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8th November 2023

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board Thursday 16th November 2023

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Crown Lodge, Outwell at 5pm on Thursday 16th November 2023.

The hot buffet will be served at the conclusion of the meeting at approx. 7pm.

As you'll be aware, we administer thirty Boards that mostly all meet within similar date ranges. Thank you to the majority of Members who already confirm their attendance proactively.

Please help us manage your Board effectively by **proactively letting Polly know as soon as possible, by telephone or email, if you can attend the meeting, or not, or if you're uncertain.** This results in less abortive time and cost to the running of all Boards.

It is important that we have early confirmation whether or not the Board will be quorate.

Yours truly

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Board

Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board

Thursday 16th November 2023 – 5pm

The Crown Lodge, Outwell

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 3 - 19	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership • Attendance • Elections, vacancies & appointments – (as appropriate) – to consider Nick Pooley as a nominee to fill one vacancy. • Composition and amalgamations, inc Waldersey IDB update • Training	Pages 20 - 22	Clerk
5	Governance • Internal Controls & Banking • Risk Assessment • IDB1 • Exercise of Public Rights	Pages 23 - 32	Clerk
6	Clerk's Report	Pages 33 - 37	Clerk
7	Environment Officer's Report	Verbal	Clerk
8	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: • Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Pages 38 - 50	Engineer
9	Health & Safety – review of actions	Page 51	HS officer
10	District Officer's Report • Compensation for crops re access to point 54 – 53.	Page 52	DO
11	Works Committee Report	Page 53	DO
12	Finance Report: looking back • Annual Account & Annual return for 2022/23 • To Consider the Auditors comments & Internal Audit report	 Pages 54 - 58 Pages 59 - 69	Chair
13	Finance Report: looking forward • Fees, renumeration and subscriptions – DO fee 2023-24 & WRE • Precept to the Environment Agency • Expenditure Estimate/Update for 2023/24	 Page 70	Chair
14	Date of Next Meeting	Verbal	Chair
15	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board
held at Middle Level Offices, March on Wednesday 14th June 2023

PRESENT

M G Day Esq (Chairman)	G L Lake Esq	Cllr A Miscandlon Esq
N Buttress Esq (Vice Chairman)	Cllr D Laws	Cllr G Booth Esq
F D Leach (Deputy Vice Chairman)	J Leach Esq	Cllr Haq Nawaz Esq
N J Harrison Esq	Cllr R Gerstner Esq	Cllr C Marks
H Duncalfe Esq	Cllr D Oliver Esq	Cllr B Barber
Cllr J French	Cllr M Davies	Cllr S Imafidon Esq
Cllr S Hoy	Cllr C Boden Esq	

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Board), Mr Paul Burrows (MLC Chief Executive), Mrs Nicola Oldfield (MLC Chief Engineer) and Mr Graham Moore (Consulting Engineer) were also in attendance.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Bunning Esq, C Smart Esq, A Pinder, Cllr Roy and Cllr Seaton.

B.2081 Declarations of Interest

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

Mr Harrison declared an interest in any item in relation to the maintenance work of the Board.

Mr Harrison & Cllr Miscandlon (as members of Waldersey IDB) declared interests in any matters concerning Waldersey IDB.

The Chairman, Mr Buttress and Mr F Leach as District Officers of the Board declared interests in matters concerning the District Officers and District Officers Fees.

Cllrs Laws, French, Marks, Davies and Imafidon declared an interest in all planning matters as members of Fenland District Councils planning committee and left the room when specific applications were being discussed.

B.2082 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 17th November 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.2083 Matters Arising

None

B.2084 Bank Mandate and National Savings & Investments

i) The Clerk requested authorisation to add the Chief Executive to the Barclays bank signatories if necessary.

ii) The Clerk reported that it is necessary to update the signatories on National Savings & Investments.

RESOLVED

i) That Mr P Burrows be added as an authorised signatory of the Barclays Bank Account, should this be required in the future.

ii) That Mr P Burrows, as Clerk to the Board and Mr M Day, as Chairman, be the authorised signatories of the National Savings Investment Account and that the account of Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board with National Savings and Investments be changed accordingly.

B.2085 Vacancies in Membership

Mr N Buttress proposed Mr Ben Wales to fill a vacancy as an elected member. He reported that he was a former employee of the Board, so had good knowledge of the district, was a Waldersey Internal Drainage Board member, District officer and pump attendant at the South Brink pumping station. Mr F Leach seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED

That Mr Ben Wales be invited to become a member of the Board.

B.2086 Member Training Update

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

Members considered it important for the new council appointees to have access to the ADA training modules.

RESOLVED

That the link to the ADA training modules be sent to the new members of the board.

B.2087 Access Problems

Further to minute B.2064, Mr Harrison reported that access within the industrial area continued to be a problem and that currently approx. 80% of works had been completed. He reported that there were

major issues with access on the SB Components site and that there was construction taking place within the Lamb Weston site.
The Chairman reported that there had been site meetings last year and there had been agreements reached to clear sections ahead of maintenance works, however, when the contractor arrived, the representative who made the agreements were no longer around and the process had to be started again, causing further delays to the maintenance programme.

Mr F Leach reported that he had been on a site visit last week to the Lamb Weston site, who were constructing a bund wall which encroached onto the Boards byelaw distance and after discussions had agreed to stop construction work. However, 24 hours later, works had re-commenced.

In response to Cllr Boden, Mr F Leach detailed the access issues encountered by the Boards contractor through the industrial area and that he would welcome any assistance that could be provided by the council to resolve these issues.

In response to Cllr Boden concerning the Boards powers to enforce byelaws, Mr N Buttress reported that the Middle Level solicitor had been requested to issue entry notices to allow the Boards contractor to gain access.

Paul Burrows reported that the Board does have powers to enforce and this starts with the issue of a notice to clear the encroachment, generally within 28 days. Following this period, the Board needs to have a clear plan of action to remedy the situation, following which the Board are entitled to recover their costs involved, the recovery of such costs likely to require legal action.

Cllr Boden reported that although Boards do not want development within the 9mtrs byelaw distance, generally the planning department at the council do not receive specific communications from Internal Drainage Board’s giving a clear objection to development within byelaw distance.

Cllr Laws reported that although drainage authorities are not statutory consultees, responses from drainage authorities are welcomed, as without specific responses the council has no way to be able to consider these issues, it being the responsibility of the drainage authority to register objections. She confirmed that the drainage authority needs to ensure a response refers to issues concerning the 9-metre byelaw distance and then the council planning officer can take these concerns into account as part of the process.

The Chairman referred to issues with original plans from developers showing the byelaw distance being kept clear but when the development has been completed, there are encroachments within the byelaw distance.

Mr G Moore queried that as Fenland District Council have all Internal Drainage Board watercourse information on their GIS, why are they not able to take this into account as part of the validation process. Cllr Laws reported that following validation, there is a 21-day response period, which should allow time for drainage authorities to respond.

Mr G Moore reported that in the past, though Middle level, individual applications were responded to, but generally these comments did not appear to have been taken into account.

Mr G Lake informed members that he had been on the Board a long time and that in the past, he felt let down by the council concerning planning/development but he was pleased to see the current representation and the positive comments from the council representatives n trying to find ways to resolve these issues.

Cllr Marks referred to a lack of understanding from developers concerning land drainage issues. Mr N Buttress referred to the current issues at the Lamb Weston site, which involved the site owner looking to address problems/issues from Anglian Water which needed compliance with requirements of the Environment Agency concerning potential discharges which had led to the current encroachment issues with the Board.

Cllr Hoy reported that the SB Component site had been discussed at the previous meeting of the Board, where it had been found that the site was owned by Fenland District Council, which had been referred back to the council by the Board.

Mr N Buttress confirmed that the Chairman and District Officers do get applications to comment on and that as everyone agrees that the 9-metre byelaw distance needs to be kept clear, could a member of the Board respond directly to Fenland District Council on matters concerning encroachment within the 9-metre byelaw distance. Cllr Boden informed members that Cllr Laws was the relevant portfolio holder and could be a conduit for communications.

In response to Cllr Laws, Mr P Burrows updated on the issues faced by the Middle Level in recruiting an additional planning engineer and that the post was now being re-appraised.

Cllr French reported that it was essential to liaise between the Council and Boards and referred to a recent report supplied by the Middle Level Planning Engineers which was extremely useful in formatting a response from the Council. Mr G Moore commented that these types of responses take a long time, which impacts on ability to respond to other applications.

Cllr Boden referred to responses made by Middle Level to developers and commented that if these were also forwarded to Fenland District Council, it would be possible to take these into account by the Council Planning Officer.

In response to Mrs N Oldfield, Cllr Laws reported that each site is looked into separately on its own merits and therefore Fenland District Council require a response on each application. Mrs N Oldfield queried if it would be possible to have a default standard lodged with the Council that there should not be any development within the 9m distance.

Cllr Boden stated that it was important to find a mechanism to allow responses to be made within the required timescales and the there was a planned meeting next week with the Middle Level Chief Executive at which he intended to look further at the specific issues with the SB Component site and more generally a mechanism that allows timely responses in relation to the maintenance of the 9m byelaw distance.

B.2088 Hundred of Wisbech IDB and Waldersey IDB
Review of Joint Pumping Arrangements/Amalgamation

Further to minute B.2065, Mr Hill informed members of the background to the joint pumping arrangement with Waldersey IDB and the agreed formula for the split of shared costs. He reported on the progress of the formal agreement being drafted and that the Middle Level Solicitor hoped to have it finalised in the near future.

In response to Cllr Boden, Mr Hill reported that both Boards had previously given consideration to an amalgamation but both were happy with the current status concerning the joint pumping arrangements, however, the possibility of a future amalgamation would continue to be considered.

B.2089 Clerk's Report

Mr Hill 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 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) 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

iii) Meeting of the Welland and Nene Branch

The Clerk reported on the Meeting of the Welland and Nene branch of the Association held in Woodhall Spa on 23rd February 2023.

iv) Water Resources East (WRE)

Further to minute B.2039 (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) Planning and Consenting Fees

Proposed changes to planning and consenting service supply charging

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

vi) <u>Changes to Electricity Supply Contracts</u>

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

The Clerk reported 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 advised 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.

vii) 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.

  With regards to insurances, Cllr Boden referred to the final paragraph concerning personal accident and sickness cover not being available for employees or members over 80 years of age and therefore the importance of having a policy in place to ensure the Board do not put any person over the ages of 80 in such a position that would invalidate any personal accident insurance cover.
  Cllr Marks referred to recent meeting of another drainage Board at which it was reported that a member affected by this had taken out private insurance cover. Cllr Booth considered it was important to get a clear understanding on this for the Board to then develop a clear policy.

viii) <u>Delegation of signatory on consents</u>

The Board was 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.

ix) <u>Service Delivery Frameworks</u>

The Board were 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.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

i) WRE – That the payment for 2023 is approved

ii) Insurance – That no person over the age of 80 be authorised to actively take part in any operations of the Board and for a policy to be further developed upon receipt of further clarification is received concerning this matter.

iii) Delegation of signatory on Consents – that the Board noted the delegation.

iv) Service Delivery frameworks – that the Board approved that the Clerk be authorised to enter any user/ access agreements.

B.2090 Delivery of Annual Maintenance Contract

Mr Harrison reported that there had been no significant issues concerning the maintenance works, progress had been hampered by a wet start but since this it had been possible to get on and that currently he was up to date with the programme. He referred to the photographs in the report which gave a clear indication of how quickly water levels can rise in a short period.

Mr N Buttress referred to works that were carried out by the contractor at 5.00am on Saturday morning as it was easier to get works completed at times when road traffic was light. He referred to the benefit of having a local contractor who was able to react quickly to particular requirements.

B.2091 Consulting Engineer’s Report.

Culverting Works near Point 66

With regards to the culverting works near point 66, Mrs N Oldfield reported that tenders would be opened tomorrow and there would then be an assessment of each tender to make a recommendation.

Flood Alleviation Investigations

Mrs N Oldfield referred to the Flood Alleviation Investigations and reported that invitations to tender were being finalised with a view to being sent out within the next 1 to 2 weeks. In response to Mr Hill, she confirmed that the study was being progressed with the Environment Agency and had been included in the Environment Agency’s programme refresh for May 2023 and should qualify for Grant-in-Aid funding.

Attenuation Area near Point 29

In response to Mr G Lake, the Chairman confirmed that the attenuation area point 29 was the Hutchinson’s development and Mr F Leach considered it to be in the region of one acre. Mr Hill confirmed that the Middle Level solicitor had recently received communications and it was hoped that the transfer could be completed in the near future.

Members gave consideration to the Seagate Home development proposals and those members of Fenland District Council planning committee left the room while this was being discussed.
The Chairman reported that there had been a site meeting approx. three years ago at which the developers had raised concerns over access to the site and put forward a proposal to pipe and fill a watercourse for them to use as an access route for the site. At this time the Board had recommended a box culvert to retain capacity within this section.

Cllr Hoy reported that the application has now been received and has been validated and that the developer was proposing to use Halfpenny Lane as access.

Mr F Leach confirmed that he had received the application but considered a meeting was required to discuss the issues and that the site was downstream of all the access issues previously discussed.

Cllr Laws referred to the possibility of an extension if it was not possible for the Board to formulate a response due to its complexities of the proposals, however this could not be guaranteed and Cllr Boden stressed the importance of liaising with Cllr Laws during the response period.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

i) That the reports are approved

ii) That the Chairman, Vice-Chair & District Officers review the Seagate homes planning application tomorrow following the opening of tenders and they be authorised to formulate a response to Fenland District Council on behalf of the Board.

<u>B.2092 Capital Improvement Programme</u>

Mr Hill referred to the programme and the two main schemes prepared for this year – the watercourse piping and filling at point 66 and works to the storage area at point 29, he informed members that both figures were estimates only, with tender for the works at point 66 being opened tomorrow and the works at point 29 to be developed following the transfer of land. He reminded members that funding for both schemes had previously been allocated.

He informed members that although there were currently allocations made for future years, there were proposals previously put forward but the whole programme for future years would be revised/updated to reflect proposals generated from the Flood Alleviation study.

Mr P Burrows referred to the importance of looking across the whole district to develop a strategic approach to future schemes and briefly referred to the current policy for the allocation of Grant-in-Aid. He further referred to the mechanisms built into the Grant-in-Aid partnership funding policy and that this excludes new development after 2012 from being eligible for grant funding. He explained that the premise behind this angle of the policy is to disincentivise Local Planning Authorities from approving development in areas of flood risk and avoiding the national taxpayer picking up the future bill.

Cllr Boden queried what was meant by flood risk area and members discussed the various mappings regarding these matters. Mr P Burrows referred to the implications of our Fenland geography generally being regarded as at flood risk. Cllr Boden queried if all developers affected were making contributions to future improvement works and Cllr Laws referred to this area being highly complex with regards to these discussions. Cllr Boden queried if this was something that the drainage board should be taking account of and Mr P Burrows referred to the principals of partnership funding being multi-tiered which required a strategic approach to ensure funding could be available at all level within the terms of the funding arrangements.

Cllr Boden referred to the Seagate Homes Development being within flood zone 3, and should therefore be contributing under partnership funding arrangement and agreed that the subject would be discussed in more detail and the meeting with the Middle Level Chief Executive next week.

In response to Mr F Leach, Mrs N Oldfield confirmed that she was currently formulating a study for all internal drainage boards for current proposals for scheme works but that as the Hundred of Wisbech proposals were already established, there would be ‘accelerated’ when making submissions.

RESOLVED

> The programme approved in principal and for the programme to be updated when more more detail becomes available following the conclusion of Flood Alleviation Study.

B.2093 Contributions from Developers

Mr Hill reported 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.

Cllr Boden queried if there were more contributions likely to come ‘on-line’ in the next reporting period and in response Mr G Moore confirmed that there were some applications being processed currently which could lead to contributions being payable but with SUDS and more attenuation development contributions are likely to reduce. He confirmed that this would be any area for discussion to properly review the implications.

B.2094 Health & Safety

Further to minute B.2070, the Board considered the report of the Health & Safety Officer.

Cllr Boden considered the report and progress made was very good and was pleased that there were no major ongoing issues of concern but raised a query over why the NFU appeared to be reluctant to release the detail of the policy/inspection, as this would generally be accepted as being required for the Board to be able to meet their obligations concerning overall responsibilities for health & safety matters. Members discussed the issues surrounding the apparent reluctance of the NFU to release the required documentation and approved for the clerk to liaise with the Health & Safety Officer and the NFU in order to resolve these issues

B.2095 District Officer Report

Mr F Leach referred to issues when de-silting in the industrial area concerning the disposal of spoil which can become very expensive, generally requiring testing. He considered the Board should look to develop a policy for the disposal of spoil and members considered this could be an area of consideration for the works committee. He further referred to ongoing issues concerning pollution and that although both the Environment Agency and Anglian Water had been involved, neither had been able to find a resolution to the issues.

In response to Cllr Marks, Mr F Leach considered that quality test had been carried out and it was non-hazardous but coloured and very smelly and in response to Cllr Hoy reported that it appears at outfalls at Algores Way, but Anglian Water were not aware of the piped system in the area so cannot trace its source. In response to Cllr Boden, Mr G Moore gave a brief update concerning the MVV development.

B.2096 Environment Officer’s report

The Clerk referred to the Environment Officers report.

RESOLVED

Members considered and approved the most recent Environment Officers report.

B.2097 Works Committee Report

The Chairman reported that all matters discussed by the works committee had been dealt with earlier during the meeting.

B.2098 State-Aided Schemes

The Board considered 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.

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.2099 Environment Agency – Precept

The Clerk reported that the precept for the financial year 2023/2024 has been fixed at £17,780.

The precept for 2022/2023 was £17,780.

B.2100 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Clerk reported 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).

B.2101 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.2102 Risk Management Assessment

The Board considered and approved the Board's Risk Management Policy.

In response to Cllr Boden, Mr P Burrows confirmed that as part of his review of Internal Drainage Board agendas and papers later in the year, he would be looking at improvements in how risks and risk management are presented.

B.2103 Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk to 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.2104 Annual Governance Statement – 2022/2023

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2023.

In response to Cllr Boden, Mr Hill outlined the timescales for getting approval of the annual Governance statements and annual returns together with the arrangements for submission to the external auditor.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2023.

B.2105 Payments 2022/2023

The Board considered and approved payments which had been made during the financial year 2022/2023.

NB: Mr Harrison declared an interest in the payments made to Harrison Agricultural Contractors Ltd.

NB: Cllr Laws & Miscandlon declared interests (as members of MLC) in payments to Middle Level Commissioners.

NB: Mr Buttress declared an interest in the payment made to him for District Officers Fees.

NB: Mr Leach declared an interest (as an employee of W.Norman & Sons Ltd) in the payment made to W.Norman & Sons Ltd.

In response to Cllr French, the Chairman detailed the nature of expenses paid to the Crown Lodge Hotel regarding the November Board meeting.

B.2106 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2022/2023

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliations for the year ended on the 31st March 2023 as required in the Audit Regulations.

Cllr Boden referred to the low interest received in the year and Mr Hill referred to the briefing note send to all members and confirmed that following the closure of the Client Premium Accounts, the Board now operated two current accounts for cash flow purposes with transfer between the two, the second account being interest bearing. He further reported in response to Cllr Boden that the Board were also able to place sums on deposit and currently it was more beneficial for a short term one month deposit and that currently the Board had arranged for £1 million to be placed on a one-month deposit at 2.3%

Cllr Boden commented that Fenland District Council were able to access higher interest-bearing rates, currently between 3% - 4% and wondered if this could be something that the Board would be interested in investigating. Mr Hill & Mr Burrows confirmed they would be interested in looking at more details concerning this but would also need to investigate the legality of this type of investment.

Cllr Boden considered that overall interest received should be itemised with the end of year accounts package, and Mr Hill & Mr Burrows agreed to look at this further.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2023.

B.2107 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2023/2024

In response to Cllr Boden, Mr Hill detailed individual elements within the budget proposal and confirmed that the net expenditure could be reduced when now taking into account likely interest on the revenue balances.

Cllr Boden referred to the level of the revenue balances, which had increased over the years to substantially more than a 'year in hand' which could generally be used as a guide. He considered to address this and start to reduce the revenue balance to nearer a year in hand, it would be possible to leave the rate requirement at 6.90p.

The Chairman referred to the expenditure of the Board which they had little control over, namely the pumping costs and also the unknown costs for the likely disposal of spoil.

Mr N Buttress queried that if balances were reduced and in 2-3years time there was unusually high expenditure and a substantial increase in rates was required to address ongoing costs and to replace depleted balances, what would Fenland District Councils position be?

Cllr Boden firstly accepted that there was likely to be major capital expenditure in future years but this type of expenditure should be serviced by way of loan and secondly, if it became necessary to raise the annual rate requirement substantially, the Fenland District Council would fully support the Board with funding to whatever level was required.

Cllr Boden proposed a rate of 6.90p together with corresponding special levies and this was seconded by Cllr French. There was no amendment to the proposal put forward and the Board approved a rate of 6.90p together with corresponding special levies for 2023/2024.

The Board considered & approved estimates of expenditure and proposals for Special levy and Drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2023/2024 and were informed by Mr Hill that under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by Drainage rates on Agriculture hereditaments and by Special levy on Local Billing Authorities would be respectively 4.85% and 95.15%

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £215,262 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 £10,439 and £204,823 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 6.90p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District

v) a) That a Special levy of £203,629 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

b) That a Special levy of £1,194 be made and issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk 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.

<u>B.2108 Date of next Meetings</u>

Mr Hill reminded members that the next Meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 16th November 2023 at The Crown Lodge, Outwell.

The Chairman referred to the possibilities of a district inspection to show the new members the issues faced by the Board and Mr Buttress considered this would be best to be held in January, when the district systems was likely to be under the most stress.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

That the Chairman to give consideration to and arrange an inspection of the district.

<u>B.2109 Any Other Business</u>

Cllr Boden reported that Fenland District Council were fully supportive of Internal Drainage Boards and both members and staff at the Council would always be available to assist in any way they could.

Mr Buttress thanked the Council for their attendance and considered having the council working with the Board and being supportive will be a great asset moving forward.
He referred to the earlier discussions concerning Health & Safety matters and after due consideration, taking into account personal circumstances, he informed that Board that he would continue in the role until the November Board meeting, but would be standing down from the role of Health & Safety Officer at that time.
Members were sorry that this was the case and hoped that with a further period of reflection he may reconsider his position as his work as Health & Safety Officer was extremely helpful to the Board and greatly appreciated by the members.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH IBD**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 16th November 2023**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Polly Tombleson**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
B. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
C. There are currently **2** vacancies on the Board.
D. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
E. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
F. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.

1. Current status

1.1 The table below outline the current composition of the Board and the quorum as detailed in the standing orders.

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	14	N/A		8
Actual	12	15 FDC	27	
Vacancies	2		2	

1.2 The table below details the current elected members of the Board

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	J Bunning	Co-opted member - Hutchinsons	
2	N Buttress	Nominee of rate payer (DG Bullard)	Vice-Chair & District Officer
3	M Day	Ratepayer	Chairman
4	H Duncalfe	Ratepayer	
5	N Harrison	Ratepayer	
6	G Lake	Ratepayer	
7	F Leach	Nominee of rate payer (W Norman)	Dep Vice-Chair & District Officer
8	J Leach	Nominee of rate payer (W Norman)	
9	A Pinder	Ratepayer	
10	C Smart	Ratepayer	
11	P Tegerdine	Nominee of rate payer (Waldersey Farms Ltd)	
12	B Wales	Co-opted member to vacancy – non-ratepayer	
13			
14			

1.3 The table below details the current appointed members of the Board.

No	Name	Appointing Council as at July 2023	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	B Barber	FDC	Councillor
2	C Boden	FDC	Councillor

3	G Booth	FDC	Councillor
4	M Davis	FDC	Councillor
5	J French	FDC	Councillor
6	R Gerstner	FDC	Councillor
7	S Hoy	FDC	Councillor
8	S Imafidon	FDC	Councillor
9	D Laws	FDC	Councillor
10	C Marks	FDC	Councillor
11	A Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor
12	H Nawaz	FDC	Councillor
13	D Oliver	FDC	Councillor
14	D Roy	FDC	Councillor
15	C Seaton	FDC	Councillor

1.4 Special levy paying District Councils appoint members to Boards and their role is to be part of the Board representing all the non-agricultural interests within the Board's district. The Council must consider appointing members who have relevant knowledge or experience that is relevant to the Board and its district.

1.5 Appointed members do not need to be councillors or employees of the Council, therefore can represent wider relevant interests within the district, eg major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

1.6 All Members are reminded that have equal status to each-other around the Board table and are here to serve the interests of the Board.

2. Attendance

2.1 The table below outlines the attendance record for the last four meetings of the Board.

Elected Members

No	Name	14/6/2023	17/11/2022	16/5/2022	18/11/2021
1	J Bunning	Apologies	Present	Apologies	apologies
2	N Buttress	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	M Day	Present	Present	Present	Present
4	H Duncalfe	Present	Present	n/a	n/a
5	N Harrison	Present	Present	Present	Present
6	G Lake	Present	Present	Present	Present
7	F Leach	Present	Present	Present	Present
8	J Leach	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
9	A Pinder	Apologies	Present	n/a	n/a
10	C Smart			Present	Present
11	P Tegerdine	Apologies	Present	Present	apologies
12	B Wales – only just on board	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
13					
14					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/04/2022	2/11/2021
1	M Day	Present	Present	Present	Present

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	14/6/2023	17/11/2022	16/5/2022	18/11/2021
1	B Barber	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a

2	C Boden	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
3	G Booth	Present	Apologies	n/a	Present
4	M Davis	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
5	J French	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
6	R Gerstner	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
7	S Hoy	Present	Apologies	Present	apologies
8	S Imafidon	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
9	D Laws	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
10	C Marks	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
11	A Miscandlon	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
12	H Nawaz	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
13	D Oliver	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
14	D Roy	Apologies	n/a	n/a	n/a
15	C Seaton	Apologies	n/a	n/a	n/a

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 Current vacancies – July 2023 – **2** elected

4. Composition and amalgamations

4.1 The Board is encouraged to continually monitor and review its membership, financial and climate resilience, along with assessing its influence locally, regionally and nationally. These are all factors that may lead the Board to consider changing its composition and/or amalgamation with (an)other Board(s).

4.2 Amalgamations and composition changes are not swift processes and can take a number of years. They require planning and additional/specialist resourcing by the MLC as your clerk, Environment Agency and Defra. Therefore, the Board is encouraged to think ahead five to ten years in its decision making, thinking about the next generation.

4.3 Joint working agreement - HW & W

5. Training

5.1 All Members are asked to digest the Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Boards published by the Association of Drainage Authorities and view the five accompanying videos intended to bring the guide to life. They are available via https://middlelevel.gov.uk/about/idb-governance/

5.2 To date 0 of 27 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 1 of 27 Board members have reported viewing 3 of the five videos.
To date 9 of 27 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the five videos

5.3 Members are asked to identify any topics areas they would value further training on as well as any site inspections that would help them undertake their role on the Board more effectively.

5.4 Member training is reported to Defra as part of the annual IDB1 return.

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Internal Drainage Boards in England

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Annual Report for the year ended
31 March 2023

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 2023 a copy must be provided to:

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Division, Ground Floor, Seacole, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF via flood.reports@defra.gov.uk
- Engineering & Standards - Policy Manager, Asset Management and Engineering, **Environment Agency**, Goldcrest House, Alice Holt Lodge, Farnham, Surrey. GU10 4LH 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 £.

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Section A – Financial information

Preliminary information on special levies issued by the Board for 2023-24

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 2023-24 (forecast)	
Name of local authority	**2023-24 forecast £**
1. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	203,629
2. KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL	1,194
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	**204,823**

Section A – Financial information (continued)

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2023

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 2023 £
INCOME		
1. Drainage Rates		10,611
2. Special Levies		204,823
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		475
5. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		
6. PSCAs from EA and other RMAs		
7. Loans		
8. Rechargeable Works		
9. Interest and Investment Income		5
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		
11. Other Income		350
Total income		**216,264**
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		18,966
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		17,780
14. Watercourse maintenance		48,365
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		33,708
16. Administration		21,153
17. PSCAs		
18. Rechargeable Works		
19. Finance Charges		74,628
20. SSSIs		
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		353
22. Other Expenditure		750
Total expenditure		**215,703**

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**561**
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		100,135
25. Grant income not applied in year		

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)?........................... 16/05/2022

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?

30.7

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

0

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

0

Health and Safety

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

If so, please summarise in the box below:

Guidance and Best Practice

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

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

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

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?	26
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	15
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	11
Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	8
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.	3

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?

5.65%

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

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Signature	
Date	17/10/2023
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT
Designation	ASSISTANT TREASURER
Email address	sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Thursday 16th November 2023**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

G. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.
H. Support the proposed approach to determining the next electricity contract.
C. In determining their valuations for insurance purposes, recognise the limitations associated with their current valuations and the risks they hold of being underinsured.

6. MLC Services available for IDBs

1.1 There has been significant incremental change over the last 10-20 years in terms of IDB governance standards, financial requirements, health & safety, environmental legislation and capital works delivery, along with a significant increase in the scale and nature of planning and partnership work.

1.2 However, what limited agreements and fee arrangements there are in place with IDBs about the MLC Services offered and received pre-date much of this evolution and as such there is significant ambiguity.

1.3 As an example of this, the current 'Clerkship agreements' with Boards was agreed in 2014 however there are many services provided by the MLC that all parties would consider as core 'clerkship' services that are not specified within the current agreement, including managing elections, arranging meeting, taking minutes, reviewing policies and publications.

1.4 The scale and nature of change ahead of us may well be more significant than that which has been experienced in the last decade. The services provided by the MLC to local IDBs require a review and refresh such that they become fit for the future.

1.5 The intent is to develop a service catalogue over the next 12-18 months that will clarify the full range of services that are offered by MLC staff, along with associated terms and conditions and fee arrangements.

1.6 Boards will be offered opportunity to engage in the development of the catalogue, such that if there are capacity and capability gaps between the services Boards want and what capacity and capability MLC staffing has to deliver, then the MLC Board can consider if and how they address this within a final service offer.

7. IDB Key Health Indicators

7.1 At the MLC and IDB Chairs session on 6th October 2023, Paul Burrows shared the observations from his first suite of IDB meetings and outlined the viability concerns of Conington & Holme IDB that have been escalated to Defra. Observations include that some Boards:

1. struggle for membership and attendance.
2. want to amalgamate but with no one willing to amalgamate with
3. have with no clear succession for critical roles

4. are underwritten by the hands-on inputs of a few (with costs not always passed on within rates)
5. where there's limited involvement from all members around the table
6. with limited financial reserves
7. with aging assets and limited capital reserves
8. will potentially struggle to afford to deliver their ever-increasing statutory duties, powers & governance standards

2.2 The Chairs explored the following question;
Beneath the surface, how healthy is your Board today, for tomorrow and for the next generation?
- What worries you?
- Do we have a good picture of the relative strengths and weaknesses of our Boards?
- How do we ensure risks and issues are tackled proactively?
- How can we better share success, learning and support across Boards?

2.3 The intent is to develop a suite of 'Key Health Indicators' (KHIs) and comparison metrics for the Middle Level Commissioners and administered IDBs. These will help Boards better understand and proactively address their key risks and understand their relative health. KHIs will also help the Middle Level Commissioners assure and focus their service provision for IDBs.

2.4 The picture created will provide an evidence base to inform a business case for change in terms of the IDB landscape within the Middle Level, as the Chairs reflected back to work undertaken by Geoff Beal a number of years ago. Chairs were supportive of the need to develop future options, assess costs:benefits and identify a preferred option proactively locally, rather than risk a national instruction to change. Any business case for change will need to be properly planned and resourced, with considerable engagement included within any scope. This will need to be scoped in due course.

8. Association of Drainage Authorities - Summary

3.1 ADA continues to work effectively on behalf of IDBs and following their role in influencing the additional payments to Councils to help off-set the energy cost impacts on special levies, they have been in negotiation with Defra to secure the Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilot (LAPSIP) fund for IDBs. This marks a considerable departure with a new role within government funding administration.

3.2 Flood & Water Live retuned to the ADA calendar and was held in Lincolnshire during July 2023 and the annual conference returns to the Institution of Civil Engineers on 21st November 2023 with a different approach to the day. The AGM aspects has now taken place virtually, so the morning is focussed on stalls and networking, then a buffet lunch ahead of conference session with keynote attendees.

3.3 At the AGM it was confirmed that there would be 6.5% increase in fees for 2024/25 with and in principle same increase for the following two years.

3.4 Locally, Marc Heading continues to Chair the Great Ouse branch and the clerking role of the branch is being transferred from the Middle Level Commissioners to Phil Camamile at the Water Management Alliance on behalf of the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards. John Heading's term as the Gt Ouse branch's Director on the ADA Board ended in June with a replacement still to be confirmed.

3.5 IDBs locally continue to fund an ADA Directorship place on the Board of Water Resources East. With his retirement from the Middle Level Commissioners, David Thomas vacated this role and has been replaced by Giles Bloomfield of the Water Management Alliance.

9. Fens 2100+

4.1 The Environment Agency launched Fens 2100+ with an introductory session for IDB representatives in June 2023. This programme of activity is crucial in informing the medium to long term flood management decision making across the whole Fens as well as framing and driving more tactical and short-term investments.

4.2 The governance for the programme is currently being finalised. Paul Burrows will Chair the 'Asset Managers Steering Group' and through this have a seat on the Programme Board.

4.3 Projects in Fens 2100+

Fens-wide investment framework

- Give the justification to taking a catchment-scale investment approach.
- Explains how the asset managers (and wider partners) will work together across the landscape to determine what investment is needed when.
- In contract with suppliers and scope agreed.
- Underpinning evidence being developed along with communications and engagement plan.

Catchment-scale asset investment plans

- Applies the framework set out above to each catchment to determine the likely investment requirements over the next 30 years.
- Confirms the immediate (2027-2023) asset (and other) investment requirements across each catchment.
- Planning to scope and get suppliers on board in 2024

Catchment-baseline reports

- Provides an overview of each catchment and the current FCRM operational situation and current and future flood risk.
- Explains future asset investment funding challenges.
- Currently scoping contracts with suppliers, aiming to contract in early 2024.

10. Electricity and Insurance

5.1 The contract for the Middle Level Commissioners and our administrated IDBs' electricity portfolio ends in September 2024. We have been impressed by the brokers of our current service (Green Energy Advice Bureau) however we and the brokers have complaints logged about the standard of service provide by our suppliers Corona Energy.

5.2 We need to plan for our next contract given that there is a notice period. The proposed approach is to bring a small group of the IDB Chairs together with our Assistant Treasurer early in 2024 to start to review options, identify a preferred option and ultimately decide on the next contract.

5.3 To clarify questions raised by Members and IDBs in response to our 2023/24 insurance renewal and personal accident cover for members over 80 years old.

5.4 With the current insurer, the age limit is 75 years of age to benefit from all the personal accident cover:

- Death - £100,000
- Permanent total disability - £100,000
- Permanent Disabling Injuries - £100,000

- Temporary Total Disablement – Weekly amount £200 for 104 weeks (Deferment period 34 weeks)
- Temporary Partial Disablement – Weekly amount £100 for 104 weeks (Deferment period 34 weeks)

5.5 The benefits, as above, will apply to persons above the age of 75 years with the exception of the temporary weekly benefits. This is no way affects the liability cover of the Board, as with all employees & board members, if they are injured as a result of the Board's negligence, then a claim can be considered by them under the main AXA liability insurance.

5.6 In previous years, the personal accident cover only applied to persons up to 75 years of age. For 2023-2024 we requested the policy be extended to persons over 80 years of age. Although we were unable to do this for all benefits, we were able to increase the age for the benefits as mentioned above. The personal accident cover has only been in place since 2017/2018 as it is part of the AXA insurance policy. It was not included in any of the previous insurers' policies.

5.7 Over the last round of board meetings a number of IDBs have asked for re-assessments of their pumping stations for insurance purposes. Having taken stock on these requests, this is not a service we are currently able to offer at the Middle Level Commissioners without procuring what would likely be considerable supplier experience that would then be an additional cost to Boards.

5.8 Appendix 1 explains the rationale with the recommendation that Boards, in determining their valuations for insurance purposes, recognise the limitations associated with their current valuations and the risks they hold of being underinsured.

11. Rating

6.1 On 7th September 2024 we were advised that South Holland IDB and the Water Management Alliance will no longer be supporting DRS operating on local area networks after 31 March 2025. This rating and election management software has been in place for 25 years. DRS is owned by South Holland IDB and was originally developed by this Board around the year 2000, primarily for its own use.

6.2 Since that time, most other IDBs have decided to use DRS under licence and it is therefore their view today that the next rating system should be controlled and developed by ADA, for use by its IDB membership should they want to, given that all but 3 IDBs and 1 IDD in England and Wales now use DRS. ADA have confirmed that they are in positive discussions on this matter.

6.3 This presents a significant risk to the Middle Level Commissioners as well as to the clerking service we provide to our administered IDBs which all rely on this system. However, it also presents an opportunity for an improved systems as we are currently unable to efficiently and optimally use the full capabilities of the system, as it doesn't cater well for dual rated areas and penalties. We have asked to be part of any team scoping any future system and/or system support.

12. Lowland Agricultural Peat

7.1 Led by Robert Caudwell, the Lowland Agricultural Task Force's report was published by Defra in June 2023. The report has a strong focus on the role Internal Drainage Boards could play in supporting and enabling landowners and land-managers. In particular, recommendation three includes:
   - Government assessing the legal implications of asking responsible bodies to raise water levels in the interests of preserving peat soil carbon.
   - Government considers giving IDBs new powers.

7.2 The Government's response to the Caudwell report recommendation three:

Recommendation 3: Legal protection and powers for managing water for carbon

We agree with recommendation 3 that authorities responsible for water management must have the legal protection and powers to manage water differently to play their part in peat preservation. We will undertake an assessment of the legal implications of asking responsible authorities to raise water levels in the interests of preserving peat soil carbon as we implement the Plan for Water action to streamline our water policy and legal framework. This will inform relevant new powers and any required legislation.

7.3 In response to the report Defra have set up two pilots funds, namely the Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilot (LAPSIP) specifically for IDBs and being administered by ADA and the Lowland Agricultural Peat Water Discovery Pilot (LAPWDP) available to IDBs and administered by the Environment Agency.

7.4 The bidding windows for these was in October 2023 with key criteria being project delivery within 2024. The timescales and criteria have made it very challenging for Boards to identify and submit deliverable bids. This alongside capacity constraints within the Middle Level Commissioners have meant we have unfortunately been unable to offer services to IDBs to make the most of this opportunity.

7.5 Fenland SOIL is a not for profit members organisation that aims to inform and develop 'whole farm' land use policies, aimed at achieving climate change mitigation and biodiversity enhancement in the Fens, and to help establish an agreed set of numbers for GHG emissions for deep, shallow and wasted peat soils. They have a small, dedicated team with farmers at its core to tackle climate issues relating to agriculture and peat in the Fens. They have recently undertaken opportunity mapping assessments across Manea & Welney district and have just started similar covering Upwell district.

7.6 Fenland SOIL currently offer Growers/Farmers and Corporate Membership and are keen to develop an affordable membership offer for IDB Groups. We are working with them to agree a Middle Level Commissioners and administered IDB group membership. Not only is this important to help Boards with their environmental enhancement duties, but it will be crucial if we are to maximise future funding and partnership working opportunities.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**16 November 2023**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Confirm if the approach to presenting planning matters is acceptable for future reports noting that the Chair, Vice Chair and Deputy Vice Chair are consulted on planning matters on a regular basis.**
B. **Note that all instructions to suppliers/contractors managed by MLC on behalf of the Board are to be given via the MLC Project Manager.**
C. **Confirm that it wishes to write to the applicant to advise that the only acceptable layout must include appropriate access for the Board in relation to mixed use development on land at the junction of the A47 and Cromwell Road, Wisbech – Scopebusy Ltd (MLC Ref No 575); All Weather Markets (MLC Ref No 578); Teshill Ltd (MLC Ref No 757); Gracechurch Retail Development Group (MLC Ref No 786); Gracechurch Retail Developments Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 851, 1090, 1207), Hutchinson Group Ltd (MLC Ref No 1380) & GC No. 27 Limited (MLC Ref No 1710).**
D. **Review and approve its Capital Programme taking account of the advice in Section 4.**
E. **Acknowledge the recommendation that in order to reduce abortive works the applicant and other relevant parties are advised of the Board's requirements in relation to various developments at Del Monte UK Limited, Weasenham Lane, Wisbech – Fisher Chilled Foods (MLC Ref No 395), Del Monte (MLC Ref No 667) and Del Monte (UK) Limited (MLC Ref No 1701).**
F. **Confirm the use of an alternative access route in relation to the brick arch near the Board's former Depot off Redmoor Lane, Wisbech.**
G. **Acknowledge the recommendation that the Chief Engineer advises against realigning the fence to the centreline of the culvert and handing over land to the adjacent landowners in relation to culverting works near Point 66 (Project Ref 346/24).**
H. **Acknowledge the recommendation that the Board/MLC assist the responsible authorities when, and if, they require further information or assistance as appropriate in relation to the pollution incident in the Boleness Road/AlgoresWay area.**

13. Overview of services provided to the Board

13.1 The Middle Level Commissioners currently act as Consulting Engineers to the Board providing the following services. These are provided for set fees, hourly rates and/or at cost by the in-house team (capped within our limited capacity and capability) and are supplemented by consultants, contractors and specialist services where necessary.

- Capital works: Advising the Board and undertaking client, project and contract management roles.
- GIS & Survey
- Strategic Planning: Inputs on behalf of the Board to relevant spatial plans (eg Local Plans), flood & water strategies and plans (eg Drainage & Wastewater Management Plans, Fens 2100+)

- Planning and consenting: Responding to Byelaw and Planning Applications and other development control and related matters on behalf of the Board and advising on and issuing Section 23, encroachment and discharge consents.

1.2 Please note that our planning and consenting services currently only have the capacity to be reactive and there is no active enforcement service defined and resourced.

1.3 A Strategic Spatial Planning report will be compiled and published periodically on www.middlelevel.gov.uk and cover the interests of the Middle Level Commissioners and all its administered Boards.

1.4 In order to reduce the cost to the Board and focus limited resources on delivery rather than reporting, the Board has previously resolved to not have a detailed planning report as part of the Consulting Engineer's report. However, following an internal discussion it was considered that this has governance related implications and places a significant burden on the Board's Officers and/or the Clerk's Representative attending the Board Meeting. Therefore, a brief summary of the current issues has been provided with a list of the planning applications responded to since the last report provided as Appendix 2.

The Board is asked to confirm if this approach is acceptable for future reports noting that the Chair, Vice Chair and Deputy Vice Chair are consulted on planning matters on a regular basis.

1.5 The Middle Level Commissioners intend to refresh the services provided to IDBs by developing a service catalogue that will clarify the full range of services that are offered, along with associated terms and conditions and fee arrangements. This is expected to be developed over the next 12-18 months. Boards will be offered the opportunity to engage in this process to help define the final service offer.

2. Chief Engineer's summary

2.1 The new process for delivering grant-aided schemes has begun with the commencement of the Hundred of Wisbech IDB & Waldersey IDB Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study. I am confident that the project team and Board representatives will work closely together to enable the consultants to undertake a meaningful assessment of the districts and, ultimately, provide suitable recommendations for their future management.

2.2 As more grant aided projects come online, the MLC engineers' workload will need to be balanced with additional resources.

2.3 Storm Babet was a good opportunity to collect additional data about how the catchment responds to rainfall, however resources are always stretched during an event. We will be able to use telemetry data where it exists, but we encourage the Board members to gather evidence in the form of photos or water level marks (where it is safe to do so), and any other information about the system during an event, to feed into the catchment studies.

2.4 The recent completion of culverting works near Point 66 (Oldfield Lane) highlighted the need to ensure that project governance is clearly defined and adhered to when delivering work and administering contracts. The Board has appointed MLC to deliver projects on their behalf and therefore all management of, and instructions to, all suppliers delivering that work should be via the MLC engineer acting as Project Manager.

The Board is asked to note that all instructions to suppliers/contractors managed by MLC on behalf of the Board are to be given via the MLC Project Manager.

3. **Summary of key planning issues**

Note that we will continue to seek the Board's input as and when required, rather than wait for Board meetings. This will be done via correspondence with the Chair, Vice Chair and Deputy Vice Chair.

Wisbech – to the north of the A47

Cromwell Road Sub-catchment

- *Various developments at the potato processing plant, Weasenham Lane, Wisbech - Smith and Holbourne Ltd/Smith and Holbourne (Holdings) Ltd/Lamb-Weston/Meijer UK Limited/ Lamb Weston EMEA (MLC Ref Nos 282, 322, 346, 580, 945, 970, 974, 1122, 1168 & 1680)*

  Meetings attended by the Commissioners' Planning Engineer, the Board's Works Committee together with a representative from Lamb Weston EMEA have been held to discuss the formation of a Buffer Tank Bund, as required by the Environment Agency, in close proximity to Point 36 and commence initial discussions about the company's future plans.

Developments in the area bounded by Cromwell Road, Newbridge Lane, the March to Wisbech Railway and the A47 (South Bridge Field), Wisbech

- *Mixed use development on land at the junction of the A47 and Cromwell Road, Wisbech – Scopebusy Ltd (MLC Ref No 575); All Weather Markets (MLC Ref No 578); Teshill Ltd (MLC Ref No 757); Gracechurch Retail Development Group (MLC Ref No 786); Gracechurch Retail Developments Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 851, 1090, 1207), Hutchinson Group Ltd (MLC Ref No 1380) & GC No. 27 Limited (MLC Ref No 1710)*

  Further to previous reports an outline planning application has been submitted by GC No. 27 Ltd, a private limited company wholly owned by Godwin Developments, in support of an application seeking outline planning permission for a flexible mix of industrial and commercial use on land at the junction of Cromwell Road and the A47 in Wisbech.

  A detailed review of the submission documents has not been undertaken but three alternative layouts have been proposed and these are significantly different to that previously approved FDC Ref No F/YR16/0798/RM. Whilst the latest application acknowledges the need to provide access strips beside the open watercourses there does not appear to be a readily available access route for the Board which it has previously requested.

  It is recommended that the Board writes to the applicant to advise that the only acceptable layout must include appropriate access for the Board.

- *Re-development of the former plant nursery at Parkside Nurseries, to the north of Anglia Community Eye Services, Cromwell Road, Wisbech – Client of Fenland Hydrotech (MLC Ref No 930), Buildbase Ltd (MLC Ref No 934), Client of Clancy Consulting Ltd (MLC Ref No 1430), Grafton Merchanting GB Ltd (MLC Ref No 1443) & UA Asset Management 2 Ltd (MLC Ref No 1685)*

  Discussions are continuing with the developer and its agents/consultant concerning the re-development of this former nursery site with two Class B8 Storage and/or Self Storage units with ancillary Class E(g)(i) offices and a drive-thru coffee shop (sui generis).

  It is understood that the County Council, in its role as the LLFA, has accepted the Board's request that the site is within an acute drainage area and in order for the discharge to be at greenfield rates of run-off the size of the orifice flow control discharge will need to be smaller than that preferred by the LLFA. Changes to the maintenance schedule/plan to accommodate this request are being discussed with the developers and its agents/consultant.

<u>Half Penny Lane Sub-catchment</u>

- *Development at the school site, Weasenham Lane, Wisbech – Cambridgeshire County Council/The Queens School/Thomas Clarkson Academy (MLC Ref Nos 674, 693, 714, 715, 738, 966, 980 & 1025) and The Department for Education (DfE) (MLC Ref No 1716)*

  Discussions have recently commenced with Hexa Consulting Ltd, the Consulting Engineer employed by the DfE in respect of the Free School that was referred to in the County Council's submissions on the Incinerator.

  In view of the size and location of the site the use of the Detailed Pre-Application Consultation procedure has been encouraged but, despite the Government encouraging public bodies to be more "business like" and reduce the burden placed on the tax payer by promoting the use of paid services, the DfE considers the cost of the estimate provided to be excessive.

  As a result a Development Control and Consenting surgery, a free service provided by the Commissioners, primarily used to provide guidance on what actions/consents are required, was held with representatives from Hexa Consulting.

  The school will be "squeezed" into the small area of land, shown hatched on the amended screengrab below, between the current coach drop off/collection point, car park and tennis courts. It is currently proposed that the discharge is regulated to 2l/s using storage crates, with potential encroachment and a new connection into the Weasenham Lane pipeline approximately between Points 56 and 57. It is hoped that the foul sewer will be made to another point of connection near Corporation Road rather than connecting under the aforementioned pipeline into the foul sewer along Weasenham Lane.

Screengrab showing the proposed location of the Free School shaded orange and hatched black

The consultants have advised that the planning application is due to be submitted to the County Council on the 12th October.

- *Residential and associated development at land east of Halfpenny Lane, Wisbech – Client of Matrix Transport and Infrastructure Consultants Ltd (MLC Ref No 1338), EMC Land (MLC Ref No 1339), and Seagate Homes Ltd (MLC Ref No 1706)*

  Further to the discussion at the last Board Meeting, correspondence was sent to the District Council's Planning Team at the end of June opposing the Hybrid Application for 353 residential properties and associated works.

  A copy of this response can be found at **F_YR23_0477_O-MIDDLE_LEVEL_COMMISSIONERS-744076.pdf (fenland.gov.uk)**.

  No subsequent correspondence has been received from any of the parties involved. The previously inferred meeting to be attended by Seagate Homes, the District Council's Head of Planning, the LLFA and the Board has yet to take place.

- *Formation of a car park and new vehicular access at Pike Textile Display Ltd, Sandall Road, Wisbech - Pike Textiles Display Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 1595 & 1627)*

  Following a period of confusion over payments the applicant's agent, Anglia Building Consultants (ABC), was requested to provide further information concerning any guidance received from UKPN about the buildability of the proposal and the health, safety and welfare implications of working in close proximity to the power cables both during installation of the access culvert, near Point 59, and when the Board or its contractors are working adjacent to them.

  A response has yet to be received. If a suitable response is not received soon there will be little option but to refuse the application as it does not currently meet the Board's minimum validation requirements.

  The culvert could potentially create a further restriction to flows in this important watercourse and may need to be included in, and guided by, the hydraulic study discussed elsewhere in this report.

Algores Way/Boleness Road area Sub-catchment

- *Various developments at Del Monte UK Limited, Weasenham Lane, Wisbech – Fisher Chilled Foods (MLC Ref No 395), Del Monte (MLC Ref No 667) and Del Monte (UK) Limited (MLC Ref No 1701)*

  The planning application for the erection of a chilled storage/packing building with associated parking and landscaping including the formation of an attenuation pond, involving the demolition of existing buildings has been granted planning permission subject to the imposition of conditions.

  Whilst the Decision Notice includes a Drainage Advisory Notice referring to the Board it has been noted during a brief review that the LLFA's response includes the following:

  > "The above documents demonstrate that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through the use of permeable paving over the car parking and car park access area and an attenuation basin. Surface water will

then discharge at a maximum rate of 25 l/s into the adjacent Anglian Water surface water sewer."

However, this development is within an acute drainage area where any discharges should be attenuated to greenfield rates of run-off. This could have a significant effect on the viability of the proposals and **it is recommended that in order to reduce abortive works the applicant and other relevant parties are advised of the Board's requirements.**

- *Medworth Energy from Waste Combined Heat and Power Facility at Algores Way, Wisbech - Medworth CHP Limited (MLC Ref 1542)*

  Further to previous reports, the Commissioners' Planning Engineer has represented the Board at various meetings during the Public Examination including attendance at Issue Specific Hearings.

  Working proactively with the Board's Works Committee, the Commissioners' Solicitor and Conservation Officer and other parties it has been possible to reach an equitable position with the promoter and their agents/consultants.

  The content of both the Statement of Common Ground and Protective Provisions was finalised and agreed before the deadline of the Public Examination in August.

  The big issues for the Board, should the proposal progress, remain as follows:

  A. The potential effects on the Board's system and operations as a result of the improvement works to New Bridge Lane;
  B. The piping of the Board's District Drain that bisects the site, Points 46-33, and the relocation of the Separation Dam;
  C. The import water main and the export power cable both of which will be positioned under New Bridge Lane and in close proximity to and/or cross the Board's system at Point 50;
  D. The CHP Export pipeline alongside the railway line;
  E. The erection of an acoustic fence at No. 10 New Bridge Lane.

<u>Wisbech – To the south of the A47</u>

- *Change of use at The Orchard Tea Room, Redmoor Lane, Wisbech - Mr and Mrs M Day (MLC Ref Nos 1057, 1683 & 1698)*

  Prior approval has been given by the District Council for the change of use of agricultural storage areas of the existing building to a single-storey 3-bed dwelling.

  The site is adjacent to the Board's District Drain at Point 28.

<u>Strategic Improvements</u>

March to Wisbech Transport Corridor
Previously known as the Re-opening of the March to Wisbech Rail-line - Scheme No 398128 (Wisbech Rail) (MLC Ref No 1274a)

No further correspondence has been received in respect of this scheme.

According to press reports the decision to cancel the northern part of the HS2 railway line could enable the improvements to increase the capacity of Ely Junction which was previously identified as a pinch point in realising a half-hourly Wisbech to Cambridge rail service.

Southern Access Road (SAR) (MLC Ref No 1514) & Wisbech Access Strategy (Phase 1) (MLC Ref No 1529)

It is understood that there are funding issues with the Wisbech Access Strategy but elements of the SAR would be delivered by Medworth CHP Limited if its DCO application, as discussed elsewhere in this report, is successful.

A47 Dualling

Board Members will be aware that in 2020, the dualling of the entire Cambridgeshire stretch of the A47, from the A16 at Peterborough to Walton Highway in West Norfolk, was not included in Highways England's plans for road improvements between 2020 and 2025. The Combined Authority team worked hard to show that the work was necessary, and Highways England has agreed to take renewed work forward presumably in the next funding period.

These works may need to be considered during the hydraulic modelling and when considering the options for the Outline Business Case (OBC), as discussed elsewhere in this report.

An update on the above has been requested from the CPCA.

Anglian Water - Peterborough to Bexwell Pipeline

Although preliminary work to install a new water main across the southeastern area of the Board's district has been ongoing for the last year actual work to lay pipework is planned to commence from March 2024 onwards. This work does not cross any of the Board's maintained watercourses.

4. Capital Programme

4.1 The Board's Capital Programme, as presented to the May meeting of the Board, is shown as Appendix 1.

4.2 In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GiA) from the Environment Agency, the Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study has a GiA allocation of up to £250,000.

4.3 <u>Attenuation Area near Point 29 (Project Ref 346/23)</u>
The Board's Solicitor has advised that the Land Transfer will be completed imminently.

A hydraulic model of the sub-catchment is needed to determine the parameters for the outfall structure. The Engineer is investigating the possibility of incorporating this into the current contract for the Catchment Study.

4.4 <u>Culverting Works near Point 66 (Project Ref 346/24)</u>
Following inspection by the Conservation Officer, there were concerns that culverting the watercourse was not the best course of action for biodiversity and that maintaining the open watercourse by other means should be explored. Further details of this were sought which delayed finishing the production of the tender documents. After further discussion with the Board regarding the advice received from the Conservation Officer, the Board decided to progress the culverting scheme as planned.

The scheme was tendered in the early part of the year and we received four tender returns. Following an assessment of these, and advice given to the Board's representatives, the decision was made to award the contract to Fen Group who submitted the lowest priced tender.

Works started on site in early August and have required a relatively high level of supervision, as anticipated, but most issues have been dealt with and the works were substantially complete by mid-October. Full vegetation clearance of the drain revealed that some residents' structures (a shed at the upstream end and a garage at the downstream end) were present on the very edge of the drain and in poor structural condition. To prevent an issue during construction and liability to the project or the Board, additional support piling was included at both ends and a specific method statement compiled for the work near to the garage.

During the works, discussions were held between the Board and the landowners either side of the drain, regarding whether the land over the new culvert should be passed to them with a new fence along the centreline of the culvert, rather than be kept as a maintenance strip by the Board. The Commissioners advised against the former as this would likely cause issues in the future as well as to this current project. The Engineer and Vice Chairman discussed the issues on-site and concluded to continue the works to the current design and fence positions. Door-to-door enquiries were made to inform the residents of this decision and a follow up letter sent by the Commissioners on behalf of the Board. It is the understood that the Board will debate the land occupancy at the meeting.

The Chief Engineer advises against realigning the fence to the centreline of the culvert and handing over land to the adjacent landowners.

In addition to the original design, it was agreed to upgrade the fencing at either end of the culverting to more secure versions (as the full clearing work had also highlighted that the individual properties' boundary fencing was not fully secure, relying previously on the drain as additional security). This was decided to be high chain link fencing, similar to the existing fencing at the Scout Hut/scrap yard premises.

Chamber at downstream end during construction and adjacent piling for additional garage support


Headwall and piling at upstream end


Area culverted looking downstream, from the upstream extent

At the time of writing, the Engineer is in discussion with the contractor regarding the poor quality of the chain link fencing and the metal grills on the inspection chamber being installed contrary to the design and without the security bolts as specified. These issues should be rectified by the time of the Board meeting. Although there have been several extras on the project and associated additional costs with these and the extra supervision, it is envisaged that the total for the works will be within the high-level budget advised previously.

4.5 Flood Alleviation Investigation (Project Ref 346/25): Hundred of Wisbech IDB & Waldersey IDB

Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study

Following assessment of tenders received, a contract was awarded to Royal HaskoningDHV, based in Peterborough. An MLC governance structure has been set up and an inception meeting was arranged.

The inception meeting was held at the Middle Level Offices on 20th October, with members of the Royal HaskoningDHV team attending in person, and virtually, with the Boards' and Commissioners' representatives to discuss the project and various options for dealing with the catchments. Prior to this, the MLC engineers met with the Boards' representatives to explain the process of the survey, hydraulic modelling, options assessment, business case production and GiA. It was also an opportunity for all to collaborate and discuss various ideas to pass on to the consultants to consider as part of the Study. The potential impact of the imminent construction of the Anglian Water pipeline was discussed, in relation to access for undertaking the surveys needed for the hydraulic modelling; confirmation that Anglian Water will provide as-built surveys on completion of the pipeline; and how the pipeline might affect chosen solutions arising out of the study.

Our Consenting Officer has been working proactively with Anglian Water to ensure that their pipeline does not adversely affect the Boards' future works and maintenance operations.

5. Other Flood Risk and Water Level Management Schemes

5.1 <u>Proposal for Drainage Improvements south of Point 53 at the A47 (Project Ref 346/20) and the Condition of the Existing Culverts under the A47 (Points 29, 50 & 53)</u>

A message was received in August from National Highways' Drainage Engineering Team Manager advising on the cleansing of the culverts under the A47 at Points 29, 50 and 53, confirming that they are aware that the IDB would like National Highways to increase the capacity of these culverts and have quoted and stated case law to support the Board's request. The Board has been invited to meet and discuss the next steps with National Highways and learn more about the information and assumptions/assessments that have been carried out in the past to determine that the culverts are undersized.

A response to National Highways:

A. Raised concerns about the cleansing of the culverts, which was undertaken under adverse weather conditions;

B. Doubted the assertions about the structural integrity of these corrugated steel culverts;

C. Provided a brief history of the issues surrounding the previously proposed scheme for uprating of the culvert at Point 53 and suggested that, in order to avoid further debate and abortive work, the hydraulic modelling, as discussed elsewhere in this report, should take precedence, when it has been completed, and requested guidance on whether the results would be accepted by National Highways and/or its agents and, if not, what is required to make it acceptable and;

D. Welcomed the invitation to meet and discuss the culverts concerned but advised that the Board's Works Committee consider that it would be appropriate for it to meet relevant representatives, on-site to initially view the culverts, discuss any observations made and outline the next steps.

A response has not yet been received and may have been delayed by the holiday period. The Commissioners will pursue the matter further.

6. Other items

6.1 Pollution Incident in the Boleness Road/Algores Way area

The pollution that appears to be discharging into the Board's system from an unknown source looks to be continuing without resolution.

The authorities responsible for investigating and enforcing pollution incidents have been informed and the Chief Engineer considers that the Board/MLC have exhausted their obligations in this matter. **It is recommended that the Board/MLC assist those authorities when, and if, they require further information or assistance as appropriate.**

6.2 Replacement of a brick arch in close proximity to the Board's former Depot off Redmoor Lane, Wisbech

A report has been received about the poor condition of a brick arch culvert near Point 28, but not knowing the condition of the structure it is difficult to comment further at this time.

It is understood that the culvert is used by the Board and its contactors to cross the watercourse, but replacing the culvert solely using the Board's funds could set a precedent that it is responsible for this and other culverts in the long term. Therefore, the initial question of whether the culvert needs replacing or if access can be gained elsewhere has been asked and is currently being investigated.

If there is a right of access over the culvert or it is used by others those parties could contribute to its replacement either in part or in full.

A detailed cost estimate has not been prepared but replacing the structure could cost approximately £20-30,000.

In view of the above, it is recommended that the Board confirms the use of an alternative access route.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme
Appendix 2: List of planning applications since last report

Appendix 1

Hundred of Wisbech 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
Structures	Gravity outfall/overspill refurbishment/replacement	B	14.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.6
	Control structure 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	0.0
	Joint pumping station refurbishment/replacement		1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5
Drainage Channels	Sleeving existing pipework		0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Open ditch lining - Point 66		0.7	250	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.7
	Culverts under the A47 - Highways improvement works		0.3	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
	Pipeline replacement - The Stitch, phase ii	A	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
	Fridaybridge improvement works - 99 - 101	B	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.0
	Channel improvement works 29 - 31 (Copart to bypass)	B	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0
	Channel improvement works 53 - (Halfpenny Lane)	D	0.0	0.0	0.0	160.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	160.0
	Storage area - Point 29	B	0.1	150	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	150.1
	Culvert replacement - Point 3	B	1.3	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
	Walkway and handrail improvements to structures	A	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0
	Water control structures improvement scheme	B	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
	District wide flood alleviation improvement scheme	A	0.3	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.3
	Surveys and studies	A	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
South Brink p/s	Improvement/refurbishment works		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
Plant & Vehicles			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
			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
			18.9	**431.6**	**11**	**165**	**60**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**692**

District wide flood alleviation scheme.
- works no-longer required depending on outcome of study

District wide flood alleviation study:
Approval for business case to be developed and grant-in-aid application to be submitted.
Programmed works for future years to be developed following recommendations in study.

Appendix 2

MLC Ref.	*Council Ref*	*Applicant*	*Type of development*	*Location*
1695	F/YR23/0288/F	Mr N Musquitta	Residence (Extensions)	Low Road, Elm
1696	F/YR23/0282/F	Langley Lodge Rest Home	Care Home (Extension and car park)	Queens Road, Wisbech
1697	F/YR23/0307/F	Mr A Sloane	Residence (Extension)	Rockcliffe Gardens, Wisbech
1698	F/YR23/0281/PNC04	Mr & Mrs M Day	Agricultural to residence	Redmoor Lane, Wisbech
1699	F/YR23/0329/F	Fenmarc Produce Ltd	Solar farm	Gosmoor Lane, Elm
1700	23/00574/O	Mr & Mrs Clarke	Residential (up to 4 dwellings)	Elm High Road, Emneth
1701	F/YR23/0375/F	Del Monte (UK) Ltd	Chilled storage/packing building	Weasenham Lane, Wisbech
1702	F/YR23/0422/PNC04	Mrs D Gibson	Agricultural to residential (2 dwellings)	Gosmoor Lane, Elm
1703	F/YR23/0355/F	Mr T Gibbs	Residence (Extension)	Hillburn Road, Wisbech
1704	F/YR23/0436/O + 23/00959/CON	Mr & Mrs Clarke	Residential (Up to 4 dwellings)	Low Road, Elm
1705	F/YR23/0432/F	Mr J Cousins	Formation of access and hardstanding including piping of drain	New Bridge Lane, Wisbech
1706	F/YR23/0477/O	Seagate Homes	Hybrid Application: (Up to 250 dwellings, Full application to erect 103 dwellings)	Halfpenny Lane, Wisbech
1707	CCC/23/006/FUL	Mr B Porter	Change of use: Storage to vehicle dismantling	Oldfield Lane, Wisbech
1708	F/YR23/0502/F	Mr & Mrs J Stanford	Residence (Car port)	Fridaybridge Road, Elm
1709	F/YR23/0505/F	Mr & Mrs Collins	Residence (Extensions)	Wales Bank, Elm
1710	F/YR23/0525/O	GC No. 27 Ltd	Commercial: Business park (B2/B8/Eg (iii)); Petrol Filling Station (Sui Generis) and Ancillary Retail Kiosk (E(a)); Drive Thru Restaurants (Sui Generis or E(b)); Drive-To Diner (Sui Generis or E(b)); and Hotel (C1) with associated infrastructure	Cromwell Road, Wisbech
1711	F/YR23/0569/F	Mr & Mrs Goward	Residence (Extension)	Low Road, Elm
1712	F/YR23/3076/COND	Mr T Adams	Change of use; Traveller's site (2no static caravans, 2no touring caravans and erection of a day room)	Bar Drove, Friday Bridge
1713	F/YR23/0682/O	Ms D Bullard	Residential (Up to 9 dwellings)	Needham Bank, Friday Bridge
1714	F/YR23/0657/F	Mr & Mrs B Wiles	Residence	Victory Road, Wisbech
1715	F/YR23/0708/F	Mr S Muffett	Residence (Extension)	Burdett Road, Wisbech
1716	Enquiry	The Department for Education (DfE)	Education	Corporation Road, Wisbech
1717	F/YR23/0757/F	Keys Group Ltd	Change of use: Residential care home and school (C2/F1) to further educational use only (Use Class F1)	Begdale Road, Elm
1718	F/YR23/0748/F	Nestle Purina Petcare UK Ltd	Storage building, formation of a car park and pedestrian access	Cromwell Road, Wisbech
1719	F/YR23/0759/O	Mr & Mrs K Cage	Residential (Up to 8 dwellings)	Fridaybridge Road, Elm
1720	F/YR23/3129/COND	A & S Clarke	Residential (Up to 4 dwellings)	Atkinsons Lane, Elm

Health & Safety/D.O report – Neil Buttress

In addition to work carried out with Fred, I have walked the drains and verbally consulted with Fred. His support and communication is invaluable.

Onto Health and Safety.
With Paul Burrows input, you are aware that the query at the last board meeting has been addressed.

I have continued with improvements and the new walkways to structures will be erected this winter as required.

I have taken over the erection and maintenance of signs (previously instructed by myself and carried out by Nigel Harrison) we feel this is a more efficient and cost effective approach as it dovetails well with my roles.

With regards to Health and Safety despite my intention to stand down from this role at the meeting. Following discussions with the Chairman I would wish to do a u turn and continue in this role if that is the wish of the board.

Finally I submit my hours to the 31 st of October for approval.
Total Hours 61.5

Kind regards Neil

District Officer Report – Fred Leach

Following the last board meeting, the chairman and District Officers met to discuss Seagate Homes Application off Halfpenny Lane, Lamb Weston, SB Components and various ongoing maintenance items. We both have regular conversations with Nigel about the maintenance contract.

On the 20th June, we met with Glen Riley at Lamb Weston to discuss their health and safety problems. We had a works committee meeting at the chairman's on the 3rd July, and following that Neil and I spent 3 hours clearing briers and rubbish from the footpath outside McDonald's. These had grown from the drain, due to the contractors machine being unable to work close to the headwall.

October, on two occasions we visited the Fen Group who were working on Piping the drain at the scout hut. We attended a presentation from Royal Haskoning on the planned itinerary for surveying the Hundred and Waldersea District.

I would like to thank Neil for covering for me during a busy harvest. We continue to try to address issues relating to contravention of our byelaws, which is extremely frustrating.

Please ask for more detailed information about any of these issues.

My hours to date and for approval are 21.5.

Fred.

Works Report – Nigel Harrison

Most of the work has now been completed on the district with only a few industrial areas to complete where we can travel on hard standing.

There are also some access issues, the new William Stobart site has floodlights and bollards which make access difficult, down the bottom of Halfpenny lane, the lane now is very narrow and is unsafe to access with machinery I have mentioned to Neil the possibility of a permanent margin on the field side which would solve this problem, SB components still continues to be a problem and there have been issues with a new structure on the Lamb Western site.

The watercress weed that we have in the Halfpenny Lane section is becoming a major problem we put a weed basket through this section twice within 6 weeks but its vigorous growth still causes us problems, during the very wet period between the 19th and the 21st Oct the grids had to be checked very regularly as the weed is uprooted and carried through in large lumps ,it is very difficult and heavy to remove and I believe is a major risk to system failure in heavy rain situations. I have been in discussions with Neil trying to find the legal way in which we can kill the weed.

Again many thanks go to both district officers for their help and support.

Nigel Harrison

Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2023

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 Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2023 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 Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Hundred of Wisbech 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: P Burrows - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 25th August 2023

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, 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 2022/23 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 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 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

31/05/2023 11/06/2023 16/06/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

WHITINGS LLP

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit B. PEECH – WHITINGS LLP

Date 16/06/2023

***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 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

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

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

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

14/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

B.2104

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

Chairman

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

HUNDRED OF WISBECH 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**	693,524	1,264,110	*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**	201,858	215,434	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. **(+) Total other receipts**	562,909	830	*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	62,181	74,628	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	132,000	141,075	*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	1,264,110	1,264,671	*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	1,319,947	1,329,373	*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	239,500	239,500	*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	1,410,762	1,361,074	*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 3rd May 2023

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

14/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

B.2106

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

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board – DB0038**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

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 2022/23

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 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Date	21/08/2023

Whitings
Chartered Accountants LLP

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BB/MM053
30 June 2023

Messrs. P Burrows, R Hill and S Ablett
Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambs.
PE15 0AH

Dear Messrs. P Burrows, R. Hill, and S Ablett,

MLC administered Internal Drainage Boards - Internal Audit 2022-2023

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 2023, 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 – mainly for residential properties**

   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. It should be noted that this is largely in relation to residential property. Should a complete rebuild following an unforeseen catastrophic event be required, current valuations may no longer be appropriate given today's prices which may lead to a shortfall in funds which would have to be drawn out of surplus funds if other financial arrangements were not available.

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.

Client comment:

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. We are recommending that Boards should look to index link valuations and we will be asking all Boards again to consider this at subsequent meetings, along with consideration of current valuations. Valuation of residential property is an area we have focussed on for the 2023 meetings.

A number of Boards have recognised the potential impact of increased costs on valuations and have taking steps to re-value, however, the consulting engineer is currently reviewing the methodology for valuation of pumping stations, to ensure there is a robust process, which will be then used going forward.

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

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.

With regards to other employee benefits, we note that where applicable these are being recognised as benefits in kind and disclosed on the P11d, we would encourage the value of these benefits to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that these are reflective of what the employee receives, especially where some boards providing the living accommodation to their employees.

Client comment:

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.

The benefit charge for living accommodation is calculated in accordance with HMRC recommended valuations. We are looking at payrolling any standard benefits but are currently unable to do this for accommodation and use of vehicles.

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 Chairperson of each individual board be given the 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 in light of any unforeseen significant variances arising.

The budgets that have been set for 2023/24 year may need to be increased throughout the year due to the significant cost increases that are largely 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 having peaked at a 40 year high within the last 12 months, 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. We note that some of IDBs decided to switch from the business premium bank account to business current bank account, these accounts no longer earn interest but are free from bank charges and fees. 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:

A brief summary of treasury management:

There are 30 separate authorities administered through the Middle Level offices, all of which are required to maintain their own banking arrangements, we do look at bulk/group arrangements to do this and it is a requirement that all boards are treated the same. In the past it was found that there was a lot of staff time being spent in investment transfers and following discussions with the bank it was decided that for ease of operation all balances would be treated the same and the bank would offer a competitive interest rate and free banking. To do this all boards had a "client premium" account. This is the type of account operated by businesses looking after clients' money (solicitors etc). They are generally specific accounts in the name of the business but it is for "third party monies."

Our arrangement worked fine until the (first) crash around 2008 – at this time interest rates plummeted below our arrangement rate – specifically, under the terms of the arrangement we could have been required to pay the bank for looking after our money. The arrangement was changed to retain free banking, but as with all accounts interest was minimal.

During last financial year our bankers started taking more of an interest in the number of client premium accounts they had across the country and were surprised with the number held in March. The use of such accounts is for very specific purposes which we as an organisation do not qualify and alarm bells were ringing with the bank that they were operating outside of all banking standards/regulations. We were notified that as a result of this the accounts would need to be closed and other accounts opened. This would involve a basic current account and an interest bearing second account – transfers to be made between the two for cash flow purposes. We made the bank aware of our concerns about transferring accounts with regards to the payment of direct debits and the collection of rates by direct debit, payment by ratepayers etc for which our account details were with many suppliers/customers and we did not want to go down the route of having payments/receipts rejected and details having to be re-registered with all parties.

While this was being put in place we had a general increase in interest rates but as previously advised we now have started to rationalise the arrangements – there will be some fine tuning required but currently the process is a standard current account for normal payments/receipts and an interest-bearing account. Additionally, balances can be transferred for deposit/investment.

We are currently making treasury deposits for individual Boards but need to manage this with specific cash flow requirements while also making consideration to having balances available for potential event situations requiring immediate cash. We will be monitoring additional staff time required to manage this while discussing matters further with our bankers.

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.

7. Financial Regulations

We noted that the last update and approve of Financial Regulations for all boards was in 2013 with the next review in 2023. However due the recent retirement of Chief Executive and the joint of new Chief Executive/Clerk in February 2023, the review of Financial Regulations has not been completed by the financial year under review. We have been informed that the new Chief Executive and Treasurer are aware of these requirements and the Financial Regulations are due to be updated by the end of this year, we look forward to reviewing this in due course.

Client comments:
There is a full review of the provision of clerking services and will be, as has been mentioned looking at reviewing these regulations towards the end of 2023 with a view to then having them updated by the Boards.

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:
For the 2023 meeting the Board approved an insured value of £701,500 and for this to be index linked.

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	£52,324.26
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	£52,436.95
Difference	**£112.69**

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.

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 suggest that meetings and account preparation periods be brought into line, if possible, to eradicate 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.

Hundred of Wisbech

During the course of our audit, we noted that the 2021/22 accounts and payment list had not been published on the website, we are pleased to note that following notification of this fact the accounts and payment list were 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.

We also notice that the statement of NS & I accounts shows the name and the address of old Chief Executive who is retired in February 2023. We understand that this matter will be brought to the attention of the board on the next general meeting to approve the changes in signatory.

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.

Your comment is noted and procedures are being amended concerning this for the future.

Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB

During our review it was noted that the actual wages increase of the employee during the year has exceeded the increase authorised by the board during the meeting. We understand that it was an isolated error and understand that this matter will be brought to the attention of the board during the next general meeting. The overall error is equal to 0.50% of the total expenditures and will be adjusted next year. We understand that the internal process is being reviewed and address to ensure that this scenario doesn't arise again in the future.

Client comment:
This administration error was reviewed by the Board at their 2023 meeting and the relevant adjustment is being made through the 2023 payroll process. We have looked at our internal processes and made appropriate adjustments to mitigate future risk.

March 3rd IDB

Whilst the board are using the budget setting process to determine the rates set on an annual basis, we note that the rates had been the same for the last 5 years. In a view of the capital improvement program – the plans for the pumping station replacement in 2026/27, the current rate of inflation and the fact that rates have been increased across other boards under the administration of the Middle Level Commissioners, we would recommend that the rates raised be reviewed and uplifted as necessary to take account of the factors outlined above.

Client comment:
The points raised are made to the Commissioners when setting the rate but there it is the appointed members who have been against rate increases, indicating that the council will address any shortfall in the following year should this be the case. This is a situation that has occurred on other Boards for the setting of the 2023/2024 rates and levies.

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

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HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

BUDGET MONITORING 2023/2024

		Approved budget 2023/2024 £	Actual to 30.09.2023 £	Forecast to 31.03.2024 £
1	Rates, Insurances and telephones	1,250	830	1,000
2	Drainworks (incl District Officer's fee & expenses and Environmental measures	81,500	32,885 [A]	81,500 [B]
3	Joint Plant Maintenance (with Waldersey IDB)	47,500 [C/D]	16,000 [C/D]	52,000 [C/D/E]
4	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	22,075	9,332	22,075
5	Planning Applications	9,000	3,478	9,000
6	Environment Agency Precept	17,780	8,890	17,780
7	Loan Charges	74,628	37,314	74,628
8	Asset Replacement Fund	0	0	0
9	Studies and Surveys	0	0	0
10	Improvement Works - (per programme)	431,600 [F]	72,793 [G]	431,600 [H]
		685,333	181,521	689,583
	Improvement works - Funding	425,600 [I]	71,969 [I]	425,600 [I]
	LESS Rents, Deposit Accounts interest etc	274	1,350	5,000
	General Fund - Use of balances	44,197 [J/M]	1,719 [K/N]	43,702 [L/O]
	annual value - 3,119,734	215,262	106,484	215,281

GENERAL FUND			
Opening balance	305,505	305,505	305,505
rates raised (2023/24 6.90p)	215,262	103,278	215,281
net expenditure	215,262	106,484	215,281
Balances	-44,197	-1,719	-43,702
Close balance	261,308	300,580	261,803

Remarks

A -	Includes:-	
	Contractors charges	13,144
	Slubbing/slip repairs	4,916
	Spoil disposal	10,000
		28,060
B -	Includes provision for:	
	Contractors charges	31,475
	Proposed slubbing programme (year 3/5)	25,000
	additional work/Fuel changeover/surcharge	8,000
	Spoil disposal	12,000
		76,475
C -	Provision based on new calculation	
D -	Includes estimate for new electricty contract -	
E -	Includes for additional standing charges	
F -	Open ditch lining - point 66 (Scout hut)	250,000
	Storage area - point 29 (Hutchinsons)	150,000
	District System Attenuation	25,000
	Health & Safety improvements	6,000
	Holly Bank culvert (spoil storage)	600
		431,600
G -	Expenditure per capital programme	
H -	Expenditure per capital programme	
	engineer to update on progress of schemes	
I -	Funding (Improvement programme)	
	engineer to update on progress and funding sources	
J,K,L	Includes - use of funds -	
J -	provision towards new slubbing programme	10,000
J -	Provision towards H & S improvements	3,000
K -	provision towards new slubbing programme	1,307
K -	Provision towards H & S improvements	412
L -	provision towards new slubbing programme	10,000
L -	Provision towards H & S improvements	3,000
M,N,O	Agreed at meeting to set same rate and subsidise from balances:	
M -	use of general fund balances	31,197
N -	use of general fund balances	0
O -	use of general fund balances	30,702