

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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Middle Level Offices

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1st June 2023

Dear Board Members

Meeting of the Board – Friday 9th June 2023

I enclose the Agenda for the Meeting of the Board to be held at Hanson's, Bluntisham at 10.30 am on Friday 9th June 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 [whether or not you will be attending the meeting](#) as soon as possible.

Yours truly

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

To the Chairman and the Members of the Bluntisham 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 1st February 2023.

(Copy pages 8 - 19)

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. Member Training Update

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

7. Changing to One Annual Meeting of the Board

Further to minute B.864, To discuss moving to one meeting of the Board annually rather than the current 2 meetings.

8. Maintenance works in the District

Further to minute B.866, the Chairman to report.

9. Hanson – Progress Report

To receive Hanson's progress report.

10. Ouse Washes Newsletter

Further to minute B.868, the Clerk will refer to the Newsletter from the Environment Agency dated March 2023.

(Copy page 20)

11. Clerk's Report

The Clerk advises:-

i) Annual Flood & Water Conference 2023

Invitation to ADA Flood & Water Conference 2023

Tuesday 21 November 2023 | 11:00 – 17:00 | One Great George Street, London, SW1P 3AA

ADA is delighted to invite you to join them for the ADA Flood & Water Conference on Tuesday 21 November 2023, as the conference returns to the magnificent venue of One Great George Street, Westminster, London. ADA will bring together a leading line-up of prominent political, policy, and technical speakers from across the United Kingdom to discuss key policy topics of the moment during the main conference session.

Following feedback from members, the format of this year's Conference has been developed to:

- maximise the time available for networking between delegates and suppliers to the sector,
- invite a greater variety of guest speakers, and
- provide more convenient timing for those travelling to and from London.

The Conference will open at 11.00 for networking with delegates and an expanded Exhibition of ADA's Associate Members in the Great Hall. A buffet lunch will be served from 12.00 before the conference presentations commence at 13.20 in the Thomas Telford Theatre. The Conference will close at 17.00.

Discussion forum

A discussion forum will form part of the day where delegates will be able to pose topical questions to the speakers/panellists via the conference chair. ADA wish to receive delegates questions in advance, which can be submitted as part of the ticket booking process on Eventbrite. Their aim is to consolidating key subjects for discussion and questioning and to maximise the value of this session.

Book your place

ADA has launched bookings for this year's conference early to give everyone plenty of advance notice of the revised date of Tuesday 21 November 2023 to make travel arrangements. They invite you to secure your place now via Eventbrite, via the link below. Tickets are non-refundable but can be transferred.

[ADA Flood & Water Conference 2023 Tickets, Tue 21 Nov 2023 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

ii) 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 Trehwella (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) 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.

iv) 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 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.

v) 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.

vi) Local Government Support - Special Levies

Thanks to lobbying by the Association of Drainage Authorities and Local Authorities, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities announced an additional financial support package totalling £3m for 2023/24 to support the 15 Local Authorities most impacted by increases in special levies from Internal Drainage Boards driven by unprecedented increases in energy costs. We provided ADA with information to support this case and Fenland District Council have secured £177,281 and King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council £205,451. The Ministerial Statement is available [here](#). Disappointingly it is explicit that this is a one-off exceptional payment and clear that the government will not provide additional grant to Local Authorities to cover special levies on an ongoing basis.

12. Consulting Engineers' Report.

- a) To consider the Report of the Consulting Engineers

(Enc 1)

- b) To consider the Supplementary Report Improving Capital Delivery

(Copy pages 21 - 23)

13. Environment Officer's Report

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

(Copy pages 24 - 27)

14. Pumping Station duties

To give consideration to the payment in respect of pumping station duties for 2023/2024

15. 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.

16. Risk Management Assessment

- a) To give consideration to the Board's Risk Management Policy.
- b) To review the insured value of the Board's buildings & to consider the sum insured to be index-linked.

(Copy page 28)

17. Health and Safety

Further to minute B.852, the Vice Chair refer to the report from Cope Safety Management after their visit to the district on 9th February 2023.

(Copy pages 29 - 32)

18. Determination of annual value for rating purposes

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

(See Confidential Papers)

19. Annual Governance Statement – 2021/2022

To review and complete the Annual Governance Statement.

(Copy page 33)

20. Payments 2022/2023

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

(Schedule page 34)

21. 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 35 - 39)

22. Date of Next Meeting

23. Any Other Business

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board
held at Hanson's, Bluntisham at 10:30 on Wednesday 1st February 2023

PRESENT

P Burton Esq (Chairman)
J R Anderson Esq (Vice Chairman)
P Burgess Esq
A G R Holloway Esq
Cllr J Neish Esq

Mr David Thomas (Clerk to the Board) was in attendance as was Paul Burrows as incoming Chief Executive of the Middle Level Commissioners as future Clerk to the Board.

Apologies for Absence

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

B.861 Declarations of Interest

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

Mr P Burton (Chairman) declared an interest in the contracted maintenance works of the Board as supplier of services.

B.862 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on 10th June 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.863 Bank Mandate and National Savings & Investments

The Clerk reported that will be necessary to update the signatories after April 2023.

Members discussed the changes required due to the impending retirement of the Clerk. The Chairman also noted his intention to stand down at the next election date and hence proposed that his signatory powers be passed on to the Vice-Chairman whilst changes were taking place.

RESOLVED

That the current signatories be changed from David Thomas to Paul Burrows and from Peter Burton to James Anderson.

As the Chairman had declared his intention to step down, there was a discussion over who might best fill the vacancy. The Clerk noted that until the Chairman stepped down there were no current vacancies but that the Board could, if it wished, co-opt a member onto the Board as they had done with Chris Hudson of RSPB. It was noted that in general Co-opted members will not have voting rights. Members agreed to speak, look at and contact possible suitable candidates and that this matter be added to the next agenda.

RESOLVED

That an item on membership candidates be included in the next meeting agenda.

B.864 Changing to One Annual Meeting of the Board

Members discussed the current arrangements and the what the needs of the Board were. It was noted that many of the Board's administered by the MLC only meet once per year and that all necessary actions and decisions can be dealt with at one meeting. Members felt in general that one meeting per year ought to be sufficient given the size of the Board and taking into account their experience over the past few years. It was noted that the Chairman considered that a February meeting would be a good option.

RESOLVED

To move to one meeting per year and that a decision on the date of that meeting will be decided at the next planned Board meeting in June.

B.865 Recovery of costs for processing consents

The Clerk outlined the reasons why some planning applications were responded to which were outside of the Board's district. In essence this was linked to the fact that treated effluent which discharged into the district could come from settlements beyond its boundaries. Based upon this explanation members agreed that it would be appropriate that the outstanding MLC invoices be settled.

Members asked the Clerk to ensure that the David Homes development near Needingworth was being persuaded fully as this could generate a significant one-off treated effluent discharge payment.

RESOLVED

That an item on this development and what the developer contribute has been or will be is included in the next Engineer's report.

B.866 Maintenance works in the District

Further to minute B.844, The Chairman advised that he had not yet walked the district to plan this coming years maintenance works. It was reported that around £4K had been spent to date in this financial year on maintenance works and that works had been held back pending the possible payment by Hansons of the bill to remove the pump blockage, which had recently been confirmed.

It was noted that the section near point 9 is overgrown but also that this is a dead end and hence will not impact significantly upon flood risk.

The Chairman raised a note of concern over two hedges that are too close to the drains and hence impede easy maintenance. These were originally going to be moved but in the end were not. The revised working method is to place spoil over the hedge such that it does not adversely impact the footpath. Hansons were going to approach the RSPB to agree for the hedge height to be lowered.

RESOLVED

- i) That a letter be sent to Hansons reminding them that the hedges between points 15 – 17 (topping and siding) and 2 – 6 (topping only) need to be kept in check and that it should not be allowed to grow to a height beyond 1.5m.
- ii) That all costs shall be borne by Hansons.
- iii) That the Board will expect this commitment to be incorporated in any land transfer to the RSPB to ensure ratepayers are not disadvantaged.

B.867 Hanson – Progress Report

It was reported that Hansons have confirmed that they will cover all costs associated with this matter.

B.868 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank works

Further to minute B.823, the Clerk referred to the Newsletters from the Environment Agency dated December 2022 & January 2023.

It was reported by the Clerk that all works have been completed, with the exception of some remedial works and some tidying up.

PB reported that the Ouse Washes Water Level Management Plan (WLMP) was being reviewed by the Environment Agency and asked if the Board wished to be included in any consultation. Members felt it would be appropriate for the Board to be consulted and kept abreast of developments and proposals.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman's and Vice Chairman's details be passed on to the Environment Agency.

B.869 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised;

- 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 contact 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.

Members expressed some concern over the potential for the new Anglian Water Fens reservoir to take water from the river system and were generally concerned over the lack of information coming forward at the moment.

Mr P Burrows advised that he was pushing for a meeting to be held to draw out details any to ensure that a commitment is made to work in partnership with affected bodies such as the IDBs.

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

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.

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) Water Resources East (WRE)

Further to minute B.846 (v), the Clerk reported that the requested contribution from this Board for 2023/2024 financial year is expected to once again be £125. Contributions from drainage boards within the East of England secure a direct stake in WRE and help to ensure their needs and opinions are taken into account.

v) 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 the 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 from 1st April 2023.

RESOLVED

- i) To pay the £125 towards ADA having representation on the Board of WRE.
- ii) That the Chairman's actions regarding changes to the electricity supply contracts be approved.

B.870 Consulting Engineers' Report, including Planning and Consenting Matters

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

The Chairman wondered whether there may be an option to install a screw pump when the pumping station is next replaced/refurbished. It was noted however that the expected life of the station would be at least another 10 years as it is believed that the station is around 30/35 years old. The need to lengthen the weedscreen rake handle was discussed and it was suggested that it could be modified in-house.

RESOLVED

That rough outline comparative figures of screw verses axial flow pumps be provided for members consideration. Also, that the weedscreen rake be modified by the Board rather than the work being outsourced.

B.871 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme be approved.

B.872 Conservation Officer's Newsletter

The Clerk referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, which had previously been circulated to Members.

Members discussed the reference in the report to Giant Hogweed. It was noted that this had been found at Overcoat Lane near the chicken farm and that it had been sprayed off now several times. It was also believed that it had emanated originally from the Gravely Treatment works.

RESOLVED

That it be monitored and kept on top of.

B.873 State-aided Schemes

Consideration was given to the desirability of undertaking further State-aided Schemes in the District and whether any future proposals should be included in the capital forecasts provided to the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.874 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

The Clerk reported that following his submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £1,258.66 (£2,168.50 less £909.84 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 £1,153.67 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2022/2023.

B.875 Environment Agency – Precept

The Clerk reported that at the Environment Agency Flood Defence Committee 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 £1,934.

B.876 Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscriptions

The Clerk reported that ADA has increased subscriptions by 4.5% for 2023, from £571 to £597.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription for 2023 be paid.

B.877 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2021/2022

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

B.878 Appointment of Internal Auditor

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

B.879 Defra IDB1 Returns

The Clerk referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2021/2022 which the Board noted and approved.

RESOLVED

It was agreed that an item should be included on agendas for member training.

B.880 Review of Internal Controls

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of Internal Controls and determined that no further controls were required.

B.881 Risk Management Assessment

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

B.882 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

The Clerk reported that, as resolved at its' last meeting, the Board will continue with a limited assurance review and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

RESOLVED

To continue with a limited assurance review as has been carried out in previous years.

B.883 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.884 Payments made from 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022

The Clerk reported on payments made from 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022.

RESOLVED

That the Board approved payments made from 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022.

B.885 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2023/2024

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2023/2024 and were informed by the Clerk that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 33.80% and 66.20%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £20,981 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £7,092 and £13,889 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 15.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £13,889 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) 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).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levy by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.886 Date of Next Meeting

The Clerk reminded Members that the next Meeting of the Board would be held on Friday 9th June 2023 at 10.30am at Hanson's Site Office, Needingworth.

B.887 Any Other Business

- i) Members wished it to be noted that they were not in favour of amalgamating with any other Board at this time
- ii) The Board's wished to record their thanks to David Thomas who was due to retire at the end of March.
- iii) A request was made to check if the Pike and Eel planning application would affect the Board in any way – App reference 20/025274.

Ouse Washes Flood Storage Reservoir

Update

March 2023

Middle Level Barrier Bank

Following our update in January 2023.

During the autumn reservoir inspection, our engineers identified cracks in the embankment between Welney and the A142 Mepal, following the prolonged period of hot, dry weather.

We undertook repair work throughout January and February and has now been complete. We will continue monitoring of the repaired cracks monthly until December 2023.

Our contractor Jackson Civil Engineering will start demobilising from the site and compound area in Welney from Monday 6 March, this will take approximately 1 week.

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

Public footpath

The Middle Level Barrier Bank will remain open.

Please continue to be careful when accessing and walking on the bank and stay away from the patches of grass that haven't grown fully yet.

Keeping your community up to date

We would like to thank you for your co-operation and patience, and we will continue to work with you and the community to minimise disruption.

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



Bluntisham 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 its 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 wholesale 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

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

Bluntisham IDB

Environmental Update – May 2023

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. Environmental Screening Report (ESR)

We have developed the template for IDBs to complete when planning any ad hoc/non-routine works that will "break ground" on 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 adaptations 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.

4. 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) *Reptiles*

Just a reminder that reptiles, particularly grass snakes will be found basking on south facing slopes or in direct sun on reeds slopes this time of year. Operations should aim to move as slowly as possible to allow them time to move away from the works area and to allow operatives a better chance of spotting them. Cutting blades should be set as high as possible to minimise the risk of blade strikes. Clear egress routes should be maintained to allow them to move into a safe area and out of harm's way. Please report sightings of any reptiles, all information is welcome so we can better understand population status and trends.

d) *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 understand that you have at least one barn owl frequenting the area near Fenton Lode, so please keep an eye on

where it may be roosting, and we can monitor the nest if you believe there may be young in it.

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.

5. 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) 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.

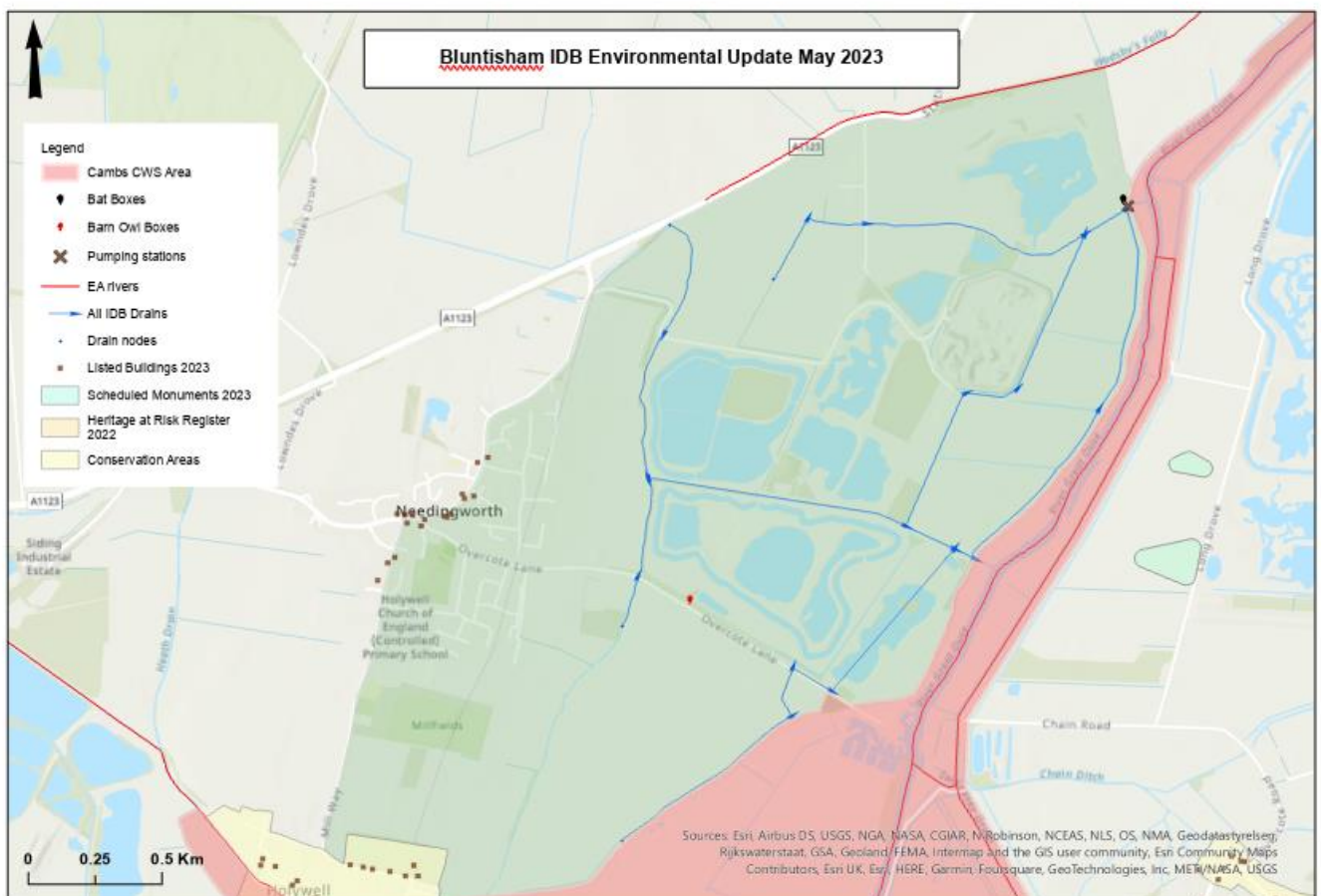


American Signal Crayfish

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>



BLUNTISHAM IDB
INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATION

As At
1st April 2023

BARLEY CROFT PUMPING STATION

470,000.00

470,000.00



Site Safety Inspection Record

Bluntisham IDB

Complete

Name of organisation:	Bluntisham IDB
Date of site visit	09.02.2023 09:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Hanson Quarry. Bluntisham.
Name of Advisor	Martin Clark
Time of arrival at site:	09.02.2023 09:00 GMT
Audit Name	Bluntisham IDB

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

James Anderson.

Have there been any accidents since our last visit?

No

None recorded

Have there been any new starters since our last visit?

No

None recorded

1

It was pleasing to note that the platform above the weed screen has now been fitted with appropriate guarding including a fan type guard to prevent unauthorised entry and an intermediate rail to reduce the potential for operators to fall from the platform.

The existing photographic risk assessment index will be amended accordingly.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

2

As discussed it is recommended that additional signage is provided warning persons of deep water and also the presence of high voltage machinery.

General operations were discussed and no significant issues were noted in the period since the previous site visit. (12.10.21)

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature



Martin Clark
09.02.2023 22:02 GMT

Departure time

09.02.2023 10:45 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

18.10.19 1,2

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments

0
From 0 to 99

Appendix



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

Bluntisham IDB SUMMARY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

No outstanding PRA's

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

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

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

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

DATE/TIME OF MEETING

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

CHAIRMAN SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Chairman

CLERK SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

ENTER HERE: WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,237.82
Middle Level Commissioners - Galvanised tube and tubeklamp fittings	44.64
D & M K Green & Sons - Work carried out whilst pump was being repaired, including 2,490 litres of diesel for pump	3,396.72
Lattenbury Services Ltd - Drain maintenance	7,740.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	185.76
Environment Agency - Precept	967.22
R & S Anderson & Son - Re-imbursement for the supply of JCB telehandler to assist with emergency work on pump to remove entangled item	267.00
Water Resources East - Contribution to operating costs 2022-2023	150.00
Lattenbury Services Ltd - Temporary pump hire (removing blockage)	6,216.66
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	482.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	444.50
PKF Littlejohns LLP - Audit fee (2021/2022 accounts)	240.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	210.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	2,676.78
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	352.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2021-2022 accounts)	558.00
Environment Agency - Precept	967.22
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to vent pipe and supply of padlock	488.15
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	185.76
Lattenbury Services Ltd - Flailmowing	4,800.00
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2022/2023	6.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Consider contents of the matters arising following Board meeting, planning and development applications)	106.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	129.60
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2023	716.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	319.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	185.76
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
	<u>33,114.59</u>

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS MONITORING 2022/2023

	<u>Approved budget</u> <u>2022/2023</u> £	<u>Probable Actual</u> <u>2022/2023</u> £	<u>actual</u> <u>2022/2023</u> £	<u>Remarks</u>
1 Channel Maintenance	5,100	1,500	4,972	- Additional flail mowing authorised
2 Pumping Station				
Repairs and Renewals	1,650	6,831	6,954	- Includes additional charges for pump blockage
Electricity	2,500	3,500	3,900	- Esstimated to usage calculations
Labour	1,600	1,550	1,600	
3 Administration				
Insurances	500	450	445	
Administration	7,500	7,350	6,915	
4 EA Precept	2,000	1,934	1,934	
5 Improvement works	0	0	0	
	20,850	23,115	26,720	
LESS Deposit Accounts interest, etc	990	6,497	11,659	- Includes refund for pump blockage costs
	19,860	16,618	15,060	

BLUNTISHAM 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	21,148.06
	Precept	1,934.44	2023	Rate income & Special levy	18,294.97
	Insurances	444.50	Mar-31	Irrecoverables	<u>0.00</u>
	Administration	6,915.20			18,294.97
	Drainworks	4,971.75			
	Pumping Station Repairs	6,453.74		Highland Water Contributions	2,348.94
	Electricity	3,900.00			
	Contractors Charges	<u>1,600.00</u>		Refund of costs:	
		24,285.19			
	Transfer to Pump Replacement Fund			- clearing blockage at pumping station	10,342.71
	Funds raised in year	500.00			
	Funds surplus for year	<u>1,032.43</u>			
		1532.43			
	Balance carried forward	<u>24,382.62</u>			
		<u>52,134.68</u>			<u>52,134.68</u>

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities

Capital Provisions 470,000.00

Assets

Barley Croft Pumping Station 470,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund 24,382.62
Sundry Creditors 26,837.03
Pumping Plant Replacement Fund 36,794.74
Development Charges Account 301.90
558,316.29

Value added Tax - Refunds due 668.46
Ratepayers Account - Arrears 0.00
Sundry Debtors 10,790.46
Balance in hand -
Barclays - Treasurer's Barclays Bank 76,857.37
558,316.29

Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2023

Treasurers Account 2021/2022

1st April 2022			31st March 2023	
Balance brought forward	83,260.77		Payments made during the year	33,114.59
31st March 2023				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	26,711.19			
Interest on deposit accounts	<u>0.00</u>	26,711.19	Balance carried forward	76,857.37
		<u>109,971.96</u>		<u>109,971.96</u>

Barclays Bank PLC

Clients Premium Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2023	76,857.37
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>76,857.37</u>

Cash balances as at 31st March 2022

Barclays Bank PLC

Clients Premium Account	76,857.37
<u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u>	<u>76,857.37</u>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

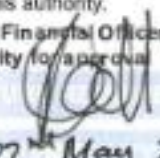
BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	66,653	56,562	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	18,295	18,295	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,866	12,842	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	31,252	26,220	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	56,562	61,479	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	83,261	76,857	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	470,000	470,000	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

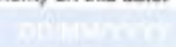
For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			

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

Signature: 
Date: 22 May 2023

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

Signature: 
as recorded in minute reference: 
Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved
Signature Required: 

Bluntisham IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return
Financial year ended 31st March 2023

**Per Annual
Return**

Line 1	Balances brought forward		
	General Fund	21,148.06	
	Pump replacement fund	35,112.31	
	Development Charges Fund	301.90	
		56,562.27	56,562
Line 2	Rates and Special Levies		
	Agricultural rates	6,118.97	
	Special Levies	12,176.00	
	Penalty	0.00	
	Costs	0.00	
	Write-off	0.00	
		18,294.97	18,295
Line 3	Total other receipts		
	Interest		
	General fund	0.00	
	Pump replacement fund	0.00	
	Development Charges Fund	0.00	
	Highland Water	2,348.94	
	Write Back of Provisions	150.00	
	Refund of Costs for Clearing Pump	10,342.71	
		12,841.65	12,842
Line 4	Staff costs		
	Wages/salaries	0.00	
	National insurance contributions	0.00	
	Pension costs	0.00	
	Travelling expenses	0.00	
		0.00	0
Line 5	Loan repayments		
	PWLB - Principal	0.00	
	PWLB - Interest	0.00	
		0.00	0
Line 6	All other payments		
	Precept	1,934.44	
	Rates, insurances, telephones	444.50	
	Repairs and renewals	6,453.74	
	Fuel	3,900.00	
	Drainworks	4,971.75	
	Contractors charges	1,600.00	
	Administration	6,915.20	
	Underprovision in previous years	0.00	
		26,219.63	26,220
Line 7	Balances carried forward		
	General Fund	24,382.62	
	Pump replacement Fund	36,794.74	
	Development Charges Fund	301.90	
		61,479.26	61,479

Reconciliation

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

61,479.26

Balances carried forward

Per Annual return

61,479.00