059 (the precept for 2019/2020 being £15,667.05).

#### B.190 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Mr Hill reported that the sum of £3,333.35 (£4,233.29 less £899.94 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for the financial year 2018/2019 together with the sum of £532.78 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2019/2020.

Mr Hill reported that the claim for 2018/2019 was higher than average due to the works at West Fen Pumping Station. He referred to the out-turn for 2019/2020 being higher than average which will lead to higher highland water claims, which could cause problems with the Environment Agency budgets in meeting these excess claims.

B.191 Association of Drainage Authorities  
Subscriptions

Mr Hill reported that it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% in 2020, viz:- from £849 to £866.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2020.

B.192 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 Board.
- ii) That the Clerk 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 Clerk be empowered to authorise appropriate action on behalf of the Board in connection with any appeals against the determinations.

B.193 Rate arrears

Consideration was given to writing off rate arrears amounting to £93.35.

RESOLVED

That the arrears be written off.

B.194 Contributions from Developers

Mr Hill reported that contributions towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume have been received.

B.195 Health and Safety

- a) Further to minute B.111(i), in light of the appointment of Cope Safety Management, Mr Hill 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 continue to deal with and report on Health and Safety matters.



b) Further to minute B.157(b), the Chairman referred to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their visit to the District on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020. He reported that, together with the Vice Chairman, he had carried out a substantial inspection of the Board's assets with the Cope Safety Officer and although a couple of minor matters were raised, which were being attended to, everything was found to be in good condition.

He further reported that he continued to get advice on safety matters from Cope Safety Management and although they were appointed to give health and safety advice it was the Board who continued to be responsible for all health and safety matters.

The Vice Chairman considered that for the fee payable the appointment of Cope Safety Management provided excellent value for money.

In response to Mr Miller, Mr Hill reported that the main insurers for the Board's insurance policies were AXA.

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

c) Mr Hill referred to the ADA Internal Drainage Boards' Health, Safety & Welfare Survey 2018.

#### B.196 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board - 2018/2019

a) The Board considered the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> 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 Board 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 Board continue to comply with the Internal control objectives to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.

b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

#### B.197 Defra IDB1 Returns

Mr Hill 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.

### B.198 Budgeting

Mr Hill referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

### B.199 Review of Internal Controls

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

### B.200 Risk Management Assessment

a) Mr Hill 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) The Board considered and approved the insured value of their buildings.

### B.201 Exercise of Public Rights

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

### B.202 Annual Governance Statement – 2019/2020

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

### B.203 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £202,103.57 which had been made during the financial year 2019/2020.

(NB) – Messrs Mottram and Whittome declared interests in the payments made to them.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr Whittome declared interests (as Members of the Middle Level Board) in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners.

## B.204 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2019/2020

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

In response to Miss Alterton, Mr Hill confirmed that the funds raised for plant refurbishment in Area 1 were for an identified programme of works and in Area 2 for a general pump overhaul programme which although not specifically identified was for likely future works.

### RESOLVED

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

## B.205 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2020/2021

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2020/2021 and were informed by Mr Hill 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:-

	<u>Area 1</u>	<u>Area 2</u>
Drainage rates	92.12%	66.40%
Special levy	7.88%	33.60%

In response to Miss Alterton, Mr Hill confirmed that the £10,000 raised for plant refurbishment in the previous year was a general provision for as yet unprogrammed works. He also noted that the drain maintenance programme was higher this year due to a number of the phased programme works all being due in the year. He commented that the Board could consider delaying some of these works until later in the year to better assess the budget position. Miss Alterton considered that as the plant refurbishment works were currently unprogrammed it would be acceptable to 'take a holiday' from them this year but as the maintenance works were programmed it was important to keep to the programme as these works were needed and would only be more expensive in the future.

### RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved; with the sum of £3,500 being taken from the Development Fund for the works required to be carried out at Turves.
- ii) That a total sum of £139,233 be raised by drainage rates and special levy (Area 1 - £37,886; Area 2 - £101,337).
- 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:-

	<u>Area 1</u>	<u>Area 2</u>
Drainage rates	£34,901	£67,291
Special levy	£2,985	£34,046

iv) That drainage rates be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District as follows:-

<u>Area 1</u>	<u>Area 2</u>
25.0p in the £	12.25p in the £

v) That a Special levy of £37,031 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special 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.

#### B.206 Display of rate notice

#### RESOLVED

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

#### B.207 Date of next Meeting

#### RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

#### B.208 Death of Mr D Phillips

The Vice Chairman referred to the death of Mr David Phillips, former Middle Level Commissioners' Chief Engineer whom he considered had provided a great contribution to the District.

#### RESOLVED

That the Board's appreciation of the services to the District rendered by Mr Phillips be recorded in the minutes.

#### B.209 Electronic agendas

Councillor Wicks reported that with the current electronic format for agendas he had found reading some of the scanned pdf documents difficult. Mr Hill reported on the investigations currently being carried out with various platforms and that he would relay his comments back to the office.

### B.210 Remote working

Mr Miller reported that when working in remote locations his staff had started using the What3Words app which he had found to be very good. Mr Whittome reported that he currently used it and Miss Alerton reported it to be a very good app.

The Chairman agreed to look into this further.