CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Telephone: DD (01354) 6699377

E-mail: enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
www.middlelevel.gov.uk

Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
MARCH
Cambs
PE15 0AH

28th April 2023

Dear Board Members

Meeting of the Board
9th May 2023

I enclose the Agenda for the Meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March at 2.00 pm on Tuesday 9th May 2023.

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

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

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

Yours truly

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

To the Chairman and the Members of the Curf and Wimblington Combined 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 10th May 2022.

   (Copy pages 12 - 23)

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. Bank Mandate and National Savings & Investments

   The Clerk will report that it is necessary to update the signatories after April 2023.

7. Member Training Update

   The Clerk to report on the training undertaken by Members in the past year.

8. Fens Reservoir Update

   The Clerk to update.

9. Inspection of District

   Further to minute B515, The Chairman to report.

8. Clerk's Report

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a ninth 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) 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.

b) Annual Conference 2023

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities for 2023 is yet to be announced.

c) Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch

The Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse ADA Branch was held on Tuesday 7th March 2023

Morning workshops were re-introduced for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak and members who attended took part in an excellent discussion focussed on three topic areas; Fens2100; Water Resources East and Climate Change. Steven Trewhella (consultant to the EA on Fens2100) and Daniel Johns (Chief Exec, WRE) took away a wide range of ideas centred around how the two topics were connected by the work of IDBs.

Within the AGM, Marc Heading was re-appointed as Chairman and Doug McMurdo as Vice Chair with approval that the secretariat of the branch be transitioned from the Middle Level Commissioners to the Bedford Group of IDBs over the coming months. Ian Moodie (Technical Manager, ADA) gave an overview of ADA's activities, including their important inputs on behalf of IDBs into the long-awaited implementation of schedule 3 of the Floods & Water Management Act. Tom Pickover introduced himself ahead of starting as Operations Manager at the Environment Agency (covering the lower Great Ouse catchment) and was joined by Darren Trumper who between them gave an overview of Environment Agency flood management activities and budgets.

iii) 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.

iv) Changes to Electricity Supply Contracts

The Clerk will report that Boards have encountered problems with the operation of the electricity contract by Anglia Farmers over the years. Following various meetings with them it appeared some of these problems were being addressed and the service appeared to be improving this, however, was short lived. Over the past 2 years there has again been a significant deterioration in both the quality of service and lack of account management received from Anglia Farmers.

During the summer the Middle Level Commissioners were approached by Green Energy Advice Bureau (GEAB), one of the UK's leading energy companies and buying group, whose portfolio includes numerous companies with over 200 million kwh tendered per annum. They have experience working with an estimated 60 Internal Drainage Boards, which include locally the Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards and Downham Market Group of Internal Drainage Boards. We accordingly contacted Jean Heading of the Ely Group of Internal Drainage to enquire of the service provided by GEAB and she has confirmed she is far happier with the service received from them compared to that from Anglia Farmers and since has signed a 5-year fixed rate contract with GEAB from 1st April 2022.

A report was presented to the Middle Level Commissioners at their Board meeting on 3rd November 2022 and due to the ongoing poor performance of Anglia Farmers, together with the positive feedback given by Jean Heading of the Ely Group, the Commissioners' resolved to consider moving to alternative arrangements. The Executive Committee were delegated the final decision and having considered a report on the options and subsequently confirmed their agreement that a move would be appropriate in the circumstances.

The Clerk will report this was considered a positive move and recommended the Board also move to this alternative arrangement.

The Clerk will report that this Board's Chairman had subsequently agreed for the Board to serve notice to Anglia Farmers and for Green Energy Advice Bureau to handle the energy procurement process and management of the electricity contract.

The Clerk will advise that the Middle Level Commissioners and its administered Boards have entered into a fixed rate energy supply with Corona Energy for an 18-month period from1st April 2023.

The Board are asked to approve the Chairmans actions.

v) Insurance

Historically the number of insurance companies willing to quote for the insurance requirements of the Middle Level Commissioners and administered Boards is limited.

Our insurance portfolio is complex and includes a range of policies that includes Commercial Combined (largest component), Motor Fleet, Engineering & Construction, Terrorism, Management Liability, Marine Craft and Professional Indemnity.

The overall cost of our insurance portfolio for 2023/24 will be £192,275 (£152,373 in 2022/23) a 26% increase, although increases will differ Board by Board depending on their individual insurance needs.

Key factors and changes are highlighted below:

For Commercial Combined insurance, 2022/23 was the last year in our previous five-year agreement with AXA which included a 7% price reduction woven into the deal. For 2023/24 Towergate, our brokers, approached several companies and all bar AXA were not willing to quote given the size and complexity of our portfolio. Independently we also approached the NFU who declined to quote for the same reason.
There has been an increase in fleet, property and marine assets included within our cover.
In view of rising inflation most Boards agreed to index link their insured sums from 1st April 2023.
AXA have increased insured sums by 15%, which has resulted in an increase within the overall premium.
AXA have offered a 2-year stability deal, where any premium increases, subject to claims not exceeding 50% of the written premium, will be capped for 2024/25 at 2.5%. This excludes any increases in sums insured.
AXA will not extend the stability deal as they plan a review of their whole IDB scheme in 2025.
Commercial combined policy excess has increased from £350 to £2,500. None of our four 2022/23 claim values were above this new excess.
Excesses are dictated by AXA's overall scheme for all IDBs and this is apparently now standard and has been imposed due to the number of lower value claims across the whole IDB industry. As other IDB/IDB Groups come out of their previous agreement with AXA the above will apply.

For future years Boards ought to consider index linking their valuations of properties and pumping stations every 3-5 years rather than annually, to mitigate annual premium increases and balancing having suitable cover without being over-insured.

It should also be noted that personal accident and sickness cover only covers employees or members up to 80 years of age. Boards may need to consider the implications of this.

vi) Delegation of signatory on consents

The Board is asked to note that under the Board's scheme of delegation, the Chief Executive has delegated the authority to sign consent on behalf of the Board to the Chief Engineer. As well as the Chief Engineer being better placed to technically assure individual consents, this will enable the them to effectively take ownership over the whole planning and consenting service. This also creates a mechanism for escalation in case of any issues or complaints.

vii) Service Delivery Frameworks

The Board are asked to resolve that the Clerk, on their behalf, be authorised to enter into user and/or access agreements for public sector delivery frameworks (For example, Environment Agency Delivery Frameworks and SCAPE). This will open up access to the fees, terms and conditions of these Frameworks so our Consulting Engineers can compare and choose the most suitable procurement route for delivery of the Boards future needs. This does not tie the Board to using any Framework they then have a user/access agreement with, and Frameworks are not the only procurement route for delivery that will be considered. Having this resolution from all the Boards we administer is key if we are to package work across Boards to exploit economies of scale and become more efficient and effective in the delivery of services.

10. Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

a) To consider the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

(Copy Pages 24 - 51)

b) To consider the Supplementary Report Improving Capital Delivery

(Copy Pages 52 - 54)

11. Capital Improvement Programme

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

(Copy page 55)

12. Environment Officer's Report

The Clerk to refer to the Environment Officer's Report.

(Copy pages 56 - 63)

13. Pumping Station duties

To give consideration to the payments in respect of pumping duties for 2023/2024.

14. State-aided Schemes

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

15. Environment Agency – Precept

The Clerk will report that at the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that there were exceptional circumstances to consider on the agreed 2% increase on the precepts on Internal Drainage Boards. The Committee voted for an additional 1% increase (reflecting exceptional circumstances) above the agreed 2% for the year ending 31st March 2024 – total of a 3% increase on the level of precept on Internal Drainage Boards for the year ending 31st March 2024.

The precept for 2022/2023 was £10,323.

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

The Clerk will report that following his submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £442.24 (£6,753.74 less £6,311.50 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment Agency for the financial year 2021/2022 based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £5,396.14 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2022/2023.

17. Letting of herbage

To consider letting of herbage 2024.

The present lettings are:-

i) Narrow Drove, Green Drove (from Narrow Drove to the South Bank) and South Bank (from the Commissioners' Pumping Station to Block Fen Drove) to Mr Robin Gowler for £10 per annum.

ii) North Bank (from Boots Bridge to the Commissioners' Pumping Station) to M F Martin Limited for £5 per annum.

18. Association of Drainage Authorities
Subscriptions

The Clerk will report that ADA has increased subscriptions by 4.5% for 2023, from £648 to £678.

19. Review Flail Mowing for 2022 season and consider 2023 season

The Chairman to report.

20. Determination of annual value(s) for rating purposes

The Clerk will submit the recommendation(s) for the determination of annual value(s) for rating purposes.

(See Confidential Papers)

21. Contributions from Developers

The Clerk will report that contributions towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume have been received.

(See Confidential Papers)

22. Health and Safety

The Chairman will advise on the report by Cope Safety Management regarding their visit on 17th January 2023.

(Copy pages 64 - 70)

23. 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 71 - 75)

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

(Copy pages 76 - 85)

24. Appointment of Internal Auditor

The clerk to report that following the conclusion of tendering Whitings LLP have been appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28).

(Copy pages 86 - 99)

25. Defra IDB1 Returns

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

(Copy pages 100 - 109)

26. Budgeting

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

(Copy page 110)

27. Review of Internal Controls

To consider the system of Internal Controls and appointment of Internal Auditor.

28. 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 to index-link sums insured from 2023

(Copy page 111)

29. Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk to refer to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

30. Annual Governance Statement – 2022/2023

To review and complete the Annual Governance Statement.

(Copy page 112)

31. Payments 2022/2023

The Clerk to report on payments made during the financial year 2022/2023.

(Schedule pages 113)

32. Annual Accounts of the Board - 2022/2023

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2023 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations.

(Copy pages 114 - 118)

33. Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2023/2024

To consider estimates of revenue expenditure and levy and rate requirements in respect of the financial year 2023/2024.

(Copy pages 119 - 121)

34. Date of next Meeting

35. Any other business

CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Curf and Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Tuesday the 10th May 2022

PRESENT

M E Heading Esq (Chairman)	D Nicholas Esq
C E Martin Esq	R J Angood Esq
D S Morris Esq	L A Nicholas Esq
C Gowler Esq	G Wakeham Esq
S Edgley Esq	R Mason Esq

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

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Davies, R Gowler esq and A Morris.

B.511 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 interests (as a Member of the Middle Level Board) in matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners.

B.512 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 11th May 2021 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.513 Vacancy in Membership

The Clerk reported that Timothy Boor had joined the Board.

B.514 Land Drainage Act 1991 - Board Membership – Fenland District Council

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

B.515 Inspection of District

The Chairman asked members if any felt there would be merit in arranging an inspection but the general feeling was that one was not required at this time. The Chairman suggested that should any member wish to view any of the Board's assets or lengths of maintained system then they can contact him and he will arrange for this to take place.

B.516 Contravention of Byelaws – Infilling of Ditch – Byall Fen Drove

It was noted that nothing further had been heard on this matter and the Chairman considered that it was largely a private boundary matter. It was agreed by members that this item no longer needs to be on the agenda.

Resolved

This item be removed from the agenda going forward unless new representations are made to the Board.

B.517 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised as follows:-

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) Application(s) for byelaw consent

That the following application(s) for consent to undertake works in and around watercourses has/have been approved and granted since the last general meeting of the Board/Commissioners:-

Name of Applicant	Details of Work Consented	Date of Consent
W G Beaumont & Son Ltd	To undertake maintenance painting works to a Cadent Gas pipe at three locations: Site No. 1 Crossing the Board's watercourse at Point 88, Site No. 2 Crossing the Board's watercourse between Points 88 and Site No. 3 Near to Point 92.	04/10/2021

iv) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

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

The Conference was once again held virtually and was split into two parts; the Conference in the morning and AGM in the afternoon. It is expected that, whilst in future years it is hoped to return to a face-to-face format, the clear separation between conference and AGM is likely to be retained.
Speakers this year included Rebecca Row MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State – Defra), Dieter Helm (economist) and Lord De Ramsey (then President of ADA).

Topics covered included the challenges of climate change and the need to step up to the plate in delivering on the aim to achieve a net zero target as soon as possible, the importance of partnership working and the importance of agriculture in feeding the nation. The latter included the need to better educate the population, who clearly desire to move forward on delivering climate change and ecological objectives, but do not fully appreciate the role of agriculture, its real impacts or even properly understood where and how food is sourced. One example given that challenged a common assumption that agriculture was bad for the environment was that recent monitoring of CO^2 release had shown that a well irrigated peat field of onions released less CO^2 than adjacent dry grassland.

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

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

b) <u>Annual Conference</u>

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

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

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

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

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

Sofi Lloyd announced that Brian Stewart and Ian Hodge from the EA had recently joined the ADA Board and that DEFRA had asked ADA to liaise with them on the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act. She was also 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.

d) Updating IDB Byelaws

That further to minute B.404, ADA had advised that there was an error in the Model Byelaws relating to a Penalty Notice which referred to s37 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982, which was actually repealed on the 1.12.2020 by the Sentencing Act 2020. Consequently, Defra had amended the Penalty Notice attached to the byelaws to include the correct reference. This Penalty Notice is not part of the Byelaws and, as such, is a simple correction. There was therefore no requirement either to readvertise, or seek Defra approval and the version now uploaded to the website is the corrected one.

v) Environment Act

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

vi) Smart Level System/District Wide Telemetry Bid

Further to minute B.484 (vi), the Clerk reported that an order has been placed for telemetry at all 5 pumping stations and that installation should take place during the summer of 2022.

vii) Anglia Farmers

Further to minute B.484(vii), the Clerk advised that although the running of the remainder of the Anglia Farmers electricity contract has continued to be monitored it has been difficult to address some of the issues due to the restrictions caused by COVID-19.
In view of this, the Middle Level Commissioners' resolved to remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30th September 2021 and to continue to monitor the performance of Anglia Farmers over the new contract period.

The Clerk reported that in addition it was proposed that quotes for 'green energy' be included, with a view to moving over to this form of power supply if the cost differential is marginal. The Clerk further reported that the need to show that IDBs carbon footprint is being actively managed over future years is expected to increase with the Environment Agency setting themselves the target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

The Clerk reported that the Chairman had subsequently agreed for the Board to remain with Anglia Farmers.

viii) Fens Biosphere

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

ix) 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.

x) Red Diesel

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

Members wished to that MLC staff and ADA for their extensive efforts in securing this position.

xi) Planning and Consenting Fees

The Clerk outlines a number of proposed changes to planning and consenting service supply charging.

The two changes that were proposed and reasoning for them was given as outlined below.

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

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

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

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

2. Many members have noted that the reporting in relation to planning application comments and responses is comprehensive. Again, it often takes many hours to produce such detailed reports for which the Board is charged. This time could be spent in dealing with and taking action on planning and consenting matters.

   There is also the issue of the potential time lapse between any planning/byelaw issue raising its head and the meeting of the Board. It is of course normally advantageous to take action as soon as possible after any issue had become apparent. It is therefore proposed that going forward the Board nominate who they wish to be copied in on all planning correspondence, for example the Chair and Vice-Chair. They will then be able to liaise with the Planning Engineer if they wish to and will be conversant with discussions being undertaken. The Board may also wish to delegate decision making for initial actions for byelaw infringements to the Board nominee/s.

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

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

   The Board discussed both proposals and drilled down into the detail of the proposals. At the end of the discussions, they agreed that there were clear benefits to be had. One question raised was what would happen if not all MLC administered Boards chose to adopt the new arrangements. The Clerk advised that at least for the time being parallel systems could be run and that those Boards who chose to retain the old arrangements would obviously also still be paying for the extra costs of associated admin.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

1) That the Board no longer receive comprehensive planning and consenting reports and that instead the Chairman and Vice Chairman would respond and instruct as necessary on planning issues, save where the Chairman specifically asks for a particular planning or consenting matter to be reported upon.

2) That subject to the Chairman finding the finalised figures acceptable the Board move to an annual lump sum payment arrangement for planning and consenting advice.

xii) National Drainage Show & Floodex 2022

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

B.518 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

Mr Lakey advised that Ashman was again available to assist with the Board's maintenance activities but noted there were likely to be increases in the hourly rates due to higher fuel costs.

The right to connect consultation was discussed and the merits of both options considered. It was generally felt that the current arrangements were the better option given the risks associated with the alternative proposal. Members however had concerns over the state of Anglian Waters assets and believed them to be under capacity leading to releases of untreated effluent in times of high rainfall.

It was noted that a quote for Fincham's pumping station was still awaited.

RESOLVED

1. To employ Ashman again, noting that rates may be higher this year reflecting increases in fuel costs

2. To record that the Board wishes the current arrangements to continue on the right-to-connect.

3. To write to Anglian Water expressing concern that their system was stressed and under capacity leading to risks to public health and damage to the environment.

B.519 Capital Improvement Programme

The Board reviewed its programme of improvements, noting the need to invest in Fincham's and Curf pumping stations very soon to avoid risk of failures occurring. The Board considered the expected cost of refurbishing Benson's pumping station which is in the programme for this year and concluded that given the predicted costs, the timings and the amount of work and delay trying to obtain GiA would cause the scheme would continue to be fully funded by the Board. For the other pumping stations it was felt that a combined phased GiA application should be developed and submitted to the EA. As part of this it was suggested that the figure for Fincham's should be re-examined as members felt it was higher than expected.

RESOLVED

1) Progress with the Benson's scheme without grant this year

2) Develop a GiA bid for the remedial works/improvements planned for the other pumping stations needing investment in the next 5 or 6 years. Works to be phased over this EA funding cycle if possible.

B.520 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

The Clerk referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter previously circulated to Members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

B.521 Pumping Station duties

The Board gave consideration to the payments in respect of pumping duties for 2022/2023 and asked what the MLC pay award had been this year. The Clerk advised that the award had been 3%.

RESOLVED

That the payments for the 2022/23 be increased by 3% as compared to those of the previous year.

B.522 State-aided Schemes

See B.519

B.523 Environment Agency – Precepts

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

The precept for 2021/2022 was £10,121.00.

B.524 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

The Clerk will report that following his submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £3,572.62 (£8,047.85 less £4,475.24 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment Agency for the financial year 2020/2021 based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £6,311.50 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2021/2022.

B.525 Letting of Herbage

The Board considered the letting of herbage 2023.

Members agreed that the rates should remain at the previous year's figure, namely:-

i) Narrow Drove, Green Drove (from Narrow Drove to the South Bank) and South Bank (from the Commissioners' Pumping Station to Block Fen Drove) to Mr Robin Gowler for £10 per annum.

ii) North Bank (from Boots Bridge to the Commissioners' Pumping Station) to M F Martin Limited for £5 per annum.

B.526 Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscriptions

The Clerk reported that ADA has increased subscriptions by 1% for 2022, from £642 to £648.

RESOLVED

That the subscription rate for this year of £648 be paid.

B.527 Review Flail Mowing for 2021 season and consider 2022 season

The Chairman reported that it was intended to continue with the current arrangements and that just alternating banksides would be flailed each year.

B.528 Contributions from Developers

The Clerk reported that contributions towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume had been received and were as detailed in the confidential papers.

B.529 Health and Safety

The Chairman reported that any matters which had arisen during the year had been attended to.

B.530 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2020/2021

a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2021.

b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2021.

RESOLVED

That the Internal Auditor be appointed for a further year.

B.531 Defra IDB1 Returns

The Clerk referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2020/2021 which Members noted and approved.

B.532 Budgeting

The Clerk referred to the budget update 2020/2021 reviewed by the Chairman, with comparison to year end out-turn added, and any actions taken.

The Board noted and approved the content.

B.533 Review of Internal Controls and appointment of Internal Auditor

a) The Commissioners considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls.
b) The Commissioners were satisfied with the proposals for the appointment of the Internal Auditor and for the proposed Strategy and Audit plan 2023-25

B.534 Risk Management Assessment

a) The Commissioners considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls

b) The Commissioners did not express a wish for the current values of its building to be reviewed.

B.535 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.536 Annual Governance Statement – 2021/2022

The Clerk made reference to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Returns, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

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.537 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £112,505.41 which had been made during the financial year 2021/2022.

The Board noted and approved the payments made on the behalf of the Board.

(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 R & J A Gowler.

B.538 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 Commissioners, for the financial year ending 31st March 2022.

B.539 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 2022/2023 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 contributions would be 90.01% and by special levy on local billing authorities and by contribution would be 9.99%.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved,

ii) That a total sum of £105,042 be raised by drainage rates and special levy and by way of contribution from the Middle Level Commissioners under the Wimblington 2nd District Drainage Order 1922.

iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy and contribution from the Middle Level Commissioners are £90,277, £9,753 and £5,012 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 25.50p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special levy of £9,753 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

vi) That a contribution of £5,012 be made by the Middle Level Commissioners in respect of Byall Fen in accordance with Wimblington 2nd District Drainage Order 1922.

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

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

B.540 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 2pm – MLC Offices

Curf & Wimblington Combined I.D.B.
Consulting Engineers Report – April 2023

Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

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

A Roundup herbicide application was applied to the Board's drains included within last year's machine cleansing programme, and also to other District drains where it was required to control sporadic growths of emergent aquatic vegetation.

The postponed bank revetment works on the main Wimblington Common pump drain, reach 41-42, was completed last year as agreed. It was noted that during the installation of the timber revetment to the southern bank of the drain, the northern side was unstable and its integrity had deteriorated further by the time the works to the southern side had been completed. With the Chairman's agreement, additional timber revetment was installed along the toe on the northern bank further stabilising the bank and returning it to the original profile.

Wimblington Common Pump Drain revetment works, reach 41-42

Aquatic vegetation, reach 44-51

A recent inspection of the Board's drains has revealed that the majority are in a generally satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. The inspection did identify sporadic stands of emergent aquatic vegetation in the Wimblington Common pump catchment and they will be included in this year's herbicide programme.

Following the Board's agreement at the annual meeting in 2016, Finchams Farm pump drain, reach 38-39, was included within the Board's phased machine cleansing programme on an annual basis. Board members will be aware in recent years of the on-going reactive/emergency machine cleansing that has been required for several seasons along this particular drain, prior to the Board's annual cleansing programme's implementation. In anticipation this will be an on-going situation, a sum to allow for the cleansing work to be undertaken has been included within the Board's estimated costs.

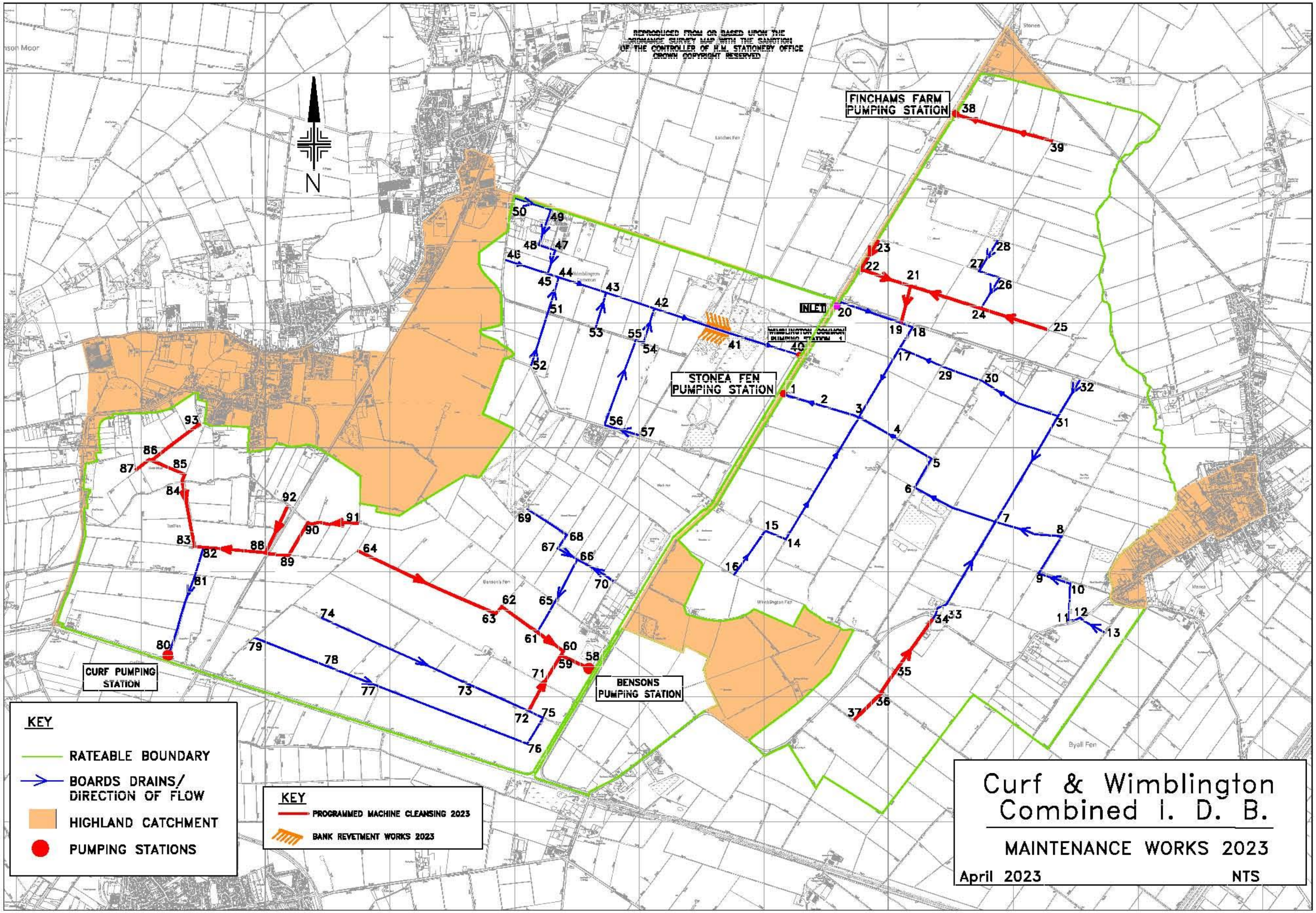
A sum has also been included within the estimate to allow for drains that fall within this year's phased machine cleansing programme, and any others that require a Roundup application to control aquatic weed growth, to be treated later in the growing season.

The flail mowing programme has continued with the cutting of both banks on drains in the current season's machine cleansing programme and alternate sides each year on any other Board's drains where access allows. This allows for environmental gains within the catchment and provides a cost saving to the Board on their annual works expenditure.

Typical example of the alternate sides @ Point 81

The Board's flail mowing contractors, Messrs Ashman, have indicated that they will no longer be available to undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements, and have intimated they wish to reduce their annual workload. Messrs Ashman would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for their continued commitment to their business and for awarding the flail mowing contract to them over many years.

A sum for the completion of flail mowing of the Board's drains for the ensuing year has been included in the estimated costs. **It is recommended that the Board reviews its requirements for flail mowing and considers an alternative contractor for the ensuing year.**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STATION
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/
DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
KEY
PROGRAMMED MACHINE CLEANSING 2023
BANK REVETMENT WORKS 2023
Curf & Wimblington
Combined I. D. B.
MAINTENANCE WORKS 2023
April 2023
NTS

The estimated cost of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain Maintenance programme is as follows, see previous district plan for locations.

1. Machine cleanse reaches within this year's Phased Cleansing Programme:

Curf Catchment					
• Reach 87-93	650	m	@	1.50	975.00
• Reach 88-92	450	m	@	1.50	675.00
• Reach 91-90-89-88-82-83-84-85-86	2300	m	@	1.50	3450.00
Finchams Farm Catchment					
• Reach 38-39	800	m	@	1.20	960.00
Stonea Fen Catchment					
• Reach 34-35-36-37	1100	m	@	1.50	1650.00
• Reach 19-21	300	m	@	1.50	450.00
• Reach 23-22-21-24-25	1900	m	@	1.50	2850.00
Bensons Catchment					
• Reach 59-71-72	600	m	@	1.50	900.00
• Reach 58-59-60-61-62-63-64	2200	m	@	1.50	3300.00
2. Allow sum for Roundup application to District Drains	Item		Sum		1500.00
3. Flail mowing of District drains	Item		Sum		8000.00
4. Provisional Item Allow sum for emergency cott clearance, culvert clearance or bank slip repair works	Item		Sum		1500.00
5. Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Board, arrangement and supervision of herbicide application and maintenance works	Item		Sum		2200.00
			TOTAL	**£**	**28,410.00**

Orders for the application of Roundup herbicide by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that they are weather dependant, and they will not be held responsible for the efficacy or failure of any treatments.

Pumping Stations

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

In view of the recent announcement by Anglian Water proposing to locate a new water supply reservoir within the catchments of Bensons and Curf pumping stations (Reference the Fens Reservoir section on the following page), **it is recommended that the Board review the whole district and develop an appropriate plan for pumping station refurbishment and management, including the proposed works at Finchams.**

Please also refer to the Consulting Engineers' Supplementary Report - April 2023 Improving Capital Delivery. A Project Initiation Form should be used to capture all the relevant information provided to the Consulting Engineer (see Appendix 1).

Bensons

Weedscreen limit switch replaced to rectify trolley travel faults.

Curf

Level sensor cable was uprated to armoured after it had been damaged by rodents. Weedscreen hydraulic hose recoil system repaired.

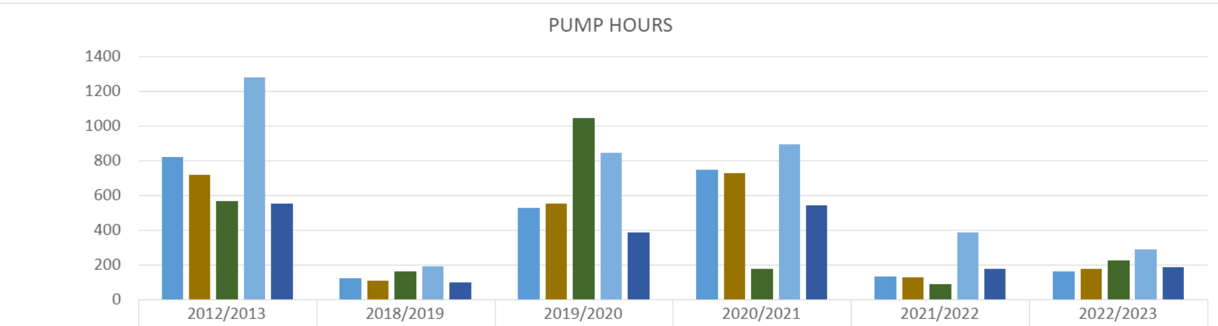
Finchams Farm,

The pump tripped during rainfall over the Christmas period due to build up of weed, this has not been a problem since the drain works.

Stonea Fen

Time clock replaced as faulty and not allowing pumps to run in auto.

Pumping Hours



	2012/2013	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
BENSONS	822	125	530	749	131	161
CURF	717	107	551	728	128	178
FINCHAMS	567	162	1043	179	89	226
STONEA FEN	1277	190	843	893	384	289
WIMB. COM	550	100	384	540	176	188

Electricity Readings

Due to the volatility of the electricity market, taking regular and accurate manual electricity meter readings is 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 applied.

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.

Fens Reservoir

The Fens Reservoir proposal is moving forward at pace. The Gateway 2 draft decision was published by OFWAT on 30th March 2023 with the final decision due on 28th June 2023. Within the draft decision:

"The evidence suggests that the solution is a potentially valuable way of supplying water to customers. However, there are concerns regarding the progression of the strategic solution due to the Fens Reservoir having notably high unit costs and the limited evidence provided to us that the Fens Reservoir solution is the best value option for meeting the need. We would like to see clear and robust evidence around the selection of Fens Reservoir as a best value option, including how the solution performs against other feasible solutions. On that basis, we will allow the solution owners to continue to develop the solution up to a conditional review point of 29th January 2024 ("Conditional Review Point"), after which partner regulators will make a final recommendation on progression beyond the Conditional Review Point to Ofwat."

Anglian Water are addressing the concerns raised and also moving forward with the critical enabling elements of design. If the project passes the Conditional Review Point, the Gateway 3 date will be September 2024 and by this time the outline design will likely be finalised.

Since January 2023, we have had a different approach to influencing and engaging with the project, and now have confidence that Anglian Water and their design consultant, Mott MacDonald, is actively listening and recognise the need to better understand the water management system within which the reservoir will integrate and hopefully transform.

We now have bespoke and focussed engagement with the project team and have identified four themes where we are uniquely placed to input and where ultimately there is the greatest opportunity for ratepayers, local communities and navigators. Thus, we are focussing our limited technical capacity to these themes:

- St Germans pond as a potential source of water
- Options for emergency drawdown
- The Reservoir footprint
- Potential open water transfers

The Middle Level Commissioners' (MLC) Chief Executive, Vice Chairman and Navigation Advisory Committee Chairman are members of the Fens Water Partnership, facilitated by Water Resources East, to act as a multi-sector steering group for the project. At their session on 6th April 2023 there was a specific focus on the opportunity to integrate the Reservoir within the Middle Level system.

We are working to secure a cost recovery arrangement with Anglian Water for technical staff time and are providing in-kind contributions of data. Whilst we are working on the basis that the opportunity we see within the Reservoir design is core, and should be funded by the project, the Board is asked to consider earmarking funding with authority for expenditure delegated to the MLC Chief Executive and Vice Chairman, should there be a need to invest promptly within the Gateway 2 window to secure significant benefits before the Gateway 3 date.

Planning Applications

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

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
592	Treated effluent	Various	Residential	The Oaks, Doddington*
593	F/YR22/0391/F	Mr & Mrs Leeding	Residence (Extension)	Manea Road, Wimblington
594	F/YR22/0350/F	Mr A Bamford	Residence (Extension)	Newgate Street, Doddington
595	F/YR22/0345/F	Mr A Garrett	Residential (3 plots)	New Street, Doddington
596	F/YR22/0434/PNH	Mr & Mrs Munden	Residence (Extension)	Manor Estate, Doddington
597	F/YR22/0495/O	PB Developments & Investments/Newman	Residential (Up to 9 plots)	Westfield Road, Manea *
598	F/YR22/0507/AG1	Mr & Mrs I Gowler	Agricultural (Tractor store)	Primrose Hill, Doddington
599	F/YR22/0584/F	Mr C Pritchard	Residence (Extension)	High Street, Doddington
600	F/YR22/3057/COND	Mr & Mrs I Gowler	Residence	Primrose Hill, Doddington
601	F/YR22/0598/F	Mr L Russell	Residential (2 plots)	Church Lane, Doddington
602	F/YR22/0682/F	Mr & Mrs Peters	Residence (Extension)	Newgate Street, Doddington
603	F/YR22/0751/RM	Mr J Mason	Residence	Church Street, Wimblington
604	F/YR22/0765/F	Mr Palmer	Residence (Extension)	Newgate Street, Doddington
605	F/YR22/0766/F	Mrs T Littler	Residence (Extension)	Primrose Hill, Doddington
606	F/YR22/0801/F	Mrs W Primrose	Residence (Extension)	Normoor Drove, Chatteris
607	F/YR22/0813/F	Mr F Notarius	Residence	Manea Road, Wimblington
608	F/YR22/0838/F	Mr R King	Residential (2 plots)	School Lane, Manea
609	F/YR22/1021/F	Ms A Anderson-Donovan	Residence (Extension)	Witchford Close, Doddington
610	F/YR22/1033/RM	Mr A Chambers	Residential (2 plots)	Primrose Hill, Doddington
611	F/YR22/1020/F	Mr C Mohr	Residence (Extension)	Doddington Road, Wimblington*
612	F/YR22/1034/F	Miss S Watkins	Residence (Annexe)	High Street, Manea
613	F/YR22/1127/F	Mr L White	Residence (Rear garden room and canopy)	New Street, Doddington
614	F/YR22/1140/RM	JM Builds Ltd	Residential (3 plots)	Westfield Road, Manea

615	F/YR22/1156/O	Ifex Engineering	Residential (Up to 26 plots)	Westfield Road, Manea*
616	F/YR22/3085/COND	Delfland Nurseries	Commercial (Erection of glasshouses)	Benwick Road, Doddington
617	F/YR22/1217/PIP	Mr M Joyce	Residential (Up to 5 plots)	Manea Road, Wimblington
618	CCC/22/112/VAR	Mick George Ltd	Irrigation reservoirs	Wimblington Road, Manea
619	F/YR22/1261/PNC04	Mrs F Notarius	Change of use (Agricultural to dwelling)	Manea Road, Wimblington
620	F/YR22/1304/F	Mr T Gowing	Residence (Extension)	Fallow Corner Drove, Manea
621	Enquiry	Client of EPS Ltd	Flood risk information request	Primrose Hill, Doddington
622	F/YR23/0020/F	Mr & Mrs K Ankin	Residence (Extension)	Westfield Road, Manea*
623	F/YR23/0017/O	Karen Barker	Residential (Up to 6 plots)	Wimblington Road, Doddington*
624	F/YR23/0113/PIP	Hamilton Estates Ltd	Residential (Up to 9 plots)	Primrose Hill Doddington
625	F/YR23/0132/F	MF Martin Ltd	Change of Use (Agricultural to light industrial)	Sixteen Foot Bank, Wimblington

Planning applications ending 'PNH' relate to household permitted regulations notification
Planning applications ending 'AG1' relate to Agricultural Notification
Planning applications ending 'COND' or 'DISC' relate to the discharge of relevant planning conditions
Planning applications ending 'RM', 'REM' or 'RMM' relate to reserved matters
Planning applications ending 'PIP' and 'IP' relate to Permission in Principle
Planning applications ending 'VAR' relate to Variation of condition
Planning applications ending 'PNCO' relate to prior notification change of use issues

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 other Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

The following applicants have chosen to use the Infiltration Device Self-Certification Service and, in doing so, agreed that if the device was to fail in the future the land owner would be liable for any remedial works to rectify the situation.

(a) Mr Follett – residence at Manor Estate, Doddington (MLC Ref No 587)
(b) Mr Pritchard - residence at High Street, Doddington (MLC Ref No 599)
(c) Mr & Mrs Munden- residence at Manor Estate, Doddington (MLC Ref No 596)
(d) Mrs Anderson-Donovan – residence at Witchford Close, Doddington (MLC Ref 609)

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, with the exception of questions raised at the last Board Meeting. In the absence of any instruction no detailed entries have been made.

Planning Updates & Consultations

Please note that this document, which was prepared for the previous reporting period, is no longer available on the website; an update is currently being prepared and will hopefully be available shortly.

All responses to consultation documents were made on behalf of both the Middle Level Commissioners and its associated Boards.

Emerging Fenland Local Plan

The draft Local Plan which sets out the emerging policies and proposals for growth and regeneration, and the "proposed sites" to deliver this growth, was the subject of a Public Participation Consultation during September and October.

Proposed sites within the Board's catchment

Doddington

The "proposed sites", are shown on the extract (left) from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Doddington (Inset 08).

Extract from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Doddington (Inset 08) showing the proposed sites in the Board's catchment

The sites are:

A. Policy Reference LP48.01 (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment [SHELAA] Site reference 40140) – Land west of Turf Fen Lane and south of Newgate Street – 145 dwellings.

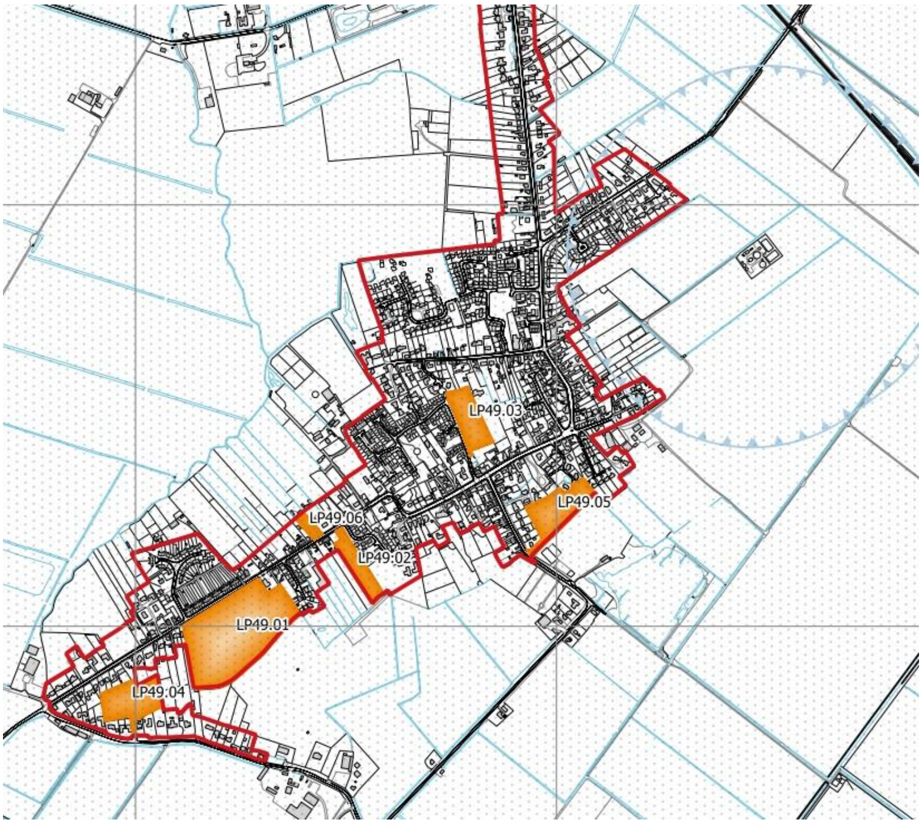
B. Policy Reference LP48.02 (SHELAA Site reference 40426) – Land south of Benwick Road – 55 dwellings.

C. Policy Reference LP48.05 (SHELAA Site reference 40140) – Land west of Turf Fen Lane and south of Newgate Street – 10 dwellings.

This site currently has planning permission for nine dwellings (MLC Ref Nos 528 & 583)

Proposed sites Policy Reference Nos LP48.01 and LP48.05 abut the current floodplain extent as shown on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning.

<u>Manea</u>



Extract from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Manea (Inset 15) showing the proposed sites in the Board's catchment

The "proposed sites", are shown on the extract (left) from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Manea (Inset 15).

These are:

A. Policy Reference LP49.03 (SHELAA Site reference 40038) – Land north of 28 - 30 High Street – 32 dwellings.

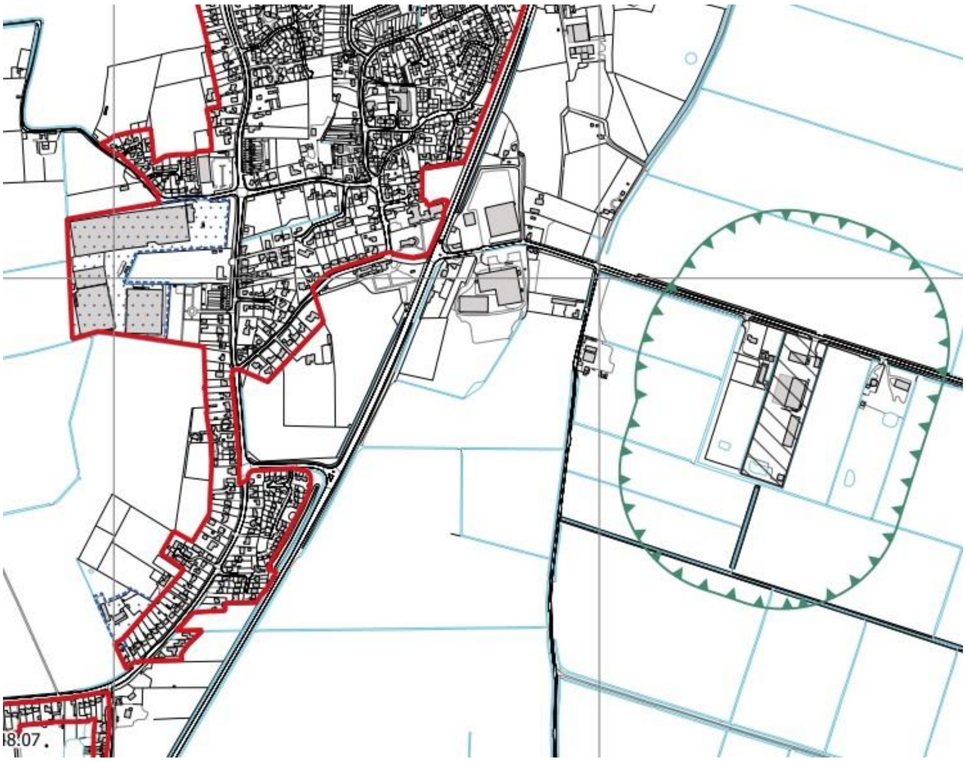
B. Policy Reference LP49.04 (SHELAA Site reference 40048) – Lavender Mill Bungalow – 29 dwellings.

This site abuts the current floodplain extent as shown on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning.

C. Policy Reference LP49.06 (SHELAA Site reference 40522) – 18 Westfield Road – 5 dwellings.

All three of these sites had extant planning permission at the time of preparing the Local Plan – (MLC Ref Nos 374 & 530; 413 & 522 *[Previously Wimblington Combined* MLC Ref No 109] + MLC Ref Nos 231, 235 & 321.

Wimblington



Extract from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Wimblington (Inset 27) showing the proposed sites in the Board's catchment

No sites have been proposed for Wimblington within the Board's catchment.

Response to the Consultation

A response was submitted to Fenland District Council on behalf of both the Middle Level Commissioners and the associated Boards with catchments within the Council's area and included comments on:

The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside – Frontage Infill Development

Growth Strategy – Neighbourhood Areas;

Health and Well-being; Renewable Energy – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure

Design and Amenity – Policy LP 7: Design – Nature, Public Spaces, Homes and Buildings + Policy LP 11: Community Safety

Housing – Policy LP 12: Meeting Housing Needs - Homes for Permanent Caravan Dwellers/Park Homes and Boat Dwellers

Town Centres – Policy LP 17: Culture, Leisure, Tourism and Community Facilities - Community Facilities

Transport and Infrastructure – Strategic Infrastructure, Transport Infrastructure, Community Infrastructure, Wisbech Rail, Wisbech Access Strategy, Whittlesey Relief Road, Local Projects, Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

Natural Environment – Policy LP 24: Natural Environment - Designated Sites, Local Sites, Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, Biodiversity and Geodiversity in development, Mitigation of Potential Adverse Impacts of Development

Policy LP 25: Biodiversity Net Gain + Policy LP 26: Carbon Sinks and Carbon Sequestration - Trees & Hedgerows + Table 8: Landscape Character Areas + Policy LP 29: Green Infrastructure
Flood and Water Management - Policy LP 32: Flood and Water Management

Specific comments included:
Disappointment was expressed that most of the contents of Part (B) Flood Risk and Drainage of Policy LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland within the current Local Plan have not been included in this policy contained within the draft Local Plan 2021-2040. As a result, it is considered that the new policy is much weaker which is disappointing given the special water level and flood risk management requirements within the Fens.

Concerns were raised about the piecemeal development encountered within the Council's area, for example, along Upwell Road in March or the Bridge Lane area in Wimblington, which is resulting in many small and isolated attenuation systems which will be difficult to maintain and will be a future liability for the parties concerned, the failure of which could potentially increase flood risk. The Council was advised that the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards would prefer more holistic solutions to be utilised such as the pond excavated by Hutchinson's in conjunction with the Hundred of Wisbech IDB which will serve several developments in the area close to the A47/Cromwell Road junction.

Policies for Sites and Settlements
When responding to similar documents it has been noted that having prepared detailed responses to specific site allocations, which has taken a significant amount of officer time and expense, the responses made are ignored.

Therefore, as a result, with a few exceptions detailed responses on individual sites were not prepared but a list of minimum requirements that need to be considered was provided when determining the suitability of a proposed site.

Specific responses
Specific responses were made on the following sites:

Policy LP 6: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure – Site Allocations LP06.01 SHELAA Site reference 40468 - 98.79 ha at Coldham Wind Farm, Elm + LP06.02 SHELAA Site reference 40469 174.29 ha at land adjacent to Graysmoor Drove, Elm.
Policy LP36: Residential site allocations for Wisbech (Page 118) (Map 28 Wisbech (Inset))
Policy LP46: Residential site allocations in Chatteris (Page 137) (Map 02 Chatteris (Inset))

Next Steps

All comments received during the consultation period are being reviewed with any changes arising being made to the draft Local Plan.

A Proposed Submission version is due to be published in summer 2023 for public consultation. This version of the plan will then be submitted together with any responses to the Secretary of State who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to carry out a public examination into the document.

High Rainfall Event and Flooding Incident – December 2020

When attending meetings of the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Flood and Water (FloW) Partnership, the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has raised concerns about the issues experienced within Cambridgeshire during or following high rainfall and/or exceptional circumstance type events and has enquired of other partners whether given the time that has elapsed any progress is being made to resolve some of the issues. To date the response has been limited.

In view of the above it is considered appropriate to advise the appropriate RMA, where relevant, on areas which experience problems, particularly within the urban environment, and requires protection, intervention and/or investment.

Initially, three areas of designation are proposed:

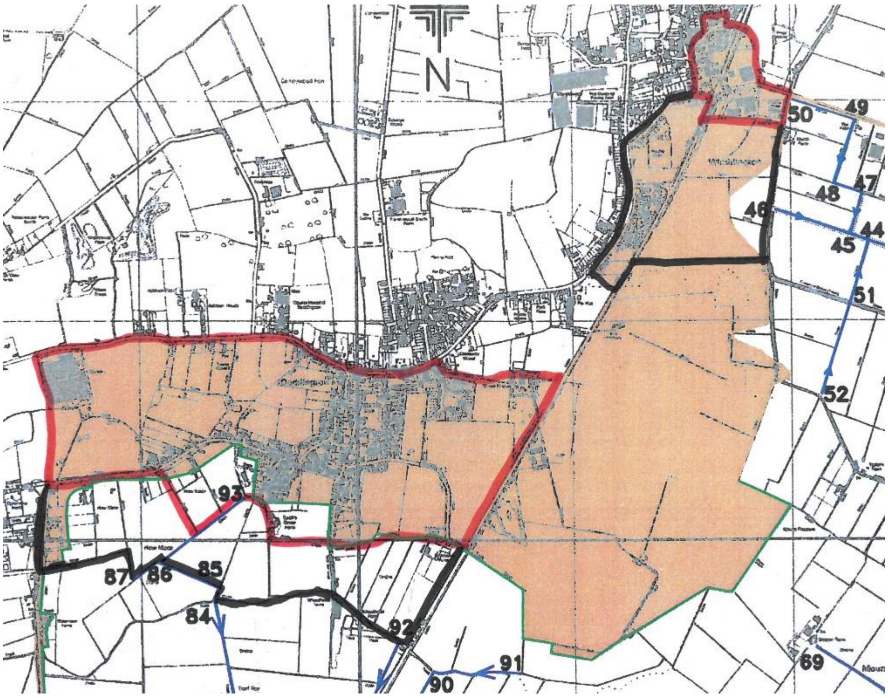
A. Business as usual - Areas where there are no known problems with the local water level and flood risk management systems that cannot be solved through the Boards "day-to-day activities".

B. Areas of concern - An area served by a water level and flood risk management system that can approach capacity during rainfall events which has been the subject of or is at an increased risk of flooding that is unlikely to be solved through the Board's "day-to-day activities" and may require protection, intervention and/or investment by the relevant RMA(s).

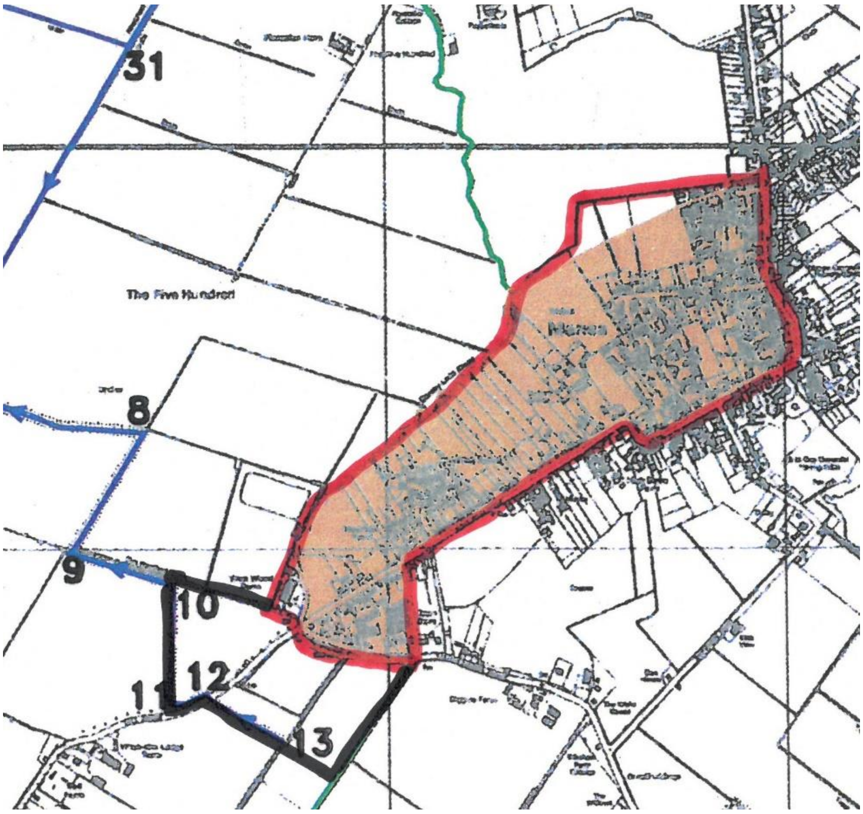
C. Acute drainage areas – A geographical area with multiple or interlinked sources of flood risk where there is a need for a higher standard of water level and flood risk management than normal to ensure that any new development will not increase flood risk that affects people, properties and local infrastructure and may require protection, intervention and/or investment by the relevant RMA(s).

Neither items B nor C are the same as a "critical drainage area" which has a specific meaning in flood risk terms i.e., "A Critical Drainage Area (CDA) is an area that has critical drainage problems and which has been notified to the local planning authority as such by the Environment Agency in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)."

A review of the potential extents of either an "area of concern", edged in red, and/or "Acute drainage areas", edged in black, within the Board's catchment has been undertaken and are shown on the extracts left and below.



Plan showing the extents of the acute drainage areas and areas of concern for Doddington and Wimblington



Plan showing the extents of the acute drainage areas and areas of concern for Manea

The intention is to highlight this area to the relevant RMA e.g., planning authorities, LLFA, Anglian Water, the Environment Agency etc., as an area which requires more involved management and will assist in protecting the local flood and water management systems including the Board's system.

As a result, apart from in the most exceptional circumstances, an initial request is that all water discharges within this area must be attenuated to current volumes and/or greenfield rates of run off, where practicable.

Following discussions, colleagues within the Middle Level Commissioners' Works Department advise that following the December 2020 event the MLC system took up to ten days, and IDB systems up to five days, to return to normal.

It is also considered that current surface water design practices do not allow for the weather conditions experienced prior to the December 2020 event or the complex network of water level and flood risk management systems within the Fens. Therefore, consideration is being given to requiring designs to:

- Incorporate a higher Standard of Protection (SoP), possibly up to 0.5% AEP (1 in 200 year) event
- Include a greater allowance for Climate Change, in excess of 40%, and
- Be able to "store" water on site for several days until the peak flows have passed.

Strategic Drainage and Wastewater consultation and issues

A. The Right to Connect

Members will recall that during the passage of the Environment Act through the House of Lords an amendment was sought which aimed to minimise the impact of new housing development on levels of local flood risk and the likelihood of storm discharges of untreated sewerage effluent into the water environment. It aimed to ensure housing developers design systems according to a hierarchy of drainage options that seek to reduce to a minimum the volume of rainwater entering combined sewerage systems removing the current "right to connect" to public sewers.

On the basis that the various RMA involved could have been asked to consider taking the opportunity to write to the government and voice their concerns over the right to connect for new developments the views of the Boards administered by the Middle Level Commissioners were sought.

The amendment was not moved and the House of Lords were not invited to take a decision on it. The Environment Act received Royal Assent in November 2021.

However, the results of the Boards who provided a positive response is as follows:

For the removal of the Right To Connect	54%
Against the removal of the Right To Connect	23%
Neither for or against the Right To Connect	18%
Not an issue for the Board	5%

The discharge from sewers can cause several challenges including increased flood risk, pollution and water quality issues, the solution to which is often at the rate payers' expense. Unsurprisingly the majority, but not all, of the Boards supporting the removal of the right either served or were detrimentally affected by areas of urban development.

Of those Boards against the removal some only served small urban areas with a limited number of sewers. Others served urban areas but only one received significant "benefit".

The Board that neither opposes nor supports the removal served a significant urban area but the remainder served a limited number of, or have no, adopted sewers within their catchments.

Other comments received expressed:

A. Concerns about the lack of investment and the need for improvement to the existing adopted infrastructure and;
B. Suggested that the permission to connect should be on an approval basis so that it can be controlled and any impacts managed and;
C. Required the Clerk to promote and lobby the Board's position.

Some Boards are more rural whilst others feature a larger urban area. Similarly, a larger individual Board may be predominantly rural but include a sub-catchment(s) which is largely, and increasingly, an urban environment which has to accommodate the resultant flows.

Therefore, it is considered that it would be difficult to have a simple yes/no solution within a complex system such as The Fens.

B. Anglian Water Drainage & Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP)

Draft DWMP

A more detailed review of the DWMP will be included in the updated version of the Strategic Planning Consultation Responses document currently being prepared. However, it is considered appropriate to include specific entries for the relevant WRCs of interest in the local area.

1. Draft DWMP Consultation

The draft DWMP document has been the subject of a consultation which provided an opportunity to comment on the document and included the following specific points:

Groundwater infiltration & surface water removal

The problems associated with groundwater infiltration and surface water within the sewer system, particularly within combined systems, are known and are a problem for all RMAs involved. Particularly when the water table is high and/or during the winter months.

The removal of groundwater infiltration and surface water from the sewerage system, to reduce the number of flood events, pollutions and storm overflow spills is considered to be an appropriate option in the correct circumstances and location.

The question that will need to be resolved in these situations is where will the surface water go instead? Most other surface water systems are approaching their finite capacity and will require the installation of significant infrastructure to deal with the flows. Who will pay and be responsible for this? Care will also need to be taken to ensure that flood risk is not being increased elsewhere within the WRCs catchment for another RMA to deal with as a result.

As the approval and consent of other RMAs may also be required, prior detailed consultation with the parties involved MUST be undertaken and agreed BEFORE work commences.

(NB: In respect of this document, infiltration refers to groundwater entering the sewer system which **increases hydraulic loadings and threatens wastewater treatment efficiency**.)

Water level Management Solutions

The use of SuDS, wetlands and other green structures is considered to be an appropriate option in the correct circumstances and location.

The management of SuDS and other water level management systems is an ongoing challenge for many RMAs. Without suitable arrangements being imposed these could simply become potential liabilities for the various rate/bill payers. Therefore, adequate arrangements MUST be made to ensure that the long-term ownership funding, management and maintenance for the upkeep of any green infrastructure, whether on or off site, in perpetuity is achieved.

Consideration also needs to be given to any restrictions upon maintenance of the drainage “facility” due to the presence of protected habitats and species.

As the approval and consent of other RMAs may also be required, prior detailed consultation with the parties involved MUST be undertaken and agreed BEFORE work commences.

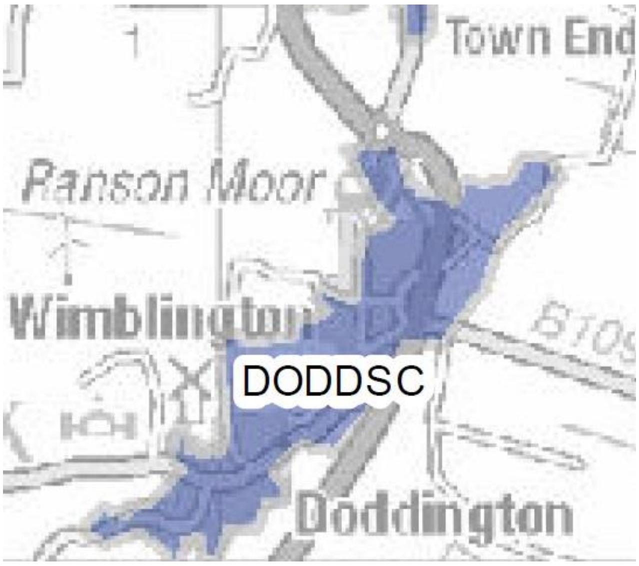
Partnership Working

The MLC and associated Boards are prepared to work in partnership with the local community, private and public partners to contribute to and deliver schemes for conservation, navigation, water resources, water level & flood risk management where there is a mutual benefit to the partners concerned.

However, to what extent they are prepared to contribute would be the subject of a decision for the respective authority and this may vary dependent upon their views.

2. Programme outputs

Doddington WRC



Extract from Anglian Water's Risk Based Catchment Screening (RBCS) Map Showing the extent of the catchment served by Doddington WRC

This WRC currently serves a population of 3965. An increase in population across the catchment of 811 (20%) by 2050 was used in the BRAVA/RBCS process. Several concerns were raised during the process and a mixed strategy has been proposed for the medium term. This is likely to involve the removal of surface water from the system network, which has been the cause of flooding during recent events, by utilising SuDS facilities. However, it is not certain where these will be located given the dense urban environment or who will be responsible for these. The longer term strategy is to remove 25% of surface water by 2050.

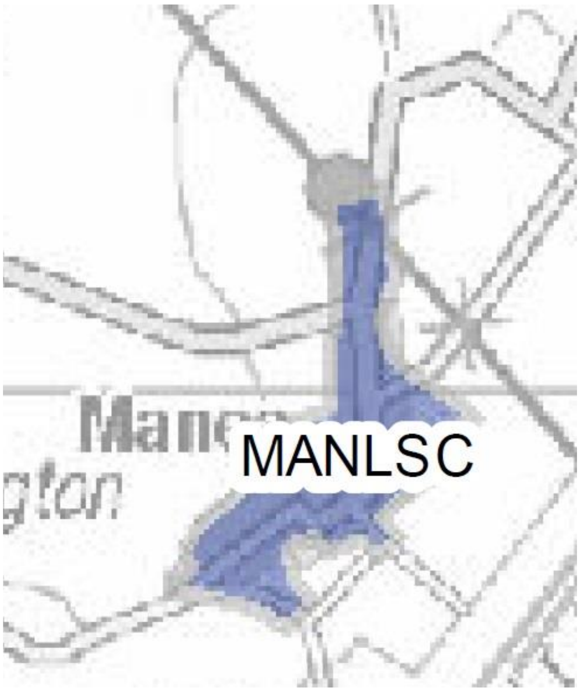
L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
DODDINGTON	3965	4484	4776	Yes	0

Planning objective themes reviewed	Stakeholder concerns/ comments	Medium term strategy	2050 Strategy
Escape from sewers WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	Flood risk implications.	Network - Mixed strategies with main solution of SuDs	25% surface water removal.

Extracts from Anglian Water's draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan showing the results and proposed plans for Doddington WRC

WRC Compliance

The quality of the discharge does not appear to be a cause for concern. However, members will be aware of Natural England's concerns about nutrients affecting the aquatic environment.



Extract from Anglian Water's Risk Based Catchment Screening (RBCS) Map showing the extent of the catchment served by Manea – Town Lots WRC

Manea – Town Lots WRC

An increase in population of 355 by 2050 was used for Manea – Town Lots WRC, which only serves Manea Village. This represents an increase of 20% of the current population.

The medium-term strategy is to remove infiltration, presumably by removing surface water connections, lining sewers etc. No long-term strategy has been identified.

L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
MANEA - TOWN LOTS	1720	1947	2075	Yes	0

Planning objective themes reviewed	Stakeholder concerns/ comments	Medium term strategy	2050 Strategy
WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	Flood risk implications.	Infiltration removal	No risk identified.

Extracts from Anglian Water's draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan showing the results and proposed plans for Manea – Town Lots WRC

WRC Compliance

The quality of the discharge does not appear to be a cause for concern. However, members will be aware of Natural England's concerns about nutrients affecting the Ouse Washes system.

Due to the proximity of the discharge to the Ouse Washes a nutrient neutrality assessment will be required to support future consent applications.

The final DWMP document is currently being prepared and is due to be published this spring.

If it is considered appropriate, a meeting with Anglian Water's DWMP and Water Recycling Growth Manager can be organised to enable the Board's views to be known to enable further discussion to occur, as required.

3. <u>Storm Overflow Consultation</u>

A consultation exercise on Storm Overflow Discharges was held during February. In view of the concerns discussed above it was considered appropriate to consult all the administered Boards even though many would not be directly affected.

The main means of providing a response was to provide answers to five specific questions and, whilst responses were provided, in view of the nature of the matter; the responses received from the Boards consulted and given that the issue is rising up the political agenda it was considered that a more detailed and focused response was required.

The following are the headlines or a brief resume of the response:

A. **Existing sewer systems and problems**

1. The Right to Connect – As discussed elsewhere in this Report
2. Other issues – On going pollution problems, the surcharging of or high discharges during or following high rainfall events, the lack of capacity within WRCs.

B. **General**

It is considered that all the current targets are too vague and will take too long to achieve any meaningful results and that the consultation was not open and transparent as the locations of the points of discharge are not readily identified within the document, therefore making it difficult to provide a meaningful comment.

Advice was given that:

Most of our systems are pumped often remaining stationary for extended periods thus dilution may not occur as expected; water is abstracted for various purposes – see High Priority Sites – Public Health below; the adverse impact on areas of interest including designated environmental sites; and that no "compensation" is provided for having to receive, transfer and dispose of the discharges from the overflows.

C. **Storm Flow Technical Overview**

High Priority Sites

1. Ecology
   a. *Environment targets*

      It is considered that these targets should apply to **all** sites not just high priority ones, with solutions implemented much sooner than identified if the Government's target of halting biodiversity decline is to be achieved and the goals of the Water Framework Directive and the 25 year environment plan are to be achieved.

   b. *Sensitive Inland Water*

      Reference was made to the proximity of trigger points.

2. Public Health

The document refers to Designated Shellfish Water and Designated Bathing Water as trigger points which is understood, but it is not appreciated that vast quantities of water are abstracted from Fenland water level management systems for agricultural use, whether this is washing or irrigating crops for consumption within the food chain.

It was suggested that it would be prudent for the trigger points to be reviewed to include those other items which could affect public health on a wider scale.

Potable Water

Reference was made concerning the use of excess water from both the Commissioners' and surrounding systems to fill the proposed Fens Reservoir and the potential benefits of improving water quality from the discharges into these watercourses.

3. Amenity

Emphasis is given to bathing waters but no reference is made to other wider but perhaps smaller benefits on the Commissioners' largely navigable systems and the disposal of sewage into these watercourses may have an adverse impact on wider issues, for example, tourism, angling etc or if these wider "costs" are considered when assessing the adverse impacts of overflows on the local area.

4. Assessing spill frequency

Event data Monitors

a. From a closer review it was identified that some of the discharges of interest including Doddington, Nightlayers and Ramsey WRCs are not fitted with Event Data Monitors. Therefore, it is not known how the number of spills can be fully assessed.

   Event Duration Monitors will be installed on all of Anglian Water's overflows during Asset Management Plan (AMP) period 7 (2020-2025) and this will, hopefully, reduce the level of uncertainty during AMP 8 (2025-2030) and AMP 9 (2030-2035) by producing "real" data.

b. Rainfall target: Storm overflows will not be permitted to discharge above an average of 10 rainfall events per year by 2050 but this target should be more defined including restriction on the duration of spills and the volume discharged. This may be difficult to achieve. The Standard of Protection (SoP) provided, the use of "typical" rather than excessive rainfall events and modelling of the various systems to identify potential problem overflows rather than actual data – the number of spills, duration of the spills etc was questioned.

Growth

The growth that has occurred in the last fifty years has contributed to the increased number and length of spills and this will only become more severe as further growth continues unless adequate steps are taken now to resolve these as a matter of urgency.

Climate Change

It would be appropriate for all RMAs to prepare for the worst-case scenario and there is an aspiration to achieve this but this could be expensive, may prove unnecessary and wasteful leading to criticism. It was suggested that the most economic and environmentally acceptable standard should be achieved.

Screening

It would be beneficial to know where these initial overflows are located.

D. **Storm Overflow Consultation**

Performance Guide

It appears that priority is given to the number of spills rather than the length of time of the discharge, the volume of flow being discharged or the cumulative effects of the overflows due to their close proximity to each other.

Preferred Plan

It would be beneficial if the “headlines” from assessments and guidance on suggested solutions could be provided to identify and instigate any early engagement with the parties concerned, for example, land owners, developers etc.

Customer Support

Reference was made in the document to continual engagement with customers but there appears to be limited engagement with those RMA who have to receive the flows from the storm overflows.

It was suggested that such engagement commences and both the Commissioners and associated Boards look forward to continual engagement and transparency on storm overflows and networks in the future.

E. **Consultation Questionnaire**

The answers to the questionnaire were generally included in the response, but in reply to the question *How confident are you that this strategy aligns with our Purpose?* A very low confidence comment was provided adding that some of the systems cannot be managed without significant investment and improvement works being required on several networks.

F. **Summary**

Whilst it is pleasing that the issue of sewage overflows is being progressed this appears to be primarily due to political pressure rather than at the instigation of the water industry.

There are concerns that priority will be given to resolving issues associated with storm overflows rather than those existing problems associated with WRCs and associated systems.

Greater transparency, early engagement and further discussions should be undertaken to any issues related to adoptable sewer systems and storm overflows if the current problems are to be resolved.

The final DWMP document is currently being prepared and is due to be published this spring.

C. <u>Review for implementation of Schedule 3 to The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (F&WMA)</u>

The Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) details the provision of comprehensive flood management to protect people, homes, and businesses. It is written to protect water supplies to the consumer and helps safeguard community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges. The Act introduces into law the concept of flood risk management as the preferred approach rather than reliance on flood defences (existing or proposed) for protection of sites.

1. Schedule 3

   Schedule 3 of the FWMA was introduced to establish a SuDS approving body (SAB) at the county/unitary level for the regulation of new development and compliance with The Act. It was intended that this Schedule would be introduced into law around 2015/2016, following the original Act that achieved royal ascent in 2010 but this did not happen and Schedule 3 did not achieve approval due to concerns that it would restrict housing delivery and growth.

   Instead, the government made amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to stipulate those decisions on planning applications relating to major developments (over 10 dwellings, or equivalent non-residential developments) should ensure that SuDS are put in place, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) currently need to approve drainage schemes and ensure they are appropriately maintained.

   Currently the maintenance of a development typically falls under the responsibility of a Private Maintenance Company (PMC) which is usually paid for using service charge agreements with the owners of the new properties and often selling residential properties as leasehold rather than freehold.

2. Review

In early December industry experts sent an open letter to the Prime Minister which "strongly urged" the implementation of Schedule 3.

Following a review, DEFRA announced in January 2023, the government's decision to implement Schedule 3 which will provide a framework for the approval and adoption of high-quality SuDS and is expected to occur at a yet to be determined date in 2024. As a result, the Government is giving consideration to how this will be implemented subject to final decisions on scope, threshold and process whilst being mindful of the cumulative impact of new regulatory burdens on the development sector and water industry. Defra recently undertook a consultation survey with LPAs and LLFAs but not with IDBs and other relevant parties. However, there are several issues and challenges that require resolution before progressing further.

3. Changes to existing laws

The implementation of Schedule 3 will introduce some small changes to three existing laws.

a. Building Act 1984

Section 59 which gives local authorities the power to request that sustainable drainage systems in an unsatisfactory condition be renewed, repaired or cleansed is to be amended.

Section 84 which stipulates that local authorities withhold the right to request that impermeable surfaces around a building which do not allow for the satisfactory drainage of its surface or subsoil be remedied requires amendment to specify that surfaces need to remove water in a satisfactory manner.

b. New Roads and Street Works Act 1991

Section 63 will include a small change should Schedule 3 be enacted.

c. Water Industry Act 1991

Section 106 to remove the right to connect. Following Schedule 3's commencement, a person may only exercise this right if their drainage system was approved by an SAB before construction and if a proposal for their drainage system to communicate with a sewer was included in their application for approval.

The NPPF and the associated PPG will require amending to reflect any changes.

4. Implementation

Whilst there will be some changes to current procedures it is considered that there are several potential benefits including better working practices, better integration with other RMA, the removal of the automatic right to connect, potential revenue streams etc but there are several potential problems that need to be resolved including funding mechanisms; potential increased costs on the rate payer; lack of resources, skills and capabilities; the need for more timely responses possibly taking staff members from other work.

The proposal is the subject of on-going discussions and a meeting with the LLFAs and other partners has been requested to discuss the issues in order to maximise any opportunities and minimise any adverse impacts on both the Middle Level Commissioners and the Boards to whom it provides a planning consultancy service.

These discussions will include, as a minimum:

a. The suggested change in surface water design practice, as discussed elsewhere in this report.
b. Ensuring that adequate arrangements are made for long term ownership funding, management and maintenance arrangements for the upkeep of any water level and flood risk management system, whether on or off site, in perpetuity including details of the works to be carried out by the occupier/land owner, adopting authority, the Management Company or other responsible person/authority, together with the costs attached, are included in the "Homeowners Pack" and the Deed of Sale.
c. The right to connect needs to be on an approval basis to ensure that it can be controlled and any adverse impacts managed.
d. That any incurred costs on the rate payer are kept to a minimum.

Consulting Engineer

26 April 2023

Curf & Wimblington Combined (308)\Reports\May 2023

Project Initiation Form

Board name	Curf & Wimblington Combined
Project name	Pumped Catchment Study
Project no.	[To be inserted by Consulting Engineer]
Doc Ref.	[To be inserted by Consulting Engineer]
Report/MA reference	[To be inserted by Consulting Engineer]

Description of requirements

Project details	
Description of the problem	
[Describe the problem to be solved/what is the driver for the project.] Pumping stations are nearing the end of their design life. Anglian Water's proposed Fens Reservoir sits within the Benson's and Curf Pumping Station catchments. [Briefly describe what the expectation is/what is to be achieved.] A combined district study to be undertaken to develop a plan for future management of the district with a packaged, phased delivery approach.	
Budget	[budget estimate or dependant on quotes]
Funding source	FDGiA
Timescales/Priority	[e.g. Urgent/5 years/long term plan/design life left]
Dependencies	
[Does delivery depend on cost, delivery of another project or recommendation of a study?] The study should consider two scenarios: 1) the impact and timescales of delivery of the Fens Reservoir, and 2) without the Fens Reservoir.	
Constraints	
[e.g. environmental? access? development?]	
Governance and key contacts	
Delegated Board Member	[Who the Board has delegated decision making to and who is the Board's key contact]
Date of delegation	[Date/meeting]
MLC Engineer	
Reporting requirements	
Frequency of reports	[e.g. monthly update to the Chairman]
Process	[e.g. By phone/email/Highlight Report]
Tolerances	[e.g. notify key contact if cost increases by 20%/delay of 6 months]

Approvals

No work is to proceed until the Chief Engineer has confirmed availability of resources/proposed timescales and Board approvals have been received below:

Name	Title	Signature	Date
	Chief Engineer		
	Delegated Board Member		

Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB

Consulting Engineers' Supplementary Report - April 2023

Improving Capital Delivery

Introduction

Since being in post I have been getting to grips with a number of things in the Engineering/Technical Services Department. I've made a number of observations: officers are knowledgeable, dedicated and committed to delivering a service to the Commissioners and IDBs; working in partnership with the Environment Agency and local planning authorities/LLFAs is clearly evident; the operations team do an excellent job managing water resources in an extremely complex system; our capital delivery programme is growing as assets come to the end of design life; we have some significant changes and challenges ahead (biodiversity net gain requirements, the climate emergency and Fens Reservoir amongst others) which need careful planning and resourcing if we are to properly represent members and local communities and secure the best outcomes for the catchment.

We have an increasing capital delivery programme, with a number of ongoing projects and many identified for future delivery. I have identified areas where improvements are needed to deliver these projects better and to improve communications between the consulting engineer and the Boards.

Resources

Staff in MLC's Technical Services are currently stretched in terms of capacity and capability. There is a significant lack of suitable people across the engineering and project delivery profession generally, which impacts not only MLC's ability to recruit, but also the availability of consultant and contractor resources.

As well as our services to IDBs, and the Bank Raising Scheme over the next 4-5 years, and delivery of the pumping station refurbishment programme, there is an immediate need to provide resources to support MLC input to developing plans for Anglian Water's Fens Reservoir. This will have a significant and profound impact on water management in the catchment, and MLC officers need to ensure we secure the very best outcomes for our Board members, ratepayers, customers and the environment. We will be working very hard over the next 6 months to achieve this before the project passes is next 'gate'.

Now that MLC receives revenue through navigation licences, we have to ensure that we deliver on the requirements set out in the Navigation Byelaws 2020. This is a work in progress, but again sets additional demands on our internal resources and our ability to be proactive.

MLC were unsuccessful in recruiting a new planning engineer in 2022 and the existing team is under continued pressure to resolve ongoing and new applications, let alone adequately accommodate new demands. We are now looking at alternative resource solutions to support the wider engineering department.

IDB Projects

I am already aware of a number of projects that have been in progress for some time. There is lack of a clear programme of delivery and/project management discipline for these; there are no specific timescales and other agreed tolerances with the IDB as 'client', and this makes it difficult to plan and prioritise resources and workloads.

I am compiling a programme of all the projects being delivered by MLC and determining the resources needed to complete them. I will work with the Boards in question to progress delivery as quickly and efficiently as possible.

For new project requests, I am implementing a simple process with a 'Project Initiation Form' to capture key information and undertake an initial assessment of the project. I will prioritise work requested based on urgency and availability of resources. Unless otherwise instructed by an IDB, our default approach will be to seek to maximise FCRM Grant in Aid funding for eligible projects. I will implement a process of reporting progress regularly to the Boards/key contacts. As part of this process, I'll be asking each Board to agree how they delegate decision making, as projects can't be effectively delivered when governed through annual meetings, and how we manage better, more frequent, communications between the Boards' delegates and officers in Technical Services.

I am looking at the possibility of 'packaging' some works together for delivery by consultants, e.g. Pumping Station Refurbishment Projects rather than delivering each one individually. This has the advantage of securing a team of suitable resources who can focus on the work and deliver it as efficiently as possible (economies of scale). This will be a change of approach for individual IDBs and will need further work to determine how we manage this approach practically when each Board is its own individual entity with maybe a once per annum meeting. I hope to provide you with more detail about this, and the benefits it will give the Boards, in the coming months.

It may take some time to deliver the backlog of projects, which in turn might delay the start of new projects. However, I'm hopeful my approach will eventually lead to a more effective and efficient delivery process.

MLC Bank Raising Scheme

This is currently the largest IDB led project in the national flood investment programme and gives us the opportunity to develop capacity and capability in the organisation and share best practice across all our work. The scheme will be under the spot-light and have a focus from the Environment Agency in terms of grant assurance.

Works are progressing on a number of fronts but were lacking leadership and direction and there was no delivery programme. I have implemented some standard project management tools to control, manage and deliver the project: An 'exception report' was raised to the Project Board/MLC Executive Board outlining the existing situation and mitigation measures being put in place; A project plan and outline programme is now in place; Clear project governance has been identified; A data management plan is being drafted; Risks and issues are being identified; Project and delivery manager resources have been appointed and they will start in April.

Most of the project work was being carried out by MLC staff putting a strain on their already stretched ability to delivery other commitments, especially to the IDBs. The Technical Services team does not currently have the capacity or capability to deliver major projects.

There was a lack of clarity around environmental impact and risk assessments for activities which are considerably more than 'business as usual.'

Resources are in place/are being identified to complete environmental impact assessment required before wholescale desilting works can be undertaken, including significant input from the MLC Environment Officer.

The Independent Technical Advisor has prepared a scope for tender to secure a consultant to develop outline design and prepare Full Business Case (for MLC Project Board approval). The consultant will provide all technical input needed for developing and planning the project and ensuring consents and approvals are identified and in place. MLC staff will continue to act in a lead client capacity, providing their specific technical expertise and knowledge of the catchment as necessary. I will lead the project as Project Executive, working closely with the Project and Delivery Managers and providing regular updates to the Project Sponsor (Chief Executive) and MLC Executive Committee.

MLC's H&S advisor, Cope, visited and assessed the provisions in place and provided advice on additional requirements. Risk assessments/methods statements are being developed for physical work activities alongside a full review of the MLC H&S policies.

A Communications & Engagement team is in place and is planning engagement in parallel with Chief Executive's proposed MLC engagement and branding improvements.

A robust forecast of project costs needs developing. It is likely that the total project costs will exceed the current approval limit of £23million from the Outline Business Case. There are also some risks to the delivery programme that need to be investigated further and mitigated as necessary. All of these will be considered in more detail over the next 6 months, appraised and included in the Full Business Case, before the end of the financial year 2023/24.

Contractors are currently being identified for the various work phases: desilting; material import; bank raising works and hard defences (including detailed design).

Consulting Engineer

5 April 2023

Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board

Capital Improvement Programme (2023/2024)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Bensons p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	24.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
Curf p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	84.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Finchams Farm p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0.0	0.0	0.0	115.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	115.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

MIDDLE LEVEL
COMMISSIONERS

Telephone: 01354 602965
07977 068864
Email: sofi.lloyd@middlelevel.gov.uk
Website: www.middlelevel.gov.uk

MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICES
85 WHITTLESEY ROAD
MARCH
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
PE15 0AH

Sofi Lloyd
Environment Officer

Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board

Environmental Update – April 2023

Introduction

As I took up post in mid-October, unfortunately I am not in a position to provide a full biodiversity action plan update yet, but have compiled the following update of environmental activities and key points relevant to the Board, which I hope you find useful.

I have been familiarising myself with the IDB area, its approaches and plans as well as I can, over winter, but from now onwards I would like to plan some further visits to the IDB area to develop a much better understanding of the area and your priorities, so will be in touch to do organise this. I note that there are a number of valuable provisions for wildlife across the area, including a number of designated sites and boards' drains are generally very supportive of thriving populations of water vole. I look forward to working with you to enhance any areas that we agree would be beneficial and feasible to do so.

1. Bank Raising Project

You will have been made aware of the Bank Raising Project and the work that is planned on the MLC channels and banks within the district. The ecological considerations of the project are being dealt with separately, outside of this report, along with the project update. However, should you have any questions about the projects' ecological considerations then do contact me directly and I will be happy to help.

2. Biodiversity Action Plan Review

The Biodiversity Action Plan has traditionally been the key document which sets out the IDBs' planned contributions towards conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Although the BAP remains vital, the objectives are unlikely to be reached unless there is a process in place to ensure that the incremental steps that need to be taken to achieve the BAP objectives are incorporated into regular operations and are reviewed regularly. Otherwise, the BAP simply becomes a document that is reviewed once or twice a year. It is the review of this vital process that I will be focussing on, rather than reviewing the objectives in the BAP, because the objectives themselves still remain valid.

3. Process and Compliance Review

I am well into a thorough process and compliance review of all our environmental approaches across all boards. This will help to ensure that IDBs are operating in line with all new legislative and regulatory requirements, updated guidance and best practice, and are better prepared for any changes we expect to be introduced in the next year. This will include the impacts and opportunities brought forward by the Environment Act 2021, including biodiversity net gain and delivering biodiversity enhancement. The outcomes of this review will feed into the BAP refresh for each IDB.

I also plan to review the currently-available pre-application environmental advice for consents and standard responses with the planning office.

4. GIS System Development

To support the activities mentioned above, an improved environmental GIS system is being developed and work is well underway to digitise all available environmental data. Lots of data exists due to all the good work already undertaken by IDBs but it exists in different states in different places. There is also a great deal of information held by the Local Environmental Records Centres, for which I am pleased to say, we now have a contract in place to receive regularly. This will be a vital data source that we must consult when planning our work to help us identify any protected and priority species which may be impacted or enhanced by our work. We are merging all these data sets to develop a more complete picture of what we have, in order to define and preserve the baseline from which to progress. This, more complete picture is also necessary to enable us to identify opportunities for environmental enhancement. Developing the GIS system this way will deliver efficiencies in environmental data collection, analysis and reporting, allowing more time to undertake practical conservation work on the ground. It will also enable us to share our data more easily with the local environmental records centres, contributing to the understanding of the local and national status of many species and help to raise the profile of the IDB and the valuable work they do to support biodiversity. You can see an example of how some of the digitised data is coming together in the attached IDB map.

5. Work Package Ecological Screening Document

We have developed the template named above for IDBs to complete when planning any ad hoc/non-routine works that will “break ground” on the any of the banks. The information is needed in order to evidence that we have correctly considered the ecological impacts of the work, and to identify opportunities for enhancement, as we are mandated to do, by law. Activities for which the form would be relevant include bank reformation, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling, filling in a ditch, moving an access culvert etc.

Only the first page needs completing by the IDB (not a lot of info needed) and the rest by me. I undertake the assessment as far as possible, and then return the second part of the document to the IDB, setting out what surveys etc. will be needed, if any. I may be able to undertake some of the practical surveys but in some cases, an ecological consultant with a specialist licence may be needed. In some cases, there may not be a need for any surveys and the recommendations will be that the work can proceed with some adaptions to the proposed approach, such as altered timings or establishment of “no-work” buffers around sensitive areas.

When all desk and fieldwork is complete, the form is “signed off” from an ecological perspective, and returned to the IDB with recommendations for the approaches to be taken. This means the IDB and the operatives undertaking the work have full sight of the ecological constraints, mitigations and approaches required to remain compliant. It is recommended that this form is completed and sent as early as possible to prevent delays, even up to 1 year in advance of the proposed works. The form is available by emailing sofi.lloyd@middlelevel.gov.uk and is also available from the MLC website.

6. Protected Species

a) Water Vole

As always, any work that plans to “break ground” on the any of the banks, so bank reformation, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling etc, **OR the removal of any marginal vegetation, please let me know ASAP by completing the above ecological screening document** so we can plan the appropriate surveys and mitigations in plenty of time, to avoid any delays and ensure compliance with wildlife legislation. This is particularly relevant for water voles. We know that there are some known, valuable water-vole ditches in the district, and some which could be enhanced to better support the local population, but the accepted approach is to always assume water voles are present in all ditches, and plan work around their assumed presence, in order to avoid committing an offence in terms of wildlife legislation. There is a lot of good, pragmatic and practical guidance on how to properly consider water voles during IDB works contained in the Environmental Good Governance Guide for IDBs.

b) Badgers

A reminder that badgers and their setts are protected by law and care must be taken not to disturb setts during routine channel management. Sett interference requires a licence under all circumstances. Please contact us should you have any queries regarding activities taking place around any known badger sett. Please also let me know asap if there are any setts which are presenting a flood risk due to any burrowing which is destabilising banks etc. More detailed information and refresher training on approaches to be taken around badger setts will be organised in the coming months. In the meantime, please refer to the relevant chapter in the Environmental Good Governance Guide (available on the ADA website) for more detailed information on badgers.

c) Birds

Please be reminded of the legislation around the disturbance of breeding birds, particularly when cutting vegetation or bank-side trees, between March and September and where kingfishers are known to hunt. Please see the relevant chapter in the Environmental Good Governance Guide (available on the ADA website) to refresh your understanding of mitigation and survey requirements and get in touch should you have any questions.

i. Barn owls

I have met with our barn owl conservation delivery partners and we had defined a schedule of checking and refreshing barn owl boxes over winter but have unfortunately been unable to commence due to the restrictions imposed by BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) due to avian flu. We continue to monitor the guidance and act accordingly and have been able to commence some box checking by following strict biosecurity measures. Please do let us know therefore if there are any boxes that you feel need some maintenance ASAP so we can plan to visit them before the start of the breeding season. It is even more important during these times that you please help us with the following:

- Tell us if you spot a box needing repair
- Tell us if you see a box being regularly visited in nesting season
- Tell us if you'd like a barn owl box
- Establish and maintain un-cropped field margins for foraging

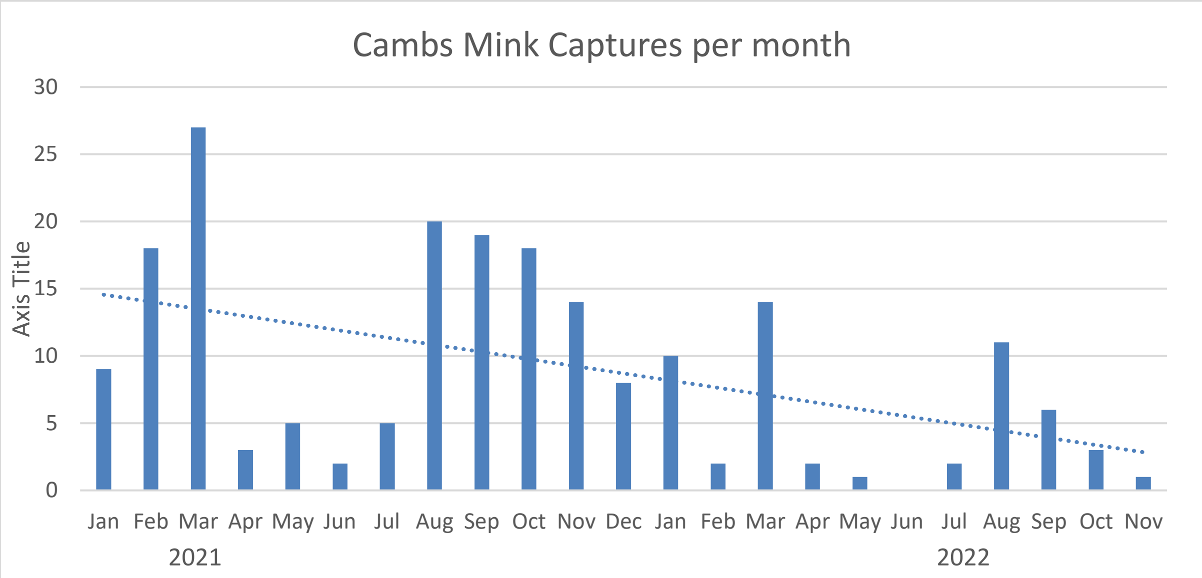
i. Avian Flu

Avian Flu is now thankfully less of a risk now that temperatures are increasing and there are less avian arrivals from overseas. However, please ensure that you are familiar with, **and promote the knowledge of** the DEFRA guidelines on avian flu, in particular those for reporting suspected cases: Bird flu (avian influenza): latest situation in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). If any dead birds are spotted, please do let us know and either we can come and collect and dispose of them in a safe manner to minimise the risk of the disease spreading to other wildlife, or we can arrange for the collection.

d) Mink & Water Voles

I am now part of the co-ordination team for the mink control strategy for the MLC area. The mink control project has been hugely successful so the vision of full eradication of mink is becoming much closer to being realised than was ever thought possible. A strategy refresh meeting took place on the 9th January where we reviewed the data to date to help us devise an updated trapping regime for the coming months. The key outcomes of which are that we are very much in **need of further volunteers** to respond to mink raft activation alerts in the area. Any activation would need to be attended promptly within a few hours but the need to respond is likely to be very occasional. Please let me know of any interest.

The following chart shows the number of mink caught each month, suggesting a declining population. However there have been a number of mink caught in recent weeks in the local area, probably due to the breeding season being underway and their increased travel to find a mate, so trapping is still very valuable and reporting any sightings is key to ensure that traps are ideally placed.



The following table shows the number of Mink caught in 2022 and their locations, compared to 62 mink captures or kills in 2021.

Middle Level mink 2022_List

List of mink captures around the Middle Level in 2022

	Animal Code	Station/Location	Date	Sex
1	WRE/0761	Upwell & Outwell: Laddus Drove holt	09 Jan 2022	Male
2	WRE/0789		11 Jan 2022	Unrecorded
3	WRE/0917	Stonea Bridge	24 Jan 2022	Female
4	WRE/0786	Ramsey: PS Ramsey Hollow	24 Jan 2022	Female
5	WRE/0924	Welches Dam PS bridge SW side	10 Mar 2022	Male
6	WRE/0950	Conington Fen Bridge	13 Mar 2022	Female
7	WRE/0944	Ransonmoor: Staffurth's Bridge PS outfall, Old ...	16 Mar 2022	Male
8	WRE/0946	Ramsey Saint Mary's: Speed the Plough Bridge	17 Mar 2022	Male
9	WRE/0951	Twenty Foot, Coldham Bank	22 Mar 2022	Male
10	WRE/0957	Crooked Drain, Sutton Gault	05 Apr 2022	Female
11	WRE/0966	Crooked Drain, Sutton Gault	26 Apr 2022	Female
12	WRE/1046	Great Fen: Charterhouse Farm Bridge	16 Sep 2022	Female
13	WRE/1047	Woodwalton Fen: south	18 Sep 2022	Male
14	WRE/1081	Pingles Pit, Mepal B	21 Oct 2022	Female
15	WRE/1140	Welches Dam PS bridge SW side	27 Nov 2022	Unrecorded

This progress with mink control will positively impact on the abundance of water voles in the area. Previous water vole survey data will be reviewed over winter and added to the GIS system and further surveys will be planned to take place in spring and summer.

As above, any planned work that will "break ground" on the bank top or face, so anything other than grass cutting, i.e., bank reformation, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling etc, **please let me know ASAP** so we can plan the appropriate water vole surveys and mitigations in plenty of time, to avoid any delays and ensure compliance with water vole legislation.

7. Invasive species

When any non-native species (particularly the following) are spotted, please record the location using the what3words app (what3words /// The simplest way to talk about location) if possible (if not postcode or grid ref) and inform us ASAP. Useful identification guides and information can be found online at ID sheets » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org)

- Floating Pennywort

- Mink
- Himalayan Balsam
- Parrot’s feather
- New Zealand pigmyweed (Australian swamp stonecrop - Crassula)

a) Floating Pennywort

Floating Pennywort continues to be an issue in other watercourses just outside the area, so we urge you to remain vigilant, refresh your identification skills and act promptly by notifying us if you think you may have spotted any in the districts drains. Strong adherence to biosecurity procedures is vital as per the boards policy (available from the website).

There has been good progress in trialling the use of an imported weevil to control the plant so we hope that if the success continues, it may be made available nationally at some point in the future.

b) Azolla

Previously reported as common across the IDB area. Please record and notify us as above of any instance. There may be an opportunity to use an approved weevil to control badly affected stretches so please advise if there are any particular areas of concern as there are only limited stocks of the weevils nationally so I will have to apply early to be in with a chance of some of the stock.

c) Chinese Mitten Crabs

Chinese mitten crabs and their apparent rapidly increasing population continue to be a concern. There are reports of some banks in some areas being damaged by their extensive burrowing but it is always difficult to pin this on the crabs alone with there being so many other factors which affect the stability of banks.

We liaise closely with the EA and follow their lead with the management of this species and many others to ensure that nothing we do contradicts their approach, regulation or legislation. Defra has no intention currently of developing policy which would allow the crabs to be caught and removed for commercial or conservation reasons. In particular there was some concern that they were found to carry a gill fluke in other counties which had the potential of being transmitted to humans if they were to be consumed. As Defra isn’t planning to change their stance, the EA’s approach remains that any crabs which are caught as by-catch must be killed on-site and not removed. The fishing for the crabs specifically is not lawful. There is no recommended or authorised approach to deal with rising populations unfortunately. A commonly held view is that removing mature individuals from the population creates a vacuum that immature individuals then tussle to fill, driving greater movement within the local population and perhaps increased burrowing as a result.

We will continue to monitor the recommended approaches and will adapt ours promptly to follow when necessary.

d) Turkish Crayfish

We have received reliable reports of the presence of Turkish crayfish in some MLC drains. Turkish Crayfish are a schedule 9 listed species listed in the Wildlife & Countryside Act meaning that it is an offence to release them or allow them to escape into the wild. Their impact is not widely understood but it is said that that they are known to reside alongside Signal Crayfish, rather than displace them or be displaced by them. Where populations of our native and protected white-clawed crayfish are still present, they are likely to outcompete them but they do not carry crayfish plague which does impact native crayfish. There is no evidence that Turkish crayfish burrow so it is unlikely that they would cause extensive damage to riverbanks but they could reduce fishery profits by competing with fish for food, stealing baits or causing declines in fish recruitment through loss of macrophyte habitat, according to the non-native species secretariat. Please be vigilant and report sightings of the species and maintain strong biosecurity procedures. They can be distinguished from other crayfish species by their long narrow claws, as shown in the pictures below.

Turkish Crayfish
Claws: claws normally same colour as body but underside lightly coloured. Fingers long, straight and narrow

White-clawed crayfish
Claws: are noticeably granular and are whitish to light pink on the underside, never red.

American Signal Crayfish
Claws white or turquoise patch at junction between fixed and moveable finger. Underside of claws are red.

If it is necessary to dispatch a Turkish crayfish, American signal crayfish, or any other non-native crayfish, because it has been removed from the channel accidentally, please ensure that you are familiar with its distinguishing features and can confidently tell it apart from particularly white clawed crayfish. This will ensure no offence against a protected species occurs. There are very few records of the native white-clawed crayfish remaining in the MLC area but care should still be taken and no assumption made. More information can be found at:
https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/information-portal/view/381

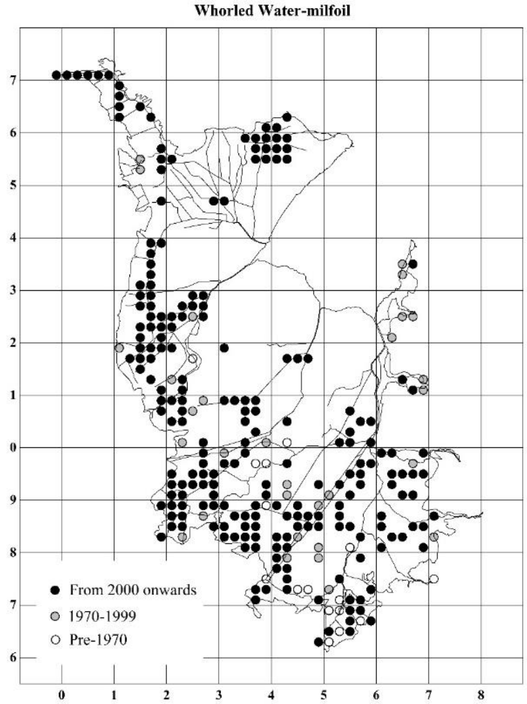
8. Fenland Flora Project

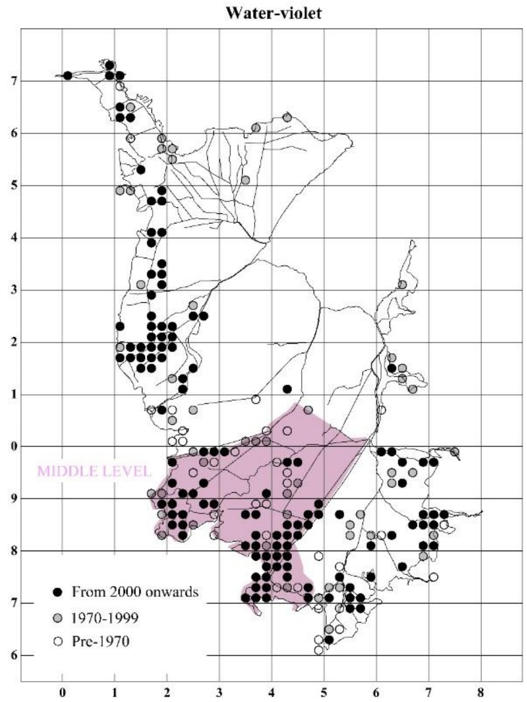
The long-running fenland flora project, headed up by botanist Jonathan Graham, to identify and record the presence of rare, threatened and notable aquatic plants in the fens, is nearing completion. The results highlight:

- There are lots of nationally significant aquatic plants in fens, many of which are only found in IDB drains and are present because of the way the drain is being managed.
- Water quality is important for many aquatic plants and a good proportion of IDB drains have good water quality.

- A summer-maintained water level is good for many plants.
- Non-IDB field drains are important too so where possible, aim to always hold some water and cut periodically.

The diagrams below show how the presence of 2 England red data plants that are frequent in local drains.





The plant location data will be added to the GIS system and made available so it can be reviewed ahead of any planed works, and will be added to BAPs. The data will also be useful in identifying any opportunities to enhance these valuable plant populations.

9. Environmental Stewardship.

You will most likely be aware that environmental stewardship schemes and farming subsidies are changing. If you would like to discuss existing stewardship provisions within the district, or you or another rate payer is thinking of applying for a stewardship agreement or establishing new stewardship measures, please do get in touch.

10. Carbon & Climate

There are increasingly a number of low-carbon, sustainable alternatives available for many of the common materials and equipment used in flood risk management, such as low-carbon concrete and steel, solar powered mechanical and electrical equipment and coir roll for bank stabilisation. Please get in touch to discuss any projects which involve these or similar materials or equipment to understand if any are suitable for you to consider.

Last year ADA published a Carbon Accounting Guide for IDBs, which is available from their website. The process of calculating carbon emissions does not have to be as complicated as some may think. If you have reviewed the guide and would like some help to progress with calculating your carbon emissions, please get in touch.

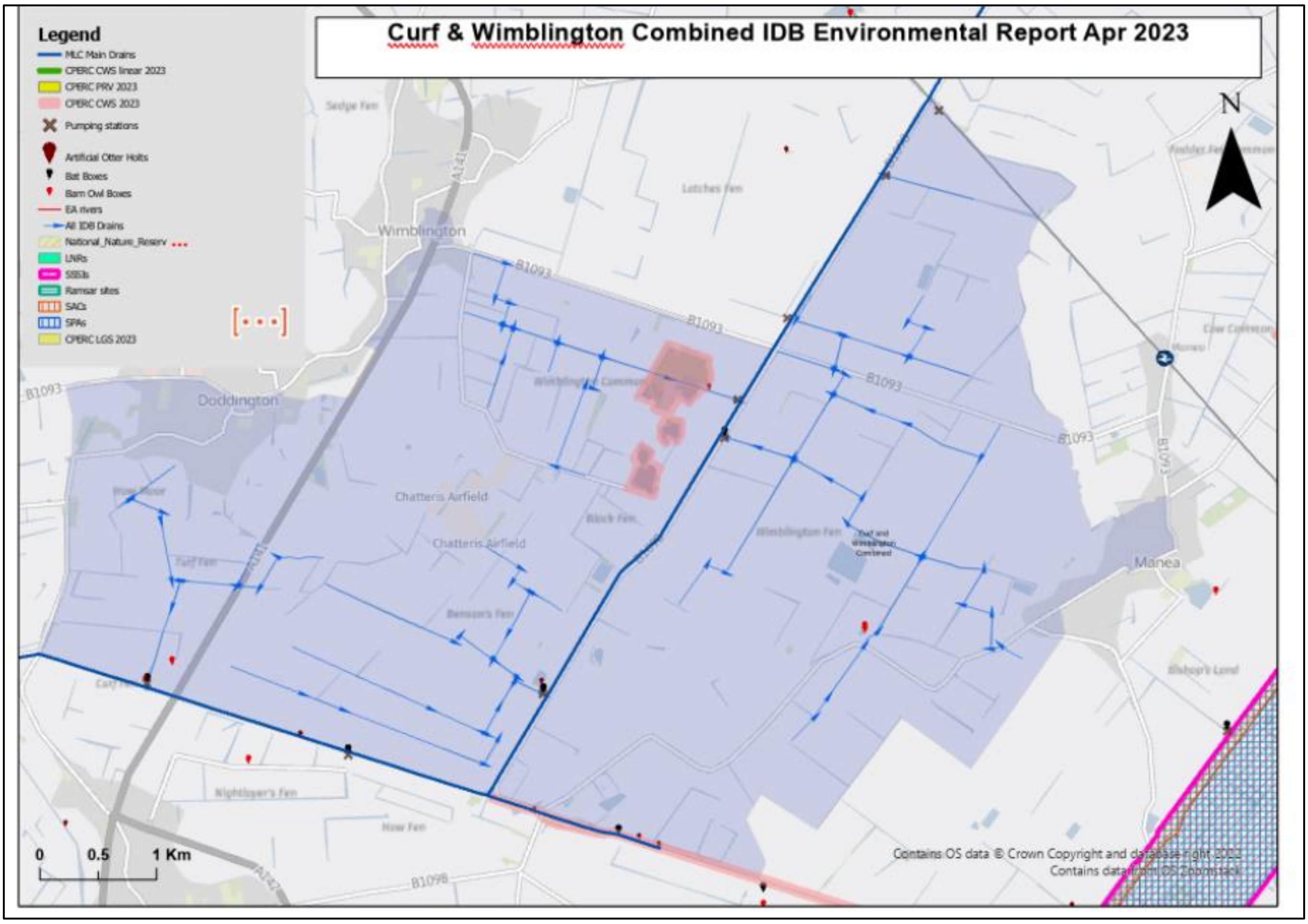
11. Paludiculture

I attended a workshop in Cambridge to discuss the progress of knowledge acquisition and trials around growing commercial crops, associated with wetlands in lowland areas, where the water level has been raised to reduce or eliminate CO_2 emissions from degraded peat. This is known as paludiculture. This includes the potential for receiving an income for carbon sequestration from such approaches. As you would expect, there is a focus on the Cambridgeshire fens as a key area for development of this approach along with Somerset, Lancashire and the

Lincs fens. If you would like to know more about how this topic is progressing, would like to get involved in some trials or would like to have a go at growing a paludiculture crop such as Typha latifolia (Bullrush or cattail) or Sphagnum moss yourself commercially, then please do get in touch.

12. Environmental Good Governance Guide for IDBs

I have a copy of the above guide, published by ADA last September, for each Chairman and District Officer which I can hand to you when I visit if you don't have a copy already. Until then, an on-line version is available from **here** and you can also request copies from ADA directly admin@ada.org.uk.



Site Safety Inspection Record

Curf and Wimblington Combined IDB SSI 170123

Complete

Name of organisation:	Curf and Wimblington Combined IDB
Date of site visit	17.01.2023 09:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Curf Pumping Station Bensons Pumping Station Wimblington Common Pumping Station Finchams Farm Pumping Station Stonea Fen Pumping Station
Name of Advisor	Simon Cross
Time of arrival at site:	17.01.2023 09:00 GMT
Audit Name	Curf and Wimblington Combined IDB SSI 170123

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Robin and Chris Gowler

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

1

Introduction. During the opening meeting and throughout the visit, issues highlighted on previous visits and progress made on recommendations made were discussed. No additional issues or concerns were raised by yourselves.

2

Curf Pumping Station.
* Electrical safety. It was noted that although a label was displayed indicating fixed electrical inspection on the main panel was carried out in 04/19, the label on the electrical panel for the automatic weed screen cleaner displayed 2015 as the last date, with a 3 year inspection cycle. It is recommended that inspection of the fixed electrical components is undertaken by a competent person periodically to ensure it remains safe to use, either 3 or 5 yearly, depending on level of risk. Inspection reports should be made available, particularly if remedial works are required and where practical, labels displayed on equipment indicating date undertaken and review date. If an inspection has been carried out it is recommended that the label date is refreshed.
* Signage. It was observed that hazard warning signage was limited in this site, or not clear due to size or legibility. It is recommended that appropriate signage is displayed in a suitable position, such as on the security fence or building indicating the hazards on site with approved pictograms. Ideally signage should also include the name of the pumping station, location details (e.g. grid ref, 'What Three Words') and emergency contact details (e.g. name, telephone). An example of a similar sign is shown below in photo 1.

Photo 1

3

Bensons Pumping Station.
* Electrical Safety. Similar to the comment above, the fixed electrical inspection label for the weed screen cleaner electrical panel indicated 2015/2016 with a retest period of 3 years. It is recommended that inspection of the fixed electrical components is undertaken by a competent person periodically to ensure it remains safe to use, either 3 or 5 yearly, depending on level of risk. Inspection reports should be made available, particularly if remedial works are required and where practical, labels displayed on equipment indicating date undertaken and review date. If an inspection has been carried out it is recommended that the label date is refreshed.
* Signage. Similar to the comment above, it was observed that hazard warning signage was limited in this site, or not clear due to size or legibility. See photo 2 below. It is recommended that appropriate signage is displayed in a suitable position, such as on the security fence or building indicating the hazards on site with approved pictograms. Ideally signage should also include the name of the pumping station, location details (e.g. grid ref, 'What Three Words') and emergency

contact details (e.g. name, telephone).
* High level access. It was observed that high level access is available above a concrete structure. See photo 3 below. Although edge protection is provided, access is possible to unauthorised persons up the short fixed ladder due to the lack of security fencing around this part of the site. It is recommended that access is restricted as far as practical, for example by using a ladder guard, warning signage or other method of limiting access.


Photo 2


Photo 3

4

Wimblington Common Pumping Station.
* Electrical Safety. Similar to the comments above regarding electrical inspections, there appeared to be no fixed electrical inspection label for the weed screen cleaner electrical panel, therefore it was unclear if this had been completed at the same time as the main electrical panel. It is recommended that inspection of the fixed electrical components is undertaken by a competent person periodically to ensure it remains safe to use, either 3 or 5 yearly, depending on level of risk. Inspection reports should be made available, particularly if remedial works are required and where practical, labels displayed on equipment indicating date undertaken and review date. If an inspection has been carried out it is recommended that the label date is displayed for clarity.
* Signage. Similar to the comments above, it was observed that hazard warning signage was limited in this site, or not clear due to size or legibility. See photo 4 below. It is recommended that appropriate signage is displayed in a suitable position, such as on the security fence or building indicating the hazards on site with approved pictograms. Ideally signage should also include the name of the pumping station, location details (e.g. grid ref, 'What Three Words') and emergency contact details (e.g. name, telephone).
* Outlet handrail. It was observed that the metal handrail provided for access to an outlet point on the river side of the bank did not extend fully to the edge protection, leaving a gap large enough for a person to pass through. See photo 5 below. It is recommended that the existing rail is adjusted to extend to the edge protection, or if not sufficient, to replace with a longer rail.


Photo 4


Photo 5

5

Finchams Farm Pumping Station.
* Access. It was pleasing to note that security and restricted access has been provided with the installation of a security palisade fence around part of the site accessed by board members. Although some steps and a metal handrail have been provided directly outside the access gate, care should be taken accessing the site as from the roadside to the top of the steps is a slightly sloping grass bank through a large wooden gate in poor condition.
* Lifting equipment. Despite the very small size of this pumping station, overhead lifting equipment, chains and hook are provided for potential use to lift the pump, although anticipated to be extremely infrequent. See photo 6 below. It was unclear if this equipment had been inspected by a competent person, in accordance with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998, as has been done at other pumping stations with similar equipment. It is recommended that if not, this should be arranged if it is likely to be used again. The alternative

could be to remove it or decommission to prevent its use and then recommission and inspect should it be required in the future.
* Signage. Similar to the comments above, it was observed that hazard warning signage was limited in this site, or not clear due to size or legibility, although hazards are less due to the absence of an automatic weed screen cleaner. It is recommended that appropriate signage is displayed in a suitable position, such as on the security fence or building indicating the hazards on site with approved pictograms. Ideally signage should also include the name of the pumping station, location details (e.g. grid ref, 'What Three Words') and emergency contact details (e.g. name, telephone).

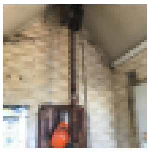


Photo 6

6

Stonea Fen.
* Signage. Similar to the comments above, it was observed that there appeared to be no hazard warning signage in this site, apart from the compound containing high voltage electrical equipment which is not under the Boards control. See photo 7 and 8 below. It is recommended that appropriate signage is displayed in a suitable position, such as on the security fence or building indicating the hazards on site with approved pictograms. Ideally signage should also include the name of the pumping station, location details (e.g. grid ref, 'What Three Words') and emergency contact details (e.g. name, telephone).

Photo 7

Photo 8

Photographic Risk Assessment

Signature of person informed

Signature of person informed 1

Signature of person informed

Robin Gowler
17.01.2023 11:05 GMT

Advisor's signature

Simon Cross
17.01.2023 17:10 GMT

Departure time 17.01.2023 11:30 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

No PRAs

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments 0
From 0 to 99

Appendix

Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Photo 4

Photo 5

Photo 6

Photo 7

Photo 8

CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB
SUMMARY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

NO OUTSTANDING PHOTOGRAPHIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

Curf & Wimblington Combined 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 Curf & Wimblington Combined 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 Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Curf & Wimblington Combined 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

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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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: 19/05/2022 23/05/2022 30/05/2022

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: BEN ZEECH - WHITINGS LLP

Date: 30/05/2022

*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:

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

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

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

10/05/22

and recorded as minute reference:

B 531

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

Chairman

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending 31 March 2021 £	Year ending 31 March 2022 £	Notes and guidance: *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	202,080	185,567	*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	86,440	100,923	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	6,893	12,325	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	10,988	10,988	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	98,858	91,376	*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	185,567	196,451	*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	201,735	213,880	*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	3,164,000	3,164,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	71,888	62,171	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

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

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 19th April 2022

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

10/05/22

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE B.538

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of **CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD – DB0020**

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: 11/09/2022

* 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.

General points

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.

Client comment:

Every effort is made to update the relevant pages of all authorities in an efficient and timely manner and in accordance with the regulations. It should be noted that 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 Audit Tender Proposal to

Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners under the administration of the Middle Level Commissioners

November 2022

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Executive Summary

Whitings LLP are a regional firm of Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers, based in 11 locations throughout East Anglia.

The firm has broad range of experience in dealing with internal and external audits, serving a range of local organisations operating with the private and public sector.

On review of your invitation to tender we understand that the following requirements need to be met:

- Subject the financial statements to internal audit in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Upon conclusion of the internal audit prepare of a management letter to the board detailing any deficiencies in the internal systems, recommending improvements in addition to communicating whether in our opinion the organisation are ensuring value for money is being achieved.
- Completion of the Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return

We have had the pleasure as serving as your internal auditors for several years and have demonstrated our ability to meet the statutory deadlines set. We will strive to deliver this whilst also providing the following benefits:

- Ensuring staff continuity from year to year
- Quoting and sticking to an agreed fee for the duration of the five year appointment
- Providing a comprehensive and personable service, building on the strong working relationships that we already have with your organisation
- Pro-active in our approach to the engagement, seeking out ways to streamline the internal audit process to ensure minimal disruption to your day-to-day operations

Our fees for the first year ended 31 March 2024, excluding VAT, will be £21,250 (exc. VAT) for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners, a detailed breakdown of our fee structure for the five year appointment can be found on page 10 of this document.

Our clients rightly demand a service that provides high quality, specialist expertise, timeliness and cost effectiveness combined with local knowledge, an appreciation of local Fenland circumstances and district needs. Whitings LLP, having been established in the local area since 1928, have a proven track record of being able to meet these demands and continue to review and develop its business practices to ensure that this remains the case for many years to come.

Your Requirements

You have asked us to quote for providing the following services for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners:

- Subject the financial statements to internal audit in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Upon conclusion of the internal audit prepare of a management letter to the board detailing any deficiencies in the internal systems, recommending improvements in addition to communicating whether in our opinion the organisation are ensuring value for money is being achieved.
- Completion of the Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return

In order to obtain best value from our service, it is essential that our audit work is directed towards areas of greatest risk. You have indicated that you will maintain the accounting records, presenting our firm with accurate completed financial statements together with relevant and supporting schedules and reconciliations as required in a timely fashion.

The first accounts to be internally audited shall be for the year ended 31 March 2024. We will be able to carry out our work on these in accordance with your completion timetable which we provisionally understand to be 30 June 2024.

Our Audit Approach

Before the boards' year end, we would anticipate a pre-planning meeting between the audit team and members of the Middle Level Commissioners' finance team. At this meeting various formalities such as the timing of our procedures will be agreed, together with the identification of key audit areas. We would also at this stage confirm our understanding of the company's accounting systems and structure of internal controls.

This enables us to adopt an efficient and structured approach to risk assessment, analytical appraisal of results and the tailoring of audit testing to ensure that your accounts comply with all relevant legislation and regulations. The below internal audit strategy has been designed to be a high level statement of how our audit approach will be delivered and developed during the proposed engagement period.

Internal audit is an independent, objective assurance and pro-active consulting services designed to add value and improve the Board's operations. It provides an independent and objective opinion to the Board on the control environment that comprises risk management, control and governance.

All internal audit work will be undertaken with due regard to the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations having cognition of the Practitioners Guide.

It covers aspects of all financial systems annually, rather than just on a strict 3 year cyclical basis which is a fairly common alternative for Internal Audit functions. The plan is for minimal 'systems review' days as the financial systems are undertaken on a common basis due to the administration of the boards by the Middle Level Commissioners, so using a risk based audit approach these only require to be audited on a sample basis across the IDBs on an annual basis. The normal level of both System confirmation and Transaction testing is set to ensure that some transactions of all individual boards within the Middle Level Commissioners' administered area are covered each year such as will be appropriate to the Board's level of activity and/or strength of assessed internal controls; nonetheless all Boards will be covered in all areas across a 3 year period.

Even so, where issues are identified , major internal control systems/personnel changes occur , or problems are encountered in conduct or results of the internal audit then the scheduled rota may be amended on year by year basis.

In addition, substantial work is carried each year on every Board on certain areas to ensure compliance and correctness of the Annual Return form.

The following list summarises the main work done and frequency, taking into account the objectives set out in the Annual Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return:

A -Return, Accounts & Completion (Annually)

- Ensure IDB/DDC cashbook kept up to date
- Ensure that monthly bank reconciliations are carried out
- Check that verification of bank reconciliations has been carried out
- Ensure that the annual return and accounting record opening and comparative figures agree to prior years records
- Ensure that figures stated on the annual return agree to underlying accounting records
- Checking casting and arithmetic of schedules
- Review variance report and investigate reasons excessive variances
- Ensure that the IDB/DDC publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit
- Ensure that the IDB/DDC has complied with the publication requirements as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

B - Purchases (Cyclically)

- Ensure that the IDB/DDC has complied with its financial regulations and these are reviewed with sufficient regularity by the board
- Check proper purchase authority is recorded by the board in relation to IDB/DDC payments
- Carry out walkthrough testing in relation to IDB/DDC purchase system
- Agreement of purchase ledger balances to trial balance
- Ensuring payment of principal and interest in respect of loans is in accordance with agreed terms
- Confirm list of payments issued agrees to minutes
- Ensure that individual purchases are authorised by a relevant person

C - Minutes, Value for Money, Risk Management, Ethical Standard and Sustainability (Annually)

Minutes

- Review of minutes to check that risks relating to the boards are discussed
- Ensure that a formal risk assessment is carried out by the board
- Review the budget setting process
- Review minutes for unusual or extraordinary activities
- Check insurance review

Value for Money

- Ensure that value for money principles are being observed
- Obtain relevant tenders for capital purchases to ensure VFM principles are being considered.

Risk Management

- Ensure that the boards risk register is kept up to date and adequately covers potential areas of risk facing the board.
- Ensure that risk factors are taken into account in the board's decision making and implementation processes

Ethical Standards and Sustainability

- Ensure that decisions are made in an ethical manner by the board, bearing in mind environmental and other socioeconomic circumstances/responsibilities within the local community.
- Ensure that ethics is taken into account within the boards defined policies
- Ensure that long term sustainability is being taken into account in operational decisions.

D - Budget and Variance Analysis (Cyclically)

- Review variance analysis issued by the board
- Check that progress against budgets are regularly monitored
- Check that budgets are used for determining rates for the following year
- Review accruals for reasonableness and completeness

E - Sales (Cyclically)

- Perform walkthrough testing on the IDB/DDC rates system, including the treatment of special levies
- Review any rates write offs and ensure received board approval
- Perform walkthrough testing of other sales made by IDB/DDCs
- Review minutes to ensure all expected other income has been received and banked

F - Petty Cash (Cyclically)

- Not applicable at present, no petty cash function for any IDB/DDCs currently administered.

G - Wages (Cyclically)

- Performance of wages walkthrough
- Ensure that authorisation granted for overtime paid
- Review of P11Ds (where applicable)
- Ensure that non-pay rolled staff have been correctly taxed
- Confirm contractor expenses to invoices and that pay rates and payments are authorised within the minutes by the board

H - Assets (Cyclically)

- Vouch additions and review sales of fixed assets in the year
- Ensure assets are adequately covered by IDB/DDC insurance policies
- Ensure that asset movements in the year are reasonable and consistent with prior years
- Review fixed assets for indicators or impairment, both through physical review and by reference to the minutes

I - Bank (Annually)

- Ensure that regular reconciliations have occurred in the year and that these are reviewed by a senior individual within the finance department
- Recalculation of interim and year end bank reconciliations, ensuring clearance of any outstanding payments or lodgements following the reconciliation date
- Ensure that cashbook entries are based on transactions as made rather than in order of appearance on the bank statements
- Consideration of treasury management, including returns where significant bank balances are held by IDB/DDCs

J - Trial Balance & Nominal (Cyclically)

- Ensure Opera trial balance transferred to the accounts correctly
- Scrutinise creditors, accruals, debtors and prepayments
- Identify any transactions that are held within the audited figures that relate to prior or future periods
- Review and scrutiny of adjustment journals posting during the year and as part of the year end accounts process

All financial systems are to be documented and reviewed on an annual basis to provide the required level of assurance. Where appropriate probity audit work will be undertaken and the propriety, accuracy and recording of transactions sample tested.

In addition to the main work carried out on each board, the below areas are also considered to be valuable components in delivering a high quality and well-rounded internal audit service.

Consultancy and Advice

Internal Audit will be available to assist the Board with control or operational issues. During the year there might be emerging risks or issues that need an independent view or review. In addition, internal audit will be pro-active with suggestions and advice to management from information gained through experience, other organisations and networking groups.

Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption

Internal Audit will be pro-active in counter fraud work. Although it is not a function of Internal Audit to detect fraud, bribery and corruption (this is a responsibility of management and good system control) work will be undertaken to help ensure there are adequate systems and procedures to highlight potential instances.

Value for Money (VFM), Risk Management, Ethical Standards and Sustainability

As a part of the internal audit review, systems and controls established by management to secure VFM, risk management, ethical standards and sustainability will be examined and evaluated. Matters of an overall nature are also addressed within the annual work programme. Auditors may initiate, conduct or participate additionally in special reviews in these areas where need arises.

The above covers Boards administered throughout the year by MLC but where a new Board is added to the group administration facility, a special additional / fuller review will occur in the first year of involvement.

At the completion of each audit a report will be produced and released to the Middle Level Commissioners for distribution to the Boards. This report details the terms of reference and scope of the audit, findings, recommendations and a management action plan. An executive summary that includes an audit opinion on controls will also be included.

An annual internal audit report shall be produced to the Board to provide an overall opinion on controls and detail the audit work for the year.

About Whitings LLP

Whitings LLP are a regional firm of Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers. At the time of writing, the firm has 12 partners and 7 associates who are supported by approximately 165 staff. The firm operates from 11 offices within the East Anglia counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. We are registered by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales to undertake audit work.

Due to the size of the firm we are able to offer our clients with a comprehensive range of services whilst also providing specific insights into industry sectors which represent the key sectors that our client base operates within, these are detailed below:

Service Offerings

- Audit and Assurance
- Business Support
- Business Tax
- General Practice
- IT Services
- Payroll
- Private Client Tax
- Probate and Estate Administration
- Start Ups
- Tax Enquiry and Investigation Service
- Wealth Management

Sector Specialisms

- Agriculture and related industries
- Construction
- Contractors
- Creative Industries
- Manufacturing
- Not for Profit
- Property
- Retail
- Road Haulage
- Technology

More comprehensive information on the firm, its services, specialisms and culture can be found on the website www.whitingsllp.co.uk

Our Fees

We believe the fee scales we propose for this assignment are competitive and reflective of the work required to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations. We do not compromise on quality by issuing tenders for audit assignments that are clearly uneconomic.

Our fees for the year ended 31 March 2024 will be £21,250 (exc. VAT) for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners.

With regard to fees for future years, we would expect, on the assumption that the level of activities and quality of accounting records do not alter significantly that our fees would rise by no more than in line with our wage rate inflation, assumed to be 5% per annum. If, through efficiencies that we can introduce, we can provide the same services at a lower guide fee, then we shall pass on this discount to you.

On this premise, we quote the following four years' fees, excluding VAT, as: -

2024-25	£22,300
2025-26	£23,400
2026-27	£24,600
2027-28	£25,800

For normal ongoing continuous supply services, the initial payment request issued will not be a tax invoice for VAT purposes but will include a notional amount for VAT. On receipt of your payment a tax invoice will be issued to enable you to recover input tax where applicable. However, please note that a VAT invoice will be issued in certain rare circumstances for exceptional "non-continuous" work only.

You will be billed at appropriate intervals during the course of the year. We would expect most of the fees to be billed in a single fee note raised soon after the completion of the Internal Audit Report and issue of our management letter to the board. We would also propose to raise fee notes for any further specially agreed work on a quarterly basis. Payment of fees will be due within 30 days of the date of the payment request.

Key Personnel and Career Summaries

Our philosophy is to provide each client with a dedicated team responsible for their affairs, thus ensuring that we can provide both expertise and continuity of service.

All our audit staff are either qualified or studying for professional qualifications in either AAT, ACCA, or ACA. Our partners, associates and staff undertake a vigorous ongoing programme of continuing professional development, to maintain high technical standards.

Over many years we have experienced extremely high levels of staff retention, enabling us to staff audits with the same individual's year on year. This allows us to accumulate high levels of background understanding of your organisation and these mature relationships with clients makes two way communication both easy and friendly.

The proposed core audit team will be:

Your Audit Principle
It is intended that the audit principle responsible for this assignment will be Ben Beech, an Associate of the firm who is based at our March office. Ben began working for Whitings in 2011, qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 2016. He is in charge of the firm's audit and assurance offering within the Fenland and surrounding areas, dealing with many of the firm's larger clients operating in a range of sectors. He is also involved in the monitoring and development of the firm's professional standards and compliance procedures.

Your Relationship Manager
Your designated relationship manager for this assignment will be Aston Hinson who is also based at our March office. Aston has worked with Ben for many years supporting him in the provision of high quality audits to some of the firm's largest clients. Aston is also part of the firms Not for Profit team, assisting these organisations with their accounting and tax requirements.

Your Audit Team
The audit team will include a range of staff appropriate to the varying tasks involved ranging from qualified accountants to junior accounts technicians.

Appendix A - Internal Audit Plan - Year Ending 31 March 2024

The below is an indication of the number of working days required to carry out the internal audit of the 29 Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners under the administration of the Middle Level Commissioners. As a result, and taking into account the engagement timeframe, we are confident that we will be able to meet the deadlines set.

Audit Areas	Planned Days
Planning - discussions, clarification, summarising, AGAR requirement review	4
Systems - review and confirmation work	20
Transactions - testing and verification	20
Completion - collation of issues and recommendations, enquiries of management, reporting via the AGAR and management letter	6
TOTAL	**50**

Appendix B - List of Administered Boards

Benwick Internal Drainage Board
Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board
Churchfield and Plawfield Internal Drainage Board
Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board
Curf and Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board
Euximoor Internal Drainage Board
Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
Hundred Foot Washes Internal Drainage Board
Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board
Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners
March West and White Fen Internal Drainage Board
March East Internal Drainage Board
March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners
March Sixth District Drainage Commissioners
March Third District Drainage Commissioners
Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board
Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board
Nordelph Internal Drainage Board
Over and Willingham IDB
Ramsey First (Hollow) Internal Drainage Board
Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) Internal Drainage Board
Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board
Ransonmoor District Drainage Commissioners
Sawtry Internal Drainage Board
Sutton and Mepal Internal Drainage Board
Swavesey Internal Drainage Board
Upwell Internal Drainage Board
Waldersey Internal Drainage Board
Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board

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 £.

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE 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	9,753
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	**9,753**

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		86,737
2. Special Levies		9,371
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		9,535
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		2,665
5. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		0
6. PSCAs from EA and other RMAs		0
7. Loans		0
8. Rechargeable Works		0
9. Interest and Investment Income		9
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		16
11. Other Income		4,915
Total income		**113,248**
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		2,309
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		10,121
14. Watercourse maintenance		25,966
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		38,331
16. Administration		13,582
17. PSCAs		0
18. Rechargeable Works		0
19. Finance Charges		10,988
20. SSSIs		0
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		575
22. Other Expenditure		492
Total expenditure		**102,364**

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		0
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**10,884**
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		10,320
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)?............................ 10/05/2022

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?

34.8

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

5

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

4 cumecs

Health and Safety

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

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?	15
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	2
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	13
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.	9
Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	1

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?
0.09%

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

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Signature	S Ablett
Date	12/09/2022
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT
Designation	ASSISTANT TREASURER
Email address	sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2022/2023

	Approved 2022/2023 £	Actual to 31/12/2022 £	Forecast to 31/03/2023 £	Remarks:
1 Insurances	2,000	1,954	2,000	
2 Repairs and renewals	8,000	3,827	8,000	
3 Fuel (electricity)	20,300	12,024	22,500	Accounts to November
4 District labour	6,000	3,247	6,000	
5 Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	39,000	21,029	50,000	Includes estimate for piling works additional to budget. Contractor account not received.
6 Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage subscriptions etc	13,750	5,338	13,750	
7 Environment Agency - Precept	10,323	10,323	10,323	
8 Improvement works	72,500	22,500	22,500	Budget included Bensons pump replacement
9 Asset Replacement Fund	4,119	3,090	4,119	
10 Public Works loan repayment	10,988	10,988	10,988	
	186,980	94,320	150,180	
LESS Deposit Accounts interest etc	81,938	32,507	32,507	Budget includes funding for Bensons pump replacement
	105,042	61,812	117,673	

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
INSURED VALUES OF PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2023
Bensons Pumping Station	736,500.00
Curf Pumping Station	873,000.00
Finchams Farm Pumping Station	333,000.00
Stonea Fen Pumping Station	894,500.00
Wimblington Common Pumping Station	548,000.00
	3,385,000.00

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED 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 2023, that:

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

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

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

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chairman

Clerk

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Payments 2022/2023 (1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023)

Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Health and Safety contract	7,444.99
Middle Level Commissioners - Discharge consent application fee	240.35
Middle Level Commissioners - Re-set time clock, run both pumps and test -Stonea Fen pumping station	126.41
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2021/22, planning and development applications)	2,982.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Temporary repair to flap door, dig out and stone around pump, fit guttering and concrete, together with repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner -Wimblington Common pumping station	3,965.86
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	279.84
Public Works Loan - Loan Repayment	5,494.22
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	909.69
Environment Agency - Precept	5,161.48
Tim Fisher Landscape Services - Grass cutting at pumping stations	135.00
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2022	777.60
J Carson - Pumping station duties (Curf pumping station)	857.50
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	150.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	150.00
R & J A Gowler - Pumping station duties (Stonea Fen, Bensons and Wimblington Common pumping stations)	945.60
Sears Bros. Ltd - Use of private drainage system (2 years)	1,008.67
Middle Level Commissioners - Drainage rates	31.36
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	150.00
R & J A Gowler - Pumping station duties (Stonea Fen, Bensons and Wimblington Common pumping stations)	945.60
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	150.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	1,976.79
Middle Level Commissioners - Attend site to take meter reading	61.78
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	150.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fees (2021-2022 accounts)	480.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning & Development applications)	670.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	5,696.38
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	575.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners 2021-2022)	930.00
G Ashman - Flailmowing	3,096.00
Environment Agency - Precept	5,161.48
J Carson - Pumping station duties (Curf pumping station)	883.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	150.00
Public Works Loan - Loan Repayment	5,494.22
Middle Level Commissioners - Set up ultrasonic and test as pumps not running correctly (Stonea Fen pumping station)	164.34
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner (Bensons pumping station)	129.61
Middle Level Commissioners - Replace level sensor cable after rodent damage - Curf Fen pumping station	744.81
Middle Level Commissioners - Dees (Discharge consent - Mr Glowacki)	146.98
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,170.33
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	174.36
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning & Development applications)	415.80
R & J A Gowler - Pumping station duties (Stonea Fen, Bensons and Wimblington Common pumping stations)	945.60
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2022-2023	30.00
G Ashman - Flailmowing	2,760.00
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District Drains	1,973.58
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	824.15
B J Plant Hire Ltd - Drain maintenance and bank revetment works	31,002.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	415.37
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	176.59
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning & Development applications)	573.30
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner - (Curf pumping station)	161.28
Middle Level Commissioners - Bank revetment works Common Pump Drain	20,501.60
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	150.00
R & J A Gowler - Pumping station duties (Stonea Fen, Bensons and Wimblington Common pumping stations)	945.60
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges (Curf pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges (Bensons pumping station)	209.71
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges (Stonea Fen pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges (Wimblington Common pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges (Curf pumping station)	131.99
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges (Bensons pumping station)	131.98
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges (Stonea Fen pumping station)	131.99
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges (Wimblington Common pumping station)	131.98
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Curf pumping station)	4,992.60
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Bensons pumping station)	4,456.33
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Finchams Farm pumping station)	2,321.76
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Stonea Fen pumping station)	7,878.21
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Wimblington Common pumping station)	5,374.95
	147,067.82

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023
GENERAL FUND

2023				2022				
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		115,624.98
	Precept		10,322.96				
	Insurances	1,953.63		2023			
	Repairs & Renewals	5,435.11		Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	105,117.37	
	Fuel	22,497.03			Less Irrecoverables	0.00	105,117.37
	Drainworks	55,487.32					
	Contractors Charges	5,781.00			Interest on Deposit Accounts		0.69
	Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising etc	13,281.71	104,435.80		Highland Water contributions	5,492.26	
					Consents	0.00	
	Loan charges - Principal	9,895.77			Rents	16.00	5,508.26
	- Interest	1,092.67	10,988.44				
					Grant-in-aid		9,251.66
	Improvement works - installation of telemetry		18,503.32				
					Asset replacement fund		9,251.66
	Balance carried forward		100,504.10				
			244,754.62				244,754.62

BALANCE SHEET
Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
Capital Provisions	3,111,724.43	Bensons Pumping Station	690,000.00	
		Curf Pumping Station	815,000.00	
Public Works Loan Board - Loan Outstanding	52,275.57	Finchams Pumping Station	312,000.00	
		Stonea Fen Pumping Station	835,000.00	
	3,164,000.00	Common Pumping Station	512,000.00	3,164,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	100,504.10	Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		2,226.79
Development Charges Account	14,739.84	Rent Account		0.00
Sundry Creditors	32,894.68	Value added Tax - Refunds due		5,905.33
Asset Replacement Fund	61,254.68	Sundry Debtors		0.00
Rent Account	41.00	Balance in hand - Treasurer's Accounts		
		Barclays Bank Account	200,050.44	
		Natrional Savings Account	1,251.74	201,302.18
	3,373,434.30			3,373,434.30

Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal District Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2023

Barclays - Treasurers Account 2022/2023

1st April 2022			31st March 2023	
Balance brought forward		212,629.17	Payments made during the year	147,067.82
31st March 2023				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	134,489.09			
Interest on deposit accounts	0.00	134,489.09	Balance carried forward	200,050.44
		347,118.26		**347,118.26**

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2022/2023 - Curf

1st April 2022		31st March 2023	
Balance brought forward	1,250.57	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2023			
Interest on deposit accounts	1.17	Balance carried forward	1,251.74
	1,251.74		**1,251.74**

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2023

Barclays Bank PLc

Clients Premium Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2023	200,050.44
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	**200,050.44**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2023

Barclays Bank PLc

Clients Premium Account	**200,050.44**

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook as at 31st March 2023	**1,251.74**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**201,302.18**

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	*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	185,567	196,451	*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	100,923	105,117	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	12,325	19,303	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	10,988	10,988	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	91,376	133,384	*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	196,451	176,499	*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	213,880	201,302	*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	3,164,000	3,164,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	62,171	52,276	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 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 19th APRIL 2023

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

as recorded in minute reference:

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

Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return
Financial year ended 31st March 2023

					Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**				
	General Fund		115,624.98		
	Development charges account		10,320.45		
	Asset replacement fund		70,505.92		
				196,451.35	**196,451**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**				
	Agricultural rates		90,277.37		
	Special Levies		9,753.00		
	Byall Fen contribution		5,012.00		
	Penalty		0.00		
	Costs		75.00		
	Write-off		0.00		
				105,117.37	**105,117**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**				
	Interest				
		General fund	0.69		
		Development charges account	0.06		
		Asset replacement fund	0.42		
	Write back of Provisions		0.00		
	Consent applications		0.00		
	Rent		16.00		
	Highland Water		5,492.26		
	Discharge contributions		4,541.81		
	Grant in Aid		9,251.66		
	Imbanking		0.00		
				19,302.90	**19,303**
Line 4	**Staff costs**				
	Wages/salaries		0.00		
	National insurance contributions		0.00		
	Pension costs		0.00		
	Travelling expenses		0.00		
				0.00	**0**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**				
	PWLB - Principal		9,895.77		
	PWLB - Interest		1,092.67		
				10,988.44	**10,988**

Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return
Financial year ended 31st March 2023

				Per Annual Return
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	10,322.96		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	1,953.63		
	Repairs and renewals	5,435.11		
	Fuel	22,497.03		
	Drainworks	55,487.32		
	Administration	13,281.71		
	Contractors charges	5,781.00		
	Development charges fees	122.48		
	Improvement costs	18,503.32		
			133,384.56	**133,384**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	96,385.10		
	Development charges account	14,739.84		
	Asset replacement fund	65,373.68		
			176,498.62	**176,499**

Reconciliation	
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6	176,498.62
Balances carried forward	
Per Annual return	**176,499.00**

CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2023/2024

		Approved 2022/2023 £	Actual 2022/2023 £	Budget 2023/2024 £	Remarks:	
					A - Includes estimate for increased premiums	
1	Insurances	2,000	1,954	2,150 [A]	B - Usage to end of year estimated from meter reads	
2	Repairs and renewals	8,000	5,435	8,500	C - Provision based on 5 year average and increased for new contract rates - see separate note	
3	Fuel (electricity)	20,300	22,497 [B]	45,150 [C]	Includes estimate for additional standing charges	8,000.00
4	District labour	6,000	5,781	6,425		
					D - Includes piling works - Common pump drain	17,085
5	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	39,000	55,487 [D]	32,000 [E]	E - Includes engineers (drain maintenance) items	28,410
6	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of				F - Provision to replace pump no. 2 - Bensons p/s	50,000
					Installation of telemetry - 5 stations	22,500
	Drainage subscriptions etc	13,750	13,282	13,975	G - Installation of telemetry - 4 x stations	18,503
7	Environment Agency - Precept	10,323	10,323	10,633	H - Includes:	
					Grant-in-aid - installation of telemetry	9,252
8	Improvement works	72,500 [F]	18,503 [G]	0	Asset fund - installation of telemetry	9,251
						18,503
9	Asset Replacement Fund	4,119	0	4,119		
10	Public Works loan repayment	10,988	10,988	10,988		
		186,980	144,251	133,940	Asset replacement fund -	
					Balance at 1st April 2023	61,255
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest etc	81,938	24,012 [H]	9,949		
		105,042	120,238	123,991		

Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB

Budget allocations 2023/2024 - electricity

There will be a new electricity contract commencing 1st April 2023 with significantly higher unit rates. For 2022/2023 the contract through Anglia Farmers was a "flex" contract, meaning the unit rates were changed monthly based on the wholesale price; also from October 2022 these charges were off-set by the Government price capping mechanism - this was based on the wholesale price with an adjustment made in addition to the monthly charges.
For 2023/2024 this capping has been significantly reduced, although ADA are lobbying Central Government to have Drainage Boards recognised as high users which could, if approved get the higher rate of capping.

We had previously started to base the electricity provision on a 5 year average, to take account of the impact of climate change and the provision suggested is based on an "average". It has not been policy to provide for possible extremes but members should be aware that, due to the increased unit rates, the direct pumping costs for an event will be significantly higher.
As an indicator, the indicative possible current-day costs for the 2020/2021 expenditure would be :-

Expenditure 2020/2021	21,939	
Indicative current day costs		76,786
Provision included for 2023/2024		37,150
Potential shortfall on budget		39,636

balances as at 31st March 2023	
General Fund	100,504
Development account	14,740
Capital account	61,255
Other	0
	176,499
Potential shortfall as % of balances	22.46%

Members are asked to note the position when considering the rate requirement for 2023/2024.

Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Board must be borne for 2023/2024 is:-

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector - 90.01%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Fenland District Council – 9.99%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £3,708.

In 2023/2024 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £4,119.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2023 - £100,504.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2023/2024, without raising additional funds for future improvement schemes is £123,991, is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 30.10p and

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £11,512.

c) a Contribution from Middle Level Commissioners in respect of Byall Fen of £5,916.

In 2022/2023 a rate of 25.50p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £9,753 on Fenland District Council and a contribution from Middle Level Commissioners of £5,012 in respect of Byall Fen.

P BURROWS,

Clerk to the Board

April 2023