SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TIME

20th December 2022

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen,

Meeting of the Board – Thursday 12th January 2023 10:30am

I enclose the Agenda for the Meeting of the Board to be held at Chatteris Cricket Club at **10.30am** on Thursday 12th January 2023.

Please telephone or e-mail to confirm **whether or not you will be attending the meeting** as soon as possible.

Yours truly

D C THOMAS

Clerk to the Board

To the Chairman and the Members of the Sutton and Mepal 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. Confirmation of Minutes

   To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 28th June 2022.

   (Copy pages 9 - 22)

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

5. 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 2023 and will submit the proposed register of electors which is applicable to the 2023 election.

6. Goodjohn's Farm

   Further to minute B.2248, the Chairman to report

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

   Further to minute B.2269, the Clerk to report.

8. Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and Level South Barrier Bank works

   Further to minute B.2271, the Clerk will refer to the Newsletter from the Environment Agency dated December 2022.

   (Copy pages 23 - 24)

9. Meter Readings – Lafarge and Tamac

Further to minute B.2273, the Clerk to report.

10. Clerk's Report

The Clerk advises:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a nineth Chair's Meeting was held on the 13th December 2022.

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

David Thomas advised on the planned staffing changes being implemented due to his impending retirements. He stated that his post was being split back into Chief Executive/Clerk and Chief Engineer and that the appointments were:

Paul Burrows – to be the new CEO/Clerk - currently in post with the EA as a national Delivery Assurance Manager, and before that as Flood & Coastal Risk Manager for the East Anglia Area, then Flood Strategy Manager – Paul spearheaded Tactical Plans for the Fens which have secured the possibility of obtaining significant grant allocation on a Board by Board basis over a 15 year period, whilst at the same time defining a pathway to better understand the challenges faced and options worth considering for our lowland catchment as climate change and growth tests our current infrastructure arrangements.

Nicola Oldfield – to be the new Chief Engineer – currently in post with the EA as a Senior Project Manager. She most recently project managed the £30M Middle Level Barrier Bank scheme and had just taken over as project manager of the Cranbrook Counter Drain Strategy. She has, in the past, been employed by an IDB and has worked in close partnership with many IDBs including North Level IDB. Jonathan Brown stated how pleased the MLC Executive had been with these two candidates and how easy the choice had been given their knowledge of the area and experience to date.

An update was given on the role out of telemetry, which was receiving positive feedback from District Officers. A request was made for the login details to be provided to Chairmen as well as District Officers and it was confirmed that this would be arranged.

David Thomas confirmed that all but two Boards had stated their wish to move to the new planning and consenting charging and reporting arrangements and that the Assistant Treasurer was finalizing figures ready for the 2023 IDB/DDC meetings. A request was made for all correspondence which developers and their agents which is copied to Chairman should include the planning application references.

The protection and control of Bylaw strips was discussed at length and it was agreed that a policy document outlining the red-lines Boards should be applying to ensure that their ratepayers do not suffer as a result of development will be prepared for the Boards to consider. It was noted at the meeting that the refusal to issue any consent is subject to a reasonableness test, hence the document cannot preclude consenting everything within the 9m strip and the policy will be for guidance purposes only. It was felt that it should help developers, planning authorities and the Boards by providing some additional clarity. It was also felt that some case history examples to be circulated to members might help them understand the issues which have to be addressed.

Climate Change was discussed and it was noted that the MLC had completed its carbon audit and would now start work on carbon reduction and mitigation initiatives. It was also noted that the M&E engineer was looking at base levels of energy consumption at pumping stations, for example to see if panel heaters are left on permanently. He will be making recommendations to Boards if he identifies scope for reducing power without risking the apparatus.

WRE were mentioned and the Chief Executive stated that he was pleased that the draft water resource plan for the East included extensive reference to agriculture and its need for water to support the growing of food to feed the nation and also of the key role played by IDBs in transferring water to the point needed by abstractors. He also commented upon the newly proposed Cambridgeshire fens reservoir, north of Chatteris and advised that the MLC were responding on the need to get fill supply and draw-down arrangements right, but also that we need to seek to gain capital from the opportunities that the new reservoir will present in terms of bringing money into the area and potentially helping reduce flood risk and assist with water need balancing.

The Chief Executive advised that a decision had been made to move the MLC and IDB's electricity supply contracts from Anglian Farmers to the Green Energy Advice Bureau. This followed several years of extended poor service levels and lack of timely information coming from Anglian Farmers.

The future of IDBs and the value of potential amalgamations was once discussed and this gave rise to questions over small boards being able to secure a quorate for which this had been a particularly poor year. It was agreed that this item should remain on the agenda and that any Chairs who felt that the time was right for their Boards to look again and the advantages/disadvantages of amalgamation would contract the Clerk. It was also agreed that it may be useful to undertake an exercise around updating the original Geoff Beal report which had recommended that the number of Boards within the area administered by the MLC could reasonably be reduced to three or four.

The Clerk finally noted that the ADA Great Ouse branch AGM would be held on the 7th March at Prickwillow Hall and would be in the format of workshops in the morning and an AGM in the afternoon. The workshops theme this year would be; water resources, the new reservoir and climate change.

ii) Applications for byelaw consent

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

Name of Applicant	Description of Works	Date Consent Granted
Mr D M Newman	Fill Board's district watercourse downstream of Point C 7 and an adjacent private watercourse outfall will be near to Point C6	16/11/2022

iii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 85th Annual Conference of the Association was held on Wednesday 9th November 2022 at The Hive, Nocton, Lincolnshire.

This year marked another change in the arrangements for the National Conference and AGM, with the AGM being held virtually on 28th September 2022 followed by the national conference held as a hybrid meeting at the Dyson Farming complex in Lincolnshire on 9th November. The choice of venue was to avoid the risk of being impacted by rail strikes and it also represented significant cost savings. The event had limited numbers and was fully subscribed.

Following an introduction by the President of ADA Robert Caudwell who noted the good work being done by ADA but also noted that with COP27 ahead climate change was the single biggest challenge facing everybody and that IDBs would need to play their part in delivering carbon reduction.

The opening address was given by Councillor Matthew Riddle, Chairperson, Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board and Councillor, South Gloucestershire Council who spoke on options which could be pursued to change the way Special Levy is reported and dealt with by the Councils. The challenge at the moment was perceived as the lack of transparency with Special Levy payments not being itemised on rate bills in the same way that police and ambulance services are. There is also the issue that by not disaggregating the Special Levy payments, increases in them can currently (for Councils who pay large Special Levys) trigger a local election under the current rules.

Key note speakers were Hazel Durant Waterway & Flood Water Management Policy Team, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Luzette Kroon Board member: Innovation & International, Dutch Water Authorities, Dykgraaf (chairperson), Wetterskip Fryslân. Hazel spoke of the challenges ahead and noted that it would be foolhardy to expect revenue expenditure to be increased by treasury given the current economic climate. The best we could hope for would be last years' figures to be matched. She praised the work of IDBs and noted the important role they play in delivering flood risk benefits through their direct works and also through PSCAs. Luzette spoke of the similarities and differences between IDBs and their Dutch equivalents and went on to describe the challenges faced arising from climate change.

A panel discussion followed and the MLC Chief Executive was invited to sit on this panel. He took the opportunity to outline the work of WRE but also to express his concerns that currently Land Drainage Act legislation was holding back the full potential of IDBs in terms of water resource management and investment. A review is urgently required and the support of the EA and DEFRA is needed. Hazel agreed that there was a need but hope a way forward could be found that didn't require primary legislation.

The day concluded with a field visit to showcase the Dunston Beck Improvement Project. The improvement project, completed by Dyson Farming with the Environment Agency, Wild Trout Trust and other partners, seeks to improve the biodiversity and water quality of the beck with a sensitive mosaic of wetland habitats delivered through excavations recreating a meandering river system with the retention of water providing ecological and also some modest flood risk benefits.

2023 Annual Conference – date to be confirmed.

b) 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 challenges 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) National Drainage Show & Floodex 2023

That the National Drainage Show & Floodex 2023 will be held at ExCel, London on the 22nd and 23rd November 2023.

v) Water Resources East (WRE)

Further to minute B.2274(iv), the Clerk will report that the requested contribution from this Board for 2023/2024 financial year is expected to once again be £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.

Fees for 2022/23 of £125 were omitted from last meeting agenda, the Board are asked to approve this payment.

11. Consulting Engineers' Report, including Planning and Consenting Matters

To consider the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

(Copy pages 25 - 30)

12. Environmental Officer Update

The Clerk to update on the position of the Environmental Officer.

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

The Clerk will report that claims for contributions totalling £1,437.35 (inclusive of supervision) have been submitted (£5,503.84 less £4,066.49 paid on account for the financial year 2021/2022 and the sum of £4,898.49 in respect of 80% of the Boards estimated expenditure for the financial year 2022/2023) and on communications from the Environment Agency concerning payment of the claims.

14. Association of Drainage Authorities
Subscriptions

The Clerk will report that ADA has increased subscriptions by 4.5% for 2023, from £721 to £754.

15. Health and Safety

Further to minute B.2286, the Chairman will advise that Cope Safety Management visit to the District will be on 17th January 2023 and will report at the next meeting.

16. Risk Management Assessment

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

b) To review the insured value of the Board's buildings and to consider index-linked insured values going forward.

(Copy page 31)

17. Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2021/2022

a) To consider the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2022.

(Copy pages 32 - 36)

b) To consider the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2022.

(Copy pages 37 - 46)

18. Defra IDB1 Returns

The Clerk to refer to the completed IDB1 form for 2021/2022.

(Copy pages 47 - 56)

19. Expenditure/Estimate Update

The Clerk will advise the Board of how estimated expenditure for 2022/2023 compares with actual expenditure to date.

(Copy page 57)

20. Date of next Meeting

The Clerk will remind Members that the next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 25th May 2023 at 10.30am prior to which the District Inspection will be held at 8.30am.

21. Any Other Business

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Sutton and Mepal Internal Drainage Board
held at Chatteris Cricket Club on Tuesday 28th June 2022

PRESENT

M R R Latta Esq (Chairman)
C P K Lee Esq (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr S Criswell
T Edgley Esq
M Heading Esq
R J Angood Esq
M Jackson Esq
R H Smith Esq
J Sole Esq

Mr David Thomas (Clerk to the Board) was in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from P W Allpress Esq, M George Esq, R Lee Esq, P E Sole Esq and A Allan Esq.

B.2267 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.

The Chairman declared an interest (as a Member of the Middle Level Board) in any matters relating to the Middle Level Commissioners.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman declared an interest in minute no. B.2281.

The Vice Chairman declared interest in the planning applications (MLC Ref Nos. 072, 148, 236, 237, 335, & 355) received for P J Lee & Sons.

Mr P Sole declared an interest in planning applications (MLC Ref No. 354) received for A Sole & Son and Mr P Sole.

B.2268 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 13th January 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.2269 Potential Amalgamation Discussions – Sutton and Mepal IDB, Manea and Welney DDC and Upwell IDB

Further to minute B.2249, the Clerk reported that the possibility of amalgamating with neighbouring Boards was not being currently considered, but this may be revisited if shared interests, such as joint IDB arrangements being made for taking on the maintenance of the Old Bedford (under a PSCA) came to fruition.

RESOLVED

To keep this matter under review and it be revisited at a later date.

B.2270 Water Levels in the Counter Drain System

Further to minute B.2250, the Chairman reported that he was extremely pleased with the progress made on addressing the leakage from the Environment Agency watercourses (Counter Drain) and that only around 500m of improvements were left to complete now. The quantity of the water seeping through from the Counter Drain was now vastly diminished and he felt that this was an excellent example of partnership working.

It was agreed that as this problem had been largely addressed, this item could be dropped from future agendas.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest when this item was discussed.

B.2271 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Inspection Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank works

Further to minute B.2251, The Clerk noted that the works were nearing completion and that regular updates were being passed on to the Board's Chairman.

B.2272 Low Level Restoration at Block Fen Account (Redland Aggregates) Limited

Further to minute B.2252, The Clerk advised there was little to report on this item.

B.2273 Meter Readings – Lafarge and Tarmac

Further to minute B.2253, The Clerk apologised for not having an update to hand on this item and promised to check the latest position and email members with an update.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk would check the latest position with Solicitor and Assistant Clerk and email members with this information.

B.2274 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 bit 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) 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) Annual Conference

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) 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) 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.

v) 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.

   <u>RESOLVED</u>

   That a lump sum fee arrangement be agreed in principle, and figures presented to the Board at their January 2023 meeting.

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.

RESOLVED

That no further detailed reports on individual planning matters be included in the Consulting Engineer's Report unless requested by the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

vi) 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.

vii) 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.2275 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

The Board considered the report of the Consulting Engineers.

The Board discussed the possibility of purchasing an additional pump now but on balance considered that it made more sense to only replace a pump if another one fails. It was noted that the spare pump is currently being refurbished.

RESOLVED

Not to order a new pump at this time but to do so should one of the existing pumps fail.

On planning matters it was generally felt that any decisions on planning matters could be left to the Chairman/Vice Chairman and Planning Officer. The Board only to be involved if the Chairman considers it necessary for this to happen.

The Chairman invited Geoff Beel and Mr Newman to speak regarding Mr Newman's request for consent to infill a length of IDB controlled watercourse. Mr Beel outlined the reasoning behind the request and stated what he considered to be the benefits of implementing the scheme. He noted that the sand and gravel abstraction in this location had changed the local situation and hence the need for the watercourse in question and he noted that it only now drained his clients land and possibly one small piece of adjacent land (in his words, just a couple of paddocks). The proposal outlined was to installed perforated pipes and then to link this with a drain out falling into the adjacent pit. The pit to have an overspill pump added to maintain levels. He also confirmed that following feedback from the Board, a meter would be included with the pump so that any surplus water entering into the Board's system could be monitored and paid for. Whilst he did not suggest there were not benefits for his client, he also pointed out plans to upgrade the footpath to a bridleway and suggested that the filling of the channel would improve the safety of the new bridleway. He concluded by noting that there were no properties or arable land now being serviced by this watercourse.

Questions from the members included whether or not all land owners were aware and in agreement with the proposals, also that this could this set a precedent and that on the face of it this proposal was contrary to the Board's policy to resist infilling of watercourses for conservation reasons. Additionally there was a question over the potential for the adjacent land to need improved drainage in the future and finally how would the future maintenance of the system be secured?

The responses were that yes this could set a precedent and yes it was contrary to the Board's policy, hence there would need to be a strong case for this to be considered and to support it as a one-off, that a clause could be added to any consent stating that there would be a future right to connect into the piped system held by the Board and that the consent could include a clear requirement to maintain the system.

Mr Beel noted that he believed that the proposals would actually improve drainage in the area.

The Board moved into closed session to discuss the matter further.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

That the infilling of the ditch be approved in principle subject to the following items being included as part of any consent granted;

a) There is to be an environmental net gain requirement and to achieve this the applicant must undertake an environmental survey of the ditch to be infilled and present his proposals to mitigate the loss of habitat linked to the infilling.

b) There shall be a maintenance obligation in perpetuity linked to the consent.

c) There is to be an implicit right for the adjacent landowner to connect into the piped lengths of watercourse subject to this application should he wish to for the drainage of his land.

d) That the length of drain shown on the plan between points A and C shall be piped with a perforated pipe to a suitable design.

e) That the cost of all work associated with the consent be born solely by the applicant.

NB The Vice Chairman declared interest in the planning applications (MLC Ref Nos. 072, 148, 236, 237, 335, & 355) received for P J Lee & Sons

NB Mr P Sole declared an interest in planning applications (MLC Ref No. 354) received for A Sole & Son and Mr P Sole.

B.2276 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered and noted the Board's future Capital Improvement Programme.

The Board considered the Plant and Vehicle Replacement Strategy and its value in allowing for forward cash flow planning and rating requirement noted. The timing of purchase of the replacement truck as considered.

RESOLVED

That the purchase of a replacement truck be delayed for at least one year.

B.2277 District Officer's Report

In the absence of the District Officer, the Chairman reported on the actions undertaken over the last year and plans for this coming year. The report was noted by Members.

B.2278 Conservation Officer's BAP Report

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

B.2279 State-aided Schemes

The Board members noted that any State-aided Scheme which might come forward, would be linked to future catchment changes and the possible replacement/reconfiguration of the Board's pumping station.

B.2280 District Labour

a) The Clerk reported that during the financial year 2021/202 overtime payments had been made as indicated on the Supplementary Schedule.

b) The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's salary for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED

That the salary of the District Officer be increased by 3% for 2022/2023

B.2281 Expenses Allowances

The Board gave consideration to the appropriate reimbursement of proper out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the Chairman and Vice Chairman on the Board's behalf.

RESOLVED

That the sums of £500 and £250 be available to the Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively to draw upon for out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the Board for 2022/2023 and if any additional expenses were incurred by the Chairman and Vice Chairman the Board would approve any reasonable expenses incurred.

(NB) – The Chairman and Vice Chairman declared a financial interest when this item was discussed.

B.2282 Charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work

The Board considered whether any revisions were necessary in their charges for hiring of plant for private work (last reviewed in 2021).

Members discussed the plant rates and noted that both fuel, labour and parts costs had increased and were likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future, hence an increase in rates charger for plant hire would be appropriate.

Previous charges

i) Atlas 140W Excavator

Present charge - £40 per hour in the District) (inclusive of operator's wages).
- £45 per hour outside the District)

ii) Flail mower

Present charge - £40.00 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages)
£45.00 per hour for work carried out for the Environment Agency

iii) Weed boat

Present charge - £40 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages)

iv) Piling Hammer

Present charge - £40 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages

(NB) – Travelling time being charged in addition to working time.

RESOLVED

That the hire charges be increased as follows:-

i) Atlas 140W Excavator

- £45 per hour in the District (inclusive of operator’s wages).
- £50 per hour outside the District

ii) Flail mower

- £45 per hour (inclusive of operator’s wages)
- £50 per hour for work carried out for the Environment Agency

iii) Weed boat

£45 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages) plus the addition of travel time by the District Officer

iv) Piling Hammer

£45 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages)

The Board noted that travelling time was to be charged in addition to working time.

NB. The Chairman declared an interest in this item and a party that hired in the Board’s plant.

B.2283 Environment Agency – Precepts

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 £113,104.

B.2284 Determination of annual value for rating purposes

The Board considered the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes, but a question was raised as to why there was no balance figure for the movement of rates for the item in the confidential paper. The Clerk considered that it may simply have been a correction but would investigate further.

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.2285 Contributions from Developers

The Clerk reported that a contribution towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume has/have been received.

B.2286 Health and Safety

Further to minute B.2261, The Chairman advised that all recommendations presented in the Cope Health & Safety report had been actioned. The Clerk reported that Cope's contract had been renewed and that going forward there would be a slight reduction in fees as the initial hurdle of getting IDBs up to an acceptable position in terms of safety matters had been achieved and that it was now a question of an annual audit to ensure this remained the position.

B.2287 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.2288 Risk Management Assessment

The Board reviewed its position in relation to valuations for insurance purposes and considered that there was a case for review but felt that next year would be the appropriate time to undertake this.

RESOLVED

That the Board undertake a review of insured values next year.

B.2289 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.2290 Annual Governance Statement – 2021/2022

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2022.

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.2291 Payments 2021/2022

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £286,565.79 which had been made during the financial year 2021/2022.

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

(NB) – The Vice Chairman declared an interest in the payments made to P J Lee & Sons.

B.2292 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2021/2022

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2022 as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2022. And the Board approved the use of the current Internal Auditor for a further year, following which time it is expected that competitive tendering for Internal Auditing will be held.

B.2293 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2022/2023

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 81.45% and 18.55%

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £271,081 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £220,802 and £50,278 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 43.00p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special levy of £21,891 be made and issued to Fenland District Council and for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

vi) That a Special levy of £18,526 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council and for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

vii) That a Special levy of £9,861 be made and issued to East Cambridgeshire District Council and for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

viii) 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).

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

B.2294 Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meetings of the Board be held as follows in 2023:-

Thursday 12th January 2023 at 8.30am at Chatteris Cricket Club.

Thursday 25th May 2023 at Chatteris Cricket Club at 8.30am

B.2295 Any Other Business

The Chairman advised that he had been approached to see if the Board may wish to consider the sale of its old pumping station. This matter was discussed but the Board did not consider that it would be in the interests of its ratepayers to consider a sale at this time.

Environment Agency

Ouse Washes Middle Level Barrier Bank raising works

December 2022

Project completion

The Middle Level Barrier Bank (MLBB) is the bank of the Ouse Washes reservoir extending from Earith to Welmore Lake Sluice. The work we have carried out is to comply with recommendations made by the Reservoir Inspecting Engineer to complete the works under the Reservoirs Act 1975.

Great news!

We are delighted to tell you that the Ouse Washes bank raising works finished in October 2022. We started construction in 2017 and the work has taken 6 years to complete.

We have raised the crest level of the MLBB between Welmore Lake Sluice and Earith and as part of the bank raising, we have provided a robust demountable flood barrier on the Welney Wash Road (A1101) where it crosses the Middle Level Barrier Bank and creates a low spot. We have also raised a low section of the South Level Barrier Bank between Sutton Gault and Chain Corner.

During October we completed the earthworks, the haul road raising, and we carried out the trialling and testing of the Welney demountable flood barrier. On the 14 October 2022 together with our contractor Jackson Civil Engineering and our supply chain partner Flood Control International Ltd, we held a training day for the Environment Agency field staff in how to install the barrier across the road in the event of flooding. The demountable flood barrier forms part of the 30km length of the Ouse Washes.

Due to the environmental constraints of the Ouse Washes work can only be carried out during the summer months, between 15 July and 31 October each year. This is to avoid disturbing the over wintering and ground nesting birds. Each year we have worked with Natural England to negotiate a longer working window to carry out winter repairs and haul road work.

We will continue to carry out regular inspections of the bank and monitor the grass growth for the next 2 years until the reservoir engineer gives a final sign-off in autumn 2024. This will include regular grass cuts, ecological surveys and repairs to damage that may happen over the winter months.

The footpath of the Middle Level Barrier Bank re-opened to the public on 1 November 2022. Although the bank is now open, the grass still needs to grow. We would appreciate if you would be careful when accessing and walking on the bank and stay away from the patches of grass that haven't grown fully yet.

Floodline 0345 988 1188

Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60

Environment Agency

What we have done	
Raised 30km of Middle Level Barrier Bank from Earith to Welmore Lake Sluice	Raised 2.5km of South Level Barrier Bank from Sutton Gault to Chain Corner
Decommissioned Black Sluice	Decommissioned disused telemetry hut at Earith
Tree and shrub planting at Earith	Improved bridleway access in Earith
Flood wall extension at Sutton Gault	Haul road widening between Welches Dam & Mepal
Raised 7.1km of the haul road from Earith to Welney	Works to Increase bridge capacity at Welches Dam
Replaced the existing flood wall at Welches Dam	Installed 5 new bird hides at the RSPB reserve
Installed temporary bridges direct to the bank at Earith & Mepal to reduce traffic on local roads	Installed erosion protection along sections of the bank between Mepal & Welches Dam
Installed hardstanding at Mepal for temporary high-volume pumps	Constructed demountable flood barrier at Welney
Throughout the project we have engaged with the public, schools and organisations adding value in local communities; visits, activities, local noticeboards, public drop-in's, surgeries, newsletters, briefings, questionnaires, press releases, online information page, virtual exhibition rooms, online consultations & meetings, social media.	

Completion event

Representatives from local organisations, Ouse Washes user groups, Internal Drainage Boards, Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire, and Norfolk County Councils joined us at the Wildfowl Wetland Trust in Welney on Friday 18 November to celebrate the end of the works. The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP for Northeast Cambridgeshire represented local constituents.

The Environment Agency and the project team, we would like to thank you for all the co-operation and support you have given us over the last 6 years.

How to stay in contact with us

Our Public Liaison Officers will continue to keep you updated during the maintenance period of the project. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Public Liaison Officers: Monica Stonham or Yazmin Parry via email ousewashesprojectea@gmail.com

Sutton & Mepal I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – December 2022

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.

As requested in the Matters Arising following the last meeting it is confirmed that warning stickers have been installed adjacent to the weedscreen cleaner.

Pumps

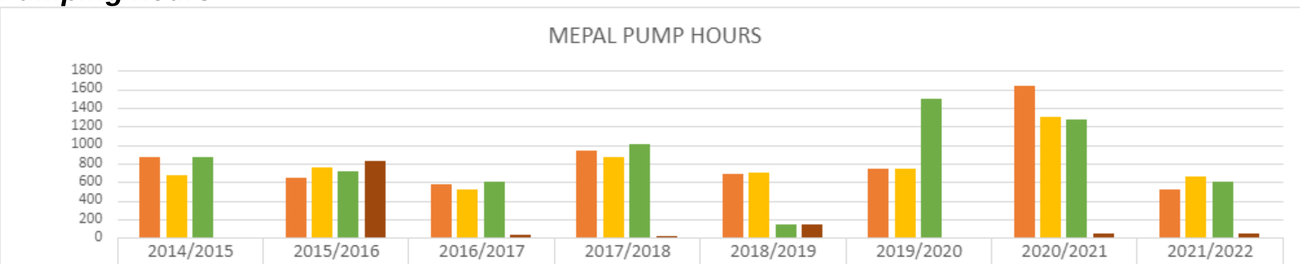
Pump 1 - failed in August 2022 so was removed for inspection and overhaul by Xylem (Flygt) and the spare pump was fitted. Overhaul cost would however have been 90% of replacement cost hence it was decided that a new pump should be ordered at a cost of £35,447. Due to current extended lead in times this replacement pump is not due to be delivered until week commencing 20th February 2023.

Pump 2 - insulation resistance had fallen considerably during this summer to a level which was a cause for concern. It has been set to duty since October 2022 and the reading has improved considerably from 2M Ohm to 110 M Ohm, this will continue to be monitored. It may indicate water ingress to the pump and consideration should be given to removing this pump for overhaul or replacement once the new pump is fitted.

Pump 3 insulation resistance figures are good.

Weedscreen Cleaner Running Hours 22/23 = 32 (1512)

Pumping hours



	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
PUMP 1	872	652	572	940	693	747	1644	517
PUMP 2	671	764	526	870	710	744	1310	659
PUMP 3	875	720	602	1009	141	1504	1271	611
PUMP 4	0	830	41	1	143	0	55	55

(note: pumping hours are a close estimate derived from available data to show comparable pumping hours for like periods)

Electricity Readings

Due to the volatility of the electricity market, regular and accurate manual electricity meter readings are becoming very important; even for sites with meters that are read remotely. This is so that bills can be verified to ensure correct rates are being paid.

Moving forward it is requested that the Pump Attendants/District Officers take electricity meter readings and pump run hours readings monthly (as close to the 1st of each month as they can) and then forward them onto the M&E Engineer on david.bantoft@middlelevel.gov.uk or 07768 026119.

Cranbrook/Counter Drain (CCD) Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy

Members are reminded that the Strategy seeks to utilise the restoration of gravel extraction sites for flood storage in Block Fen, reducing reliance on the Environment Agency's (EA) Welches Dam pumping station and potentially offering a number of wider benefits.

In the past 6 months, the EA has been progressing with hydraulic and topographical modelling tasks. These activities will help them understand how much floodwater is needed to be stored in a design event and how much could potentially be stored at Block Fen, based on mineral depths and existing restoration proposals. The next step is to develop a series of options as to how this flood storage could function, the associated enabling infrastructure and potential after uses alongside flood storage. This will include exploring opportunities for wider benefits such as water resources and biodiversity and working with the leading mineral operators to explore the development of flood storage proposals through 2023. Engagement with other key stakeholders is ongoing and discussions with several landowners in the catchment have commenced.

The announcement of Anglian Water's preferred location for the Fens Reservoir, immediately north west of the Block Fen allocated site, presents a number of opportunities and risks for flood storage at Block Fen. It also has a number of implications for long term flood risk management in the whole Cranbrook/Counter Drain catchment and at Welches Dam pumping station. The EA is meeting with partners in the new year to discuss these opportunities and risks and will be working with Anglian Water (AWS) to investigate these opportunities and risks.

The development of the overall catchment strategy is reliant on both the Fens 2100+ Strategy (EA led) and the Fens Reservoir (AWS led). These are being developed over a number of years and for this reason a focus is being made on the time limited opportunity of flood storage at Block Fen. This will allow the Fens 2100+ and the Fens Reservoir to progress over the next 2-3 years, such that it is possible to start planning for the whole catchment again over the long term (100 years). This is in line with the Tactical Plans approach which the Internal Drainage Boards are signed up to.
The focus of the next 6-12 months is on the storage opportunities in the allocated area (Block Fen/Langwood Fen) to develop the proposals further, understand achievable storage volumes and

mechanisms for transferring water in/out of the storage areas. Liaison with local landowners and stakeholders will also continue, within the three Internal Drainage Board districts, to understand future water resource needs which could be delivered through the Strategy.

Ouse Washes Counter Drain Water Resources

Members will be aware that for many years the transfer of water from the Tidal Ouse into the Ouse Washes Counter Drain system to aid water resources during the irrigation season has been undertaken by the Commissioners' Lock Keeper at Salter's Lode.

However, a change of circumstances has meant that this arrangement is no longer possible. In the absence of any support from the EA, this necessitated a change of procedure where the District Officers from the Boards benefitting from this resource, together with assistance from the Commissioners' staff, had to undertake this role themselves.

This change of procedure coincided with the challenging summer of 2022 which presented the worst possible combination with conditions being hot, dry and windy which required 81 transfers, significantly more than the 16 transfers that occurred during the previous season.

In the absence of substantial rainfall, water quality issues had arisen by mid-June and there were a couple of periods when IDB abstraction was stopped.

A subsequent meeting with the EA was attended by representatives from the relevant parties and, in an effort to maximise the limited resource, discussions took place in regard to the operation of the EA's water control structures, channel maintenance, retained water levels, water salinity and recording levels.

In the absence of permanent replacement arrangements, it was commented that closer liaison is required between the parties involved, as the same level of service provided during the summer of 2022 may not be maintainable in the long term.

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 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*
363	H/22/00666/AGDET	Mr D Newman	Agricultural (Storage building)	Chatteris Road, Somersham
364	H/22/00541/FUL	AJM Residential	Residence	Somersham Road, Colne
365	F/YR22/0501/F	Mr J Doram	Residence	Iretons Way, Chatteris
366	H/22/01383/AGDET	Mr J Pomfret	Agricultural (Storage building)	Somersham Road, Colne

MLC Ref.	*Council Ref.*	*Applicant*	*Type of Development*	*Location*
367	F/YR22/0939/FDC	Fenland District Council	Residential (Up to 2 plots)	Wood Street, Chatteris
368	Enquiry	To be confirmed	Irrigation reservoir	Confidential - Details unknown*
369	CCC/22/099/DCON	A Sole & Sons	Irrigation reservoirs (2)	Langwood Fen Drove, Chatteris*
370	F/YR22/1197/F	The Active Learning Trust	Education (Temporary siting of portacabins for office use)	Wenny Road, Chatteris*

Planning applications ending 'AGDET' relate to Agricultural Determination
Planning applications ending 'DCON' relate to the discharge of relevant planning conditions

Developments that are known to propose direct discharge are indicated with an asterisk. The remainder propose, where applicable and where known, disposal to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

No applications for Infiltration Device Self Certification or the Checking Service have been received since the last meeting report.

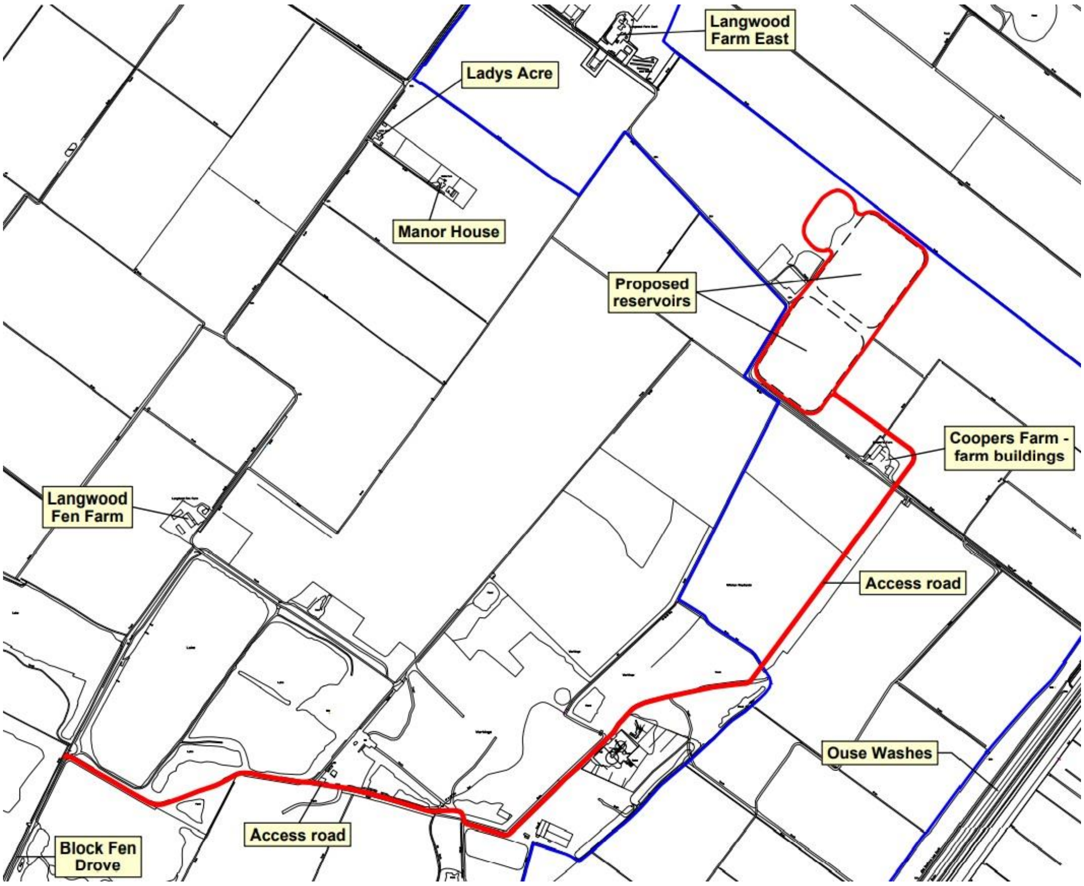
Members of the Board will recall that at the last meeting it was decided that specific detailed entries would not be made in future reports unless requested to do so. In the absence of any instruction no detailed entries have been made.

Current Planning Matters within the Master Plan area

Developments at Hundreds Farm, Langwood Fen Drove, Chatteris – A Sole & Son (MLC Ref No 091), *Mr P Sole* (MLC Ref No 319) *& A Sole & Sons Ltd* (MLC Ref No 354) and Coopers Farm – A Sole & Sons Ltd (MLC Ref 368)

Further to previous Meeting Reports, a discharge of conditions application has been submitted to the County Council, in its role as the Minerals & Waste planning authority, (Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Ref CCC/22/099/DCON) for the creation of two irrigation reservoirs through the extraction and export of sand and gravel and the extraction of clay, followed by the infilling of a redundant irrigation reservoir with imported inert material. The application is for approval of details required by Conditions 5 (Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation); 6 (Construction Environmental Management Plan & Ecological Mitigation Strategy); 7 (Access road ditch crossing method statement); and 10 (Groundwater disposal scheme) of planning permission CCC/21/121/FUL.

A response was provided to the planning office outlining the requirement for the relevant discharge consent and byelaw consent in respect of the reservoir construction and access crossing. CCC planning office confirmed that as the application is in respect of discharge of conditions no further conditions would be applied. However, the response was forwarded to the applicant.



Extract from Mick George Ltd's Drawing No M4/1/21/01 Rev. A showing the site boundaries

Subsequent to the above, correspondence was received from the applicant, Mick George Ltd, and the relevant consent applications have been received. In correspondence with the Chairman and Vice Chairman no initial concerns with the proposals were identified, other than the potential for scour/erosion of watercourses at the discharge points. At the time of writing the consent application fee has not been paid. Following payment of the relevant fees the consent applications will be reviewed.

In addition to the relevant consents the applicant was advised that any dewatering volumes discharged to the Board's system would be recharged to recover the costs associated with the Board dealing with the increase in volumes. Details of this have been passed to the Clerk to draw up the relevant contract to recover costs.

Planning Updates & Consultations

A “Strategic Planning Consultation Responses” document can be found on www.middlelevel.gov.uk via the following link Strategic Planning Consultation.

General Advice

Assistance has been given, on the Board’s behalf, in respect of the following:

a) Mr D M Newman – An application has been received for byelaw consent to infill a length of Board’s watercourse downstream of Point C7 and pipe and infill a length of private watercourse. Alternative drainage arrangements will be made utilising the existing adjacent lake. In wet periods should there be any overflow from the lake into the Board’s drainage system then this will be metered and paid for. The application is recommended for approval with the addition of five clauses added to the consent document relating to the specific requirements identified by the Board.

Consulting Engineer

9 December 2022

S&M(350)\Reports\December 22

SUTTON & MEPAL IDB

INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS AND BUNGALOW

	As At 31st March 2022
Fortrey Hall Pumping Station Electric	1,300,000.00
Fortrey Hall Pumping Station Diesel	1,500,000.00
	2,800,000.00
Mepal Pumping Station Bungalow	180,000.00
	2,980,000.00

Sutton & Mepal Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2022

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 Sutton & Mepal Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2022 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 Sutton & Mepal Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Sutton & Mepal 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: 26th September 2022

Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22

SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2022, 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 2021/22 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 2020/21, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements	✓		
M. The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) 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 2020/21 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: 28/06/2022 08/03/2022 22/03/2022

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: WHITINGS LLP

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: C. Potter – Whitings LLP

Date: 22/03/2022

*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 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

SUTTON & MEPAL 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:

28/06/2022

and recorded as minute reference:

B.2290

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

Chairman

Clerk

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

SUTTON & MEPAL 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	720,190	700,582	*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	229,511	236,745	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	24,050	15,302	*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	36,183	35,684	*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	236,986	234,586	*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	700,582	682,359	*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	698,491	694,567	*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	3,202,164	3,202,164	*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 30th April 2022

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

28/06/2022

as recorded in minute reference:

B.2292

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

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of **SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD – DB0105**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/ .

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 2022; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor report 2021/22

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 2021/22

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 2022.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature: PKF Littlejohn LLP Date: 14/09/2022

* 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

BB/MM053
11 October 2022

Messrs. D Thomas, R Hill and S Ablett
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 2021-2022

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 2022, 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.

<u>General points</u>

1. **Asset Valuations and Insurances**

   It is noted that, whilst a large proportion of boards took the option to revalue for insurance purposes their pumping station and residential assets during recent years, there are still 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. Should a pumping station or residential property require a complete rebuild following an unforeseen catastrophic event, current valuations may no longer be appropriate given today's prices which may lead to a shortfall in funds which have to be met by surplus funds.

   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. This is especially important given the significant increase in material and labour costs seen in recent times as a result of rising inflation and global material shortages. However we are pleased to note that boards are being asked whether they wish for insurance to be index linked going forward and would strong suggest that all boards agree to this proposal.

1. **Asset Valuations and Insurances - Continued**

<u>*Client comment:*</u>

While we have put it to Boards to review pumping station valuations for insurance purposes, as separate statutory authorities it is up to each Board to review and approve what they consider to be an appropriate valuation and your point concerning possible under-insured amounts having to be funded directly by the Board following an event has been highlighted previously. A number of Boards have previously approved to index link valuations and we will be asking all Boards to consider this during the 2023 meetings, along with consideration of current valuations. This is an area already programmed to be reviewed every five years and hopefully with indexing we may not require such individual valuations going forward.

2. **Employee Benefits - Vehicle Usage**

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' vehicles 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. The Court of Appeal ruled in favour of HMRC and, as a result HMRC are now reminding employers of the importance to ensure that they have classified their vehicles correctly and as a result we would advise that this matter is kept under review both now and into the future to mitigate the risk of an unexpected tax bill arising. We would advise that this is considered across all boards going forward if this is not being taken into account already.

<u>*Client comment:*</u>

We are aware of the case and potential implications to employees of classification of vehicles. Generally, we do not make changes concerning additional passenger/load capabilities to that of the original manufacturer's specification, which are relied upon alongside the HMRC guidance when designating vehicles for taxation/benefits in kind.

3. 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 and ideally the rationale being documented in the accounts pack provided to us as part of the internal audit

We would also recommend that any such old debts or provisions (apart 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 accounting procedures, provisions/balances are looked at on an individual basis and decisions made on relevance as to retain or to write back.

4. 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.

The budgets that have been set for 2022/23 year may need to be increased throughout the year due to the significant cost increases that are currently well publicised in the media, most notably in relation to the cost of gas and electricity as a result of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

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.

5. Surplus Funds

It is noted a number of IDB's hold significant cash reserves, with inflation now being at a 40 year high, all IDB's need to consider investing their surplus funds, in order to achieve greater return on public funds and to ensure value for money principles are observed and cash asset values are not eroded overtime. We appreciate that in recent years interest rates would have made such an exercise unfruitful when taking into account the associated admin cost involved in such an undertaking. However, with the Bank of England now increasing interest rates to combat rising inflation in the UK, we would advise that this is now an opportune time to conduct such an exercise.

Client comment:

We have previously made arrangements with our bankers concerning the costs for the provision of banking services and interest which when added together more than covered the costs associated with monthly/quarterly administration costs in transferring funds. As mentioned, interest rates in recent years have been negligible and as responsible public authorities we need to maintain caution as to where funds may be deposited - the general principle of the higher the reward the higher the risk applies. During this period we did re-negotiate our banking arrangements and maintained the cost benefit in relation to the provision of banking services. Although it is correct that the Bank of England is increasing interest rates to combat inflation, rates will not match/keep pace with (current) inflation and with the current spiralling fuel costs we also need to ensure Boards have sufficient liquidity to meet ongoing operational expenditure. We have planned meetings with our bankers when this will be discussed further as well as looking at possible alternative places for longer term investments.

6. **Rental of Land**

It was previously noted that some IDB's were renting out land to tenants for less than market value and that this should be reviewed to ensure value for money principles were being applied.

We are happy to note that some IDB's have increased the rental values of land to market rates, although there are still some IDB's where the rental value is significantly below market value and we advise that the market values are increased for these boards to ensure value for money principles are applied going forwards.

Client comment:

Boards which have land holding for rent generally review rents in accordance with tenancy agreements and use local land agents for guidance. A number of Boards have small holdings of land which are let at reasonable rates with a view to keep the land tidy and in good order as they are not necessarily commercially viable. A number of Boards have slamp land, which cannot be considered the same as general agricultural land for rental purposes. All Boards look to get the best rents available, but these are relevant to the size and type of land being let.

Specific Points

Conington & Holme IDB

We note that the pumping station owned by the board is insured at less than the latest revaluation amount, see below;

Insured value	610,000
Latest revaluation	685,630
Underinsured	**75,630**

We understand that the board took the conscious decision not to uplift the insurance value in line with the revaluation figure suggested by the engineer. As already highlighted above, should any significant event occur, such as a major fire, resulting in the need to reinstate the asset in full, the board run the risk of the shortfall which would require the use of surplus balances to cover the resulting deficit in funds. We would therefore strongly recommend that the board consider increasing the insured value to the revaluation figure.

Client comment:

Although as previously mentioned these points will be raised as agenda items your comments and recommendations will also be considered when reviewing the internal audit report.

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.

Waldersey IDB - Debtor	25,936.95
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	25,500
Difference	**436.95**

We are pleased to note that this difference is insignificant for the current year. The difference arises due to the accounts of Hundred of Wisbech IDB being completed before Waldersey IDB, leading to a provision being required in the former's books in the absence of more accurate information being 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.

Client comment:

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 both Boards.

There are no current plans to change meeting dates so as one set of accounts is finalised before the other there is likely to remain creditor/debtor position in both sets of accounts although now that all older balances have been cleared, any in-year balance should be cleared, generally a year in arrears.

March East IDB

During our review it was noted that the onsite pumping station attendant's payments were not authorised during the year, the amounts charged by the attendant are similar to the rental costs charged to the individual for occupying residential property owned by the district. We understand that this arrangement has been agreed at board level to ensure that the individual is not financially penalised in carrying out their duties for the board. However, this treatment appears to be at odds with the amount charged being disproportionate when compared to other IDB's that we have audited. We would advise that these amounts most certainly should be authorised to ensure adequate controls are maintained over the purchase function and we would also question how HMRC would interpret the arrangement should they carry out any follow up review in the future.

Client comment:

Following a review in the previous financial year residential property rent was re-assessed in-line with current guidance from HMRC. At the same time the value of the attendant's services was re-appraised. These reviews were approved by the Board. There were no changes proposed for 2022 so the original resolution remained unchanged. However, we agree with your comments and both areas will be considered annually as separate agenda items.

March Sixth DDC

During the course of our audit we noted that the 2021/22 public rights notice had not been published on the website, we are pleased to note that following notification of this fact the notice was promptly uploaded. We are satisfied that this is an isolated incident but would remind all boards of their obligation to comply with the requirements in this area and to ensure that all relevant documents are published in a timely manner.

<u>Client comment:</u>

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 as well as display on the website, notices are also displayed in paper format withing the District.

Your comment is noted and procedures will be amended concerning this for the future.

We 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. We trust that the engagement team have not caused significant disruption during the execution of their procedures.

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 2022

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 31 October 2022 a copy must be provided to:

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Division, Floor 3, Seacole, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF via flood.reports@defra.gov.uk
- National Flood and Coastal Risk Manager (Strategic Delivery), The Environment Agency, Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AH via james.addicott@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 £.

SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAIANGE BOARD

Section A – Financial information

Preliminary information on special levies issued by the Board for 2022-23

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 2022-23 (forecast)	
Name of local authority	**2022-23 forecast £**
1. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	21,891
2. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	18,526
3. EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	9,861
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	**50,278**

Section A – Financial information (continued)

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2022

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 2022 £
INCOME		
1. Drainage Rates		191,546
2. Special Levies		45,199
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		6,298
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		300
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		8,570
9. Interest and Investment Income		34
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		0
11. Other Income		101
Total Income		**252,048**
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		0
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		113,104
14. Watercourse maintenance		88,362
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		74,387
16. Administration		19,248
17. PSCAs		0
18. Rechargeable Works		0
19. Finance Charges		0
20. SSSIs		0
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		673
22. Other Expenditure		269
Total expenditure		**296,043**

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		0
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**(43,995)**
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		265,598
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?)............................ 2022

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

When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)?................................ 28/06/2022

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?

66.5

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

1

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

5.77 cumecs

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) ☐

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?	17
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	4
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	16
Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	1
Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	10
Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	0

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?

0.43%

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

SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Signature	
Date	12/04/2022
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT
Designation	ASSISTANT TREASURER
Email address	sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2022/2023

		Approved budget 2022/2023 £	Actual to 30/11/2022 £	Forecast to 31/03/2022 £
1	Rates, telephones and insurances	6,000	5,570	6,000
2	Drainworks, repairs and renewals (including Environmental measures)	20,000 [A]	14,480 [B]	23,000 [C]
	Drainage channel - Cranbrook	0	0	0
3	Oil and electricity	59,000 [D]	17,543	61,000
4	District labour	39,000	26,009	39,000
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	20,250 [E]	7,899 [E]	20,250 [E]
6	Environment Agency - Precept	115,366	115,366	115,366
7	Plant replacement	25,000 [F]	1,040	37,500 [G]
		284,616	187,908	302,116
	LESS :			
	Use of balances	0	0	0
	Revenue income	13,535	12,530	27,897 [H]
		271,081	175,378	274,219

Rates and Special Levy raised 2022/2023 - 43.00p £271,081

Remarks

A -	Includes for:	
	Maintenance/general	6,000
	Service/repairs to excavator	3,500
		9,500
B -	Includes for:	
	Maintenance/general	1,761
	Service/repairs to excavator	998
	Service/repairs to tractor/mower	3,023
		5,782
C -	Includes additional for excavator repairs	3,000
D -	Provision based on 5 year average plus 50% for new contract rates	
E -	Includes for new Health & Safety arrangements	
F -	Provision for plant replacement strategy	
G -	Replacement and fitting pump no.1	
H -	Includes asset replacement fund for balance of pump replacement	12,500