UPWELL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Upwell Internal Drainage Board
hosted at the Lamb & Flag, Welney on Wednesday 24th January 2024

PRESENT

K Goodger Esq (Chairman)	J Kirk Esq (KLWN)
P Clabon Esq (Vice Chairman)	S Hartley Esq
H G Bliss Esq	C Marks (FDC)
S Calton Esq	A Quail Esq
R D Gladwin Esq	J Quail Esq
R Gott Esq	C N T Rose (KLWN)

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board), Mr Carl Nunn (District Foreman), Mrs Rebecca Young, who was attending on behalf of Mr Adrian Kew and Ms Megan Hudson from Fenland Soil were also in attendance.

The Chairman enquired whether ALL Board members were happy for the meeting to be recorded. All members were in agreement.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr C Marks to his first meeting of the Board, Mrs Rebecca Young, who was attending on behalf of Mr Adrian Kew, but who would take no part in the meeting and Ms Megan Hudson who would be making a presentation to the Board on behalf of Fenland Soil.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from C J Crofts (KLWN), G W Gowler Esq, A Kew Esq and R Means Esq

B.2117 Declarations of Interest

Miss Ablett 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 C Marks declared interests in all Fenland District Council planning matters, as Vice Chairman of FDC planning Committee.

Roger Gladwin declared an interest in the Old Croft Maintenance Agreement as a member of Manea & Welney DDC.

Cllr C Rose declared an interest in the development at Three Holes.

B.2118 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 17th May 2023 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.2119 Fenland Soil

A presentation was given to the Board by Megan Hudson on behalf of Fenland SOIL.

She reported a project was being undertaken in the Upwell IDB District and as part of this project Fenland SOIL was looking for ways in which they could generate opportunities for land management, whether by improving the way in which water was used in the Fens or the way in which the land could be better used.

She explained in more detail the work that was being undertaken, part of which was to check the condition of soil in terms of productivity, to prove to DEFRA that there were large areas of land within the Fens that did not contain peat and therefore did not emit any carbon. She also explained what would be required from farmers if they agreed to be included as part of the project and enquired whether Members would be willing to give up some of their time to take part.

Roger Gladwin advised he had taken part in the project undertaken last year in the Manea & Welney DDC district as he considered farmers had a far better knowledge of their land in order to categorise the soil. He further advised that taking part in the project was not difficult and had not taken up too much of his time.

The Chairman thanked Megan for her presentation to the Board and advised Members that both he and the Vice Chairman had agreed to take part in the project and hoped other Members would also be willing.

B.2120 Constitution & Membership

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**UPWELL IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Wednesday 24th January 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Polly Tombleson**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Election

The Clerk will report that as the number of candidates for membership did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (fourteen), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from 1st November 2023:

H Bliss, S Calton, P Clabon, R Gladwin, K Goodger, R Gott, G Gowler, P Hartley, S Hartley, A Kew, R Means, A Quail, J Quail

B. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.

C. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.

D. There is currently **1** vacancy

E. To consider previous discussions of amalgamation – SM, MWe & Up.

F. Reinforce the need for members to view all five ‘Good Governance’ videos.

G. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.

1. Current status

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

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	14	N/A		7
Actual	13	2 FDC, 3 KLWN	18	
Vacancies	1		1	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	H Bliss	Ratepayer	
2	S Calton	Nominee of ratepayer (Fred Hartley Estates Ltd)	
3	P Clabon	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair & District officer
4	R Gladwin	Ratepayer	
5	K Goodger	Ratepayer	Chair & District Officer
6	R Gott	Ratepayer	
7	G Gowler	Ratepayer	
8	P Hartley	Nominee of Ratepayer – (Frank Hartley & Sons)	
9	S Hartley	Nominee of Ratepayer – (Frank Hartley & Sons)	
10	A Kew	Nominee of Ratepayer - (Waldersey Farms Ltd)	

11	R Means	Nominee of Ratepayer – (Fred Hartley Estates Ltd)	
12	A Quail	Ratepayer	
13	J Quail	Nominee of Ratepayer – (Scott Oldroyd & Co)	
14			

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 French	FDC	Councillor
3	J Kirk	BCKLWN	Councillor
4	C Marks	FDC	Councillor
5	C Rose	BCKLWN	Councillor

1.6 All Members are reminded that they 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	17/5/2023	23/1/2023	18/5/2022	24/1/2022
1	H Bliss	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
2	S Calton	Apologies	Attended	Attended	Attended
3	P Clabon	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
4	R Gladwin	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
5	K Goodger	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
6	R Gott	Apologies	Attended	Attended	Attended
7	G Gowler	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
8	P Hartley	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
9	S Hartley	Attended	Apologies	Attended	Attended
10	A Kew	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	R Means	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
12	A Quail	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
13	J Quail	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
14					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022	2/11/2021
1	K Goodger	Apologies		Attended	Apologies

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	17/5/2023	23/1/2023	18/5/2022	24/1/2022
1	C Crofts (BCKLWN)	Attended	Apologies	Attended	Apologies
2	J French (FDC)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	J Kirk (BCKLWN)	Apologies	Attended	Attended	Attended
4	C Marks (FDC)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	C Rose (BCKLWN)	Attended	Attended	apologies	Attended

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 To consider the appointments of the Chair, Vice-Chair & District Officers.

3.2 There is currently **1** vacancy.

4. Composition and amalgamations

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

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

4.3 The Clerk to report on previous discussions regarding a possible amalgamation between – SM, MWe & Up.

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 18 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 10 of 18 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

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

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

Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That Mr K Goodger be appointed as Chairman

Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED

That Mr P Clabon be appointed as Vice-Chair

Appointment of Finance Committee

RESOLVED

That the following be appointed as Members of the Finance Committee:

Chairman
Vice Chairman
Roger Gladwin
Jonathan Quail
Steven Hartley

Filling of Vacancies

Members gave consideration to filling the vacancy on the board.

As both Michael Fairey of Maurice Crouch Growers and William Gladwin had been proposed and seconded to join the Board a vote was taken by the members, following which it was decided to ask William Gladwin to join the Board.

RESOLVED

That Mr William Gladwin be invited to become a member of the board.

Amalgamations

Miss Ablett referred to informal discussions that had been had in the past regarding potential amalgamation with Sutton & Mepal IDB and Manea & Welney DDC. She advised the Clerk would soon be hosting a 'meeting of minds' for all Chairman, Vice Chairman and Board Members who sit on more than one Board to informally share thoughts regarding the future and anything that comes from this will be relayed back to IDB's for their deliberation.

Training

Miss Ablett referred to the ADA governance training videos and to the number of Members who have reported viewing them.

Some Members advised they had viewed the videos but hadn't reported it to the Office and enquired whether there was any other way this could be reported.

Miss Ablett confirmed she would make enquiries and get back to the Chairman.

B.2121 Governance

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**5**
Meeting:	**UPWELL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Wednesday 24th January 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 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.

1. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) and 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 The last report from the Internal Auditor is available as an Appendix to this paper. The Board is asked to act on the advice of the Auditor within its decision making.

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 Management Strategy

3.1 The Board's Risk Management Strategy has been recently updated and is available as Appendix 4. It is due for formal review and update in 2027.

4. IDB1

4.1 The Board's IDB1 return to Defra for the year 2022/23 is included as Appendix 3.

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 assertion 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.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1	**Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 2022/23**
Appendix 2	**Internal Audit Report**
Appendix 3	**IDB1 2022/23**
Appendix 4	**Risk Management Strategy 2024 - 2027**

APPENDIX 1

Upwell 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 Upwell 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 Upwell Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Upwell 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

UPWELL 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).*	✓		

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

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 19/05/2023 20/05/2023 31/05/2023

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: P.PEECH - WHITINGS LLP

Date: 31/05/2023

***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:

UPWELL 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.

	Yes	No	N/A	
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.				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:

17/05/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

B.2076

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

Chairman [signature]

Clerk [signature]

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

UPWELL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records*
1. Balances brought forward	397,727	404,696	***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	206,876	216,547	***Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.***
3. (+) Total other receipts	10,789	28,744	***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	34,256	35,778	***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	30,318	30,318	***Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).***
6. (-) All other payments	146,122	224,992	***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	404,696	358,899	***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	427,822	363,143	***The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,539,847	3,540,347	***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	501,695	483,968	***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 6th May 2023

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

17/05/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

B; 2078

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 **Upwell Internal Drainage Board – DB0116**

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

APENDIX 2

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."

6. Rental of Land

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

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

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

7. Financial Regulations

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

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

Specific Points

Conington & Holme IDB

We note that the pumping station owned by the board is insured at less than the latest revaluation amount, see below;

Insured value	610,000
Latest revaluation	685,630
Underinsured	**75,630**

We understand that the board took the conscious decision not to uplift the insurance value in line with the revaluation figure suggested by the engineer. As already highlighted above, should any significant event occur, such as a major fire, resulting in the need to reinstate the asset in full, the board run the risk of the shortfall which would require the use of surplus balances to cover the resulting deficit in funds. We would therefore strongly recommend that the board consider increasing the insured value to the revaluation figure.

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

Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB – Joint Pumping Arrangement

As in previous years it is noted that there is a discrepancy between debtor held in Waldersey IDB and the creditor held in Hundred of Wisbech IDB.

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

We are pleased to note that this difference is insignificant for the current year. The difference arises due to the accounts of Hundred of Wisbech IDB being completed before Waldersey IDB, leading to a provision being required in the former's books in the absence of more accurate information being available. The difference is adjusted in the following year's Accounts for Hundred of Wisbech.

We note that there have been discussions to potentially amalgamate the two boards, this would eradicate the anomaly. However, in the absence of this, we suggest that meetings and account preparation periods be brought into line, if possible, to eradicate this issue.

Client comment:
These costs relate to the contribution for the costs of the shared pumping facility and at the time of production of the year end accounting statements discussions were taking place concerning potential changes to the contribution as a result of changes in land use. A new proposal had been put forward which was broadly approved by both Boards.

There are no current plans to change meeting dates so as one set of accounts is finalised before the other there is likely to remain creditor/debtor position in both sets of accounts although now that all older balances have been cleared, any in-year balance should be cleared, generally a year in arrears.

March East IDB

During our review it was noted that the onsite pumping station attendant's payments were not authorised during the year, the amounts charged by the attendant are similar to the rental costs charged to the individual for occupying residential property owned by the district. We understand that this arrangement has been agreed at board level to ensure that the individual is not financially penalised in carrying out their duties for the board. However, this treatment appears to be at odds with the amount charged being disproportionate when compared to other IDB's that we have audited. We would advise that these amounts most certainly should be authorised to ensure adequate controls are maintained over the purchase function and we would also question how HMRC would interpret the arrangement should they carry out any follow up review in the future.

Client comment:
Following a review in the previous financial year residential property rent was re-assessed in line with current guidance from HMRC. At the same time the value of the attendant's services was re-appraised. These reviews were approved by the Board. There were no changes proposed for 2022 so the original resolution remained unchanged. However, we agree with your comments and both areas will be considered annually as separate agenda items.

Hundred of Wisbech

During the course of our audit, we noted that the 2021/22 accounts and payment list had not been published on the website, we are pleased to note that following notification of this fact the accounts and payment list were promptly uploaded. We are satisfied that this is an isolated incident but would remind all boards of their obligation to comply with the requirements in this area and to ensure that all relevant documents are published in a timely manner.

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

Client comment:
Every effort is made to update the relevant pages of all authorities in an efficient and timely manner and in accordance with the regulations.

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

Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB

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

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

March 3rd IDB

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

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

We take this opportunity to thank your staff involved in our audit for their assistance and cooperation in achieving substantial completion by the stated target deadlines. We trust that the engagement team have not caused significant disruption during the execution of their procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Whitings LLP

APPENDIX 3

Internal Drainage Boards in England

Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Annual Report for the year ended
31 March 2023

The Law – the following annual report is provided in accordance with Paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 to the Land Drainage Act 1991.

No later than 31 October 2023 a copy must be provided to:

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Division, Ground Floor, Seacole, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF via flood.reports@defra.gov.uk
- Engineering & Standards - Policy Manager, Asset Management and Engineering, **Environment Agency**, Goldcrest House, Alice Holt Lodge, Farnham, Surrey. GU10 4LH via james.addicott@environment-agency.gov.uk
- The Chief Executives of:
  - all local authorities that pay special levies to the Board;
  - all County Councils or London Boroughs within which the Board is situated.

Please complete the form electronically. If you are unable to complete the form electronically, please complete in BLOCK LETTERS using **black ink**.
Please round all cash figures down to nearest whole £.

UPWELL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Section A – Financial information

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

Information requested below is essential in calculating future formula spending share. It is not covered elsewhere on this form or by the external auditor's certificate.

Special levies information for financial year 2023-24 (forecast)	
Name of local authority	**2023-24 forecast £**
1. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	24,702
2. KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL	37,184
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	**61,886**

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		163,830
2. Special Levies		52,717
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		1,254
5. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		10,971
6. PSCAs from EA and other RMAs		
7. Loans		
8. Rechargeable Works		1,235
9. Interest and Investment Income		5
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		
11. Other Income		5,399
Total income		**235,411**
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		76,852
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		41,604
14. Watercourse maintenance		84,764
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		35,380
16. Administration		24,394
17. PSCAs		
18. Rechargeable Works		
19. Finance Charges		30,318
20. SSSIs		
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		655
22. Other Expenditure		684
Total expenditure		**294,651**

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		9,879
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**(49,361)**
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		34,203
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)?.............................. 18/05/2022

Do you have a biosecurity process?.. Yes ☒ No ☐

SSSI water level management plans

Please indicate whether your Board is responsible for any SSSI water level management plans?.. Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, which ones:

Area of SSSI with IDB water level management plans.............................

Area of SSSI where IDB water level management activities are contributing to recovering or favourable condition?

Area of SSSI where IDB water level management actions are required to achieve recovering or favourable condition?

Access to environmental expertise

Does your IDB have access to environmental expertise? If so please tick all those options below through which environmental expertise is regularly provided to your IDB:

Appropriately skilled Board Members (e.g. Board member from an Environmental Body/Authority)	☐
Co-opted members	☐
Directly employed staff	☒
Contracted persons or consultants	☐
Environmental Partners/NGOs	☐
Other (please describe)	☐

Asset Management

What system/database does your Board use to manage the assets it is responsible for?

ADIS	☐
Paper Records	☒
Other Electronic System	☒

Has your Board continued to undertake visual inspections and update asset databases on an annual basis? Yes ☒ No ☐

What is the cumulative total of identified watercourse (in km) that the Board periodically maintains?

72.1

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

5

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

4.51 cumecs

Health and Safety

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

If so, please summarise in the box below:

Guidance and Best Practice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Has your Board adopted the following governance documents?

Standing Orders........Yes ☒ No ☐

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

Byelaws........Yes ☒ No ☐

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

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

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

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

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

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

Board membership and attendance

How many Board members (in total – elected and appointed) do you have on your IDB?	19
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	5
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	14
Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	5
Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	13
Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	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?	1
Number of complaints outstanding in the financial year?	0
Number of complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman?	0
Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman?	0

Public Engagement

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

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

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

0.53%

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

UPWELL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

UPWELL 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

Review of Internal Controls

Miss Ablett reported that the financial controls that the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Board have now been summarised and are available on the Board's web-page.

RESOLVED

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

Risk Management

Miss Ablett reported that the Board's risk management strategy had been due an update and the Clerk had drafted and published an updated strategy for all Boards clerked by the Middle Level Commissioners. She referred to the Risk Management Strategy that would run from 2024-2027 and outlined how Members and the Middle Level Commissioners' staff govern the Board's risks.

RESOLVED

> The Board considered and approved the Risk Management Strategy.

IDB 1

Miss Ablett referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2022/2023 which the Board noted and approved.

Exercise of Public Rights

Miss Ablett referred to the publishing of the Notices 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.

Banking

Miss Ablett reported that funds were being deposited monthly into both a business premium account and a Treasury Deposit account in order to generate income for the Board.

She further advised that Mr Hill was looking at ways to maximise this income and his proposals would be put to the Board at the next meeting.

B.2122 Clerk's Report

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**6**
Meeting:	**UPWELL IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 24th January 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.

D. To consider the Death in Service Insurance provision for employees with a NEST Pension.

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 inc death in service (NEST)

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

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

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

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

- Death - £100,000
- Permanent total disability - £100,000
- Permanent Disabling Injuries - £100,000
- Temporary Total Disablement – Weekly amount £200 for 104 weeks (Deferment period 34 weeks)
- Temporary Partial Disablement – Weekly amount £100 for 104 weeks (Deferment period 34 weeks)

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

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

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

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

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

6. Rating

6.1 On 7th September 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

Miss Ablett referred to the Clerk's proposals to review and refresh the services provided by Middle Level to Internal Drainage Boards to develop a `Service Catalogue' over the next 12-18 months,

She referred to the development of IDB Key Health Indicators, which would help Boards better understand and proactively assess their strengths and weaknesses to help identify and manage risk.

Miss Ablett informed Members of the discontinuing support for the DRS software and the Middle Level request to be part of a team to scope any future system.

Miss Ablett referred to the existing electricity contract and the need to plan for procurement of the next contract. She advised the proposed approach was to bring together a small group of the IDB Chairs in early 2024 to review options, identify a preferred option and ultimately decide on the next contract.

Miss Ablett enquired whether Members would authorise this group to decide upon the contract requirements for the Board.

This was discussed by the Board and agreed that the Chairman should be included in the group. And that the group be authorised to agree the method of procurement of electricity for the Board.

RESOLVED

> That the Chairman be included in the group and that the group be authorised to agree the method of procurement of electricity for the Board.
>
> That the Death in Service benefit be provided to the Board's employee.

B.2123 Environment Officer's Report

Miss Ablett reported that the lack of a written report for this meeting from the Environment Officer was due to her priority being focussed on the Middle Level Bank Raising scheme and on urgent badger management issues. She informed Members that part of these works was to put Environmental/Conservation process and procedures in place, which would then subsequently provide benefit to all IDBs, with badger training planned to be rolled out soon.

Miss Ablett advised the Clerk was encouraging the Board to consider appointing an environmental representative, similar to the Board's Health & Safety representative, who will act as Sofi's go to person.

RESOLVED

> That the Vice Chairman be appointed as the Board's Environmental representative.

B.2124 Consulting Engineers' Report

The Board considered the report of the consulting engineers, viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**UPWELL IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**Wednesday 24 January 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. 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.

- Mechanical & Electrical (M&E): Providing general advice, routine maintenance, minor works and inspections. Supporting development of capital works programme.
- Capital works: Advising the Board and undertaking client, project and contract management roles.
- GIS & Survey
- Strategic Planning: Inputs on behalf of the Board to relevant spatial plans (eg Local Plans), flood & water strategies and plans (eg Drainage & Wastewater Management Plans, Fens 2100+)
- Planning and consenting: Responding to Planning Applications 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.

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

2.3 Fen's 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.

3.2 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Programme

The County Council's Flood and Water team are currently in the process of developing a programme of flood risk schemes/works across sixteen locations in Cambridgeshire which are identified in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy as key areas requiring further investigation. To undertake this piece of work the Council has commissioned AtkinsRéalis (SNC-Lavalin Atkins), a multi-disciplinary consultant that provides the County Council's Highways Management Services, who are currently working on the first phase which includes:

- A review of existing information at each of the locations
- Site walkovers
- Gap analysis

- Survey scoping
- Stakeholder analysis
- Concept solution identification

As key partners, the Commissioners' Planning Engineer, together with representatives from other RMAs, recently attended a workshop to identify and discuss any ongoing flood management projects that are being progressed, aspirations and needs for each area, opportunities for partnership working, option constraints, relevant data and general receptiveness to solutions within the areas.

3.3 Summary of Key Planning Issues

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 being experienced now, 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 they are implemented.

3.4 Cranbrook/Counter Drain (CCD) Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy
The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer continues to represent the Board/Commissioners on the Stakeholder Group and associated engagement with the relevant interested parties.

Following a change of the EA's Project Manager the once regular Update Meetings have become less frequent, but work continues on this long-term Strategy.

The EA's consultant, Mott MacDonald, has been undertaking Optioneering Work concerning the provision and operation of the storage facilities within the Block Fen area of Sutton and Mepal IDB.

The EA has offered to give an update presentation to the Board and this is being discussed with the Board's Chair.

4. Capital Programme

4.1 The Board's Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 1. Budgets have been included for future pumping station replacements. These will be reviewed on completion of the System Study.

4.2 In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GiA) from the Environment Agency, there is an allocation for culvert works and for undertaking a System Study to identify any improvements needed in the system. Works arising have also been included, starting in 2026, and will be updated following completion of the System Study.

Culvert works are programmed for 2024. The small tree was removed and cutting works to banks carried out by the District Officer so the final small bit of survey will progress imminently to allow the drawings and documents to be produced alongside the application for grant. Subject to this application being successful, the works will be programmed for the summer months.

The Upwell IDB System Study is programmed for 2023/24 and will include channel surveys, structural condition assessments of pumping stations and other assets, hydraulic modelling, economic and environmental assessments, and development of recommendations/solutions with the aim of securing further grant for the delivery of those solutions. The Study will also include consideration of the potential impacts of works arising from the EA's Cranbrook Counter Drain FRM Strategy.

4.3 I will contact the Chair to arrange a meeting to review and finalise the scope of work before appointing consultants to undertake the study. I hope that the Board representatives will work closely with the appointed project team to enable the consultants to undertake a meaningful assessment of the district and, ultimately, provide suitable recommendations for future management.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

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

Appendix 1

Upwell 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
Bedlam Bridge p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,320.0	1320.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	94.4
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0.0	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cock Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	1,320.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1320.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	59.1	145.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	204.1
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0.0	0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nordelph p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,320.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1320.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.4	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.4
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Padgetts p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,320.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	300.0	1620.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0	0	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Upwell fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,207.0	1207.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.4
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
Plant	Ford Ranger - MK15 YAY	13.5	0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.5
	New Holland Tractor AE67 BXX (March '18 - £75,000)	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
	Shelbourne Reynolds Flail mower (Sept '16 - £26,000)	0.0	0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	40.0
Drainage Channels	Piling works - (Old Croft River)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Asset refurbishements	0.2	150.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	250.2
		90.4	**295.0**	**165**	**46**	**1,380**	**1,330**	**15**	**1,435**	**0**	**0**	**20**	**2,877**	**7,653**

Appendix 2

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

MLC Ref.	*Council Ref.*	*Applicant*	*Type of Development*	*Location*
552	23/00430/F	R & F Johnson	Residential (8 dwellings)	Main Road, Three Holes
553	23/00212/F	Mr B Cook	Leisure – Holiday Accommodation (Glamping pods and WC/ Shower unit)	Squires Drove, Three Holes
554	23/00672/FM	A S Johnson & Son Ltd	Leisure – Holiday Accommodation (Lodges inclusive of permanent on-site warden's accommodation)	Silt Road, Three Holes
555	F/YR23/0572/O	Mr G Brown	Residential (Up to 3 dwellings)	Church Road, Christchurch
556	23/01150/F	New Windows 2000	Residence (Extension)	Nordelph, Downham Market
557	CCC/23/060/FUL	Cambridgeshire County Council	Education (Classroom extension, new fencing and hard play area, removal of mobile classroom and base)	Crown Road, Christchurch
558	23/01574/O	Mr & Mrs Kenny	Residence	Birchfield Road, Nordelph
559	F/YR23/0769/PIP	Mr & Mrs Sutton	Residential (Up to 5 dwellings)	Padgetts Road, Christchurch
560	23/01683/PACU3	Mr Johnson	Leisure – Holiday Accommodation (Conversion of barn)	Silt Road, Three Holes
561	23/01650/F	Mrs I Forth	Residence	Squires Drove, Three Holes
562	Pre-application	Mr L Bishop	Residence	Silt Road, Nordelph
563	F/YR23/0799/F	Mr Khan	Residence (Extensions)	Padgetts Road, Christchurch
564	23/01361/F	Mr M Reynolds	Residence	Main Road, Lott's Bridge, Three Holes
565	F/YR23/0879/O	Mr P Russell	Residential (Up to 6 dwellings)	Padgetts Road, Christchurch
566	F/YR23/0891/F	Mr B Dawson	Change of Use (Field to paddock land including erection of stable block, formation of new access and hardstanding, involving culverting a drain)	Fen View, Christchurch
567	23/01843/F	Mr B Cook	Retrospective Change of Use (Siting of 4 Glamping pods and WC/Shower unit for holiday accommodation)	Squires Drove, Three Holes

The following applications have been granted since the last report.

Consent No	Description of Works/Location	Date consent granted
BC/87	Installation of 15 underdrain outfalls int the Board's watercourse between Points 50 and 51	14/2/23
BC/88	Driveway within 9m of Straight Drain to the north of Point 31	26/07/23

The following Infiltration Device application has been acknowledged since the last report.

Option 1 (Self-certification) or Option 2 (Checking Form)	Location	Date acknowledged
Option 1	Coronation Avenue, Nordelph	9/10/23

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**UPWELL IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**
Date:	**Monday 23 January 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Dave Bantoft**

1. M&E key messages and advice

1.1 Other than the matters described below or previously reported, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition. The stations, pumps and control panels are at an age where reliability is a concern, this will be addressed in the upcoming System Study.

1.2 **Padgetts Corner**
The pump main contactor failed in December, a temporary repair was made and replacement Star Delta contactor set ordered and fitted during December. The pump is slightly noisy and this needs to be monitored, the pump was new in 2012. Replacement costs and lead times have been requested from Xylem as a reference if the pump condition deteriorates.

1.3 **Upwell Fen**
The discharge pipe thrust block continues to show a small leak and will continue to be monitored to determine if any works are needed ahead of the System Study.

1.4 **Cock Fen**
The weedscreen has had several issues with position sensors which have been rectified, but the underlying cause of the issues is thought to be the speed at which the trolley travels, this will be investigated to reduce faults.

2. Pumping summary

2.1 The pumps have operated well through this period; the main pumping report will be provided by the District Officer.

3. Inspections, maintenance and minor works

3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out during September 2023.

3.2 ElCR test and due dates as below.

Station	EICR Pass Date	EICR Due
Bedlam Bridge	21-Jul-2022	21-Jul-2027
Cock Fen	21-Jul-2022	21-Jul-2027
Nordelph	20-Jul-2022	20-Jul-2027
Nordelph Bungalow	18-Aug-2022	18-Aug-2027
Padgetts Corner	21-Jul-2022	21-Jul-2027
Upwell Fen	20-Jul-2022	20-Jul-2027

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

RESOLVED

i) That the report and actions therein be approved.

ii) That the capital programme be approved in principle and be developed further when the District Wide study has been completed and the availability of FRCM Grant-In-Aid available.

B.2125 Chairman's Items

The Chairman updated the Board on matters arising from the last meeting.

i) Clearance of trees at Mumby Drove

The Chairman reported that following the last meeting no further communication had been received from the landowner regarding the reinstatement of the hedge following maintenance works.
He reminded Members the Board wished to install a gate on land to allow access to the Old Croft River and he considered that either he or the Board's District Foreman should Rallingham Hall to discuss the Board's request further.

Miss Ablett advised that if the landowner was willing to allow the erection of a gate this could give rise to the Board establishing a right of way to the Old Croft River, for which there may be a cost attached and that the other landowner may still insist on the hedge being re-instated.

ii) Erection of Gate at Hen Meadows adjacent to Cock Fen pumping station

The Vice Chairman reported that as he had been unsuccessful in identifying the landowner a gate had not yet been erected, but confirmed he would continue to make enquiries.

iii) Gate at Nordelph Pumping Station

Miss Ablett reported that the neighbouring landowner fully appreciated why the Board wished to improve security at the pumping station and they were prepared to contribute towards the gate subject to agreeing costs first.

She advised that if the Board wished to continue with its approach, it ought to acknowledge and accept the risk of entering into a legal dispute and having to fund any legal advice and defence.

iv) The agreement for the Old Croft maintenance contributions

Miss Ablett reported the agreement had been signed by the Chairman of Manea & Welney DDC and advised that if the Board were happy with the contents, it needed to be signed by the Chairman.

She added the Chairman of Manea & Welney DDC had agreed with the Chairman that any discharge contributions received should be assigned to the Board in which the development occurs.

v) Right of Way at Cock Fen Pumping Station

Miss Ablett reported an agreement between South Yorkshire Pensions Fund and Eastern Power Networks had largely been agreed by both parties, although the solicitor for South Yorkshire Pension Fund had advised of a few small amendments.

She advised that originally, the Board had not been included as part of the agreement, but this had been amended to include the Board, as it was paying the costs. She added the costs were likely to be capped at £4,000, but it was anticipated the costs would not be in excess of this sum.

Miss Ablett reported the Assistant Clerk had amended the agreement and returned this to the solicitors for South Yorkshire Pension Fund and it was hoped they should be able to finalise the agreement shortly.

She confirmed this would give the Board a permanent legal right of way.

vi) Rates Outstanding for more than one year

Miss Ablett reported that the Clerk had emailed fellow clerks around the country and although this was not a unique issue, it was one that had not been solved by any of the clerks who had responded to him.
She further reported that the Assistant Clerk would be retiring at 31st March and the Clerk had advised that a review of the bailiff options would be added to the long list for the new Lead Clerk to action.

RESOLVED

i) That the Chairman and District Foreman meet with the owner of Rallingham Hall, regarding the right of way and access to the Old Croft River

ii) That the Vice Chairman continue to identify the landowner and take appropriate action

iii) That the Clerk writes to the neighbouring landowner to Nordelph Pumping Station advising that no contribution to costs will be necessary and a key to the gate will be provided to him, but access is not to be used by tractors and trailers due to the septic tank being under the road and the risk of further subsidence.

iv) That the Chairman be authorised to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.
That development contributions that discharge into the Old Croft River be assigned to the area in which the development is undertaken.

B.2126 Health & Safety

The Chairman referred to the report from COPE Safety Management following their visit on 11th January and advised that the actions/recommendations made by them were being actioned by the District Foreman, viz;

Cope
SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Site Safety Inspection Record

Upwell IDB SSI 110124 — Complete

Score	0 / 99 (0%)	Flagged items	0	Actions	0

Name of organisation:	Upwell IDB
Date of site visit	11.01.2024 12:45 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Bedlam Bridge Pumping Station. Padgetts Corner Pumping Station. Nordelph Pumping Station. Upwell Fen Pumping Station. Cock Fen Pumping Station.
Name of Advisor	Simon Cross
Time of arrival at site:	11.01.2024 12:45 GMT
Audit Name	Upwell IDB SSI 110124

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

K Goodger and P Cabon

Have there been any accidents since our last visit?	No

Understood to be no recorded accidents.

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

1

Introduction. During this visit all five pumping stations within the responsibility of the IDB were visited to determine progress on recommendations made previously and also if any significant changes had occurred, or significant risks were evident.

Signage. Previous recommendations had been made regarding the replacement of faded or illegible hazard warning signage at the pumping station sites, e.g. electrical hazard and automated machinery operating without warning. Most of the sites have now been provided with replacement signage for automatic machinery. In order to provide a consistent standard of signage at each of the pumping station sites, it is recommended that signage is displayed on the site access gate(s) or perimeter fencing where provided, or pumping station building that has the following information:
- Pumping Station Name.
- IDB Name.
- Location details. eg. Grid ref, 'What Three Words'
- Contact details for emergency (e.g. name, phone number, email).
- Hazard warning pictograms relevant to the site, e.g electric shock, automatic machinery, deep water or fall from edge, no unauthorised entry, etc.

It was suggested that Middle Level Commissioners are contacted to facilitate this.

2

Upwell Fen Pumping Station.
It was observed that the entry threshold into the pump house building was relatively high, with persons having to step up and down a significant height. See photo 1 below. It is recommended that a step or similar is provided to improve the access and egress to the building.

Photo 1

3

Cock Fen Pumping Station.
A number of observations were made, as detailed below:

* Noise. Due to the noise hazard associated with the operation of the 2 diesel engines within the pumping Station building, hearing protection has been provided and is worn by the Board employee, Mr Nunn. It was recommended that a suitable warning sign requiring wearing of hearing protection is provided on the door.

* Fuel tank. It was reported that a fuel gauge is installed on the fuel tank to negate the need for Board members to use ladders to determine the fuel level.

* Access. As a result of the recent wet weather the access between the gate and building was wet, muddy

and slippery. See photo 2 below. It is recommended that a more suitable surface is provided for access pathway, such as aggregate, slabs, etc.

* Steps. It was noted that the top step was loose and 'rocked' when stood on, increasing the risk of slip, trip or fall. See photo 3 below. It is recommended that the step is secured.


Photo 2


Photo 3

4

Padgetts Corner Pumping Station.
No other observations were made at the time of the visit.

5

Bedlam Bridge Pumping Station.
No other observations were made at the time of the visit.

6

Nordelph Pumping Station.
A number of observations and recommendations were made, as detailed below:

* New weedscreen. The newer weed screen and platform with barrier has been installed, however it was reported and noted that if the screen was to be cleared using the long handled crome, as has been done recently, the current positioning of the barrier rails hinders this work and increases the risk of manual handling injuries. It is also understood, and observed, that the design of the base of the weed screen makes it difficult to effectively clear. See photo 4 below. It is recommended that the positioning of the rails is reviewed in consultation with Mr Nunn and if necessary, re-positioned.

* Old weedscreen. The old, larger, weed screen remains, as previously reported, and an intermediate barrier rail has been installed to reduce the risk of a fall into the water. It is understood to be in a position which minimises the fall risk whilst still enabling weed clearing with a crome to be undertaken without increased risk of manual handling injuries. However following the recent significant wet weather, an increased requirement to manually clear the weedscreen has been experienced, this has resulted in a significant weed spoil pile which is placed on the weedscreen platform restricting safe access at the front. This is exacerbated by the lack of a toe board or similar to reduce the risk of slipping under the rail on the wet weed covered surface. The weed pile also has to then be manually cleared from the platform. See photo 5 below. It is recommended that a suitable toe board is installed at the top of the weedscreen. In addition, to reduce the amount of manual handling undertaken, it is recommended that a method of moving the weed spoil pile is investigated and implemented, such as provision of a small wheeled trailer that fits on the platform and can be loaded directly and then wheeled away to empty.

* Air compressor. It was not clear if the air compressor in the workshop had been subject to an examination and test by a competent person, as recommended by the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000. See photo 6 below. It is recommended this is completed and records kept, including a Written Scheme of Examination.


Photo 4


Photo 5


Photo 6

7

Photographic Risk Assessment

0 / 99 (0%)

Person informed

Advisor's signature

Simon Cross
11.01.2024 21:24 GMT

Departure time 11.01.2024 16:05 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

None

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments 0
From 0 to 99

Media summary


Photo 1


Photo 2


Photo 3


Photo 4


Photo 5


Photo 6

The Charman referred to the comments made in the report concerning the increased risk of manual handling injuries whilst clearing the weedscreen at Nordelph pumping station and he considered this highlighted that the Board should perhaps make enquiries regarding the cost of installing a weedscreen cleaner. The Chairman advised he had spoken, on behalf of the Board, with Dave Bantoft, the consulting mechanical & electrical engineer, regarding the options available to the Board. He reported the Consulting Engineer had advised the Board could look at installing either an automatic or semi-automatic weedscreen cleaner at the pumping station as part of the district wide study, as it may be possible to obtain grant funding.

The Chairman added that as the loan had been drawn down for the electrification of Cock Fen pumping station, it was hoped there would be funds remaining, even if the Board approved for diesel engines be installed instead.

B.2127 District Officer's Report

Viz;

Upwell IDB District Foreman's report May 2023 to January 2024

Drain works

The 2024 drain works programme will continue as it has done for the past few years splitting the district into two parts with the 2024 campaign concentrating on the Bedlam Bridge and Christchurch area while managing any other issues that may arise across the district. There will be some works required along the Old Croft due to the water not being able to get away quick enough during the heavy rainfall at the end of 2023.

The 2023 drain works programme concentrated on the Cock Fen and Nordelph side of the district, virtually all planned works have been completed as well as some unplanned works with the biggest extra work being the drain leading from Squires Drove to three Holes main road which required bank reprofiling both sides.

Pumping Stations

Bedlam Bridge Pump - The pumps are both working well at present with the bigger pump 2 being on duty since early October. The weed screen cleaner is working well at present.

Padgetts Pump - The pump has had a few issues with burning a contactor out and blowing some fuses but was repaired quickly by middle level engineers and has been fine since.

Cock Fen Pump - Both pumps are running well at present with engine two on duty for October and November then switching to engine one in December due to the amount of rainfall. Engine two was found to have a faulty radiator sensor and since being changed I have had no problems with cutting out the engine also had a recent service and engine one is due to be serviced shortly. The weed screen cleaner has had a few issues with switch gear but is fully operational at present.

Upwell Fen Pump - The pump is working fine at present. I have met an electrician there concerning the fitment of a smart meter but due to the size of the fuses he recommended a

CT meter to be fitted, I did make him aware of the problems we have faced at Nordelph pump so we will have to see what action is to be taken. The weed screen cleaner is fully operational at present.

Nordelph Pump - The pump is running well although with the amount of starts recently it tends to knock the electric off in the bungalow every now and again but the electrician is due out shortly to test and replace the fuse. The electric meter is still faulty and awaiting a resolution.

Shelbourne Flail mower

The Flail mower has done 8 seasons since it was purchased in 2016, it has been working well although there a few issues with the electrics now and again, I also replaced one of the main rotor hydraulic hoses due to a leak and found several others are deteriorating. The flail head has a lot of metal fatigue with several splits in the cowling even though this has been repaired in the past.

Works Truck

The Ford Ranger has had a few issues and spent some time in the garage with engine management and sensor problems, it has also been in with a gear linkage problem. It will be going in again shortly as the engine management light has just come on again.

New Holland Tractor

The tractor has been performing well this season although there were problems at the start of cutting with the axle mounts as the bolt threads in the axle casing stripped thus having to have a new end on the axle and whilst fitting the new part on it was discovered that part of the axle bracket was missing (was not fitted at Pecks) which caused the flail mower to twist on the axle, since it’s all been fitted it has not been a problem.

Summary

This year has been exceptionally wet which is the complete opposite to this time last year where we were looking at ways to store water but can't get rid of it quick enough this year. All pumps have been on since early October and between then and at time of writing this report (19/12/2023) the pumps have pumped more than the last 2 years added together so pump hours will be high by the time April comes around but considering the amount of water we have had so far the drains have been coping well.

I will bring an up-to-date hours total for this year to the meeting.

If anyone has any questions or queries, please don't hesitate to contact me or I am happy to answer questions at the meeting.

Carl Nunn

The Vice Chairman referred to comments made by the District Foreman in his report on the condition of the flail mower, which the Board had been using for over 8 years. He advised the cost of replacing the flail mower would in the region of £30,000 and the tractor would cost approximately £56,000 and enquired whether the Board would consider replacing the assets.

Members discussed the matter further and approved for quotes to be obtained for replacing both the flail mower and tractor and for these to be reviewed by the finance committee. They requested the Clerk be asked to provide details of the costs of repairs for both the tractor and flail mower to the Chairman, in advance of the finance committee meeting.

The Chairman suggested the recommendations made by the finance committee should be sent to all Members for their comments and approval. This was agreed by all Members.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

i) That the Clerk be asked to provide details of the costs of repairs for both the tractor and flail mower to the Chairman in advance of the finance committee meeting.

ii) That 3 quotes be obtained for the purchase of both a flail mower and tractor for review by the finance committee and the recommendations made by the finance committee be sent to all Board members for their approval.

<u>B.2128 Finance Committee Report</u>

The Chairman reported that no Finance Committee had been held since the last meeting of the Board.

<u>B.2129 Finance Report – Looking Forward</u>

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	13
Meeting:	**UPWELL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Wednesday 24th January 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Renew its subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities.

B. Approve the determination of land values for rating and note the receipt of developer contributions.

C. Agree what action to take with regards to any rate arrears.

D. Consider the Finance Officer's budget monitoring for 2023/24.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

The Clerk to report.

1. Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions

1.1 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 6%, from £915 to £975 for 2024.

2. Determination of Land Values for Rating

2.1 The confidential papers enclosed detail land that has changed from being rateable to being included within the special levy calculations.

3. Rate Arrears

3.1 The confidential papers enclosed detail of the Rate Arrears. The Board are to consider the options with regards to Rate Arrears – write-off, hold on account or enforce.

4. Precept to the Environment Agency

4.1 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.

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

4.3 The precept for 2023 was £57,046.

5. Budget Monitoring for 2023/24

5.1 The budget monitoring for 2023/24 is shown in Appendix 1.

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

Enclosure 1 Determination of Land Values for Rating (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)
Enclosure 2 Rate Arrears (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)

Appendix 1 Budget Monitoring for 2023/24

APPENDIX 1

UPWELL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2023/2024

		Approved budget 2023/2024 £	Actual to 30.11.2023 £	Forecast to 31.03.2024 £
1	District labour	41,000	27,737	41,000
2	Insurances and telephones	5,000	4,042	4,500
3	Repairs and renewals	10,000	10,389 [A]	13,000
4	General maintenance	28,500 [B]	16,184 [C]	28,500 [D]
5	Fuel (oil and electricity)	47,800	17,373 [E]	47,800 [F]
6	District Officers' fees etc	5,000	0	5,000
7	Administration charge, Health and, Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising etc	26,175	11,791	26,175
8	Future capital works	14,116 [G]	9,400 [G]	14,125 [G]
9	Public Works Loan	30,318	23,608	30,318
10	Environment Agency - Precept	42,853 [H]	50,805	42,853 [H]
11	Tractor / Flail mower replacement	15,100 [I]	10,000 [I]	15,100 [I]
12	Improvement works	145,000	1,059 [J]	5,000 [J]
		410,862	182,388	273,370
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, Fishery Rent etc	156,771	13,177 [K]	23,550 [L]
		254,091	169,211	249,820
	Estimated General Fund:			
	Open balance at 01.04.2023	175,160	175,160	175,160
	Rates Raised - 27.00p	254,091	254,091	254,091
	Net Expenditure	254,091	169,211	249,820
	Balances	0	0	0
	(Estimated) Closing balance	175,160	260,040	179,431

Remarks

A	Service/repair tractor-mower	6,262
	Serevice/repair works truck	1,865
B -	Includes for contractor hire: slubbing	20,000
C -	Includes for contractor hire: slubbing	13,847
D -	Includes for contractor hire: slubbing	20,000
E -	AF supply period not yet finalised	
	Includes new contract accounts to August only	
F -	Estimated to budget only	
G -	Funding for future plant replacement & capital projects -	
H -	Environment Agency charge	58,758
	Middle Level contribution	-15,905
		42,853
I -	Depreciation on heavy plant	
J -	Cock Fen p/s electrification	
	Cock Fen electrification on hold - engineer to update	
K -	Includes:	
	Asset replacement fund (Depreciation)	10,000
	Loan funding - Cock fen p/s electrification	1,059
L -	Includes:	
	Asset replacement fund (Depreciation)	15,100
	Loan funding - Cock Fen p/s electrification	5,000

ADA Subscription

The Board considered and approved the increased ADA subscription of £975 be paid.

Determination of Annual Values

The Board considered & approved the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

Rate Write-off

The Board considered & approved the write off of the rate arrears.

Precept

Miss Ablett reported that the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee determined that there were exceptional circumstances to consider on the agreed 2% increase on 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 2025 – total of a 3% increase on the level of precept on internal Drainage Boards for the year ending 31st March 2025.

Budget Monitoring

Miss Ablett referred to the schedule and confirmed the Treasurer had reviewed the figures with the Chairman. She advised that in view of the recent rainfall events it was likely the boards pumping costs would increase beyond the forecast.
Members accepted the position in that they had no control over the weather patterns and were required to do all they could to provide effective drainage to the district.

B.2130 Dates of next Meetings

That the next meetings of the Board shall be held at the Lamb & Flag as follows: -

i) Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 5.30pm

ii) Thursday 13th June 2024 at 5.00pm for an inspection

……………………………….
Chair

…………………….
Date