

MANEA AND WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE **COMMISSIONERS**

At a Meeting of the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners
held at The Lamb and Flag, Welney on Wednesday 2nd February 2022

PRESENT

J E Heading Esq (Chairman)
R M C Sears Esq (Vice Chairman)
C M Barnes Esq
Cllr C J Crofts Esq
J H Hawes Esq
M E Heading Esq
P Jolley Esq
Mrs A J Morris
W Sutton Esq
N V M Walker Esq

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Commissioners) was in attendance.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from N Cook Esq, M D R Fairey Esq, P D Hawes Esq and C W Sears Esq.

C.924 Declarations of Interest

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

The Chairman and Mr M Heading declared an interest in the planning applications (MLC Ref Nos 573, 579 & 594) received for A & E G Heading Ltd.

The Chairman, M Heading and Councillors Croft and Sutton declared interests (as Members of the Middle Level Board) in the payments made to and any matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners.

The Chairman declared an interest (as a Director) in the payments made to and any matters concerning the Association of Drainage Authorities.

Councillors Croft and Sutton declared interests (as Members of Upwell IDB) in the payments made to and any matters concerning the Upwell IDB.

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

C.925 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 3rd February 2021 and 25th June 2021 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.926 Appointments – 2022/2023

a) Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That J E Heading Esq be appointed Chairman of the Commissioners.

b) Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED

That R M C Sears Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Commissioners.

c) Appointment of Finance Committee

RESOLVED

That the Finance Committee be constituted as follows;

Cllr C J Crofts Esq, J E Heading Esq, P Jolley Esq, Mrs A J Morris, R M C Sears Esq and Cllr W Sutton Esq

C.927 Resignation of Members

i) The Chairman reported that he had received a letter from C F Hartley Esq informing the Commissioners of his resignation as a Commissioner. He informed Members that Mr Hartley had been a Commissioner since 6th June 2013 and that he had sent a letter to Mr Hartley. R Hill confirmed that the Clerk had also sent a letter to Mr Hartley on behalf of the Commissioners.

ii) The Chairman referred to a conversation he had had with P Lawrence Esq who had informed him that as he was unable to attend meetings he wished to stand down as a Commissioner.

RESOLVED

i) That it be formally recorded that the Commissioners were extremely grateful to C Hartley Esq for his services to the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners.

ii) That the Clerk write to Oddfellows to see if they wish to nominate somebody to replace P Lawrence Esq as a Commissioner.

C.928 Land Drainage Act 1991

Mr Hill reported that Fenland District Council had re-appointed Councillors C Marks and W Sutton to be Commissioners under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

C.929 Joint Maintenance of the Old Croft River – Upwell IDB Overhanging Trees – Copes Hill Farm

Further to minute C.895, R Hill reported that works to remove trees from the bank side to allow access for machinery to carry out piling works had been completed and that Upwell IDB had confirmed that the piling works had now been completed at an approximate cost of £13,000, giving rise to a contribution payable by the Manea and Welney DDC of approximately £6,500.

The Chairman reported that although there was a long-standing arrangement between the Manea and Welney DDC and Upwell IDB concerning joint maintenance of the Old Croft River, there was no formal agreement. He further reported that when the development contribution for the Grange Farm Development had been received, the Clerk had made proposals to split the contribution equally between Manea and Welney DDC and Upwell IDB, but following further consideration he did not consider this to be appropriate and he had held further discussions with the Chairman of Upwell IDB concerning this.

Following these discussions, he had contacted the Clerk again and it was intended to formally draw up an agreement for the joint maintenance to set out both parties' responsibilities and obligations and to also clearly define how development contributions discharging into the Old Croft River should be dealt with.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to discuss these matters further with the Chairman of Upwell IDB and the Clerk with a view to drawing up a formal agreement between Manea and Welney DDC and Upwell IDB for the Joint Maintenance of the Old Croft River and to clearly define how development contributions discharging into the Old Croft River would be apportioned.

C.930 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank Works

Further to minute C.857, Mr Hill referred to Newsletter from the Environment Agency dated December 2021.

The Chairman reported that it was his intention to arrange a site visit to the works as part of the summer inspection.

C.931 Potential Amalgamation Discussions – Manea & Welney DDC, Sutton & Mepal IDB and Upwell IDB

Further to minute C.898, the Chairman referred to previous discussions with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Sutton and Mepal and Upwell IDBs and that he was currently trying to arrange a further meeting between all three Chairmen to discuss opportunities for closer working between all three Districts with a view to providing cost savings and provide influence on future

arrangements being considered by the Environment Agency for the Old Bedford River and Welches Dam Pumping Station.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman and Vice Chairman continue discussions with Sutton & Mepal and Upwell IDBs Chairmen and Vice Chairmen.

C.932 Old Diesel Building

Further to minute C.899, the Chairman referred to the old Welches Dam Pumping Station structure which Commissioners had previously agreed to remove mechanical equipment to store at the Old Glenhouse Pumping Station and then demolish the wooden structure. He informed Members that there had not been any opportunities to carry out these works yet, but the District Superintendent would look to carry out these works when a suitable opportunity presented itself.

With regards to the Old Glenhouse Pumping Station building, the Chairman informed Members that after a full discussion it was the recommendation of the Finance Committee not to carry out any remedial works to the structure in 2022/2023 and to review the matter further at next year's meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee not to carry out any remedial works to the structure in 2022/2023 and to review the matter further at next year's meeting.

C.933 Clerk's Report

Mr Hill advised;

i) COVID-19 Actions

That due to the risk of COVID-19 mutations appropriate measures are being put in place, revised and reviewed as per government advice and using activity-based risk assessments.

ii) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a seventh Chair's Meeting was held on the 2nd November 2021.

The meeting covered a wide variety of matters likely to affect IDBs. A summary of the key points and resolutions follows;

a) The MLC Chair introduced the meeting and took the opportunity to warn those present that government were pushing for land in this area to be set aside to mitigate the impacts of climate change. In this respect there was concern that the data underpinning this move was out-of-date and inadequate and that there was a risk that no proper account would be taken of the storage effects of the land as it is currently managed compared to how it might react if managed as wetland.

b) To better fit in with the farming calendar the annual safety audits carried out by Cope are to be moved to January and February. In response to a question from the floor, Chairs were advised that it is ultimately the Board and not the MLC's responsibility to manage safety at Board owned assets, although the MLC will assist where they can.

c) Chairs considered that it was considered important that IDBs and the MLC have a policy on climate change. It was felt likely that this will become increasingly important as pressure mounts for action to be taken. In this respect the Clerk advised that the MLC intended to carry out a baseline assessment of its carbon footprint which would then be used to underpin plans for reductions in CO2 release and for mitigation. This model would be made available to those IDBs which wished to follow a similar path. Once what could be reasonably achieved has been defined a policy to steer implementation would be produced. Obviously, the aim will be to achieve net zero or as close to it as can be realistically and practically be achieved.

d) The Chief Executive outlined the work of WRE, including the regional reconciliation of water supply just carried out, the proposals for two new reservoirs (one in Lincolnshire and one in Cambridgeshire) and the future plans for water security providing a 1 in 500 year level of drought tolerance for potable water supply. On this latter point he advised that he had been pushing hard for the needs of agriculture to be taken into account, noting that wet farming and environmental targets for farming would require extra water in this region. Also, he considered that separating agricultural need from environmental need was an error and failed to recognise the close tie between the two.

e) It was reported that it seemed increasingly likely that despite lobbying MPs and Defra it will be the case from the 1st April 2022 that IDB's will lose access to red diesel for anything other than powering generators and for heating. This will increase costs and will present problems with the use of contractors who also work for agriculture which will have an exemption, hence can continue to use red diesel in plant.

With regards to the future use of red diesel, R Hill distributed the file note from ADA to Members and the Chairman gave an update on the current position. He reported that it appeared likely that drainage authorities would be given an exemption for the use of red diesel on maintenance works carried out predominantly on agricultural land. He informed the meeting that currently there had not been an exemption granted for pumping, but that ADA had carried out extensive work and were due to meet with Defra shortly and it was hopeful that an exemption for the use of red diesel for pumping would be forthcoming. He informed Members that although it was a possibility that red diesel could be available for pumping in the future, the Finance Committee had considered it prudent to approve budget estimates for the inclusion of white diesel for pumping as this was the current position.

f) On member training it was agreed that the MLC would set up a Zoom type seminar running several of the ADA video training sessions back-to-back. All members of all MLC administered IDBs would be invited and attendance will be recorded. This was seen as the most efficient way of delivering the training that Defra expects members to have undertaken.

g) For the next round of IDB meetings, the MLC website secure pages will be used for Board meeting documents. Members will be sent links to the appropriate webpage with a password. The documents can then be downloaded whenever it is convenient to do so. **MEMBERS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO FOLLOW THIS ROUTE RATHER THAN REQUIRE PAPER COPIES OF DOCUMENTS.** In exceptional circumstances – for example for those members without email addresses - a paper copy of the relevant documents can still be printed off, bound and sent out. The use of the Microsoft Teams software is also to be explored for future years.

h) GDPR was discussed and it was resolved that for internal matters, or where working with partner organisations all email addresses will be visible to allow members to see who has knowledge of the matter under discussion. All external communications will normally be blind copied unless there is a need to show the address or the address is already known (for example when a member is passing on a query he or she has received themselves). It was also agreed that the website could continue to show names and primary contact numbers as long as addresses were not identified.

iii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 84th Annual Conference of the Association was held on Wednesday the 10th November 2021.

The Conference was once again held virtually and was split into two parts; the Conference in the morning and AGM in the afternoon. It is expected that, whilst in future years it is hoped to return to a face-to-face format, the clear separation between conference and AGM is likely to be retained.

Speakers this year included Rebecca Row MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State – Defra), Dieter Helm (economist) and Lord De Ramsey (then President of ADA).

Topics covered included the challenges of climate change and the need to step up to the plate in delivering on the aim to achieve a net zero target as soon as possible, the importance of partnership working and the importance of agriculture in feeding the nation. The latter included the need to better educate the population, who clearly desire to move forward on delivering climate change and ecological objectives, but do not fully appreciate the role of agriculture, its real impacts or even properly understood where and how food is sourced. One example given that challenged a common assumption that agriculture was bad for the environment was that recent monitoring of CO₂ release had shown that a well irrigated peat field of onions released less CO₂ than adjacent dry grassland.

In his speech Lord De Ramsey announced that he was stepping down as President and that his place would be taken by Henry Cator. He was warmly thanked by ADA for his many years of service and was presented with a painting by an artist which it is known he admires. Henry spoke about how pleased he had been to be invited to take over the role and that he looked forward to working with ADA to meet the future challenges of the industry.

The AGM that followed gave an update on the work of ADA, noting the likelihood that, despite vigorous lobbying, the expectation was that from 1st April 2022 IDBs would no longer be able to use red diesel for anything other than heating or to run generators. This will impact on costs and will provide challenges to the continued use of agricultural contractors. The passing of the Environment Bill was touched upon which will release barriers to the formation of new IDBs and will also provide opportunities for IDBs to explore extending their boundaries if it was clearly beneficial to do so. Innes Thomason spoke on the work of ADA and the consultations ADA had responded to, including proposals to extend beaver introduction and a water abstraction licencing charging review amongst other things. Finally, it was reported that the ADA Board had agreed to a 1% rise in subscriptions for the 2022/23 year and noted that with inflationary pressures a higher increase should be expected next year.

b) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held on Wednesday the 9th November 2022, venue to be decided.

RESOLVED

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

c) Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association will be held on Tuesday the 1st March 2022.

d) ADA response to publication of EFRA Flooding Inquiry Report

That ADA have responded to the Government EFRA report into the winters flooding, which has the headline conclusion that the lack of clear flood-resilience targets is leaving England at risk of 'playing catch-up' with climate change.

Encouragingly, in addition to recognising these challenges, EFRA have also clearly stated that in light of ever more frequent and severe storms, there is an urgent need to provide long-term funding for the maintenance of existing and new flood defences, to match capital commitment together with a need to examine the mental health impacts of severe flooding, calling for an action plan to address this alongside the economic and physical effects.

The full EFRA report can be found via the following link;

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmenvfru/170/170.pdf>.

e) Updating IDB Byelaws

Further to minute C.834, ADA has advised that there was an error in the Model Byelaws relating to a Penalty Notice which referred to s37 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982, which was actually repealed on the 1.12.2020 by the Sentencing Act 2020. Consequently, Defra has amended the Penalty Notice attached to the byelaws to include the correct reference. This Penalty Notice is not part of the Byelaws and, as such, is a simple correction. There is no requirement either to readvertise, or seek Defra approval and the version now uploaded to the website is the corrected one.

RESOLVED

Members approved the updated byelaws.

iv) Environment Act

In November 2021 Defra announced that the Environment Act became law. The stated aim of this Act is to improve air and water quality, tackle waste, increase recycling, halt the decline of species, and improve the natural environment. However, the Act also includes powers (specific to IDBs) which amend the Land Drainage Act 1991, addressing the technical issue of missing or incomplete data, which is preventing existing internal drainage boards from expanding and new ones from being established. Defra have stated that they will be working on the associated secondary legislation over the coming year and will be engaging with IDBs through ADA on this.

v) Smart Level System/District Wide Telemetry Bid

Further to minute C.900(vii), the Chairman referred to the current system which was out-dated and of no real benefit and, with this in mind, he had approved for an inspection of the Commissioners pumping stations to provide a quote. Upon receipt, it was noted that there was likely to be an imminent price rise and, following confirmation that 50% grant funding would be available, he had confirmed for an order to be placed for the supply of the equipment as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED

That the actions of the Chairman in placing an order for the provision of telemetry at the Commissioners pumping stations be approved.

vi) National Drainage Show & Floodex 2022

That the National Drainage Show & Floodex 2022 will be held at ExCel, London on the 23rd and 24th November 2022.

vii) Water Resources East (WRE)

Further to minute C.862(v), the Clerk will report that WRE have had a productive and fruitful year despite COVID and have managed to lever many millions of funding for studies and initiatives which in the long term should benefit this area by recognising the importance of agriculture to the water resource supply chain and by seeking ways to integrate water resources, flood risk management and environmental objective delivery together. For the 2020/2021 year (should the Commissioners continue to wish to support the work of WRE and contribute accordingly) the calculated figure will be £125.00. Please note that ADA have developed a new band-based charging structure, hence the change from the previous year's figure.

The Commissioners are asked to approve this payment.

RESOLVED

To approve the payment to WRE.

C.934 Consulting Engineers' Report, including Planning and Consenting Matters

The Commissioners considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

The Chairman reported on the Engineer's comments that the plant and machinery was in a satisfactory condition and referred to the Cranbrook/Counter Drain (CCD) FRM study. He reminded Members that the Manea and Welney, Sutton and Mepal and parts of the Upwell Districts discharge into the Old Bedford River and into the washes through Welches Dam Pumping Station, and therefore these proposals were important to all these Boards and he was currently looking to arrange a meeting between the Chairman to discuss the proposals and develop a common strategy to respond to the proposals.

He considered the proposals could provide substantial water storage in the future which could eventually replace Welches Dam Pumping Station.

P Jolley queried the possible future use of the area, for either water storage or flood defence. He queried the possible high carbon costs of pumping water into and out of the proposed water storage areas.

C Barnes queried if the new reservoir would be primarily for flood defence or water storage and the Chairman referred to the current considerations relating to the Ouse Washes.

M Heading referred to the inherent problems with trying to use one facility for two purposes.

The Chairman referred to the Engineer's comments concerning planning and development applications and concerns were raised over the Engineer's capacity to deal with applications in a timely manner.

Cllr Crofts referred to the problems caused by drainage authorities not being statutory consultees for planning and that County Councils generally only consult on the larger developments. P Jolley considered that there were issues with getting timely responses from the Middle Level and Cllr Crofts referred to the lack of funding available for drainage authorities to deal with planning matters. A Morris considered there were a vast number of applications which made it virtually impossible to monitor all applications without appropriate funding. M Heading supported these comments.

The Chairman reported on the public meeting in the village of Manea following the flooding incident last year. He reported that he had told the meeting of the works of the Commissioners and the assistance they had given to try and alleviate the problems, but that the cause was outside of their control. He reported that the issue was in relation to the sewage treatment works being overwhelmed, leaving Anglian Water with either two options – either let sewage flood into the receiving watercourses, or restrict the flows into the works. He considered there were issues between the Government encouraging more developing, while at the same time restricting increases in water charges.

The meeting approved for the Chairman to liaise with the Clerk to draft a letter to Anglian Water to express the Commissioners' concerns over the lack of investment in the sewage treatment works despite the increase in the population of the village which led to the flooding incident last year and would likely lead to further problems in the future.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) That the Chairman and Vice Chairman continue to represent the Commissioners in discussions concerning the Cranbrook/Counter Drain study.
- iii) That the recommendations proposed by the Engineer in relation to planning applications be followed, and for the Engineer to liaise further with developers and agents to ensure the requirements of the Commissioners are met.
- iv) That the Chairman liaise with the Clerk to draft a letter to Anglian Water to express the Commissioners' concerns over the lack of investment in the sewage treatment works despite the increase in the population of the village which led to the flooding incident last year and would likely lead to further problems in the future.

C.935 Pumping Stations

The Chairman reported that both pumping stations were in good condition and operating efficiently. He reported that there had been a major breakdown on the weed screen cleaning equipment at Glenhouse Pumping Station and he had authorised a major overhaul. He informed Members that the overhaul had cost approximately £24,000.

He referred to the proposals to convert two of the diesel pumps at Glenhouse Pumping Station to electricity and that the Consulting Engineers were currently working on developing a scheme for grant-in-aid funding for submission to the Environment Agency.

C Barnes queried if it would be possible to power electric pumping units from nearby plant and the Chairman considered it not feasible due to the nearest plant being designed for gas production.

In response to V Walker, the Chairman reported that the current grant-in-aid allocation was based on a sliding scale, with schemes giving protection to urban areas generally getting preference to those for mainly rural areas.

RESOLVED

That the actions of the Chairman in authorising the major overhaul of the weed screen cleaning equipment at Glenhouse Pumping Station be approved.

C.936 District Superintendent's wages, pension contributions and Future Labour Requirements

The Chairman reported on the discussions and the recommendations of the Finance Committee;

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve the recommendations of the Finance Committee;

- i) That the basic pay of the District Superintendent for 2022/2023 be increased as indicated on the Supplementary Schedule, together with the proportionate increase in overtime rates.
- ii) That the Commissioners' pension contribution remains unchanged at 6% for 2022/2023, as from 1st April 2022, but be increased to match the rate paid by the District Superintendent up to a maximum of 10%.

C.937 Capital Improvement Programme

The Commissioners considered their future capital improvement programme.

Mr Hill reported that the Capital Improvement Programme would be updated when further information became available concerning Grant-in-Aid applications. The Chairman reported that he considered the works van should be kept for a further year and replaced in the 2023/24 financial year.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Capital Improvement Programme be approved, subject to the Citroen van being carried forward for review next year.
- ii) That the Commissioners approve the actions of the Chairman with regard to the new dredging bucket.

C.938 Conservation Officer's Newsletter

R Hill referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, dated December 2021, which had previously been circulated to the Commissioners.

C.939 District Superintendent's Report

The Commissioners considered the Report of the District Superintendent.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved
- ii) That the Chairman thank the Superintendent for the quality of his Report and for his services over the preceding year.

C.940 Maintenance Works in the District

The Chairman reported that the majority of works last year had been completed in accordance with the Commissioners Maintenance Programme and it was intended to carry out works for the coming year in line with the Programme again.

He reported that he considered the watercourses were in good order and requested if any Member had concerns over any section of the District system, that they should contact him.

RESOLVED

To continue with the Commissioners' annual maintenance programme in 2022/2023.

C.941 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.

R Hill reported that the proposals for the electrification of 2 pumps at Glen House pumping station would be progressed with the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to take any actions he considers appropriate to progress the future availability of grant funding for schemes promoted by the Commissioners.

C.942 Environment Agency – Precept

Mr Hill reported that at the Environment Agency Flood Defence Committee Meeting the Committee voted to adopt an indicative 2% increase in the precepts on Internal Drainage Boards for the next 6 years commencing from 2022/23, with the ability to revisit annually should exceptional circumstances indicate this is required.

The Committee voted for a 0% increase (for exceptional circumstances) above the indicative 2% increase for the year ending 31st March 2023 - total of a 2% increase on the level of precept on Internal Drainage Boards for the year ending 31st March 2023.

The precept paid for 2021/22 was £75,297.

C.943 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Mr Hill reported that following his submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £278.96 (£817.92 less £538.96 received on account) (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment Agency for the financial year 2020/2021 based on the Commissioners' actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £547.16 in respect of 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2021/2022.

C.944 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

R Hill reported that ADA has increased subscriptions by 1% for 2022, from £642 to £648.42.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription for 2022 be paid.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest as a Director of ADA

C.945 Contribution from Developers

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

C.946 Health and Safety

Further to minute C.913, the Chairman reported on the two meetings with Cope Safety Management and their report. He reported that the Commissioners had attended to all matters raised to the

satisfaction of the Cope Safety Assessor. In response to R Sears, the Chairman confirmed that he was satisfied with the appointment of Cope Safety Management.

C.947 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Commissioners – 2020/2021

- a) The Commissioners considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2021.
- b) The Commissioners considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2021.

C.948 Defra IDB1 Returns

R Hill referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2020/2021 which the Commissioners noted and approved.

C.949 Review of Internal Controls

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

C.950 Risk Management Assessment

- a) The Commissioners considered and expressed satisfaction with their current Risk Management Policy
- b) The Commissioners considered and approved the insured value of their buildings.

C.951 Exercise of Public Rights

R 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.

C.952 Payments to 31st December 2021

The Commissioners considered payments amounting to £175,840.12 which had been made during the period from the 1st April to the 31st December 2021.

(NB) – The Chairman, M Heading and Cllrs Crofts and Sutton declared interests (as a Member of the Middle Level Board) in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners.

The Commissioners considered and approved payments amounting to £175,840.12 which had been made during the financial year 2020/2021.

C.953 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2022/2023

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2022/2023 and were informed by R 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 respectively be 72.04% and 27.96%.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve the recommendations of the Finance Committee;

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £205,435 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £147,917 and £57,518 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 43.25p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v)
 - a) That a Special levy of £36,146 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
 - b) That a Special levy of £21,372 be made and issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.
- vi) That the seal of the Commissioners be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

C.954 Display of Rate Notice

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

C.955 Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman referred to his intention to hold a meeting and inspection in June, to take in a visit to the Ouse Washes to see the works carried out by the Environment Agency. He informed Members

that he liked to hold one meeting in Manea and one in Welney, but was currently struggling to find a suitable venue in Manea.

C Barnes informed the meeting that his Café 29 would be available but that he considered it appropriate for the Chairman to view the premises prior to making a booking to assess its suitability. C Barnes declared an interest in Café 29.

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the Board (including an inspection) will be held on Wednesday 22nd June 2022 and the Chairman be authorised to select a suitable venue.

C.956 Any Other Business

M Heading referrer to issues surrounding climate change and carbon emissions and that a new group had been set up to look into matters in more depth with a view to challenging some of the assumptions being made concerning farming and to find ways to work within the targets being set to find a sustainable future for farming.

He reported that a discovery grant had been awarded to fund a study into carbon emissions between semi-flooded and agricultural land and with regards to this the group may request background information from the District Superintendent. He hoped that by the June meeting it would be possible to give a more detailed update on the progress of the group.

The Chairman considered, depending on how the study was progressing that it may be possible to take in parts of the study as part of the June Inspection.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date