Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB

At an Inspection and Meeting of the Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB
hosted at Lakeside Lodge, Pidley at 2.00pm on Thursday 30th November 2023

PRESENT

C Leadbetter (Chairman)	D England	Ms L Munns
D Brown (Vice-Chair)	M England	T Noble
J Armstrong	D Fabb	J Short
J Carney	J German	Rupert Waters
D Cornwell– not at inspection	I Johnson	H Whittome
S Edgley	S Johnson	S Whittome
D Edwards – not at inspection	Ms C Lowe	

Mr Paul Burrows (Clerk), Mr Dave Bantoft (M&E Engineer) and Mr Graham Moore (Planning Engineer) were also in attendance

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from James Carney and Richard Wilmer (District Officer)

B.1892 Inspection

Members that attended the inspection are as above with the exception of D Cornwell & D Edwards.

The Board travelled to two locations for their inspection.

At Washways Pumping Station, the Vice Chair highlighted the issues with over-heating during Storm Babet and Mr I Johnson outlined the current trial using a siphon.

The trial is intended to save electricity during the irrigation season by transferring water from downstream of the station to upstream in lieu of addressing the seized valve within the station that would ordinarily perform this function.

The Vice Chair referred to the unknown integrity of the piling downstream of the pumping station and the potential risk by transferring water. Mr D Bantoft outlined the importance of the catchment study in terms of addressing the pumping station and its seized valve as well as inspecting the below water structural integrity of the piling within the downstream channel.

RESOLVED

The Board approved expenditure of up to £3,000 for the trial.

At the Womb Farm/Abbot Walk Persimmon Homes development site abutting Fillenham's drain, the Board met Mr Simon Ireland, Persimmon Homes' engineering lead for the site to review the latest plans for the site and how concerns regarding encroachment within the Board's 9m Byelaw easement are being addressed.

Mr Ireland outlined that the design will be a consistent gradient berm similar to the opposite bank with a slight slope rather than being flat. The elevation will vary along the site as it does now. The bank would be moved drainwards in locations to keep development clear of the 9m byelaw easement. Upon questions from various members, he also outlined:

- The land between the properties and drain will be public land owned by Persimmon Homes and managed by an in-house management company. There will be knee-rail fencing to keep cars away from the public area.
- Access for IDB machinery will be as per existing arrangements, with some new access available via the adoptable roadway within the development. No access is available from the private drives that are part of the development.
- Footings and foundations are buried and work can commence once the Board's consent is received.
- There will be no drainage assets, eg manholes, within the 9m and no change to the current engineered section of drain.
- There will be no works within 3m of channel as per environmental advice and to manage Persimmon's health and safety risks.
- It may be the middle of 2024 before homes are starting to be built on the estate closest to the drain.
- Board access will be allowed during construction but with a sign-in arrangement.
- Persimmon happy to include information that the Board may produce within new home-owners welcome packs.
- In terms of stability of reprofiled bank for heavy machinery, it is felt the design is an improvement on the existing and no steeper than the current bank.
- Slubbed material can still be deposited within the 9m and alternatives could be considered with the management company.

The Board deferred resolutions on the above until later in the Meeting (See Consulting Engineer's report section)

B.1893 Declarations of Interest

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

The Chairman declared an interest in item 3.1 within the Consulting Engineer's report, the Somersham Pocket Park.

Mr S Whittome and Mr H Whittome declared an interest in matters relating to the Middle Level Commissioners.

B.1894 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Board held on 8th June 2023 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1895 Matters arising from the minutes.

None raised

B.1896 Constitution & Membership

Mr Burrows reported that during his 10 months in his role as Clerk to the Boards, he had attended a number of meetings and taken stock of the way in which the Middle Level Commissioners were supporting Boards with the right paperwork to ensure they were providing clarity and consistency across Boards. He advised that with this in mind the Clerk considered the agendas needed a refresh to assist Members with the flow and make it easier for minutes of the meetings to be prepared to a better standard and in a timely manner.

He advised that having attended several Board meetings during the past year, it was evident that some Boards did not have as good attendance as others and were struggling in term of membership and governance. He added that the purpose of this agenda item was to assist in reporting this information to Defra in order to bring greater clarity around the strength of Boards in terms of membership. It was the Clerk's intention that those Boards that were struggling it may trigger conversations around whether they needed to consider amalgamating with neighbouring Boards.

The Clerk reported that the agenda item would also encourage Members to think about training they may need to assist them with the important role they undertook on behalf of the Board and to consider whether there was any additional training they would like or required that wasn't facilitated through the ADA videos, that had been provided in the past. He added that if this was the case a conversation could be had as to whether the Middle Level Commissioners could support Boards with that or whether it was something the Board could arrange themselves.

The Clerk outlined that the composition change approved by the Board at their last meeting had been submitted to the Environment Agency and that on behalf of the Board he would be seeking Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) approval at their meeting in January 2024. This then triggers the Environment Agency engaging Defra and moving the process forward. In light of the Board's intention to reduce elected member numbers, the Board were asked to clarify whether the current vacancy would remain vacant to assist with the reduction.

The Chairman announced that he wishes to step down as Chair given his time commitments and proposed that the Vice Chairman would make a natural Chair, viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**4**
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 30th 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. Consider the **1** vacancy 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	21	N/A	24	12
Actual	20	1 FDC, 2 HDC	23	
Vacancies	1			

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	Jacob Armstrong	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr C Armstrong)	
2	Daniel Brown	Ratepayer	Vice Chairman
3	Stuart Cornwell	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr D Cornwell)	
4	Lord de Ramsey	Ratepayer	
5	Stephen Edgley	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mr A Edgley)	
6	Daniel Edwards	Ratepayer	
7	David England	Ratepayer	
8	Mark England	Ratepayer	
9	Daniel Fabb	Ratepayer	
10	James German	Ratepayer	
11	Marc Heading	Ratepayer	
12	Ian Johnson	Ratepayer	
13	Sam Johnson	Ratepayer	
14	Charles Leadbetter	Ratepayer	Chairman
15	Lucy Munns	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr G Munns)	
16	Thomas Noble	Ratepayer	
17	Jonathan Short	Ratepayer	
18	Rupert Waters	Nominee of ratepayer (Abbots Ripton Farming)	
19	Hugh Whittome	Ratepayer	
20	Stephen Whittome	Ratepayer	
21			

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

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	James Carney	FDC	Councillor
2	Adela Costello	HDC	Councillor
3	Charlotte Lowe	HDC	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	8/6/2023	1/12/2022	26/5/2022	2/12/2021
1	Jacob Armstrong		attended	apologies	attended
2	Daniel Brown	attended	attended	apologies	attended
3	Stuart Cornwell	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Lord de Ramsey	apologies	apologies	apologies	apologies
5	Stephen Edgley	attended	attended	apologies	apologies
6	Daniel Edwards		attended	attended	attended
7	David England	attended	attended	attended	attended
8	Mark England	attended	attended	attended	attended
9	Daniel Fabb		Apologies		attended
10	James German	attended	attended	attended	attended
11	Marc Heading	attended		attended	attended
12	Ian Johnson	attended	attended	attended	attended
13	Sam Johnson	attended	attended	attended	
14	Charles Leadbetter	attended	attended	attended	attended
15	Lucy Munns	apologies	apologies	attended	
16	Thomas Noble	attended	attended	attended	attended
17	Jonathan Short	attended	attended	attended	attended
18	Rupert Waters	attended	attended	apologies	apologies
19	Hugh Whittome	attended	attended	apologies	attended
20	Stephen Whittome	apologies	attended	apologies	attended
21					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022	2/11/2021
1	Charles Leadbetter	apologies	attended		N/A

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	8/6/2023	1/12/2022	26/5/2022	2/12/2021
1	James Carney (FDC)		N/A	N/A	N/A

2	Adela Costello (HDC)	apologies	attended		N/A
3	Charlotte Lowe (HDC)		attended		N/A

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 There is currently **1** vacancy on the Board, due to the retirement of The Lord De Ramsey on 7th November 2023. A letter of thanks for his service to the board has been sent for his service from 1st February 2001.

The Board to consider the following appointments:

3.2 Appointment of Chair
3.3 Appointment of Vice-Chair
3.4 Appointment of Clerk
3.5 Appointment of Finance Committee

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 The Clerk to update regarding the reconstitution of the Board.

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 24 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 14 of 24 Board Members have reported viewing 2 or the 5 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

RESOLVED

Not to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of The Lord de Ramsey.

Mr D Brown appointed as Chairman (to start after this meeting)

Mr T Noble appointed as Vice Chairman (to start after this meeting)

Middle Level Commissioners continue to be appointed as Clerk

That Mr I Johnson be added to the Finance Committee and existing members be reappointed.

That a ‘Pump Committee’ be set up including the Chairman, Vice Chair and Mr I Johnson.

B.1897 Governance

a) Review of Internal Controls

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls.

b) Risk Management Assessment

The Board considered and approved the Boards Risk Management policy.

c) IDB1

The Clerk referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2022/2023 which the Board noted and approved, viz;

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 £.

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY 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	6,198
2. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	18,136
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	**24,334**

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		162,963
2. Special Levies		19,821
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		19,126
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		458
5. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		13,877
6. PSCAs from EA and other RMAs		
7. Loans		
8. Rechargeable Works		300
9. Interest and Investment Income		
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		6600
11. Other Income		600
Total income		**223,745**
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		28,361
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		22,314
14. Watercourse maintenance		79,314
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		96,625
16. Administration		23,975
17. PSCAs		
18. Rechargeable Works		
19. Finance Charges		
20. SSSIs		
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		673
22. Other Expenditure		622
Total expenditure		**251,884**

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**(28,139)**
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		358,488
25. Grant income not applied in year		164,011

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)?............................... 26/05/2022

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?

78.4

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

6

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

10.27 cumecs

Health and Safety

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

If so, please summarise in the box below:

Guidance and Best Practice

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

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

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

Is your Board's website information current for this financial year? (Board membership, audited accounts, programmes of works, WLMPS, etc)........Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your IDB adopted computerised accounting and rating systems?........Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your board published all minutes of meetings on the website?........ Yes ☒ No ☐

Does the Board publish information on its website on its approach to maintenance works and provide contact details to allow for and encourage public engagement? Yes ☒ No ☐

When planning maintenance and capital works are environmental impacts taken into account and wherever possible best practice applied? Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your Board adopted the following governance documents?

Standing Orders .... Yes ☒ No ☐

Have the Standing Orders been approved by Ministers ....Yes ☒ No ☐

Byelaws ....Yes ☒ No ☐

If you have Byelaws, have you adopted the latest model byelaws published in 2012........ Yes ☒ No ☐

Have the Byelaws been approved by Ministers........Yes ☒ No ☐

Code of Conduct for Board Members........Yes ☒ No ☐

Financial Regulations........Yes ☒ No ☐

Register of Member's Interests........Yes ☒ No ☐

Anti-fraud and corruption policy........ Yes ☒ No ☐

Board membership and attendance

How many Board members (in total – elected and appointed) do you have on your IDB?	23
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	3
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	20
Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	3
Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	13
Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	1

Have you held elections within the last three years?..Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Did elections comply with the requirements specified by the Secretary of State under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938?........................ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Complaints procedure

Is the procedure for a member of the public to make a complaint about the IDB accessible from the front page of its website?...Yes ☒ No ☐

Number of complaints received in the financial year?	0
Number of complaints outstanding in the financial year?	0
Number of complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman?	0
Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman?	0

Public Engagement

Set out what your Board has done in this financial year to engage with the public (tick relevant box(es) below):

- Press releases ☐
- Newsletters ☐
- Web site ☒
- Meetings ☒
- Shows/events (including open days/inspections) ☐
- Consultations ☐
- Notices ☒

Percentage (in value) of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

0.78%

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

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY 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

d) Exercise of Public Rights

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

B.1898 Clerks Report

The Clerk referred to the current 'Clerkship Agreements' which were due a refresh to keep pace with the changing IDB governance standards, financial requirements, health & safety, environmental legislation and capital Works delivery and that he would be fully assessing the services to IDBs over the next 12-18 months to ensure that there is clarity on the full range of serviced offered, along with the associated terms and conditions and fee arrangements.

Concerning the management of risk, the Clerk reported that he was looking to gain greater clarity by bringing in Key Health Indicators, which would allow and assist Boards to assess their strengths and weaknesses to help identify an manage risk.

Adding to the written report regarding Rating, the clerk added that it may be that Board's will need to also earmark and account for budget within rates to act as a contribution towards the development of any replacement software system, viz;

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners</td><td>Item No:</td><td colspan="2">6</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting:</td><td>WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB</td><td>Subject:</td><td colspan="2">CLERK’S REPORT</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td>Thursday 30th November 2023</td><td colspan="2">Officer Responsible:</td><td>Paul Burrows</td></tr>
</table>

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.

1. 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.

2. IDB Key Health Indicators

2.1.1 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Electricity and Insurance inc death in service (NEST)

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.

5.9 In view of the disparity between the benefits attached to the Nest Pension Scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Middle Level Commissioners have considered it appropriate to provide a death in service benefit equivalent to 3 x annual salary to employees enrolled into a NEST Pension Scheme.
The Board is asked to consider whether it also wishes to provide this benefit to its employee.

6. 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.

7. 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

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be part of the group assessing and determining the next electricity contract.

That the Board offer death in service insurance benefit to the new District Officer once appointed.

B.1899 Environment Officers Update

The Clerk reported that the lack of a written report for this meeting from the Environment Officer was due to her priority being focussed on the Middle Level Bank Raising scheme and on urgent badger management issues– he informed Members that part of these works is to put Environmental/Conservation process and procedures in place, which will then subsequently provide benefit to all IDBs.

B.1900 Consulting Engineers' Reports, including CIP & FCRM Grant-in-Aid

The Board noted the contents of the report and focussed their discussions on the key items reported below, viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**Thursday 30th November**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider what they would like included in the WS&P IDB Catchment Study and to nominate two representatives to work with the Consulting Engineer to prepare a project brief in due course.

B. Consider whether it may want to adopt the downstream receiving drain at Somersham Pocket Park if is included as part of the solution.

C. Consider taking appropriate action to manage the potential problems with Dents Diversion – channel maintenance. Some reed beds within the channel and several saplings, primarily along the water's edge, are becoming established.

D. Give appropriate consideration to the issue of embankment crest levels and that it is included in the scope of the proposed Catchment Study.

E. Review and approve their Capital Programme taking account of the advice in Section 5.

1. Overview of services provided to the Board

1.1 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.

- Mechanical & Electrical (M&E): Providing general advice, routine maintenance, minor works and inspections. Supporting development of capital works programme.
- 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 Planning Applications on behalf of the Board and advising on and issuing discharge and byelaw consents.

1.2 Please note that our planning and consenting services currently only have the capacity to be reactive and there is no 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 3.

The Board is asked to confirm if this approach is acceptable for future reports.

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 services offer.

2. Chief Engineer's summary

2.1 The new process for delivering grant-aided schemes is now in progress. As more grant-aided projects come online, the MLC engineers' workload will need to be balanced with additional resources. We are using a number of different external consultants and will be monitoring their performance, using this to inform our future delivery model.

2.2 For the Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB Catchment Study, we will prepare a Project Initiation Form for approval at the next Board meeting in June 2024. This will briefly describe the aims and objectives of the study and will be used to provide a scope of work for appointing consultants. I hope that the Board representatives will work closely with the appointed project team to enable the consultants to undertake a meaningful assessment of the districts and, ultimately, provide suitable recommendations for their future management. **The Board is asked to consider what it would like included in the Study and to nominate two representatives to work with the Consulting Engineer to prepare a project brief in due course.**

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.

3. Technical Services

3.1 <u>Somersham Pocket Park (Ref 333/22)</u>
Following the actions of the last Board meeting, contact was made with Tarmac to obtain existing and new survey data for the area. Drawings were received in late September which gave comprehensive land levels around the lakes but unfortunately, due to access, only included sporadic levels in the receiving riparian watercourse.

Further survey was needed and it was decided to include bed levels in the lakes to ascertain the proposed storage volumes and depths to inform any gravity discharge options. The MLC's survey boat fitted with echosounder was used and the surveys were undertaken in October and November. Due to restrictive access and large trees encroaching on the receiving drains, it is hoped that now some of the leaves have fallen, the GPS surveying kit can be used in the coming weeks to obtain more bed levels in the drains but more traditional, manual, surveying methods may also be required to achieve this.

These levels are crucial as regardless of pumped or gravity option, the receiving watercourse will need major improvements, or to be culverted, to allow the conveyance of water to the Long Drove culvert and into the Board's existing system.

Once the surveys are carried out, proposals can be made and discussed with Tarmac and the Board. It is hoped that a solution can be implemented in 2024.

Depending on the agreed solution, the following may be required, needing additional input from the Consulting Engineer:

- A variation to the existing agreement of 2012.
- Ecological surveys.
- A change to the planning approval/new planning permissions.
- A discharge consent.

If the downstream receiving drain is included as part of the solution, the Board may want to consider adopting this drain on the completion of the works.

3.2 <u>Diversion of Fenton Lode/Fillenhams Drain, Chatteris (Dents Diversion</u>)

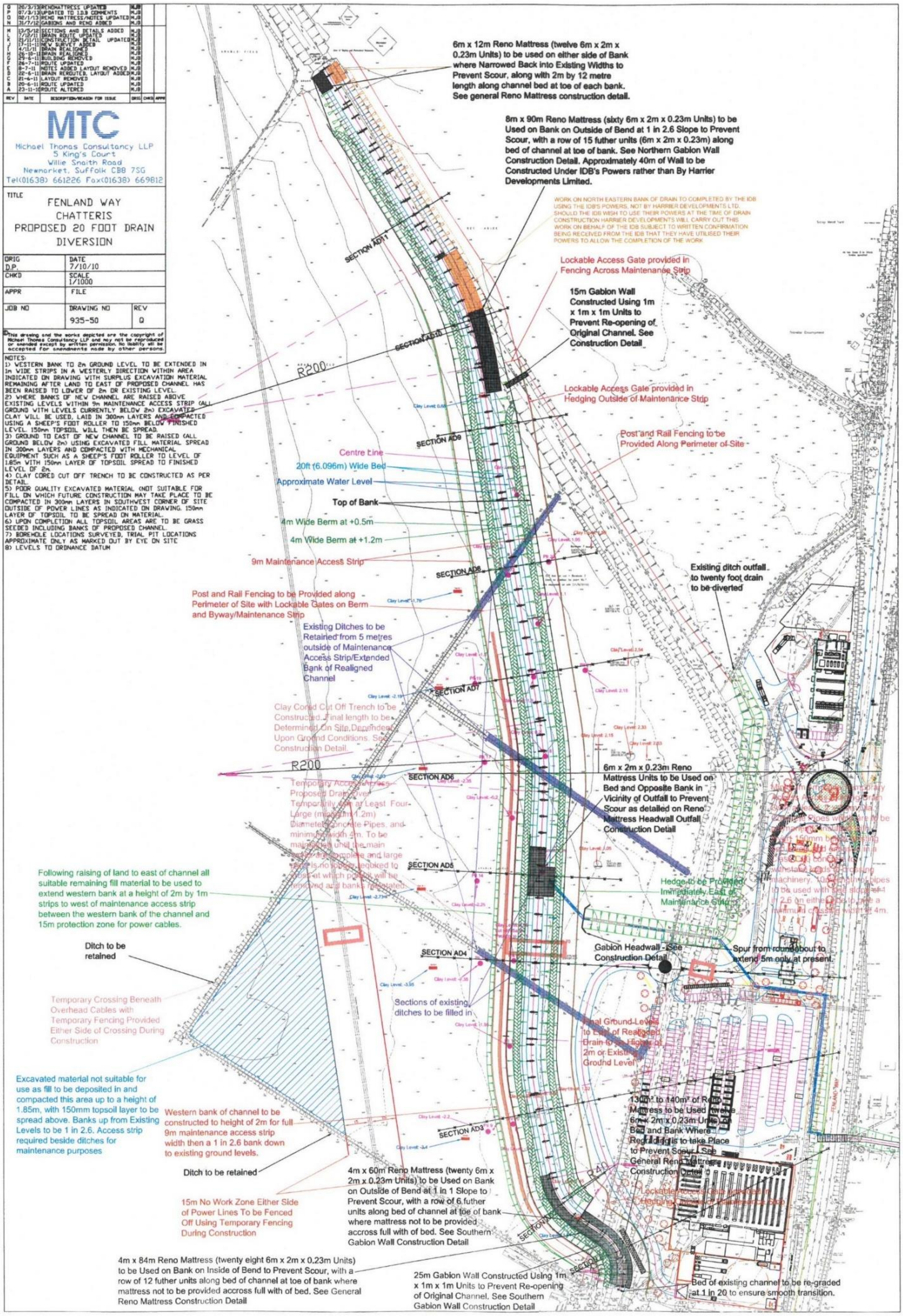
General
A visual inspection of the diverted channel between the site of the former Womb Farm Bridge, in the north (Point 4a), and the northern boundary of Honeysome Industrial Estate owned by Pall Mall Estates, on the eastern side of the channel, and The Gault, on the western side (Point 5a) was undertaken during a period of sunny and hot weather. Washways Booster Pumping Station was not pumping and there was no apparent flow in the channel.

Unfortunately, despite a request to do so the channel had not been flailed making a purely visual and walked inspection of both sides more difficult. No topographical survey has been undertaken.

Channel Condition
It is considered that some slight deformation of the channel profile has occurred but the channel slopes and flood embankments appeared to be in good condition.

Some rutting of the berm surface could be felt underfoot which is not unexpected as it is used by the Board to undertake routine maintenance operations. The rutting is unlikely to be of significant concern.

It was noted that several of the access gates had been removed, on both the western and eastern sides, and this had resulted in some debris being deposited within the Board's maintenance access strip near the car park for the retail units.



Layout Plan of the Dents Diversion Works (for orientation purposes only)

Block Revetment

The sections of block revetment along the channel appear to be in good condition and are slowly naturalising with grasses, reed and other vegetation.

View of the steep hard revetment

Some deformation and cracking were seen, particularly along the steep section on the right-hand side close to the delivery access road and yard to the rear of the retail units.

Extract of the layout plan showing the extent of the hard revetment at the southern bends

View of the cracked and deformed surface

Ecological Issues

The above ground elements of the otter holt just downstream of the diversion works remain in place, but in order to prevent adverse impacts or cause any distress to the occupants this was not inspected in any detail.

In view of the soils involved there was some concern when the new channel was dug that the previous natural environment would struggle to return. However, significant recovery has already occurred with several prevalent species being well established. This may be due to several factors including aquatic seedbank translocation; the use of hydro grass seeding, thus enabling a rich sward to establish at an early stage; the installation of pre-planted coir rolls; the generally unshaded north/south alignment of the channel and the ecology maintenance procedures undertaken.

General View of the established channel just downstream of the southern bends

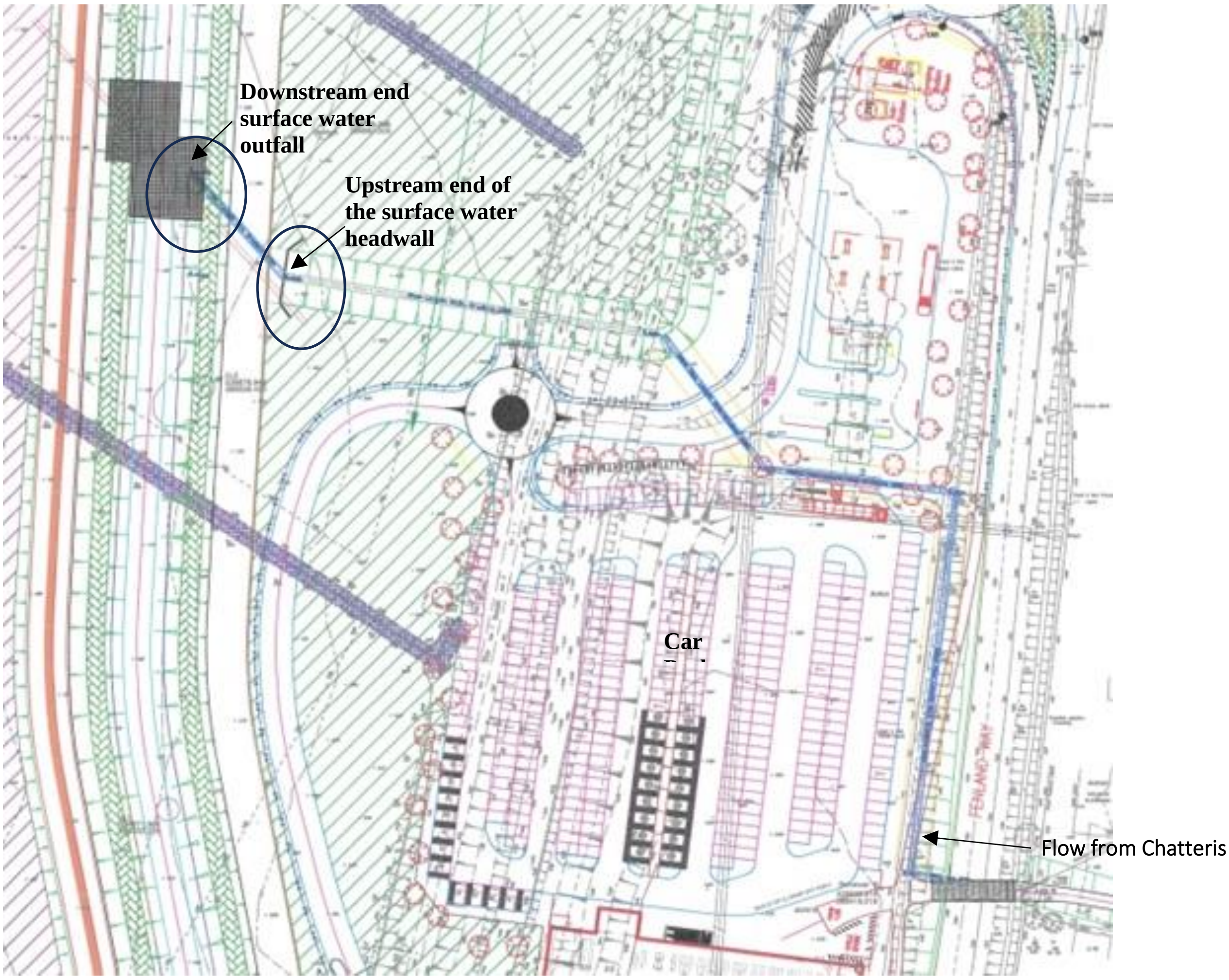
Channel Maintenance

It was noted during the visit that the channel was experiencing an algal bloom which may have been the result of nutrient rich runoff from the upstream catchment and/or inflows from the Forty Foot River.

Some reed beds within the channel and several saplings, primarily along the water's edge, are becoming established and **the Board may wish to consider taking appropriate action to manage these potential problems.**

The Surface Water Side Inlet to the north of the Retail Unit's Car Park

The surface water channel and outfall form an integral part of the site serving the currently undeveloped land to the north including the proposed filling station, the retail units and the car park. In addition, it provides the outfall for a significant urban area of western Chatteris.



Extract of the layout plan showing the car park and surface water outfall and headwall

The main point of any significant damage is to the protective revetment at the main surface water outfall. This has been the victim of damage for several years with the revetment blocks being removed and deposited in the outfall bay. However, most of this damage has occurred since 2020.

As can be seen from the view below, taken from the western profile, the damage has mainly occurred at the top of the berm whilst the lower section, which is more prone to erosion due to high flows, does not appear at this time to be threatening the stability of the channel profile.

Damaged revetment at the downstream end of the surface wate outfall

The channel served by the outfall is poorly maintained being overgrown with reed and other vegetation including the occasional established sapling, one of which is a few metres from the culvert entrance and will require managing.

The surface water outfall viewed from the western side of the channel

This channel is believed to be the responsibility of Anglian Water Services Ltd and does not form part of the Board's adopted system but it is partly within the Board's rateable District.

Upstream end of the surface water outfall

Other Issues

Whilst not a direct matter for the Board's operations the planting used to establish the extent of the Board's maintenance access strip adjacent to the units and car park is well established but to the north the planting is not established and would benefit from some reinforcement planting.

Section of missing hedging

View of the hedging along the delivery access road

View of the overgrown surface water channel

Hedging in need of reinforcement

3.3 **Summary of key planning issues**

Gravity Drained areas

Chatteris

Downstream of Washways Pumping Station

Development at Womb Farm to the south west of Doddington Road (Fillenham Way and Vermuyden Close), Chatteris - Colliers CRE (MLC Ref No 524), Triman Developments (UK) Ltd (MLC Ref No 528), *Client of Haskoning DHV UK Ltd* (MLC Ref No 1036)*, Barmach Ltd* (MLC Ref No 1040)*, Triman Developments (UK) Ltd & Robertson Strategic Asset Management Ltd* (MLC Ref No 1066) & Persimmon Homes East Midlands (MLC Ref No 1177, 1246 & 1249)

Persimmon Homes were advised that:

A. Your company has until the 14th July 2023 to resolve the currently outstanding encroachment related issues to the Board's satisfaction.
B. To ensure that the Board's requirements are met the Commissioners, in their role as the Consulting Engineer, have been asked to respond to planning related revisions.
C. The Board has formed a sub-committee to deal with all further matters and has been authorised to take action as it considers appropriate to ensure that its requirements are met.

Comments were also provided to Persimmon Homes on the previously supplied berm formation details that were presented at the last Board Meeting.

Persimmon Homes requested a meeting, which was held at the Middle Level Offices at the end of June. The meeting was attended by members of the previously agreed sub-committee, representatives from Persimmon Homes and the Commissioners' Planning Engineer.

At this meeting the sub-committee resolved that:

> ".. the formation of the berm as shown on ID Ltd's "Alteration to IDB Maintenance Easement" Drawing No 1090-00-101 Rev. – is to be undertaken by Persimmon Homes at its expense as soon as reasonably possible following the issue of the encroachment consent with the works to be regularly inspected by the Engineer and representatives of the Board".

A signed and completed Encroachment Application was received from Persimmon Homes at the end of June.

After some delay, due to the holiday period, a site inspection was held at the beginning of September at which it was noted that the previous encroachment had been repositioned outside of the Board's maintenance access strip as requested. The inspection also enabled the Board's Environment Officer to view the site and for wider discussions to occur amongst the other attendees.

The meeting raised several points which required further discussion and were raised with Persimmon Homes. The latter's responses are in red:

A. Environmental Report

The Environment Officer has queried the provision of the Environmental Report required to support the application for the formation of the berm. She advises that if they have not yet been undertaken the surveys will need to be completed in the next couple of weeks otherwise it will be spring next year before the surveys and the reshaping works can be undertaken. BSG will be undertaking the survey next Thursday 12th October.

B. The stability of the rear slope

A question has been raised about the integrity of the new rear slope, adjacent to the properties, and what action will be taken if the slope deforms and slumps. Presumably, this situation would not damage the properties concerned but it would be pleasing to know how such earth movement would be restored? The rear slope is outside of the 9m easement however it is a 1:3 slope with a height above the easement between 1196mm – 0mm.

Presumably suitable mitigation such as a retaining wall or soil reinforcement will be used to prevent this situation from occurring? The slope is at a gradient of 1:3 so it will not require further soil retention mitigation.

C. Health, Safety and Welfare

In view of the interface between the properties, the berm and the Board's maintenance access strip could you please provide a document that assesses the risk to public safety and detail any mitigation that is required, for example, barrier fencing, signage etc. IDB are to supply information leaflets to Persimmon Homes for the new residents, informing them of the IDB's role and responsibilities for waterways. The edge of vehicle block paved areas will have a wooden knee rail to deter vehicles from accessing the berm.

D. Channel Defects & Maintenance Agreement + Performance Deed

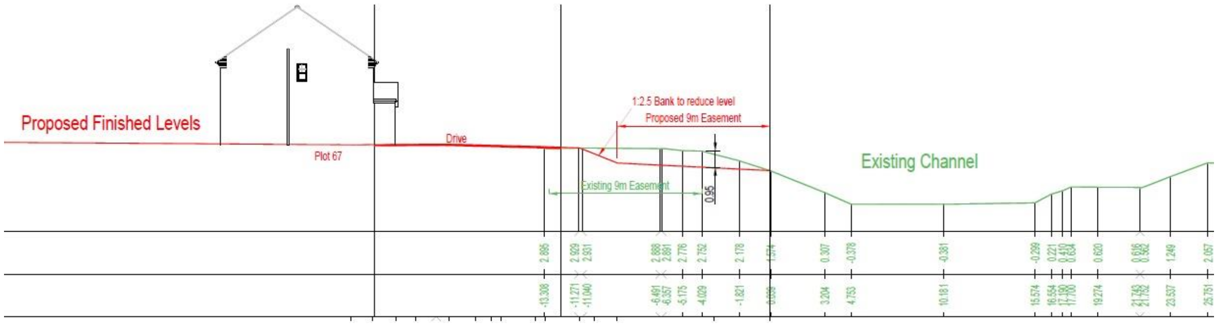
It is understood that the works alongside the channel were undertaken using the Board's powers and were not the subject of the above-mentioned Agreement or Performance Deed. Therefore, the reshaping works on the eastern bank could be undertaken without breaching the agreement which ends this December. Is this the 'Tesco' development area agreement? If so thank you for confirming that our proposed works will not affect any other agreement.

E. Spoil/Silt Disposal

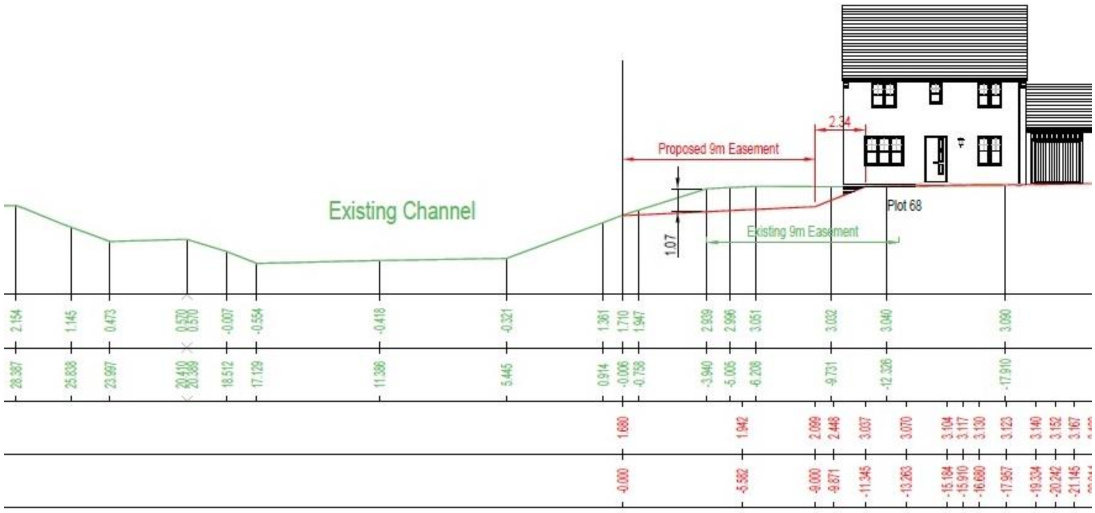
The principle of spoil/silt disposal and the payment of any increased costs due to the "additional works" that need to be undertaken to accommodate your company's development and the berm is currently being discussed internally. As previously discussed, the 9m easement required by the Byelaw will be maintained to allow the IDB to maintain their asset.

A copy of the Ecological Survey was supplied during October and the Board's Environment Officer has recently advised that "... all fine for works to commence, what we don't have is an agreed enhancement plan and associated management plan setting out what habitats will be created and maintained through the work".

Amended extract of the plan provided by Persimmon Homes showing the current 9.0m wide maintenance access strip in green and the proposed berm in red



Sections through the proposed berm showing the proximity of the drive and dwellings



Whilst an equitable position is being reached issues that remain to be resolved include:

- The payment of the increased costs associated with the off-site spoil disposal – presumably the management company

- Health, Safety and Welfare implications including Occupiers' Liability as the owner of Fillenhams Drain – Input from the Board's Health and Safety Officer will be required for this.

Upstream of Washways Pumping Station – Little Acre Fen Gravity Outfall

Mixed Use Development on land at Tithe Barn Farm and south east of London Road, Chatteris - Hallam Land Management Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 160, 184, 606, 630 & 1259)

An enquiry has been received from a developer concerning this large development but as advised previously, it appears, according to the Board's records, that this development abuts but is currently outside of the Board's catchment, therefore, any impact on the Board's system is likely to be minimal.

Residential development on land to the south of 8 - 59 Fairbairn Way, Chatteris - A Bartlett & Sons (MLC Ref Nos 281 & 284); Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 508 & 514); Client of Rossin Associates (MLC Ref No 553); Mr T Bartlett (MLC Ref No 890); Alan Barlett & Sons Ltd (Chatteris) (MLC Ref No 1020) & Accent Homemade Ltd (MLC Ref No 1248)

Further to previous Meeting Reports contact has recently been made with JPP Consulting Ltd, the Consulting Engineer, acting on behalf of Accent Homemade Ltd, a Housing Association, concerning surface water disposal and other consent related issues.

<u>Pidley</u>

Residential development on land to the west of Richmond Lodge, Fen Road, Pidley - Mr Hopkins (MLC Ref Nos 907, 936, 980 & 1104) *& Mrs Bradshaw* (MLC Ref No 1060)

As requested at the last Board Meeting the MLC Solicitor has written to all parties, on behalf of the Board, instructing that all outstanding byelaw issues must be resolved.

<u>Somersham</u>

Change of use of land from agriculture to caravan/mobile home travellers' site on land north of The Paddock, Chatteris Road, Somersham - Mr & Mrs F Adams (MLC Ref Nos 521, 532, 544, 562,563 & 573)

Correspondence has recently been received from the applicants' agents concerning the potential extension of the existing traveller's site.

Application for outline planning permission for up to 145 dwellings and associated access, all other matters reserved on land north of the bank at land north of 16 The Bank, Somersham – Client of Waldeck Consulting (MLC Ref No 1045) and Larkfleet Homes (MLC Ref Nos 1058, 1084 & 1259)

Further to the Board's May 2022 Board Meeting Report, a Reserved Matters planning application has been submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council for consideration.

As discussed previously this site is shown within the Board's "highland" catchment with its rateable boundary forming the eastern boundary of the site. For this reason, it was previously understood that the site discharges into the Board's system and land levels would infer that this is the situation. However, following further investigation and discussion with Anglian Water, Larkfleet Homes are proposing that surface water from the site will now discharge via a new surface water sewer into the Environment Agency's Cranbrook Drain on the southern side of Chatteris Road and not into the Board's system.

4 Capital Programme

The Board's Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 2.

In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GIA) from the Environment Agency, we have identified an allocation to undertake a Catchment Study to identify any improvements needed in the system. This is currently programmed for 2025/26. This will include channel surveys, structural condition assessments of pumping stations and other assets, hydraulic modelling, economic and environmental assessments, and development of recommendations/solutions with the aim of securing further grant for the delivery of those solutions.

4.1 Embankment Raising

The discharge channel downstream of Washways Pumping Station
Members will be aware that sections of the watercourse downstream of Washways Pumping Station are protected by raised embankments to prevent flooding during high water levels in the Middle Level Commissioners' Forty Foot River. Whilst some protection is provided by the overspill at Point 1 members are reminded that the design of these structures is several years old and did not include allowances for climate change.

Fenton Lode upstream of Washways Pumping Station
Similarly bank crest levels of the embankments upstream of Washways Pumping Station have not been measured since 1999 and may no longer provide a suitable standard of protection (SoP).

It is recommended that the Board gives appropriate consideration to the issue of embankment crest levels and that it is included in the scope of the proposed Catchment Study.

5 Other Matters

5.1 Works to Puddock Road – Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)

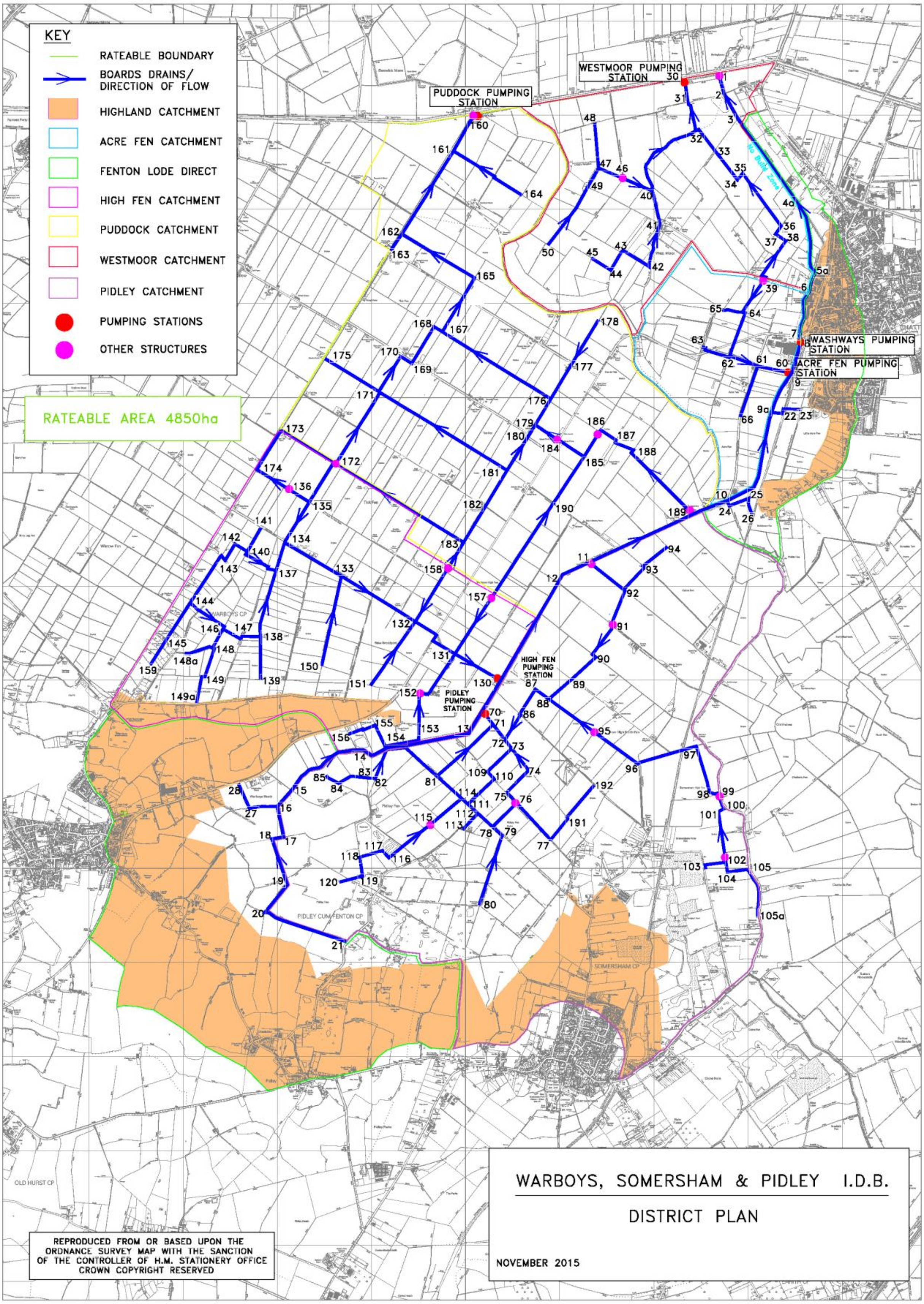
Initial correspondence has recently been received from CCC concerning potential works to Puddock Road.

No detail has been provided to date but the works are presumably to prevent further deterioration of the highway.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: District Plan
Appendix 2: Capital Programme
Appendix 3: List of planning applications since last report

Appendix 1



KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
ACRE FEN CATCHMENT
FENTON LODE DIRECT
HIGH FEN CATCHMENT
PUDDOCK CATCHMENT
WESTMOOR CATCHMENT
PIDLEY CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
OTHER STRUCTURES
RATEABLE AREA 4850ha
PUDDOCK PUMPING STATION
WESTMOOR PUMPING STATION
WASHWAYS PUMPING STATION
ACRE FEN PUMPING STATION
HIGH FEN PUMPING STATION
PIDLEY PUMPING STATION
WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY I.D.B.
DISTRICT PLAN
NOVEMBER 2015
REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED

Appendix 2

Warboys Somersham & Pidley 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
Acre Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	252.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	356.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	0.0	90.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
High Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pidley p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	49.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Appendix 3

MLC Ref.	*Council Ref*	*Applicant*	*Type of development*	*Location*
1252	F/YR23/0349/VOC	Hallam Land Management Ltd & B S Pension Trustee Ltd	Mixed Use Development comprising residential development up to 1,000 dwellings, employment (B1, B2, & B8), Local Centre (A1, A2, A3, A4 & D1) & Primary School)	London Road, Chatteris
1253	H/23/00696/HHFUL	Mr D Hopkins	Residence (Garage)	Field Fen Road, Pidley
1254	H/23/00541/FUL	Mr S Clark	Equine (Extension to stables)	Parkhall Road, Somersham
1255	F/YR23/0446/F	Mr S Davis	Change of use: Commercial to Residence	Station Road, Chatteris
1256	F/YR23/0454/F	Mr S Latchem	Residence (Garage/storage building with office/gym above)	London Road, Chatteris
1257	F/YR23/3072/COND	Mr E Bialobloki	Residential (Erect up to 3 dwellings)	Willey Terrace, Doddington Road, Chatteris
1258	H/23/01010/F	Mr M Hutchings	Residence	Pond Close, Pidley
1259	H/23/00369/REM	Allison Homes	Residential (132 dwellings)	The Bank, Somersham
1260	H/23/01048/OUT	Mr D Hopkins	Residence	Warboys Road, Pidley
1261	H/23/00648/FUL	Mr & Mrs Robinson	Residence	Puddock Road, Warboys
1262	F/YR23/0646/F	Mr & Mrs Arnold	Residence (Extension)	York Road Chatteris
1263	F/YR23/0758/O	Mr Sailsbury	Residence	Blackmill Road, Chatteris
1264	F/YR23/3096/COND	Mr M Smith	Residence	Huntingdon Road, Chatteris
1265	H/23/01703/HHFUL	Mrs Ray	Residence (Annexe)	Warboys Road, Pidley
1266	H/23/01964/AGDET	R & S Clark Farming Ltd	Storage facility	Parkhall Road, Somersham
1267	H/23/01878/HHFUL	Mr Jacob Armstrong	Residence (Extension)	Puddock Road, Warboys

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Thursday 30TH November	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. **M&E key messages and advice**

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

2. **Minor Works**

2.1 *Puddock* **-** The pumps have run well through this period but as previously reported they are due overhaul or replacement.

2.2 *Westmoor* - The inlet flap door shackle corroded and became detached which prevented door opening and had to be replaced.

2.3 *Acre Fen* **-** Nothing to report.

2.4 *High Fen* **-** The station has operated well and the level control issues were stopped by replacement of the sensor cable.

2.5 *Washways* - During the high rainfall in October the station overheated due to extractor fans not being in automatic mode. This stopped one diesel as the high temp fusible link had opened and had to be resoldered onsite. There were also weedscreen faults which were hard to rectify as the manual pendant plug and socket had poor connections. The extractor fan control switches are being replaced with keyswitch units. The weedscreen pendant control plug and socket and the external station run light are being replaced. The parts are on order.

2.6 *Pidley* **-** During the high rainfall in October the station lost its automatic level control due to a failed level sensor and cabling that had been attacked by rats, an MLC spare unit was fitted temporarily to enable pump automatic operation and new sensor was ordered.

3. **Inspections**

3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out on 27 September 2023. The Washways weedscreen wire ropes were recommended for replacement and have been ordered.

3.2 EICR Test and Due dates as below. Upcoming retests have been booked.

Station	EICR Pass Date	EICR Due
Acre Fen	14-Dec-2018	14-Dec-2023
High Fen	14-Dec-2018	14-Dec-2023
Pidley	14-Dec-2018	14-Dec-2023
Puddock	14-Dec-2018	14-Dec-2023
Washways	14-Dec-2018	14-Dec-2023
Westmoor	14-Dec-2018	14-Dec-2023

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Somersham Pocket Park (ref 333/22)

The Chairman, Mr C Leadbetter left the room due to his personal interests in this item.

Mr I Johnson, referring to the discussion at the last Board meeting, reported that he had now secured information from the Land Registry and provided copies of a 'Transfer of whole registered title(s)' document dated 31 December 2012 to members of the Board.

He read out the clauses relating to 'The Pump' which makes no mention of the Board and indicates sole responsibilities on Lafarge Aggregates Limited (now Tarmac) as Transferor and William Gosney Limited as Transferee. He recommended that all Board related work associated with the Somersham Pocket Park be paused whilst this new information is considered alongside any pre 2012 paperwork involving the Board.

Womb Farm/Abbot Walk Persimmon Homes development site, Chatteris

Reflecting on the morning's inspection, Members thanked Mr G Moore for his efforts in negotiating with Persimmon to address the main concerns of the Board. The Board suggested that they would need to have an enhanced and focussed maintenance programme as the housing is constructed and residents move in to set expectations as to the role of the channel, the berm and the Board.

The Board supported Mr G Moore in finalising and issuing the consent with the following aspects to be considered either within the consent or within follow-up arrangements with the management company.

- The suitability of the proposed fencing as a means to deter the public/residents from the drain edge and to dump rubbish/garden waste.
- The importance of the Board in keeping control over the berm, so it is maintained as a drainage berm along with the Board's environmental obligations rather than as an extension of a potential public grassed area.
- Consider some form of warranty arrangement in case of bank slippage due to Board's machinery

M&E

Mr D Bantoft referred Members to his report and added following a query from Mr D Cornwell that in terms of Puddock Pumping Station he advised there is no need for significant expense ahead of the findings of the proposed catchment study.

Mr H Whittome asked about level control at Washways PS and Mr Bantoft outlined the issues experienced with the current 'dead band' and that in his view there were non-expensive options to address by raising the sensor or defaulting to pumping in case of the 'dead band' being triggered.

Mr I Johnson asked about the opportunity to use diesel at Washways rather than electric given relative costs at the moment. Mr D Bantoft recommended not given the criticality of the diesel as back-up, reflecting that it is a difficult balance between stressing and losing resilience versus operational cost.

The Vice Chair thanked Mr B Bantoft and Mr A Lakey for their really helpful response during Storm Babet. Mr Bantoft was grateful for the feedback and highlighted that there was an element of luck within that response as with over 80 pumping stations to look after, whilst Washways will always be relatively high up the priority list, St Germans and Bevills' Leam are his highest priority.

RESOLVED

i) That the Commissioners noted and approved the Consulting Engineers Report
ii) That the Chair and Vice Chair work with MLC staff to scope the catchment study

iii) That all Board related work associated with Somersham Pocket Park be paused and a Committee be formed to include Chairman, Vice Chair, Mr I Johnson, Mr D Cornwell and the MLC Chief Engineer and empowered to determine any immediate actions required in order to bring clarity to the situation.
iv) In light of the good condition, take no mitigating action at the moment on Dents Diversion
v) Allocate up to £300 for a professional graphic designed leaflet targeted at future Abbot Walk residents outlining the Board's role.
vi) The Chair and Vice Chair with the MLC Chief Engineer to review and update the capital programme, adding the catchment study (noting a Board financial contribution may be needed) and subsequent potential works at Puddock PS.
vii) That the M&E Engineer develop and install a solution to the level control 'dead band' at Washways PS.

B.1901 Health & Safety

The Chairman reported that there had been no accidents or H&S issues to report.

B.1902 District officer report

The District Officer's report was noted and the Board discussed the impending departure of Richard Wilmer in January 2024. The Clerk highlighted that the MLC are not recruitment specialists, but have a job description that could be used and can advertise any vacancy on their website, viz;

DISTRICT OFFICER REPORT 30-11-23

District Work - Westmoor/Acre Fen:

All District Work in Westmoor and Acre Fen has been carried out using the Doosan DX-140. The Mower was attached to the DX-140 on Mon 17-07-23 and all river banks that could be accessed were mowed by Thu 31-08-23.

The 3m Custom extension and weed basket were attached to the DX-140 on Fri 01-09-23. By Wed 18-10-23 all ditching/slubbing out in both Westmoor and Acre Fen was completed apart from a couple of beet fields which to date are still unaccessable.

It needs noting that both George Munns and Jim Carson at Carters Bridge in the Westmoor area were extremely helpful and supportive and made those particular areas a joy to work in having pointed out land drains, hydrants, etc before working in their areas.

Doosan DX-140 - AU09 FWE:

The DX-140 had a 1000hr Service, 2 new batteries and a front indicator and bulb (near side) replaced by Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd on Friday 30-06-23.

After assessing the DX-140 during its service it was made clear a return visit would be required to fit a new alternator belt. The alternator belt was fitted Tues 18-07-23 and helped cure the starting issues it had over the previous months.

The DX-140 has also had 2 tyres replaced this year (front near side and rear near side).

Terry Underwood fitted new aircon parts on Wed 04-10-23.

Isuzu D-Max - AO17 WMW (100,521 miles on Fri 10-11-23):

The truck had a basic service (all filters) at Somersham Fast Fit and passed its MOT on Wed 14-06-23. The truck needed new tyres and rear shock absorber mountains to pass its MOT.

The truck also had a new battery fitted that week at Boons as it had been struggling to start for a few weeks and needed jump starting a few times leading up to the MOT. Since the battery was replaced it starts first time every time.

On Fri 18-08-23 the Propshaft Universal Joint came off. Recovery was arranged via the Middle Level Commissioners and taken to their yard. The Middle Level also arranged for the propshaft to be refurbished and then refitted at their workshop.

Pump Station Maintenance:

For further information regarding the repair of the Westmoor Inlet carried out on Tue 29-08-23 by the Middle Level Commissioners and other work carried out or recommended at our 6 pump stations in the district see the Engineers Report.

Also, on Tue 07-11-23 UK Power networks were called out and did a temporary repair on the electric box at High Fen Pump Station; after crackling and burning smells coming from the building were reported. A full repair is due to be completed on Tue 14-11-23.

Dave Bantoft and Ash Lakey at the MLC have always been very helpful and supportive regardings any faults or concerns reported at our Pump Stations.

Telemetry:

I believe the Telemetry system is a very useful guide whilst carrying out the day to day duties. It helps prioritise the work load before starting a shift; and is a useful reference point if you are out on the digger all day and cant get round all the pump stations. Its also very helpful for record keeping to help monitor the daily level changes within different parts of the district. However you cant beat actually visiting the pump stations and seeing everything around you first hand. The telemetry signal is poor at Washways Pump Station which the MLC engineers are aware of.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

That the Board strive to recruit and appoint a replacement District Officer.

The Board forms a Committee including the Chair, Vice Chair and Ms C Lowe to progress this matter.

The Clerk assess whether or not the District Officer’s truck can be left at the MLC depot until the new employee is in place.

As a contingency and/or to assist with the new District Officer’s induction, that the MLC Operations team arrange contractors for the Board’s Autumn 2024 drain maintenance requirements and link with the Chair and Vice Chair to scope requirements.

<u>B.1903 Finance – looking back;</u>

<u>Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2022/2023</u>

a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year that ended on the 31st March 2023, viz;

Warboys Somersham & Pidley 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 Warboys Somersham & Pidley 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 Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Warboys Somersham & Pidley 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: 8th September 2023

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAIANGE 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).*	✓		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. **(For local councils only)** 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: 12/06/2023 18/06/2023 19/06/2023

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: B. [illegible] – WHITINGS LLP

Date: 19/06/2023

***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:

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAIANGE BOARD

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

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

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

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

08/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

B. 1888

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

Chairman CG

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAIANGE 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	751,869	707,687	*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	175,442	182,784	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	28,372	40,961	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	36,089	65,746	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	211,907	181,492	*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	707,687	684,194	*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	866,134	861,353	*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	5,226,826	5,226,826	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				*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 29th April 2023

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

8th June 2023

as recorded in minute reference:

B.1890

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

CC

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

In respect of **Warboys Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board – DB0119**

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: 04/09/2023

b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year that ended on the 31st March 2023, viz;

Whitings
Chartered Accountants LLP
Fenland House, 15 B Hostmoor Avenue
March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AX
t: 01354 652304
e: march@whitingsllp.co.uk
w: whitingsllp.co.uk

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.

<u>Client comment:</u>

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

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

B.1904 Finance – looking forward;

The Clerk reported that the main area for variance would be pumping costs, but currently there was no indication to vary the forecast from the approved budget, viz;

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2023/2024

	Approved budget 2023/2024 £	Expenditure to 30.09.2023 £	Est. Expenditure 01.10.23 to 31.03.24	Estimated out-turn at 31.03.2024 £	Variance to budget £	Actual 2022/2023 £
1 District labour (including District Officer's salary)	41,500	23,974	8,526	32,500 [A]	-9,000	65,747
2 Rates, insurances and telephones	6,000	5,670	330	6,000 [B]	0	4,616
3 Repairs and renewals	17,000 [C]	11,069 [C]	7,431	18,500 [C]	1,500	17,122
4 Drainworks	20,000 [D]	5,571 [D]	6,929	12,500 [D]	-7,500	16,267
Piling works						
5 Fuel (oil and electricity)-including District Officer's travelling	125,000 [E]	24,493 [E]	100,507	125,000 [E]	0	68,792
6 Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	25,250	11,228	14,272	25,500	250	23,975
7 Environment Agency - Precept	22,984	11,492	11,492	22,984	0	22,314
8 Capital Reserve Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0
	257,734	93,497	149,486	242,984	-14,750	218,833
Improvement works	0	0	0	0	0	28,361
Bad debt provision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Less income						
Budgeted income	33,448 [F]	6,902 [F]	30,301	37,203 [F]	3,755	54,987
	224,286	86,596	119,185	205,781	-18,505	192,206
Rate Requirement	*0.2700 p*					
Rate set	*0.2700 p*	0.00 p				

General Fund	Approved budget 2023/2024	Expenditure to 30.09.2023	Est. Expenditure 01.10.23 to 31.03.24	Estimated out-turn at 31.03.2024	Actual 2022/2023
Opening balance	153,248	*153,248*	*200,964*	153,248	162,670
Rate income	224,285	*134,312*	*89,945*	224,257	182,784
Write back of provisions					0
Net expenditure	224,286	*86,596*	*119,185*	205,781	192,206
Use of balances	0	*0*	*0*	0	0
Closing balance	153,247	*200,964*	*171,724*	171,724	153,248

Budget Monitoring 2023/2024

Remarks	**Budget 2022/2023**	**Actual 2022/2023**	**Budget 2023/2024**
A - District Officer to leave employment January 2024, Estimated costs to January 2024, board to give consideration to future arrangements			
B - Includes provision for increased insurances, telephones			
C - Includes provisions for:			
General provisions	17,000	4,269	10,750
truck	0	2,336	2,786
digger	0	4,464	4,964
	17,000	11,069	18,500
Pump overhaul provision 2023/24 not raised			
D - Includes contractors accounts:-			
Flail Mowing	4,000	0	1,000
Slubbing (machine hire)	6,000	0	0
Chemical weed control	500	0	250
	10,500	0	1,250
E - Provision based on average	65,500	*24,493*	*125,000*
Includes provision for new increased contract rates			
F - Estimated income includes:			
Full calculated highland water claim	26,828.00	0.00	26,828.00
At time of publication no payments or indications of likley payments have been received from the Environment Agency			

RESOLVED

i) That the report be approved

ii) That a fee of £150 per month be offered to Mr I Johnson for pump attendance whilst a replacement District Officer is being recruited.

iii) That the determination recommended be adopted by the Board.

iv) That the rate arrears be written off.

B.1905 Date & Time of next Meeting

Thursday 6th June, 17:30, Lakeside Lodge, Pidley

……………………………………………
Chairman

………………………..
Date