NEEDHAM AND LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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11 April 2022

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen

Meeting of the Board
19th April 2022

I enclose the Agenda for the Meeting of the Board to be held at the Crown Lodge Hotel, Outwell at 7.00 pm on Tuesday the 19th April 2022.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS AGENDA INCLUDES CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS. APART FROM THE COPY RETAINED WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES THEY WILL BE DESTROYED FOLLOWING THE MEETING AND MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY MUST NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN A BOARD MEMBER.

AFTER THE MEETING PLEASE DESTROY YOUR COPY OF THE PAPERS OR RETURN THEM TO THE OFFICE TO BE DESTROYED.

Please telephone or e-mail to confirm your attendance as soon as possible.

Yours truly

D C THOMAS

Clerk to the Board

To the Chairman and the Members of the Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests relating to the agenda.

3. Standing Orders

Further to minute B.278, ADA have obtained agreement from Defra for the flexibility which allowed the Board to choose how they wished to hold Board meetings during the pandemic to become permanent. This change will allow remote attendance or fully virtual meetings to take place in future should that best meet the Board's particular requirements at that time.

(Copy pages 10-14)

The Board's approval to these revised Standing Orders is sought.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 20th April 2021.

(Copy pages 15-28)

5. Matters arising from the Minutes

6. Election of Board Members

The Clerk will report that the term of office of the Members of the Board will expire on the 31st October 2022 and will submit the proposed register of electors which is applicable to the 2022 election.

7. Resignation of Mr C F Hartley

The Clerk will refer to a letter dated 15th November 2021 from Mr Hartley advising of his resignation. Mr Hartley was a member of the previous Needham, Burial & Birdbeck District Drainage Commissioners from March 2011.

(Copy page 29)

To consider the filling of the vacancy in membership of the Board caused by the resignation of Mr C F Hartley.

8. Clerk's Report

The Clerk advises:-

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.

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) Application(s) 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:-

Name of Applicant	Description of Works	Date Consent Granted
Mr Paul West	Installation of 1 no field underdrain outfall – district watercourse between Points 26 and 27 adjacent to Laddus Drove	08/04/21
Ms C Fitzpatrick	Construction of a replacement dwelling 6m from the top of the Board's drain at Mill House, The Common, Upwell – Board's Drain points 45 – 41 and 42 - 40	20/05/21

iv) 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 CO_2 release had shown that a well irrigated peat field of onions released less CO_2 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) <u>Annual Conference</u>

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

c) <u>Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch</u>

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

This was the first face to face meeting held since the COVID-19 outbreak but the format was restricted to the AGM only. It is planned however to reintroduce the popular and useful morning workshops for 2023.

Marc Heading was reappointed as chair with Councillor Doug McMurdo as vice chair. Topics covered included unsurprisingly red diesel, and water resources/the work of WRE.

Sofi Lloyd announced that Brian Stewart and Ian Hodge from the EA had recently joined the ADA Board and that DEFRA had asked ADA to liaise with them on the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act. She was also please to be able to report that ADA had been instrumental in initiating an all-party parliamentary group with a remit to discuss and consider Sustainable Flood and Drainage Management.

Phil Hulme and Amanda Macloughlan spoke on behalf of the EA covering the challenging associated with significant staff changes at the EA and noted that with the capital program for this six year cycle being double that of the previous one this would be generating considerable additional work load.

It was advised that this coming years revenue (maintenance) budget was £5.3M which was more than the previous year but what could be delivered within this budget could be impacted by inflation.

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 7th March 2023.

d) Updating IDB Byelaws

Further to minute B.250, 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.

v) 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.

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) Fens Biosphere

The Clerk will report that this project is on hold and will remain so unless and until Fenland District Council is prepared to engage with a redefined brief and vision for it.

viii) Water Resources East (WRE)

A draft WRE plan went out for public consultation and responses to it were to be received by 28th February 2022. The latest news can be found by visiting www.wre.org.uk.

ix) Red Diesel

Following extensive lobbying and the efforts of ADA, DEFRA and Treasury have softened their stance on the potential loss of access to red diesel use by IDBs. Going forward then as long as the work undertaken by the IDB can be shown to have some agricultural benefit then red diesel use can continue. The exception will be construction works and works where the sole beneficiary is an urban area.

9. Consulting Engineers’ Report, including planning and consenting matters

To consider the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

(Enc 1)

10. New Culvert Installation

Further to minute B.318, the Clerk to report.

11. Robbs Chase/Cottons Corner, Outwell

The Clerk/Chairman to report.

12. Capital Improvement Programme

To review and approve the Board’s future capital improvement programme.

(Copy page 30)

13. District Officer’s Report

To consider the Report of the District Officer.

14. Conservation Officer’s Newsletter and BAP Report

The Clerk to refer to the Conservation Officer’s newsletter, previously circulated to Members, and to consider the most recent BAP Report.

(Copy pages 31-41)

15. District Officer's Fee

To give consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2022/2023.

16. State-aided Schemes

To consider whether to undertake further State-aided Schemes and whether any future proposals should be included in the forward capital forecasts provided to the Environment Agency.

17. Environment Agency – Precept

The Clerk will report 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 for 2021/2022 was £6,463.

18. Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

The Clerk will report that ADA has increased subscriptions by 1% for 2022, from £565 to £571.

19. Health and Safety

Further to minute B.298, the Vice Chairman will refer to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their visit to the District on the 9th November 2021.

(Copy pages 42-46)

20. Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2020/2021

a) To consider the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2021.

(Copy pages 47-51)

b) To consider the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2021.

(Copy pages 52-60)

21. Defra IDB1 Returns

The Clerk will refer to the completed IDB1 form for 2020/2021.

(Copy pages 61-70)

22. Budgeting

The Clerk to refer to the budget update reviewed by the Chairman, with comparison to year end out-turn added, and any actions taken.

(Copy page 71)

23. Review of Internal Controls

a) To consider the system of Internal Controls.

b) To consider the appointment of the Internal Auditor and the proposed Audit Strategy and Audit Plan for 2022-2025.

24. Risk Management Assessment

a) To give consideration to the Board's Risk Management Policy.

25. Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk to refer 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.

26. Annual Governance Statement – 2021/2022

To review and complete the Annual Governance Statement.

(Copy page 72)

27. Payments 2021/2022

The Clerk to report on payments made during the financial year 2020/2021.

(Copy page 73)

28. Annual Accounts of the Board - 2021/2022

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2022 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations.

(Copy pages 74-78)

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

To consider estimates of revenue expenditure and levy and rate requirements in respect of the financial year 2022/2023.

(Copy pages 79-80)

30. Date of next Meeting

To agree the date for the Meeting of the Board in 2023.

31. Any other business

Rules made by the Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board with the approval of the Secretary of State under paragraph 3(1) of the Second Schedule to the Land Drainage Act, 1991. The relevant statutory provisions governing the proceedings of an Internal Drainage Board are set out in the Annex to these Rules for reference purposes

Regulations as to Proceedings

1. Meetings of the Board, for which 14 days notice will be given, will be open to the public and press who will on the invitation of the Chairman be able to speak at the meeting. The Board can name a resolution to exclude the public and/or press from a meeting or part thereof:-

   a) The Board will hold an Annual Public Meeting.

   b) The Board will hold a meeting at which the drainage rate and special levies will be set to enable the latter to be served on the special levy council by no later than the 15th February in respect to the following financial year.

   c) In the event of the need for an emergency meeting the notice will be waived.

   d) The Board will hold a meeting following an election of members of the board at which the election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman will be made.

2. For each meeting, other than for one arranged as an emergency meeting, members will receive an Agenda and any accompanying papers by post or other means despatched at least seven days before the meeting.

3. No business shall be transacted by the Board, other than that which appears on the Agenda, unless 75% of the members present agree to any such additional issue being discussed.

   a) A formal meeting of the Board cannot be conducted unless 5 members are present at the start of and during the meeting. If departures reduce the number below 5 then the Chairman will terminate the meeting at that point.

   b) All resolutions and proposals will be decided by a majority of votes of the members present.

   c) In the case of an equality of votes at any meeting, the Chairman for the time being of such meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

4. The Board shall meet at a place to be confirmed on the Agenda, including: in person, by remote attendance, or a combination of the two. A place where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.

   A member in remote attendance is present if they are able at that time -

   (a)to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members in attendance,

   (b)to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, been seen by any members of the public entitled to attend part or all, of the meeting.

5. The Board shall, as soon as they conveniently can, appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for a period not exceeding three years. The term of office of such Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall continue until the first meeting of the Board after the next election following his appointment.

6. If any vacancy occurs in the office of Chairman or Vice-Chairman, the Board shall as soon as they conveniently can after the occurrence of such vacancy, choose someone of their number to fill such vacancy.

7. a) At any meeting of the Board the Chairman, if present, shall preside.

   b) If the Chairman is absent from a meeting of the Board, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside.

   c) If at any meeting of the Board both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are not present at the time the members present shall choose someone of their number to be Chairman of such meeting.

8. The Board shall cause Minutes to be made of all meetings and recorded in an appropriate form:-

   a) of all appointments of Officers made by the Board

   b) of the names of the members present at each meeting of the Board and Committees or Sub-Committees of the Board

   c) of all orders made by the Board and Committees or Sub-Committees of the Board, and

   d) of all resolutions and proceedings of meetings of the Board and of Committees or Sub-Committees of the Board.

   The Board will approve, with or without amendment, the minutes of the preceding meeting and these will be duly signed by the Chairman together with any financial statements presented at that meeting.

9. All proceedings, resolutions and reports of every Committee or Sub-Committee intended to be laid before the Board shall be circulated among the members of the Board at least seven days before the meeting of the Board at which the same are to be submitted.

Committees or Sub-Committees

10. The Board may appoint such Committees or Sub-Committees as they think fit but all acts of any Committee or Sub-Committee shall be subject to the approval of the Board unless the Board has delegated its powers to that Committee or Sub-Committee to deal with a specific issue.

11. A Committee or Sub-Committee may elect a Chairman of their meetings. If no such Chairman is elected, or if he is not present, the members present shall choose someone of their number to be Chairman of such meeting.

12. A Committee or Sub-Committee may meet and adjourn as they think proper. Proposals at any meeting shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present. In case of any equal division of votes the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

13. Regulations 8 and 9 shall apply to minutes of Committees and Sub-Committees.

Standing Orders
Order of Debate

14. Every proposal or amendment, other than a proposal for the approval of a Committee or Sub-Committee, shall be proposed and seconded and shall, if required, be submitted to the Chairman who shall read it out before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.

15. The Chairman will invite members to speak on the subject under discussion.

16. Members must declare where they have an interest in a matter to be discussed, the Chairman then deciding what if any part the member can take in any ensuing discussion and whether the member can vote.

17. A proposal or amendment once made shall not be withdrawn without the consent of the Board.

18. Every amendment shall be relevant to the proposal to which it is applied.

19. Whenever an amendment upon an original resolution has been proposed and seconded, no second or subsequent amendment shall be moved until the first amendment shall have been dealt with but notice of any number of amendments may be given.

20. If an amendment is rejected then other amendments may be proposed on the original resolution or proposal.

21. If an amendment is carried the proposal as amended shall take the place of the original proposal and shall become the question upon which any further amendment may be moved.

22. No proposal to rescind any resolution which has been passed within the preceding six months, nor any proposal to the same effect as any proposal which has been negatived within the preceding six months shall be in order unless: (a) notice thereof has been given and specified in the Agenda and (b) the notice bears, in addition to the name of the member who proposed the resolution, the names of two other members; and when such resolution or proposal has been disposed of by the Board, it shall not be competent for any member to propose a similar proposal within a further period of six months.

23. Order 22 shall not apply to proposals which are moved by the Chairman or other members of the Committee or Sub-Committee in pursuance of the report of the Committee.

Common Seal

24. The Common Seal of the Board shall be kept in some safe place. All deeds and other documents to which the Common Seal of the Board shall require to be affixed shall be sealed in pursuance of the Board, and in the presence of both the Chairman and the Clerk of the Board.

25. Copies of all sealed documents must be retained.

Suspension of Standing Orders

26. Any one or more of the standing orders, in any case of urgency or upon resolution or proposal made on a notice duly given, may be suspended at any meeting, so far as regards any business at such meeting, provided that 75% of the members of the Board present and voting are in agreement.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS REGARDING THE PROCEEDINGS OF AN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF SCHEDULE 2 TO THE LAND DRAINAGE ACT, 1991.

Proceedings of internal drainage board

3. (1) An internal drainage board may, with the approval of the relevant Minister, make rules–

(a) for regulating the proceedings of the board, including quorum, place of meetings and notices to be given of meetings;

(b) with respect to the appointment of a chairman and a vice-chairman;

(c) for enabling the board to constitute committees; and

(d) for authorising the delegation to committees of any of the powers of the board and for regulating the proceedings of committees, including quorum, place of meetings and notices to be given of meetings.

(2) The first meeting of an internal drainage board shall be held on such day and at such time and place as may be fixed by the relevant Minister; and the relevant Minister shall cause notice of the meeting to be sent by post to each member of the board not less than fourteen days before the appointed day.

(3) Any member of an internal drainage board who is interested in any company with which the board has, or proposes to make, any contract shall–

(a) disclose to the board the fact and nature of his interest; and

(b) take no part in any deliberation or decision of the board relating to such contract;

and such disclosure shall be forthwith recorded in the minutes of the board.

(4) A minute of the proceedings of a meeting of an internal drainage board, or of a committee of such a board, purporting to be signed at that or the next ensuing meeting by a person describing himself as, or appearing to be, the chairman of the meeting to the proceedings of which the minute relates–

(a) shall be evidence of the proceedings; and

(b) shall be received in evidence without further proof.

(5) Until the contrary is proved–

(a) every meeting in respect of the proceedings of which a minute has been so signed shall be deemed to have been duly convened and held;

(b) all the proceedings had at any such meeting shall be deemed to have been duly had; and

(c) where the proceedings at any such meeting are the proceedings of a committee, the committee shall be deemed to have been duly constituted and to have had power to deal with the matters referred to in the minute.

(6) The proceedings of an internal drainage board shall not be invalidated by any vacancy in the membership of the board or by any defect in the appointment or qualification of any member of the board.

The Common Seal of the
Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board
was affixed in the presence of:-

Chairman

Clerk

NEEDHAM AND LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Tuesday the 20th April 2021

PRESENT

J F Martin Esq (Chairman)	C N T Rose Esq
J H Fenn Esq (Vice Chairman)	M Scott Esq
D J W Boyce Esq	W Sutton Esq
C J Crofts Esq	P M Tegerdine Esq
C F Hartley Esq	P W West Esq

The Clerk and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance. Mr N Harrison attended as a member of the public.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Harrison, M E Fenn and J Scott.

B.312 Declarations of Interest

The Clerk 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.

Mr Hartley and Councillor Sutton declared an interest (as a Member of the Middle Level Board) and Mr J Fenn declared an interest (as an employee of the Middle Level Commissioners) in matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners.

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

Mr West declared an interest in the planning application (MLC Ref No. 376) received for himself.

B.313 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on the 21st April 2020 and the 9th February 2021 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.314 Matters Arising

Councillor Boyce apologised for not attending the previous meeting but advised that this had been due to the death of his father which occurred several days before the meeting.

B.315 Land Drainage Act 1991
Board Membership

The Clerk reported that Fenland District Council have re-appointed Councillor W Sutton to be a Member of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

B.316 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

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

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

Planning and Consenting

One of the agreed actions from this 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.

That a sixth Chair's Meeting was held virtually on the 26th November 2020.

Topics discussed included the Middle Level Commissioners' Chief Executive giving an update on COVID-19 actions and responses, the change of MLC Chairman from Marc Heading to Jonathan Brown, updates on the Technical Services Department review (which aims to address the delays in responding to planning and consenting matters) and an update on the work of WRE. He also advised that Defra had commented positively on the Good Governance Guide published by ADA and that on the back of this feedback ADA were currently working on an Environmental Good Governance Guide. It was also noted at this meeting that Agricultural and Environmental Bills were passing through Parliament, the later including clauses benefiting IDBs, allowing them to expand their boundaries or for entirely new IDBs to be created, which was welcomed by the Chairmen as a positive step forward. Paul Burrows spoke on the work of the Environment Agency covering topics such as carbon baselining, national strategies, the tactical plans (which are securing much needed grant allocation for the area) and the need to continue to grow partnership working. He also spoke for Brian Stewart, the RFCC Chairman, who unfortunately was suffering from a poor broadband connection. On behalf of Brian, he advised that following the re-shaping of the local RFCC, there were two extra EA nominated positions available and that in this respect he wanted to propose that an Ex-officio seat be created for the incumbent Chair of the Great Ouse branch of ADA. This is likely to be Marc Heading who is expected to take over from Harry Raby in the spring. The new post will inject a direct link to farming which is of course the major business sector covered by this RFCC. The meeting finally turned to the future amalgamation of IDBs which it was generally agreed are likely to increase over time as succession planning has to be addressed.

ii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 83rd Annual Conference of the Association was held virtually on Wednesday the 11th November 2020.

The conference this year was held in two distinct and separate parts, with the morning session comprising of key speakers and questions and the afternoon the AGM.

Key speakers in the morning were;

David Cooper, Deputy Director for Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Policy (Defra) – who first thanked the IDBs for the work they do and then endorsed the efforts being made to improve governance through the publication of the 'Good Governance Guide' and the work in hand on 'Good Environmental Governance'. He then went on to speak about the ambitious aims of government, the record investment agreed by treasury for the next six year funding cycle and the Agriculture Bill that if passed will facilitate the creation of new IDBs and allow existing IDBs to expand districts. He finished by stating that the key was to educate people and to work together to share good practice.

Chris Stoate, Head of Research (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust) – who spoke about the Allerton Project which was a carefully implemented scheme to directly measure the impacts of controlling headwaters using measures such as leaky dams. This work consisted of schemes on similar upland sub-catchments where a direct comparison could be made between interventions and non-interventions. The results were very promising with downstream peak flows being reduced by around a quarter where the most effective measures were installed. Chris accepted that there were challenges surrounding maintenance and that the choice of natural materials and design was key. He also noted that in the locations chosen any failed leaky dam materials would get caught on stream bends well before any risk of being washed downstream into urban areas.

Toby Willson, Executive Director of Operations (Environment Agency) – who is soon to leave the EA reflected on the target to be carbon neutral in less than a decade and in doing this noted that the equivalent carbon release linked to pumping alone from the February event this year was equivalent to that of 1200 houses. He went on to point out that the onus in on us to act now and that if we fail to do so it will be our children and grandchildren who will face the consequences. He acknowledged the hugely influential role of ADA's voice in the development of national strategies and the work being done in partnership with IDBs to be more resilient. He finished by setting out three challenges.

1) To develop true partnerships where all organisations are working unified towards the same goals.

2) To achieve net zero carbon emissions, asking specifically what the IDBs were doing towards this?

3) To develop and implement strategies to attract young people into the industry.

Questions were taken from the floor and were wide ranging from asking why there was so little information being shared on the development of ELMs to why it was necessary in one location for the EA to undertake an environmental check before removing a dead tree from across a watercourse.

A more formal question and answer session ended the morning, the panel being made up from, Julia Beeden from Cambridgeshire County Council, Emily Clarke from Anglian Water, John Curtin from Environment Agency, David Jenkins from Wessex RFCC, Innes Thompson from ADA and David Thomas from the Middle Level Commissioners. When asked a question David Thomas, your Clerk, took the opportunity to advise of the importance and value of the work being undertaken by WRE and also to point out to Toby Wilson that he absolutely agreed with the sentiments of partnership working and also the key aims of the EA but noted that true partnership working was a two way street and that there were still areas of policy development that ADA were not being involved with sufficiently. Toby accepted that the EA were not perfect and that more work needed to be done on this.

The AGM in the afternoon followed the usual format of recording appointments and electing office holders. It was noted that Robert Caudwell would be coming to the end of the normal Chair's term of office and that this would be reviewed next year. The formalities over a lively question and answer session followed which seemed to work very well and may influence how future conferences are arranged.

b) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held in London on Wednesday the 10th November 2021.

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) Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association was held virtually on Tuesday the 2nd March 2021.

Matters covered were that there was a change in Chairman with Harry Raby stepping down and Marc Heading taking his place. Councillor Doug McMurdo takes on the role of Vice Chairman. This maintains the balance of having upland and lowland members in key roles and also balances council and agricultural ratepayers' interests. John Heading was appointed for another three years on the ADA Board as branch representative. Robert Caudwell gave on update on ADA matters focusing in on progress of the agriculture bill through parliament and the lowland peat initiative which he considers must not negatively impact on livelihoods and the need to produce food for the nation. Next to speak was Brian Stewart who was seeking support for his initiative to create an Ex-Officio post on the FRCC for the sitting Chairman of the Great Ouse branch of ADA (EA nominated post). This was supported unanimously and Marc Heading will take up this new role with immediate effect.

Claire Jouvray and Paul Burrows gave updates on the revenue funding position, which was quite healthy with sources of money found to deliver what had been targeted and on the long-term strategy for the area including the tactical plans which are set to make access to grant in aid smoother than it might otherwise be. A warning was raised that funding may get squeezed as time passes and the financial impact of COVID-19 gets addressed.

Approximately 30 people attended this virtual meeting, which should return to its normal format at Prickwillow Hall next year.

That the date of the next meeting is 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.

ADA's response and the full EFRA report can be found via the following link; https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmenvfru/170/170.pdf

iii) Capital Funding Projects

That at the spring 2020 budget it was announced by Government that they would provide the Environment Agency with a settlement of £5.2billion for capital funding projects over the next 6 years, from April 2021 to March 2027, to better protect 336,000 properties. This includes both homes and non-residential properties and presents a significant increase over the current 6-year programme. It is noted that the definition of non-residential properties includes shops, businesses, industrial sites, schools, hospitals, etc. and the new arrangements also facilitate funded improvements to habitat and the environment.

In response to this the Environment Agency have issued new partnership funding rules which go alongside this increased funding programme. The new rules are considered critical to delivering the called for better protection to the target of 336,000 properties, but will also allow:

- updated payments which will now account for inflation and be based on new evidence on the overall impacts of flooding, such as mental health

- increased payments for flood protection schemes which also create a range of environmental benefits

- more funding for flood protection schemes which also protect properties that will later become at risk of flooding due to climate change
- a new risk category which will enable schemes that prevent surface water flooding to qualify for more funding

iv) What is Good Governance

That Defra have provided a summary of “What is Good Governance?”:-

- Good governance is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It’s not about making ‘correct’ decisions, but about the best possible process for making those decisions - and therefore good governance, share several characteristics. All have a positive effect on various aspects of Boards including consultation policies and practices, meeting procedures, service quality protocols, officers’ conduct, role clarification and good working relationships.

- Boards should implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results for their community – and try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner. A community’s wellbeing results from all of its members feeling their interests have been considered by Boards in the decision-making process. This means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunities to participate in the process.
- People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made – what information, advice and consultation Boards considered, and which legislative requirements (when relevant) Boards followed. This means that decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law and are within the powers of the Acts.
- Anyone affected by or interested in a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the process for making that decision. This can happen in several ways – community members may be provided with information, asked for their opinion, given the opportunity to make recommendations or, in some cases, be part of the actual decision-making process.
- Accountability is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Boards have an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents.

v) Fens Biosphere

Further to minute B.287, the Clerk referred to the leaflet from Cambridgeshire Acre.

vi) Land Registry

That whilst it is a legal requirement for land occupiers to notify the Board of any change of occupation, including releasing contact details for the new occupiers, on many occasions this does not occur and time is spent trying to determine who the new occupier is. When the normal avenues fail to deliver any meaningful information we now use our Land Registry account to gain details of the current land owner. The costs of making an application via this method are small (currently £6) but obviously this will show up on the Board accounts, hence the need to draw this new way of working to the Boards attention.

vii) National Drainage Show & Floodex 2021

That the National Drainage Show & Floodex 2021 will be held at ExCel, London on the 9th and 10th November 2021.

B.317 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

Mr Lakey noted the reference to the health and safety works referred to in the Cope Safety Management report. The Clerk advised that this was to be covered in the item on health and safety, but saw no reason why it could not be discussed at this point. Mr Lakey advised that the Cope Safety Management report had condemned the screen located at point 2 and the access to it. The Clerk noted that the options appeared to be repair/replace them or remove them.

The Vice Chairman advised that the structure was unsafe so the Board needed to agree an action plan. He also advised that the weedscreen was necessary so its removal would not be in the Board's interest. He estimated that the cost of replacing the screen and access structure would be around £5,000.00 and suggested that the works could be funded from balances. He outlined the importance of the syphon linked with the screen and gave details on the history of the site and that around 15 years ago a walkway was installed to provide safer access. However, this work was not done to a high standard and had over time deteriorated and was now dangerous. The Chairman and Councillor Boyce supported a proposal to remedy the situation.

RESOLVED

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

ii) Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

a) That the recommendations contained in the Report be approved.

b) That Harrison Agricultural Contractors Ltd and B J Button be requested to carry out the Board's drain maintenance for the coming year.

iii) That the weedscreen and walkway be replaced this year using money taken from balances and that to deliver this quotations should be sought. The Vice Chairman to obtain quotations and the Chairman and Mr M Scott to review the quotations and make a final decision.

(NB) - Mr West declared an interest in the planning application (MLC Ref No. 376).

B.318 New Culvert Installation

Further to minute B.288(iii) and B.311, the Clerk referred to the notes of the site meeting held on Tuesday the 21st July 2020 and the minutes of the virtual meeting held on the 9th February 2021.

The Clerk gave an update on the position in relation to the scheme. He noted that the Board had passed a policy that (in special circumstances) they could award a contract of the value of this scheme without the normal three plus quotations being returned. In this instance although more than three tenderers were invited to quote only two were returned. The good news was that one of the tenders was below the estimate. Whilst the Board had resolved to go ahead with the scheme if it was within the budget estimate the issue currently was that the grant had not yet been approved, hence the Board were not in a position to place an order. The other concern was that the road closure required had a long lead in time and, as the Vice Chairman pointed out, so did the pipe supply. The Clerk outlined what he considered the Board's options were assuming they wished to progress with the scheme.

1) Await grant in aid approval with the risk that the delay to the project might put delivery this summer in jeopardy.

2) Apply for loan sanction to cover just the culvert at point 1. Then approach the contractor to see if he was willing to go forward with part of the contract (point 1 culvert) with the expectation that the point 2 culvert works would also go ahead when and if grant was confirmed.

3) Apply for loan sanction in the sum of £230,000.00 which leaving all options open. This option having the merit that once the loan is approved the Board is not obliged to drawn down any or all of the loan amount.

The general feeling of members was that the point 1 culvert must be progressed. Also, if the scheme was not to receive any grant-in-aid then consideration should be given to deferring replacement of the culvert at point 2. The rationale of this being that unlike the culvert at point 1 in an emergency the culvert at point 2 could be ripped out relatively quickly, without the major impact of it being under an adopted highway.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

i) That an amount not exceeding £230,000 be borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board; repayable over a maximum period of 30 years.

ii) That the Chairman and Vice Chairman meet with the contractor to discuss the options and that they be delegated to make the final decision on progressing with replacements of culverts at points 1 and 2 or just at point 1 if grant is not approved.

iii) That if grant is approved both culverts shall be replaced.

<u>B.319 Capital Improvement Programme</u>

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

Members noted that the £10,000.00 refers to the old Laddus outfall. The Clerk noted the £10,000.000 spend was not at this stage committed to but did suggest the Board's current intent.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

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

B.320 District Officer’s Report

In the District Officer’s absence, the Vice Chairman advised that it had been a challenging year with quite a lot of weed to clear which was done using contractors. Going forward, it was intended that a joint inspection be carried out. There are a number of drains which have not been flailed for a number of years and it is considered they will benefit from some attention. It was also noted that the District Officer had started to let water into the system and hence levels were close to summer retention levels.

RESOLVED

That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved and that the Officer be thanked for his services over the preceding year.

B.321 Conservation Officer’s Newsletter and BAP Report

The Clerk referred to the Conservation Officer’s newsletter, dated December 2020, previously circulated to members.

The Clerk advised that ADA has issued updated guidance on BAPs.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

B.322 District Officer’s Fee

The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2021/2022.

The Vice Chairman advised that he believed

Councillor Boyce asked if there was a standard rate for District Officers. The Clerk advised that there was not.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £1,699.00 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2021/2022.

B.323 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.

It was noted that the Board’s only major scheme in the short/medium term was the replacement of the culverts at points 1 and 2.

RESOLVED

That no further proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.324 Environment Agency – Precepts

The Clerk reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2021/2022 in the sum of £6,463.00 (the precept for 2020/2021 being £6,463.00).

B.325 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

The Clerk reported that he had been advised that subscriptions for 2021 will remain unchanged at £565.

RESOLVED

That the requested ADA subscription for 2021 be paid.

B.326 Determination of annual value for rating purposes

The Board considered the recommendations for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

i) That the determination 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 appeal against the determination.

B.327 Rate arrears

Consideration was given to writing off rate arrears amounting to £9.76.

RESOLVED

That the arrears be written off.

B.328 Health and Safety

The Vice Chairman referred to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their visit to the District on the 16th February 2021 and to the discussions earlier in the meeting.

B.329 Special Circumstance Policy on Tendering

The Clerk referred to the policy that had been produced and advised members that there have been issues for some IDBs during the COVID-19 pandemic in respect to meeting their normal policy on numbers of valid tenders or quotations. It is intended that this policy will only apply in special conditions such as these and that to invoke the policy the Chairman will need to record what the special circumstance is before it can be used.

The Clerk reported that the Board had previously formally adopted this policy.

B.330 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2019/2020

a) The Board considered the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2020.

b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ending on the 31st March 2020.

B.331 Defra IDB1 Returns

The Clerk referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2019/2020 which the Board noted and approved.

The Clerk noted that Defra are now (unlike in the past) looking at and reporting on the data collected in the IDB1 forms.

B.332 Budgeting

The Clerk referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2021.

B.333 Review of Internal Controls and appointment of Internal Auditor.

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

The Clerk advised that their Internal Auditor, Whiting & Partners, were in the third year of a three year contract and that normally we would be tendering for this work at this stage. However, with COVID-19 the Middle Level Commissioners had approached Whiting & Partners and asked if they would be prepared to continue into a fourth year on the same terms. They had agreed. It was also being proposed that going forward auditors be invited to tender for a five-year term, the principle being that this gave both parties certainty over a longer period. For the Boards this meant that the investment in time in getting a new auditor up to speed represented better value.

RESOLVED

To continue with Whiting & Partners for a further year and to support the proposal for a five year contract to be tendered thereafter.

B.334 Risk Management Assessment

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with their current Risk Management Policy.

The Chairman intervened that he had noted that a gas pipeline was crossing the IDB district. Mr Lakey advised that this was covered on page 53 of the Consulting Engineer's report. It was noted that where pipelines crossed IDB maintained drains the clearance below bed level should be 5 metres and under all other drains this was to be a minimum of 2 metres. The Clerk advised that the Middle Level Commissioners' Senior Engineer, Mr Convine, was dealing with this matter and that the reasoning for the greater depth for IDB watercourses was to provide opportunity to improve and if necessary pile to secure bank toes over the section crossing the pipeline. Mr Lakey gave details of how the pipelines were installed under watercourse utilising no-dig boring techniques.

B.335 Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk 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.336 Annual Governance Statement – 2020/2021

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending on the 31st March 2021.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2021.

B.337 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £42,322.23 which had been made during the financial year 2020/2021.

(NB) – Mr Hartley and Councillor Sutton declared interests (as a Member of the Middle Level Board) and Mr J Fenn (as an employee of the Middle Level Commissioners) in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners.

B.338 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2020/2021

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2021 as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2021.

B.339 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2021/2022

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2021/2022 and were informed by the Clerk that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 42.13% and 57.87%.

The Clerk drew attention to the fact that the largest item on the budget was the culvert replacement scheme. The Board then considered the rate. It was noted by Councillor Sutton that the rate had been increased by 1p in the previous year to show that the Board could, and would if required, service a loan for the scheme works. Also that as at this point no grant-in-aid approval had been given, this was not the time to consider a rate reduction, although if grant was forthcoming it might be feasible to do so next year.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £47,901 be raised by drainage rates and special levy and by way of contribution from Hundred of Wisbech IDB.

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 and contribution from Hundred of Wisbech IDB are £20,128, £27,643 and £130.00 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 8.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) a) That a Special levy of £23,718 be made and issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

b) That a Special levy of £3,925 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

c) That a contribution of £130.00 be made by Hundred of Wisbech IDB in respect of the Friday Bridge outfall.

vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).

vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

(NB) – Councillor Rose declared an interest as a member of the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

B.340 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.341 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday the 19th April 2022.

B.342 Proposed development in Outwell

Councillor Boyce expressed concern over the proposed development at the back of M&B distributors in Outwell and invited comment from other members. The Vice Chairman confirmed that he shared Councillor Boyce's concerns as this is a low wet area which developers will struggle to drain. Councillor Boyce asked the Middle Level Commissioners to do everything they could to draw attention to the fact that trying to drain this area will not work. The Vice Chairman agreed but noted that this seemed to be the area attracting the most interest from developers. The Clerk pointed out that the Middle Level Commissioners and IDBs were not statutory consultees but that planning authorities could give weight to their comments as local experts on drainage in the area. He promised that he would ensure that the concerns raised were made via representation to the planners but could not promise that this would stop approval being given and the development proceeding. A question was asked if the IDB had to take the flow from the development. The Clerk advised that he considered that if the flow already discharged from the area then yes. He also noted that in general terms if you invested enough money into a solution then usually a site could be drained, but of course this might have to be a pumped arrangement which for surface water was less than ideal.

Bexwell Hall
Bexwell
Norfolk
PE38 9LZ
15/11/2021

Dear James,

Following my recent standing down from The Middle Level I am afraid I have to do the same with the Needham & Laddus Drainage Board. As I explained at that meeting I have found it increasingly difficult to hear clearly enough to follow or contribute to the meetings adequately and I even struggled with the zoom meetings with the volume at maximum. I have tried with little success with a variety of hearing aids and have to accept that this is not going to improve in the future.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved with he Needham & Laddus Drainage Board, I wish the board all the success in the future. I was pleased how well the Thurlands Drove improvements coped with last years rain event at Christmas and hope you didn't receive too many complaints. I am available of course if there are any future local issues to assist if they require my historical recollection.

Yours sincerely,

Needham & Laddus Internal Drainage Board

Capital Improvement Programme (2022/2023)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Structures	Gravity outfall refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
	Control structure refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
	Refurbish & renew structures along Needham outfall drain	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	200.0	200.0
Pumping	Provision of pumping facilities in District	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drainage Channels	Channel Improvement works	0	0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	90.0
	Structure at Point 2	0	10	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Gravity outfall (Point 1) & culvert at Point 2	76.8	142	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	218.8
		76.8	**152**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**220**	**539**

Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board

Biodiversity Action Plan Report 2021-22

Environment Act (2021) and note on 2021-22 BAP report

The new Environment Act recognises the key roles IDBs play in nature conservation (Photo: PB)

The Environment Act (2021) passed into UK law in November 2021 with the aim of protecting and enhancing our environment for future generations. The Act includes bold aims to ‘halt the decline in species by 2030’, improve air quality, natural habitats and how look at how resources may be better used. For Internal Drainage Boards ADA describes the Act as bringing ‘impacts and opportunities’ which recognise the important role IDBs have to play in some of these targets. Areas of particular interest to IDBs are:

- Biodiversity Assessment and Reporting
- Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Sites Strategies
- An Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to uphold environmental law

Following the note in the 2020-21 report, work is underway to update IDB Biodiversity Action Plans in line with the newly available ADA guidelines; Boards will be notified when this is ready. As part of this process voluntary submissions for an IDB ‘Biometrics survey’ were issued by ADA in autumn 2021 and were submitted on behalf of the Board by the Conservation Officer. This survey aims to gather data relevant to key targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan with a view to putting IDBs ‘on the front foot’ with regards future Biodiversity reporting and assessment, like that laid out in the Environment Act above.

The Conservation Officer is happy to field any questions on the subject and will continue to work with Boards on existing and future plans.

<u>Needham and Laddus IDB Report Summary</u>

Invasive Species

Azolla present on many drains in the district – care should be taken if moving machinery between sites and cleaned off if contact suspected.

Mink raft in place along the Old River Nene bordering the district caught 2 mink in the reporting period. Reports of the species are, as ever, very important.

Mitten crabs reported from Marmont Priory Lock in March 2022. This species is a considerable threat and should not be put back in the water if recovered. Contact the CO if it is observed in Board drains.

Water Voles

As always, Boards are reminded to contact the Conservation Officer *before* any bank reprofiling or other works that may impact water voles take place. <u>If unsure, please contact the Conservation Officer regardless.</u>

A detailed survey of drain 10-8 took place in March 2022 and found good density of water voles. Similarly, signs were found in many sites in the district. Species should be considered widespread when planning works.

Tree Planting

Sites sought within IDB districts – contact Conservation Officer with any suggestions.

Training

No training opportunities possible in 2021 due to Covid-19 guidelines. New sessions are planned in 2022 covering two important areas of our work; it is hoped that IDBs will be able to use the opportunities to refresh their knowledge on the subjects and/or enhance the skills of contractors/staff who may not have received such training before.

~~Tuesday 22nd March 2022: Non-native species workshop. Venue: Oliver Cromwell Hotel, March. 10-1pm.~~

The culmination of our Floating Pennywort awareness project, this training morning will provide an up-to-date summary of invasive species, both flora and fauna, to look out for in the Middle Level. Guest speakers: Cliff Carson and Mike Foley. *This event has passed but the CO is happy to discuss or share presentations from it with Boards upon request.*

May/June date TBC: Water voles - ecology, legislation and mitigation: a guide for IDBs. Venue: Middle Level Offices, March (followed by visit to local drain)

This training will be led by Julia Massey CEnv MCIEEM a Principal Ecologist with many years of experience working with water voles in the fens. It will cover the key elements of the species' ecology and how it relates to the work of IDBs.

Peter Beckenham, Conservation Officer for Middle Level Commissioners

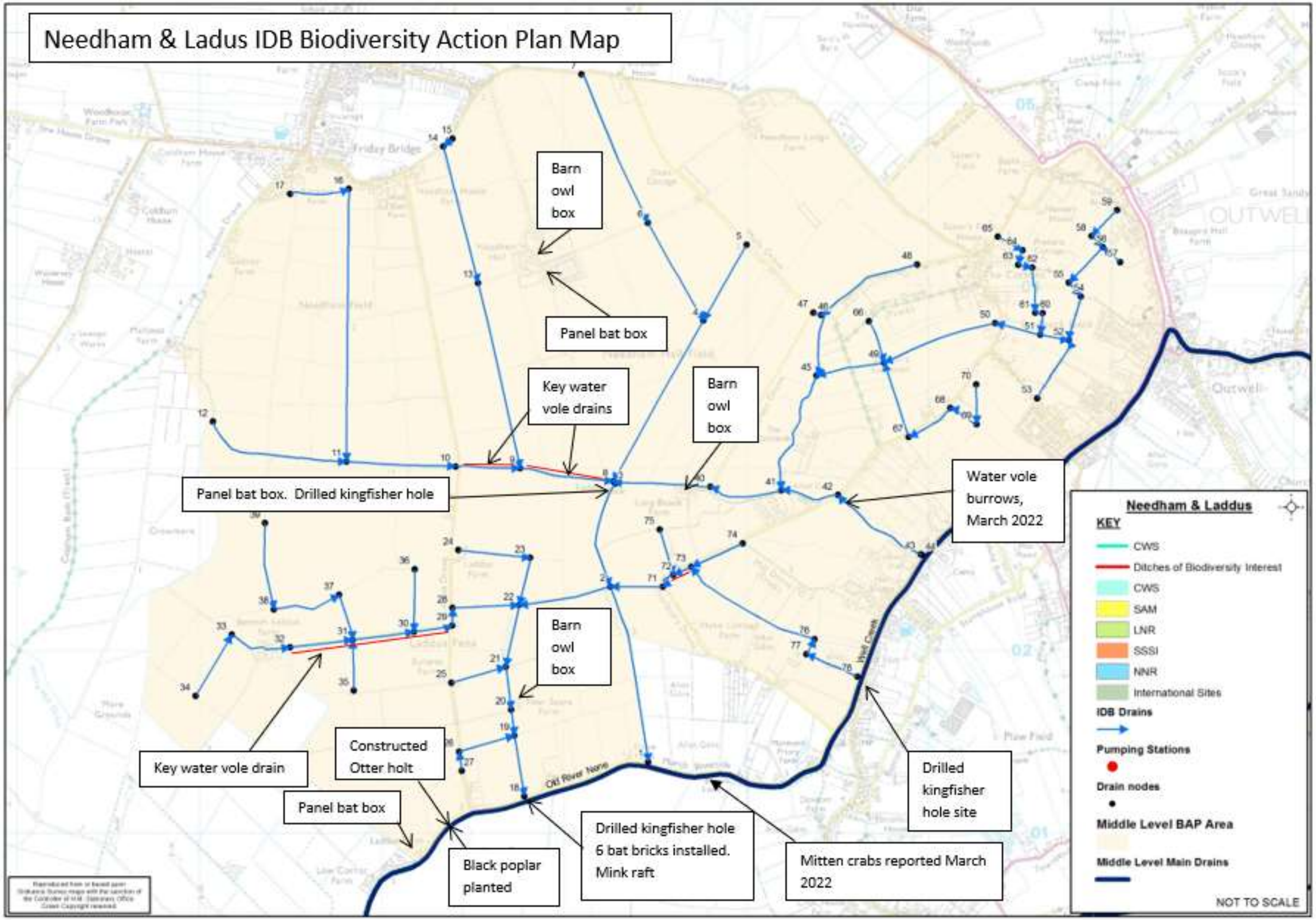
Peter.beckenham@middlelevel.gov.uk

07765 597775

Clockwise from top left:

Water vole 'lawn' around a burrow half way up a bank – close views show the vegetation chewed in the immediate vicinity of the burrow; Frogspawn in an IDB drain – another species that benefits from sensitive management and in-channel growth; Margins in place on drains is a characteristic of the modern IDB

Needham and Laddus IDB Map 2021-22



Drainage Ditch Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Manage ditches for biodiversity as well as for drainage	1.1	Establish and maintain a management plan for routine IDB operations incorporating key biodiversity features	Conservation Officer	2015	Plan finalised and followed each year	*A map-based is attached.*
		1.2	Look for opportunities to provide natural erosion protection such as marginal plant ledges when re-profiling ditches	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	If re-profiling is carried out, opportunities identified	*No re-profiling carried out during the period.*
		1.3	Provide natural erosion protection as in 1.2 if opportunities available	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	Length of ditch with ledge / natural vegetation revetment	*No opportunities available.*
2	Identify ditches of conservation interest and manage appropriately	2.2	Ensure appropriate management of ditches for priority species	Conservation Officer, Plantlife, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Specified in management plan	*Ditches of interest identified on map.*
3	Support the Conservation Officer in working with landowners to benefit wildlife in the district	3.1	Refer private landowners to the Conservation Officer for advice on creating field margin buffer zones and wildlife-friendly ditch management	Conservation Officer, Natural England, Wildlife Trust, FWAG	Ongoing	Number of contacts received and passed to Conservation Officer	*No enquiries were received during the period*
4	Control invasive species	4.1	Report any sightings of non-native invasive species immediately to the Conservation Officer and control as appropriate	Conservation Officer, Environment Agency, Plantlife, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Reports to Conservation Officer	*See summary.*

Reedbed Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Identify, assess and map any areas of reedbed over 0.5ha in size	1.1	Pass details of any known areas to Conservation Officer	Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Environment Agency	2013	Review of reedbed areas carried out	*No areas of reedbed over 0.5ha identified. The District has a good number of drains with significant reed margins.*
2	Support appropriate reedbed creation	2.2	Manage the District adopted drains, where possible, to assist private landowners who wish to create areas of reedbed on their own land	Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency	Ongoing	Number of landowners assisted	*No requests received.*
3	Take conservation value of reedbed into account when planning and carrying out ditch and river maintenance	3.2	Undertake work outside the bird breeding season (7th April – 15th July). Where this is not possible take conservation advice and carry out breeding bird surveys prior to works.	Conservation Officer, Wildlife Trust, RSPB	Ongoing	Reeds not cut during bird nesting season	*Management work was not carried out during the bird nesting period.*

Open Water Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Promote the creation of ponds, lakes and reservoirs in appropriate areas	1.1	Consider pond creation as mitigation when a ditch has to be filled in or culverted	Local authorities, Amphibian & Reptile Conservation, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Number of ponds created	*None*
		1.2	Support creation of flood storage areas and reservoirs	Environment Agency, Natural England, Wildlife Trust, RSPB	Ongoing	Number of projects involved with	*No flood storage areas or reservoir projects arose during the period*
		1.3	Assist private landowners with advice, information or contacts as necessary	Amphibian & Reptile Conservation, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Number of landowners assisted	*None*
2	Look for opportunities to create open water habitat when managing ditches	2.1	Create a pool at an appropriate ditch junction when re-profiling (see the Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual, technique CL3)	Conservation Officer	2010	One pool successfully created	*No opportunities for this method arose.*

Water Vole Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Manage ditches according to the law and to best practice for water vole	1.1	Assume water voles are present when carrying out works and follow the ADA water vole mitigation guide	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	Measures incorporated in management plans	*Water vole Best Practice methods were used*
		1.2	Publicise good practice for rat control near drainage ditches	Conservation Officer, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Good practice publicised	*Best Practice for rat control has been previously publicised in the Environmental Officer's Natural Level newsletter.*
2	Enhance drainage ditch habitat to benefit water vole	2.1	Look for opportunities to add a marginal shelf when re-profiling banks	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	(a) Opportunities identified (b) Measures taken	*No opportunities identified; no measures taken during the period.*
		2.2	Consider using coir roll to stabilise banks and provide marginal vegetation	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	(a) Sites considered (b) Measures taken	*No appropriate sites or opportunities arose during the period.*
3	Monitor water vole populations	3.1	Set up a survey programme to monitor water vole populations	Conservation Officer, Wildlife Trust	2010	Surveys carried out	*Conservation Officer surveys key drains annually.*
		3.2	Provide data on water vole to the relevant Biological Records Centres	Conservation Officer, CPERC, NBIS	Ongoing	Data sent via Environmental Officer annually	*Data sent to CPERC.*
4	Control mink as necessary	4.2	Carry out mink control as part of the Middle Level programme and report all sightings to the Conservation Officer	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	Number of sightings/minks caught	*Mink trap in place on Old River Nene adjacent the district.*

Otter Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Improve otter habitat	1.1	Identify and maintain existing key bushes and trees near watercourses likely to be important for otters	Conservation Officer	2012 and ongoing	Sites identified and listed in management plans	*Suitable habitat and popular sprainting sites represented on map*
2	Monitor otter populations	2.3	Ensure any dead otters are reported to the Conservation Officer	Conservation Officer, Environment Agency	Ongoing	Otters reported to Conservation Officer, if found	*No dead otters were reported but the Old River Nene remains a key waterway for the species.*
3	Reduce otter deaths related to eel and crayfish trapping and road traffic	3.1	Report incidents of suspected illegal netting, trapping or fishing to the Environment Agency Fisheries Officers and the Conservation Officer	Environment Agency, Angling Clubs & syndicates	Ongoing	Incidents reported, if discovered	*No reports or indications of illegal trapping noted. Members are encouraged to report any suspicious activity or illegal fishing to the EA or Conservation Officer.*

Bats Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Improve habitat for bats	1.1	Put up at least one bat box at an appropriate site, e.g. a pumping station	Bat Conservation Trust	2015	Number of bat boxes sited	*3 previously installed at Needham Hall Farm, Ladus Farm and node 3 headwall.*
		1.2	Pollard suitable trees to provide bat roosts		Ongoing	Number of trees pollarded	*No trees identified.*
		1.3	Identify potential sites for a bat hibernaculum, e.g. in disused buildings or tunnels	Conservation Officer, Bat Conservation Trust	As opportunities arise	Site created	*Six bat bricks were previously installed inside the brick culvert at Laddus Drain (node 1). Still in place (2021)*
2	Collect information on bat populations	2.1	Monitor bat boxes	Bat Conservation Trust	2015 onwards	Number of boxes used by bats	*Bat checks will be made when possible.*
		2.2	Pass bat box information to CPBRC and NBIS	Conservation Officer, CPBRC, NBIS	2015 onwards	Data via Conservation Officer annually	*Annually if box found to be occupied by bats.*

Kingfisher Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Improve the quality of kingfisher habitat	1.1	Provide at least 3 potential nest holes	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	Number of nest sites provided	*Four sites provided - at Laddus outfall culvert, inlet 44, inlet 78 and culvert 3.*
		1.2	Leave kingfisher fishing perches where possible (e.g. occasional branch)	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	Number of perch sites left	*There are many natural perch sites for kingfishers available*
2	Collect records of kingfisher breeding between March and July	2.1	Note sightings of potential breeding kingfisher and pass information to CPBRC and NBIS via the Environmental Officer	Conservation Officer, CPBRC, NBIS	Ongoing	Data sent via Conservatio n Officer annually	*Routinely observed on Old River Nene/Well Creek*

Barn Owl Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Improve the quality of barn owl habitat	1.1	Put up at least one barn owl nest box in a suitable location	Wildlife Conservation Partnership	2015	Number of nest boxes provided	*3 barn owl boxes previously erected at Four Score Farm, Common Farm and Needham Hall Farm.*
		1.2	Pollard suitable trees to provide natural nest sites	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	Number of trees pollarded	*Few trees suitable for pollarding are present but many nest sites exist in the district.*
2	Collect records of barn owl presence	2.1	Monitor nest boxes for use. Have occupied boxes checked for success by licensed barn owl ringers.	Wildlife Conservation Partnership	2015	(a) Number of nest boxes checked by licensed ringers (b) Number of nest boxes used	*CO to check.*
		2.2	Pass barn owl box information to CPBRC and NBIS	Conservation Officer, Wildlife Conservation Partnership, CPBRC, NBIS	2015	Data sent via Conservation Officer annually	*Annual, when box is occupied.*

Procedural Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Provide training on IDB BAP and conservation management of drainage channels for all relevant staff by 2013	1.1	Establish programme of 1-day courses for IDB staff	Conservation Officer, Wildlife Trust, Natural England	2013	Staff numbers attending	*See summary for training opportunities.*
		1.2	Establish suitable training for contractors' staff	Conservation Officer, Contractors	2013	Contractors covered	*The contractor has previously attended conservation workshops.*
2	Take biodiversity into account when planning and undertaking capital works	2.2	Consult with the Conservation Officer and choose the best possible mitigation solutions for biodiversity, e.g.fish-friendly pumps	Conservation Officer	Ongoing	Number of schemes commented on	*No schemes commented on.*

Cope
SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Site Safety Inspection Record

Needham and Laddas IDB.

Complete

Site Safety Inspection

Name of organisation:	Needham and Laddas IDB
Date of site visit	9 Nov 2021 09:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	C/O Middle Level Commissioners Middle Level Offices 85 Whittlesey Road March Cambridgeshire PE 15 0AH
Name of Advisor	Martin Clark
Time of arrival at site:	9 Nov 2021 09:00 GMT
Audit Name	Needham and Laddas IDB.

Audit

Inspection Record

An opening meeting was held with

James Martin.

Have there been any accidents since our last visit?	No

None recorded.

Have there been any new starters since our last visit?	No

None recorded.

1

It was understood that some work had commenced to replace the culvert at the the overspill point however this has stalled for several reasons and it is anticipated that work will recommence by early spring 2021.
An additional handrail has been added, it was understood that once the work to replace the culvert has been completed that the access platforms and corresponding handrails will be replaced.

Photo 1

2

It was understood that documentation sent by Middle Level Commissioners, including risk assessments and Safe Systems Of Work (SSOW) have been communicated to relevant persons.
Lone working was discussed with James and it was pleasing to note that when attending the overspill point operators ensure that a third person is aware where they are.

Photographic Risk Assessment

Signature of person informed

Signature of person informed 1

Signature of person informed

Signed on behalf of James Martin by advisor.
9 Nov 2021 13:46 GMT

Advisor's signature

Martin Clark.
9 Nov 2021 13:46 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

Nil

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments	2 From 0 to 99

Appendix

Photo 1

NEEDHAM AND LADDUS IDB
SUMMARY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

Site Safety Inspection 3rd September 2019

Ref.	Location	Risk Level	Brief Description	Action
1	Overspill point 2	L	Access for water adjustment and weed screen clearing. Hazard is damaged platform which could result in injury and/or fall into the water if it collapses. It is understood that the platform and simple weed screen may no longer be required. If this is the situation then the platform and screen should be removed. If it is still required, then the platform should be repaired or replaced.	
2	Overspill point 2	L	Access to overspill point. Hazard is fall from height into water. If platform and weed screen remains in operation (see PRA above) it is recommended that a suitable barrier is installed to reduce the risk of falling.	

SSI 09 11 21

Needham & Laddus Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2021

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 /234)

1 The Audit of accounts for the Needham & Laddus Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2021 has been completed and the accounts have been published.

2 The Annual Governance & Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of Needham & Laddus Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Needham & Laddus Internal Drainage Board
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AH

between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm on Mondays to Fridays (excluding public holidays), when any local elector may make copies of the Annual Return.

3 Copies will be provided to any local elector on payment of £2.40 for each copy of the Annual Return

Announcement made by: D C Thomas - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 17th September 2021

Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

NEEDHAM & LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2021, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2020/21 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2019/20, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2019/20 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. If the authority has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it publishes information on a website/ webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.			✓
M. The authority, during the previous year (2019-20) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2019/20 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 11/05/2021 25/05/2021 26/05/2021

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Whiting & Partners

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: M. Haydon - Whiting + Partners

Date: 03/06/2021

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

NEEDHAM & LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021, that:

	Agreed Yes	Agreed No*		'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓			prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓			made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓			has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓			during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓			considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓			arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓			responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓			disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

20/04/21

and recorded as minute reference:

B. 336

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman J.F. Martin

Clerk [illegible]

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

NEEDHAM & LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	103,934	107,523	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	39,105	47,871	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	395	436	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	35,911	44,513	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	107,523	111,317	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	113,297	127,867	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.*
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	0	0	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

	Yes	No	
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
			N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2021 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Date 8th APRIL 2021

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

20/04/21

as recorded in minute reference:

B.338

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

J. F. Martin.

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of **NEEDHAM & LADDUS IDB – DB0058**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2020/21

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

NONE

3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature: PKF Littlejohn LLP   Date: 12/09/2021

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

Whitings
Chartered Accountants LLP
The Old School House, Dartford Road
March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AE
t: 01354 652304
e: march@whitingsllp.co.uk
w: whitingsllp.co.uk

MNH/BB/MM053
08 October 2021

Messrs. D Thomas and R Hill
Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambs.
PE15 0AH

Dear Messrs. D Thomas, R. Hill, and S Ablett,

MLC administered Internal Drainage Boards - Internal Audit 2020-2021

Having completed the internal audit work for the various Internal Drainage Boards administered by the Middle Level Commissioners officers for the year ended 31 March 2021, we are pleased to provide you with the following recommendations to be considered for implementation. We have included some general points and some points which are related to specific boards.

General points

1. **Annual Return – Guidance notes**
   We note that there has been a subtle change within the guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21 from what was shown in 2019/20. Previously the guidance stated that "the authority **should** receive and note the annual internal audit report **if possible** before approving the annual governance statement and the accounts" this has been replaced by "the authority **should** receive and note the annual internal audit report before approving the annual governance statement and the accounts". As such whilst we are satisfied that all of the administered boards have previously and remain compliant in this matter, due to this not being something that the boards **must** comply with, we would strongly urge a review of the wording within any future AGAR's to ensure that, should this requirement come into force, you are able to adjust your plan of works in plenty of time. We would also request that should this take affect you contact us at your earliest convenience, so that we may tailor our own work programmes accordingly.

2. Asset Valuations and Insurances

We note that there are a number of boards which have had revaluations within the year on their pumping station assets and that these are now valued in excess of what has been included within the insurance valuations and the accounts/annual return. We appreciate that the accounts/annual return value must remain at cost/deemed cost however we would suggest that as soon as the results of these valuations come to light you seek to change the insurance valuation accordingly, we understand that in many cases these amendments are carried out at the point of annual renewal.

In some individual cases it is noted that residential properties have been revalued during the audited year, but the underlying insurance values have not been increased. We recommend that, as with pumping station assets, the insurance valuation is increased to reflect the current market value and thereby ensure that such assets are adequately insured.

Finally, it is noted that, whilst a large proportion of boards have taken the option to revalue for insurance purposes their pumping station and residential assets during the year, there are some boards that have not followed suit. We have seen elsewhere that such revaluations have sometimes resulted in significant uplifts in value, and as such we would suggest that any remaining boards that have yet to carry out such an exercise do so at the earliest convenience.

We would recommend that in the absence of specific information to the contrary suggesting need for earlier review, that a revaluation exercise be performed for insurance purposes at least every 5 years on all major Board assets.

Client Comment:

All Boards are asked concerning valuations for insurances and it is a Board decision. Depending when the meeting is held and when the valuation is completed depends when the instruction can be given. However, once approved we look to update policies at that time. Where applicable, we are also looking into the viability of having certain values index linked but note that these will still need monitoring on a routine basis.

3. Employee Benefits - Vehicle Usage, and VAT recovery

In 2020 a high-level tax case was brought by HM Revenue & Customs against Coca-Cola European Partners Great Britain Limited relating to vehicles provided to employees of Coca-Cola and whether these 'dual purpose' vehicle should be classed as a van or a car for benefit-in-kind (BIK) and other taxation purposes. Typical example of such a vehicle being a double-cab pickup as operated by some boards.

This case was ruled in favour of HMRC where the use of three of its vehicles (2 Volkswagen Kombis and a Vauxhall Vivaro) should be treated as cars, rather than vans for tax purposes. The Vauxhall had been modified in a number of ways and an additional row of seats and windows were added along with a bulkhead to ensure goods being transported could not enter the passenger area. Both the VW Kombi vehicles were fitted with rear seats and additional racking was required by the driver for business use, for the Kombi version 2 this required a rear seat to be removed for racking. The Court of Appeal ruled that the vehicles were not sufficient to differentiate between them and therefore they should all be treated on a similar basis for BIK purposes, each vehicle was multi-purpose and capable of transporting goods or passengers, but neither type of vehicle was 'primarily' suited to the carrying of goods as required by current taxation legislation s.115(2).

At this point in time (drafting late June 2021) no updates to the tax rules have been issued by HMRC in the light of the ruling and therefore we are unable to determine whether the current vehicles owned by each board and allocated to an employee will be classed as a van or car. And until HMRC include any such updates and guidance we are unable to determine whether the vehicles held by each board will be liable for a van or car BIK on employees where the vehicle is not operated as a depot-based Pool vehicle. This case also has potentially wider implications relating to recovery or not of VAT on the vehicle when purchased and in commercial settings capital allowances.

Client Comment:

We are aware of this position and have also been checking with HMRC but as yet they have not issued guidance that can be passed onto Boards. There are significant tax implications, both for employer and employee and will continue to monitor the position.

4. **Provisions**

We are pleased to note that, in the main; provisions for amounts owing to and owed from applicable boards, are being monitored and written back should the underlying potential asset/liability be extinguished. There are still odd cases where provisions are "brought forward and carried forward" that relate in excess of the standard life of debt, being 6 years. On review in some cases whilst the underlying rationale of these balances are reasonable, we would question whether payments could still be enforced if chased, aside from in relation to development contributions. As such we would encourage continued review of provisions as a whole, with special consideration being made to aged provisions that have existed for a number of years.

We would recommend that any such old debts or provisions (part from development contribution provisions), say over 3 years old, be presented at the Board meeting annually and approved.

Client comment:

As part of the year end accounts procedures, provisions are looked at and decisions made on an individual basis as to retain or to write back.

5. **Risk Management Policy and procedures**

We noted in the 2019 most boards undertook a substantial risk management assessment process in 2014 leading to formal acceptance in April 2015 which is now subject to a brief review each year which is duly recorded formally in the board minutes. After recommendation in the prior year's management letter, we are pleased to note that this processed has been carried out again for 2020 - 21.

The COVID-19 pandemic is, hopefully, the greatest challenge many of us will face in our lifetime. In the face of adversity there is also opportunity to embrace this emerging "new normal" and such an event should allow us to take a step back and look at the policies and procedures that underpin the organisation. With this in mind we would urge greater breadth of coverage of policies and procedures to include consideration and action points in relation to areas such as climate change, global pandemics, and disaster action & recovery – at the time of writing we are not aware of such bigger policy being in existence.

It may also be helpful to revisit and enhance appreciation by way of visual colour coding of the RAG rating numbers to better differentiate between the varying levels of risk and consequence. We would expect to see low risk items being colour coded green, middling items colour coded yellow and high-risk items in red.

Risk Management Policy and procedures - continued

Client comment:

Risk management is an evolving matter and we will continue to look at emerging risks and having effective policies concerning these and although no formal policies are in place at this time the matters you have mentioned have been under consideration. With regards to the existing policy, consideration will be given to updating the matrix when either next revised or reviewed.

6. Website Publication

We note that there has been, for a number of years, significant information available to the public. We note that for some boards the latest information does not appear to have been updated, for example in one case the 2019/20 payments list was still published when the 2020/21 payments list should have been displayed. We would recommend that all items are updated promptly on the website once the meeting has been carried out.

Client comment:

Every effort is made to update the relevant pages of all authorities in an efficient and timely manner and in accordance with the regulations. It should be noted that the JPAG requirements for display appear to differ from those of audit requirements so while not necessarily aligning both requirements could be met. (This matter is being looked into for further guidance).

7. Capital works

Currently the definition of capital works is limited to new items e.g., a new culvert but works involving a repair or maintenance will be wholly written out in the year even though there may be a not insignificant element of improvement involved.

8. Capital assets

Following on from item 7 above it follows those assets may be unrecognised in the Accounts of the Boards and not appear in their Assets register. In view of greater Government and public interest and concern for environmental and climate change factors, should the 'value' of the basic drainage system be recognised beyond the pumping stations and equipment? This may be important in future years in order to factoring a fair proportion of potential future national Government funding.

Capital assets - continued

Client comment:

Comment has been noted. While Boards own pumping facilities and their footprint they do not (generally) own the watercourses, designating the arterial system for maintenance. This is probably a matter that could be discussed on an "industry wide" level, maybe through ADA by its policy and finance committee to ensure, if recognised, would provide a uniform approach across the country.

9. Budget figures

We note that Budget figures are prepared annually in advance, but we note these are not updated in the late Autumn even when notable variances may have occurred for various factors. Whilst not necessary to do so for all boards, we suggest that Chairmen of individual Boards are given opportunity to request updated Budgets after the half year point for the remainder of the year and distribute to Board members if they feel it appropriate due to circumstances to date or anticipated during the year.

Client comment:

As part of the finance regulations, we are required to carry out a budget monitoring exercise during the course of the year. For those Boards that have a relevant meeting, this is reviewed by the Board at their autumn/winter meeting. For all other Boards the monitoring exercise is completed as at the end of the calendar year, at this point the majority of the drain maintenance works have been completed, as would be any planned maintenance works at pumping stations. The expenditure to-date is then forecast to the end of the financial year and compared to the budget and initially sent to the chairman for review. Depending on the outcome of the monitoring exercise depends on whether it is considered appropriate to hold an emergency meeting. However, it is likely that if there were an extraordinary event the Board would be aware "in real time" and appropriate action taken at that point. It is not policy to update budgets depending on levels of expenditure but to use these as comparative to analyse variances of actual expenditure against.

Specific Points

Sutton and Mepal IDB

See item 2 above – residential property value

Hundred of Wisbech IDB
See item 6 above

Conington & Holme IDB
See item 9 above

Client comment (Conington & Holme IDB):

The "overspend" against budget related to additional drain maintenance works that were required and a breakdown at the pumping station which occurred after the monitoring exercise had been completed. These events were managed at the time and appropriate action taken when setting the following years rate.

Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB – Joint Pumping Arrangement
As in previous years it is noted that there is a discrepancy between debtor held in Waldersey IDB and the creditor held in Hundred of Wisbech IDB; due to the substantial rainfall pattern in late 2020-21 this amount was more significant than normal

Waldersey IDB – Debtor	38,459.99
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	47,997.84
Difference	**9,537.85**

This difference arises due to the accounts of Hundred of Wisbech IDB being completed before Waldersey IDB, therefore a provision having to be included within the former's books before more accurate figures become available. The difference is adjusted in the following year's Accounts for Hundred of Wisbech but in the short term could be considered slightly misleading.

We note that there have been discussions to potentially amalgamate the two boards, this would eradicate the anomaly. However, in the absence of this, we wonder whether there is scope to bring the meetings and account preparation periods in line to address this issue.

Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB – Joint Pumping Arrangement - continued

<u>*Client comment (Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB – Joint Pumping Arrangement):*</u>

These costs relate to the contribution for the costs of the shared pumping facility and at the time of production of the year end accounting statements discussions were taking place concerning potential changes to the contribution as a result of changes in land use. A new proposal had been put forward which was broadly approved by the Hundred of Wisbech Board, whose meeting is held first. In completing their accounting statements they requested that, due to the impact of the winter rainfall event the new proposal be used in calculating the contribution. When the Waldersey Board held it's meeting no changes had been approved at therefore the existing contribution calculation was used in their accounting statements. With regards to the Hundred of Wisbech creditor, these "old balances" will be written back during this financial year. There are no current plans to change meeting dates so there will remain a creditor/debtor position in both sets of accounts although now settled, this should be cleared, generally a year in arrears.

Other Matters

As you will already be aware our firm underwent a change of business name from Whiting & Partners to Whitings LLP, with effect from 1 October 2021. As the world and our practice move forward, even in these challenging times towards a "new normal", we have also decided to rebrand and change our look to promote this.

As provided for under the clauses of our existing Terms of Business ongoing engagements under our standard Whiting & Partners Terms and Conditions remain unchanged and have rolled over seamlessly into Whitings LLP; these are available on our new and improved website www.whitingsllp.co.uk

We are immensely proud of the work we continue to do with you at Whiting and we would like to take this opportunity to thank your staff involved in our audit for their assistance and cooperation in achieving substantial completion by the stated target deadlines, especially in light of the operational challenges posed to us all by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

Whitings LLP

Whitings LLP

Internal Drainage Boards in England

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Annual Report for the year ended
31 March 2021

The Law – the following annual report is provided in accordance with Paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 to the Land Drainage Act 1991.

No later than 30 September 2021 a copy must be provided to:

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Flood Management Division, Floor 3, Seacole, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF via floodreports@defra.gsi.gov.uk
- National Flood and Coastal Risk Manager (Strategic Delivery), The Environment Agency, Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AH via rachael.hill@environment-agency.gov.uk
- The Chief Executives of:
  - all local authorities that pay special levies to the Board;
  - all County Councils or London Boroughs within which the Board is situated.

Please complete the form electronically. If you are unable to complete the form electronically, please complete in BLOCK LETTERS using **black ink**.

Please round all cash figures down to nearest whole £.

NEEDHAM & LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Section A – Financial information

Preliminary information on special levies issued by the Board for 2021- 22

Information requested below is essential in calculating future formula spending share. It is not covered elsewhere on this form or by the external auditor's certificate.

Special levies information for financial year 2021-22 (forecast)	
Name of local authority	**2021-22 forecast £**
1. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	3,925
2. KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL	23,718
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	27,643

Section A – Financial information (continued)

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2021

All Internal Drainage Boards must ensure that the Income and Expenditure information provided below is consistent with the Board's annual accounting statements which have been prepared in accordance with proper practices found in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners' Guide to proper practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements March 2017*

	Notes	Year ending 31 March 2021 £
INCOME		
1. Drainage Rates		20,334
2. Special Levies		27,537
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		0
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		0
5. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		0
6. PSCAs from EA and other RMAs		0
7. Loans		0
8. Rechargeable Works		0
9. Interest and Investment Income		286
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		0
11. Other Income		150
Total income		**48,307**
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		9,739
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		6,463
14. Watercourse maintenance		17,796
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		0
16. Administration		9,754
17. PSCAs		0
18. Rechargeable Works		0
19. Finance Charges		0
20. SSSIs		0
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		465
22. Other Expenditure		296
Total expenditure		**44,513**

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		0
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**3,794**
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		46,522
25. Grant income not applied in year		0

Notes:

11. Include all other Income, such as absorption account surpluses (for example plant and labour absorption accounts).

12. State the gross cost of undertaking minor capital works that have not been capitalised and the annual depreciation charges of all major schemes that have been capitalised. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the schemes.

13. State the total precept demanded for the year as properly issued by the Environment Agency, in accordance with section 141 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Providing that the precept has been properly issued as before stated it should always be included here, even when the Board has appealed against the amount of contribution, in accordance with section 140 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Where the Board knows with certainty the outcome of any such appeal, it should also include the appropriate accrual/prepayment.

14. State all costs associated with the maintenance of watercourses, meaning work associated with open channels, pipelines, culverts, bridges, etc. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the maintenance programme.

15. State all costs associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures.

16. Include the cost of non-technical staff only, office accommodation, annual depreciation of office equipment that has been capitalised, minor office equipment that has not been capitalised, postages, telecoms', stationery, printing, advertising, auditing of accounts, general insurances and all other costs associated with supporting the organisation. Please note that this does not include support costs, which are directly associated with the delivery of front line services.

17. State all costs associated with the PSCA

18. State all costs associated with undertaking work for third parties. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with undertaking the rechargeable work.

19. Include the cost of servicing any borrowing, in terms of bank/loan/hire purchase Interest payable.

20. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – specifically for helping to achieve favourable condition on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). In most cases, these costs will be incurred in implementing actions set out in SSSI Water Level Management Plans or SSSI River Restoration Plans.

21. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – that are likely intended to help conserve biodiversity (other than works on SSSIs). These costs are likely to be incurred in implementing actions set out in an IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan or other conservation actions on non-designated sites.

22. Include all other expenditure, such as a provision for bad/doubtful debts, write-offs, and absorption account deficits (for example plant and labour absorption accounts).

23. For the disposal of assets, state the difference between any proceeds from the sale/disposal of the asset and the cost of the asset less accumulated depreciation.

24. Total balance of developer fund year end.

25. Unspent grant at year end.

Section B –IDB Reporting

Policy Delivery Statement

Boards are required to produce a publicly available policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aims and objectives. It is recommended that these statements be published on Boards' websites where they have them and reviewed every three years.

Is an up to date statement in place and copy (or weblink) provided to Defra, and EA?..Yes ☒ No ☐

Biodiversity

Please indicate whether your Board has a Biodiversity Action Plan ....Yes ☒ No ☐

If "yes" is the Biodiversity Action Plan available on your website?..Yes ☒ No ☐

What year was your Biodiversity Action Plan last updated?)............................ 2021

Have you reported progress on BAP implementation on your web site?...................................Yes ☒ No ☐

When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)?.............................. 20/04/2021

Do you have a biosecurity process?..Yes ☒ No ☐

SSSI water level management plans

Please indicate whether your Board is responsible for any SSSI water level management plans?...Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, which ones:

Area of SSSI with IDB water level management plans............................

Area of SSSI where IDB water level management activities are contributing to recovering or favourable condition?

Area of SSSI where IDB water level management actions are required to achieve recovering or favourable condition?

Access to environmental expertise

Does your IDB have access to environmental expertise? If so please tick all those options below through which environmental expertise is regularly provided to your IDB:

Appropriately skilled Board Members (e.g. Board member from an Environmental Body/Authority)	☐
Co-opted members	☐
Directly employed staff	☐
Contracted persons or consultants	☒
Environmental Partners/NGOs	☐
Other (please describe)	☐

Asset Management

What system/database does your Board use to manage the assets it is responsible for?

ADIS	☐
Paper Records	☒
Other Electronic System	☒

Has your Board continued to undertake visual inspections and update asset databases on an annual basis? Yes ☒ No ☐

What is the cumulative total of identified watercourse (in km) that the Board periodically maintains?

28

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

0

What is the cumulative design capacity of the Board's pumping station(s) (enter zero if no stations are operated)?

0

Health and Safety

Does the Board have a current Health and Safety policy in place?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Does the Board have a responsible officer for Health and Safety?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Have there been any reportable incidents in the past year?	Yes ☐	No ☒

If so, please summarise in the box below:

Guidance and Best Practice

Has your IDB adopted a formal Scheme of Delegation? Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your IDB provided training for board members in the last year in the any of the following areas?

Governance ☐
Finance ☐
Environment ☐
Health, safety and welfare ☐
Communications and engagement ☐
Other (please describe) ☐

No training has been provided for board members during the year ended 31st March 2021.

Is your Board's website information current for this financial year? (Board membership, audited accounts, programmes of works, WLMPS, etc) .... Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your IDB adopted computerised accounting and rating systems? .... Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your board published all minutes of meetings on the website? .... Yes ☒ No ☐

Does the Board publish information on its website on its approach to maintenance works and provide contact details to allow for and encourage public engagement? Yes ☒ No ☐

When planning maintenance and capital works are environmental impacts taken into account and wherever possible best practice applied? Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your Board adopted the following governance documents?

Standing Orders .... Yes ☒ No ☐

Have the Standing Orders been approved by Ministers .... Yes ☒ No ☐

Byelaws .... Yes ☒ No ☐

If you have Byelaws, have you adopted the latest model byelaws published in 2012........ Yes ☒ No ☐

Have the Byelaws been approved by Ministers........ Yes ☒ No ☐

Code of Conduct for Board Members........ Yes ☒ No ☐

Financial Regulations..Yes ☒ No ☐
Register of Member's Interests...Yes ☒ No ☐
Anti-fraud and corruption policy...Yes ☒ No ☐

Board membership and attendance

How many Board members (in total – elected and appointed) do you have on your IDB?	19
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	13
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	12
Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	7
Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	6
Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	4

Have you held elections within the last three years?...Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐
Did elections comply with the requirements specified by the Secretary of State under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938?......................... Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Complaints procedure

Is the procedure for a member of the public to make a complaint about the IDB accessible from the front page of its website?...Yes ☒ No ☐

Number of complaints received in the financial year?	0
Number of complaints outstanding in the financial year?	0
Number of complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman?	0
Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman?	0

Public Engagement

Set out what your Board has done in this financial year to engage with the public (tick relevant box(es) below):

- Press releases ☐
- Newsletters ☐
- Web site ☒
- Meetings ☒
- Shows/events (including open days/inspections) ☐
- Consultations ☐
- Notices ☒

Percentage (in value) of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

0%

Section B: NOTES

Guidance and Best Practice

Has your Board published **all** minutes of meetings on the web site? In answering this question, this should apply to all the main Board meetings held in the year and any appropriate meetings the Board has held with external stakeholders.

Board membership and attendance

When referring to **elected members** of the Board, this relates to the number of landowners/drainage rate payers that are elected to the Board.

When referring to **appointed members** of the Board, this relates to the number of members appointed by the local authorities to represent the local council taxpayers.

When referring to mean average number of elected and appointed members in attendance at meetings at each board meeting – **this should be expressed as a number of attendees** and not as a percentage attendance.

With regard to elections, under Schedule 1 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, elected members should hold office for three years, at which point a further election is held. When elections are held, they should comply with the requirements under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938 – to advertise and notify local stakeholders accordingly.

Section C – Declaration

NEEDHAM & LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

I confirm that the information provided in sections A-C or with this form is correct.

Signature	S Ablett
Date	27/09/2021
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT
Designation	ASSISTANT TREASURER
Email address	Sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

NEEDHAM AND LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2023/2023

	Approved budget 2021/2022 £	Actual 2021/2022 £	Budget 2022/2023 £
1 Insurances	300	351	375
2 Repairs and renewals	100	0	100
3 District Officer's fee	1,660	1,699	1,800
4 Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	20,250	25,303 [A]	24,500 [B]
5 Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	10,000	9,603	10,000
6 Environment Agency Precept	6,463	6,463	6,592
7 Futur works funding	10,975	10,975	10,975 [C]
8 Improvement works	230,000	76,803 [D]	152,000 [E]
	279,748	131,197	206,342
LESS Deposit Accounts interest	231,847	78,719	153,950 [F]
	47,901	52,478	52,392

Remarks

A -	Slubbing	10,000
	Flail mowing/weed bucket/spraying	6,927
	Works at Dodds Stile	1,075
	Contribution - Env. Officer	468
	Drainworks/Planning fees/misc	2,726
		21,195
B -	Slubbing (including emergency)	10,625
	Flail mowing	6,900
	Spraying	800
	Contribution - Env. Officer	475
	Drainworks/Planning fees/misc	3,200
	Culvert at Point 10-11	2,500
		24,500
C -	Provision for Future works programme	
D -	Scheme developmemnt costs and replace culvrt at Point 2	
E -	Provision for culvert replacement at point 1	142,000
	Provision to replace structure at Point 2	10,000
F -	Includes Grant-in-aid (culvert Point 1)	130,850
	Future Works Fund - culvert at Point 1	11,150
	Future Works Fund - replace structure Pt 2	10,000

Actual General Fund		Approved budget 2021/2022	Actual 2021/2022	Budget 2022/2023	
Opening Balance -		47,774	47,774	43,188	
Rate Raised -	8.00p	47,901	47,891	52,392	0.0875
Net Expenditure		47,901	52,478	52,392	
Use of balances		0	0	0	
Closing Balance		47,774	43,188	43,188	

Fund balances at 31st March 2022

Development charges fund	35,993
Commutation fund	10,175
Future works fund	31,259

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

NEEDHAM & LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022, that:

	Agreed: Yes	Agreed: No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✔		*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✔		*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✔		*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✔		*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✔		*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✔		*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✔		*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✔		*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*

	Yes	No	N/A	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.				*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

Clerk

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

NEEDHAM & LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Payments made 2021/2022 (1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022)

Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Health and Safety contract	5,579.33
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2021, works in connection with culvert replacements and outfall replacement, planning and development applications)	11,442.30
Middle Level Commissioners - Bank revetment at The Cottons, Upwell	166.82
Middle Level Commissioners - Land registry charges (Account from Land Registry)	6.00
Environment Agency - Precept	3,231.29
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2021-2022	678.00
Fen Group - Supply of 1.35 metre drainage pipes for culvert replacement at points 1 and 2, application to Anglian Water and BT	26,409.06
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Flailmowing	122.40
Upwell IDB - Rates refund	1,717.48
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	4,263.92
Middle Level Commissioners - Advertising of environmental impact assessment notices (Account from Archant)	213.34
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	351.21
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with culvert replacements, planning and development applications)	7,947.23
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fee (2020-2021 accounts)	240.00
Environment Agency - Precept	3,231.29
Davies Contracting Ltd - Drain maintenance	10,500.00
Bank charges	3.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting and Partners 2020/2021)	558.00
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Work in connection with culvert replacements, planning and development applications)	1,275.60
Davies Contracting Ltd - Drain maintenance	1,289.40
Fen Group - Work in connection with culvert replacements	55,346.23
M E Fenn & Son - District Officer's fee (2021-2022)	1,699.00
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2021-2022	30.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Conservation Officer)	467.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Health and Safety re-charges for 2021-2022	240.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Culvert replacement works at Point 2, planning & development applications)	1,996.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees for Land Registry search	6.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Health and Safety contract	5,426.29
Middle Level Commissioners - Discharge consent application fee	190.92
	144,668.41

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

NEEDHAM AND LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2022

GENERAL FUND

2022				2021		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year			Apr-01	Balance brought forward	47,774.32
	Precept		6,462.58	2022		
	Insurances	351.21		Mar-31	Rate income & Special levies	47,891.48
	Contractors charges	1,699.00			Interest on Deposit Accounts	40.94
	Drainworks	25,303.04			Development Charges Account	1,825.00
	Administration charge, Audit fee,				Consents	50.00
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	9,602.68	36,955.93			
	Improvement Works - Culvert replacements		76,803.19		Future Works Fund - Culvert replacements	5,760.24
	Future Works Fund - Rates raised 2021-2022		10,975.00		Grant-in-aid	80,051.53
	Future Works Fund - Grant-in-aid 2020/2021		9,008.58			
	Balance carried forward		43,188.23			
			183,393.51			183,393.51

BALANCE SHEET

Revenue Section

Liabilities			Assets			
	General Fund	43,188.23		Ratepayers - Arrears		1744.42
	Development Charges Account	35,993.40		Value added Tax - Refunds due		1,310.57
	Commutation Fund			Sundry Debtors		0.00
	(Rookery Farm Drain)	10,175.22		Grant-in-aid		66.60
	Future Works Fund	31,258.97		Balance in hand:-		
	Sundry Creditors	15,322.47		Treasurer's Account	131,838.91	
				National Savings Account	977.79	132,816.70
		135,938.29				135,938.29

Needham & Laddus Internal Drainage Board

Treasurers Account 2021/2022

1st April 2021			31st March 2022	
Balance brought forward		126,889.46	Payments made during the year	144,668.41
31st March 2022				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	149,522.58			
Interest on deposit accounts	95.28	149,617.86	Balance carried forward	131,838.91
		276,507.32		**276,507.32**

National Savings Account 2020/2021

1st April 2021		31st March 2022	
Balance brought forward	977.69	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2022			
Interest on deposit accounts	0.10	Balance carried forward	977.79
	977.79		**977.79**

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2022

Barclays Bank PLc

Clients Premium Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2022	131,838.91
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	**131,838.91**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2022

Barclays Bank PLc	
Clients Premium Account	**131,838.91**
National Savings	
Investment Account per passbook	**977.79**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**132,816.70**

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

NEEDHAM & LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	107,523	111,317	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	47,871	47,891	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	436	81,788	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	44,513	120,380	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	111,317	120,616	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	127,867	132,817	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	0	0	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	N/A	*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
				N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2022 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Date 7th APRIL 2022

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

Needham & Laddus IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2022

				Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**			
	General Fund	47,774.32		
	Development charges account	36,355.27		
	Commutation fund	10,166.51		
	Asset replacement Fund	17,021.05		
			111,317.15	**111,317**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	20,128.24		
	Contribution Needham Bank	130.00		
	Special Levies	27,643.00		
	Penalty	0.00		
	Costs	0.00		
	Write-off	-9.76		
			47,891.48	**47,891**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	40.94		
	Development charges account	31.15		
	Commutation fund	8.71		
	Future works account	14.58		
	Grant in Aid	80,051.53		
	Consents	50.00		
	Discharge contributions	1,591.08		
	Write back of provisions	0.00		
			81,787.99	**81,788**
Line 4	**Staff costs**			
	Wages/salaries	0.00		
	National insurance contributions	0.00		
	Pension costs	0.00		
	Travelling expenses	0.00		
			0.00	**0**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**			
	PWLB - Principal	0.00		
	PWLB - Interest	0.00		
			0.00	**0**

Needham & Laddus IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2022

				Per Annual Return
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	6,462.58		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	351.21		
	Drainworks	25,303.04		
	Contractors charges	1,699.00		
	Administration	9,602.68		
	Development charges fees	159.10		
	Improvement works	76,803.19		
			120,380.80	**120,380**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	43,188.23		
	Development charges account	35,993.40		
	Commutation fund	10,175.22		
	Future works account	31,258.97		
			120,615.82	**120,616**

Reconciliation
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 120,615.82

NEEDHAM AND LADDUS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2023/2023

	Approved budget 2021/2022 £	Actual 2021/2022 £	Budget 2022/2023 £
1 Insurances	300	351	375
2 Repairs and renewals	100	0	100
3 District Officer's fee	1,660	1,699	1,800
4 Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	20,250	25,303 [A]	24,500 [B]
5 Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	10,000	9,603	10,000
6 Environment Agency Precept	6,463	6,463	6,592
7 Futur works funding	10,975	10,975	10,975 [C]
8 Improvement works	230,000	76,803 [D]	152,000 [E]
	279,748	131,197	206,342
LESS Deposit Accounts interest	231,847	78,719	153,950 [F]
	47,901	52,478	52,392

Remarks

A -	Slubbing	10,000
	Flail mowing/weed bucket/spraying	6,927
	Works at Dodds Stile	1,075
	Contribution - Env. Officer	468
	Drainworks/Planning fees/misc	2,726
		21,195
B -	Slubbing (including emergency)	10,625
	Flail mowing	6,900
	Spraying	800
	Contribution - Env. Officer	475
	Drainworks/Planning fees/misc	3,200
	Culvert at Point 10-11	2,500
		24,500
C -	Provision for Future works programme	
D -	Scheme developmemnt costs and replace culvrt at Point 2	
E -	Provision for culvert replacement at point 1	142,000
	Provision to replace structure at Point 2	10,000
F -	Includes Grant-in-aid (culvert Point 1)	130,850
	Future Works Fund - culvert at Point 1	11,150
	Future Works Fund - replace structure Pt 2	10,000

Actual General Fund					
Opening Balance -		47,774	47,774	43,188	
Rate Raised -	8.00p	47,901	47,891	52,392	0.0875
Net Expenditure		47,901	52,478	52,392	
Use of balances		0	0	0	
Closing Balance		47,774	43,188	43,188	

Fund balances at 31st March 2022

Development charges fund	35,993
Commutation fund	10,175
Future works fund	31,259

Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Commissioners must be borne for 2022/2023 is:-

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 42.13%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levies issued to Councils:-

Borough of Kings Lynn & Norfolk –	49.65%	
Fenland District Council –	8.22%	
		57.87%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £2,516.

In 2022/2023 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levies and contributions would raise £5,988

Revenue balance in hand on 31st March 2022 - £43,188

The estimated net expenditure of £52,392 in 2022/2023, which includes provision for the replacement of the gravity outfall (Point 1) and culvert (Point 2) is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 8.75p

b) a Special levy on the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk of £25,941 and

c) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £4,293

d) contributions from Hundred of Wisbech IDB of £142

In 2021/2022 an equivalent rate of 8.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £3,925 on Fenland District Council and £23,718 on the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, and contributions from Hundred of Wisbech IDB of £130.

D C THOMAS

Clerk to the Board

April 2022