RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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Administered by:

30th April 2024

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Wednesday 8th May 2024

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board on Wednesday 8th May 2024.

Inspection at **10am** – meeting at New Fen Farm PE26 2SN

Followed by lunch at **1pm** at The Old Nene Golf Club, Ramsey PE26 2XQ

Followed by the meeting of the Board at **2pm**.

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

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

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

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

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

Yours truly

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Board

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Wednesday 8th May 2024 – 2pm

The Old Nene Golf Club, Ramsey PE26 2XQ

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
Inspection	**Meeting at New Fen Farm, PE26 2SN at 10am**		
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising • Roadway to Upwood pumping station – clerk to report • Abbey Farm – clerk to report • Tesco pumped outfall – clerk to report	Pages 3 - 10	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership • Attendance • Vacancies & appointments • Composition and amalgamations • Training	Pages 11 - 13	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 14 - 22	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	Pages 23 - 25	Clerk
7	Chairman's Items • Horse gate	Verbal	Chair
8	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: • Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Enc – to follow	Clerk or Engineer
9	Health & Safety	Pages 26 - 28	Chair
10	District Officer's Report	Verbal	DO
11	Governance • Risk Management Assessment/Strategy • Financial Regulations & Financial Code • Review of internal controls • Exercise of Public Rights • Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments • Annual Governance Statement	Pages 29 - 31 Pages 32 - 33 Pages 34 - 51 Page 52	Clerk
12	Finance Report: looking back • Finance officer's review • Payments 2023/2024 • Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2023/2024 • Annual Return 2023/2024	Page 53 Page 54 Pages 55 – 57 Page 58	Clerk
13	Finance Report: looking forward • Finance Officer's summary • Fees, remuneration and subscriptions • Determination of land for rating purposes - *Confidential papers* • Rate arrears - *Confidential papers* • Rating Estimates for 2024/2025 • Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements or 2024/2025	Pages 59 - 60 Page 61 Page 62	Clerk
14	Date of Next Meeting	Verbal	Chair
15	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board hosted at the Old Nene Golf and Country Club, Ramsey on Thursday 4th January 2024

PRESENT

R Blackhurst (Vice-Chairman)
S Bedford Esq
A Butler Esq
L Butler Esq
Cllr S Corney
S Cornwell Esq
J Edwards Esq
M Mckenna Esq
A Wagstaffe Esq
C Wilkinson Esq

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Roberts (Chairman), T Bedford Esq, J Clarke Esq, M Lambert Esq

Mr Hill informed the members that as 2023 was an election year and the previous chairman was not able to attend today's meeting, they would need to appoint a member to Chair today's meeting.

RESOLVED

That Mr Richard Blackhurst be appointed to Chair the meeting of the Board.

B.1410 Declarations of Interest

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

Mr L Butler declared an interest (as District Officer) in any matters concerning the District Officer.

Cllr Corney declared an interest in any planning matters as a member of Huntingdonshire District Council Planning Committee.

B.1411 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 11th May 2023 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1412 Matters Arising

Upwood Common – Points 81-88
In response to Mr Wilkinson, the District Officer confirmed that the soil heaps had been moved sufficiently to allow access for this year's drain maintenance works although they had not been fully removed from the byelaw strip.

Roadway to Upwood Common Pumping Station
Mr Hill reported that the Middle Level solicitor had obtained plans from the land registry, which indicated that the land ownership on the watercourse side of the roadway went to the edge of the roadway, however, he considered this needed further investigation to properly clarify the matter.

Mr A Butler raised concerns over the ongoing issues with the overhanging trees, which could cause problems if the Board need to access HGV's to the pumping station at short notice. He raised the same concerns over the overhanging willow trees along the pump drain.

Mr Hill referred to the use of the roadway by Mr Ayres under licence and queried if this should be looked into. Mr Wagstaffe considered it appropriate to look at any conditions contained in the licence to see if these could be of benefit to the Board in resolving this matter.

Mr Blackhurst considered it maybe beneficial to meet Mr Ayres face to face to explain the issues faced by the Board.

RESOLVED

> That the Chairman be authorised to meet with Mr Ayres to discuss the issues of overhanging trees along the Boards roadway and the overhanging willow trees along the pump drain at Upwood Common Pumping Station and that he be authorised to take any further action as he considers appropriate.

Abbey Farm
Further to minute B.1358, Mr Hill reported that due to the confidential nature of the issues relating to the matter, it was necessary to pass a formal resolution to exclude the public.

RESOLVED

> That in pursuance of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting when the above matters are considered by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Drain adjacent to Tesco's – point 28
Mr Hill reported that there had been little progress since the last meeting. He confirmed that the Middle Level solicitor has responded and provided all the information requested.

RESOLVED

> That the Board continue with action as previously authorised for the recovery from Tesco Stores of the calculated discharge costs.

Issues with rubbish and sewage discharge along Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights

Mr Hill reported that there was a multi-agency site meeting on 21st June 2023. The District Officer confirmed that no-one from the Board attended and that the general position at the site remains unchanged. Mr Cornwell reported that the Environment Agency class the pollution as low level and it was therefore unlikely that they would be taking any further action concerning this.

Mr Edwards reported on other actual and proposed development in the Middle Drove/Harpers Drove area.

B.1413 Constitution & Membership

Election

Mr Hill reported that 2023 was an Election year and the following twelve Members were elected as Members of the Board for a period of 3 years from 1st November 2023.

S Bedford	L Butler	M McKenna
T Bedford	S Cornwell	A Roberts
R Blackhurst	J Edwards	A Wagstaffe
A Butler	M Lambert	C Wilkinson

Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That Mr Andrew Roberts be appointed as Chairman

Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED

That Mr Richard Blackhurst be appointed as Vice-Chair

Appointment of District Officer

RESOLVED

That Mr Leo Butler be appointed as District officer

Composition & Amalgamations

Mr Hill reported that during the now 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. He advised that with this in mind the Clerk considered the agendas needed a refresh to assist Members with the flow and make it easier for minutes of the meetings to be prepared to a better standard and in a timely manner.

Mr Hill advised that the Clerk having attended several Board meetings during the past year, it was evident that some Boards did not have as good attendance as others and were struggling in term of membership and governance. He added that the purpose of this agenda item was to assist in reporting this information to

Defra in order to bring greater clarity around the strength of Boards in terms of membership. It was the Clerk's intention that those Boards that were struggling it may trigger conversations around whether they needed to consider amalgamating with neighbouring Boards.

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

B.1414 Governance

Internal Controls

Mr Hill reported that a schedule detailing the financial internal controls in place at the Middle Level Offices has been drawn up and is now on the Boards website pages.

The Board considered and approved the system of Internal Controls.

Risk Management

The Board considered and approved the Boards Risk Management Policy.

Mr Hill reported that the clerk was currently reviewing and updating the Boards Risk Management Strategy, and that it is proposed to present this at the next scheduled meeting of the Board for review and approval.

IDB1

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

Exercise of Public Rights

Mr Hill 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

Mr Hill referred to the changes to banking as previously reported and that currently sums were being invested on deposit for periods to gain additional interest, He reported that through the Middle Level offices there were around 18 such deposits and that the general principal was that the interest was tiered, with higher rates being available for larger sums and longer periods of investment. After discussion with the clerk, it was clear that if Boards 'pooled' investment sums it would be possible to obtain higher rates of interest for all Board's by investing the higher 'pooled' investments for longer periods of time.

Members considered the proposal and although accepted that the scheme would provide a higher return on the Board's balances, they had reservations about 'investing' the Boards balances in a 'third party name'.

In response to Mr A Butler, Mr Hill considered that there would not be any increased risk, as any deposits would be within the existing mandate/authorisation given by the Board.
In response to Mr Wagstaffe, Mr Hill gave a brief explanation how interest would be allocated between all participating parties.

In response to Mr A Butler, Mr Hill confirmed that the Boards existing banking accounts would continue to be operated and it would only be investment deposits which would be 'pooled'.

In response to Mr Blackhurst, Mr Hill reported that it was proposed to discuss this matter at a few Board meetings during the next couple of weeks to get the views/concerns from Boards and to then, if considered viable, draw up a proposal to send to all Board's. He confirmed that if this stage was reached, a formal 'Governance' document/policy would need to be drawn up.

RESOLVED

> That Members give this matter further consideration and that it be discussed further at the next scheduled meeting of the Board.

B.1415 Clerks Report

Mr Hill referred to the Clerk's proposals to review and refresh the services provided by Middle Level to Internal Drainage Board's to develop a 'Service Catalogue' over the next 12-18 months.

He referred to the development of IDB Key Health Indicators, which would help Board's better understand and proactively address their Key Risks and understand their relative health.

Mr Hill 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.

Mr Hill reported that the Association of Drainage Authorities proposed to increase subscriptions by 6.5% for 2024/2025. In response to Mr Blackhurst, Mr Hill confirmed that the subscription for 2024 would be £636.

RESOLVED

> That the Board subscribe to the Association of Drainage Authorities for 2024 at the increased cost of £636.

B.1416 Consulting Engineers Reports

Mr Blackhurst referred to the Engineers' comments at 3.2 – New developments and the use of SuDs, the Chair's concerns concerning the effectiveness of these and the proposal to use underground attenuation for the proposed development on land opposite Viscount Garage, St Mary's Road, Ramsey. He confirmed that the Chairman's view was that current systems do not operate effectively and the Board end up with all the water regardless, generally quicker than the design parameters. Members considered that current surface water design practices do not take into account exceptional weather conditions or the complex systems within the Fens.

Mr Hill reported that these issues have been raised by other Boards and that the Clerk has written to Michelle Sacks, Chief Executive at Huntingdonshire District Council to outline the issues being faced by drainage authorities and for the importance of a wider strategic approach to new development water management planning being essential, and that the Clerk had invited Michelle to attend a site visit to discuss these issues to find a common approach to deal with these problems.

Mr Corney supported the comments made and reported that without specific issues being raised for planning applications, it is difficult for the planning authority to raise objections. He referred to the general lack of responses from Middle Level. Mr Hill referred to drainage authorities not being statutory consultees regarding planning, which restrict their responses.

In response to Mr Blackhurst, Mr L Butler confirmed that water from the developed area reaches New Fen pumping station very quickly and that currently, the station had been running for 3 days continuous.

Mr Hill referred to the Board's Capital Programme and that the Consultant Engineer was currently looking to appoint Consultants to carry out a catchment study to identify improvements needed in the system. He reported that the Engineer had confirmed that a catchment study was a requirement to identify future potential grant aided improvement works and that funding has been identified to cover the full costs of the study through grant aid.

RESOLVED

i) That Mr Andrew Roberts be authorised as the delegated Board Members on the Project Initiation Form
ii) That the Capital Programme be approved in principal and that it be updated following the conclusion of the Catchment Study
iii) that the Clerk and Engineer be made aware of the Boards concerns over the use of attenuation systems and the engineer convey these concerns when dealing with planning applications
iv) That the report be approved.

B.1417 Health & Safety

Mr Blackhurst reported that the Chairman has regular meetings concerning Health & Safety with the District officer and there are inspections/reports on a regular basis from the Board's Health & Safety Consultants. He confirmed that all actions/recommendations made by the Health & Safety consultants had been actioned and there were no issues currently outstanding.

B.1418 Environment Officers Report

Mr Hill 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 – he informed Members that part of these works is to put Environmental/Conservation process and procedures in place, which will then subsequently provide benefits to all IDB's. He encouraged the Board to consider appointing an Environmental representative, similar to the Board's Health & Safety representative.

B.1419 District Officers Report

The District Officer reported that there has been an unconsented culvert installed along Harpers Drove and he has made arrangements for a site inspection next week with Mr Convine from the Middle Level Commissioners. He referred to bank slips alone section 81 – 88, which he considered was due to goats from Mr Crump accessing the watercourse due to insufficient fencing and water run-off from the roadway as a result of gulleys cut out by Mr Ayres. Members discussed the condition of roadways and Mr A Butler raised concerns over the condition of the roadway to Green Dyke pumping station, which he considered would restrict access by HGV.

The District Officer raised concerns that the Board were not looking forward enough for future resilience, particularly in his role as District officer. He did not think it likely that there was a current successor for this role. He thanked Mr A Butler for his help and assistance, without which he would not be able to carry out all duties.

Mr Wagstaffe referred to the annual use of a weed bucket on district drains on other Boards, which helped keep drains clear and reduced the build up of weed/reeds at pumping stations and queried if this policy would be of benefit for the Board.
Mr Blackhurst queried if the Board should be looking at further automation at pumping stations with the installation of automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment.

RESOLVED

i) That the District Officer be authorised to inspect the unconsented culvert at Harpers Drove and to take any further action as he considers appropriate.
ii) That the Chairman and District Officer be authorised to have site meetings with Mr Crump and Mr Ayres to discuss the bank slips along section 81 – 88 and to take any further action regarding this as they consider appropriate.
iii) That the Engineer be informed of the Board's requirement for greater automation at pumping stations when carrying out the catchment study.
iv) Members give consideration to the use of a weed bucket on district watercourses and this matter be discussed further at the next scheduled meeting of the Board.

Mr A Butler & Mr L Butler declared an interest in the roadway referred to in this item.

Mr Blackhurst, on behalf of the Board thanked Leo & Ashley for all their work in maintaining the district system in these challenging circumstances, which is very much appreciated.

B.1420 Finance – Looking Back

Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board 2022/2023.

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

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

Highland Water

Mr Hill reported that claims had been submitted to the Environment Agency and after discussions concerning the makeup of the claims, they had been paid in full. In response to Mr Blackhurst, Mr Hill confirmed that the claims included the works programmed on the Catchwater Drain for 2023/24 and that the full payment received was around £7,000 with the payment for the 2023/24 works being 80% of the estimate.

B.1421 Finance – Looking Forward

Precept to the Environment Agency

Mr Hill reported that the Anglian (Great Ouse) RFCC meeting had approved an additional 1% on top of the 2% annual increase to Internal Drainage Boards precepts for the year ended 31st March 2025, giving a recommended increase of 3%.

Budget Monitoring 2023/2024

Mr Hill referred to the schedule and confirmed he had reviewed the figures with the Chairman, at which point they had considered the forecast reasonable.
He considered that currently most areas of expenditure were likely to be in line with the forecast but recent rainfall events would likely increase the Boards pumping costs beyond the forecast. He referred to the inclusion of around £18,000 in the budget for future works, which, if needed could be utilised to 'balance the budget'.
Members accepted the position in that they had no control over weather patterns and would be required to do all they could to provide effective drainage to the district.

B.1422 Date of next Meeting

Wednesday 8th May 2024 – Inspection 10am followed by Lunch (1pm) then Meeting (2pm).

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**4**
Meeting:	**RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Wednesday 8th May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Polly Tombleson**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

1. Current status

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

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	12	N/A		
Actual	12	2 HDC	14	6
Vacancies	0		0	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	Stuart Bedford	Ratepayer	
2	Thomas Bedford	Ratepayer	
3	Richard Blackhurst	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
4	Ashley Butler	Nominee of Ratepayer (J&H Edwards)	
5	Stuart Cornwell	Ratepayer	
6	Jason Edwards	Ratepayer	
7	Michael Lambert	Ratepayer	
8	Mike Mckenna	Nominee of Ratepayer (AG Reserves)	
9	Andrew Roberts	Nominee of Ratepayer (D C Roberts)	Chairman
10	Andrew Wagstaffe	Ratepayer	
11	Christopher Wilkinson	Ratepayer	
12	Leo Butler	Nominee of Ratepayer (J&H Edwards)	District Officer

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	J Clarke	HDC	Councillor

2	S Corney	HDC	Councillor
3			

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	04/01/2024	11/5/2023	05/1/2023	12/5/2022
1	Stuart Bedford	Present	Attended	attended	apologies
2	Thomas Bedford	Apologies	apologies	attended	apologies
3	Richard Blackhurst	present	attended	apologies	attended
4	Ashley Butler	Present	apologies	attended	apologies
5	Stuart Cornwell	Present	attended		
6	Jason Edwards	Present	attended	attended	attended
7	Michael Lambert	Apologies		attended	
8	Mike Mckenna	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
9	Andrew Roberts	Apologies	attended	attended	attended
10	Andrew Wagstaffe	Present	attended	attended	
11	Christopher Wilkinson	Present	attended	attended	attended
12	Leo Butler	Present	attended	attended	attended

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022	2/11/2021
1	Andrew Roberts	apologies	attended		attended

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	04/01/2024	11/5/2023	5/1/2023	15/2/2022
1	J Clarke (HDC)	Apologies	apologies	attended	attended
2	S Corney (HDC)	Present		attended	apologies
3					

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 To appoint the Clerk to the Board for the ensuing year.

4. Composition and amalgamations

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

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

5. Training

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

5.2 To date 0 of 14 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 5 of 14 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 videos.

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

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

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 8th May 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. Boards are asked to note the banking overview and that unless there is collective approval, they will not be maximising their interest on available balances.

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. The IDB governance future within the Middle Level of the Fens

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.

2.5 On 15th February 2024 the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Board Members who sit on more than one IDB within the Middle Level (and those outside the catchment that we administer) had been invited to an informal session in Ramsey to share thoughts about the future IDB governance landscape within the Middle Level and whether action was needed to ensure this was resilient for the future.

2.6 The was consensus from those who attended that we needed to act and a small group has been identified to draft an initial case for change. This will be shared when ready for wider inputs and views.

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 In February 2024, ADA hosted their second Environment Day, held at Park Farm, Thorney. Sofi Lloyd presented jointly with Robin Price of Anglian Water on the topic of IDB and water quality.

3.4 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.

3.5 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.

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

4. Fens 2100+

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

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

4.3 Projects in Fens 2100+

Fens-wide investment framework

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

Catchment-scale asset investment plans

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

Catchment-baseline reports

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

5. Electricity and Insurance

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

5.2 Complaints have been escalated to Corona's Managing Director with the request to release us from our contract with them at no penalty. This has resulted in a great impetus in terms of rectifying the issues, but at the time of writing the situation is far from perfect.

5.3 The additional time this has taken our Assistant Treasurer has been significant and the scale of pumping has compounded the issue. This has meant developing a plan for our next contract is behind where we'd like to be and will need due focus over the coming months, bringing together a small group of IDB Chairs to review options and ultimately decide on the next contract arrangements.

5.4 OFGEM's new approach to regulation has had an unexpected and considerable impact upon the standing charges within our electricity portfolio. Unless the regulations change this level of standing charge is now baked into future bills regardless of our supplier.

5.5 We have flagged the impact this issue will have on Highland Water Claims with the Environment Agency.

5.6 We responded to OFGEMs review of Standing Charges and also escalated the issues and our response with local MPs. However, it was the interest of BBC Countryfile who saw a MLC 'tweet' about the issue, that triggered OFGEM to reach out directly to ADA and we joined a session with their policy leads to discuss the issue.

5.7 From this and following BBC Countryfile, we understand there to be a recognition that our sector has been unfairly and unintentionally impacted and there's a commitment to review and address.

5.8 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.

5.9 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)

5.10 The benefits, as above, will apply to persons above the age of 75 years with the exception of the temporary weekly benefits. This in 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.

5.11 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.

5.12 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.

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

6. Banking

6.1 As has previously been reported, due to regulatory changes from our bankers, the type of accounts held by all authorities had changed. The current arrangements within our delegations from all the

Boards we administer are that we have free banking in return for a non-interest-bearing current account and an interest-bearing Business Premium account within which higher interest could be gained on ‘surplus’ balances by putting them on deposit for fixed periods. The minimum balance for the Business Premium account is £100,000 and higher rates of interest are available for higher deposit amounts and longer periods of investments.

6.2 For the larger Boards with >£100,000 available, the Treasurer actively transfers funding between accounts and monitors the situation monthly, balancing the need to have funds available for outgoings versus the ability to maximise income. This is relatively resource intensive.

6.3 Following discussion on maximising banking interest at some IDB meetings last year, consideration had been given to Boards ‘pooling’ deposit funds into a single Business Premium account to enable all Boards to access better rates of interest on balances. To allow this, Boards balances would have to be transferred into a single named account from which the deposit investments would be made.

6.4 In order to gauge views on this outline proposal, it has been raised at IDB meetings over the winter period, at which reservations were raised by all Boards. There were reservations about ‘investing’ Board balances through a third-party name (another IDB) and the possible security of balances under these circumstances.

6.5 Given that none of the Boards approached approved to proceed along these lines and under these circumstances we will not be actively developing or promoting this option further unless being directly requested to by all Boards.

6.6 With regards to balance security above the FCA Compensation limit, consideration could be given to opening an account with National Savings and Investments where balances are fully backed by the Government. However, to operate these accounts would need to be an online account with mandated authority given to a single person as ‘administrator.’ As this delegation was an area of concern raised with regards to deposit balance investments, this has not been pursued and is left for the future consideration and instruction.

6.7 Boards are asked to note that they will therefore not be maximising their potential interest individually and collectively.

7. Rating

7.1 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.

7.2 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 DDC in England and Wales now use DRS. ADA have confirmed that they are in positive discussions on this matter.

7.3 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 system 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.

7.4 ADA has recently concluded that the Association is not best placed to drive the design or own or manage any DRS future software as they do not have the experience or knowledge to do that. We can, however, very much help administratively support an active working group and we will be setting up a meeting in Spring/Summer 2024 to seek volunteers for this working group.

8. Lowland Agricultural Peat

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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.

8.4 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.

9. MLC Staffing

9.1 Lorna McShane, Assistant Clerk/Solicitor, left the organisation in March 2024 and we have successfully recruited Ruth Martin to a new role of Lead Clerk. Ruth starts in April 2024. Ruth brings survey, assets, drainage and engineering experience from her time with Breheny contractors, Anglian Water and Haskoning. Since 2008, she has had leadership roles focussed on property, estates and facilities management and joins us from a charity where she leads the facilities management for 48 leased properties across East Anglia.

9.2 This role marks an adjustment for us all, for the Commissioners and for our services to IDBs in that we no longer have in-house legal qualified expertise. Ruth will have a key role in pooling and using the knowledge and experience we have within the office and within our networks, whilst learning and developing her own knowledge. The intent is to develop and drive a clearer suite of Legal and Estates work packages, using external suppliers where appropriate in a more considered and structured manner.

9.3 Sofi Lloyd our Environment Officer has been promoted into a new role of Ecology & Environmental Services Manager. The Environment Act 2021 was a game-changer for IDBs and our journey towards enhancing the environment as part of our delivering our wide range of services now comes with greater expectations, greater responsibilities, greater scrutiny, greater risk and a necessity to work in partnership and collaboration with an increasing variety of groups and organisations. There is also now the opportunity we need to unlock to use our land, assets, operations and waterways to enable the biodiversity net gain responsibilities of others and bring in some income. The MLC Executive Committee recognised this and the need to scale up our ecological capacity and capability. We will be looking to recruit to an Ecologist/Environment Officer role reporting to Sofi in due course as part of the suite of new roles needed to enable the delivery of the increased MLC and IDB capital programme.

9.4 One of the other new roles needed to enable increased capital delivery is within our M&E team and we welcomed Richard Wilmer to the organisation in February 2024.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

MLC Services for IDBs

Pumping Station Insurance Valuations

Many of our administered Internal Drainage Boards have asked for a re-assessment of the replacement costs of their pumping stations to ensure they have adequate insurance cover.

Within insurance cover this is called the 'Declared Value' and includes for:

- Reinstatement of building (eg station house)
- Replacement of contents (eg pumps and associated M&E)
- Professional fees (eg consultant and contractor costs)
- Debris removal (eg demolition of damaged station)
- Costs to comply with new 'public authority requirements' (eg eel regulations)

There are many factors that influence the costs of replacement pumping stations with many not well understood until business cases are in development. The last three replacement pumping stations locally all virtually doubled in 'value' from their initial flag within the Environment Agency's capital programme to business case stage. They are difficult to estimate, requiring a range of engineering capability and experience.

The existing insurance valuations across the pumping stations within our IDBs' portfolio are based on an assessment a previous MLC M&E Engineer undertook in 2015. He used his 40-years of experience in the industry, including overseeing a suite of replacement pumping stations, to make a judgement. He used asset appraisals undertaken by a consultant to inform this. This would likely have been sufficiently robust at that time.

Since then, there have been occasional percentage uplifts from this baseline and more recently each Board has taken a view on whether or not to index link their valuations.

The delivery and economic landscape have changed immeasurably since 2015 and since the suite of replacements that informed the baselines used to inform current valuations. There are also a range of new requirements and technology not catered for within the baselines.

As such Boards need to be aware that the MLC cannot provide reassurance that their 'Declared Values' are appropriate and they need to recognise the risk that they are more likely than not to be under-insured. We accept no liability for the consequences of this in the event of a Board needing to make a claim.

We do not currently have the capacity, capability and breadth of recent delivery experience to re-undertake assessments similar to those undertaken in 2015.

It is unlikely that there is a supplier who would undertake a bespoke assessment to determine a valuation without this being a costly exercise for the IDB, alongside invoiced costs from the MLC to explore this possibility.

We could work with a supplier to create a framework for valuations based on complexity and then assign each of our local pumping stations to a scoring within any framework. This would need all our IDBs to support and there would be a shared cost to setting up this framework and approach.

Over the next 3-10 years there will be a suite of pumping station refurbishments and replacements locally led by the MLC, so we will be better placed to undertake assessments in a similar manner to those undertaken in 2015. These assessments would be billed to Boards at the hourly rate for the technical staff involved.

Our recommendation is 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.

Unless they wish to invest to explore the 'bespoke assessment' or 'framework' approach, then they need to accept the risks in the medium term until we have sufficient information, evidence and experience to undertake suitable assessments.

Paul Burrows, Chief Executive

Nicola Oldfield, Chief Engineer

October 2023

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**RAMSEY, UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**ENVIRONMENT OFFICER'S REPORT**
Date:	**WEDNESDAY 9th May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Sofi Lloyd**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Identify who is best placed to be the Environmental Representative for the Board to help us to define and agree the ongoing service provision.
B. Review their current BAP ahead of Env Officers' visit
C. Ensure an Ecological Screening Report (ESR) is completed and submitted to Sofi well in advance of any non-routine work
D. Note and comply with the provided flail mowing, badger, water vole and weed screen guidance

1. Catchwater Drain Scrub Clearance

Thank-you for liaising with the Env Officer regarding the catchwater drain scrub clearance and engaging with the new ESR process (see below). We expect the first part of the works are now complete. Please keep Sofi posted regarding the status and progress of the works.

2. Services provision to the Board.

Protecting and improving biodiversity and the environment are higher than ever on the political agenda, and the Government is looking for strong environmental delivery from Public Bodies to contribute towards their own challenging statutory environmental targets. The Fens are an area of particular importance due to national peat protection and water resource management strategies. Our local communities are more focussed than ever on our work as a result of the bank raising project but also, because the general public is nowadays much better informed and aware of the state of nature. For these reasons, it is more important than ever for us to be able to evidence how we have considered the environment when determining our approaches to our flood risk and water level management. Inevitably, this has meant that IDBs now require greater support to meet their statutory environmental duties.

Historically, IDBs have made a contribution towards the MLC Environment Officers' salary in order to access ecological and environmental advice and guidance if required. There has been little definition around what services have been included. This is now being reviewed to ensure that we are able to efficiently plan and secure resources to support IDBs to achieve environmental compliance. It is anticipated that fees will need to be increased to reflect this but we expect the fees will remain very competitive against those of qualified external environmental consultants. While we define the level of service required by the IDB over the longer term, but in recognition of the already significantly increased service requirements, the 2024-2025 fees will include a transitional uplift. It is expected that from 2025, the fees charged will be reflective of the defined and agreed environmental and ecological services provided to the IDB.

We have begun to define what a standard IDB support package will need to include to support minimum compliance and the following services have been identified:

- One review visit by Env Officer per year & subsequent reporting
- 1 environmental training day per year
- Budget setting and expenditure recording
- Review & assessment of annual programme of works
- ESR review and sign-off for all non-routine works
- BAP report & review for Board
- Consent applications advice & guidance

- Communication of relevant updates in policy, legislation, regulation and best practice

Please identify who is best placed to be the Environmental Representative for the Board to help us to define and agree the ongoing service provision.

3. BAP Refresh Visit

Sofi will contact the Chairman to organise a district visit in order to discuss and refresh the BAP in the next month. Please advise who is best placed to lead that visit and discussions. Please in the meantime review the most current BAP, which is available on the MLC website: Appendix 1 (middlelevel.wpenginepowered.com)

4. Work Package Ecological Screening Report (ESR)

Thank-you for already engaging with the ESR process for the ecological assessment of any non-routine maintenance works. The ESR is necessary to identify any ecological or environmental risks and their mitigations associated with the works and will help to ensure that the work is completed compliantly. Please contact Sofi for the ESR template for any such works. This will include bank reprofiling, culverts, piling and significant extents of woody vegetation removal. If there is any uncertainty, please contact Sofi.

5. Flail mowing and compliance

Please ensure that the Boards' flail mowing contractors are aware and comply with the following:

- Undertake grass bank mowing outside the bird nesting season (March to end August). If mowing within the bird nesting season, and vegetation is over 25cm tall, a walkover survey is likely to be required to ensure that any nesting birds are identified and a stand-off area is applied around nesting birds. This will minimise the risk of disturbing them, which would be an offence under wildlife law.
- Flail cutter heights are set to 10cm or higher to reduce the risk of impacting reptiles between March to the end of Sept.
- Any planned flail mowing over a known badger sett must be reported to Sofi at least two weeks ahead of works being undertaken. Please see next bullet point below for more info regarding badgers.
- The locations of all newly discovered badger setts must be reported to Sofi using W3W.
- Flail mowing must not be undertaken within 1m of the waters' edge to avoid the risk of damaging any water vole habitats present. If mowing must take place within 1m of the waters' edge either:
    a. Vegetation height of no less than 30cm must be maintained on both banks or
    b. Only one bank should be mown to the waters' edge, leaving at least a 1m width of bankside vegetation uncut on the other bank to ensure refuge and habitat is maintained

6. Badgers and licences

There is a badger licence available specifically to all IDBs nationally, which allows them to undertake a number of routine operations (flailing, bank reprofiling, desilting etc.) near badger setts which would otherwise be classed as an offence under the Badger Act. MLC now operates under these licences. It is the intention to offer badger licence training and administration services to all MLC-serviced IDBs as soon as possible to enable them to improve their operational compliance. However, in the last month, some interpretation discrepancies regarding the conditions of the licence have arisen nationally, which has put this offer on hold temporarily until a clearer understanding is reached and confirmed by Natural England. Until then, it is advised that a stand-off area of 30m around all badger setts is maintained, where no flailing or bank reprofiling or any other maintenance activity should take place, and de-silting arisings should not be placed. Please see the link below to view the full list of activities that are usually licensable that should be avoided around badger setts. It is hoped that a resolution will be reached by late autumn this year to allow routine maintenance to recommence compliantly and the service will then be offered by MLC. If any necessary or urgent works are needed around badger setts in the meantime, please contact me to agree the approach.

Licence to interfere with badger setts for watercourse and drainage purposes (CL27) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Please be reminded that it is an offence to disturb or interfere with a badger sett in any way without a licence. If any interference or disturbance is required, please contact Sofi ASAP.

7. Water Voles

As always, for any work that plans to “break ground” on the any of banks, (bank reformation, bank slip repair, vegetation removal or cutting vegetation lower than 30cm within 1m of the waters’ edge, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling etc, please complete the ESR document mentioned earlier in this report and send to Sofi. The ESR will be needed some months ahead of planned works to ensure that all necessary surveys and mitigations can be planned and conducted in plenty of time so that the work is not delayed. Water vole surveys and mitigations can only take place between Feb and Oct. **NOTE**: This process would also need to be followed if a drain needs to be dewatered in order to carry out routine desilting. Dewatering a drain where water voles are present would be considered an offence without a licence.

Please also be reminded that routine ditch cleansing using excavators must ensure that the bank faces are not touched, in order to avoid damaging water vole burrows and habitat, which would be an offence. Buckets should enter and be lifted from the ditch before reaching the bank toe so the bank toe and bank face are not scraped.

For more information on complaint maintenance approaches, please see IDB Biodiversity Manual – Middle Level

8. Mink Control

We are very much in need of further volunteers to respond to mink raft activation alerts in the area. Any activation would need to be attended promptly within a few hours but the need to respond is likely to be very occasional. Please let me know of any interest. Please also report any suspected mink sightings to Sofi.

A link to the most up to date mink project newsletter can be found here:

Waterlife-Recovery-Trust-Newsletter-6-Final.pdf (waterliferecoverytrust.org.uk)

9. Weed screen spoil heaps

These can provide important refuge for a range of species. If they have been in situ for some time, and they now need to be removed it is advised that they are taken apart carefully using hand tools to ensure that any wildlife can flee without being injured. An excavator bucket can be used carefully and slowly if a banksman is observing directly at the edge of the pile to ensure that any wildlife is spotted and allowed to flee if necessary. If any reptiles or reptile nests or eggs are discovered, they should be re-covered carefully and left in order to remain compliant.

10. Invasive species

When any non-native species (particularly the following) are spotted, please record the location using what3words if possible (if not postcode or grid ref) and inform us ASAP. Useful identification guides and information can be found online at www.nonnativespecies.org

- Floating Pennywort
- Mink
- Himalayan Balsam
- Parrot’s feather
- New Zealand pigmyweed (Australian swamp stonecrop - Crassula)
- Japanese Knotweed

Author Name: Sofi Lloyd
Role: Environment Officer

Cope
SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Site Safety Inspection Record

Ramsey Upwood and Great Graveley IDB
SSI 090224

Complete

Name of organisation:	Ramsey Upwood and Great Graveley IDB
Date of site visit	09.02.2024 09:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Upwood Pumping Station Green Dyke Pumping Station New Fen Pumping Station.
Name of Advisor	Simon Cross
Time of arrival at site:	09.02.2024 08:50 GMT
Audit Name	Ramsey Upwood and Great Graveley IDB SSI 090224

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Andrew Roberts

1

Signage. Previous recommendations had been made regarding the replacement of faded or illegible hazard warning signage at the pumping stations, e.g. electrical hazard and automated machinery operating without warning. Most other IDB sites have 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 to ensure consistency of information provided.

2

Upwood Pumping Station. No additional observations were made.

3

Green Dyke Pumping Station. This site, although remote, is not afforded any security fencing. Due to the height of the weedscreen, an escape ladder has been provided to the side wall which is accessible from the top. See photo below. It is recommended that as far as practical, measures are taken to restrict access to the top of the ladder whilst still enabling its use in an emergency and/or provide additional safety signage at that point. An ideal long term solution could be to provide security fencing around the site.

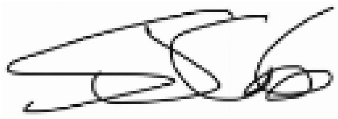
Photo 1

4

New Fen Pumping Station. It was noted that significant litter was accumulating at the front gate due to its proximity to the roadway and pull-in area. It should be ensured that care is taken if there is a requirement to remove litter or waste in the future to reduce the risk of accidental exposure to contamination, needles, etc. No additional observations made.

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature



Simon Cross
09.02.2024 17:20 GMT

Departure time	09.02.2024 11:00 GMT
Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments	0 From 0 to 99

Media summary

Photo 1

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Wednesday 8th May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.
B. Review and approve the updated Risk Management Strategy.
C. Review and approve the Financial Regulations & Financial Code
D. 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.
E. Advise on any changes they wish to make to insured values.
F. 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.
G. Exercise of Public Rights
H. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments
I. Authorise the Chairman to sign the annual return for 2024.

1. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) and Internal Auditor

1.1 The AGAR provides the framework by which the governance of the Board is assessed. The Board's last AGAR is available on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk

1.2 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).

1.3 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 Assessment and Insured Values

3.1 The Board's Risk Management Strategy has been recently updated and is available as Appendix 1. It is due for formal review and update in 2027. The Board are asked to review and approve the updated strategy.

3.2 The insured values for the Board's assets are detailed below:

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB
INSURED VALUES OF PUMPING STATIONS

PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2024
New Fen Pumping Station	969,680.00
Upwood Common Pumping Station	606,050.00
Green Dyke Pumping Station	751,502.00
	2,327,232.00

4. Financial Regulations & Code

4.1 To review and approve the Financial Regulations & Financial Code and to confirm the next review period (Appendix 2)

5. Annual Governance Statement:

5.1 To review and complete the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2024. (Appendix 3)

6. Exercise of Public Rights

6.1 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.

6.2 In order to warrant a positive response to this assertation the authority needs to have taken the following actions in respect of the previous annual return:

Exercise of Public Rights: The authority provided for the exercise of public rights set out in Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Part 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the RFO to have published including on the authority's website or other website:

- 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.

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

6.4 The Clerk to refer to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

7. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:

7.1 The clerk to report.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 **Risk Management Strategy 2024 – 2027**
Appendix 2 **Financial Regulations & Financial Code**
Appendix 3 **Annual Governance Statement 2024**

Appendix 1

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY 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.

Risk Management Approach

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

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Financial Regulations

INDEX

A. INTRODUCTION

1. These Financial Regulations are designed to supplement the Board's Standing Orders and to ensure that the funds and assets of the Board are properly accounted for and controlled.

2. Any variation to these Regulations shall be made by a resolution of the Board.

3. The Clerk shall, where appropriate, prepare additional rules of procedure, supplementary to these Regulations, to ensure the maintenance of financial control and security.

4. The Clerk or such officer as shall be designated by him ("together referred to as "the Clerk") shall, together with the Board's Internal Auditor, be responsible for determining the format of the Board's accounting systems, annual Accounts and supporting records and shall ensure that the accounting systems determined by him are observed and that the accounts of the Board and supporting records are kept up to date.

5. The Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective internal audit of the accounts of the Board in the manner he considers to be best.

6. The Clerk shall ensure that the Board's annual Accounts are prepared as soon as possible after 31st March in each year, and in accordance with the dates as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended).

7. "The Board" shall mean the Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board.

B. CONTRACTS

1. The Board shall determine the procedures to be employed in connection with the procurement of goods and services save that, if no procedures be specified, three (or more) written quotations shall be invited unless the obtaining of tenders is prescribed by the rules applicable to the particular procurement.

2. Tendering may be selective or open, although, whenever possible, selective tendering shall be used and tenders invited to seek to ensure that the required number of tenders are actually received.

3. Tenders shall be opened, not earlier than the closing date prescribed in the tender documents, in the presence of such person or persons as may be authorised by the Board. A declaration shall be signed to such effect by the persons present at the opening of the tender(s) and a report on the tenders received shall be made to the Board.

4. Where a tender is accepted other than the lowest, the approval of the Chairman of the Board, or of the Board itself shall be obtained.

5. In the case of a tender for rents or similar sums where these are to be paid <u>to</u> the Board, where a tender is accepted other than the highest, the approval of the Chairman of the Board, or of the Board itself shall be obtained.

C. RESPONSIBILITY OF OFFICERS

1. All employees, officers and members of the Board have a general responsibility for the security of the property of the Board, for the avoidance of loss and for economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

D. ESTIMATES

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for the preparation of annual Estimates.

2. The Estimates should be determined as at the commencement of each financial year – using the best information available.

3. The Estimates shall be approved by the Board each year in order that the rates and special levies can be determined at the appropriate time.

4. The Clerk shall be responsible for seeking reasons and causes for deviation from the Estimates and shall inform the Board of all material variances.

E. BANKING

1. The Clerk shall advise the Board's bankers in writing of the conditions under which each bank account (which account must be in the Board's name) shall be operated.

2. All payments other than those made from Petty Cash shall be made by either cheque, BACS, direct debit or internet banking or via the Board's Office Credit card.

   The main bank accounts will be operated on the following basis:-

   a) Where payment is made by cheque:-

   Current Account – All cheques will be signed by both an authorised officer and an authorised member.

   Labour Account – All cheques will be signed by an authorised officer.

   b) Where payment is made by any other means the invoice will be authorised by a Board Member and payment made by an authorised officer.

3. Salaries and Wages will be paid by BACS and all BACS transactions will be authorised by the Clerk.

4. All bank transfers to non-Board bank accounts (save those solely made between inter office accounts which may be made by the Clerk) shall be authorised as in paragraph 2. of this Section.

5. The Clerk shall seek to ensure that the Board's bank accounts are managed so as to produce maximum benefits for the Board.

F. INCOME

1. An official receipt shall be made out for every sum received by the Board and must show:-

   (a) Date of receipt
   (b) Amount received
   (c) Type of remittance
   (d) Account Reference

   Copies of all receipts raised shall be retained by the Board.

2. Board monies shall not be used for the encashment of private cheques.

3. All cheques, cash etc received shall be banked at least weekly. Disbursements shall not be made from cash received but from the Petty Cash float. Banking shall be daily when large sums are received which require this.

4. Keys to safes, cash boxes etc shall be carried only by those authorised to do so and shall only be used by or under the supervision of such persons.

5. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies received are properly brought to account in the Board's accounting records.

6. Any debts which the Clerk considers are not recoverable may be written off with the Board's approval unless they are considered not recoverable following legal advice when the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman may authorise them to be written off.

G. PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES

1. Any goods and services for which provision is made in the Estimates may be purchased by an authorised employee, officer or member.

2. The purchase of any goods or services may be effected by an authorised employee, officer or member where they are of a type the authority to purchase which has been delegated to that employee, officer or member by the Board.

3. The purchase of any goods or services not referred to in paragraphs 1 or 2 of this Section may be authorised by the Chairman or District Officer where they are of a routine or recurring nature or form part of the Board's maintenance expenditure.

4. For all goods and services other than as provided for in this Section, the Board's approval shall be obtained prior to the purchase being effected.

5. The requirements under this Section may be dispensed with if the goods or services are required urgently such that it would not be feasible or practical to obtain the necessary approval. In such cases, the Chairman shall be authorised to effect the purchase in conjunction with the Clerk. Any purchase made under this paragraph shall be specifically reported to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

6. An official order shall be placed for all goods and services.

7. All invoices for payment shall be examined, coded and approved and shall be certified by the appropriate authorised employee, officer or member.

8. See Section B "Contracts" for further Financial Regulations in connection with the purchase of goods and services.

H. EMPLOYEES

1. The Board's approval shall be required for the employment of additional permanent employees.

2. The Chairman or District Officer shall have authority to employ additional temporary employees provided the revenue consequences are contained within the current annual Estimates.

3. All time records and other pay records shall be in a form approved by the Chairman or District Officer in conjunction with the Clerk and shall be certified and submitted in accordance with their instructions.

4. The Clerk shall be responsible for the proper compilation of the payroll and for the final determination of pay.

I. STORES

1. Stores records shall be in such a form and shall comply with such systems of control as the Chairman or District Officer shall in conjunction with the Clerk approve.

2. All goods received shall be checked as regards quantity and/or weight and inspected as to quality, condition and specification. A delivery note shall be obtained from the supplier, wherever possible, and signed by the person receiving the goods. No goods shall be signed for as "in good condition" or similar wording without being properly inspected. Therefore most goods delivered should be signed for as 'received uninspected'.

3. All goods issued from stores shall be properly accounted for and recorded.

4. All breakages and losses of goods held in store shall be recorded and reported to the Board's office in order that appropriate action can be taken.

5. There shall be a physical check of all items in store at least once a year and the stock taking records shall be signed by the responsible person(s).

J. ASSETS

1. All assets other than stores owned by the Board shall be accounted for in an asset register maintained by the Clerk. The asset register shall reflect additions and disposals of assets and record the cost or valuation of the assets.

2. From time to time as the Board deem appropriate the accuracy of the asset register shall be compared with a physical inspection of the Board's assets.

3. The asset register shall be placed before the Board for inspection at the earliest opportunity following the completion of the annual Accounts.

4. Any sale of Board assets will be undertaken either through competitive Tender or in the manner approved of by the Board.

5. See Section B "Contracts" for further Financial Regulations in connection with Tenders.

K. AUDIT

1. As a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended) the Clerk shall arrange for an internal audit of accounting, financial management and other operations of the Board to take place. This audit will be undertaken by an external person qualified to perform this function.

2. Authority of Internal Audit

Auditors are authorised to:

(a) Access/enter at all reasonable times any Board premises or land
(b) Have access to all assets, records, documents, minutes, correspondence and control systems relating to any aspect of the Board
(c) Require and receive any information and explanation considered necessary concerning any matter under examination
(d) Require any employee, officer or member of the Board to produce or account for cash, stores or any other Board asset under his or her control
(e) Request access to records belonging to third parties, such as contractors
(f) Have full and free access to all employees, officers, members and committees
(g) Allocate resources, set frequencies, select subjects, determine scope of work, and apply the techniques required to accompany audit objectives

Auditors are not authorised to:

(a) Perform any operational duties for the Board
(b) Initiate or approve accounting transactions
(c) Direct the activities of any Board employee, member or officer, except to the extent that such employee, member or officer has been appropriately assigned to assist the Internal Auditor.

3. In addition all employees, members or officers of the Board are required to assist the External Auditor, or his/her authorised representative, in the performance of his/her duties under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

L. FRAUD OR OTHER IRREGULARITIES

1. Any employee, officer or member concerned shall immediately notify the Clerk and/or the Internal Auditor in accordance with the Board’s Fraud and Corruption Policy of any matter which involves, or is thought to involve, irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Board or any suspected irregularity in the exercise of the functions of the Board.

2. Any financial irregularity involving an employee of the Board will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.

M. WRITE OFFS

1. In addition to the exercise of any powers under Section F above the Clerk shall have the authority to write off the following:-

(a) damaged or stolen goods for which it is not considered that the Board may make a valid insurance claim, where those goods do not form part of a stock account
(b) surplus goods and materials
(c) goods, vehicles or materials that are considered to have no material value due to deterioration or obsolescence.

2. The appropriate employees, members or officers shall inform the Clerk of any item under paragraph 1 of this Section that they consider should be written off together with:-

- details of the item or debt to be written off
- the circumstances necessitating the write off

- the reasons why he/she considers that the debt is irrecoverable or that no proceeds on sale would accrue to the Board

3. Where any items to be written off do constitute part of a stock account, the procedures for recording the write off within the Board's accounts and the method of disposing of the goods shall be approved of by the Clerk. The Clerk shall then make the appropriate adjustments to the Board's accounting records.

N. SALARIES, WAGES AND PENSIONS

1. The payment of all salaries, wages, compensation and other emoluments to all present or former employees, members or officers shall be made by the Clerk or under arrangements controlled by him.

2. Each responsible employee, member or officer shall notify the Clerk immediately, and in the form prescribed by him, of all matters affecting such payments, and in particular:-

   - resignations, dismissals, suspensions, secondments and transfers
   - absences from duty for sickness, unpaid leave or other reason, but not normal leave
   - changes in remuneration, other than pay awards and agreements of general application
   - information necessary to maintain records of service for pensions, income tax, national insurance and the like

3. Unless determined otherwise by the Board, the Clerk shall be responsible for overseeing the private use of the Board's vehicles and shall be notified by the responsible employee, member or officer of any financial contributions in respect thereof, to be made by members, employees or officers.

O. BOARD EMPLOYEES etc

1. All members, officers and employees of the Board shall conduct themselves in a polite and courteous manner as expected by the Board.

2. Members, officers and employees must declare to an appropriate responsible officer any financial or other interest, which could conflict with the Board's interests.

3. It is a criminal offence for a member, an employee or an officer of the Board to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing or not doing anything, or showing favour or disfavour, from or to any person, in their official capacity as such a Board member, employee or officer.

4. In terms of hospitality and gifts, only usable gifts of a small value may be accepted by individual staff or a section as a whole. Under no circumstances may cash be accepted as a gift.

5. Hospitality of a value greater than the value specified from time to time by the Board by resolution must be recorded in a Hospitality Book to be kept at the Board's offices.

6. Where an outside organisation is seeking to sponsor a Board activity (whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily), the basic rules concerning acceptance of gifts and hospitality shall apply.

P. MEMBERS' AND EMPLOYEES' ALLOWANCES

1. All claims for payment of car allowances, subsistence allowances, travelling and any other incidental expense shall be submitted as required duly certified, in a form approved by the Clerk.

2. The certification by or on behalf of the responsible member, employee or officer shall imply that the certifying person is satisfied that the journeys were authorised, the expenses properly and necessarily incurred and that the allowances are properly payable by the Board.

3. An employee or officer shall not certify a claim form made payable to him/herself.

4. Payments to members, (including co-opted members of the Board or its Committees), who are entitled to claim travelling or other allowances will be made by the Clerk upon receipt of the completed prescribed form.

5. No member shall be allowed to claim an allowance or expenses from more than one body.

Q. INSURANCES

1. The Clerk shall, in consultation with the Board's insurance broker initiate all insurance cover and oversee the negotiation of all claims in consultation with other members, employees or officers where necessary or appropriate.

2. Responsible employees, officers or members shall promptly notify the Clerk of all new risks, properties or vehicles needing to be insured, and of any disposals or alterations affecting existing insurances.

3. Responsible employees, officers or members shall promptly notify the Clerk of any loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to a claim on any Board policy, and shall where appropriate notify the police of the relevant circumstances.

4. All appropriate employees of the Board shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

5. The Clerk shall annually, or at such other period as he considers necessary, review all insurances held by the Board in consultation with such others as may be appropriate.

6. Responsible employees, members or officers shall consult the Clerk in respect of the terms of any indemnity which the Board is requested to give.

7. The responsible employee, member or officer shall inspect insurance policies of contractors who undertake works on behalf of the Board to ensure as far as possible that all necessary cover has been taken out.

R. SECURITY

1. Each responsible employee, member or officer is responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all buildings, stores, plant, vehicles, equipment, cash, documents and information under his/her control. Each responsible person shall consult the Clerk in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.

2. All members, employees and officers of the Board have a duty to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any amending legislation. Responsible officers shall ensure that members, employees and officers are aware of their responsibilities under this legislation through the provision of suitable training and the circulation of relevant information on the subject.

3. Keys to safes and similar receptacles are either to be carried on the person of those responsible or kept locked away in a safe and secure place at all times. A list of such key holders shall be supplied to the Clerk. Where keys are transferred, the new recipient assumes responsibility. The loss of any keys must be reported immediately to the Clerk.

S. PROTECTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

1. Each responsible employee, member or officer shall notify the Clerk of any case where steps are necessary to prevent or mitigate loss of or damage to moveable property.

2. The Board shall not be liable for accidental loss or damage to the personal possessions which members, employees or officers use whilst on Board business that are not included under the Board's insurance policies.

3. All recovered valuables such as jewellery, watches and other small items of a similar nature and documents of title shall be kept under safe custody as directed by the Clerk, and shall, if not claimed, be disposed of in a manner determined by him.

4. In the event of theft of personal items from employees, officers or members, a full report shall be made by the person affected as soon as the theft has been discovered. All such incidents shall be recorded and investigated and where appropriate reported to the Police. Where possible, the Clerk or responsible employee, officer or member shall make appropriate recommendations to improve security.

T. REVIEW

These Financial Regulations shall be reviewed at least every ten years by the Board.

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

FINANCIAL CODE

A SUMMARY

1. This Financial Code supplements the Board's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegations to ensure that its resources are properly managed, accounted for and controlled. It should be read together with those Regulations, Orders, Schedule and Scheme together with any supplementary guidance produced by the Clerk in respect thereof.

2. The level at which decisions relating to the finances and functions of the Board are to be taken are as set out in the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations

3. The Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining adequate and effective controls and procedures in the manner and format he/she considers to be best and shall where appropriate, prepare additional rules of procedure or guidance, supplementary to this Code.

4. The Clerk shall be responsible for setting up and maintaining the financial and management accounting/reporting systems, processes, procedures and coding lists. Such systems shall be properly documented and shall not be changed save by or with the approval of the Clerk. The Treasurer to the Middle Level Commissioners from time to time shall be the Board's Responsible Financial Officer, as defined in and for the purposes of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

5. The Clerk shall be responsible to the Board for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and for ensuring that value for money is provided.

6. The Clerk shall ensure that the Board's Financial Statements for each Financial Year ending 31 March are prepared in accordance with any advice received from the Internal Auditor and with the provisions in force from time to time of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities and, so far as may be appropriate, the Practitioners' Guide to the Preparation of Financial Statements for IDBs..

7. The Clerk shall ensure that the Board considers and approves its Financial Statements for a Financial Year in accordance with the provisions of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

8 References in this Code to ''the Clerk'' shall be a reference to such officers of the Middle Level Commissioners as may from time to time undertake the relevant work or functions on behalf of the Board and references to "the Chairman" shall also include the Vice Chairman.

B SCHEME OF BUDGET DELEGATION

1. The Clerk shall be a budget holder and is responsible to the Board for the overall management of the Board's Finances, the Expenditure Estimates and all Budgets.

2. The Board's Consulting Engineer is responsible to the Board to the extent that he is so authorised by the Board and is allocated funds for the purpose for preparing and managing the Board's Capital Works Budget

3. The Board's Consulting Engineer and/or the Chairman and/or the District Officer are responsible to the Board to the extent that they are so authorised by the Board and are allocated funds for the purpose for preparing and managing the Board's Maintenance Works Budget, the Plant/Labour Operating Accounts, the Plant Renewals Budget, the Stock Control Account and the Rechargeable Works Budget and any other matter in respect of which they are authorised under the Scheme of Delegations.

4. Other than as set out in the Scheme of Delegations or where authorised to do so by a resolution of the Board, no other person shall be empowered to enter into contracts on behalf of the Board unless authorised to do so by a budget holder. Nor shall any other person commit the Board to a particular course of action or provide an undertaking or assurance to any third party without the prior consent of the Clerk or of the Chairman.

5. No budget holder other than the Chairman shall procure goods and services, charge, allocate or otherwise commit expenditure against a budget that they have no budgetary responsibility for.

6. All correcting journal entries shall always be authorised and approved by the Clerk.

7. All employees and members have a responsibility for health and safety, compliance with policies, procedures and codes of practice, for the general security of the Board's property, and, for economy efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

8. All members and employees shall familiarise themselves with and observe the Schedule of Reserved Matters, the Financial Regulations, the Scheme of Delegations and this Code.

9. Failure to comply with any aspect of this Code may result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual(s) concerned. Serious breaches by Board Members may result in action being taken against them, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

C MANAGING BUDGETS & REPORTING

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for preparing the Board's Estimates/Budgets, for monitoring income and expenditure during the course of the year, for alerting the Chairman to any material variances, and, for providing budget holders with the financial information that they require and assisting them as necessary to enable them to properly prepare/manage their budgets. The Clerk shall further ensure that the Board are presented with and consider the proposed expenditure estimates in order that the Rates and Special Levies can be determined for each financial year in due time in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 and it is the individual budget holder's responsibility to provide him/her with their detailed budgets and supporting information in order that this may be done.

2. Any drainage rate refunds due for whatever reason shall be approved by the Clerk prior to being paid or otherwise accounted for.

3. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the Drainage Rates and Special Levies are substantially collected by **1 November** each year. Outstanding Rates/Levies shall be pursued in a timely manner after that date.

4. The Clerk shall ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for alerting the Clerk immediately should a Local Authority fail to make their Special Levy payment at the agreed time, or where Drainage Rates are outstanding following reminder.

5. Every budget holder is responsible for seeking to ensure that actual expenditure on each of their budgets does not exceed the budget as approved and shall regularly monitor income/expenditure to this end. Budget holders shall whenever practicable get approval for material adverse variances to any of their budgets that are anticipated. Approval shall be sought in accordance with the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations.

6. The Clerk may convene a meeting of the Board or a Committee. The Chairman or any 3 other Board members shall also have the power to convene such a meeting.

7. The Consulting Engineer shall prepare a Report for each Board meeting at which such items appear on the agenda detailing amongst other things the progress made on approved capital schemes in respect of which he has been instructed during the reporting period as compared to approved budgeted costs, and, when appropriate, will propose new capital schemes for consideration. Such Report will also detail any maintenance work which he has organised for the Board during the reporting period and the cost of such work.

8. The Clerk shall also prepare a Financial Report for each Board meeting and, shall prepare any other management accounting/financial report that may be required by the Board.

D PURCHASING GOODS & SERVICES (INCLUDING PLANT)

1. Unless otherwise authorised by the Board by resolution or required under the terms of any formal procedures relating to such work, budget holders shall always comply with the following procedures when procuring goods and services.

   Quotations/Tenders will be sought as follows, other than in emergency situations where approved buying groups or approved contractors/consultants/suppliers for a particular area of work or expertise have been appointed or are used or where approved service level agreements are in force. These threshold amounts may be amended from time to time by resolution of the Board:

Estimated Value of Goods/Services Quotes/ obtained	Quotation/Tenders to be
<= £2,000	No quotations/tenders required
> £2,000 and <= £5,000	Obtain 1 written quotation
> £5,000	Obtain 3 quotations or 3 tenders
as	
	appropriate

2. The budget holder shall be responsible for ensuring that quotations or tenders are sought when required by the above table. Where it is not possible to get the required quotations or tenders, the Chairman's written approval must be obtained prior to awarding any contract.

3. Any approved contractors, consultants or suppliers list shall be maintained and kept up to date by the Clerk.

4. A budget holder must never agree to permit a third party to provide them with goods/services where tenders or quotations are required without obtaining a copy of their terms of business beforehand.

5. Budget holders shall fully comply with all competition law and the Bribery Act 2010 and shall so far as is reasonable, satisfy themselves as to the insurance policies of contractors, and their systems of work before awarding works contracts.

6. Budget holders shall not enter in to any contract that has been reserved to the Board or delegated to a Board Committee without obtaining the Clerk's approval beforehand. The Clerk shall not permit any budget holder to enter in to such a contract if he/she considers it to be inappropriate or that the required approval has not been given.

7. The relevant budget holder is responsible for ensuring that the procurement of all goods and services is authorised by the Board or in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations. All emergency work must be approved by the Chairman.

8. All procurement of goods and services shall be authorised by the signing and dating of an official purchase order or purchase instruction. On so authorising the procurement of goods or services the budget holder will have satisfied themselves that the Financial Regulations and this Code have been complied with and that any approval required by the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations has been obtained. The Clerk shall be authorised to raise, sign and date a purchase order or purchase instruction where the procurement has been authorised by resolution of the Board.

9. The budget holder must never break down a job and string a number of purchase orders or authorisations together simply to avoid having to get 3 written quotations/tenders.

10. The following information must be clearly stated on each purchase order or instruction:

    i. The name of the supplier.

    ii. The agreed price of the goods/services required, other than in an emergency or where impractical to do so.

    iii. The cost centres to which the item(s) will be allocated and thereby charged to.

    iv The Unique Order No as approved by the budget holder.

11. The Clerk shall ensure that procedures are in place for establishing when goods or services, have been charged, allocated or otherwise expenditure has been committed against an unauthorised budget.

12. All quotes/tenders, delivery notes, invoices for payment and credit notes shall be matched to the official purchase order or instruction, examined and coded before they are proposed for payment or set off. If the budget holder or the Clerk deems any invoice/credit note to be incorrect they shall not process such invoices/credit notes for payment or set off until satisfied that payment or set off is properly due. The quotes/tenders, purchase orders

and delivery notes where required to be signed or where amended, shall all be filed together with the invoices/credit notes as otherwise directed by the Clerk

13. The Clerk shall ensure that all Invoices which have been approved for payment are duly scheduled for payment.

14. All Invoices shall be authorised by the Chairman and checked by the Clerk prior to making payment.

15. Where it is considered that there are valid reasons for departing from these procedures the approval of the Chairman shall be obtained. Any such departure shall be reported to the Board.

E BANK MANDATE AND INVESTMENTS

1. No changes shall be made to the Board's bankers or the bank mandate without the prior consent of the Board.

2. Approved signatories for the Board's bank accounts are as follows:

    1. The Chairman

    2. Such other member(s) as shall from time to time be authorised by the Board

    3. Such officers of the Middle Level Commissioners as shall from time to time be authorised by the Board

3. All cheque books, deposit books, banking cards and other documentation or materials relating to the Board's bank accounts shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.

4. All payments, bank transfers and Investments shall be made in the most efficient/secure manner as determined from time to time by the Clerk

5. The Clerk shall maintain a Register of Passwords and Contact Details relating to financial transactions. All bank accounts shall be reconciled monthly and checked at regular intervals by separate officers of the Clerk.

F INVESTMENTS AND LOANS STRATEGY

1. All investments made by the Board are made within guidance received from CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants) Guidance for the Public Sector, and relevant legislation:

    - The Board's investment activities are limited by statute

    - The Board may invest in major Banks and Building Societies

    - The Board's investments are to be regarded as low/medium risk

    - The Board's investments must be made in the name of the Board and not any named individual

2. All investments shall be negotiated by the Clerk and reported to the Board. They must be for an appropriate period.

3. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Board and shall be from the Public Works Loans Board unless a short term or emergency loan is required.

4. No loans shall be taken out without a resolution of the Board.

5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.

G COLLECTING MONEY

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies received are properly recorded in the accounting records.

2. Electronic copies of all receipts issued shall be retained for at least six years.

H SUNDRY DEBTORS

1. Each budget holder shall be responsible for providing the Clerk with the necessary information to enable rechargeable work to be properly accounted for and invoiced, and, any other debts due to be properly invoiced. The budget holder shall advise the Clerk whenever an Invoice is to be raised for goods provided or services rendered, under their control.

2. The Clerk shall ensure that all such Invoices are properly raised as soon as practicable after being authorised.

3. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all other debts due to the Board are properly raised when required and collected promptly.

4. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the Board consider whether any rents payable to them should be reviewed by a Chartered Surveyor at least once every 5 years.

5. The Clerk shall calculate any claims for highland water payments from the Environment Agency and send such claims to the Agency by the dates specified by the Agency.

6. Any refunds due to debtors for whatever reason shall be approved by the Clerk prior to being paid or otherwise accounted for.

7. The Clerk shall ensure that procedures are in place for all debts to be substantially collected within 30 days from the Debtor Invoice tax point date and for when a debt becomes 3 months overdue or whenever a debt becomes doubtful or is disputed.

8. The Clerk shall be empowered to collect all sundry debts due.

9 The Clerk shall obtain the Board’s approval for instigating legal proceedings to collect outstanding amounts in excess of the County Court Small Claims limit.

I EMPLOYING/MANAGING STAFF

1. The Chairman and/or the District Officer shall be responsible to the Board for all matters regarding any employees.

2. The Board's approval shall be required for the employment of additional permanent staff.

3. The Chairman and/or the District Officer shall have the authority to employ temporary staff and replace permanent staff provided the employment costs are contained within the Expenditure Estimates/Budgets approved by the Board and to take disciplinary action against (including the dismissal of) Board employees.

4 Subject to the above paragraphs and to the terms of any employee's contract, Board members shall not individually have the power to formally offer anyone any form of employment or to dismiss a Board employee, or otherwise take disciplinary action against any of the Board's employees unless the Board has specifically authorised such action by resolution.

5. Board members other than the Chairman and the District Officer shall not individually give instructions to any of the Board's employees.

6. The Chairman and the District Officer shall be responsible for managing the day to day activities of employees and for determining the nature and extent of these activities.

J STOCK IN STORES/DELIVERED TO SITE

1. The Board's Consulting Engineer shall be responsible to the Board for all matters relating to the security of the stock in stores or delivered to site and for managing stock in and out in respect of any works which he is undertaking on behalf of the Board.
2. The responsible person regarding the physical check of and accounting for all other items in stock will be the Chairman or the District Officer.

K ASSET ACCOUNTING/MANAGEMENT

1. Any assets to be sold will be advertised in the appropriate media or by the method most appropriate for securing best value and will be sold for the highest offer unless they are being part-exchanged or traded-in when acquiring another asset, or otherwise sold for a budget price approved by the Board.

2. The Clerk shall be responsible for documenting and maintaining the records of the Board's Assets.

L AUDIT

1. As a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations the Clerk shall ensure that the Board is presented with the Internal Auditor's Report each year.

M SALARIES AND WAGES

1. The Board shall where appropriate seek independent advice before making significant changes to terms and conditions of employment and, save where such changes are as a result of legislative change no changes shall be made to terms and conditions of employment (deliberately or otherwise) without the prior consent of the Board.

2. The Clerk shall be responsible for the proper compilation of the payroll(s) and for the final determination of pay, as approved by the Board.

3. All annual holiday entitlements (including any carried forward provisions) shall be agreed with the Chairman and/or the District Officer at the beginning of every financial year and signed off by him/her as such, in accordance with the Board's terms and conditions of employment.

4. All time-off in lieu, sick leave, working-from-home arrangements and other absences from work or the work place shall be approved in writing by the Chairman and/or the District Officer.
5. All proposed payments of salaries and wages shall be authorised by the Clerk prior to being made.

N INSURANCES

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for expeditiously submitting all insurance claims that the Board agrees should be pursued. The Board shall be responsible for providing the Clerk with all of the necessary information he/she deems necessary in order to successfully make an insurance claim.

2. The Chairman and/or the District Officer shall immediately notify the Clerk of any loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to a claim on any of the Board's insurance policies and shall where appropriate notify the police of the relevant circumstances.

O SECURITY

1 Keys to the Board's buildings and property shall be controlled by the Chairman and/or the District Officer who shall maintain the list of such key holders.

P REVIEW OF FINANCIAL CODE

1. The Board reserves the right to make reasonable changes to this Code at any time in future.

2. Failure to take action against any employee following a breach of the Financial Regulations or of this Code does not constitute a waiver of the Board's right to take disciplinary action on any future breaches of the Financial Regulations or this Code and no single or partial action taken shall prevent any further disciplinary action being taken or other action being taken against any employee.

3. This Code shall be reviewed at the same time as the Financial Regulations.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY 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 2024, that:

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

9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

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

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

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chair

Clerk

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Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	12
Meeting:	**RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Wednesday 8th May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS
The Board is asked to:

A. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 1.
B. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2023/2024 within Appendix 2.

Finance Officer's review and key messages

For 2023/2024 the Board set a rate of 24.00p to raise £78,473 in agricultural drainage rates and Special Levy against estimated expenditure of £78,473. The rate setting process was centred around the new electricity contract and the uncertainty of the impact of a significant rainfall event. As members will be aware 2023/2024 became an ongoing rainfall event.

A budget monitoring exercise was carried out in January 2024 based on figures to December 2023 which at that point gave an indicative estimate that electricity costs could be in the region of £21,500. Subsequently we had further significant rainfall in January and the wettest February on record. Accounts have now been received from the supplier to February 2024 and an estimate has been made for the month of March 2024 based on meter reads, giving a total cost for the year of £44,125.

Other areas of expenditure have been generally in-line with budget provisions.

Claims for highland water contributions were submitted and paid in full by the Environment Agency.

The estimates against which the rate income was raised included the sum of £18,139 for the plant refurbishment fund and as a result of the increases for pumping this has been reduced to £1,678 for the year.

Over-all this gives a decrease in balances that were rated for during the year.

These balances are reflected in the Boards financial statements and Annual Return which they are requested to review and approve.

1. Payments for 2023

1.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

2. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2023/2024:

2.1 Annual Return 2023/2024:

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2024 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations. Appendix 2

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

Appendix 1 **Payments for 2023/24**
Appendix 2 **Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2023/24**

Appendix 1

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & Safety Re-charge 2022-2023 (Account from COPE Safety Manage	213.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Travelling	4,153.93
Middle Level Commissioners - Telemetry charges up to termination of contract (Account from Vodafone)	109.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	176.70
Middle Level Commissioners - Balance payable for supply and fit of steel shutter door (Account from Stanair)	1,575.31
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to pump panel at Green Dyke pumping station	810.07
Middle Level Commissioners - Court fees - liability orders	3.00
Environment Agency - Precept	2,746.54
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	532.68
Middle Level Commissioners - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	171.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Land Registry search - Great Raveley Drain	12.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2022-2023 accounts)	378.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, planning and development applications)	1,808.04
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	3,619.28
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2022-2023 accounts)	588.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	731.51
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	1,209.31
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to pump panel at Green Dyke pumping station	447.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	563.88
Environment Agency - Precept	2,746.53
D G Corney & Partners - Refund of draunage rates due to change of direct debit	1,515.52
L C Butler - District Officer's fee (1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023)	2,350.20
E M Butler - Flail mowing	4,129.92
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Work in connection with the monitoring of pumping station subsidence, checking and greasing pump bearings, planning and development applications)	989.89
Chittenden - Returned rate payment	7.86
Corney - Returned rate payment	378.88
Lattenbury Services Limited - Drain maintenance and flailmowing	8,142.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	48.80
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2024	763.20
The Old Nene Golf & Country Club - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	20.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Insurance premium for increase in pumping station valuations	42.15
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	421.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	563.88
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, planning and development applications)	1,535.23
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2023-2024	6.00
L C Butler - District Officer's fee (October 2023 to March 2024)	2,770.20
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply - (Green Dyke pumping station)	499.10
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply - (New Fen pumping station)	909.77
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply - (Upwood Common pumping station)	525.89
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (Green Dyke pumping station)	2,316.38
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (New Fen pumping station)	3,006.50
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (Upwood Common pumping station)	1,074.08
	54,652.53

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 2

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024
GENERAL FUND

2024				2023			
Mar-31	Payments made during the year:-			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		175,427.51
	Precept		5,493.07	2024			
	Rates and Insurances	1,251.46		Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	78,497.72	
	Repairs & Renewals	5,734.37			Interest	2788.82	
	Fuel	44,125.42			Development charges account	177.00	
	Drainworks	22,104.47			Highland Water contributions	7,188.56	
	Administration charge, Audit fee,				Wayleave rental	101.91	
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	8,367.63	81,583.35		Consents	50.00	
							88,804.01
	Write back of provisions		50.00				
	Transfer to Future Works Account						
	Surplus 2023/2024		1,677.59				
	Balance carried forward		175,427.51				
			264,231.52				264,231.52

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
Capital Provisions	1,770,000.00	New Fen Pumping Station & Store	745,000.00	
		Upwood Common Pumping Station	455,000.00	
		Green Dyke Pumping Station	570,000.00	
	1,770,000.00			1,770,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	175,427.51	Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		4,344.18
Sundry Creditors	81,480.53	Value added tax - Refunds due		9,197.66
Development Charges Account	3,373.41	Sundry Debtors		34,789.09
Future Works Account	99,849.28	Balance in hand -		
		Barclays - Treasurer's Account	25,764.69	
		Barclays - Business Premium	136,035.11	
		Barclays - Treasury deposit	150,000.00	311,799.80
	2,130,130.73			2,130,130.73

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2024

Treasurers Account 2023/2024

1st April 2023			31st March 2024	
Balance brought forward		264,908.41	Payments made during the year	54,652.53
			By returned direct debit/bounced cheque	0.00
31st March 2024				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	97,315.18			
Interest on deposit accounts	4,228.74			
		101,543.92	Balance carried forward	311,799.80
		366,452.33		**366,452.33**

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2024	25,764.69
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
O/S lodgement	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	**25,764.69**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2024

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**25,764.69**
Business Premium Account	**136,035.11**
Treasury Deposit	**150,000.00**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**311,799.80**

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return
Financial year ended 31st March 2024

				Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**			
	General Fund	175,427.51		
	Development charges account	3,494.85		
	Future works account	96,635.44		
			275,557.80	**275,558**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	39,588.72		
	Special Levies	38,884.00		
	Penalty	0.00		
	Costs	25.00		
	Write-off	0.00		
			78,497.72	**78,498**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	2,788.82		
	Development charges account	55.56		
	Future Works	1,536.25		
	Consent applications	50.00		
	Wayleave	101.91		
	Highland Water	7,188.56		
	Discharge contributions	0.00		
	Write back of provisions	0.00		
	Insurance claim	0.00		
			11,721.10	**11,721**
Line 4	**Staff costs**			
	Wages/salaries	0.00		
	National insurance contributions	0.00		
	Pension costs	0.00		
	Travelling expenses	0.00		
			0.00	**0**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**			
	PWLB - Principal	0.00		
	PWLB - Interest	0.00		
			0.00	**0**
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	5,493.07		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	1,251.46		
	Repairs and renewals	5,734.37		
	Fuel	44,125.42		
	Drainworks	22,104.47		
	Administration	8,367.63		
	Development charges fees	0.00		
	Write back of provisions	50.00		
			87,126.42	**87,127**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	175,427.51		
	Development charges account	3,373.41		
	Future works account	99,849.28		
			278,650.20	**278,650**

Reconciliation
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 278,650.20

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	*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	250,868	275,558	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	72,459	78,498	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	11,068	11,721	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	58,837	87,127	*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	275,558	278,650	*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	264,908	311,800	*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	1,770,000	1,770,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 19/04/2024

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	13
Meeting:	**RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Wednesday 8th May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the Finance Officer's summary
B. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
C. Review & approve Determination of land for rating purposes & Rate arrears (Confidential papers)
D. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency
E. Review & Approve Rating Estimates for 2024/2025
F. Consider & approve the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2024/2025

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

For the rating estimates for 2024/2025 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known. Standard provisions have been included for drain maintenance works with a further provision for the phased works to the catchwater drain.

Estimates for pumping costs are as problematical as last year in that we need to factor in an 'average' pumping year, taking-into-account the impact of climate change. Further, we will have a new electricity supply contract from October 2024 with no current indications of possible unit costs. The provision is therefore an estimate of pumping volumes at an estimate of possible new contract rates. Members should therefore consider if they think the provision is reasonable when setting the rate.

The engineer has indicated that the District Wide catchment study will commence this year at an estimated cost of £75,000. This study will be fully funded by grant-in-aid.

The Board are asked to review and approve the engineers' comments concerning the capital improvement programme.

The budget proposal includes for the recovery of balances depleted during winter 2023/2024 pumping. When considering the rate for 2024/2025 members should also consider likely future capital investment requirements at the pumping stations

1. Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions

1.1 To consider the District Officers fee for 2024/25

1.2 To consider the Clerks fee for the ensuing year

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

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

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

2.3 The precept for 2022/2023 was £5,333.

3. Determination of land for rating purposes and rate arrears – Confidential papers

4. Estimates for 2024/25

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

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

5. Rate Requirements for 2024/25

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 1

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2024/2025

		Approved budget 2023/2024 £	Actual 2023/2024 £	Budget 2024/2025 `
1	Rates and Insurances	1,775 [A]	1,251	1,550 [A]
2	Repairs and renewals	5,700	5,734	5,875
3	Fuel	20,500	44,125 [B]	29,000 [C]
4	Drainworks (including District Officer's fee)	26,600	22,104 [D]	27,000 [E]
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	8,450	8,368	8,800
6	Environment Agency Precept	5,493	5,493	5,658
7	Plant refurbishment funding	18,139 [F]	1,678 [F]	20,581 [F]
8	Improvement works	0	0	75,000 [G]
9	Reinstatement of balances - Yr 1 of 3	0	0	5,487 [H]
		86,657	88,754	178,951
	LESS Government grant, Deposit Accounts interest etc	8,184	10,256 [I]	94,541 [I]
		78,473	78,498	84,410
	Estimated General Fund			
	Open balance	175,428	175,428	175,428
	Rates raised	78,473	78,498	84,410
	Net expenditure	78,473	78,498	84,410
	transfer of surplus		0	
	Close balance	175,428	175,428	175,428

Remarks

A - Includes estimate for increased premiums

B - Includes accounts to February, estimated for March

C - Provision based on increased annual pumped volume and estimate for new contract rates from October 2024

D - Includes for :-

Flail mowing & tree cutting	9,054
Slubbing	5,585
	14,639

E - Includes for :-

Flail mowing & tree cutting	8,100
Slubbing	12,000
	20,100

F - Future works at pumping stations

G - Provision for Catchment Study consultancy

H - Provision for recovery of balances reduced by winter 2023/24 pumping. Recover over 3 years

H - Includes full highland water claims and interest received

I - Includes for:

Full highland water claim receipt	17,264
Bank interest	2,250
Grant-in-aid - catchment study	75,000

<u>Does not include provision for replacement of Green Dyke pumping station</u>

<u>Does not include for possible subsidence works at New Fen pumping station</u>

Appendix 2

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

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

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 50.29%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Huntingdon District Council – 49.71%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £1,649.

In 2024/2025 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £3,278.

Revenue balance in hand on 31st March 2024 - £175,428

The estimated net expenditure of £84,410, which does not include provision for refurbishment works at pumping stations, in 2024/2025 is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 25.75p and

b) a Special levy on Huntingdon District Council of £41,958

In 2023/2024 a rate of 24.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £38,884 on Huntingdon District Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

April 2024