SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Sutton and Mepal Internal Drainage Board
held at Chatteris Cricket Club on Thursday 23rd May 2024

Present:

M R R Latta Esq (Chairman)	R Lee Esq
C P K Lee Esq (Vice Chairman)	P E Sole Esq
A Allan Esq	C Baker Esq
R J Angood Esq	M E Heading Esq
Cllr S Criswell	E Jackson Esq
T Edgley Esq	
M Jackson Esq	

P Burrows (Clerk & MLC Chief Executive) and Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) were in attendance.

B.2359 Inspection of the District

I. Pumping Station

The Chairman would like the Board to visit the Pumping Station on a regular basis so that they are fully aware of its condition. The spare submersible pump stored in the workshop was viewed. The Chairman and the District Officer talked through the operation of the pumping station including how to start the diesel pump, and the difficulties in opening the door. The tractor and flail were seen to be in good condition. The Vice Chairman outlined the health and safety approach at the station and how the advice from COPE had been taken on board.

II. Cooling Tower

The District Officer advised frequent issues with the growth of Cott in the cooling tower. This blocks the feed to engine (the cooling tower is for water cooling the engine).

III. Pump Controls

The Chairman explained that the controls are for the electric pumps only. There is currently no telemetry but this needs to be considered as when the current District Officer retires there will not be an attendant on site. The practicalities of installing an external generator were also explained, which detailed why the project had not progressed.

IV. Atlas Excavator

The new Atlas Excavator was viewed, and District Officer explained its benefits.

V. Weed Boat

The weed boat was viewed ready for use. It has already been in use, and maintenance on the boat was carried out during the winter months. It is hoped the regular maintenance should prolong its lifespan.

VI. Pumping Station Bungalow

The Board have previously been advised that the heating oil tank at the side of the bungalow should be moved as it is too close to the pumping station. However, it is difficult to identify a suitable location should it be moved. Although the bungalow was not viewed internally, it was advised that it will require some cosmetic attention, and the water tank in the roof may need some attention. It was noted that a new boiler was fitted at the end of 2023. Any future tenant will need to be made aware of the noise from the weed screen although this is low level.

VII. Counter Drain Outlet

The discharge into the Counter Drain was viewed. The Board were advised of the problem with weed growth in the drain over winter which was cleared by the Board last year to ensure unimpeded discharge into the drain. Prior to the clearance water was backing up and draining back into the Boards system, resulting in double pumping the water.

Regular meetings are being held with the Chairman, District Officer and the Environment Agency Welches Dam operations staff. The automation at Welches Dam is reliant on set water levels, and changing these is difficult. However, with negotiation changes have been made creating a more constant flow. Going forward, the installation of variable drives and the start/stop levels being taken from a location further upstream would benefit the Board.

Welcome and Apologies

Apologies: W Veal Esq

The Chairman welcomed new Board members, Mr E Jackson and Mr Baker, to the meeting.

B.2360 Declarations of Interest

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

The Chairman and Mr Heading declared an interest (as a member of the Middle Level Board) on any matters relating to the Middle Level.

Mr P Sole declared an interest in planning applications received for A Sole & Son and Mr P Sole

B.2361 Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Chairman reminded the Board of the importance of reading the minutes before the meeting as the new meeting format is reliant upon this.

There were no Matters Arising and the Minutes of the Last Meeting were agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on the 18th January 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.2362 Constitution and Membership

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 23rd 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. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
C. There are currently **0** vacancies
D. To consider previous discussions of amalgamation – SM, MWe & Up.
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	16	N/A		8
Actual	16	1 HDC	17	
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	A Allan	Nominee of ratepayer (Allan Partners)	
2	R Angood	Ratepayer	
3	T Edgley	Nominee of ratepayer (R A Latta Farms Ltd)	
4	M George	Ratepayer	
5	M Heading	Ratepayer	
6	M Jackson	Nominee of ratepayer (DJ & MO Jackson)	
7	M Latta	Ratepayer	Chairman
8	C Lee	Nominee of ratepayer (P J Lee & Sons)	Vice-Chair
9	R Lee	Nominee of ratepayer (P J Lee & Sons)	
10	R Smith	Ratepayer	
11	J Sole	Nominee of ratepayer (A Sole & Son)	
12	P Sole	Nominee of ratepayer (A Sole & Son)	
13	E Veal	Ratepayer	
14	W Veal	Ratepayer	
15	C Baker	Nominee of ratepayer (A G Heading)	
16	E Jackson	Nominee of ratepayer (DJ & MO Jackson)	

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	Stephen Criswell	HDC	Councillor
2			

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	18/01/2024	25/5/2023	12/1/2023	28/6/2022
1	A Allan	Present	Attended	Attended	Apologies
2	R Angood	Present	Attended	Attended	Attended
3	T Edgley	Present	Attended	Attended	Attended
4	M George	Apologies			Apologies
5	M Heading	Apologies	Apologies	Attended	Attended
6	M Jackson	Present	Attended	Attended	Attended
7	M Latta	Present	Attended	Attended	Attended
8	C Lee	Present	Attended	Attended	Attended
9	R Lee	Present		Attended	Apologies
10	R Smith	Present	Attended	Attended	Attended
11	J Sole	Present	Attended	Attended	Attended
12	P Sole	Present	Attended	Attended	Apologies
13	E Veal	Present	Apologies	Attended	
14	W Veal	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	
15					
16					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022	2/11/2021
1	M Latta	Attended	Attended	Attended	

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	18/01/2024	25/5/2023	12/1/2023	28/6/2022
1	Stephen Criswell HDC	Present	Apologies	Attended	Attended
2					
3					

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 Nothing to report

4. Composition and amalgamations

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

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

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

5. Training

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

5.2 To date 0 of 15 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 7 of 15 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

The Clerk referred the Board to page 12 of the report and to the improved presentation of information. He confirmed that there are currently no vacancies on the Board.

However, the Clerk reported that he has received an email from Mr M George tendering his resignation from the Board, but requesting that Mr Darren Griffiths, his Quarry Manager, be appointed to the Board as his nominee. The Board accepted that although they were under no obligation to accept Mr Griffiths, they agreed to have a member with a knowledge of the water management in the area would be preferable.

Mr R Lee proposed that Mr Griffiths be invited to join the Board, and this was seconded by Mr Heading. The Chairman agreed to contact Mr Griffiths by phone with the offer and the Clerk will arrange for confirmation in writing.

A discussion followed trying to establish if Mr George was a ratepayer or if his land fell into Special Levy. The Clerk agreed to establish this outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED

That Mr Darren Griffiths be coopted to the Board as a nominee of Mr M George.

Training

The Clerk reported that ADA are in the process of updating the Good Governance Guide, and a new version is expected with new training materials. The Chairman informed the Board of a useful video, 'Keep The Water Flowing' which can be viewed via the Middle Level Commissioners website, which explains what Internal Drainage Boards do.

B.2363 Clerks Report
Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Thursday 23rd 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

Appendix 1

middle level commissioners

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.

Proudly managing water levels in the Fens since 1862
www.middlelevel.gov.uk

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

The Clerk reported to the Board that only the previous day he had received confirmation of the Government's IDB Storm Recovery and Asset Improvement fund, a £75million fund supporting Drainage Boards following last winter and its impact on assets. The Clerk advised that details of the scheme have now been received, and these were shared with the Chairman and Vice Chairman the previous evening. The Board needs to consider if they wish to make Expressions of Interest.

There are two elements to the fund. There is a £25million Storm Recovery fund for Boards exceptionally impacted by last winter, to assist with operational expenses and repairs to assets damaged during the winter. This is known as Tranche 1 and applications have to be made by 7th June 2024.

Tranche 2 is for Asset Improvement, and is a fund of £50million. Applications for this fund need to be made by 28th June 2024. This fund is for the modernisation and upgrading of assets, but the funding has to be spent by the end of this financial year.

There will be no clarity on either fund allocation until the end of June for Tranche 1, and the end of July for Tranche 2. Middle Level Commissioners staff will do what they can to put bids together for all Boards they represent as well as the Commissioners, but hope the Board understands that this is a huge task at a time where staffing is already under immense pressure, and so any assistance the Board can give is appreciated.

The Chairman asked if the Board could apply for funding for the additional electricity used, and the pump that had to be replaced, and this was confirmed as eligible by the Clerk. The Clerk understands that the fund also promotes IDB's stepping in to assist with works on the Main Rivers and referred to the works already undertaken by the Board on the Counterdrain this winter, although The Chairman confirmed that they had already been reimbursed by the Environment Agency for the works.

Mr Heading asked if Boards were expected to get competitive quotes for any works for which they apply for funding. The Clerk advised that he had already reported back to Defra that smaller organisations do not have the capacity to suddenly scale up, and the reality is that some of the funding may be impossible to access, although the Terms and Conditions may allow projects that go over into future years.

The Clerk then provided an overview of his report and drew out the item relating to the MLC Services available for IDBs specifically. The Clerk referred to the current 'Clerkship Agreements' which were due a refresh to keep pace with the changing IDB governance standards, financial requirements, health and safety, environmental legislation and capital Works delivery and that the Clerk to the Boards would be fully assessing the services to IDBs over the next 12-18 months to ensure that there is clarity on the full range of serviced offered, along with the associated terms and conditions and fee arrangements.

In summary, MLC staffing is spread far too thinly and this is directly impacting our ability to deliver the Middle Level Commissioners' responsibilities and is therefore increasing their risk and costs. He added that the pressures on services for the MLC and IDBs are particularly acute within M&E, Planning & Consenting and Finance. He added that within our service review, it is likely that the MLC services will need to be rationalised. He added that this presents a risk to the Board that they need to be aware of. To add to this the Treasurer has also announced his intention to retire early next year, after 26 years of diligently managing finances, and recruitment to the role is currently underway.

The Clerk observed that this is a healthy Board with good attendance and active involvement of its members, but not all Boards are the same. If other Boards in the area collapse it may have a knock-on effect. The Chairman asked if the Clerk could explain what happens if a Board fails. The Clerk reported that if a Board is not quorate or does not have a chairman, it cannot make any decisions and cannot take any actions such as raising rates. The Clerk would have to raise any viability concerns with Defra, which in the past has resulted in the Minister instructing the Environment Agency to take over the running of a Board until they can get the Board back on a stable footing. Although this Board is strong now, the Board need to consider the future and 5-10 years ahead.

Electricity
The Clerk drew the Boards attention to the electricity contract, with the current contract coming to an end in September. The Chairman of this Board is part of the Working Group formed to negotiate a new electricity contract, thus giving an opportunity for the Board to contribute towards the decision making on the contract.

Rating
The Clerk reported that since his written report there has been some positive movement on the potential impact of the software void that the withdrawal of the DRS system could create. He advised that thanks to the involvement of ADA this is now much less of a risk and new software should be available soon.

RESOLVED

i) That the report be noted
ii) That the proposed approach to determining the next electricity contract is supported.
iii) That the Board have noted the banking overview and that unless there is collective approval, they will not be maximising their interest on available balances.

B.2364 Environment Officers Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**ENVIRONMENT OFFICER'S REPORT**
Date:	**Tues 23rd 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. 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.

2. 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)

3. Work Package Ecological Screening Report (ESR)

Please be reminded that any non-routine maintenance works may require environmental screening in order to identify any ecological or environmental risks and their mitigations. This will 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. This is particularly relevant bearing in mind that many of the Boards drains are County Wildlife Site status and so there are more sensitivities to consider.

4. 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

5. 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.

6. 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

7. 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)

8. 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.

9. 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

The Clerk referred the Board to the Environment Officers report. The Clerk asked the Board to identify who was best place to be the Environmental Representative for the Board, however the Board did not appoint anyone, and the Chairman and Vice Chairman agreed to discuss this with Board members outside of the meeting. The first task that would need to be undertaken is a review of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Clerk drew attention to the need for an Ecological Screening Report to be completed for any non-routine works. He reported that due to weather conditions some flail mowing has been put back due to the bird nesting season. The Clerk drew attention to the issues with Badger licencing, and reminded the Board about works affecting water vole habitat. The Chairman reminded the Board that the legislation around the Environment meant that the Board needed to ensure compliance in all actions. He reminded the Board that they should also head this advice in their capacity as farmers, and that the Board need to understand that the guidance given is to ensure the avoidance of prosecution.

The Clerk concluded the report by reminded the Board that they need to be more aware of how activities impact on protected species, such as ground nesting birds and badgers.

RESOLVED

i) That the report be noted
ii) That the Board’s Environmental Representative is still to be agreed.
iii) That the current BAP will be reviewed
iv) That an Ecological Screening Report (ESR) is completed and submitted to the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager well in advance of any non-routine work
v) That they have noted and will comply with the provided flail mowing, badger, water vole and weed screen guidance.

B.2365 Consulting Engineers Report

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME**	
Date:	**Thursday 23rd May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Provide its views on item 2.1.1 *New developments and the use of SuDS*.**
B. **Review and approve its Capital Programme.**
C. **Approve if it would like the MLC to take quarterly meter readings at an approximate cost of £60 per station per quarter (see Appendix 3, item 1.3).**
D. **Review the pumping station key dates provided in Appendix 3, item 4.1 and advise if there are any discrepancies or if further details can be added.**

1. Chief Engineer's Summary

1.1 <u>M&E Resources</u>

Our small M&E team is extremely stretched after the wet winter of 2023/24. It has taken some time to identify all the remedial works required to pumping stations across the Middle Level. These works are in addition to our regular inspection and maintenance programme. We have prioritised remedial works and will deliver those most critical to get through next winter. This work is becoming more and more complex due to ageing and deteriorating assets, changes in regulations and the standards needed to achieve compliance. We need to expand our M&E team in order to continue to provide a suitable standard of service to IDBs. Our focus this summer is therefore on ensuring that St Germans and Bevills Leam pumping stations are adequately maintained, and that critical works are delivered for IDB stations. Some routine works will be paused (e.g. routine inspections) until we have the capacity in the team to resume.

Regular checking of pumps and running for a short period of time by pump attendants/district officers is vitally important and any issues should be reported so they can be added to the remedials list.

2. Technical Services

2.1 <u>Summary of Key Planning Issues</u>

2.1.1 ***New developments and the use of SuDS***

As discussed in the last Meeting Report it is considered from the adverse weather conditions experienced within the last few years that there is sufficient evidence to prove that current surface water design practices are not changing quickly enough and/or do not allow for exceptional weather conditions, such as that experienced in recent years – long periods of wet weather resulting in a high ground water table such as that experienced prior to the December 2020 event; storms experienced featuring several intense back-to-back storms together with periods of wet weather between October 2023 – March 2024; Storm Babet (October 2023) and Henk (January 2024).

In addition, current design does not allow for the complex network of water level and flood risk management systems within the Fens particularly when they are "at capacity" during October to April and/or where flows can become "locked" due to high water levels taking many days to return to a "normal" level.

Therefore, consideration is being given to requiring designs to:

1. Incorporate a higher Standard of Protection (SoP), possibly up to 0.5% AEP (1 in 200 year) event,
2. Include a greater allowance for Climate Change, in excess of 40%,
3. Consider the consequences and impacts of back-to-back storms,
4. Consider the timing of the discharge to minimise any adverse impacts on the receiving system,
5. Be able to “store” water on site for several days until the peak flows have passed,
6. Use complex controls to enable the most suitable means and time of the discharge.

Several other Boards have raised concerns about the installation and efficiency of SuDS facilities particularly in the longer term and the adverse impacts on their systems. Concerns include the following:

1. The approval and supervision of the installation of SuDS with no post-construction review against their design and performance reviews through their lifecycle.
2. Long term appropriate maintenance and inspection is considered a deficiency and will, in time, result in higher run off rates being discharged into its system that may have a cumulative impact.
3. That despite the weather conditions being experienced recently many balancing ponds are either very full or empty. There have been several reports of ponds overtopping.
4. The cumulative impact of attenuating surface water from developments has been to elongate the duration that the system is under stress. This increases operational costs and could increase the risk of flooding.
5. The need to meet the greater expectations from residents, occupants, operators and promoters of development which requires more regular maintenance operations to alleviate flooding.

The introduction of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act may assist in resolving some of the points raised above, particularly if the MLC represent the Board on the SuDS Approval Board (SAB), but the implementation of this has now been set back further, until the end of the year at the earliest.

The above matter was briefly discussed at a C&P FloW Partnership meeting and other IDBs and Cambridge City Council raised similar concerns.

The Board’s views on this would be appreciated.

2.1.2 ***MLC001: Middle Level System Flood & Drainage Infrastructure Capacity***

This is directly relevant to the Boards that drain and/or pump into the MLC system and will be of interest to others.

As you will be aware, 2023/24 broke records for rainfall and the amount of water pumped at St Germans. Over 227,000 million litres of water were safely pumped into the Tidal Great Ouse that would have otherwise been flooding homes, land, businesses, roads and other critical infrastructure, significantly affecting other vital public services.

Our station worked in combination with over 70 smaller Internal Drainage Board stations, hundreds of kilometres of drains and raised embankments, to keep our Fens relatively dry and protect local communities and the economy from flooding. We are hoping for a drier 2024/25 but need to plan for this being the new normal. This winter really helped highlight the importance of, and also the weaknesses, in our infrastructure and operations.

Alongside this, and within the constraints of our limited staff capacity, we are improving how we engage as non-statutory consultees in the planning process. We want to provide planning authorities, developers and others with an earlier, much clearer stance from us, to inform plans strategically (e.g. within Local Plan development) and tactically (e.g. within individual planning applications).

With these factors in mind, we have published our first 'standing advice note' which is included in Appendix 4 and is available on our website https://middlelevel.gov.uk/standing-advice-2/. Standing Advice Note MLC001 effectively declares our flood and drainage infrastructure 'at capacity'. The intent is to develop and publish further notes over the coming months.

This note was issued to local Councils and the Environment Agency on Wednesday 8th May for them to consider within their decision making. Boards will need to appreciate and plan for the limitations within the MLC receiving system within their own pumping station improvement schemes.

Boards may choose to create, adopt and issue similar standing advice notes for their districts.

2.2 **Cranbrook/Counter Drain (CCD) Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy**
The MLC Planning Engineer continues to represent the Boards on the Stakeholder Group and associated engagement with the relevant interested parties.

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

The members of the Board's Sub-Committee have been kept informed of the position but have not always been able to attend meetings due to work commitments. Alternative meetings have been offered by the EA and attended by Sub-Group members and individual meetings held with Board members at their request.

Following the presentation by the EA at the January 2023 meeting the EA has offered to give an update presentation to the Board at a future meeting and the timings of this will be discussed with the Board's Chair.

2.3 The MLC Planning Engineer is currently on indeterminate sick leave and there are no additional planning updates provided in this report.

3. Capital Programme

3.1 The Board's Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 1.
The programme has been updated with future costs for replacing the pumping station based on recent similar projects.
These works will be further informed by the completion of the system study described in the January report.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: **Capital Programme**
Appendix 2: **List of applications responded to since last report**
Appendix 3: **M&E Report**
Appendix 4: **MLC001: Middle Level System Flood & Drainage Infrastructure Capacity**

Appendix 1

Sutton & Mepal Internal Drainage Board														
Capital Improvement Programme (2024/2025)		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Mepal p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,000.0	0.0	0.0	5000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	36.5	0	40.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.5
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Plant & Vehicles	Toyota Hilux Pick up	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Case Tractor	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Spearhead Twiga flail mower	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.0
	Conver Weedcutting Boat C480F	0	0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
	Atlas 140w wheeled excavator	0	130	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	130.0
	Piling hammer	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Drainage Channels	Cranbrook inprovement scheme	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		36.5	**130**	**40**	**60**	**15**	**50**	**0**	**0**	**100**	**5,000**	**0**	**5**	**5,437**

Appendix 2

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

MLC Ref.	*Council Ref.*	*Applicant*	*Type of Development*	*Location*
389	F/YR24/0104/AG1	A I Power	Agricultural (Erection of building)	Langwood Fen Drove, Chatteris
390	F/YR24/0143/AG1	D & M Jackson & Son	Agricultural (Erection of building)	Iretons Way, Chatteris
391	F/YR24/0173/PIP	Mr J Waters	Residential (Up to 4 dwellings)	London Road, Chatteris
392	E/21/00305/DISA	PJ Lee & Sons	Residence	The Gault, Sutton
393	F/YR24/0223/AG1	Mr A Allan	Agricultural (Erection of building)	Langwood Fen Drove, Chatteris
394	F/YR24/0283/AG1	Strutt & Parker (Farms) Ltd	Agricultural (Straw barn)	Iretons Way, Chatteris

The following infiltration device application has been acknowledged since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	*Council Ref*	*Option 1 (Self-certification) or Option 2 (Checking Form)*	*Location*	*Date acknowledged*
367 & 379 (320/1/AWSL)	F/YR23/0318/RM	Option 2	Wood Street, Chatteris	Refused 4/4/24

No Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses or to discharge to a watercourse) applications have been granted during the reporting period.

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**		**7**
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**	
Date:	**Thursday 23rd May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Dave Bantoft**

1. M&E key messages and advice

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

1.2 Pumps

These are the pumps currently fitted:

Pump 1 - Previously overhauled spare unit fitted. Overhauled 2014 fitted July 2022
Pump 2 - New unit fitted October 2023
Pump 3 - New unit fitted October 2019

The pump removed from pump 2 canister was working when removed on the 27th September 2023 but it had poor insulation resistance which is a sign of water ingress into the motor. It is one of the original pumps and has been overhauled in the past. Overhauling this unit again is not recommended as due to its age it is unlikely to be viable or reliable.

To ensure resilience with availability of a spare pump it is recommended that a new pump is purchased and fitted as pump 1 and the current pump 1 put back to being the spare unit. The cost is likely to be in the region of £39k with 12 to 18 weeks lead time

The weed screen and the pump control panel have needed small repairs this winter. The ultrasonic level controller would benefit from replacement due to its age, a program glitch over winter caused a fault that would only allow 2 pumps to run. This was rectified quickly but it does raise concerns over the reliability of the unit. This could be a good opportunity to replace the level controller and integrate it with telemetry.

1.3 Electricity Readings

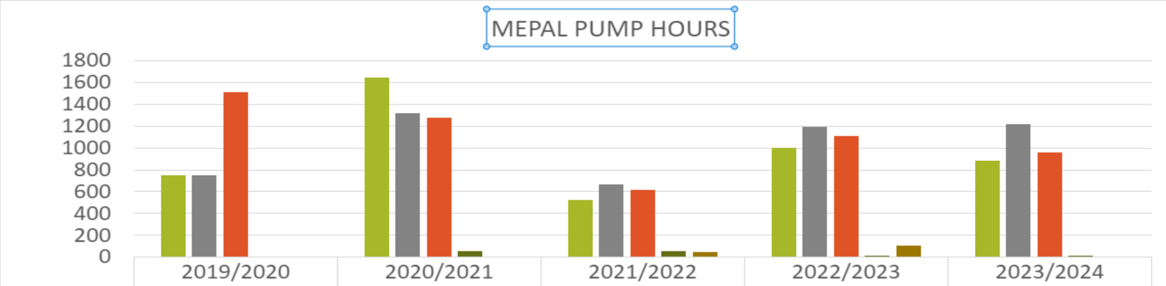
Taking regular and accurate manual electricity meter readings is very important; even for sites with meters that are read remotely. There have been cases of significant variances between bills and actual usage, regular meter readings and pump hours readings are essential for verifying bills and forecasting usage. **This year we have been able to successfully challenge 93000 kWh of incorrectly invoiced electricity, this would not have been possible without the manual readings.**

Moving forward it is requested that the Pump Attendants/District Officers take electricity meter readings and pump run hours readings monthly (as close to the 1st of each month as they can) and then forward them onto the M&E Engineer on david.bantoft@middlelevel.gov.uk or 07768 026119.

If you are unable to provide readings, or would prefer, the MLC can take quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board for the time and mileage involved. Please approve this if it is required. Approximate cost will be £60 per station per quarter.

2. Pumping summary

Please note only part year figures from December 23 to April 24 are shown for the electric pumps, it does not include the volumes pumped by the engine.



	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
PUMP 1	747	1644	517	997	882
PUMP 2	744	1310	659	1185	1214
PUMP 3	1504	1271	611	1102	955
PUMP 4	0	55	55	8	1
WSC			44	99	

PUMP 1 PUMP 2 PUMP 3 PUMP 4 WSC

3. Inspections

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

3.2 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Report (due every 5 years) is in date and the retest will be booked in.

Sutton & Mepal	Mepal	23-Oct-2019	23-Oct-2024

4. Pumping Station Key Dates

4.1 **Please review the pumping station key dates below, if there are any discrepancies or you can add any details, please let me know. The key dates are an important reference and will feed into the upcoming Key Health Indicators and District Studies.**

	Station				Weedscreen		
Station	**Built**	**Pump Canisters**	**Pump Overhaul**	**Controls**	**WSC**	**WSC O/H**	**Controls**
Mepal	1929/ 1990	1990	Pump 1 - 2014 fitted 2022, Pump 2 new 2023, Pump 3 new 2019	1990	1990	2014	1990

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

middle level commissioners

Proudly managing water levels in the Fens since 1862

Standing Advice Note MLC001:

Middle Level Flood and Drainage Infrastructure Capacity

Issued: 01 May 2024 (Version 1)

Key messages

A. Our flood and drainage infrastructure should be considered as 'at capacity' during October to April.

B. Unless there is a compelling exception case, we will not consent surface water discharges greater than greenfield run-off rate and/or any new water entering our catchment across a watershed.

C. We consider that the cumulative impact of attenuating surface water from developments and timing of discharges has been to elongate the duration that our system is under stress. This increases our operational costs and could increase the risk of flooding.

D. We are concerned that there is seemingly no post-construction review of SuDS against their design and performance reviews through their lifecycle. Therefore, even well-designed SuDS may not be performing as expected/consented and there may be a cumulative impact of this across our catchment. Long term appropriate maintenance and inspection is considered a deficiency.

E. The opportunity to release stored water into our system during May to September should be actively explored within strategic flood risk assessments, development masterplans and local flood risk management strategies and in consultation with our engineers.

F. In considering and granting planning permission, Local Planning Authorities need to understand, consider and acknowledge the impact of new development upon their special levy and future funding requests under Defra's Partnership Funding policy. It should be noted that under this policy housing built or converted after January 2012 is not included within FCRM government grant-in-aid calculations.

G. Prior to granting outline planning permission, Local Planning Authorities must consider whether any proposed Biodiversity Net Gain provisions will be compatible with the flood risk management activities undertaken by MLC and other IDBs, for the full 30-year registration period. If this is not known, the LPA should seek advice from MLC prior to granting outline planning permission.

H. In considering and granting planning permission, Local Planning Authorities ought to secure funding from developers towards future capital investment in our water management infrastructure.

I. The Environment Agency needs to understand, consider and acknowledge the impact of new development and sub-optimal SuDS upon the Highland Water claims from the Middle Level Commissioners.

J. As statutory consultees and fellow Risk Management Authorities under the Flood & Water Management Act, Lead Local Flood Authorities and the Environment Agency need to

consider and reflect this advice within their responses to Local Planning Authorities so as not to increase flood risk within the Middle Level.**

K. Developers and Local Planning Authorities ought to consider the adoption of measures such as rainwater harvesting and re-use to avoid as much water as possible from entering the drainage network.

L. When considering abstraction licences for unrestricted winter fill applications from irrigators within the Middle Level catchment, the Environment Agency should take account of the potential benefit to the capacity of the system, operational costs, Highland Water costs and their responsibility to reduce flood risk within their determinations.

M. In addressing historic mis-connections to the foul sewer network and within changes to discharges of treated effluent water, Anglian Water and Local Authorities need to appreciate the potential impact on the surface water drainage network and receiving system.

N. Internal Drainage Boards within the Middle Level catchment may wish to consider adopting similar Standing Advice. They also need to appreciate and plan for the limitations in the capacity of the MLC system withing their own pumping station improvement schemes.

Advice Primarily For:

- **Local Planning Authorities (LPAs): Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council, Peterborough City Council**
- **Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs): Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Norfolk County Council**
- **Minerals & Waste Planning Authorities; Peterborough City Council, Norfolk County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council**
- **Highways Authorities: National Highways, Peterborough City Council, Norfolk County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council**
- **Environment Agency**
- **Developers**
- **Internal Drainage Boards within the Middle Level catchment area**
- **Anglian Water**

About us:

The Middle Level Commissioners are a public authority comprising agricultural ratepayers (those rated on >100 acres of land) who benefit from drainage services provided by their watercourses and assets.

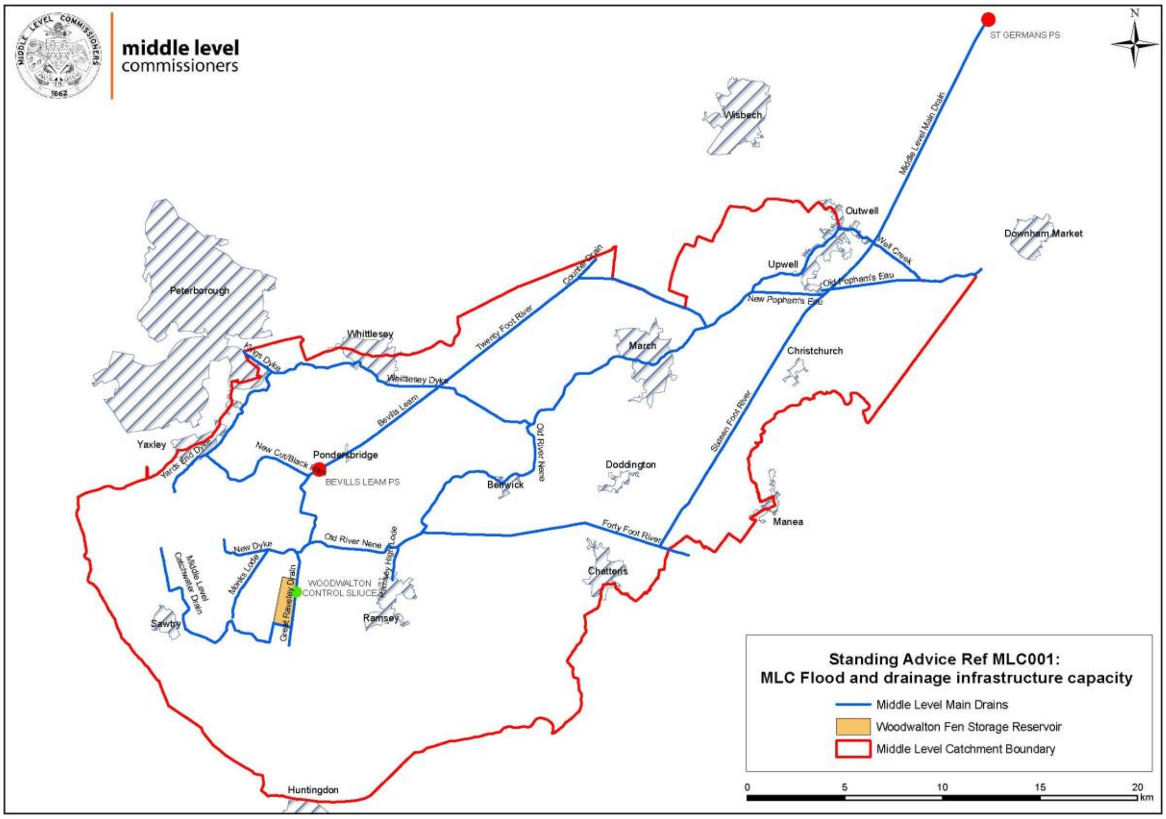
The Commissioners elect a Board and, via an Executive Committee, appoint a Chief Executive who leads a staffing structure to deliver their various statutory duties and responsibilities.

The Commissioners are, for all intents and purposes, an Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and therefore a Risk Management Authority under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and we have a duty to enhance the environment under the Environment Act 2021. The Commissioners also have duties and powers under bespoke Acts of Parliament, most notable of these is our role as the fourth largest Navigation Authority in England. We also provide a summer water transfer service, with legacy rights to import water into our catchment from the River Nene.

We are not statutory consultees in the Town & Country Planning Act process, however paragraph 166 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that strategic policies "should take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.". Independent from the planning process, developers are likely to need consent from us and/or an Internal Drainage Board under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and/or Byelaws.

We only have a technical team of 2.5 staff inputting and responding as a non-statutory consultee into planning applications and consent determinations on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners and over thirty other Internal Drainage Boards in the area.

Geographical coverage:
The Middle Level catchment boundary plus areas where there is the potential through development to transfer water across the watershed into the Middle Level.



Our system:
We own and operate two major land drainage pumping stations. These work in combination with approximately 190km of waterways and 300km of raised embankments to convey excess water from, and provide flood resilience to, land, property and businesses within our 750km^2 catchment.

Whilst the Fens is known for being flat, the catchment's higher land towards and beyond the A1 is very responsive to rainfall and funnels water quickly into the lowest land in the country, below sea level. We provide the second tier of drainage along with 25 Internal Drainage Boards and a handful of private districts either pumping or gravity draining into our system. We have no operational control over the 70+ pumping stations that add water into our system. Within the Middle Level 61% of the catchment is pumped twice, 19% is pumped three times and 15% is pumped once.

Our booster station at Bevills Leam elevates and transfers water from the lowest land in the country (we call this our Bevills Pond) into the main Middle Level drainage system (we call this our St Germans Pond). Bevills Leam Pumping Station was constructed in the 1980s and requires major refurbishment in the coming years.

Our pumping station at Wiggenhall St Germans is the largest land drainage pumping station in the UK. It came online in 2010 and is the only outfall from our system, pumping excess water from the whole catchment into the Great Ouse Tidal River. It has an 80-year design life.

The biggest operational challenge we have in times of flood concern is the ability to get vast amounts of water through Bevills Leam Pumping Station and then through the main system (high level carriers and embanked watercourses) to St Germans. Both Stations need to pump early to lower water levels, creating a 'hole' which then draws water to them, given the fact there is no fall/gradient in their respective ponds.

Our system is effectively a giant bowl, with the Bevills Pond being a bowl within that giant bowl. The Bevills Pond is a greater concern in terms of capacity than the St Germans Pond and is considered particularly vulnerable to intense, repeat and elongated rainfall and run-off.

The standard of protection the system provides to local communities, businesses and agricultural land was last assessed prior to 2020. A strategic assessment recommended significant, complex and costly bank raising and desilting works to return the capacity of our system to a 1.51% (or 1 in 66 year) annual exceedance probability for a 15-year design life until the next major intervention will be required.

Will there be future increases in the capacity of our system?
This cannot be, and is not, guaranteed. The current management approach across the Great Ouse Fens is to sustain infrastructure standards of service until a longer-term strategic plan is developed. It should be noted that sustaining standards of service does not keep pace with the impacts of climate change on the standards of protection our infrastructure provides.

We are working with the Environment Agency as part of Fens 2100+. This is a £9.8m programme to develop a Fens-wide flood resilience investment strategy that achieves long-term value for money and generates regional and national benefits. It's being developed with, and for, Flood Risk Management Authorities so they can plan for the next 20-25 years of flood risk management.

Nicola Oldfield
Chief Engineer, Middle Level Commissioners
chiefofficers@middlelevel.gov.uk

1 May 2024

The Clerk referred to Board to the Consulting Engineers Report, including the Chief Engineers Summary, M&E Report and Capital Programme.

The Clerk advised that the MLC M&E Services are currently stretched, and they are prioritising works. There are also pressures in the Planning department and there is further pressure on the department from developers. The Middle Level Commissioners have issued Standing Advice to Council's Planning Departments and to developers that the Middle Level system is at capacity and cannot accommodate any additional flow. A copy of the Standing Advice Note is included in the agenda. The Clerk referred the Board to the Capital Programme and advised that a replacement Pumping Station is forecast in Year 9.

The Chairman referred the Board to the pumping hours in Section 2 of the M&E Report. Although the full year figures for 2023/24 are not shown it is possible to equate the cost in electricity to 115%, plus an additional 450 hours of diesel pumping. It is clear to see how much additional pumping and power was necessary. The Chairman went on to say that he would like to prioritise pump replacement but the rates need to reflect the extra electricity used. The Board have the choice of waiting for a pump to fail and then reuse the spare pump (as seen on the inspection) whilst waiting for a replacement pump – which could take 12-16 weeks – and hoping that the spare pump runs effectively.

The Board took the opportunity to discuss different options and outcomes and agreed that they would not make any changes to the current regime, but that they would like to apply to the Asset Improvement fund (just announced) for funding for a new spare pump.

The Vice Chairman proposed that a new weed boat, identified for replacement in the Capital Plan, would not be required in the short term due to the maintenance regime being undertaken on the boat keeping it in good order. The Board agreed.

The Chairman felt that the Capital Plan could be deferred by two years, allowing more time to increase the Capital Fund which is currently being increased by £25k/year. It would also be prudent to defer the replacement of the HiLux as it is in good condition and only used around the District.

The Clerk advised the Board needed to treat the Asset Improvement Fund as a potential bonus funding, and potentially apply in Tranche 1 for the costs associated with the installation of the new pump last winter, and for a spare pump for resilience in Tranche 2. The Chairman asked if they could apply for an additional weed boat which could be used to keep the Counter Drain clear, thus benefiting the Environment Agency. The Clerk advised he would have to check the Terms as he is not sure if Plant and Equipment are included.

The Chairman asked the Board if they would be happy to defer the Capital Programme by two years, but to still allow the £10k for the installation of telemetry. Mr Heading asked if a replacement pumping station is still being considered for Year 9, and the Chairman advised that he thought this very much depended on the Cranbrook Strategy. The future of Welches Dam is uncertain with the deterioration of the lock causing water to leak out into the Sixteen Foot.

The Board agreed to defer the Capital Programme by 2 years, but to keep the telemetry (control system) in Year 2 with a £10k budget.

Referring to the M&E section of the report, winter has shown the importance of regular meter readings. The Board agreed that the services of Commissioners were not required to take meter readings and that monthly readings would be taken by the District Officer.

RESOLVED

i) That the reports be approved
ii) That the Capital programme is amended to defer the Capital Programme by 2 years, but to keep the telemetry (control system) in Year 2 with a £10k budget.

B.2366 Health and Safety

Viz;

Cope
SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Site Safety Inspection Record

Middle Level Sutton & Mepal 150224 — Complete

Name of organisation:	Middle Level Commissioners
Date of site visit	15.02.2024 13:15 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Mepal Pumping Station Engine Bank Metal CB6 2AX
Name of Advisor	Kathryn Simmonds
Time of arrival at site:	15.02.2024 13:15 GMT
Audit Name	Middle Level Sutton & Mepal 150224

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Matthew Latta and Christopher Lee

1

During the opening meeting, time was taken to review the report from the previous visit. Actions either completed or outstanding are listed in the below report.

2

It was pleasing to note that fire extinguishers have been subject to inspection in June 2023 and first aid kits were identified to be present in the pump station.

It was also good to note that PAT has been completed for portable appliances, completed Jan 2024.

3

An asbestos survey has been undertaken since the last visit and asbestos containing materials have been identified in two locations; the large exhaust in the pump house and in the soffits of the bungalow next door. It was good to note that these have been encapsulated where possible and you are regularly monitoring the condition of the materials.

4

Since the last visit, hand rails have now been installed along the access path from the road to the screen cleaning area. These are alongside the anti slip materials that were installed for the previous visit. Please ensure that these remain in a suitable condition.

5

Training was discussed. It is understood that your Pumphouse operative is due to retire in the coming months and you have recruited their replacement. It was reported that you plan to provide them with necessary training, such as work at height, COSHH, spraying, etc. It is recommended that this training is undertaken and refreshed periodically. You verbally confirmed that you plan to provide this training once they have completed their probationary period.

6

Signage was discussed. It was good to observe that you have replaced the faded signage along the automatic screen cleaner. It may be beneficial to display one board which identifies all of the hazards that are present on the site and that this is in a prominent position where it can be easily seen by persons approaching.

7

Risk assessments were discussed. It was good to hear that you have risk assessments documented for relevant activities, however you were unsure if these should be communicated to staff. It is recommended that these are made available for staff to see if required. This can also assist with ensuring that your risk assessments are correct for how activities are completed.

8

Lone working was discussed. You currently utilise the What3Words application to identify staff locations, however it is understood that mobile phone signals can be lost when works are being carried out on the boat. You discussed that you may look into tracking devices on vehicles, etc. as a "plan B" when a phone signal is not available. It is also recommended that staff advise when they are arriving to site and leaving site on each working day as a minimum so you are aware of their location during working hours.

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature

Kathryn Simmonds
15.02.2024 13:59 GMT

Departure time	15.02.2024 13:59 GMT
Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments	0 From 0 to 99

The Vice Chairman drew the Board's attention to the Cope Health and Safety report. The Vice Chairman reported that the Board is waiting for training for the New District Officer although he has this in hand. The incoming District Officer has expressed a concern over lone working, and the Board discussed different options that could be available to them. It was agreed that the Board and District Officer would continue to investigate options and reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

B.2367 District Officers Report

Viz;

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

RUSTON ENGINE AND NO 2 PUMP 144.5 RUNNING HOURS PUMPING.

AUXILLARY ENGINES BOTH IN WORKING ORDER BOTH HAVE OIL AND DIESEL LEAKS.

ELECTRIC PUMPS FROM 19/5/23 TO 10/5/24.

	RUNNING HOURS 20/5/22-18/5/23	RUNNING HOURS 19/5/23-10/5/24	TOTAL RUNNING
NO.1	632	1643	31357
NO.2	1016	1665	31439
NO.3	633	1597	31316

WEED CLEANER 2000 HOURS.

10” PUMP 3112 HOURS. RUNNING HOURS 9 FROM 19/5/23-10/5/24.

RAINFALL MAY 20TH 2022 TO MAY 18TH 2023 = 494 mm.

RAINFALL MAY 19TH 2023 TO MAY 10TH 2024 = 686 mm.

TRACTOR & FLAIL MOWER GOOD WORKING ORDER. HOURS 1644.

2024 ATLAS 165W GOOD WORKING ORDER.

2015. TOYOTA TRUCK IN GOOD WORKING ORDER. AE65 NMM.

1995. WEED CUTTING BOAT HAS BEEN REPAIRED AND PAINTED.

D. STIMSON

(DISTRICT OFFICER)

The Board were reminded that the District Officers report had been circulated and that all items have been viewed during the District Inspection.

B.2368 Governance

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	10
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Thursday 23rd May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Review and approve the updated Risk Management Strategy.
B. Review and approve the Financial Regulations & Financial Code.
C. 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.
D. Advise on any changes they wish to make to insured values.
E. 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.
F. Exercise of Public Rights
G. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments
H. 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).

1.4 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.middlevel.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:

SUTTON & MEPAL IDB
INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS AND BUNGALOW

		As At 1st April 2024
Fortrey Hall Pumping Station	Electric	1,575,730.00
Fortrey Hall Pumping Station	Diesel	1,818,150.00
		3,393,880.00
Mepal Pumping Station Bungalow		263,500.00
		3,657,380.00

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

SUTTON & MEPAL 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) 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.
f) Start to use language and terminology from this strategy at Board meetings within their consideration of risks.
g) Adopt formal project risk management as part of any capital works projects led by MLC staff on behalf of the Board.
h) 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

Appendix 2

SUTTON AND MEPAL 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 Sutton and Mepal 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 to 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.

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

FINANCIAL CODE

SECTION
Page

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.

Appendix 3

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

SUTTON & MEPAL 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	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

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

The Clerk referred the Board to the Governance report and summarised its content.

Review of Internal Controls

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

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

Risk Management Strategy and Insured Values

The Clerk outlined that the Board's Risk Management Strategy had been due an update, that he had drafted and published an updated strategy for all IDBs clerked by the Middle Level Commissioners. The new strategy will run from 2024 to 2027 and outlines how Members and the Middle Level Commissioners staff govern the Board's risks. The Clerk outlined the strategy for the Board and the Board reviewed the insurance valuations. There were concerns that the insurance valuation is too low and after some deliberation it was agreed that the insurance valuation be increased to £5million, and to index link as at present.

Finance Regulations & Finance Code

The Clerk reported that the Board's Finance Regulations and Finance Code Policy were due for review and renewal this year. However, he informed the Board that it was intended to carry out a full review of the Middle Level Service Provision, the introduction of Key Health Indicators and to start a review of the IDB landscape of drainage boards within the Middle Level. Further, these reviews would also trigger a review of the finance dept. at the Middle Level and all these matters would likely influence areas of delegation regarding finance through the Middle Level offices, it would therefore make sense to retain the current regulations and policy pending a more in-depth review.

Annual Governance Statement

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Board for the financial year ended 31st March 2024.

Exercise of Public Rights

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

Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

The Clerk reported that as part of the Annual Governance review the Board were required to consider if there were any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the authority. He confirmed that there were no such matters that have been raised through the office of the clerk. Members gave consideration to the position.

RESOLVED

i) That the Risk Management Strategy is agreed by the Board
ii) That the Board's current Finance regulations and Finance Code Policy be approved for a further year and the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer be authorised to carry out a full review of both and report at next year's meeting.
iii) That the insured value of the pumping station is increased to £5million
iv) That the Chairman sign the annual return for 2024.

v) That there are no such potential litigation, liabilities, commitments that would have an adverse financial impact on the Board that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2024.

B.2369 Finance Report: looking back

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Thursday 23rd May 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Budgeting review within Appendix 1.
B. Note the Highland Water contributions
C. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 2.
D. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2023/2024 within Appendix 3.

Finance Officer's review and key messages

For 2023/2024 the Board had estimated expenditure for the year of £290,388 and set a rate of 46.00p to raise this through agricultural drainage rates and Special Levies. 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, without the benefit of any invoiced charges from June, could be in the region of £115,000. 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 of electricity for the year of £234,226.

Repairs have been higher than budgeted, with additional service/repair costs at the pumping station resulting from increased wear. Also included is the installation of a new heating boiler at the bungalow. District labour costs are down as it was anticipated to have a longer period of succession planning, however these additional costs were planned from balances so there is no net gain against this. Other areas of expenditure have been generally in-line with budget provisions.

During the year the board purchased a new Atlas 165W excavator for £161,000, trading in the Atlas 140W excavator for £26,000. The board will need to continue to raise sufficient monies through the annual rating cycle to fund this and further purchases through their working lives.

Over-all this gives a decrease in the Boards General Fund of £116,821 to a balance of £198,181 at 31st March 2024, allowing for the budgeted decrease in relation to the District officer succession planning. Longer term the board will need to address balances to restore them to a minimum of a year-in-hand.

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

1. **Budgeting**

1.1 The budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2024 is included as Appendix 1.

2. Payments for 2023

2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 2

3. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2023/2024:

3.1 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 3

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

Appendix 1 **Budget Review**
Appendix 2 **Payments for 2023/24**
Appendix 3 **Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2023/24**

Appendix 1

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2023/2024

		Approved budget 2023/2024 £	Actual to 31.12.2023 £	Forecast to 31.03.2024 £
1	Rates, telephones and insurances	7,150 [A]	6,037	6,600
2	Drainworks, repairs and renewals (including Environmental measures)	22,000	18,617 [B]	25,500 [C]
	Drainage channel - Cranbrook	0	0	0
3	Oil and electricity	90,700 [D]	40,506	115,000 [E]
4	District labour	76,500 [F]	35,654 [F]	64,500 [F]
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	20,900	8,738	20,900
6	Environment Agency - Precept	118,827	118,827	118,827
7	Plant replacement	25,000 [G]	16,666 [G]	25,000 [G]
		361,077	245,045	376,327
	LESS :			
	Use of balances	36,250 [H]	10,743 [H]	26,500 [H]
	Revenue income	34,439 [I]	30,702	39,427 [J]
		290,388	203,600	310,400

Rates and Special Levy raised 2023/2024 - 46.00p £290,388

Remarks

A - Includes estimate for increased premiums

B - Includes for:

Maintenance/general	2,970
Service/repairs to excavator	2,182
	5,152

C - Includes for:

Maintenance/general	6,000
Service/repairs to excavator	3,200
Pumping station/general repairs	16,300
	25,500

D - Provision adjusted for use of generator

E - estimated without provision for savings from use of generator

F - Includes provision for District Officer succession planning

G - Provision for plant replacement strategy 25,000

H - Balances for District Officer succession planning

I - Includes metered discharge recovery 20,000

J - Includes for:

Metered discharge recovery	20,000
Full highland water claims	8,470

Appendix 2

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

GENERAL ACCOUNT

Lynx Fire & Security - New battery installed on inspection	26.40
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Hose connector	9.30
Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & Safety Re-charge 2022-2023 (Account from COPE Safety Management)	628.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and travelling	10,309.61
Richard Yardy (2002) Ltd. - Replace lighting in pumping station	1,129.17
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	252.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment at pumping station	1,548.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply 3,212 litres of gas oil (account from Watson Fuels)	3,076.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Court costs (liability orders)	1.00
EE - Mobile telephone charges	26.08
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
Water Resources East - Contribution to operating costs 2023/2024	150.00
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	90.40
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Manufacture of dam	4,828.15
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd - Primer, sand paper, turpentine and paint	135.98
Environment Agency - Precept	59,413.45
N L Hydraulics - Hydraulic hoses and copper washes	83.64
Wave - Water charges	57.67
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	462.72
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd - Mastic, paint, paint brushes	268.24
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - White paper, disposable overalls, goggles, overalls and filters	175.50
Chatteris Cricket Club - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	103.15
Fenland Fire Appliances - Service of fire extinguishers and renovation of dry powder extinguisher	99.00
Anglian Compressors - Repairs to Atlas 140W Excavator	376.14
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd. - First aid kit	13.49
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd - Paint and mastic	240.84
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	84.62
EE - Mobile telephone charges	26.08
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	81.73
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
EE - Mobile telephone charges	26.08
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Bolts, tines, washers, nuts, clutch cleaner, drill bit, 25 litres of TFR, safety wellington boots, cement, toilet brush, angle iron, wood, paint and stud fitted to flail	610.24
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	485.52
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	75.31
EE - Mobile telephone charges	26.08
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	148.94
Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd - 2 nylon couplings	57.44
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd - Mastic, paint brushes and paint	246.83
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd. - Annual service of New Holland Tractor AE19 DHK	1,236.30
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 5 litres of gear oil, gloves, perspex, roll of hand paper, solo sprayer and crimping cable	369.34
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	1.27
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd - 5 litres of barn paint	74.28
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd. - Number plate for New Holland Tractor AE19 DHK	33.88
Fen Farm Supplies - Sawn timber posts, cant rail and timber gravel board	114.65
Wave - Water charges	63.82
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
EE - Mobile telephone charges	26.08
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	65.10
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fees (2022-2023 accounts)	756.00
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Hand cleaner, 25 litres of TFR with wax, 60 lites of Adblue and manufacture and fit of roller bracket	338.73
The Oil Tank Company - Fit a watchman to tank	216.54

EE - Mobile telephone charges	31.46
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	48.86
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, and telephone charges	9,520.74
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners 2022-2023 accounts)	1,596.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board reports, planning and development applications)	1,014.42
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd. - I pair of safety boots	45.00
Cropley Green Bodyshop - Insurance excess on claim for repairs to AE65 NMM	250.00
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 40 litres of Adblue, glass cleaner, roller clamp plates for Spearhead, nuts and cap head studs	497.98
TDL Equipment - Repairs to Atlas 140W excavator	1,856.82
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	72.13
TDL Equipment - Repairs to Atlas 140W excavator	563.71
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	1.40
N L Hydraulics - Hydraulic hose and 25 litres of hydraulic 46 oil	84.97
The Lock Shop - Mortice key, chubb key and padlock	24.00
Certas Energy UK Limited - Supply of 209 litres of Rimula R3 +30 oil	835.16
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd. - Repairs to New Holland Tractor AE19 DHK	697.56
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	5,650.70
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	485.52
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	64.87
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
EE - Mobile telephone charges	30.66
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 40 litres of Adblue and repars to flail mower	209.21
Middle Level Commissioners - Road tax for AE65 NMM and for Atlas 140W excavator YN61 FYV	485.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply 3,700 litres of gas oil (Account from Watson Fuels)	3,574.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Service and MOT of AE65 NMM	492.85
Middle Level Commissioners - Repair ruston engine (Account from Rands)	1,920.49
Environment Agency - Precept	59,413.45
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	1.27
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
EE - Mobile telephone charges	26.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Correspondence regarding LASIP funding application, planning and development applications)	2,045.10
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 40 litres of Adblue, ear muffs, AA batteries, beason brush, bolts, layflat hose and clips, bow shackles, raw bolts and drilling hole in bracket	203.86
R A Latta Farms Limited - Recharge of recruitment process and advert	733.15
EE - Mobile telephone charges	26.08
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	78.78
Wave - Water charges	65.59
Engineering & Hire Ltd - Bolt & locking nut, boot flail and U shackle to suit Spearhead and collar with 14.5mm hole	772.59
Richard Yardy (2002) Ltd. - Call out and supply and fit of new extractor fan in the bungalow	202.80
HMRC - VAT payment for the quarter to 31st December 2023	2,205.09
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	60.62
EE - Mobile telephone charges	26.08
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	1.27
N L Hydraulics - Hydraulic hose	105.95
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2024	966.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	227.70
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 1 pack of 2 large white hand paper towels	81.46
G Fowler - Emptying of cesspit	150.00
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	60.62
TDL Equipment - Supply of Atlas 165W excavator (net of trade-in of Atlas 140W excavator)	162,000.00
N L Hydraulics - Hydraulic hose	112.73
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Disposable gloves, cutting discs, WD 40, bolts and lock nuts, Kanoflex hose, rubber hose with 2 Mickalor clips and wood shaft	197.42
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd - 20kg of Qualube cleaning rags	29.75
Fen Farm Supplies - 20 kg of post mix and green timber posts	148.50
Richard Yardy (2002) Ltd. - Carry out PAT testing at pumping station	170.40
Morton & Hall (Dixon) - Refund of refused consent application	294.00

BE Fuelcards - Diesel	90.58
EE - Mobile telephone charges	38.32
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	85.63
TDL Equipment - Supply of 40 litres of oil	213.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply and fit hand rinse unit (Account from Heatflo)	298.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply 3,000 litres of gas oil (Account from Watson Fuels)	2,710.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply 4 meter straps, toeboard, oiles and intro to personal safety lone workers course (Account from Wrights Tools and Cope Safety Management)	377.15
Middle Level Commissioners - Assist environmental officer with water vole study, supply of toeboard and environmental impact assessment public consultation publication on Crooked Drain (Account from Newsquest)	721.74
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	708.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply 3,000 litres of gas oil (Account from Watson Fuels)	3,221.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	485.52
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board reports, planning and development applications)	1,428.00
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
David Lowe Plumbing and Heating Limited - Installation of new boiler, replacement of thermostatic radiator valves and automatic air vents at bungalow	5,605.20
Wave - Water charges	65.60
BE Fuelcards - Diesel	74.26
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd - Supply of a lamp number plate	38.56
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2022-2023	36.00
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd - Supply of 5 litres of Qualube soluble cutting oil	26.28
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Roll of masking tape, dustpan and brush, glass cleaner, twin 13 amp trailing socket, mop heads, gloves, hand wipes, Draper pliers, nails and Cimtek filter	200.71
EE - Mobile telephone charges	29.11
British Telecommunications PLC - Telephone charges	47.94
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply to pumping station	20,251.06
Corona Energy - Electricity supply to pumping station	31,654.78
District labour	53,537.44
	471,597.32

LABOUR ACCOUNT

District labour	1,597.92
	473,195.24

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 3

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

GENERAL FUND

2024				2023			
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		337,486.12
	Precept (EA)		118,826.90				
	Rates, insurances, telephones	6,530.18		2024			
	Repairs & Renewals	29,109.42		Mar-31	Rate income & Special levies	290,387.92	
	Fuel	247,248.36			Irrecoverable	-912.21	289,475.71
	Drainworks	5,788.40					
	District Labour	59,099.88			Interest on Deposit Accounts		3,737.05
	Administration charge, audit fee,				Highland Water Contributions		8,470.24
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	20,863.08	368,639.32		Development Charges		1,925.00
					Private Works		8,115.00
	Improvements:				Consent		50.00
	Pump replacement		0.00		Water transfer (Old Bedford sluice)		166.08
	Plant replacement				Insurance claims		1,395.96
	Funds raised in year		0.00		Metered discharge		34,775.97
	Balance carried forward		198,180.91		Write back of provisions		50.00
			685,647.13				685,647.13

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
		Bungalow - Pumping Station	250,000.00	
Capital Provisions	3,050,000.00	Pumping Stations	2,800,000.00	
		Plant and Vehicles etc	176,204.84	
		Stock	3,981.19	
	3,050,000.00			3,230,186.03

Revenue Section

General Fund		Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		1,851.09
- Revenue Balance	198,180.91	Value added tax - Refunds due		70,205.89
- Asset replacement	89,287.49	Advance pay for Workmen		79.75
Low Level Restoration at Block Fen		Sundry Debtors		45,178.41
Account (Redland Aggregates Ltd)	248,156.68	Balance in hand -		
Development Charges Account	36,606.11	Barclays - Treasurer's Account	99,621.40	
Sundry Creditors	273,070.40	Barclays - Business premium Account	240,017.77	
		Barclays - Treasury Deposit Account	200,000.00	
		National Savings-Treasurer's Account	5,677.37	
		Labour Account	2,483.88	547,800.42
	3,895,301.59			3,895,301.59

Sutton & Mepal Internal Drainage Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2024

Barclays - Treasurers Account 2023/2024

1st April 2023			31st March 2024		
Balance brought forward		676,973.39	Payments made during the year	471,597.32	
			Transfers to Labour Account	3,500.00	
31st March 2024			Returned Direct Debits	38,400.26	
Receipts during the year					513,497.58
Clerk's collection account	369,419.09				
Interest on deposit accounts	6,744.27	376,163.36	Balance carried forward		539,639.17
		1,053,136.75			**1,053,136.75**

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2023/2024

1st April 2023		31st March 2024	
Balance brought forward	5,671.37	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2024			
Interest on deposit accounts	6.00	Balance carried forward	5,677.37
	5,677.37		**5,677.37**

Labour Account 2023/2024

1st April 2023		31st March 2024	
Balance brought forward	581.80	Payments made during the year	1,597.92
31st March 2024			
Transfer from Treasurer's Account	3,500.00		
Interest on deposit accounts	0.00	Balance carried forward	2,483.88
	4,081.80		**4,081.80**

Barclays Bank PLc

Clients Premium Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2024			99,822.11
Less unpresented cheques	22/03/2024	2023/112	200.71
O/S lodgement			0.00
Balance per Trial Balance			**99,621.40**

Labour Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2024	2,483.88
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
O/S lodgement	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	**2,483.88**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2024

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**99,621.40**
Buisness Premium Account	**240,017.77**
Barclays Treasury Deposit	**200,000.00**
Labour Account	**2,483.88**

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook	**5,677.37**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**547,800.42**

Sutton & Mepal 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	293,386.12		
	Development charges account	38,063.63		
	Low level fund	245,438.91		
	Asset Replacement Fund	92,182.65		
			669,071.31	**669,071**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	235,589.92		
	Special Levies	54,798.00		
	Penalty	0.00		
	Costs	0.00		
	Write-off	-912.21		
			289,475.71	**289,476**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	3,737.05		
	Development charges account	421.48		
	Low level fund	2,717.77		
	Private works	8,115.00		
	Consent applications	50.00		
	Insurance claim	1,395.96		
	Highland Water	8,470.24		
	Discharge contributions	46.00		
	Metered discharge	34,775.97		
	Sale of Asset	26,000.00		
	Water Transfer - EA	166.08		
	Write Back of Provisions	50.00		
			85,945.55	**85,945**
Line 4	**Staff costs**			
	Wages/salaries	52,782.32		
	National insurance contributions	5,087.15		
	Pension costs	1,230.41		
	Travelling expenses	0.00		
			59,099.88	**59,100**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**			
	PWLB - Principal	0.00		
	PWLB - Interest	0.00		
			0.00	**0**

Sutton & Mepal IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2024

				Per Annual Return
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	118,826.90		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	6,530.18		
	Repairs and renewals	29,109.42		
	Fuel	247,248.36		
	Drainworks	5,788.40		
	Administration	20,863.08		
	Development charges fees	0.00		
	Purchase of assets	161,000.00		
	Pump Replacement costs	0.00		
			589,366.34	**589,366**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	19,080.91		
	Development charges account	36,606.11		
	Low level fund	248,156.68		
	Asset Replacement Fund	92,182.65		
			396,026.35	**396,026**

Reconciliation		
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6		396,026.35

Reconciliation to Accounts

Balances carried forward per Annual Return - As above		396,026.35
Add Back:-		
Adjustments for Prior Years	31,724.27	
Depreciation	-16,518.43	
Assets acquired in year	161,000.00	
Assets disposed of in year	-26,000.00	
Profit on disposal	25,999.00	
		176,204.84
Balances carried forward per Accounts		
General Fund	198,180.91	
Development charges account	36,606.11	
Low level fund	248,156.68	
Asset Replacement Fund	89,287.49	
		572,231.19

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending 31 March 2023 £	Year ending 31 March 2024 £	Notes and guidance *Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	682,359	669,071	*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	271,218	289,476	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	12,863	85,945	*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	37,190	59,100	*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	260,179	589,366	*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	669,071	396,026	*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	683,227	547,800	*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	3,202,164	3,269,164	*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			*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

Date 26/04/2024

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

as recorded in minute reference:

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

Finance officer’s review and key messages

The Clerk asked the Board to consider the key finance messages included in Mr Hill’s ‘Finance Report: Looking Back’ report. The attention of the Board was drawn to the summary, showing how last year had impacted on the Board’s General Fund.

The Board approved the key finance messages.

Budgeting

The Board considered and approved the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2024.

Payments 2023

The Board considered and approved the Payments for 2023.

Annual Accounts and Annual Return 2023/2024

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and Finance Papers for 2023 – 24, and authorised the Chairman to complete and sign the Annual Return 2023 – 24.

B.2370 Finance report: looking forward

Viz;

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		12
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**		**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Thursday 23rd 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 (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 figures have been reviewed and approved with the chairman. 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.

Members should note that the budget proposal includes for the full recovery of highland water claims of £25,260 and £20,000 for metered discharges into the boards system.

At the January 2024 Board meeting members deferred placing an order for a new pump and review the position further at the next meeting. The engineers will raise this matter in their report. The Board have previously approved to replace pumping units from balances and members should take-into-account the current state of balances when consideration is given to this matter.

Previously the Board agreed not to install telemetry at the pumping station as it was a manned station. Following 'out of hours' issues over the winter and with the imminent retirement of the District Officer the engineer will raise this matter again for members consideration. A system suited for the Boards requirements could cost up to £10,000 but would offer an 'out of hours' cover. No provision has been made within the budget proposal but this is an area that could provide significant value for money to the Boards operations.

The budget proposal includes for the recovery of balances depleted during winter 2023/2024 pumping over a three-year period. Longer term the board will need to address balances to restore them to a minimum of a year-in-hand. 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 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 6.5%, from £755 to £805. The Board is also asked to consider and reaffirm its contribution estimated to be £150 towards the Board Member role representing local IDBs within Water Resources East (WRE).

1.2 To consider the District Officer's salary.

1.3 To consider the appropriate reimbursement of the out-of-pocket expenses to Chair & Vice-Chair.

1.4 To consider whether any revisions are necessary in the Board's charges for hiring of plant for private work (last reviewed – June 2022):-

i) Atlas 140W Excavator
£45 per hour in the District) (inclusive of operator's wages)
£50 per hour outside the District)

ii) Flail mower
£45 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages)
£50 per hour for work carried out for the Environment Agency

iii) Weed boat
£45 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages)

iv) Piling Hammer
£45 per hour (inclusive of operator's wages)

(NB – Travelling time being charged in addition to working time).

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 £115,366.

3. Determination of land for rating purposes – 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)

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

Appendix 1

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2024/2025

		Approved budget 2023/2024 £	Actual 2023/2024 £	Budget 2024/2025 £
1	Rates, telephones and insurances	7,150	6,530	7,150 [A]
2	Drainworks, repairs and renewals (including Environmental measures)	22,000	34,898 [B]	30,000 [C]
	Drainage channel - Cranbrook	0	0	0
3	Oil and electricity	90,700	247,248 [D]	153,000 [E]
4	District labour	76,500 [F]	59,100 [F]	53,750 [G]
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	20,900	20,863	21,400
6	Environment Agency - Precept	118,827	118,827	122,392
7	Plant replacement	25,000 [H]	0 [H]	25,000 [H]
8	Reinstatement of balances	0	0	38,941 [I]
		361,077	487,466	451,633
	LESS :			
	Use of balances	36,250 [J]	22,484 [J]	0
	Revenue income	34,439	58,685 [K]	55,505 [L]
		290,388	406,296	396,127

Rates and Special Levy raised 2023/2024 - 46.00p £290,388

Remarks

A - Includes estimate for increased premiums

B - Includes for:

Maintenance/general	5,788
Service/repairs to excavator	2,195
Maintenace/repairs at pumping station	11,686
Supply and install new boiler at bungalow	4,671
	24,340

C - Includes for:

Maintenance/general	7,000
Service/repairs to excavator	3,500
Pumping station/general repairs	19,500
	30,000

D - Includes accounts to February, estimated for March

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

F - Includes provision for District Officer succession planning

G - Includes for two officers to May 2024

H - Provision for plant replacement strategy 25,000
Nothing raised 2023/2024

I - Provision for reinstatement of balances reduced by winter 23/24 pumping. Year 1 of 3

J - Balances for District Officer succession planning

K - Includes metered discharge (not paid) 34,775

L - Includes: Full highland water claim 25,260
Metered discharge 20,000

DOES NOT INCLUDE RENTAL FRON BUNGALOW

Appendix 2

Sutton & Mepal Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

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

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 81.13%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Councils:-

East Cambridgeshire District Council -	3.63%	
Fenland District Council -	8.41%	
Huntingdonshire District Council -	6.83%	18.87%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £5,122.

In 2024/2025 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £6,313.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2024 - £198,181.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2024/2025 is £396,127 and equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 62.75p

b) a Special levy on East Cambridgeshire District Council of £14,391

c) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £33,326 and

d) a Special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £27,035

When setting the rate for 2024/2025 members should give consideration to possible future expenditure.

In 2023/2024 the Board raised a rate of 46.00p together with the appropriate Special levies to raise a total sum of £290,388 which was comprised as follows:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 46.00p

b) a Special levy on East Cambridgeshire District Council of £10,549

c) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £24,430 and

d) a Special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £19,819.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

May 2024

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Clerk asked the Board to consider the key finance messages included in Mr Hill's 'Finance Report: Looking Forward' report.

The Board considered and approved the key finance messages by Mr Hill.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

ADA subscription

The Board approved the continued membership of ADA with payment of £805 to be paid. The Board also reaffirmed its contribution of £150 towards the Board Member role within Water Resources East (WRE).

District Officers Salary

Due to the recent appointment of the District Officer, the Board agreed to not make any changes and to discuss this item at the next meeting.

Expenses Allowances

The Chairman and Vice Chairman declared an interest in this item.

It was agreed that the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses be paid at the agreed current rate.

The Board noted their appreciation of the work of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Charges for Hire of Plant when engaged on private work

The Board agreed that the charges should remain at the current rate.

The Chairman declared an interest in this item.

Determination of Annual Value for Rating purposes

The Confidential Paper was agreed.

The Vice Chairman and Mr R Lee declared an interest in this item.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2024/25

The Clerk drew the attention of the Board to the Finance Officer's comments in his report.

The Clerk advised that to budget for the electricity costs has been difficult and a pumped volume assessment based on 125% of a 5 year average has been used. There has previously been caution over the full payment of Highland Water claims although this was paid in full last year and the Environment Agency now has greater discretion to switch capital funds to revenue to fulfil claims.

The Chairman advised that according to his calculations last year saw an increase of 134% in pumped volumes, and the additional spend of £140k could be attributed to the oil and electricity costs to do this. The budget also includes for reinstating the balances to pre 2023/24 levels over a 3 year period and uses a pessimistic pumping forecast although an optimistic electricity rate.

Discussions followed on different aspects of the budget, and the possibility of poor weather again. It was observed that future rates could go down as well as up, although that looked unlikely for the next few years. Mr R Lee observed that there is £250k in the bank and asked what this could be used for. The Chairman responded that this would be needed when replacing the pumping station, and they should not consider using this for operational costs. The Clerk reminded the Board that the costs of telemetry had not been included when developing the budget.

Mr Heading proposed a Rating of 62.75p in the £, which was seconded by Mr R Lee. This was agreed by the Board.

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2024/2025 and were informed by the Clerk that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 81.13% and 18.87%.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £398,960 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

iii) That a rate of 62.75p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

iv) That a Special levy of £14,391 be made and issued to the East Cambridgeshire District Council, £38,110 be made and issued to Fenland District Council, and £27,035 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure

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

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

B.2371 Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next meetings of the Board be held as follows:

Thursday 16th January 2025 at the Chatteris Cricket Club at 8.30am.

Thursday 22nd May 2025 at the Chatteris Cricket Club including Inspection at 8.30am.

The Chairman asked the Board to advise him if there were any particular areas that would like to look at during the inspection.

B.2372 Any Other Business

Nothing was raised, and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting closed at 12.10pm