CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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Administered by:

16th February 2024

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Monday 4th March 2024

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Crown Lodge, Outwell PE14 8SE at 7pm on Monday 4th March 2024.

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

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

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

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

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

Yours truly

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Board

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Monday 4th March 2024 at 7pm

The Crown Lodge, Outwell PE14 8SE

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 3 - 17	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership • Attendance • Elections, vacancies & appointments • Composition and amalgamations • Training	Pages 18 - 20	Clerk
5	Governance • Appointment of Auditor • Annual accounts 2022/23 • Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for 2022/23 • Internal Controls & Banking • Risk Assessment & Strategy • IDB1 • Exercise of Public Rights • Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities	Pages 21 – 22 Pages 23 - 27 Pages 28 - 38 Pages 39 - 40 Pages 41 - 50	Clerk
6	Clerk's Report	Pages 51 - 55	Clerk
7	Environment Officer's Report	verbal	Clerk
8	Chairman's Items	Verbal	Chair
9	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: • Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Pages 56 -66	Clerk or Engineer
10	Health & Safety	Pages 67 - 69	Chair
11	District Officer's Report	Pages 70 - 73	DO
12	Finance Report: looking back • Finance Officer's Review • Payments for 2022/23	Page 74 Page 75	Clerk
13	Finance Report: looking forward • Finance Officer's summary • Fees, remuneration and subscriptions • Determination of land for rating (Confidential) • Rate arrears (Confidential) • Precept to the Environment Agency • Estimates for 2024/25 • Rate requirements for 2024/25	Pages 76 - 77 Page 78 Page 79	Clerk
14	Date of Next Meeting	Verbal	Chair
15	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

CHURCHFIELD AND PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Churchfield and Plawfield Internal Drainage Board hosted at, Upwell the Crown Lodge Hotel on Monday 6th March 2023

PRESENT

S A Calton Esq (Chairman)	S A Calton Esq
D J W Boyce Esq (Vice Chairman)	Cllr K Harrison
P Allen	D J Lunn Esq
G D Boyce Esq	Cllr C N T Rose

Mr David Thomas (Clerk to the Board) was in attendance as was Mr Paul Burrows (incoming Clerk to the Board).

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from M D R Fairey Esq, P Cutting Esq, A Robb Esq and Cllr C J Crofts.

B.1181 Declarations of Interest

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

Cllr Rose declared he had an interest in a number of items on the agenda in respect to his role as a local Councillor. These are generally returning items and the interest has been declared previously.

B.1182 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on the 7th March 2022 and 22nd June 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1183 Matters Arising from the Minutes

All matters arising have been picked up in the agenda. No other items were identified.

B.1184 Election of Board Members

The Clerk reported that as the number of candidates for membership did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (8), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from 1st November 2022, viz:-

Paul Allen Esq	Glenn Boyce Esq	Steven Calton Esq (Chairman)
Peter Cutting Esq	Michael Fairey Esq	David Lunn Esq

Andrew Robb Esq

The Clerk reported that there was one vacancy on the Board. As there were more than one name put forward as a suitable candidate members voted on their choice and John Lunn was chosen to fill the vacancy when the Chairman's casting vote was accounted for.

RESOLVED

That John Lunn be invited to join the Board.

B.1185 Bank Mandate and National Savings & Investments

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

The Board noted that David Thomas was stepping down as Clerk and that he was to be replaced with Paul Burrows. Members welcomed Paul and confirmed that they were content that bank mandate and National Savings & Investment signatories be updated accordingly.

RESOLVED

That Paul Burrows replaces David Thomas as signatory on National Savings & Investment accounts and bank mandates.

B.1186 Member Training Update

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

It was recorded that 8 members had undertaken training during the period and that this would be recorded on the IDB1.

B.1187 Anglian Water – Culvert at Points 35-36

Further to minute B.1154, The Clerk reported that Anglian Water had attended site but only men with shovels, hence the material emanating from the badger set had been left as-was. Anglian Water did not consider they had any requirement to deal with this and were not prepared to return to site with an excavator.

The Board considered its options and noted that there were multiple issues at this location, including a sewer which is in the wrong location but would have been installed perhaps 20 years ago. The collective view was that piping the watercourse over 4 to 5m would be one solution, alternatively the drain could be moved and straightened.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman arrange for an Engineer to visit site with a view to assessing options. The Chairman and District Officer to be present at the meeting.

B.1188 Contraventions of Byelaws

Development on land to the east of Church Field, south west of 54 Well Creek Road and east of Baldwins Drove, Outwell – Mr J Vickers (MLC Ref No. 604)

Further to minute B.1155(b) the Clerk reported the occupier has advised that both surface water and foul water from the development will be taken off-site by tanker. This was not considered a realistic option but there are no actions required from the Board at this time unless it is found that he is discharging to the Board's managed system. It was noted that the applicant has been refused planning permission but is appealing the decision.

B.1189 District System Sections 42-40

Further to minute B.1156, the District Officer advised there was nothing further to report on this item at this time. It was however noted that there is a section of watercourse at point 40 which can only be maintained by hand.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman and District Officer visit the site to decide what actions can and should be undertaken.

B.1190 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised;

i) COVID-19 Actions

That the majority of control measures have been removed now and normal office working has resumed (with the exception of trialling a degree of flexible working, which has been shown to be effective following the previous periods of enforced home working). Impacts now are largely confined to the high rates of COVID-19 illness cases in the UK.

ii) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Chief Executive advised that a decision had been made to move the MLC and IDB's electricity supply contracts from Anglian Farmers to the Green Energy Advice Bureau. This followed several years of extended poor service levels and lack of timely information coming from Anglian Farmers.
The future of IDBs and the value of potential amalgamations was once discussed and this gave rise to questions over small boards being able to secure a quorate for which this had been a particularly poor year. It was agreed that this item should remain on the agenda and that any Chairs who felt that the time was right for their Boards to look again and the advantages/disadvantages of amalgamation

would contract the Clerk. It was also agreed that it may be useful to undertake an exercise around updating the original Geoff Beal report which had recommended that the number of Boards within the area administered by the MLC could reasonably be reduced to three or four.

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

iii) Applications for byelaw consent

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

Name of Applicant	Description of Works	Date of Consent
Mrs Caroline Deane 143 School Road Upwell PE14 9ES	Retrospective permission for the erection of a car port installed by previous owner and erect a timber shed between Points 5 and 6	30/05/2022
H G Bliss Ltd Beechwood Farm Toll Road Three Holes Wisbech PE14 9JE	Installation of a culvert between two fields at District watercourse at Point 36	01/09/2022
Mr P Clabon HG Bliss Ltd Beechwood Farm Toll Road Three Holes Wisbech PE14 9JE	Construction of culvert near to private watercourse Point 39 C & P	23/09/2022

iv) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

b) <u>Annual Conference 2023</u>

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

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

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association was held on Tuesday the 1st March 2022.
This was the first face to face meeting held since the COVID-19 outbreak but the format was restricted to the AGM only. It is planned however to reintroduce the popular and useful morning workshops for 2023.

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

Sofi Lloyd announced that Brian Stewart and Ian Hodge from the EA had recently joined the ADA Board and that DEFRA had asked ADA to liaise with them on the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act. She was also pleased to be able to report that ADA had been instrumental in initiating an all-party parliamentary group with a remit to discuss and consider Sustainable Flood and Drainage Management.

Phil Hulme and Amanda Macloughlan spoke on behalf of the EA covering the challenging associated with significant staff changes at the EA and noted that with the capital program for this six-year cycle being double that of the previous one this would be generating considerable additional work load.

It was advised that this coming years revenue (maintenance) budget was £5.3M which was more than the previous year but what could be delivered within this budget could be impacted by inflation.

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 7th March 2023.

v) National Drainage Show & Floodex 2023

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

vi) Planning and Consenting Fees

Proposed changes to planning and consenting service supply charging

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

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

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

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

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

2. Many members have noted that the reporting in relation to planning application comments and responses is comprehensive. Again, it often takes many hours to produce such detailed reports for

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

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

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

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

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

During the summer the Middle Level Commissioners were approached by Green Energy Advice Bureau (GEAB), one of the UK’s leading energy companies and buying group, whose portfolio includes numerous companies with over 200 million kwh tendered per annum. They have experience working with an estimated 60 Internal Drainage Boards, which include locally the Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards and Downham Market Group of Internal Drainage Boards. We accordingly contacted Jean Heading of the Ely Group of Internal Drainage to enquire of the service provided by GEAB and she has confirmed she is far happier with the service received from them compared to that from Anglia Farmers and since has signed a 5-year fixed rate contract with GEAB from 1st April 2022.
A report was presented to the Middle Level Commissioners at their Board meeting on 3rd November 2022 and due to the ongoing poor performance of Anglia Farmers, together with the positive feedback given by Jean Heading of the Ely Group, the Commissioners’ resolved to consider moving to alternative arrangements. The Executive Committee were delegated the final decision and having considered a report on the options and subsequently confirmed their agreement that a move would be appropriate in the circumstances.

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

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

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

RESOLVED

i) Planning & Consenting

The proposed changes to planning and consenting fee charging was discussed and the Chairman advised that he was in support of the proposal. He noted his wish to see two things in addition to what is proposed.

a) That the application be passed to the Chairman and Vice Chairman for consideration when it comes in.
b) That planning numbers are included in all correspondence.

The Board then voted on the proposed changes.

That the Board agree to the new arrangements and that the MLC be asked to ensure that the Chairman and Vice Chairman are included in the circulation list when planning application are being considered by the MLC on the Board's behalf.

ii) Electricity Supply Contracts

That the Chairman's actions are approved.

B.1191 Consulting Engineers' Report, including Planning and Consenting Matters

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers.

The Board resolved that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would be empowered to act upon all planning matters on behalf of the Board.
The Townley Close issues were discussed at length. It was considered that a great deal of effort had been made but with very little real benefit yet in evidence. Whilst the area looks much improved unfortunately the flood risk remains much as it was. The main issue appears to be that there is no connection from the problem area into the Board's managed system. It was considered that one solution would be to excavate a new interconnecting drain, but this would be a costly option requiring an investment of perhaps £25,000 and there are currently no parties offering to fund such a scheme.

The Board continue to be prepared to offer support and advise, but it is not prepared to fund any works as it considers that this is an issue for the planning authority and riparian occupiers. In addition, the Board would be content to assist by offering to allow the use of its powers and bylaws to help with the delivery of any finally proposed scheme

Resolved that the Board consider that this is a matter for the Borough Council to lead on and that whilst happy to share information, advise and its powers it is not prepared to contribute financially.

Construction of 2 dwellings to replace mobile residential units – no further action was considered required in respect to this development.

Outdoor all weather riding area – this development is complete and no further action is required.

Erection of four dwellings at 53-57 Croft Road – the Chairman considered that there should be no issue for the IDB in relation to surface water disposal for this site as infiltration drainage works well in this location.

Proposed 2 dwellings with carports and conservation of office – it was felt that there should be little problem with surface water drainage for this site as the gross impervious area is being reduced.

Four new dwellings, involving the demolition of three farm buildings – the Chairman expressed his concern that access to maintain the ditch at the rear of the development would be significantly reduced once development takes place.

RESOLVED

That the MLC write to the planning authority raising a concern over the impact of the proposed development on the maintenance access corridor.

It was noted that the report omitted one development – which was 7 Baptist Road (22/01743/F).

It was also noted that the occupants of the development at Waterways had moved away.

That the Clerk checks the Land Registry records to find the current owners and then write to them.

B.1192 Capital Improvement Programme

The Board reviewed their future Capital Improvement Programme.
It was considered that the Stand-Alone section of drain between points 27 and 28 may require attention.

Changes were proposed to the capital Improvement Plan as follows.

- Rename the first item "Gravity outfall and culvert refurbishment /replacement /improvement. Then put £5K in years 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- Remove the final item "Culvert improvement programme"

B.1193 District Officer's Report

The District Officer reported that all matters he might wish to raise had already been covered in the agenda excepting that a footbridge had been erected between points 14 and 21 in addition to some fencing. None has consent and should be removed.

It was also noted that fly tipping remained a problem and that the Board should look at hiring a skip to use to collect the material. It was advised that Barry Brandford was the point of contact at the Borough Council.

RESOLVED

i) That the Middle Level Commissioners make contact with the occupier and ask that the unconsented item be removed.
ii) That the Middle Level Commissioners be asked to advise who they use for skip hire.

B.1194 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

The Clerk referred to the Conservation Officer's most recent BAP Report.

RESOLVED

The Board noted and approved the recent BAP report.

B.1195 District Officer's Fee

a) The Board considered the District Officer's fee for 2023/2024

b) The Board considered the appropriate reimbursement of the out-of-pocket expenses of the District Officer for 2023/2024.

RESOLVED

That the District Officer receive an increase that matches the decision the Middle Level Commissioners take with regards to their staff salaries for 2023/24.

NB. The District Officer declared an interest in this item and took no part in discussions on any revisions to renumeration.

B.1196 State-Aided Schemes

There is nothing requiring state aid at this time. However, if it is later found that a Board owned bridge needed to be replaced, then this should trigger an investigation into what grant may be available.

B.1197 Environment Agency – Precept

The Clerk reported that at the Environment Agency Flood Defence Committee determined that there were exceptional circumstances to consider on the agreed 2% increase on the precepts on Internal Drainage Boards. The Committee voted for an additional 1% increase (reflecting exceptional circumstances) above the agreed 2% for the year ending 31st March 2024 – total of a 3% increase on the level of precept on Internal Drainage Boards for the year ending 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED

That the Precept was approved.

B.1198 Association of Drainage Authorities
Subscriptions

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

RESOLVED

That the Ada Subscription be paid for 2023.

B.1199 Health and Safety

Further to minute B.1168, the Chairman reported on the Cope Safety Management visit on 20th February 2023 and commented that the Health and Safety audit had been completed and that no actions were required.

B.1200 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2021/2022

a) The Clerk reported that in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations all members received a copy of the Annual Accounts for the year ended the 31st March 2022 before the 30th June of that year and approved the Accounts for the purposes of the Regulations.

b) The Board considered & approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2022.

c) The Board considered & approved Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2022.

B.1201 Appointment of Internal Auditor

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

B.1202 Annual Accounts of the Board - 2022/2023

The Clerk reported that in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations Internal Drainage Boards' accounts are required to be approved by resolution on or before the 30th June of that year.

B.1203 Defra IDB1 Returns

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

B.1204 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.1205 Risk Management Assessment

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with their current Risk Management Policy.

B.1206 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

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

RESOLVED

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

B.1207 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.1208 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £9,841.15 which had been made during the financial year 2021/2022 (1st February to 31st March 2022) and £22,575.60 made during the financial year 2022/2023 (1st April 2022 to 31st January 2023).

(NB) – The District Officer declared an interest in the payment made to him.

B.1209 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2023/2024

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2023/2024 and were informed by Mr Thomas that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 17.75% and 82.25%.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £43,689 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £7,754 and £35,935respectively.

iv) That a rate of 9p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special levy of £35,935 be made and issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.1210 Date of next Meeting

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Monday 4th March 2024 at 7.00pm at the Crown Lodge Hotel, Outwell.

CHURCHFIELD AND PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Members of the Churchfield and Plawfield Internal Drainage Board hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Friday 23rd June 2023

PRESENT

S A Calton Esq (Chairman)	
D J W Boyce Esq (Vice Chairman)	Cllr K Harrison
P Allen	D J Lunn Esq
G D Boyce Esq	Cllr C N T Rose

Miss Sam Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from M D R Fairey Esq, P Cutting Esq, A Robb Esq and Cllr C J Crofts.

B.1211 Annual Governance Statement – 2022/2023

Members considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2023.

RESOLVED

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

B.1212 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2022/2023

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

RESOLVED

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

B.1213 Date of next Meeting

That the next Meeting of the Board will be held on Monday 4th March 2024 at the Crown Lodge Hotel, Downham Road, Outwell at 7.00pm.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Monday 4th March 2024**	**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. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
D. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
E. 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	8	N/A		5
Actual	8	1 FDC, 3 KLWN	12	
Vacancies	0		0	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	P Allen	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr P W Dorling)	
2	D J Boyce	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair & District Officer
3	G Boyce	Ratepayer	
4	S Calton	Nominee of Ratepayer (D J Boyce Outwell)	Chairman
5	P Cutting	Ratepayer	
6	M Fairey	Nominee of Ratepayer (Alderney Livestock Co Ltd)	
7	D Lunn	Ratepayer	
8	J Lunn		

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

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.

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	C Crofts	BCKLWN	Councillor

2	J Kirk	BCKLWN	Councillor
3	C Rose	BCKLWN	Councillor
4	A Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor

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	6/3/2023	7/3/2022	8/3/2021	9/3/2020
1	P Allen	Attended	Attended	Apologies	Attended
2	D J Boyce	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
3	G Boyce	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
4	S Calton	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
5	P Cutting				Attended
6	M Fairey	Apologies	Apologies	Attended	
7	D Lunn	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
8	J Lunn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022	2/11/2021
1	S Calton	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	6/3/2023	7/3/2022	8/3/2021	9/3/2020
1	C Crofts (BCKLWN)	attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
2	J Kirk (BCKLWN)				Attended
3	C Rose (BCKLWN)	attended	Apologies	Apologies	Attended
4	A Miscandlon (FDC)				N/A

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

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.

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 1 of 12 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 7 of 12 Board Members have reported viewing 2 of 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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Monday 4th March 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.
B. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for 2022/23.
C. Note the system of financial Internal Controls that are in place and consider whether additional controls are required within the running and decision making of the Board.
D. Review and approve the updated Risk Management Strategy.
E. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
F. Note the IDB1 return made on its behalf to Defra.
G. Continue with a limited assurance review approach.

1. Internal Auditor

1.1 The Board are reminded that Whitings LLP were appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28).

1.2 To consider and approve the annual accounts for 2022/23 (Appendix 1)

1.3 To consider and approve the comments from the Audit Report for 2022/23 (Appendix 2)

2. Internal Controls

2.1 Within the financial operations at the Middle Level offices there are a series of controls in place to ensure the segregation of duties, so as far as practical within a small workforce, that no one person has control of a single operation from start to finish. The Internal Controls are available via the website within the 'Governance' section on the Board's page.

2.2 Note the Financial Code for the Board is included within its 'Governance Documents' also available on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk

2.3 The Board needs to ensure there is adequate separation of duties within its running and decision making. Members are asked to refresh themselves as to the Member Code of Conduct (available within the Governance Documents on the Board's webpage) and ensure their declarations of interests are clear and up-to-date.

2.4 If a Board Member (or their business) undertakes contracted work (or bids for such work) for the Board it is recommended that they be excluded from any decision making as a matter of course and that appropriate contractual arrangements are in place.

2.5 If the Member also has a lead role for the Board (eg Chairman/Vice Chairman) then it is important that the Board puts in place safeguards to ensure a separation of duties, particularly being clear on who is acting as lead client for the contractor.

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 The Board's Risk Management Strategy has been recently updated and is available as Appendix 3. It is due for formal review and update in 2027. The Board are asked to review and approve the updated strategy.

4. IDB1

4.1 The Board's IDB1 return to Defra for the year 2022/23 is included as Appendix 4.

5. Exercise of Public Rights

5.1 For completion of the Annual Governance Statement the Board is required to confirm that they provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

5.2 In order to warrant a positive response to this assertation we have published the following via www.middlelevel.gov.uk

- Sections 1 and 2 of the annual return
- A declaration that the status of the statement of accounts is 'unaudited;' and
- A statement that sets out details of how public rights can be exercised, as set out in Regulation 15(2)(b), which includes the period for the exercise of public rights.

5.3 In addition, a notice of the conclusion of the external auditor's limited assurance review of the annual return, together with relevant accompanying information, has been published in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. We also display the 'Local Authority Accounts – A Summary of Your Rights' with the notice.

6. Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

6.1 In previous years the Board has continued with a limited assurance review approach and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1	**Annual Accounts 2022/2023**
Appendix 2	**Audit Report 2022/2023**
Appendix 3	**Risk Management Strategy 2024 - 2027**
Appendix 2	**IDB1 2022/23**

Churchfield & Plawfield 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 Churchfield & Plawfield 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 Churchfield & Plawfield Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Churchfield & Plawfield 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

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 12/06/2023 28/06/2023 28/06/2023

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: P. TEECH - WHITINGS LLP Date 28/06/2023

*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:

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

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

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

26/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

B.1212

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

Chairman

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending 31 March 2022 £	Year ending 31 March 2023 £	Notes and guidance: Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.
1. Balances brought forward	31,143	37,558	*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	30,519	38,750	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,693	6,145	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	25,797	31,723	*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	37,558	50,730	*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	39,724	57,475	*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	0	0	*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 12th June 2023

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

21/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

B.1213

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

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

In respect of Churchfield and Plawfield Internal Drainage Board – DB0017

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

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.

Client comment:

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

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

3. Provisions

We are pleased to note that, in the main; provisions for amounts owing to and owed from applicable boards, are being monitored and written back should the underlying potential asset/liability be extinguished. There are still odd cases where provisions are "brought forward and carried forward" that relate in excess of the standard life of debt, being 6 years. On review in some cases whilst the underlying rationale of these balances are reasonable, we would question whether payments could still be enforced if chased, aside from in relation to development contributions. As such we would encourage continued review of provisions as a whole, with special consideration being made to aged provisions that have existed for a number of years and ideally the rationale being documented in the accounts pack provided to us as part of the internal audit.

We would also recommend that any such old debts or provisions (apart from development contribution provisions), say over 3 years old, be presented at the board meeting annually and approved.

Client comment:
As part of the year end accounting procedures, provisions/balances are looked at on an individual basis and decisions made on relevance as to retain or to write back.

4. Budget figures

We note that budget figures are prepared annually in advance, but we note these are not updated in the late Autumn even when notable variances may have occurred for various factors. Whilst not necessary to do so for all boards, we suggest that Chairperson of each individual board be given the opportunity to request updated budgets after the half year point for the remainder of the year and distribute to board members if they feel it appropriate in light of any unforeseen significant variances arising.

The budgets that have been set for 2023/24 year may need to be increased throughout the year due to the significant cost increases that are largely as a result of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Client comment:

As part of the finance regulations, we are required to carry out a budget monitoring exercise during the course of the year. For those Boards that have a relevant meeting, this is reviewed by the Board at their autumn/winter meeting. For all other Boards the monitoring exercise is completed as at the end of the calendar year, at this point the majority of the drain maintenance works have been completed, as would be any planned maintenance works at pumping stations. The expenditure to-date is then forecast to the end of the financial year and compared to the budget and initially sent to the chairman for review. Depending on the outcome of the monitoring exercise depends on whether it is considered appropriate to hold an emergency meeting. However, it is likely that if there were an extraordinary event the Board would be aware "in real time" and appropriate action taken at that point. It is not policy to update budgets depending on levels of expenditure but to use these as comparative to analyse variances of actual expenditure against.

5. Surplus Funds

It is noted a number of IDB's hold significant cash reserves, with inflation having peaked at a 40 year high within the last 12 months, all IDB's need to consider investing their surplus funds, in order to achieve greater return on public funds and to ensure value for money principles are observed and cash asset values are not eroded overtime. We appreciate that in recent years interest rates would have made such an exercise unfruitful when taking into account the associated admin cost involved in such an undertaking. We note that some of IDBs decided to switch from the business premium bank account to business current bank account, these accounts no longer earn interest but are free from bank charges and fees. However, with the Bank of England now increasing interest rates to combat rising inflation in the UK, we would advise that this is now an opportune time to conduct such an exercise.

Client comment:

A brief summary of treasury management:

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

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

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

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

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

6. **Rental of Land**

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

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

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

7. **Financial Regulations**

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

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

<u>Specific Points</u>

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.

<u>Client comment:</u>
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.

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

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

APPENDIX 3

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Administered by:

middle level commissioners

Governance

Risk Management Strategy 2024 - 2027

This document replaces the Board's 2020 risk management documentation and outlines how Members, officers/employees and the Middle Level Commissioners staff govern the Board's risks.

Risk Management Principles

The five key principles from the UK Government's 'Orange Book' shall be used in a proportionate manner, recognising Internal Drainage Boards as small public authorities with limited resources.

A. Risk management shall be an essential part of governance and leadership, and fundamental to how the organisation is directed, managed and controlled at all levels.
B. Risk management shall be an integral part of all organisational activities to support decision-making in achieving objectives.
C. Risk management shall be collaborative and informed by the best available information and expertise.
D. Risk management processes shall be structured.
E. Risk management shall be continually improved through learning and experience.

Risk Definition

A risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the Board's ability to achieve its statutory responsibilities; remain viable and sustainable; deliver any wider objectives and; manage its reputation.

Risk is a function of the likelihood or probability of the event occurring versus the impact. A risk that materialises is no longer a risk, it is an issue.

Risk Categorisation

The Board will consider tactical risks and strategic risks that are within its control and/or influence to address.

Tactical risks will tend to be short term time horizon risks that are specific to the Board and within its control to address (ie it has the capacity, capability, finance, information, technology and responsibility).

Strategic risks will tend to be more generic to the local IDB community and potentially longer term in their time horizon. These are less likely to be within a single IDB's control to mitigate but will be within collective influence by IDBs working together and with other relevant authorities.

Risk (and Issue) Management Choices

The following four standard categories of risk response will be considered:

Terminate (heaviest strategy) - the risk will not be allowed to occur.
Treat - the risk may occur, but its impact or likelihood will be lessened through mitigating actions.
Transfer - the ownership of the risk will be formally moved to someone else not currently the risk. manager. *The new owner may decide to terminate, treat or tolerate the risk.*
Tolerate (Lightest strategy) - the risk will be allowed to occur with little to no mitigating action.

<u>Risk Management Approach</u>

These are the actions and approaches the Board will take to managing its risks through the period 2024-2027.

a) Receive papers and reports from MLC staff covering the topics Governance, Constitution & Membership, Finance, Environmental, Clerk's Report, Consulting Engineer (inc Operations, Capital Works and M&E) helping the Board identify and make choices around management of tactical and strategic risks.
b) Receive papers and reports from the Board's District Officer(s), Health & Safety rep and others as appropriate to help the Board identify and make choices around management of tactical risks.
c) Support the development and adoption of Key Health Indicators (KHIs) and Comparison Metrics across the portfolio of IDBs administered by MLC staff. These will be integrated into MLC staff authored papers and reports.
d) The Chairman & Vice Chairman will actively engage with the MLC & IDB Chairs community and MLC Senior Officers to identify and mitigate generic tactical and strategic risks that impact multiple IDBs.
e) Support the Middle Level Commissioners in managing its operational, environmental and asset management risks, including delivery of its capital programme, recognising the benefit to the IDBs within the MLC catchment.
f) Empower and recognise that the MLC Senior Officers and staff engage in wider relationships, partnerships and strategic projects on their behalf to help identify and mitigate generic tactical and strategic risks. This includes Fens 2100+ and the Fens Reservoir programmes.
g) Start to use language and terminology from this strategy at Board meetings within their consideration of risks.
h) Adopt formal project risk management as part of any capital works projects led by MLC staff on behalf of the Board.
i) Keep under review the need, benefit and cost of developing a formal risk assessment, risk register and risk response plan. It is currently not considered a proportionate approach.

Strategy published: January 2024

Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Internal Drainage Boards in England

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 £.

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD 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. KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL	35,935
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	**35,935**

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		6,892
2. Special Levies		31,858
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		731
5. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		
6. PSCAs from EA and other RMAs		
7. Loans		
8. Rechargeable Works		
9. Interest and Investment Income		
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		
11. Other Income		5,414
Total income		**44,895**
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		4,874
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		2,895
14. Watercourse maintenance		16,179
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		
16. Administration		7,010
17. PSCAs		
18. Rechargeable Works		
19. Finance Charges		
20. SSSIs		
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		473
22. Other Expenditure		292
Total expenditure		**31,723**

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**13,172**
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		12,900
25. Grant income not applied in year		

Notes:

11. Include all other Income, such as absorption account surpluses (for example plant and labour absorption accounts).

12. State the gross cost of undertaking minor capital works that have not been capitalised and the annual depreciation charges of all major schemes that have been capitalised. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the schemes.

13. State the total precept demanded for the year as properly issued by the Environment Agency, in accordance with section 141 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Providing that the precept has been properly issued as before stated it should always be included here, even when the Board has appealed against the amount of contribution, in accordance with section 140 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Where the Board knows with certainty the outcome of any such appeal, it should also include the appropriate accrual/prepayment.

14. State all costs associated with the maintenance of watercourses, meaning work associated with open channels, pipelines, culverts, bridges, etc. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the maintenance programme.

15. State all costs associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures.

16. Include the cost of non-technical staff only, office accommodation, annual depreciation of office equipment that has been capitalised, minor office equipment that has not been capitalised, postages, telecoms', stationery, printing, advertising, auditing of accounts, general insurances and all other costs associated with supporting the organisation. Please note that this does not include support costs, which are directly associated with the delivery of front line services.

17. State all costs associated with the PSCA

18. State all costs associated with undertaking work for third parties. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with undertaking the rechargeable work.

19. Include the cost of servicing any borrowing, in terms of bank/loan/hire purchase interest payable.

20. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – specifically for helping to achieve favourable condition on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). In most cases, these costs will be incurred in implementing actions set out in SSSI Water Level Management Plans or SSSI River Restoration Plans.

21. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – that are likely intended to help conserve biodiversity (other than works on SSSIs). These costs are likely to be incurred in implementing actions set out in an IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan or other conservation actions on non-designated sites.

22. Include all other expenditure, such as a provision for bad/doubtful debts, write-offs, and absorption account deficits (for example plant and labour absorption accounts).

23. For the disposal of assets, state the difference between any proceeds from the sale/disposal of the asset and the cost of the asset less accumulated depreciation.

24. Total balance of developer fund year end.

25. Unspent grant at year end.

Section B –IDB Reporting

Policy Delivery Statement

Boards are required to produce a publicly available policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aims and objectives. It is recommended that these statements be published on Boards' websites where they have them and reviewed every three years.

Is an up to date statement in place and copy (or weblink) provided to Defra, and EA?..Yes ☒ No ☐

Biodiversity

Please indicate whether your Board has a Biodiversity Action Plan ....Yes ☒ No ☐

If "yes" is the Biodiversity Action Plan available on your website?..Yes ☒ No ☐

What year was your Biodiversity Action Plan last updated?)............................ 2022

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

When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)?.............................. 07/03/2022

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?

16.1

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

0

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

0

Health and Safety

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

If so, please summarise in the box below:

Guidance and Best Practice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Has your Board adopted the following governance documents?

Standing Orders .... Yes ☒ No ☐

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

Byelaws ....Yes ☒ No ☐

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

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

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

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

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

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

Board membership and attendance

How many Board members (in total – elected and appointed) do you have on your IDB?	12
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	9
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	8
Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	6
Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	6
Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	2

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?

1.55%

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

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Monday 4th March 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.
B. 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 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

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.

6. Rating

6.1 On 7th September 2023 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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	9
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**Monday 4 March 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Provide views on the review of the potential extents of either an "area of concern" and/or "Acute drainage areas" would be welcomed as described in Section 3.2
B. Consider creating and adopting a 'Position Statement' described in Section 3.2 iii)
C. Confirm if illegal structures have been dealt with or if the Board requires the Consulting Engineer to pursue these matters described in Section 3.2 iv)
D. Review and approve its Capital Programme taking account of the advice in Section 4.

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.

- 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 and related matters on behalf of the Board and advising on and issuing byelaw consents. A list of the planning, consent and infiltration device applications responded to since the last report are provided as Appendix 2.

1.2 Please note that our planning and consenting services currently only have the capacity to be reactive and there is no proactive enforcement service defined and resourced with no allowance made in the Board's budget for such action.

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, this may have governance related implications and does place a burden on the Board's Officers and/or the Clerk's representative attending the Board Meeting.

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

2. Chief Engineer's summary

2.1 The new process for delivering grant-aided schemes 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. The Board is reminded that should it wish to progress any capital schemes that grant-in-aid may be available and any future proposals should be included in the forward capital forecasts provided to the Environment Agency.

2.2 Recent storms (Babet and Henk) may have provided 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, which will be useful in supporting any grant-in-aid applications for future works.

2.3 Fens Reservoir

Anglian Water's Fens Reservoir development work is moving fast. The Middle Level System has a significant role to play in enabling its delivery, with benefits to all parties; there are potentially significant improvements and financial benefit opportunities to secure. It is imperative that MLC staff continue to be closely involved in consultation with Anglian Water's various design and assessment teams to ensure that the Reservoir does not have any adverse impacts on the Middle Level System and our ability to continue to manage water for the IDB districts. Therefore, it is likely that MLC staff may be required to join meetings with the Anglian Water team at short notice and this may briefly affect work we are delivering for the Boards. In this event, we will make any necessary arrangements to limit the impacts this may have.

3. Technical Services

3.1 High Rainfall Event and Flooding Incident – December 2020

Further to the last meeting report the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has continued to raise concerns about the issues experienced within Cambridgeshire during or following high rainfall and/or exceptional circumstance type events and the apparent lack of action being taken and has enquired of other partners whether given the time that has elapsed any progress is being made to resolve some of the issues.

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

Initially, three areas of designation are proposed:

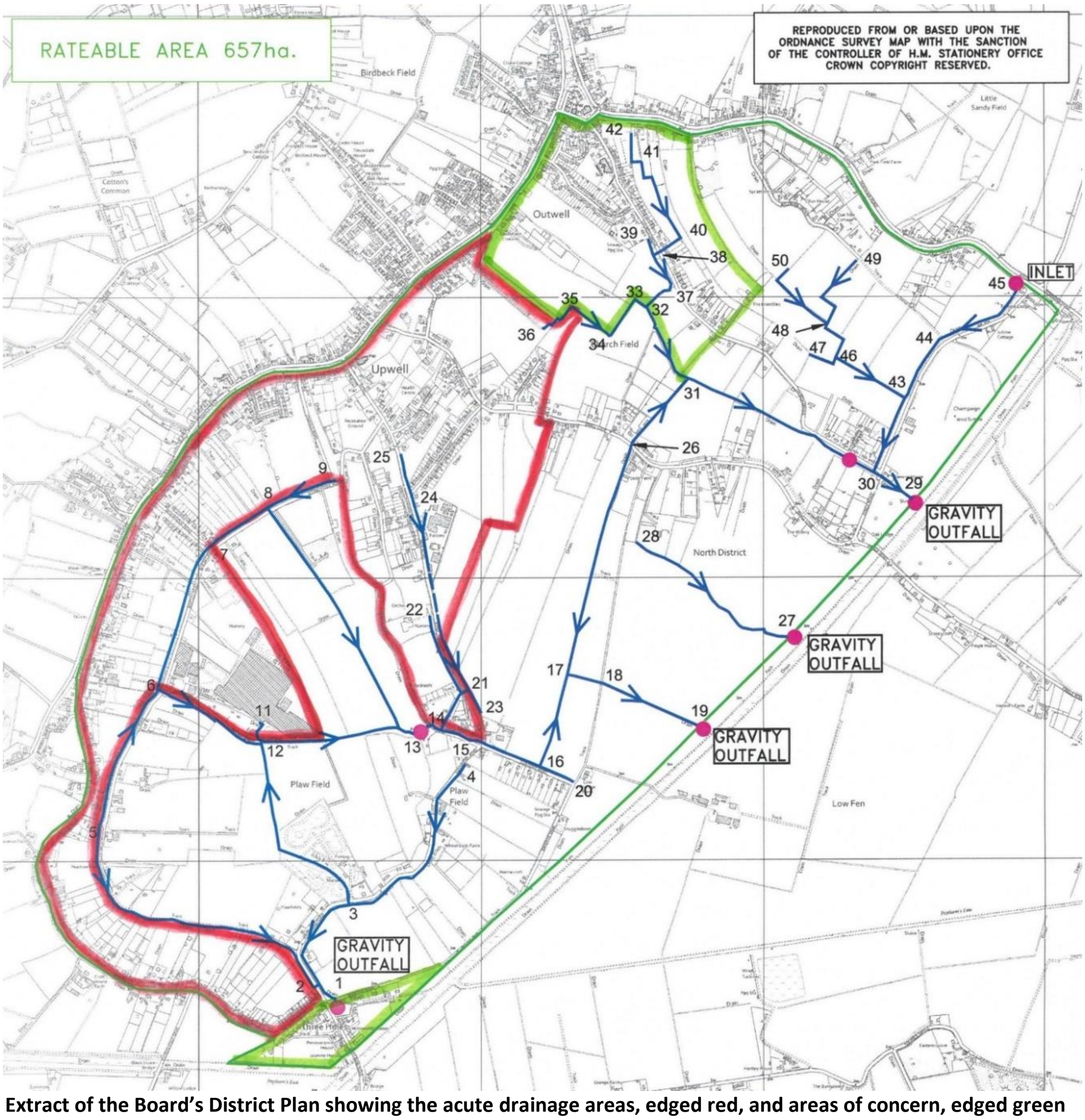
a. Business as usual - Areas where there are no known problems with the local water level and flood risk management systems that cannot be solved through the Board's "day-to-day activities".

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

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

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

A review of the potential extents of either an "area of concern" and/or "Acute drainage areas" has been undertaken and it is considered that parts of the Board's catchment are designated as shown on the amended extract of the District plan below. **The Board's views on these areas would be welcomed.**



Extract of the Board's District Plan showing the acute drainage areas, edged red, and areas of concern, edged green

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

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

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

3.2 Summary of Key Planning Issues

i) ***New developments and the use of SuDS***

As discussed in the last Meeting Report it is considered that there is sufficient evidence that current surface water design practices do not allow for exceptional weather conditions, such as that experienced prior to the December 2020 event which are similar to those experienced now, such as Storm Babet (October 2023), or the complex network of water level and flood risk management systems within the Fens. Therefore, consideration is being given to requiring designs to:

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

The introduction of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act may assist particularly if the Commissioners represent the Board on the SuDS Approval Board (SAB) when implemented.

ii) ***Flooding and high water levels at Upwell Health Centre car park and private drain to rear of Townley Close, Upwell. (MLC Ref Nos: 306/1 + 306/PL/602)***

Further to the last Board meeting, the working group of officers representing the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk (BCKLWN) and Norfolk County Council last met on 13th February 2023. This meeting was attended by the Consulting Engineer and Assistant Clerk. The objective of the meeting was to agree investigation works in the drain at 37 New Road to determine the presence and condition of the private pipe connecting the open ditch to the Board's piped drain along New Road. At this meeting BCKLWN agreed to fund a site investigation and the Consulting Engineer was asked to seek quotations for the work. ADC drainage company subsequently carried out the investigation on 20th July 2023 which confirmed the existence of the 300mm pipe. The pipe was located below the headwall to the public footpath and had been buried by the build-up of silt within the ditch. ADC excavated the drain to expose the pipe inlet and jetted the pipe which proved the connection to the Board's piped drain.

The clearance work to the pipe was limited and temporary so a recommendation was made to the working group to construct a suitable headwall and chamber to safeguard the pipe inlet and prevent future blockages from occurring. This would also create future access to maintain the pipe. A budget quotation from ADC for the chamber was put to BCKLWN. As a private watercourse the riparian owner is ultimately responsible, therefore a decision is pending regarding who could, and would, be willing to fund this work and where suitable funds could be obtained.

In addition to the above, in May 2023, the landowner of the old orchard, land south of Townley Close, offered to dig a new drain to help drainage. Whilst carrying out clearance work on his land, which included vegetation clearance and desilting of the drain to the rear of Listers Close, the contractor dug a connecting drain from the Health Centre carpark to the drain to the rear of Listers Road. The location and a photograph of this new drain (taken on 20th May 2023) is shown below. This ditch now provides a new connection to take high water levels away from the Health Centre carpark to the Board's open channel watercourse at New Road/Listers Road. No survey of these private drains has been carried out so the final drain bed levels are not known. It cannot therefore be confirmed if this new drain will solve the issues at the carpark and to the rear of Townley Close, particularly along the section behind Townley Close towards the New Road end. Due to high bed levels in the Townley Close drain water may not back flow to this new drain.

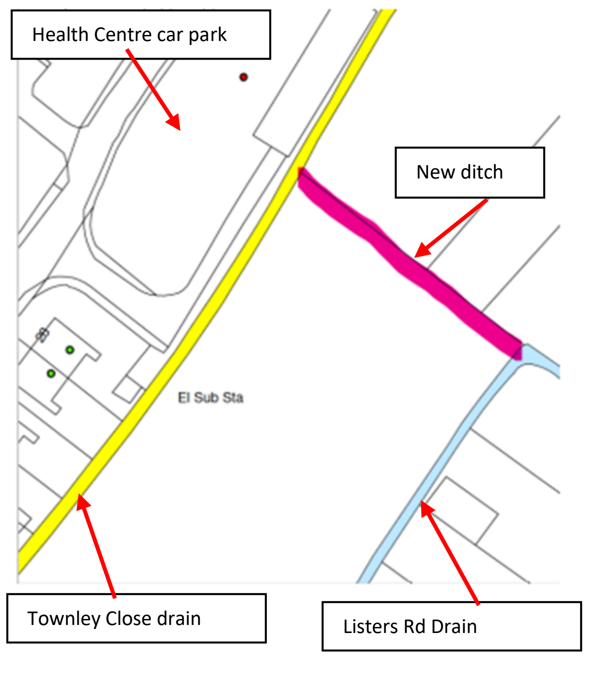


Photo: New private ditch (20th May 2023)

This new drain and the drain to the rear of Listers Road are both private watercourses so it will be the responsibility of the riparian owner to maintain these drains to ensure they are kept clear and ensure effective drainage.

No reports of high water levels in this location have been received following high rainfall events over the winter 2023 season. This would suggest that the work described above is having a positive impact. However, there are still concerns that this may be temporary without effective maintenance of the drains or provision of a suitable structure at the head of the pipe connection at 37 New Road. At the time of writing the Consulting Engineer has requested a meeting of the working group of council officers to confirm the way forward in respect of a permanent chamber at the New Road end of the Townley Close drain. A date for this meeting is still pending.

iii) ***Development within Upwell and Outwell***

The issue of development within the Upwell and Outwell area was the subject of a Special Meeting of the neighbouring Needham and Laddus IDB toward the end of last year.

Discussions were initiated around potential future developments within the Board's rateable area and solutions to resolve the pressures on existing drainage infrastructure to accommodate this. The Board resolved to designate some additional sections of open watercourse as District Drains in order to control and enable its offer over future developments.

In addition, it was agreed to create and adopt a 'Position Statement' providing a clear articulation of the problems and the Board's offer and concerns to Parish Councils, Borough Council, rate payers and developers. This can include the "Acute Drainage area plan" discussed above. **The Board may wish to consider similar action.**

iv) ***Baptist Road/Stonehouse Road area***

During mid-December concerns were raised by several parties concerning the high water levels being experienced within the Baptist Road/Stonehouse Road area which is a known problem area.

The Chairman correctly advised that conditions being experienced were extreme with many places in the villages where there are unprecedented wet areas and that this section of the Board's system features "..numerous private culverts and even places where the drain has been filled in (with questionable piping underneath), many of them unlicensed and most of them failing to meet today's regulations" and added that this is why the Board is "..against further development in the area such as Blunts Orchard, but despite our protests the planners at BC allowed it." and that the Board ".. would rather anticipate flood risks before work is done than see water being pumped out of houses."

It is understood that the problems were resolved but this incident did highlight several issues and misconceptions by members of the public about roles, responsibilities and operation of the Board's system. However, there may be an opportunity to prepare an information document that can be issued to inform and educate local land owners and rate payers.

Several items of concern were also raised about illegal structures and **the Board's advice on whether these items have been dealt with or if the Board requires the Consulting Engineer to pursue these matters is requested.**

v) **Outline Application with some Matters Reserved for residential development at Manor Lodge, 40 Small Lode, Upwell – Mr R Starr (MLC Ref Nos 643 & 695)**

Following concerns raised by Upwell Parish Council a request was received from the Board's Chairman to issue a bespoke response to the Borough Council in respect of the outline planning application, KL&WN Ref No 23/01626/O.

The response opposed the planning application due to the increasing concern being raised about the piecemeal development being proposed in both Upwell and Outwell, as discussed elsewhere in this report; the challenges faced by the Board; the site being within an acute drainage area; the flooding being experienced in the area.

The response provided guidance that:

> "Therefore, it is considered that if development of both this site, the larger "manor" and other sites within the sub-catchment are permitted significant improvements, such as the enlargement and realignment of watercourses, pipelines and road culverts, will be required to accept the increased flows and provide a suitable SoP, to accommodate the change to a more vulnerable use, and ensure that an adequate freeboard is available to prevent the surcharging of the on site system.
>
> These improvement works will be at the developer's expense and this may challenge the viability of the sites concerned. The failure to undertake these improvements will increase the risk of flooding in the area endangering local residents, including adverse impacts on people's wellbeing and mental health; damage to property and infrastructure; wasteful expenditure at the publics expense to undertake remedial works and/or cause unacceptable detriment to the environment."

It also urged the applicant to discuss the relevant issues via the post-application consultation procedure. As yet no further correspondence has been received from the Borough Council, the applicant or his agents.

A copy of the response can be viewed at 23_01626_O-INTERNAL_DRAINAGE_BOARD_COMMENT-5524611.pdf (west-norfolk.gov.uk).

During the processing of this application, it was noted that there is some confusion concerning the reporting of flood incidents. Further guidance can be provided if required and could be included in the information document discussed above.

4. Capital Programme

41 The Boards' Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 1.

4.2 In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GIA) from the Environment Agency, the Board does not currently have any schemes identified.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme
Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting
Appendix 3: Board's District Plan

Appendix 1

Churchfield & Plawfield Internal Drainage Board

Capital Improvement Programme (2023/2024)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Structures	Gravity outfall refurbishment/replacement	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
	Control structure refurbishment/replacement	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
	Inlet structure refurbishment/replacement	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Refurbishment of culvert at Small Lode (Point 26)	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
	Sulivans dam refurbishment	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
	Works to Townley Close/New Road Watercourses	5	0.0											
			0.0											
	Culvert refurbishment - points 2-4 & 21-25	7	9.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.5
	Culvert improvement programme	0	0.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Drainage Channels														
		12	**9.5**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**20**	**57**

Appendix 2

The following planning applications have been responded to since the last meeting:

MLC Ref.	*Council Ref.*	*Applicant*	*Type of Development*	*Location*
680	23/00027/F	Mr D Wagg	Residence	Small Lode, Upwell
681	23/00204/F	Mr & Mrs J Hill	Residence (Proposed alterations & extensions)	St Peters Road, Upwell
682	23/00482/F	Mr J Barrett	Residence (Detached garage)	Church Drove, Outwell
683	23/00594/O	Mr W Sutton & Mr P Fiztpatrick	Residential (2 dwellings, following demolition of existing)	Green Road, Upwell
684	23/00551/RM	Mr & Mrs J Stanford & Ms Satt	Residence	Dovecote Road, Upwell
685	23/00647/F	Mr & Mrs Russell	Residence (log cabin annexe)	School Road, Upwell
686	23/00856/PACU3	Mrs C Leigh-Walker	Change of use (Agricultural to dwellings)	Croft Road, Upwell
687	23/00808/F	Mr & Mrs J Hill	Change of use (Domestic garden land and erection of domestic outbuilding (Retrospective)	St Peters Road, Upwell
688	23/00886/F	Churchill Building Contractors Ltd	Residence (Side and rear extension including demolition of existing conservatory and rear extension)	Church Drove, Outwell
689	23/01015/F	Mr & Mrs L Pearce	Change of use (Paddock and garden including fencing and stables/store)	Stonehouse Road, Upwell
690	23/01158/O	Mr & Mrs R Burr	Residence	Baptist Road, Upwell
691	22/01277/F	Simon Waite	Residence (Conversion of detached garage to accommodation)	Orchard Gardens, Upwell
692	23/01504/F	Mr & Mrs Flint-Johnson	Residence (Demolish existing outbuilding and replace with a single storey side extension)	New Road, Upwell
693	23/01454/F	Mr C Thurston	Residence (Two storey rear extension and detached double garage)	Tointons Road, Upwell
694	23/01645/F	Mr J Lawrence	Office (Extension to office – Fountain Foods	New Road, Upwell
695	23/01626/O	Mr R Starr	Residential development (TBC)	Small Lode, Upwell
696	23/01989/F	S Hurrell & H Dimes	Residence (Demolition of dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling and detached garage)	Green Road, Upwell
697	23/02277/F	Ms H Sprigg & Mr G Boyce	Residence (Extension and det garage)	New Road, Upwell

The following applications for Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) have been granted since the last meeting:

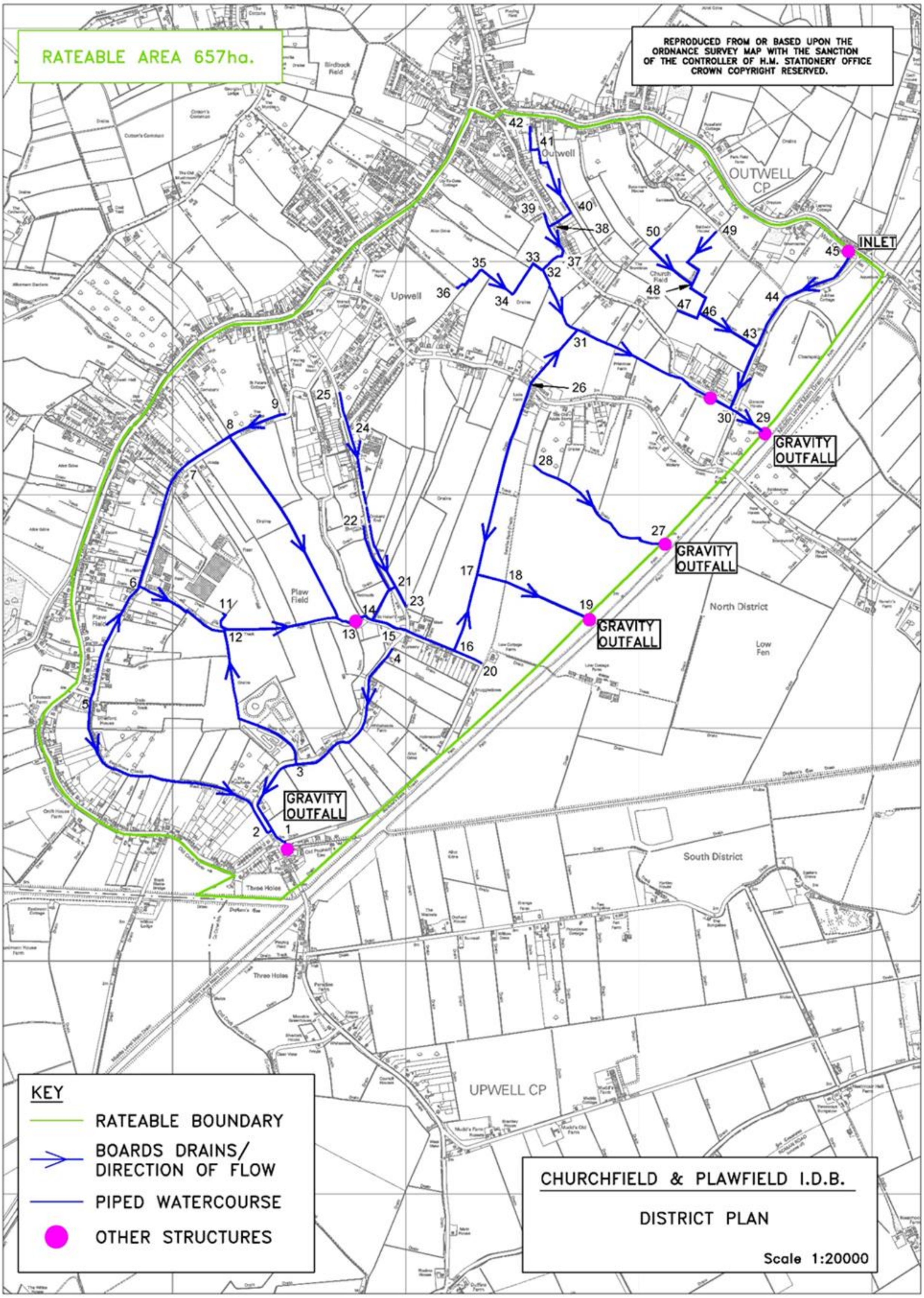
MLC Ref	***Council Ref***	***Consent No***	***Applicant***	***Description of Works***	***Location***	***Date consent granted***
689	23/01015/F	CP/78	Mr & Mrs Pearce	Change of use of land to paddock and erection of fencing within maintenance strip	Stonehouse Road, Upwell	15/08/2023
306/1		CP/79	Mrs J Vile	Construction of an access culvert across Board's watercourse using a 1200mm diameter pipe 12 metres long including headwalls	Between Points 2 & 5	15/08/2023

No applications for Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) have been granted since the last meeting.

The following infiltration device applications have been acknowledged since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	***Council Ref***	***Option 1 (Self-certification) or Option 2 (Checking Form)***	***Location***	Date acknowledged
660	22/00930/F	Option 1	Dovecote Road, Upwell	11/4/2023

Appendix 3


RATEABLE AREA 657ha.
REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED.
OUTWELL CP
INLET
GRAVITY OUTFALL
GRAVITY OUTFALL
GRAVITY OUTFALL
GRAVITY OUTFALL
North District
Low Fen
South District
UPWELL CP
Upwell
Outwell
Plaw Field
Three Holes
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
PIPED WATERCOURSE
OTHER STRUCTURES
CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD I.D.B.
DISTRICT PLAN
Scale 1:20000

SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Site Safety Inspection Record

Churchfield & Plawfield IDB SSI 200223 — **Complete**

Name of organisation:	Churchfield and Plawfield IDB
Date of site visit	20.02.2023 11:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	No assets visited.
Name of Advisor	Simon Cross
Time of arrival at site:	20.02.2023 10:35 GMT
Audit Name	Churchfield & Plawfield IDB SSI 200223

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Steve Calton (Chair) and Dale Boyce (District Officer & Vice Chair)

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

1

Introduction. The previous health and safety advisory visit was undertaken in Feb 2020, although it is understood that no significant changes have occurred since then. The limited number of pen stock and gravity outfall locations are only visited periodically for inspection, change of levels or clearing is undertaken very infrequently. The locations have reportedly been provided with suitable platforms and edge protection. Asset machinery is maintained accordingly and remedial works undertaken as required.
Due to accessibility, none of the locations were visited on this occasion. If any other works are undertaken, such as watercourse maintenance, mowing, flailing, etc is undertaken by contractors.

2

Flytipping. It was reported that issues have been experienced lately with flytipping in some of the watercourses within the district, in some cases significant or large items such as furniture. It was understood that small items may be removed manually and disposal arranged. Larger items likely to be removed by contractors.

3

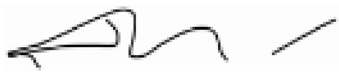
Lone working. Although visits to locations within the district are undertaken alone, board members will have communication, such as mobile phone, and inform family or work colleague of their location and likely duration. No high risk activities are understood to be undertaken whilst lone working.

Photographic Risk Assessment

Signature of person informed

Signature of person informed 1

Signature of person informed



Steve Calton
20.02.2023 11:18 GMT

Advisor's signature

Simon Cross
21.02.2023 14:37 GMT

Departure time	20.02.2023 11:30 GMT
Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments	**0** From 0 to 99

District Officers report – 2023/24

Maintenance work was again completed by The King's Lynn Consortium of Internal Drainage Boards.

As reported last year, remedial works between Points 35 and 36 are still to be completed satisfactorily.

The control structure at Point 14 is still being monitored and has caused no problems.

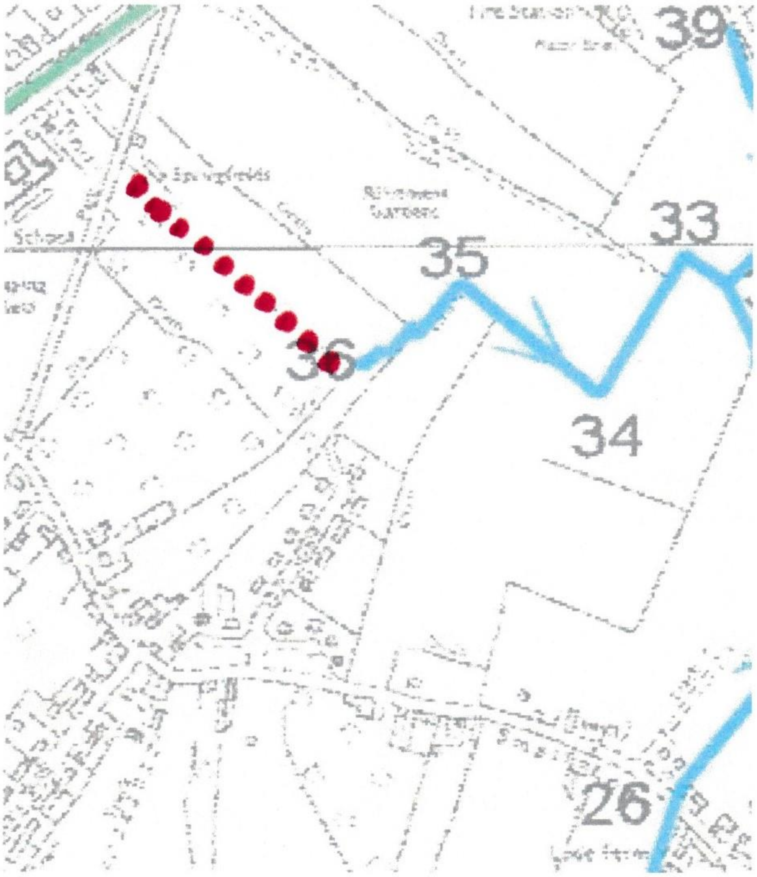
Fencing installed by the occupants of the property opposite (dog breeding site) has, once again, caused difficulty with the mowing and raking.

The situation at Upwell Health Centre has hopefully been resolved by the cutting of a new drain. Would it be in the best interest of all concerned for The Board to formally adopt this and the adjacent ditch to the north of Listers Road.

A large clump of Himalayan Balsam was noted during a routine inspection earlier in the year.

Fly-tipping has been problematic. Where possible, it has been cleared manually but some has required the use of a digger for removal.

As the potential sale of the old school field for development is being discussed, would it be a proactive move by The Board to adopt the drain that runs north-west of point 36?



There were considerable problems between points 5 and 9 (Stonehouse Road and Baptist Road) following the high rainfall this winter. The number of culverts (12 along Stonehouse Road and 19 along Baptist Road) alongside the varying lengths/sizes causing a massive attenuation effect. It was very difficult to tell if work had been effective. For this stretch of drain to function efficiently ALL culverts should be an absolute minimum of 600mm diameter and the longer ones 1m. With climatic change being a very important consideration, could this be made a requirement of all owner/occupiers?

Maintenance for the forthcoming season:
The usual flailing, weed raking and jetting (as and when required) will hopefully be sufficient.

Board members to advise on any further potential issues please.

Comment: I prefer to keep my report brief, factual and written in the third person. However, I would like to put on record that, in my opinion, the number of new dwellings and associated impermeable surfaces planned for the North-West of the district in the near future will render that part of the system inadequate in a high rainfall event, leading to significant localised flooding.

Finally, I would like to say Thank You to all involved for assistance given throughout the year.

DjwB 2024

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	12
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Monday 4th March 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider and approve the payments detailed for 2023.

Finance Officer's review and key messages

The Clerk to report

1. Payments for 2023

1.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

Author Name: Robert Hill/Sam Ablett
Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Payments for 2023

Appendix 1

CHURCHFIELD AND PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Payments 2023/2024 (1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024)

Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & safety re-charge 2022-2023	213.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Travelling	3,760.20
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2023	716.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	116.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,230.56
The Skip Company - Skip hire for removal of fly- tipped rubbish in Board's drain	240.00
Environment Agency - Precept	1,491.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Land registry search fee	6.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fee (2022-2023 accounts)	252.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	620.71
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	2,807.62
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners 2022-2023 accounts)	588.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	165.07
King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board - Flail mowing	11,644.80
Environment Agency - Precept	1,490.99
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	1,389.60
Harrison Agricultural Contractors Limited - Removal of rubbish from drain	90.00
ADC (East Anglia) Ltd - Jetting blocked culvert (Stonehouse Road, Upwell)	300.00
	27,121.95

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**13**
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Monday 4th March 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Approved the increase of payment for Precept funds
B. Renew its subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities
C. Consider the Finance Officers summary and key messages and approve a budget estimate for 2023/24.
D. Consider the District Officer Renumeration.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

The Clerk to report

1. Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions

1.1 RE DISTRICT OFFICER WAGES/FEES

1.2 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 6%, from £597 to £636 for 2024.

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

2.1 Internal Drainage Boards are required to pay a Precept (IDB Precept) to the Environment Agency for their expenses managing water passing into main rivers. Predominantly, the Precept funds additional maintenance downstream of and/or benefitting IDB districts.

2.2 The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 3% for 2024.

2.3 The precept for 2022/2023 was £2,896.00

3. Estimates for 2024/25

3.1 The estimated budget for 2024/25 is shown in Appendix 1.

3.2 The Board are reminded that it is standard practice to budget for an average year in terms of rainfall and associated pumping requirements.

4. Rate Requirements for 2024/25

4.1 Appendix 2 details the rate requirement that needs to be set and approved by the Board in order to raise sufficient rate and special levy income to cover the budget estimate.

4.2 Board Members are welcome to propose alternative rate requirements and invite these for consideration by the Board along with their supporting rationale and proposed mechanism for catering within the budget estimate and/or the Board's investment strategy.

Author Name: Robert Hill/Sam Ablett
Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Enclosure 1 Determination of Land Values for Rating & Rate Arrears **(CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)**

Appendix 1 Estimates for 2024/25
Appendix 2 Rate Requirements for 2024/25

Appendix 1

CHURCHFIELD AND PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2024/2025

		Estimated 2023/2024 £	Probable actual 2023/2024 £	Budget proposal 2024/2025 £
1	Insurances	350	165	225
2	District work and repairs and renewals (including Environmental measures)	19,150	19,000 [A]	19,150 [B]
3	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising etc	7,500	7,400	7,800
4	Improvement works	14,350 [C]	14,350 [C]	15,300 [C]
5	Environment Agency Precept	2,982	2,982	3,071
		44,332	43,897	45,546
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest	648	1,120	1,208
		43,684	42,777	44,338

Remarks

A - Includes for:
Flail mowing/weed cutting 9,704

B - Includes provision for:
Flail mowing/weed cutting 12,000

C - Culvert refurbishment/future works

Estimated General Fund		Estimated 2023/2024	Probable actual 2023/2024	Budget proposal 2024/2025	
Opening Balance		30,830	30,830	31,741	
Rate set	9.00p	43,688	43,688		
Rate Required				44,338	9.00 p
Net Expenditure		43,684	42,777	44,338	
Use of balances		0	0	0	
Closing Balance		30,834	31,741	31,741	

Appendix 2

Churchfield & Plawfield Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Board must be borne for 2024/2025 is:-

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 17.41%.

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk – 82.59%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £858.

In 2024/2025 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £4,926.

Estimated revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2024 – £31,500.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2024/2025 is £44,338, is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 9.00p and

b) a Special levy on the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk of £36,620.

In 2023/2024 a rate of 9.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £35,935 on the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

Members should give consideration to funding requirements for future improvement works and the likely impact of inflationary pressures on future budgets when setting the rate.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

February 2024