

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

**At a Meeting of the Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board
held at Hanson's, Bluntisham at 10:30am on Friday 10th June 2022**

PRESENT

P Burton Esq (Chairman)
P Burgess Esq

J R Anderson Esq (Vice Chairman)
A G R Holloway Esq

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

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Green Esq, C Hudson Esq and H Law Esq.

B.842 Declarations of Interest

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

P Burton declared an interest as a Contractor to the Board in any matters concerning maintenance works.

B.843 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 7th January 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.844 Maintenance works in the District

The Chairman reported that the majority of this years planned maintenance works had been completed early spring-time and Mr Hill confirmed that the cost of these works had been incorporated into the 2021/2022 accounts, however, as the works were already included in the 2022/2023 budget allocation, the balances should be adjusted back by the end of this financial year. The Chairman further reported that he had discussed matters with the Vice-Chairman and although not an issue currently, there could be a potential issue with weed in the channel upstream of the pumping station. P Burgess considered it was important to ensure the water was not held up. The Vice-Chairman did not consider that the weed was an immediate concern and it could be possible to carry work over into the next financial year. The Chairman reminded members that these works were unbudgeted. In response to P Burgess, the Vice Chairman reported that there would be access available to the watercourses all year, so it would not be a problem should works be required during winter months.

RESOLVED

That the situation be monitored and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be authorised to take any further actions as they consider necessary.

B.845 Hanson – Progress Report

There was no progress report as Mr Laws did not attend the meeting.

The Chairman reported on the blockage at the pumping station caused by a large aggregate bag from Hanson's site which had blown in to the watercourse and got stuck in the pump. He informed Members that there were difficulties in getting the blockage removed as the pump had to be removed and high water levels in the main rivers had caused delays in being able to drain the pump sump to enable the removal of the pump. In response to the Chairman, Mr Hill reported that the costs to remove the blockage was approx. £5000. The Vice-Chairman reported that he had brought the bag removed from the pump to the meeting which confirmed it was clearly from Hanson's site. Members queried if these costs would be covered by insurance and the Chairman reported that he had discussed this with the Clerk who had confirmed that this type of incident was not covered by insurance.

The Chairman reported that he had tried to discuss this matter with the Clerk with a view to him writing to Hanson's to claim the Boards costs back from them but he was currently waiting for the Clerk to contact him.

RESOLVED

- a) That the Clerk review the insurance cover to see if there is any form of insurance cover that could be taken out against this type of accident.
- b) That the Clerk write to Hanson's to explain the situation and claim back the Boards costs back either from Hanson's direct or from their insurers.

B.846 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised:-

i) COVID-19 Actions

That the majority of control measures have been removed now and normal office working has resumed (with the exception of trialling a degree of flexible working, which has been shown to be effective following the previous periods of enforced home working). Impacts now are largely confined to the high rates of COVID-19 illness cases in the UK.

ii) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That an eighth Chair's Meeting was held on the 12th April 2022.

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

It was recorded that there had been a number of MLC staff changes over the period. These included the retirement of Deb Watts, Katie Hunt and Malcolm Downes. Also, Sarah Lemmon and Richard Lloyd had handed in their notice. New members of staff replacing them and linked with some restructuring of the finances and admin departments were Dave Bantoft (M&E Engineer), Sarah Bowd (Accounts Assistant), Polly Tombleson (PA Secretarial) and Claire Collings (Secretarial).

It was reported that following the successful telemetry grant bid for Local Levy £125K in grant had been secured and consequently an order had been placed for in excess of 45 new telemetry outstations. The MLC have tested the new system with the six stations they commissioned and were satisfied with its operation.

Training for Board members was covered and it was noted that ADA provide online training videos. Various methods for delivering these and recording attendance was discussed and it was finally resolved that the best way forward would be to ask all members to watch one or two videos a year and to record when they had been viewed. A record of who had watched which video would be retained and this information recorded at Board meetings and used to support DEFRA IDB1 returns.

A proposal to move from time charges to lump sum annual fees for planning and consenting matters was discussed and it was agreed that a proposal to move to this more efficient and effective way of working would be put to each Board. For similar reasons it was resolved that a proposal should be put forward which would reduce the scale of content reported to Boards under planning matters.

Inflationary pressures were touched upon and it was recognised that if this continues there will be pressure placed upon Boards to raise their rates more than has occurred in recent years. It was also recognised that along with these inflationary pressures there were increasing demands (with legal backing) evolving in relation to environmental gains and Boards should be aware of the costs of delivering on these. Examples are the government's commitment to protect 30% of all land by 2030 for the environment and of the Doubling Nature initiative in Cambridgeshire.

An update on work in relation to climate change and carbon reduction was given. Work currently in hand comprises of production of a carbon baseline for the MLC. Once complete the scale of the challenge to target carbon neutrality will be known and work will be undertaken to identify possible opportunities for reduction and mitigation, prior to production of a policy statement. During these next stages it is expected that Boards associated with the MLC will be similarly assessed and plan proposals made for them.

iii) Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch

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 pleased 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.

iv) Anglia Farmers

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting of each Board/Commissioners the Anglia Farmers electricity contract was renewed in October 2021 for a shorter period of 6 months to 31st March 2022 and this was due to the volatile energy market at the time. As there remains an enormous amount of volatility and uncertainty surrounding energy prices and as competition is very limited, it was decided that the Commissioners and Boards should remain within the Anglia Farmers buying group at the moment as there is likely to be little scope for us to negotiate better deals. The Clerk will also report a new contract has been signed for a 12-month period to 31st March 2023 with EDF Energy through Anglian Farmers.

The Anglia Farmers Energy team does not have to commit to buying energy for years ahead at the current price levels and the flexible contract that they have to buy energy from 1st April 2022 allows them to risk manage the portfolio for their Members, which means they will be well positioned to take advantage of any energy market normalisation ahead. When market conditions have settled down/normalised the Board/Commissioners will be asked whether they wish to remain with Anglia Farmers. But this may not be for several years based upon current market assessments.

v) Water Resources East (WRE)

Further to minute B.824 (viii), the requested contribution from this Board for the 2021/2022 financial year is once again £125. Also, the contributions for 2022/23 had been confirmed at £125. Contributions from drainage boards within the East of England secure a direct stake in WRE and help to ensure their needs and opinions are taken into account.

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.

RESOLVED

The Board approved the requested WRE contributions for 2021/22 and for 2022/2023 to be paid.

vi) 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.

The Chairman reported that it was his understanding that, as long as a detailed log book was kept showing when and where worked and the fuel used, contractors would be allowed to switch between red and white diesel without the need to empty tanks, drain systems and change filters. Mr Hill reported that he was not aware of this development, but he would take the matter up with the Clerk.

vii) Planning and Consenting Fees

Proposed changes to planning and consenting service supply charging

Two changes are proposed. The current arrangements and the proposed changes are outlined below.

1. The current arrangements for charging for Technical Services advice and support, for planning and consenting matters, is based upon a direct cost recovery arrangement. To achieve this all time spent on every item of work undertaken has to be logged and recorded in detail. This information is then pulled together and invoices prepared and checked before being passed to the Board Chairs for sign-off. This requires a considerable amount of time and effort and this time is of course included in the eventual fees paid. It is considered that a more efficient model would be to mirror the one used for charging for Clerking services which is based upon a lump sum annual fee. This has a number of advantages. It reduces internal workload which in turn releases time to carry out productive work. It also allows Boards to budget for the fees knowing at the time of rate setting what the annual fees will be.

To ensure that a fair assessment is made it is suggested that the last five years of fees are looked at and an average taken. If there is clearly one or two years where one or two planning matters have impacted heavily upon the figures then an appropriate adjustment will be made. The final fee will be converted into a fraction of the costs of overall cost of supplying planning and consenting services for all Boards including the MLC and this percentage will become fixed until such time that a review is called for.

In addition, we will still actively encourage developers and their agents to enter into Pre/Post application contracts. This will help keep the overall planning costs to a minimum. We will also be looking to move more and more to lump sum charges for developers for the same reasons outlined above, ie to reduce internal administration work and costs where possible.

It is not proposed that this change will extend to other Technical Services work, such as surveys, catchment analysis, and refurbishment/replacement/improvement scheme work or associated advice which will continue to be logged and charged on a “hours spent” basis.

2. Many members have noted that the reporting in relation to planning application comments and responses is comprehensive. Again, it often takes many hours to produce such detailed reports for which the Board is charged. This time could be spent in dealing with and taking action on planning and consenting matters. There is also the issue of the potential time lapse between any planning/byelaw issue raising its head and the meeting of the Board. It is of course normally advantageous to take action as soon as possible after any issue had become apparent. It is therefore proposed that going forward the Board nominate who they wish to be copied in on all planning correspondence, for example the Chair and Vice-Chair. They will then be able to liaise with the Planning Engineer if they wish to and will be conversant with discussions being undertaken. The Board may also wish to delegate decision making for initial actions for bylaw infringements to the Board nominee/s.

To ensure that the Board is consulted on the most important matters it is proposed that when it is wished for a matter to be raised within the Board report then a request from the Chair can be made and a detailed report would follow. This would normally be the case where significant costs might be associated with enforcement, including perhaps incurring legal fees or where an unusually large or significant development is proposed.

Should the above change be agreed to, then going forward the Engineer’s report will provide a list of all planning applications of interest to the Board and consents applied for/approved but unless requested by the Chair no detail will be provided.

The Chairman referred to fee charges from the Middle Level for development proposals outside of the Boards District, which he did not consider the Board should pay and that he had tried to discuss this further with the Clerk but was still waiting for his calls to be returned.

Mr Hill apologised for any delays but reminded members that they had a responsibility to ensure there was no inappropriate development and although some planning applications were outside the Boards District, it could be possible for discharge from these to directly impact on the Board and it was therefore important for these to be monitored.

In response to P Burgess, Mr Hill outlined how development contributions were collected and their use in dealing with ongoing discharges into the Boards system.

The Vice-Chairman considered it was very important that, at the early stages of planning applications, the way in which surface water discharges could be dealt with was considered.

In response to P Burgess, Mr Hill outlined the proposals for calculations of the five-year average.

The Chairman reported that although he saw planning applications, he considered that it was important for members to be kept updated on development proposals, especially if they would be required to make decisions.

Mr Hill considered that, regardless of the availability of Grant-in-Aid funding, any funding from the Board would likely need to be made by a loan, and upon receipt of information from the engineers, the Board should consider raising rates over the next few years with a view to being able to raise loan repayment should this be required.

RESOLVED

- a) That the proposal to charge a fixed fee for dealing with planning applications to applied in principal and that the matter be reviewed further when more detailed proposals are available.
- b) That no changes be made to the format of the Engineers' Report but that the matter be reviewed again when consideration was given to fee change proposals.

viii) Fens Biosphere

The Clerk reported 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.

B.847 Consulting Engineers' Report, including Planning and Consenting Matters

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers, viz;

Bluntisham I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – May 22

Pumping Station

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

Pump

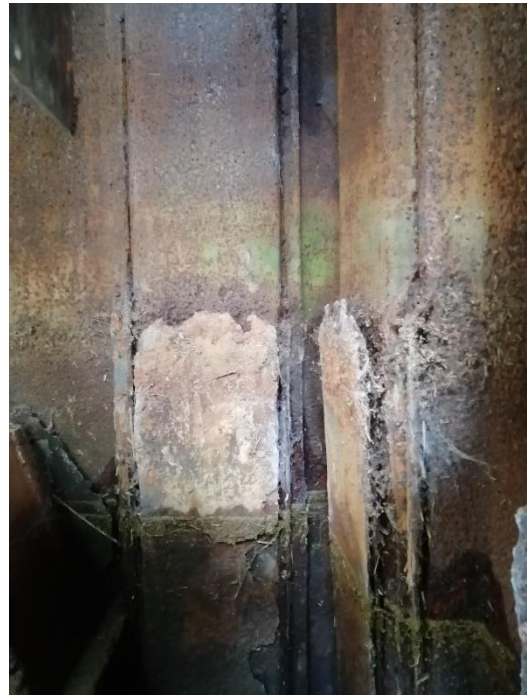
On 23rd February the pump attendant reported that the pump had tripped. An attempt was made to test and run the pump but it was overloading and evidence of yellow plastic string could be seen at both inlet and outlet which we believed was causing a blockage in the pump. To attend to this the pump wet well had to be dammed off and dewatered to allow access to remove the pump. Once lifted the pump was found to be blocked by a tonne bag which had to be cut free from the impellor. The pump is now over 20 years old and has recorded nearing 20,000 running hours. The impellor, bell mouth and discharge elbow are showing their age. The electrical readings for the pump are still good but plans should start to be made for the pump's replacement, which is estimated at around £40-50k.

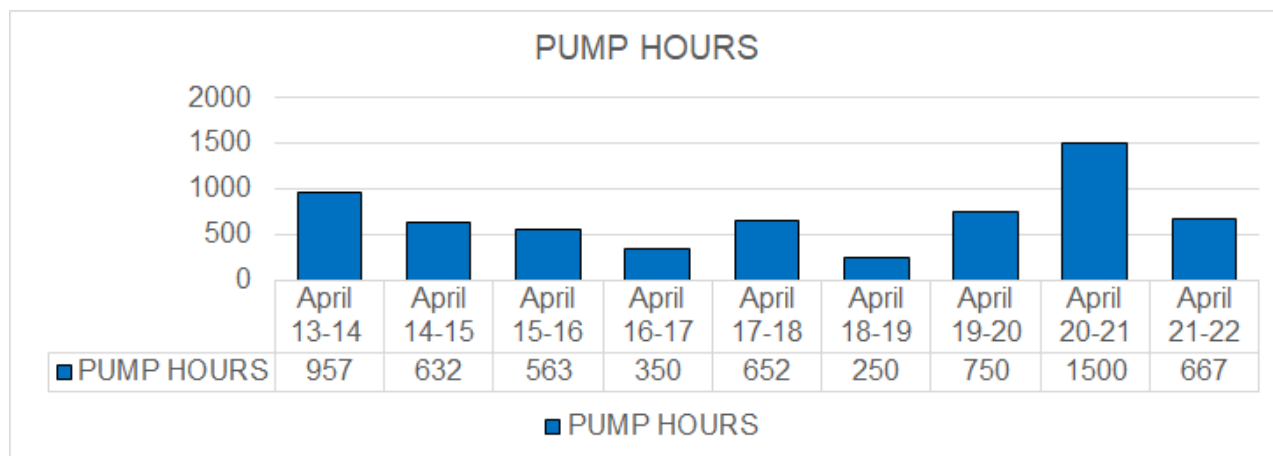
The pump discharge pipe vent pipe is broken and will be repaired this summer during a low tide to prevent the need for damming off. There is still a small leak between the pipe in pipe discharge system which has been ongoing for many years but does not seem to cause a problem.



Station

While the pump well was de-watered, it was possible to inspect the condition of the piles which were not found to be good, they have corroded and delaminated quite badly with large pieces (800mm x 200mm x 4mm) falling away. There is also some cracking to the concrete top platform and reinforcing bars are exposed. Checking through our records it appears that this station was first constructed in 1944, with its last upgrade in 2001 when the present pump was fitted. Due to the age of the station and condition of the piles, thought needs to be given to its repair or replacement. Some of the 8mm piles at the inlet have corroded right through. The concrete outfall chamber has been undercut by the water and surrounding earth has eroded as the discharge channel does not allow the water to flow away quickly enough when pumping.





Total Pump Hours 18829

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 6 new development related matters have been received and, where appropriate, dealt with since the last meeting:

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
040	H/22/00014/EXTDET	Mr & Mrs R Beaman	Residence (Extension)	Willow Green, Needingworth
041	H/21/02842/HHFUL	Ms Agnes Gondor	Residence (Extension)	Ashton Close, Needingworth
042	H/22/00181/OUT	Mr & Mrs G & A Quinsee	Residence	Mill Way, Needingworth
043	H/22/00569/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs L Faulkner	Residence (Extension)	Willow Green, Needingworth
044	H/22/00741/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Smith	Residence (Extension)	Ashton Close, Needingworth
045	H/22/00738/HHFUL	Mrs H Rodgers	Residence (Extension)	Overcote Lane, Needingworth

Planning applications ending 'EXTDET' relate to General Permitted Development-Extensions

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

Mr & Mrs Beaman chose to use the Infiltration Device Self-Certification Service for surface water disposal from an extension to their dwelling in Willow Green, Needingworth (MLC Ref No 040) and, in doing so, agreed that if the device was to fail in the future, the land owner would be liable for any remedial works to rectify the situation.

Most of the above are likely to discharge treated foul effluent water into the Board's system via Needingworth Water Recycling Centre (WRC).

Further to the entry in the “Planning Updates & Consultations” document entitled “Long-term Ownership, Funding and Maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)” it is presumed that the Board will require its interests to be protected by ensuring the provision of adequate arrangements for the long-term ownership funding, management and maintenance arrangements for the upkeep of any water level and flood risk management system, whether on or off site, in perpetuity.

In order to assist further discussion when dealing with development related matters, the Board is asked to consider the proposal, advise on any requirements it may have and provide instruction on how it would wish us to proceed.

Needingworth

Proposed development to the north of Fairview and west of Enterprise Farm - (Bluntisham Farm), off Bluntisham Road, Needingworth - Client of RSK Land & Development Engineering Ltd (MLC Ref No 011), Gladman Developments (MLC Ref No 013) & David Wilson Homes (MLC Ref No 027)

&

Residential development (Egret Close) on land adjacent to Fair View, Bluntisham Road, Needingworth - Luminus Homes (MLC Ref Nos 012 & 017)

Further to Minute B.825 Consulting Engineers’ Report, including Planning and Consenting Matters item i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved, advisory letters have been issued to the developer and responses are currently awaited.

Development of existing vacant plot adjacent to Lodel Farm in Needingworth for (up to) 30 new residential units, including 12 affordable housing units at land north of Lodel Farm, Overcote Lane, Needingworth – Mr M Hudson (MLC Ref No 020)

The District Council’s Simple Search webpage advises that:

“This application has not been determined and has been FINALLY DISPOSED of in accordance with Article 40(13) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).”

Residential development with associated landscaping, parking, cycle and refuse storage, sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) and vehicular access point off Mill Way at land north of Sunryl, Church Street, Needingworth – Innerspace Homes Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 022 & 032)

It is understood that despite a recommendation for approval from the Case Officer, subject to conditions, the District Council refused planning permission on HDC Ref 20/00443/FUL (MLC Ref No 032), for many reasons most of which are not relevant to the Board's interests.

Rear ground floor extension, side first floor extension, garage conversion and new attached garage at 7 Old Farm Close, Needingworth – Miss H Seabourne (MLC Ref No 036)

The means of surface water disposal from the development is currently being investigated by the client.

Change of use to form horse paddocks with menage and retrospective application for stable block at Bridge Farm, Overcote Lane, Needingworth - Mr A Griffiths (MLC Ref No 037)

Further to Minute B.825 Consulting Engineers' Report, including Planning and Consenting Matters item ii) Change of use to form paddocks etc, it is understood that a meeting has been held to discuss the planting which encroached within the Board's maintenance access strip. However, an application for consent has not yet been received.

Bluntisham

Developments at Green Acres, Needingworth Road, Bluntisham

- (a) *Change of use of agricultural land to one gypsy/traveller pitch including two dayrooms (retrospective) at land north of Green Acre – Mr R Harris (MLC Ref No 018)*

&

- (b) *Change of use of the land to Gypsy & Traveller residential with the siting of one static caravan and one touring caravan and the development of a block of stable/utility block (part retrospective) at 2 Green Acre - Mr J Wenman (MLC Ref No 030)*

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

Planning Updates & Consultations

To reduce the size of this consultant's report and to increase public transparency the section of this report which provides information on the various strategic consultations and issues that may affect the Middle Level Commissioners and administered/associated Internal Drainage Board has been relocated to our website and can be found on www.middlelevel.gov.uk towards the bottom of the page under "Strategic Planning Consultation Responses".

Consulting Engineer

25 May 2022

Bluntisham(357)\Reports\May 2022

The Vice-Chairman reported that he had discussed matters with Middle Level Mechanical & Electrical Engineer, who considered that while the pump was still serviceable, the Board should start to consider its eventual replacement in 5-10 years' time. He referred to the condition of the wet well piles and that, if a new pump was fitted, it may be more viable to move it to one side in a concrete chamber.

The Vice-Chairman queried the availability of Grant-in-Aid towards the possible future pump replacement and Mr Hill outlined the process for making an application for Grant -in-Aid. Mr Hill explained that it would be dependant on what and where any funding was in the current programme and in response to P Burgess, estimated that the costs for developing a scheme for application for Grant-in-Aid could be up to £10,000, but, if successful, these costs become eligible for Grant. Members considered the possibility of introducing automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment in any proposals.

RESOLVED

- a) The Engineer to make enquiries to the EA to ascertain if Bluntisham IDB currently has any allocation in the current capital grant programme and how successful on application might be.
- b) The Engineer drafts some outline proposals for the installation of a new pumping unit for consideration at the next meeting.

B.848 Pumping Station Duties

Members considered the payments in respect of pumping station duties for 2022/2023.

2021/2022 – set at £1,545

RESOLVED

That the payment in respect of pumping station duties be set at £1,600 for 2022/2023

B.849 Conservation Officer's Newsletter

Mr Hill referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, which had previously been circulated to Members, viz;

Bluntisham IDB

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. 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.

For ease of use the BAP table has been omitted from this report but is available upon request.

Bluntisham IDB Report Summary

Invasive Species

The Giant Hogweed patch adjacent the Board's drain at node 17 on Overcote Lane (see photo below) - near the 40pmh signs has regrown and increased in size considerably. It is on both sides of the road. Ideally this needs to be treated *immediately* to prevent further flowers seeding and spreading. The extent is such now that some sensitive manual clearance around the plants may be required to establish full spread. If clearing around it the correct PPE must be worn to prevent contact with the plant on skin, face or eyes. A glyphosate-based weedkiller is probably the best solution; given the plants have spread, follow-up treatment in August or September would be worthwhile. If disposing of the plant it should be burned, giant hogweed is a controlled waste so, if it is taken off site, can only be disposed of in licensed landfill sites with the required documentation. **CO to discuss treatment with Board.**



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. If unsure, please contact the Conservation Officer regardless.

A survey along node 8-7 found probable feeding signs of water vole, many of the ditches are suitable habitat. Of interest a grass snake was also seen.

Mink

A full summary of the region-wide project to date is available in the December 2021 Natural Level. No records from the district but it is understood trapping is taking place in the wider area.

Other species/issues

The Board-provisioned bat box is in good condition. The kingfisher holes drilled at the PS however will require attention, one hole is blocked and the other has no material behind it.



Above: Left, confluence at node 2, a wider channel with many submerged and emergent plants benefitting aquatic communities. Right, 45 degrees cut on grass stems generally an indicator of water voles.

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.

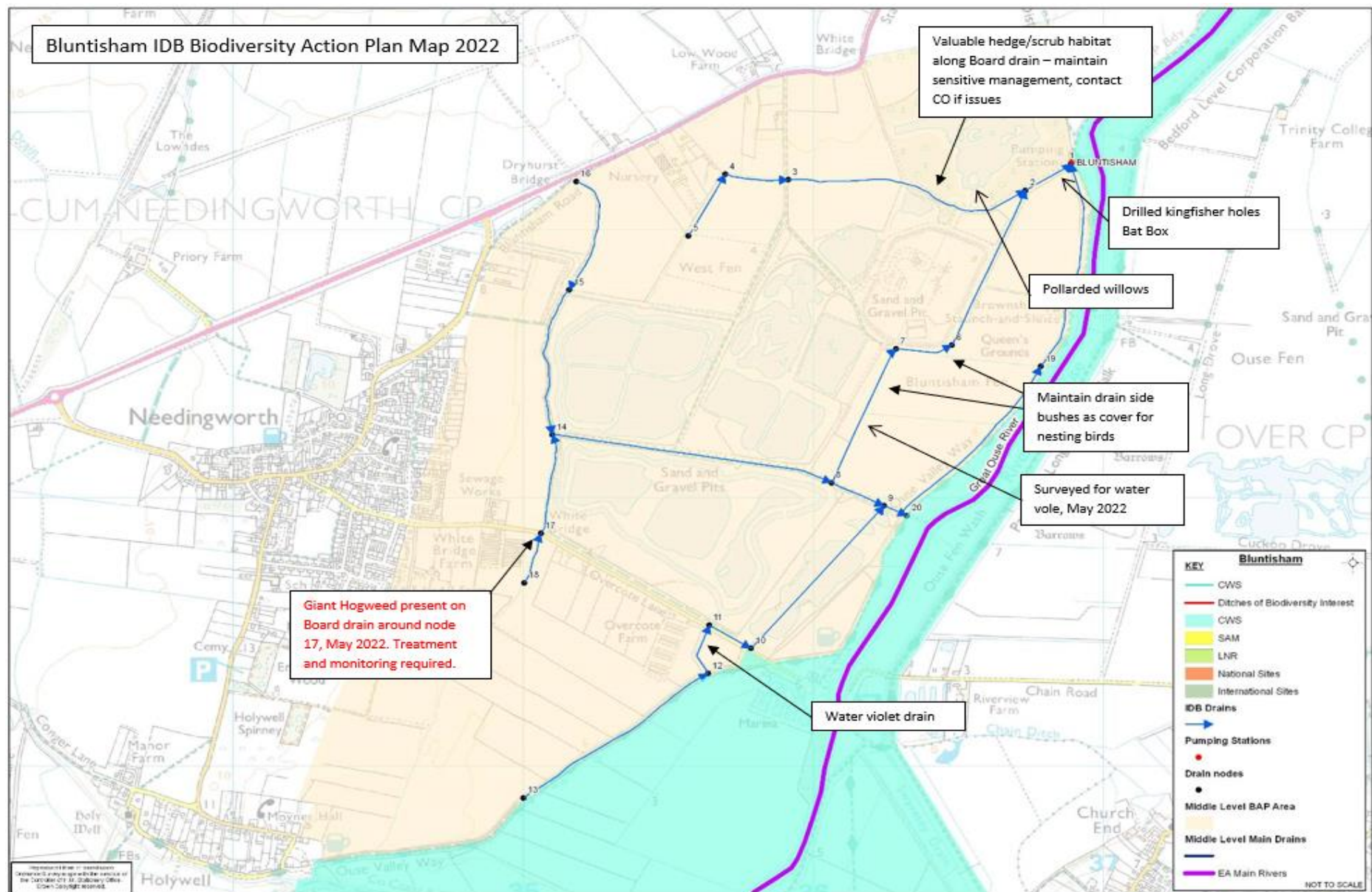
~~Tuesday 22nd March 2022: Non-native species workshop. Venue: Oliver Cromwell Hotel, March. 10-1pm.~~

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.*

Date TBC: Water voles - ecology, legislation and mitigation: a guide for IDBs. Venue: Middle Level Offices, March (followed by visit to local drain) MOVED TO 2023.

Peter Beckenham, Conservation Officer for Middle Level Commissioners

IDB Map 2021-22



The Vice-Chairman reported that, following consultation with the Conservation Officer, he had sprayed giant hogweed as identified in the report.

B.850 Environment Agency – Precept

The Clerk reported that at the Environment Agency Flood Defence Committee meeting the Committee voted to adopt an indicative 2% increase in the precepts on Internal Drainage Boards for the next 6 years commencing from 2022/23, with the ability to revisit annually should exceptional circumstances indicate this is required. The Committee voted for a 0% increase (for exceptional circumstances) above the indicative 2% increase for the year ending 31st March 2023 - total of a 2% increase on the level of precept on Internal Drainage Boards for the year ending 31st March 2023.

The precept for 2021/2022 was £1,897.00

B.851 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.

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.852 Health and Safety Report

Further to minute B.810, the Vice-Chairman reported that the fencing works had now been completed and that a further rail had been put on the barrier on the weedscreen deck and that all matters raised in the Cope Safety Report had been dealt with.

B.853 Budgeting

The Clerk referred to the budget update comparison of actual out-turn against forecast reviewed by the Chairman, and any actions taken, viz;

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS MONITORING 2021/2022

	<u>Approved budget</u> <u>2021/2022</u> £	<u>Forecast</u> <u>2021/2022</u> £	<u>Actual</u> <u>2021/2022</u> £	<u>Remarks</u>
1 Channel Maintenance	5,000	5,500	10,023 ^A	A - Includes: Works for 2022/2023 carried out March 2022 say 5,000
2 Pumping Station				
Repairs and Renewals	1,600	1,600	6,261 ^B	B - Includes expenditure for emergency
Electricity	2,300	2,500	3,300 ^C	works to blocked pump 5,162
Labour	1,500	1,550	1,545	
				C - Revised provision for adjusted contract rates
3 Administration				
Insurances	500	400	393	D - Installation of pallisade fencing -
Administration	7,500	7,150	7,110	(Funded from plant replacement account)
4 EA Precept	1,897	1,897	1,897	E - Includes plant replacement account for
				installation of pallisade fencing 1,223
5 Improvement works	0	0	1,223 ^D	
	20,297	20,597	31,752	
LESS Deposit Accounts interest, etc	947	1,260	2,486 ^E	
	19,350	19,337	29,266	

B.854 Determination of annual value for rating purposes

The Clerk submitted the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

The Board approved the recommendations.

B.855 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

Mr Hill reported that following the additional expenditure the Board would not qualify for the audit exemption and would be required to continue with a limited assurance review, as had been their policy in previous years.

B.856 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.857 Annual Governance Statement – 2021/2022

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement, viz;

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

BLUNTISHAM 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’ means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
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:

DD/MM/YY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2022.

B.858 Payments 2021/2022

The Clerk reported on payments made during the financial year 2021/2022, viz;

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Health and Safety contract	3,653.92
Lattenbury Services Ltd - Drain maintenance	5,400.00
Environment Agency - Precept	948.26
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	179.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	83.96
Lattenbury Services Ltd - Drain maintenance	3,000.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	179.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	393.44
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	2,693.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	177.30
PKF Littlejohns LLP - Audit fee (2020/2021 accounts)	240.00
Environment Agency - Precept	948.25
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2020-2021 accounts)	558.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	179.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	155.10
Fen Fencing Ltd - Supply and fit palisade fencing at pumping station	1,467.60
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2022	685.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	74.57
D & M K Green & Sons - Pumping station duties (1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022)	1,854.00
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2021/2022	6.00
Water Resources East - Contribution to operating costs 2020-2021	150.00
Water Resources East - Contribution to operating costs 2021-2022	150.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Health and Safety re-charges for 2021-2022	240.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	352.50
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	425.70
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	179.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Lift pump and clear blockage, refit and test	1,248.41
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges and stationery	3,735.91
	<u>29,400.96</u>

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

RESOLVED

That the Board approved payments made during the financial year 2021/2022.

B.859 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board - 2021/2022

Mr Hill reported that the final out-turn was approx. £10,000 worse than the forecast, due to the additional expenditure in dealing with the pump blockage and the 2022/23 programmed maintenance works being accounted for in the 2021/22 financial year, viz;

BLUNTISHAM 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		32,119.20
	Precept	1,896.51	2022	Rate income & Special levy	18,294.97	
	Insurances	393.44	Mar-31	Irrecoverables	<u>0.00</u>	18,294.97
	Administration	7,109.59		Interest on Deposit Accounts		2.97
	Drainworks	10,023.00		Highland Water Contributions		1,259.82
	Pumping Station Repairs	5,761.36		Transfer from plant replacement fund:		
	Electricity	3,300.00		- Palisade fencing at pumping station		1,223.00
	Contractors Charges	<u>1,545.00</u>				
		28,132.39				
	Palisade fencing at pumping station	1,223.00				
	Pumping plant replacement fund	500.00				
	Balance carried forward	<u>21,148.06</u>				
		<u>52,899.96</u>				<u>52,899.96</u>

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities

Capital Provisions 470,000.00

Assets

Barley Croft Pumping Station 470,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund 21,148.06
Sundry Creditors 28,292.06
Pumping Plant Replacement Fund 35,112.31
Development Charges Account 301.90
554,854.33

Value added Tax - Refunds due 1,092.17
Ratepayers Account - Arrears 73.14
Sundry Debtors 428.25
Balance in hand -
Barclays - Treasurer's Barclays Bank 83,260.77
554,854.33

Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2022

Treasurers Account 2021/2022

1st April 2021			31st March 2022	
Balance brought forward	83,926.72		Payments made during the year	29,400.96
31st March 2022				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	28,728.85			
Interest on deposit accounts	6.16	28,735.01	Balance carried forward	83,260.77
		<u>112,661.73</u>		<u>112,661.73</u>

Barclays Bank PLC

Clients Premium Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2022		88,245.09
Less unrepresented cheques	30/03/2022	87.87
		4,984.32
Add outstanding lodgements		0.00
Balance per Trial Balance		<u>83,260.77</u>

Cash balances as at 31st March 2022

Barclays Bank PLC

Clients Premium Account	83,260.77
<u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u>	<u>83,260.77</u>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £	
1. Balances brought forward	72,418	66,653	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	15,080	18,295	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,052	2,866	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	21,987	31,252	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	66,653	56,562	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	83,927	83,261	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	470,000	470,000	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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

24/05/2022

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

DDIMMIYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Bluntisham 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	32,119.20	
	Pump replacement Fund	34,232.15	
	Development Charges Fund	301.87	
		<u>66,653.22</u>	66,653
Line 2	Rates and Special Levies		
	Agricultural rates	6,118.97	
	Special Levies	12,176.00	
	Penalty	0.00	
	Costs	0.00	
	Write-off	0.00	
		<u>18,294.97</u>	18,295
Line 3	Total other receipts		
	Interest		
	General fund	2.97	
	Pump replacement fund	3.16	
	Development Charges Fund	0.03	
	Highland Water	1,259.82	
	Write Back of Provisions	1,600.00	
		<u>2,865.98</u>	2,866
Line 4	Staff costs		
	Wages/salaries	0.00	
	National insurance contributions	0.00	
	Pension costs	0.00	
	Travelling expenses	0.00	
		<u>0.00</u>	0
Line 5	Loan repayments		
	PWLB - Principal	0.00	
	PWLB - Interest	0.00	
		<u>0.00</u>	0
Line 6	All other payments		
	Precept	1,896.51	
	Rates, insurances, telephones	393.44	
	Repairs and renewals	5,761.36	
	Fuel	3,300.00	
	Drainworks	10,023.00	
	Contractors charges	1,545.00	
	Administration	7,109.59	
	Underprovision in previous years	0.00	
	Improvement works	1,223.00	
		<u>31,251.90</u>	31,252
Line 7	Balances carried forward		
	General Fund	21,148.06	
	Pump replacement fund	35,112.31	
	Development Charges Fund	301.90	
		<u>56,562.27</u>	56,562

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6

56,562.27

Balances carried forward

Per Annual return

56,562.00

- a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2022.
- b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2022.

B.860 Date of Next Meetings

The Board agreed the following dates for the meetings in 2023:

Wednesday 1st February 2023

Friday 9th June 2023

.....
Chairman

.....
Date