

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
hosted at the Baptist Hall, Station Road, Haddenham at 5.00pm on Thursday 27th April 2023

PRESENT

M Church Esq (Chairman)
C Bidwell Esq
T Chambers Esq
A Darby Esq
Mrs M Darby
R Darby Esq
R Flint Esq

K Furness Esq
P Mappledoram Esq
K Robinson Esq
J Smith Esq
N Tebbit Esq
Cllr G Wilson Esq
N R W Wright Esq

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Gary Roberts (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

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

Mr David Jordan (District Engineer) was in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L Flint, E Veal Esq and R Waddelow Esq

C.487 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman declared an interest in item 17 and 26 on the agenda.

C.488 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Commissioners held on 3rd November 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.489 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That M Church Esq be appointed Chairman of the Commissioners’.

C.490 Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED

That J Smith Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Commissioners’.

C.491 Appointment of New Commissioners

Further to minute C.471, The Chairman advised there was nothing further to report at this stage.

C.492 Bank Mandate

Miss Ablett reported that it is necessary to update the signatories after April 2023, and after the appointment of Mr J Smith as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

- i) That Mr P Burrows be added as an authorised signatory of the Barclays Bank Account, should this be required in the future.
- ii) That Mr J Smith be authorised as a signatory of Barclays Bank.

C.493 Member Training Update

Miss Ablett reported on the training undertaken by Members in the past year.

C.494 Construction of Irrigation Reservoirs - Willow Hall Farm

Further to minute C.472, the Chairman reported that further to the minutes of the meeting on 23rd September 2022, development work on the plant site had continued.

He further reported another meeting was held on 10th March due to the lack of progress with the proposed and agreed recharge trenches. He advised that a planning application had been listed on the East Cambridgeshire County Council website with the agreed plan, under an Agricultural General Notification, however the plan had since been modified, removing a section of the recharge trench, which the Commissioners consider a most essential part.

The Chairman reported that although the agreed planning permission stated pumping would cease at the end of December, pumping off site, was still continuing and added that the variation to the planning for 365-day pumping was still in abeyance.

The Chairman further advised Mick George Ltd. had an engineering variation, which they considered allowed them to continue, because the site was flooded and added that he was uncertain, whether the engineers' variation over-rode the current planning permission. He reported he had spoken to Cambridgeshire County Council and had advised them of this and they were going to send an enforcement officer to inspect the site to ensure everything was in order, but he was unaware whether this had yet occurred.

The Chairman reported that he, together with the Vice Chairman and Mr Roberts were working on a proposed summer trigger level, that would be considered reasonable, as the current planning application was based on winter levels, which were quite low.

The Chairman confirmed the proposed summer trigger level had been included in the draft agreement between Mick George Ltd. and the Commissioners, which had been sent to Mick George Ltd for their comments or approval.

The Chairman enquired whether Members wished to allow Mick George Ltd. to continue for the moment, whilst things were progressed and planning permission for the installation of the recharge trenches was being sought, or whether Mick George Ltd. should be told to cease pumping with immediate effect.

Mr Roberts reported the Consultant appointed by Mick George Ltd. had spoken with both him and the Vice Chairman and had proposed lower levels than those put forward by the Commissioners and questions had been raised on behalf of the Commissioners relating to the proposed changes and the Consultant had been advised the Commissioners did not wish to amend the summer trigger levels included in the draft agreement. He added that it appeared Mick George Ltd. were working in the right direction as they had started to install the recharge trenches within the site, although this had breached planning conditions relating to archaeology, they had submitted a planning application for the recharge trenches offsite and they had submitted a byelaw consent application after having been advised they would require consent from the Commissioners for the re-charge trenches.

The Chairman confirmed Mick George Ltd. should not be pumping until they received permission to de-water for 12 months and the Commissioners must physically see the recharge trenches in place and operational before considering lifting the objection to de-watering all summer.

Mr Wright requested an email be sent to Cambridgeshire County Council advising them the summer trigger levels had already been breached requesting the Council instruct Mick George Ltd. to stop pumping until planning permission was granted for installation of the recharge trenches.

The matter of de-watering during the summer months and of the summer trigger levels was discussed at some length and Members agreed with Mr Wright.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman contacts Cambridge County Council regarding the actions of Mick George Ltd. requesting that pumping is stopped until planning permission is received for the recharge trenches, as the summer trigger levels have already been breached.
- ii) That the Commissioners continue to object to summer dewatering.

C.495 Ouse Washes Section 10 & Ouse Washes Newsletters

Further to minute C473, Miss Ablett referred to the Newsletters from the Environment Agency dated December 2022, January & March 2023, viz;

Ouse Washes Middle Level Barrier Bank raising works

December 2022

Project completion

The Middle Level Barrier Bank (MLBB) is the bank of the Ouse Washes reservoir extending from Earith to Welmore Lake Sluice. The work we have carried out is to comply with recommendations made by the Reservoir Inspecting Engineer to complete the works under the Reservoirs Act 1975.

Great news!

We are delighted to tell you that the Ouse Washes bank raising works finished in October 2022. We started construction in 2017 and the work has taken 6 years to complete.

We have raised the crest level of the MLBB between Welmore Lake Sluice and Earith and as part of the bank raising, we have provided a robust demountable flood barrier on the Welney Wash Road (A1101) where it crosses the Middle Level Barrier Bank and creates a low spot. We have also raised a low section of the South Level Barrier Bank between Sutton Gault and Chain Corner.

During October we completed the earthworks, the haul road raising, and we carried out the trialling and testing of the Welney demountable flood barrier. On the 14 October 2022 together with our contractor Jackson Civil Engineering and our supply chain partner Flood Control International Ltd, we held a training day for the Environment Agency field staff in how to install the barrier across the road in the event of flooding. The demountable flood barrier forms part of the 30km length of the Ouse Washes.



Due to the environmental constraints of the Ouse Washes work can only be carried out during the summer months, between 15 July and 31 October each year. This is to avoid disturbing the over wintering and ground nesting birds. Each year we have worked with Natural England to negotiate a longer working window to carry out winter repairs and haul road work.

We will continue to carry out regular inspections of the bank and monitor the grass growth for the next 2 years until the reservoir engineer gives a final sign-off in autumn 2024. This will include regular grass cuts, ecological surveys and repairs to damage that may happen over the winter months.

The footpath of the Middle Level Barrier Bank re-opened to the public on 1 November 2022. Although the bank is now open, the grass still needs to grow. We would appreciate if you would be careful when accessing and walking on the bank and stay away from the patches of grass that haven't grown fully yet.



What we have done

Raised 30km of Middle Level Barrier Bank from Earith to Welmore Lake Sluice	Raised 2.5km of South Level Barrier Bank from Sutton Gault to Chain Corner
Decommissioned Black Sluice	Decommissioned disused telemetry hut at Earith
Tree and shrub planting at Earith	Improved bridleway access in Earith
Flood wall extension at Sutton Gault	Haul road widening between Welches Dam & Mepal
Raised 7.1km of the haul road from Earith to Welney	Works to increase bridge capacity at Welches Dam
Replaced the existing flood wall at Welches Dam	Installed 5 new bird hides at the RSPB reserve
Installed temporary bridges direct to the bank at Earith & Mepal to reduce traffic on local roads	Installed erosion protection along sections of the bank between Mepal & Welches Dam
Installed hardstanding at Mepal for temporary high-volume pumps	Constructed demountable flood barrier at Welney

Throughout the project we have engaged with the public, schools and organisations adding value in local communities; visits, activities, local noticeboards, public drop-in's, surgeries, newsletters, briefings, questionnaires, press releases, online information page, virtual exhibition rooms, online consultations & meetings, social media.

Completion event

Representatives from local organisations, Ouse Washes user groups, Internal Drainage Boards, Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire, and Norfolk County Councils joined us at the Wildfowl Wetland Trust in Welney on Friday 18 November to celebrate the end of the works. The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP for Northeast Cambridgeshire represented local constituents.

The Environment Agency and the project team, we would like to thank you for all the co-operation and support you have given us over the last 6 years.

How to stay in contact with us

Our Public Liaison Officers will continue to keep you updated during the maintenance period of the project. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Public Liaison Officers: Monica Stonham or Yazmin Parry via email ousewashesprojectea@gmail.com



Ouse Washes Flood Storage Reservoir

Update

January 2023

Middle Level Barrier Bank

During the autumn reservoir inspection, our engineers identified cracks in the embankment between Welney and the A142 Mepal, following the prolonged period of hot, dry weather.

The reservoir bank remains in operation as normal although we do need to carry out repairs as soon as possible.

We will be installing equipment in the areas of the cracking over the coming days to monitor them. Operatives will also be carrying out weekly surveys during the winter months.

Our contractor, Jackson Civil Engineering, has started work between Welney and railway bridge. As you know this work will be dependent on weather and flood conditions.

There will be an occasional lorry delivery of materials to the access at Welney using the haul road where an excavator will load the materials onto a tracked dumper or similar for transport along the haul road.

We have liaised with Natural England and RSPB before going ahead with this work.

Public footpath

The Middle Level Barrier Bank will remain open.

Please continue to be careful when accessing and walking on the bank and stay away from the patches of grass that haven't grown fully yet.

We will continue to monitor the bank and grass growth.

Keeping your community up to date

We would like to thank you for your co-operation and patience, and we will continue to work with you and the community to minimise disruption.

Please contact our Public Liaison Officers, Monica Stonham or Yazmin Parry at ousewashesprojectea@gmail.com or on 07534 457348 for more information.



Ouse Washes Flood Storage Reservoir

Update

March 2023

Middle Level Barrier Bank

Following our update in January 2023.

During the autumn reservoir inspection, our engineers identified cracks in the embankment between Welney and the A142 Mepal, following the prolonged period of hot, dry weather.

We undertook repair work throughout January and February and has now been complete. We will continue monitoring of the repaired cracks monthly until December 2023.

Our contractor Jackson Civil Engineering will start demobilising from the site and compound area in Welney from Monday 6 March, this will take approximately 1 week.

We will continue to carry out regular inspections and maintenance of the bank and monitor the grass growth for the next 2 years until the reservoir engineer gives a final sign-off in autumn 2024. This will include regular grass cuts, surveys and repairs to damage that may happen over the winter months.

Public footpath

The Middle Level Barrier Bank will remain open.

Please continue to be careful when accessing and walking on the bank and stay away from the patches of grass that haven't grown fully yet.

Keeping your community up to date

We would like to thank you for your co-operation and patience, and we will continue to work with you and the community to minimise disruption.

Our Public Liaison Officers will continue to keep you updated during the maintenance period of the project. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Public Liaison Officers: Monica Stonham or Yazmin Parry via email ousewashesprojectea@gmail.com



Miss Ablett advised:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Climate Change was discussed and it was noted that the MLC had completed its carbon audit and would now start work on carbon reduction and mitigation initiatives. It was also noted that the M&E engineer was looking at base levels of energy consumption at pumping stations, for

example to see if panel heaters are left on permanently. He will be making recommendations to Boards if he identifies scope for reducing power without risking the apparatus.

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

The Chief Executive advised that a decision had been made to move the MLC and IDB's electricity supply contracts from Anglian Farmers to the Green Energy Advice Bureau. This followed several years of extended poor service levels and lack of timely information coming from Anglian Farmers.

The future of IDBs and the value of potential amalgamations was once discussed and this gave rise to questions over small boards being able to secure a quorate for which this had been a particularly poor year. It was agreed that this item should remain on the agenda and that any Chairs who felt that the time was right for their Boards to look again and the advantages/disadvantages of amalgamation would contact the Clerk. It was also agreed that it may be useful to undertake an exercise around updating the original Geoff Beal report which had recommended that the number of Boards within the area administered by the MLC could reasonably be reduced to three or four.

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

ii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

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

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

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

The opening address was given by Councillor Matthew Riddle, Chairperson, Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board and Councillor, South Gloucestershire Council who spoke on options which could be pursued to change the way Special Levy is reported and

dealt with by the Councils. The challenge at the moment was perceived as the lack of transparency with Special Levy payments not being itemised on rate bills in the same way that police and ambulance services are. There is also the issue that by not disaggregating the Special Levy payments, increases in them can currently (for Councils who pay large Special Levys) trigger a local election under the current rules.

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

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

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

b) Annual Conference 2023

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

c) Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch

The Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse ADA Branch was held on Tuesday 7th March 2023

Morning workshops were re-introduced for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak and members who attended took part in an excellent discussion focussed on three topic areas; Fens2100; Water Resources East and Climate Change. Steven Trewhella (consultant to the EA on Fens2100) and Daniel Johns (Chief Exec, WRE) took away a wide range of ideas centred around how the two topics were connected by the work of IDBs.

Within the AGM, Marc Heading was re-appointed as Chairman and Doug McMurdo as Vice Chair with approval that the secretariat of the branch be transitioned from the Middle Level Commissioners to the Bedford Group of IDBs over the coming months. Ian Moodie (Technical Manager, ADA) gave an overview of ADA's activities, including their important inputs on behalf of IDBs into the long-awaited implementation of schedule 3

of the Floods & Water Management Act. Tom Pickover introduced himself ahead of starting as Operations Manager at the Environment Agency (covering the lower Great Ouse catchment) and was joined by Darren Trumper who between them gave an overview of Environment Agency flood management activities and budgets.

iii) National Drainage Show & Floodex 2023

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

iv) Water Resources East (WRE)

Miss Ablett reported that the requested contribution from this Board for 2023/2024 financial year is expected to once again be £125. Contributions from drainage boards within the East of England secure a direct stake in WRE and help to ensure their needs and opinions are taken into account.

v) Changes to Electricity Supply Contracts

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

During the summer the Middle Level Commissioners were approached by Green Energy Advice Bureau (GEAB), one of the UK's leading energy companies and buying group, whose portfolio includes numerous companies with over 200 million kwh tendered per annum. They have experience working with an estimated 60 Internal Drainage Boards, which include locally the Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards and Downham Market Group of Internal Drainage Boards. We accordingly contacted Jean Heading of the Ely Group of Internal Drainage to enquire of the service provided by GEAB and she has confirmed she is far happier with the service received from them compared to that from Anglia Farmers and since has signed a 5-year fixed rate contract with GEAB from 1st April 2022.

A report was presented to the Middle Level Commissioners at their Board meeting on 3rd November 2022 and due to the ongoing poor performance of Anglia Farmers, together with the positive feedback given by Jean Heading of the Ely Group, the Commissioners' resolved to consider moving to alternative arrangements. The Executive Committee were delegated the final decision and having considered a report on the options and subsequently confirmed their agreement that a move would be appropriate in the circumstances.

Miss Ablett reported this was considered a positive move and recommended the Commissioners also move to this alternative arrangement.

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

Miss Ablett advised that the Middle Level Commissioners and its administered Boards have entered into a fixed rate energy supply with Corona Energy for an 18-month period from 1st April 2023.

vi) Insurance

Historically the number of insurance companies willing to quote for the insurance requirements of the Middle Level Commissioners and administered Boards is limited.

Our insurance portfolio is complex and includes a range of policies that includes Commercial Combined (largest component), Motor Fleet, Engineering & Construction, Terrorism, Management Liability, Marine Craft and Professional Indemnity.

The overall cost of our insurance portfolio for 2023/24 will be £192,275 (£152,373 in 2022/23) a 26% increase, although increases will differ Board by Board depending on their individual insurance needs.

Key factors and changes are highlighted below:

- For Commercial Combined insurance, 2022/23 was the last year in our previous five-year agreement with AXA which included a 7% price reduction woven into the deal. For 2023/24 Towergate, our brokers, approached several companies and all bar AXA were not willing to quote given the size and complexity of our portfolio. Independently we also approached the NFU who declined to quote for the same reason.
- There has been an increase in fleet, property and marine assets included within our cover.
- In view of rising inflation most Boards agreed to index link their insured sums from 1st April 2023. AXA have increased insured sums by 15%, which has resulted in an increase within the overall premium.
- AXA have offered a 2-year stability deal, where any premium increases, subject to claims not exceeding 50% of the written premium, will be capped for 2024/25 at 2.5%. This excludes any increases in sums insured.
- AXA will not extend the stability deal as they plan a review of their whole IDB scheme in 2025.
- Commercial combined policy excess has increased from £350 to £2,500. None of our four 2022/23 claim values were above this new excess.
- Excesses are dictated by AXA's overall scheme for all IDBs and this is apparently now standard and has been imposed due to the number of lower value claims across the whole IDB industry. As other IDB/IDB Groups come out of their previous agreement with AXA the above will apply.

For future years Boards ought to consider index linking their valuations of properties and pumping stations every 3-5 years rather than annually, to mitigate annual premium increases and balancing having suitable cover without being over-insured.

It should also be noted that personal accident and sickness cover only covers employees or members up to 80 years of age. Boards may need to consider the implications of this.

vii) Delegation of signatory on consents

The Board was asked to note that under the Board's scheme of delegation, the Chief Executive has delegated the authority to sign consent on behalf of the Board to the Chief Engineer. As well as the Chief Engineer being better placed to technically assure individual consents, this will enable them to effectively take ownership over the whole planning and consenting service. This also creates a mechanism for escalation in case of any issues or complaints.

viii) Service Delivery Frameworks

The Board were asked to resolve that the Clerk, on their behalf, be authorised to enter into user and/or access agreements for public sector delivery frameworks (For example, Environment Agency Delivery Frameworks and SCAPE). This will open up access to the fees, terms and conditions of these Frameworks so our Consulting Engineers can compare and choose the most suitable procurement route for delivery of the Boards future needs. This does not tie the Board to using any Framework they then have a user/access agreement with, and Frameworks are not the only procurement route for delivery that will be considered. Having this resolution from all the Boards we administer is key if we are to package work across Boards to exploit economies of scale and become more efficient and effective in the delivery of services.

RESOLVED

- i) WRE – That a contribution to Water Resources East of £125 be approved.
- ii) Electricity contract – That the Chairmans actions be approved.
- iii) Service Delivery Framework – That the Clerk be authorises to enter into user and/or access agreements for Public Sector Delivery frameworks

C.497 Consulting Engineers' Report.

The Commissioners considered the Engineers report, viz;

Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
Consulting Engineers Report – April 2023

Pumping Stations

Other than the matters described below, 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.

Sutton Gault

During October 2022 the pump bolts were assessed and although corroded do not require replacement yet. The corroded steps and handrail were removed to prevent damage to the pump. Pump station structural survey to be planned and funded with GiA if possible.

The rain gauges have been on a long lead time and are due in April 2023.

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following new development related matters have been received and, where appropriate, dealt with since the last meeting:

<i>MLC Ref.</i>	<i>Council Ref.</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Location</i>
012	22/00507/RM	Vistry Homes Ltd	Residential (164 plots)	Mepal Road, Sutton*

013	21/01329/FUL & 21/01031/FUL	Paul Hutchinson	Proposed lake and associated works	The Row, Sutton
014	22/00057/RMM	Abbey Developments Ltd	Residential (46 plots)	Garden Close, Sutton*
015	CCC/22/075/VAR	Dennis (Haddenham) Ltd	Irrigation Reservoirs	Hillrow Causeway, Haddenham*

***Planning applications ending 'RM', 'REM' or 'RMM' relate to reserved matters
Planning applications ending 'VAR' relate to Variation of condition***

Developments that are known to propose direct discharge are indicated with an asterisk. The remainder propose, where applicable and where known, disposal to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

No applications for Infiltration Device Self Certification or the Checking Service have been received since the last meeting report.

District Wide

Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant Relocation in the Snout Corner/Honey Hill/Poplar Hall Farm area, Fen Ditton - Anglian Water Services Ltd (MLC Ref No 009)

As this proposal is outside of the Commissioners' interests it will be removed from future reports.

Haddenham

Approval of the details for reserved matters for appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale of planning application 18/01041/OUM erection of 33 dwellings, associated public open space and landscaping, with all matters reserved except for access on site east of 12 - 18 Metcalfe Way Haddenham, 20/01766/RMM – Castlemore Homes (MLC Ref No 005)

The Reserved Matters application for the above development was approved on the 23rd July. Construction has since commenced on site.

No further correspondence has been received in relation to the above development and as a consequence no further action has been taken on the Commissioners' behalf.

Change of use of (1) an existing open-sided agricultural shed from agriculture to a mixed use of agriculture and B8 storage, (2) an existing agricultural building from agriculture to a mixed use of agriculture and B8 storage, and (3) (part retrospective) an area of

hardstanding from open agricultural storage to open storage of contractor's plant and machinery (sui generis) at Tree Farm, Hillrow Causeway, Haddenham, 21/00044/FUL - Mr Kevin Johnson – CB Groundworks & Construction Ltd (MLC Ref No 006)

Further to the entry in the previous report the planning application was refused by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) on the 4th November. An appeal against this decision has been made to the Secretary of State, dated 30th March. The notification of the appeal received from ECDC does highlight that additional comments, or amendments/modifications to previous representations, can be made should the Commissioners wish to do so.

The Commissioners are asked for their opinion on the amendments and to confirm if they wish a response to the appeal to be submitted.

Proposal to demolish the existing buildings on site and replace with two barn structures at Forest School Camps Stores, Bungalow Farm, Hill Row Causeway, Haddenham – Forest School Camps (MLC Ref No 007)

Further to the entry in the last report no further correspondence has been received in relation to the above development and as a consequence no further action has been carried out on the Commissioners' behalf.

Construction of irrigation reservoirs by the extraction, processing and export of sand and gravel at Willow Hall Farm, Hillrow Causeway, Haddenham (MLC Ref No 008)

Further to the entry in the previous report the Consulting Engineer and the Commissioners' working group have continued to liaise with the quarry operator, MG Ltd, in respect of the above development.

Dewatering of the working area and first of the reservoirs to the Commissioners' drainage system commenced on the 18th November and continued until 8th February. Following this date dewatering of the site has been to the first of the recharge trenches installed within the site boundary alongside the A1123. The water level monitoring system was in place and working and no issues with the Commissioners' pumping of excess discharge were observed during the period. The invoice for payment of discharge volumes has been raised and passed to MG Ltd for payment.

With respect to the proposed variation to planning permission (CCC ref: CCC/22/075/VAR, MLC Ref No 015) to year-round dewatering, this application is still in

abeyance pending discussions and agreements with the Commissioners. A meeting was held between the Commissioners' working group, the Consulting Engineer and MG Ltd on the 10th March 2023. A copy of the meeting notes is available at Appendix 1.

The meeting confirmed that MG Ltd are in the process of constructing the recharge trenches, to the agreed location, line and depth. An issue relating to archaeology had delayed the works to the western recharge trench installation. Inspection of the trenches once in place has been agreed and the Consulting Engineer will liaise with MG Ltd to carry out the inspections.

A key issue relating to the year-round dewatering proposals relates to the groundwater monitoring trigger levels. MG Ltd was advised that the current trigger levels for groundwater monitoring and cessation of pumping are winter levels only. The meeting, held on 10th March, confirmed that summer trigger levels are required and the Consulting Engineer will liaise with MG Ltd's appointed hydrogeologist to confirm and agree the summer ground water trigger levels.

The meeting confirmed that a suitable agreement or consent from the Commissioners is needed for the objection to summer dewatering to be removed. The Consulting Engineer is working with the Assistant Clerk to prepare this agreement. The key requirements the Commissioners have outlined for the agreement are that the summer groundwater trigger levels and the recharge trenches are installed and operational as per the agreed alignments and depths, before summer dewatering can commence.

It is assumed that any further instructions will be via the working group and the Consulting Engineer will continue to liaise with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and working party members in respect of this development.

The Commissioners are requested to approve the removal of the objection to summer dewatering subject to the agreement being in place.

Mepal

Erection of 55 new dwellings, new access, estate roads, driveways, parking areas, open space, external lighting, substation and associated infrastructure at site south and west of The Bungalow, Brick Lane, Mepal - Havebury Housing Partnership (MLC Ref No 011)

Further to the last meeting an email was sent to ECDC in December advising that the Commissioners' main concern "relates to the condition and capacity of the receiving

culverted watercourses in Mepal Road and subsequently “The Brook”. The capacity, condition and ongoing maintenance of these is unknown therefore it is not clear whether there are any risks associated with accommodating the proposed 18.3l/s discharge rates from the development, whether they require improvement to accommodate the additional flows, or whether any maintenance of these receiving culverts is required to ensure no future issues arise.”

Sutton

Outline planning application (ECDC ref 19/01707/OUM) for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 173 dwellings and provision of land for community facilities (sports pitches and burial ground), including access (not internal roads), open space, sustainable urban drainage systems and associated landscaping. All matters reserved apart from access on land adjacent to 43 Mepal Road, Sutton – Linden Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 001 & 011)

Further to item iv) Linden Ltd (MLC Ref No 001) & Vistry Homes Ltd (MLC Ref No 012) of Minute C.477 Consulting Engineers’ Report, including planning and consenting matters a response was submitted on behalf of the Commissioners in December highlighting the Commissioners’ concerns with respect of surface water drainage.

According to the District Council’s Public Access webpage the decision on this discharge of conditions application (ECDC Ref No 19/01707/DISB) is still pending consideration. It is noted that the response from the LLFA in September 2022 states they are unable to approve discharge of conditions relating to surface water drainage. No further correspondence from the LLFA has been submitted.

Reserved matters for Outline planning application 17/01445/OUM for erection of up to 53 houses to include public open space and details relating to access on land rear of Garden Close Sutton – Abbey Developments Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 002, 004 & 014)

Further to item iv) Linden Ltd (MLC Ref No 001) & Vistry Homes Ltd (MLC Ref No 012) of Minute C.477 Consulting Engineers’ Report, including planning and consenting matters a response was submitted on behalf of the Commissioners to raise further objection to the application in December 2022.

According to the District Council’s Public Access webpage the decision on the Reserved Matters application, ECDC Ref No 22/00057/RMM (MLC Ref No 014), is still pending consideration.

Whilst a detailed review of the submitted planning application has not been carried out the response from the County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), is noted. The LLFA has objected to the application on the basis that the drainage proposals have changed from the outline planning permission and more detailed information is required. Of particular concern is the discharge rates to the two discharge locations have increased from the previous combined total of 2l/s rate to 8l/s. An initial review of the Drainage Strategy plan would suggest that the system utilises the previous drainage routing, whilst increasing the discharge rates. It is therefore assumed that the developer has not taken into account the previous comments and concerns raised.

A subsequent response from the LLFA, dated 17th March 2023, noted the condition placed on the Outline Planning Permission, (ECDC Ref No 18/01053/OUM, MLC Ref No 002), and that the LLFA is happy to await the details of the discharge of conditions application to request the detailed calculations they require.

Local representations continue to object to the planning application. Specifically, the Sutton Poor's Charity "strongly object" due to the risk from flooding of land immediately to the south of the development and the response from Sutton Parish Council is "Outright refusal".

The Commissioners are asked for their opinion and further instructions on the planning application to inform further discussion.

Wilburton

Outline application comprising access and landscaping to provide up to 115 dwellings comprising 35 CLT houses and 80 market houses (including 5no. self-build plots), commercial units - (Use Class B1(Business) and/or D1 (Non-residential Institutions - day nursery) - in the alternative), substation, multi-functional community building and football pitch, together with landscaping (including public open space) and associated infrastructure (with all other matters reserved) on land at Camp's Field south of Stretham Road, Wilburton – Stretham & Wilburton Community Land Trust & Laragh Homes Developments Ltd (MLC Ref No 003)

Further to the entry in the last report no further correspondence has been received in relation to the above development and as a consequence no further action has been carried out on the Commissioners' behalf.

The Planning Officer wrote to the applicant requesting an extension of time until 11th November 2022 to allow for a “full assessment of the application”. According to the District Council’s Public Access webpage a decision on this planning application is pending.

Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan (HANP)

Following the end of the six week consultation period the plan was submitted to an Independent Examiner who concluded that the HANP was suitable to be put to Referendum.

The content of the Examiner’s Report has not been considered in detail but it is noted that entries on Policy HAD 15: Flooding and sustainable drainage specifically refers to the LLFA but not the Commissioners.

The Referendum took place at the end of September with over 90% of voters in favour of its adoption which occurred during October.

Planning Updates & Consultations

The “Strategic Planning Consultation Responses” document can be found on www.middlelevel.gov.uk via the following link [Strategic Planning Consultation](#). Please note that this document was prepared for the previous reporting period; an update is currently being prepared and will be available on the website at some point after the meeting.

All responses to consultation documents were made on behalf of both the Middle Level Commissioners and its associated Boards.

High Rainfall Event and Flooding Incident – December 2020

When attending meetings of the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Flood and Water (FloW) Partnership, the Middle Level Commissioners’ Planning Engineer has raised concerns about the issues experienced within Cambridgeshire during or following high rainfall and/or exceptional circumstance type events and has enquired of other partners whether given the time that has elapsed any progress is being made to resolve some of the issues. To date the response has been limited.

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

Initially, three areas of designation are proposed:

- A. Business as usual - Areas where there are no known problems that cannot be solved through the Boards “day-to-day activities”.
- B. Areas of concern - An area subject to flooding which is unlikely to be solved through the Boards “day-to-day activities” and may require protection, intervention and/or investment by the relevant RMA(s).
- C. Acute drainage areas – A geographical area with multiple or interlinked sources of flood risk where there is a need for a higher standard of water level management than normal to ensure that any new development will not increase flood risk that affects people, properties and local infrastructure and may require protection, intervention and/or investment by the relevant RMA(s).

This is not the same as a “critical drainage area” which has a specific meaning in flood risk terms i.e “A Critical Drainage Area (CDA) is an area that has critical drainage problems and which has been notified to the local planning authority as such by the Environment Agency in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).”

A review of the potential extents of either an “area of concern” and/or “Acute drainage areas” within the Commissioners’ catchment is currently being prepared with the intention of it being available for the next Meeting.

The intention is to highlight this area to the relevant RMA eg planning authorities, LLFA, Anglian Water, the Environment Agency etc., as an area which requires more involved management and will assist in protecting the local flood and water management systems including the Commissioners’ system.

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

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

It is also considered that current surface water design practices do not allow for the weather conditions experienced prior to the December 2020 event or the complex network of water level and

flood risk management systems within the Fens. Therefore, consideration is being given to requiring designs to:

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

Strategic Drainage and Wastewater Consultation and Issues

The Right to Connect

Members will recall that during the passage of the Environment Act through the House of Lords an amendment was sought which aimed to minimise the impact of new housing development on levels of local flood risk and the likelihood of storm discharges of untreated sewerage effluent into the water environment. It aimed to ensure housing developers design systems according to a hierarchy of drainage options that seek to reduce to a minimum the volume of rainwater entering combined sewerage systems removing the current “right to connect” to public sewers.

On the basis that the various RMA involved could have been asked to consider taking the opportunity to write to the government and voice their concerns over the right to connect for new developments the views of the Boards administered by the Middle Level Commissioners were sought.

The amendment was not moved and the House of Lords were not invited to take a decision on it. The Environment Act received Royal Assent in November 2021.

However, the results of the Boards who provided a positive response is as follows:

For the removal of the Right To Connect	54%
Against the removal of the Right To Connect	23%
Neither for or against the Right To Connect	18%
Not an issue for the Board	5%

The discharge from sewers can cause several challenges including increased flood risk, pollution and water quality issues, the solution of which are often at the rate payers’ expense. Unsurprisingly the majority, but not all, of the Boards supporting the removal of the right either served or were detrimentally affected by areas of urban development.

Of those Boards against the removal some only served small urban areas with a limited number of sewers. Others served urban areas but only one received significant “benefit”.

The Board that neither opposes nor supports the removal served a significant urban area but the remainder served a limited number of or have no adopted sewers within their catchments.

Other comments received expressed:

- A. Concerns about the lack of investment and the need for improvement to the existing adopted infrastructure and;
- B. Suggested that the permission to connect should be on an approval basis so that it can be controlled and any impacts managed and;
- C. Required the Clerk to promote and lobby the Board’s position.

Some Boards are more rural whilst others feature a larger urban area. Similarly, a larger individual Board which may be predominantly rural but include a sub-catchment(s) which is largely, and increasingly, an urban environment which has to accommodate the resultant flows.

Therefore, it is considered that it would be difficult to have a simple yes/no solution within a complex system such as The Fens.

Anglian Water Drainage & Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP)

Draft DWMP

A more detailed review of the DWMP will be included in the updated version of the Strategic Planning Consultation Responses document currently being prepared. However, it is considered appropriate to include specific entries for the relevant WRCs of interest in the local area.

1. Draft DWMP Consultation

The draft DWMP document has been the subject of a consultation which provided an opportunity to comment on the document and included the following specific points:

Groundwater infiltration & surface water removal

The problems associated with groundwater infiltration and surface water within the sewer system, particularly within combined systems, are known and are a problem for all RMAs involved. Particularly when the water table is high and/or during the winter months.

The removal of groundwater infiltration and surface water from the sewerage system, to reduce the number of flood events, pollutions and storm overflow spills is considered to be an appropriate option in the correct circumstances and location.

The question that will need to be resolved in these situations is where will the surface water go instead? Most other surface water systems are approaching their finite capacity and will require the installation of significant infrastructure to deal with the flows. Who will pay and be responsible for this? Care will also need to be taken to ensure that flood risk is not being increased elsewhere within the WRCs catchment for another RMA to deal with as a result.

As the approval and consent of other RMAs may also be required, prior detailed consultation with the parties involved **MUST** be undertaken and agreed **BEFORE** work commences.

(NB: In respect of this document, infiltration refers to groundwater entering the sewer system which **increases hydraulic loadings and threatens wastewater treatment efficiency.**)

Water level Management Solutions

The use of SuDS, wetlands and other green structures is considered to be an appropriate option in the correct circumstances and location.

The management of SuDS and other water level management systems is an ongoing challenge for many RMAs. Without suitable arrangements being imposed these could simply become potential liabilities for the various rate/bill payers. Therefore, adequate arrangements **MUST** be made to ensure that the long-term ownership funding, management, and maintenance for the upkeep of any green infrastructure, whether on or off site, in perpetuity is achieved.

Consideration also needs to be given to any restrictions upon maintenance of the drainage “facility” due to the presence of protected habitats and species.

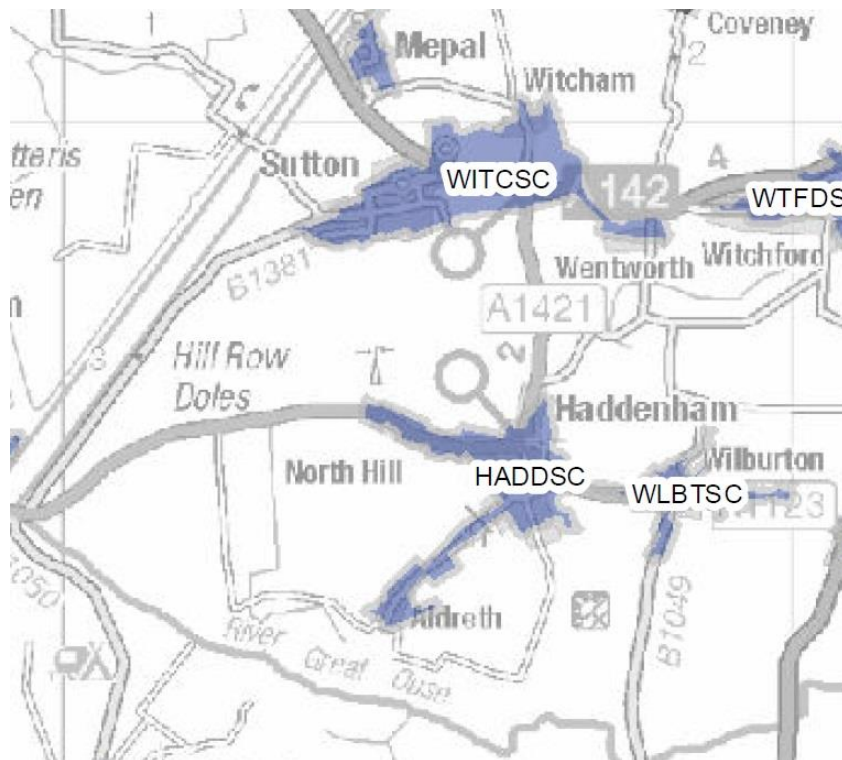
As the approval and consent of other RMAs may also be required, prior detailed consultation with the parties involved **MUST** be undertaken and agreed **BEFORE** work commences.

Partnership Working

The Commissioners and associated Boards are prepared to work in partnership with the local community, private and public partners to contribute to and deliver schemes for conservation, navigation, water resources, water level & flood risk management where there is a mutual benefit to the partners concerned.

However, to what extent they are prepared to contribute would be the subject of a decision for the respective authority and this may vary dependent upon their views.

2. Programme outputs



Extract from Anglian Water's Risk Based Catchment Screening (RBCS) Map showing the extent of the WRC catchments adjacent to the Commissioners' area

L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
HADDENHAM	3153	3680	3810	Yes	0

Extracts from Anglian Water's draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan showing the results and proposed plans for March WRC

Planning objective themes reviewed	Stakeholder concerns/ comments	Medium term strategy	2050 Strategy
Escape from sewers WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	Flood risk implications.	Wait and see.	50% surface water runoff removal.

Haddenham WRC

This WRC currently serves a population of 3153. An increase in population across the catchment of 3810 (21%) by 2050 was used in the BRAVA/RBCS process.

Despite concerns being raised no risk has been identified and a “wait and see” (monitor) approach has been suggested by Anglian Water in the medium term.

The long-term strategy is to reduce surface water run-off removal by 50%.

WRC Compliance

The quality of the discharge does not appear to be a cause for concern. However, members will be aware of Natural England’s concerns about nutrients affecting the aquatic environment.

3.Storm Overflow Consultation

A consultation exercise on Storm Overflow Discharges was held during February. In view of the concerns discussed above it was considered appropriate to consult all the administered Boards even though many would not be directly affected.

The main means of providing a response was to provide answers to five specific questions and, whilst responses were provided, in view of the nature of the matter, the responses received from the Boards consulted and given that the issue is rising up the political agenda it was considered that a more detailed and focused response was required.

The following are the headlines or a brief resume of the response.

A. Existing sewer systems and problems

1. The Right to Connect – As discussed elsewhere in this Report.
2. Other issues – On going pollution problems, the surcharging of or high discharges during or following high rainfall events, the lack of capacity within WRC’s.

B. General

It is considered that all the current targets are too vague and will take too long to achieve any meaningful results and that the consultation was not open and transparent as the locations of the points of discharge are not readily identified within the document therefore, making it difficult to provide a meaningful comment.

Advice was given that:

Most of our systems are pumped often remaining stationary for extended periods thus dilution may not occur as expected; water is abstracted for various purposes – see High Priority Sites – Public Health below; the adverse impact on areas of interest including designated environmental sites; and that no “compensation” is provided for having to receive, transfer and dispose of the discharges from the overflows.

C. Storm Flow Technical Overview

High Priority Sites

1. Ecology

a. Environment targets:

It is considered that these targets should apply to **all** sites not just high priority ones, with solutions implemented much sooner than identified if the Government’s targets of halting biodiversity decline is to be achieved and the goals of the Water Framework Directive and the 25 year environment plan are to be achieved

b. Sensitive Inland Water

Reference was made to the proximity of trigger points.

2. Public Health

The document refers to Designated Shellfish Water and Designated Bathing Water as trigger points which is understood but it is not appreciated that vast quantities of water are abstracted from Fenland water level management systems for agricultural use, whether this is washing or irrigating crops for consumption within the food chain.

It was suggested that it would be prudent for the trigger points to be reviewed to include those other items which could affect public health on a wider scale.

Potable Water

Reference was made concerning the use of excess water from both the Commissioners’ and surrounding systems to fill the proposed Fens Reservoir and the potential benefits of improving water quality from the discharges into these watercourses.

3. Amenity

Emphasis is given to Bathing waters but no reference is made to other wider but perhaps smaller benefits on the Commissioners’ largely navigable systems and the disposal of sewage into these watercourses may have an adverse impact on wider issues, for example, tourism, angling etc or if these wider “costs” are considered when assessing the adverse impacts of overflows on the local area.

4. Assessing spill frequency

Event data Monitors

- a. From a closer review it was identified that some of the discharges of interest including Doddington, Nightlayers and Ramsey WRCs are not fitted with Event Data Monitors. Therefore, it is not known how the number of spills can be fully assessed.

Event Duration Monitors will be installed on all of Anglian Water's overflows during Asset Management Plan (AMP) period 7 (2020-2025) and this will, hopefully, reduce the level of uncertainty during AMP 8 (2025-2030) and AMP 9 (2030-2035) by producing "real" data.

- b. Rainfall target: Storm overflows will not be permitted to discharge above an average of 10 rainfall events per year by 2050 but this target should be more defined including restriction on the duration of spills and the volume discharged. This may be difficult to achieve. The Standard of Protection (SoP) provided, the use of "typical" rather than excessive rainfall events and modelling of the various systems to identify potential problem overflows rather than actual data – the number of spills, duration of the spills etc was questioned.

Growth

The growth that has occurred in the last fifty years has contributed to the increased number and length of spills and this will only become more severe as further growth continues unless adequate steps are taken now to resolve these as a matter of urgency.

Climate Change

It would be appropriate for all RMAs to prepare for the worst-case scenario and there is an aspiration to achieve this but this could be expensive, may prove unnecessary and wasteful leading to criticism. It was suggested that the most economic and environmentally acceptable standard should be achieved.

Screening

It would be beneficial to know where these initial overflows are located.

D. Storm Overflow Consultation

Performance Guide

It appears that priority is given to the number of spills rather than the length of time of the discharge, the volume of flow being discharged or the cumulative effects of the overflows due to their close proximity to each other.

Preferred Plan

It would be beneficial if the “headlines” from assessments and guidance on suggested solutions could be provided to identify and instigate any early engagement with the parties concerned, for example, land owners, developers etc.

Customer Support

Reference was made in the document to continual engagement with customers but there appears to be limited engagement with those RMA who have to receive the flows from the storm overflows.

It was suggested that such engagement commences and both the Commissioners and associated Boards look forward to continual engagement and transparency on storm overflows and networks in the future.

E. Consultation Questionnaire

The answers to the questionnaire were generally included in the response but in reply to the question *How confident are you that this strategy aligns with our Purpose?* A very low confidence comment was provided adding that some of the systems cannot be managed without significant investment and improvement works being required on several networks.

F. Summary

Whilst it is pleasing that the issue of sewage overflows is being progressed this appears to be primarily due to political pressure rather than at the instigation of the water industry.

There are concerns that priority will be given to resolving issues associated with storm overflows rather than those existing problems associated with WRCs and associated systems.

Greater transparency, early engagement and further discussions should be undertaken to any issues related to adoptable sewer systems and storm overflows if the current problems are to be resolved.

The final DWMP document is currently being prepared and is due to be published this spring.

Review for implementation of Schedule 3 to The Flood and Water Management Act 2010

(F&WMA)

The Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) details the provision of comprehensive flood management to protect people, homes, and businesses. It is written to protect water supplies to the consumer and helps safeguard community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges. The Act introduces into law the concept of flood risk management as the preferred approach rather than reliance on flood defences (existing or proposed) for protection of sites.

1. Schedule 3

Schedule 3 of the FWMA was introduced to establish a SuDS approving body (SAB) at the county/unitary level for the regulation of new development and compliance with The Act. It was intended that this Schedule would be introduced into law around 2015/2016, following the original Act that achieved royal ascent in 2010 but this did not happen and Schedule 3 did not achieve approval due to concerns that it would restrict housing delivery and growth.

Instead, the Government made amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to stipulate those decisions on planning applications relating to major developments (over 10 dwellings, or equivalent non-residential developments) should ensure that SuDS are put in place, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) currently need to approve drainage schemes and ensure they are appropriately maintained.

Currently the maintenance of a development typically falls under the responsibility of a Private Maintenance Company (PMC) which is usually paid for using service charge agreements with the owners of the new properties and often selling residential properties as leasehold rather than freehold.

2. Review

In early December industry experts sent an open letter to the Prime Minister which “strongly urged” the implementation of Schedule 3.

Following a review Defra announced in January 2023, the Government’s decision to implement Schedule 3 which will provide a framework for the approval and adoption of high quality SuDS and is expected to occur at a yet to be determined date in 2024. As a result, the Government is giving consideration to how this will be implemented subject to final decisions on scope, threshold and process whilst being mindful of the cumulative impact of new regulatory burdens on the development sector and water industry. Defra recently undertook a consultation survey with LPAs and LLFAs but not with IDBs and other relevant parties. However, there are several issues and challenges that require resolution before progressing further.

3. Changes to existing laws

The implementation of Schedule 3 will introduce some small changes to three existing laws.

a) Building Act 1984

Section 59 which gives local authorities the power to request that sustainable drainage systems in an unsatisfactory condition be renewed, repaired or cleansed is to be amended.

Section 84 which stipulates that local authorities withhold the right to request that impermeable surfaces around a building which do not allow for the satisfactory drainage of its surface or subsoil be remedied requires amendment to specify that surfaces need to remove water in a satisfactory manner.

b) New Roads and Street Works Act 1991

Section 63 of the Act will include a small change should Schedule 3 be enacted.

c) Water Industry Act 1991

Section 106 to remove the right to connect. Following Schedule 3's commencement, a person may only exercise this right if their drainage system was approved by an SAB before construction and if a proposal for their drainage system to communicate with a sewer was included in their application for approval.

The NPPF and the associated PPG will require amending to reflect any changes.

4. Implementation

Whilst there will be some changes to current procedures it is considered that there are several potential benefits including better working practices, better integration with other RMA, the removal of the automatic right to connect, potential revenue streams etc but there are several potential problems that need to be resolved including funding mechanisms; potential increased costs on the rate payer; lack of resources, skills and capabilities; the need for more timely responses possibly taking staff members from other work.

The proposal is the subject of on-going discussions and a meeting with the LLFAs and other partners has been requested to discuss the issues in order to maximise any opportunities and minimise any adverse impacts on both the Middle Level Commissioners and the Boards to whom they provide a planning consultancy service.

These discussions will include, as a minimum:

- a) The suggested change in surface water design practice, as discussed elsewhere in this report.
- b) Ensuring that adequate arrangements are made for long term ownership funding, management and maintenance arrangements for the upkeep of any water level and flood risk management system, whether on or off site, in perpetuity including details of the works to be carried out by the occupier/land owner, adopting authority, the Management Company or other responsible person/authority, together with the costs attached, are included in the “Homeowners Pack” and the Deed of Sale.
- c) The right to connect needs to be on an approval basis to ensure that it can be controlled and any adverse impacts managed.
- d) That any incurred costs on the rate payer are kept to a minimum.

Consulting Engineer

11 April 2023

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Appendix 1

Notes of meeting held on Friday 10th March 2023

Our Ref: GR/356/PL/008 (Please quote this reference on any correspondence)

Haddenham Level District Commissioners ('the Authority')

E/3003/18/CM & CCC/21/235/DCON

Construction of irrigation reservoirs by the extraction, processing and export of sand and gravel at Willow Hall Farm, Hillrow Causeway, Haddenham

Notes of meeting 14:00-15:30hrs 10th March 2023, AG Wright and Son (Farms) Ltd, Hermitage Farm, Hillrow Causeway, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire, CB6 3PB.

Attending:

Haddenham Drainage Commissioners – Michael Church (Chairman), Jack Smith (Vice Chairman/A.G.W. Ltd); Nick Wright (A.G.W Ltd) Toby Chambers, Raymond Waddelow, Darby

Mick George Ltd – Mick George, Andrew Woodcock

Gary Roberts, Middle Level Commissioners [Notes by GJR]

Item #1 – Proposed Recharge Trenches

The key points relating to seasonal dewatering are outlined below:

- Mick George confirmed that they have stopped excavating the recharge trench to the west of the site due to issues associated with the archaeologist. This trench is therefore not to the required depth and will recommence once the issue resolved.
- The recharge trenches are not ditches. They are being excavated to discourage any water voles so there are no issues later when it comes to reinstatement.
- The recharge trenches will remain separate to the field drains around the site. The initial idea of using existing drains has been superseded. there will be a minimum of 5-6m offset from any existing drain
- The requirement for inspection of the recharges to confirm levels was reiterated. Inspections would be agreed at suitable points as/when trenches are installed to required depths (Action; GR/AW)
- Recharge trenches will be to the agreed lengths shown on the plan and previously agreed at the mtg 23rd September 2022.

Providing the recharge trenches are implemented and functioning before dewatering continues after March 2023 the Commissioners confirmed they would support the dewatering. It was agreed that a formal agreement is required for this.

Item #2 Groundwater levels, particularly boreholes 13,14,15 and cessation levels

- Monitoring of groundwater levels is ongoing. Andrew Woodcock shared the monitoring data along with graphs showing levels. Groundwater levels in BH 13, 14 & 15 have been approximately 300-500mm above the target trigger level during dewatering. Levels are starting to rise now dewatering to the Commissioner's system has stopped and pumping is to the first recharge trench, along the roadside boundary within the site.
- Discussion was had over the trigger levels, how these have been set and how these trigger levels would impact on summer water levels.
- It was noted that the trigger levels relate to seasonal dewatering, as per existing planning permission, and therefore relate to the impacts on winter groundwater levels. These levels were defined by Enzygo.
- To agree year round dewatering further agreement is necessary on suitable trigger levels for summer period (April to September).
- MG suggested that he would employ Tetra-Tek (formerly WYG) consultants to review the work Enzygo produced. A meeting with MG Ltd's consultant would be set up to identify suitable trigger levels. (Action: AW)

Item #3 – Status of planning permission for all year-round dewatering/working under engineering derogation

- The variation to planning application E/3003/18/CM still in abeyance with a revised application still to be submitted.
- Works could therefore continue at risk whilst the necessary permissions and consents are obtained.
- MG advised that a new agreement between the Commissioners and MG Ltd would be needed to support the planning application. GR will discuss this with the Clerk to the Commissioners to progress a suitable agreement (Action – GR)

Post meeting note – A planning application for the excavation of additional peripheral drains to aid with the management of water on the site has been submitted to East Cambridgeshire District Council. This was noted 17th March 2023, although the application was submitted 28th February 2023. The application drawings align with the proposed recharge trenches as agreed.

Item #4 – Notification of pumping into the district

- Commissioners' Chairman requested suitable notification from MG Ltd when they will recommence pumping to the Commissioners' system

Item #5 – Any other Business

- MG noted that he had completed on the sale to Hanson Ltd, although this was still with the Competition Commission to confirm. it would likely be May 2023 when this would formally complete subject to the outcome of the Competition Commission review.

The Commissioners considered the supplementary Report of the Consulting Engineers, viz;

Haddenham Level DC

Consulting Engineers' Supplementary Report - April 2023

Improving Capital Delivery

Introduction

Since being in post I have been getting to grips with a number of things in the Engineering/Technical Services Department. I've made a number of observations: officers are knowledgeable, dedicated and committed to delivering a service to the Commissioners and IDBs; working in partnership with the Environment Agency and local planning authorities/LLFAs is clearly evident; the operations team do an excellent job managing water resources in an extremely complex system; our capital delivery programme is growing as assets come to the end of design life; we have some significant changes and challenges ahead (biodiversity net gain requirements, the climate emergency and Fens Reservoir amongst others) which need careful planning and resourcing if we are to properly represent members and local communities and secure the best outcomes for the catchment.

We have an increasing capital delivery programme, with a number of ongoing projects and many identified for future delivery. I have identified areas where improvements are needed to deliver these projects better and to improve communications between the consulting engineer and the Boards.

Resources

Staff in MLC's Technical Services are currently stretched in terms of capacity and capability. There is a significant lack of suitable people across the engineering and project delivery profession generally, which impacts not only MLC's ability to recruit, but also the availability of consultant and contractor resources.

As well as our services to IDBs, and the Bank Raising Scheme over the next 4-5 years, and delivery of the pumping station refurbishment programme, there is an immediate need to provide resources to support MLC input to developing plans for Anglian Water's Fens Reservoir. This will have a significant and profound impact on water management in the catchment, and MLC officers need to ensure we secure the very best outcomes for our Board members, ratepayers, customers and the environment. We will be working very hard over the next 6 months to achieve this before the project passes its next 'gate'.

Now that MLC receives revenue through navigation licences, we have to ensure that we deliver on the requirements set out in the Navigation Byelaws 2020. This is a work in progress, but again sets additional demands on our internal resources and our ability to be proactive.

MLC were unsuccessful in recruiting a new planning engineer in 2022 and the existing team is under continued pressure to resolve ongoing and new applications, let alone adequately accommodate new demands. We are now looking at alternative resource solutions to support the wider engineering department.

IDB Projects

I am already aware of a number of projects that have been in progress for some time. There is lack of a clear programme of delivery and/project management discipline for these; there are no specific timescales and other agreed tolerances with the IDB as 'client', and this makes it difficult to plan and prioritise resources and workloads.

I am compiling a programme of all the projects being delivered by MLC and determining the resources needed to complete them. I will work with the Boards in question to progress delivery as quickly and efficiently as possible.

For new project requests, I am implementing a simple process with a 'Project Initiation Form' to capture key information and undertake an initial assessment of the project. I will prioritise work requested based on urgency and availability of resources. Unless otherwise instructed by an IDB, our default approach will be to seek to maximise FCRM Grant in Aid funding for eligible projects. I will implement a process of reporting progress regularly to the Boards/key contacts. As part of this process, I'll be asking each Board to agree how they delegate decision making, as projects can't be effectively delivered when governed through annual meetings, and how we manage better, more frequent, communications between the Boards' delegates and officers in Technical Services.

I am looking at the possibility of 'packaging' some works together for delivery by consultants, e.g. Pumping Station Refurbishment Projects rather than delivering each one individually. This has the advantage of securing a team of suitable resources who can focus on the work and deliver it as efficiently as possible (economies of scale). This will be a change of approach for individual IDBs and will need further work to determine how we manage this approach practically when each Board is its own individual entity with maybe a once per annum meeting. I hope to provide you with more detail about this, and the benefits it will give the Boards, in the coming months.

It may take some time to deliver the backlog of projects, which in turn might delay the start of new projects. However, I'm hopeful my approach will eventually lead to a more effective and efficient delivery process.

MLC Bank Raising Scheme

This is currently the largest IDB led project in the national flood investment programme and gives us the opportunity to develop capacity and capability in the organisation and share best practice across all our work. The scheme will be under the spot-light and have a focus from the Environment Agency in terms of grant assurance.

Works are progressing on a number of fronts but were lacking leadership and direction and there was no delivery programme. I have implemented some standard project management tools to control, manage and deliver the project: An 'exception report' was raised to the Project Board/MLC Executive Board outlining the existing situation and mitigation measures being put in place; A project plan and outline programme is now in place; Clear project governance has been identified; A data management plan is being drafted; Risks and issues are being identified; Project and delivery manager resources have been appointed and they will start in April.

Most of the project work was being carried out by MLC staff putting a strain on their already stretched ability to delivery other commitments, especially to the IDBs. The Technical Services team does not currently have the capacity or capability to deliver major projects.

There was a lack of clarity around environmental impact and risk assessments for activities which are considerably more than 'business as usual.'

Resources are in place/are being identified to complete environmental impact assessment required before wholesale desilting works can be undertaken, including significant input from the MLC Environment Officer.

The Independent Technical Advisor has prepared a scope for tender to secure a consultant to develop outline design and prepare Full Business Case (for MLC Project Board approval). The consultant will provide all technical input needed for developing and planning the project and ensuring consents and approvals are identified and in place. MLC staff will continue to act in a lead client capacity, providing their specific technical expertise and knowledge of the catchment as necessary. I will lead the project as Project Executive, working closely with the Project and Delivery Managers and providing regular updates to the Project Sponsor (Chief Executive) and MLC Executive Committee.

MLC's H&S advisor, Cope, visited and assessed the provisions in place and provided advice on additional requirements. Risk assessments/methods statements are being developed for physical work activities alongside a full review of the MLC H&S policies.

A Communications & Engagement team is in place and is planning engagement in parallel with Chief Executive's proposed MLC engagement and branding improvements.

A robust forecast of project costs needs developing. It is likely that the total project costs will exceed the current approval limit of £23million from the Outline Business Case. There are also some risks to the delivery programme that need to be investigated further and mitigated as necessary. All of these will be considered in more detail over the next 6 months, appraised and included in the Full Business Case, before the end of the financial year 2023/24.

Contractors are currently being identified for the various work phases: desilting; material import; bank raising works and hard defences (including detailed design).



Consulting Engineer

5 April 2023

Mr Roberts referred to the Planning Engineer's comments regarding the change of use at Tree Farm, Hillrow Causeway, Haddenham and enquired whether they wished for him to comment any further on the planning application or to respond to the appeal to be submitted.

The Commissioners agreed that no response to the appeal be submitted.

Mr Roberts referred to the Planning Engineer's comments regarding reserved matters for outline planning application for the erection of up to 53 houses on land to the rear of Garden Close, Sutton and his request for any further instruction.

The Commissioners agreed that no further action was required at this time.

Mr Roberts referred to the Planning Engineer's report on the high rainfall event and flooding incident in December 2020, included in the Consulting Engineers' report and advised the Planning Engineer was making recommendations to the Boards within the Middle Level area around potential areas of concern from a drainage and flood risk perspective with regards to developments.

He advised that the Chairman had been asking the Middle Level Commissioners to comment and review larger developments within certain areas and it was considered it might be worth including these within these areas of interest the Planning Engineer was looking at.

Mr Roberts enquired whether the Commissioners wished to be included within this initiative, which was being recommended to the Boards within the Middle Level area.

Members considered the Commissioners should be included.

Miss Ablett referred to the supplementary report Nicola Oldfield, the Chief Engineer, had prepared and advised she had tried to summarise early observations she had made to get some improved processes in place.

She advised the Chief Engineer was asking all Boards to consider delegating project decision making to the Chairman or other members, who would act as the Board's contact with the Consulting Engineer. She added this would assist with keeping the process moving in between Board meetings.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved
- ii) Change of use at Tree Farm, Hillrow Causeway, Haddenham (MLC Ref No. 006) - That no response to the appeal be submitted
- iii) Erection of 53 Houses on land to the rear of at Garden Close, Sutton (MLC Ref Nos. 002,004 & 014) - That no further action be taken at this time
- iv) That the Commissioners be included in the Middle Level Commissioners' exercise regarding identification of high-risk areas or areas of concern relating to flooding, which arise during or following high rainfall events and/or exceptional circumstances type events.
- v) That decision making on project decision making be delegated to the Chairman.

C.498 Capital Improvement Programme

The Commissioners considered their future capital improvement programme, viz;

Haddenham Drainage Commissioners

Capital Improvement Programme (2023/2024)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Haddenham p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.0	49.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sutton p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	750.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	750.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	8.4	0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.0	118.4
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	35.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Plant	Ford Ranger Truck	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Terex excavator	4.7	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	54.7
Structures	Slackers (x6)	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drainage Channels		0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		17.7	0	15	30	0	15	750	15	0	0	0	205	1,048

Miss Ablett reminded members that at the last Board meeting they had approved for a structural survey of the steel piles and base at Sutton Gault pumping station to be undertaken.

Miss Ablett reported the Chief Engineer had advised that she was in early discussions with Balfour Beatty regarding them undertaking a feasibility study of several pumping stations, which would include Sutton Gault Pumping Station. She advised the study would include reviewing drawings, possibly inspecting the site to ascertain what works were required and deciding the best way to undertake the structural survey. She added that this would allow for an indication of the cost of the structural survey.

Miss Ablett confirmed there would be no cost to the Commissioners in Balfour Beatty Plc undertaking the initial feasibility study. She pointed out that the Chief Engineer was in early discussions with Balfour Beatty Plc and until all details were provided to them it was still not known how they would wish to progress.

Miss Ablett reported that following a tour of the Catchment by the Chairman with both Paul Burrows, the Chief Executive and Nicola Oldfield, Chief Engineer, the Chief Engineer was investigating the benefit of carrying out catchment studies for Boards, which, in the case of the Commissioners, would look at both pumping stations, the catchwater drain, the impact of the new reservoir etc. She advised this would assist the Commissioners in making decisions for potential capital works and grant in aid applications and added the District Study may be funded by Grant in Aid. Miss Ablett advised she would report back to the Commissioners at the November meeting.

RESOLVED

That Sutton Gault Pumping Station be included in a feasibility study, should Balfour Beatty Plc wish to proceed

C.499 Environment Officer's Report

Miss Ablett referred to the Environment Officer report, viz;

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Sofi Lloyd
Environment Officer

Haddenham Level DDC

Environmental Update – April 2023

Introduction

As I took up post in mid-October, unfortunately I am not in a position to provide a full biodiversity action plan update yet, but have compiled the following update of environmental activities and key points relevant to the Board, which I hope you find useful.

I have been familiarising myself with the IDB area, its approaches and plans as well as I can, over winter, but from now onwards I would like to plan some further visits to the IDB area to develop a much better understanding of the area and your priorities, so will be in touch to do organise this. I have driven through the area many times and recognise that the area is surrounded by many high-value biodiversity sites, and has many within its boundary also. The also note that the landscape is quite different to other local IDB areas, which presents great opportunities for the Board, and something I would like to explore more with you.

1. Biodiversity Action Plan Review

The Biodiversity Action Plan has traditionally been the key document which sets out the IDBs' planned contributions towards conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Although the BAP remains vital, the objectives are unlikely to be reached unless there is a process in place to ensure that the incremental steps that need to be taken to achieve the BAP objectives are incorporated into regular operations and are reviewed regularly. Otherwise, the BAP simply becomes a document that is reviewed once or twice a year. It is the review of this vital process that I will be focussing on, rather than reviewing the objectives in the BAP, because the objectives themselves still remain valid.

2. Process and Compliance Review

I am well into a thorough process and compliance review of all our environmental approaches across all boards. This will help to ensure that IDBs are operating in line with all new legislative and regulatory requirements, updated guidance and best practice, and are better prepared for any changes we expect to be introduced in the next year. This will include the impacts and opportunities brought forward by the Environment Act 2021, including biodiversity net gain and delivering biodiversity enhancement. The outcomes of this review will feed into the BAP refresh for each IDB.

I also plan to review the currently-available pre-application environmental advice for consents and standard responses with the planning office.

3. GIS System Development

To support the activities mentioned above, an improved environmental GIS system is being developed and work is well underway to digitise all available environmental data. Lots of data exists due to all the good work already

undertaken by IDBs but it exists in different states in different places. There is also a great deal of information held by the Local Environmental Records Centres, for which I am pleased to say, we now have a contract in place to receive regularly. This will be a vital data source that we must consult when planning our work to help us identify any protected and priority species which may be impacted or enhanced by our work. We are merging all these data sets to develop a more complete picture of what we have, in order to define and preserve the baseline from which to progress. This, more complete picture is also necessary to enable us to identify opportunities for environmental enhancement. Developing the GIS system this way will deliver efficiencies in environmental data collection, analysis and reporting, allowing more time to undertake practical conservation work on the ground. It will also enable us to share our data more easily with the local environmental records centres, contributing to the understanding of the local and national status of many species and help to raise the profile of the IDB and the valuable work they do to support biodiversity. You can see an example of how some of the digitised data is coming together in the attached IDB map.

4. Work Package Ecological Screening Document

We have developed the template named above for IDBs to complete when planning any ad hoc/non-routine works that will “break ground” on the any of the banks. The information is needed in order to evidence that we have correctly considered the ecological impacts of the work, and to identify opportunities for enhancement, as we are mandated to do, by law. Activities for which the form would be relevant include bank reformation, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling, filling in a ditch, moving an access culvert etc.

Only the first page needs completing by the IDB (not a lot of info needed) and the rest by me. I undertake the assessment as far as possible, and then return the second part of the document to the IDB, setting out what surveys etc. will be needed, if any. I may be able to undertake some of the practical surveys but in some cases, an ecological consultant with a specialist licence may be needed. In some cases, there may not be a need for any surveys and the recommendations will be that the work can proceed with some adaptations to the proposed approach, such as altered timings or establishment of “no-work” buffers around sensitive areas.

When all desk and fieldwork is complete, the form is “signed off” from an ecological perspective, and returned to the IDB with recommendations for the approaches to be taken. This means the IDB and the operatives undertaking the work have full sight of the ecological constraints, mitigations and approaches required to remain compliant. It is recommended that this form is completed and sent as early as possible to prevent delays, even up to 1 year in advance of the [proposed works. The form is available by emailing sofi.lloyd@middlelevel.gov.uk and is also available from the MLC website.

5. Protected Species

a) Water Vole

As always, any work that plans to “break ground” on the any of the banks, so bank reformation, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling etc, **OR the removal of any marginal vegetation, please let me know ASAP by completing the above ecological screening document** so we can plan the appropriate surveys and mitigations in plenty of time, to avoid any delays and ensure compliance with wildlife legislation. This is particularly relevant for water voles. We know that there are some known, valuable water-vole ditches in the district, and some which could be enhanced to better support the local population, but the accepted approach is to always assume water voles are present in all ditches, and plan work around their assumed presence, in order to avoid committing an offence in terms of wildlife legislation. There is a lot of good, pragmatic and practical guidance on how to properly consider water voles during IDB works contained in the Environmental Good Governance Guide for IDBs.

b) Badgers

A reminder that badgers and their setts are protected by law and care must be taken not to disturb setts during routine channel management. Sett interference requires a licence under all circumstances. Please contact us should you have any queries regarding activities taking place around any known badger sett. Please also let me know asap if there are any setts which are presenting a flood risk due to any burrowing which is destabilising

banks etc. More detailed information and refresher training on approaches to be taken around badger setts will be organised in the coming months. In the meantime, please refer to the relevant chapter in the Environmental Good Governance Guide (available on the ADA website) for more detailed information on badgers.

c) Birds

Please be reminded of the legislation around the disturbance of breeding birds, particularly when cutting vegetation or bank-side trees, between March and September and where kingfishers are known to hunt. Please see the relevant chapter in the Environmental Good Governance Guide (available on the ADA website) to refresh your understanding of mitigation and survey requirements and get in touch should you have any questions.

i. Barn owls

I have met with our barn owl conservation delivery partners and we had defined a schedule of checking and refreshing barn owl boxes over winter but have unfortunately been unable to commence due to the restrictions imposed by BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) due to avian flu. We continue to monitor the guidance and act accordingly and have been able to commence some box checking by following strict biosecurity measures. Please do let us know therefore if there are any boxes that you feel need some maintenance ASAP so we can plan to visit them before the start of the breeding season. It is even more important during these times that you please help us with the following:

- Tell ASAP us if any work on pumping stations is planned in 2023 so boxes can be relocated before the breeding season (March-Aug)
- Tell us if you spot a box needing repair
- Tell us if you see a box being regularly visited in nesting season
- Tell us if you'd like a barn owl box
- Establish and maintain un-cropped field margins for foraging

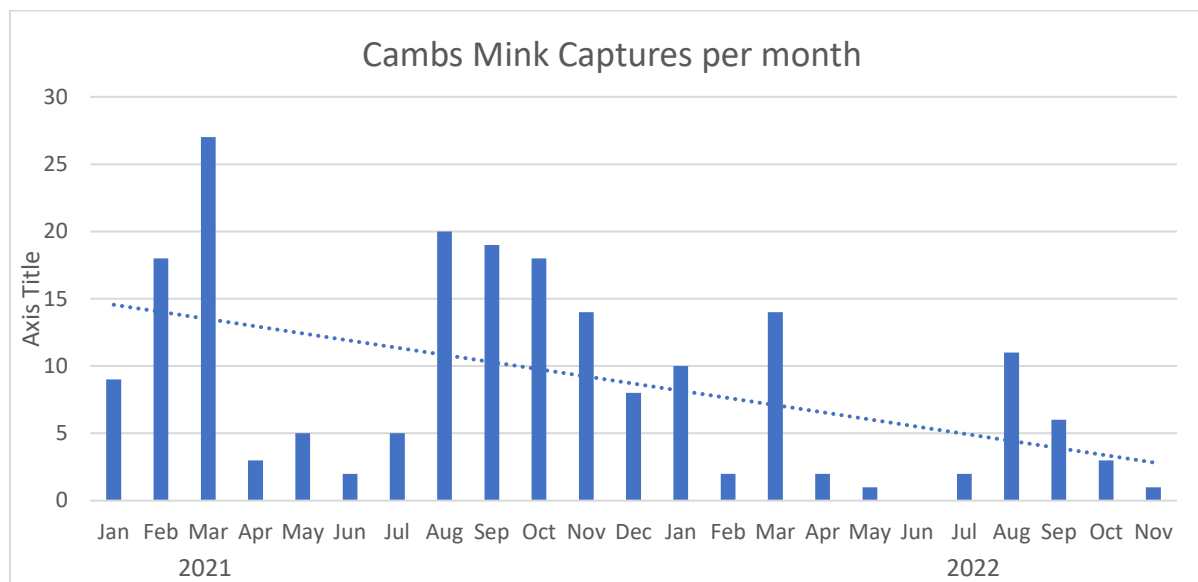
i. Avian Flu

Please ensure that you are familiar with, **and promote the knowledge of** the DEFRA guidelines on avian flu, in particular those for reporting suspected cases: Bird flu (avian influenza): latest situation in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). If any dead birds are spotted, please do let us know and either we can come and collect and dispose of them in a safe manner to minimise the risk of the disease spreading to other wildlife, or we can arrange for the collection.

d) Mink & Water Voles

I am now part of the co-ordination team for the mink control strategy for the MLC area. The mink control project has been hugely successful so the vision of full eradication of mink is becoming much closer to being realised than was ever thought possible. A strategy refresh meeting took place on the 9th January where we reviewed the data to date to help us devise an updated trapping regime for the coming months. The key outcomes of which are that 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.

The following chart shows the number of mink caught each month, suggesting a declining population. However there have been a number of mink caught in recent weeks in the local area, probably due to the breeding season being underway and their increased travel to find a mate, so trapping is still very valuable and reporting any sightings is key to ensure that traps are ideally placed.



The following table shows the number of Mink caught in 2022 and their locations, compared to 62 mink captures or kills in 2021.

Middle Level mink 2022_List

List of mink captures around the Middle Level in 2022

	Animal Code	Station/Location	Date	Sex
1	WRE/0761	Upwell & Outwell: Laddus Drove holt	09 Jan 2022	Male
2	WRE/0789		11 Jan 2022	Unrecorded
3	WRE/0917	Stonea Bridge	24 Jan 2022	Female
4	WRE/0786	Ramsey: PS Ramsey Hollow	24 Jan 2022	Female
5	WRE/0924	Welches Dam PS bridge SW side	10 Mar 2022	Male
6	WRE/0950	Conington Fen Bridge	13 Mar 2022	Female
7	WRE/0944	Ransonmoor: Staffurth's Bridge PS outfall, Old ...	16 Mar 2022	Male
8	WRE/0946	Ramsey Saint Mary's: Speed the Plough Bridge	17 Mar 2022	Male
9	WRE/0951	Twenty Foot, Coldham Bank	22 Mar 2022	Male
10	WRE/0957	Crooked Drain, Sutton Gault	05 Apr 2022	Female
11	WRE/0966	Crooked Drain, Sutton Gault	26 Apr 2022	Female
12	WRE/1046	Great Fen: Charterhouse Farm Bridge	16 Sep 2022	Female
13	WRE/1047	Woodwalton Fen: south	18 Sep 2022	Male
14	WRE/1081	Pingles Pit, Mepal B	21 Oct 2022	Female
15	WRE/1140	Welches Dam PS bridge SW side	27 Nov 2022	Unrecorded

This progress with mink control will positively impact on the abundance of water voles in the area. Previous water vole survey data will be reviewed over winter and added to the GIS system and further surveys will be planned to take place in spring and summer.

As above, any planned work that will “break ground” on the bank top or face, so anything other than grass cutting, i.e., bank reformation, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling etc, **please let me know ASAP** so we can plan the appropriate water vole surveys and mitigations in plenty of time, to avoid any delays and ensure compliance with water vole legislation.

6. Invasive species

When any non-native species (particularly the following) are spotted, please record the location using the what3words app ([what3words /// The simplest way to talk about location](#)) if possible (if not postcode or grid ref)

and inform us ASAP. Useful identification guides and information can be found online at [ID sheets » NNSS \(nonnativespecies.org\)](https://nonnativespecies.org)

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

a) *Floating Pennywort*

Floating Pennywort continues to be an issue in other watercourses just outside the area, so we urge you to remain vigilant, refresh your identification skills and act promptly by notifying us if you think you may have spotted any in the districts drains. Strong adherence to biosecurity procedures is vital as per the boards policy (available from the website).

There has been good progress in trialling the use of an imported weevil to control the plant so we hope that if the success continues, it may be made available nationally at some point in the future.

b) *Azolla*

Previously reported as common across the IDB area. Please record and notify us as above of any instance. There may be an opportunity to use an approved weevil to control badly affected stretches so please advise if there are any particular areas of concern as there are only limited stocks of the weevils nationally so I will have to apply early to be in with a chance of some of the stock.

c) *Chinese Mitten Crabs*

Chinese mitten crabs and their apparent rapidly increasing population continue to be a concern. There are reports of some banks in some areas being damaged by their extensive burrowing but it is always difficult to pin this on the crabs alone with there being so many other factors which affect the stability of banks.

We liaise closely with the EA and follow their lead with the management of this species and many others to ensure that nothing we do contradicts their approach, regulation or legislation. Defra has no intention currently of developing policy which would allow the crabs to be caught and removed for commercial or conservation reasons. In particular there was some concern that they were found to carry a gill fluke in other counties which had the potential of being transmitted to humans if they were to be consumed. As Defra isn't planning to change their stance, the EA's approach remains that any crabs which are caught as by-catch must be killed on-site and not removed. The fishing for the crabs specifically is not lawful. There is no recommended or authorised approach to deal with rising populations unfortunately. A commonly held view is that removing mature individuals from the population creates a vacuum that immature individuals then tussle to fill, driving greater movement within the local population and perhaps increased burrowing as a result.

We will continue to monitor the recommended approaches and will adapt ours promptly to follow when necessary.

d) *Turkish Crayfish*

We have received reliable reports of the presence of Turkish crayfish in some MLC drains. Turkish Crayfish are a schedule 9 listed species listed in the Wildlife & Countryside Act meaning that it is an offence to release them or allow them to escape into the wild. Their impact is not widely understood but it is said that they are known to reside alongside Signal Crayfish, rather than displace them or be displaced by them. Where populations of our native and protected white-clawed crayfish are still present, they are likely to outcompete them but they do not carry crayfish plague which does impact native crayfish. There is no evidence that Turkish crayfish burrow so it is unlikely that they would cause extensive damage to riverbanks but they could reduce fishery profits by competing with fish for food, stealing baits or causing declines in fish recruitment through loss of macrophyte habitat, according to the non-native species secretariat. Please be vigilant and report sightings of the species and maintain

strong biosecurity procedures. They can be distinguished from other crayfish species by their long narrow claws, as shown in the pictures below.



Turkish Crayfish

Claws: claws normally same colour as body but underside lightly coloured. Fingers long, straight and narrow



White-clawed crayfish

Claws: are noticeably granular and are whitish to light pink on the underside, never red.



American Signal Crayfish

Claws white or turquoise patch at junction between fixed and moveable finger. Underside of claws are red.



If it is necessary to dispatch a Turkish crayfish, American signal crayfish, or any other non-native crayfish, because it has been removed from the channel accidentally, please ensure that you are familiar with its distinguishing features and can confidently tell it apart from particularly white clawed crayfish. This will ensure no offence against a protected species occurs. There are very few records of the native white-clawed crayfish remaining in the MLC area but care should still be taken and no assumption made. More information can be found at:

<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/information-portal/view/381>

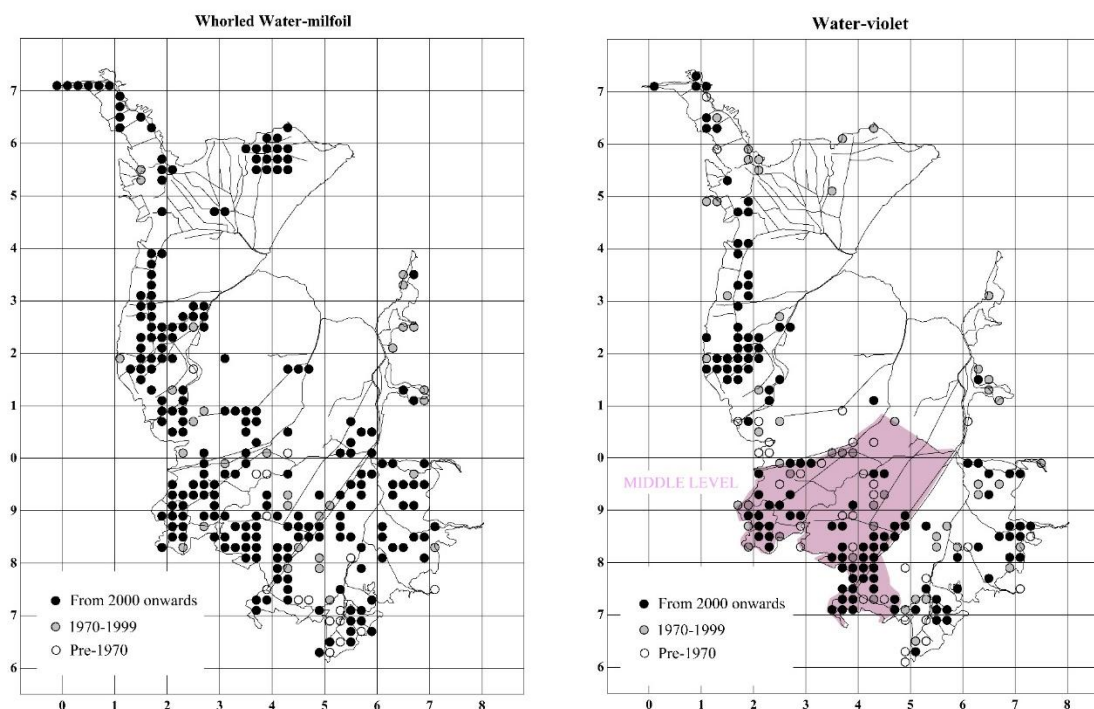
7. Fenland Flora Project

The long-running fenland flora project, headed up by botanist Jonathan Graham, to identify and record the presence of rare, threatened and notable aquatic plants in the fens, is nearing completion. The results highlight:

- There are lots of nationally significant aquatic plants in fens, many of which are only found in IDB drains and are present because of the way the drain is being managed.

- Water quality is important for many aquatic plants and a good proportion of IDB drains have good water quality.
- A summer-maintained water level is good for many plants.
- Non-IDB field drains are important too so where possible, aim to always hold some water and cut periodically.

The diagrams below show how the presence of 2 England red data plants that are frequent in local drains.



The plant location data will be added to the GIS system and made available so it can be reviewed ahead of any planned works, and will be added to BAPs. The data will also be useful in identifying any opportunities to enhance these valuable plant populations.

8. Environmental Stewardship.

You will most likely be aware that environmental stewardship schemes and farming subsidies are changing. If you would like to discuss existing stewardship provisions within the district, or you or another rate payer is thinking of applying for a stewardship agreement or establishing new stewardship measures, please do get in touch.

9. Carbon & Climate

There are increasingly a number of low-carbon, sustainable alternatives available for many of the common materials and equipment used in flood risk management, such as low-carbon concrete and steel, solar powered mechanical and electrical equipment and coir roll for bank stabilisation. Please get in touch to discuss any projects which involve these or similar materials or equipment to understand if any are suitable for you to consider.

Last year ADA published a Carbon Accounting Guide for IDBs, which is available from their website. The process of calculating carbon emissions does not have to be as complicated as some may think. If you have reviewed the guide and would like some help to progress with calculating your carbon emissions, please get in touch.

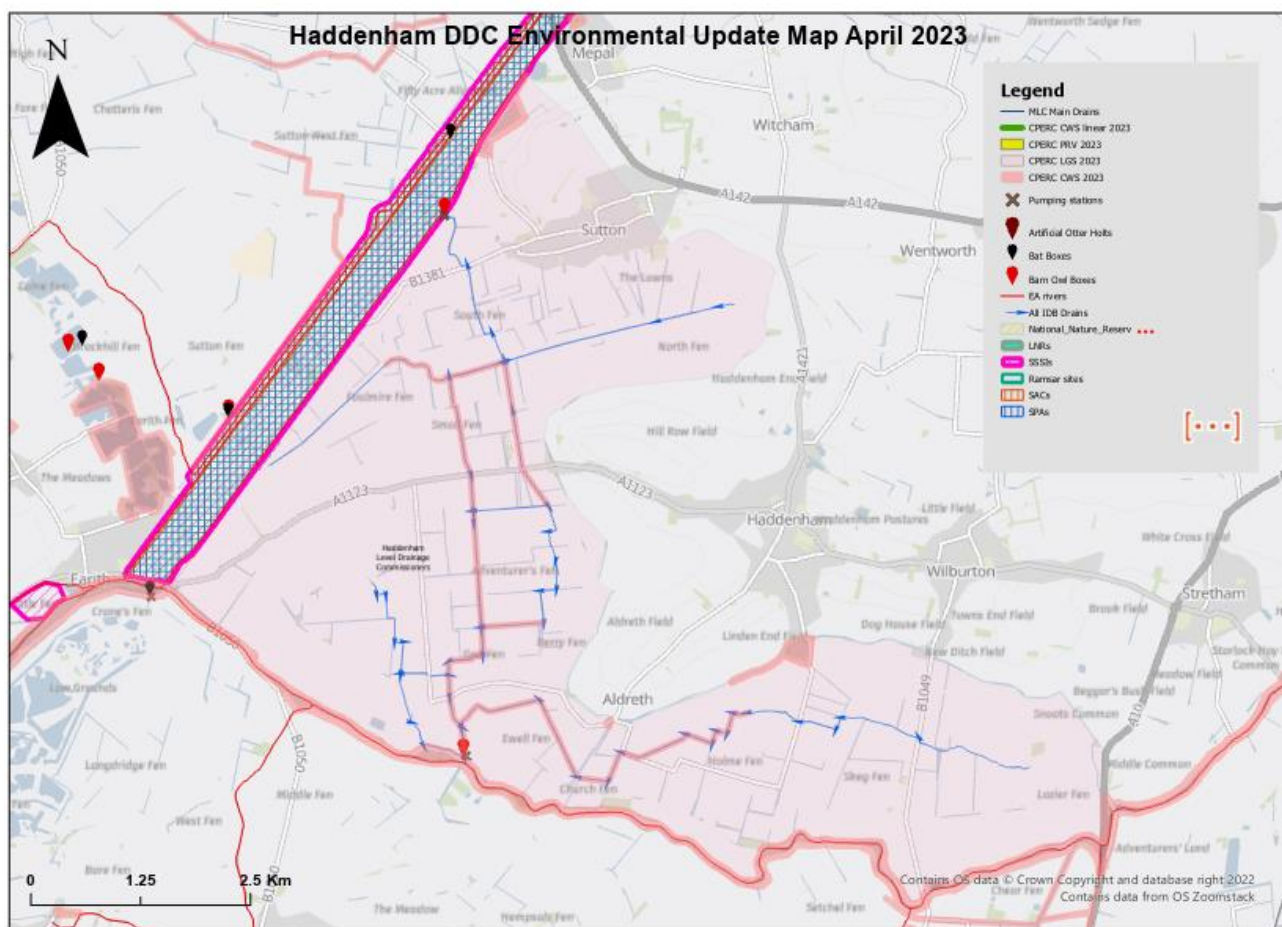
10. Paludiculture

I attended a workshop in Cambridge to discuss the progress of knowledge acquisition and trials around growing commercial crops, associated with wetlands in lowland areas, where the water level has been raised to reduce or

eliminate CO2 emissions from degraded peat. This is known as paludiculture. This includes the potential for receiving an income for carbon sequestration from such approaches. As you would expect, there is a focus on the Cambridgeshire fens as a key area for development of this approach along with Somerset, Lancashire and the Lincs fens. If you would like to know more about how this topic is progressing, would like to get involved in some trials or would like to have a go at growing a paludiculture crop such as *Typha latifolia* (Bullrush or cattail) or Sphagnum moss yourself commercially, then please do get in touch.

11. Environmental Good Governance Guide for IDBs

I have a copy of the above guide, published by ADA last September, for each Chairman and District Officer which I can hand to you when I visit if you don't have a copy already. Until then, an on-line version is available from [here](#) and you can also request copies from ADA directly admin@ada.org.uk.



RESOLVED

That the report of the Environment Officer be approved.

C.500 District Labour - District Engineer's Wage Increase – 2023/2024

With reference to minute C.478, Miss Ablett reported that the District Engineer's wages will be increased in accordance with the Middle Level Commissioners' pay award.

C.501 District Work Report & Review of District Watercourses

Further to minute C.479,

i) District Work Report

The Chairman reported on the programmed drain maintenance works that had been carried out and advised that no major faults had been reported to him or Mr Jordan, the Commissioners' employee.

The Chairman advised that due to the lack of winter rainfall, the groundwater water levels had not restored to levels of 2022 and as the area was still officially in a drought situation that this would affect water availability this summer. He added that during January and February the water levels in the Drains had been held at a higher level than normal, but due to the March rainfall, the levels had been returned to normal seasonal levels, however levels were rising again.

The Chairman advised that the normal drain maintenance programme will be carried out for 2023/2024.

The Chairman reported he had contacted Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the culverts between Hoghill Drove and Church Fen Drove. He further reported the Council had inspected the sites and were advised of the Commissioners' concerns by the District Engineer and Mr T Chambers, who were working in the area at the time. The Chairman advised the Council had confirmed that as all four culverts were Council property, they would replace them.

The Chairman reported that as requested at the last meeting and as he had not been contacted by the Council, he had approached several contractors and unfortunately only one had supplied a quote for replacing the culverts, which was in the region of £5,000 per culvert. He advised that his intention would have been to replace two of the culverts and he enquired how members wished to proceed.

Members discussed the replacement of the culverts in more detail and it was agreed the Commissioners did not want to pay and the Council should be advised that the condition of the culverts was restricting water levels and they needed relacing. The Chairman suggested that if the Council hadn't contacted him within one month, he would write to them advising them of the Commissioners' concerns and request.

RESOLVED

That the report and the actions therein be approved and the Chairman in conjunction with the District Engineer be authorised to arrange for the District work programme to be undertaken.

That the Chairman contacts Cambridgeshire County Council regarding replacement of 4 culverts between Hoghill Drove and Church Fen Drove, if no response to previous communication is received within 1 month.

ii) District Work Arrangements

The Chairman declared an interest and the Vice Chairman took the Chair.

The Commissioners gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2023-2024.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman be re-appointed District Officer
- ii) That the Commissioners agree that the sum of £2,750 be allowed for the services of the Chairman for 2023-2024, together with legitimate expenses.

- iii) That the Chairman submit half yearly invoices to the Commissioners in respect of his fees
- iv) That the Commissioners agree that 45p per mile be allowed for travelling expenses incurred, on behalf of the Commissioners, by the Chairman,
- v) That that the Chairman continues to reimburse the Commissioners for 5% of the net telephone costs.

C.502 Charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work

Members discussed the rates for hiring out plant and considered that the rates should be increased to reflect the increased costs of parts, labour and in particular diesel.

RESOLVED

- a) That the charges for hire of the Commissioners Atlas 360 (including operator and travelling) be set at;
 - £30 per hour inside the district
 - £45 per hour outside the district
- b) That the district Engineer monitor's the daily usage of diesel used by the excavator over a number of days and that this information be supplied to the Board to ensure that it can assess better the impacts of fuel price increases.

C.503 Health and Safety Report

Further to minute C.480, the Chairman reported on Cope Safety Management's site safety inspection carried out on 23rd January 2023, the only matter identified was the installation of a handrail to prevent a potential fall as the access to the building was raised above the weedscreen platform area and confirmed this was in hand, viz;



Site Safety Inspection Record

Haddenham Level DC SSI 230123

Complete

Name of organisation:	Haddenham Level DC
Date of site visit	23.01.2023 09:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Haddenham Pumping Station Sutton Gault Pumping Station
Name of Advisor	Simon Cross
Time of arrival at site:	23.01.2023 09:00 GMT
Audit Name	Haddenham Level DC SSI 230123

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Michael Church and David Jordan

Have there been any accidents since our last visit?

No

Have there been any new starters since our last visit?

No

1

Introduction. During the opening meeting a number of topics were discussed including previous observations and progress made on previous recommendations. It was reported that there had been no health and safety issues or concerns since the previous visit in Oct 2021. It is understood that telemetry is available at both pumping stations to enable monitoring to be undertaken remotely without having to visit the sites, this is a benefit as it reduces any periods of lone working. It was also observed that hazard warning signage had been refreshed at both sites to indicate both electrical and automatic machinery hazards.

2

Overhead powerlines. It was pleasing to note that since the previous visit, the wheeled 360 excavator owned and used by the Board had been fitted with an automatic height limiter, controllable from a panel in the cab. This should provide added safety when operating near overhead powerlines.

3

Haddenham Pumping Station.

* Electrical safety. A fixed electrical inspection had been undertaken 19 Mar 21, with a re-inspection frequency of 5 yearly, as indicated by a label on the panel. It should be ensured that a copy of the electrical installation condition report is available either in hard copy or electronic, to confirm the inspection and identify any remedial actions. An assumption was made that the whole panel had been inspected, including that for the weedscreen cleaner, it is recommended that this is confirmed.

* Weedscreen cleaner. At the time of the visit the weedscreen cleaner was not working as a result of the cold weather freezing the weed pile and obstructing the weed grab. It was reported that the cleaner had been powered down. It should be ensured that any remedial works are undertaken with the power off to prevent any inadvertent movement.

4

Sutton Gault Pumping Station.

* Floor tiles. Following the previous visit, it was pleasing to note that the tiled floor surface had been painted and sealed to prevent any inadvertent disturbance to the tiles, which may contain asbestos. It is recommended that the condition is monitored and any persons undertaking work that could disturb the tiles is informed the possible hazard.

* Electrical safety. Similar to the comment above, a fixed electrical inspection had been undertaken Mar 2019 with a re-inspection frequency of 5 yearly, as indicated by a label on the panel. It should be ensured that a copy of the electrical installation condition report is available either in hard copy or electronic, to confirm the inspection and identify any remedial actions. An

assumption was made that the whole panel had been inspected, including that for the weedscreen cleaner, it is recommended that this is confirmed.

* Fall from height.

- Ladders. A set of metal extendable ladders were noted in the building, it was reported that these are used for occasional access to the carriage of the weedscreen cleaner for checking or topping up oil, once moved to over the weed trailer away from the water. It should be ensured that during use the ladders are suitably secured to prevent them falling or slipping.

- Raised platform. The access to the building is raised above the access to the weedscreen platform area, with a small retaining wall dividing the two levels. See photo 1 below. Although the risk of a fall is considered low, it is recommended that measures are taken to provide a suitable method of preventing a potential fall, such as fencing or barrier.



Photo 1

5

* Fire safety. Annual inspection of the fire extinguishers undertaken by Fenland Fire Services during Apr 2022, as indicated by label and coloured tag.

Photographic Risk Assessment

Signature of person informed

Signature of person informed 1

Signature of person informed



Michael Church
23.01.2023 12:13 GMT

Advisor's signature



Simon Cross
23.01.2023 15:40 GMT

Departure time

23.01.2023 12:45 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

No PRAs

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments

0
From 0 to 99

Appendix



Photo 1

Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners

SUMMARY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

No Outstanding PRA's

C.504 Review of Internal Controls

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

C.504 Risk Management Assessment

- a) The Commissioners considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls.
- b) The Commissioners considered and approved the insured value of their buildings, viz;

HADDENHAM LEVEL DC **FIXED ASSETS - PUMPING STATIONS & BUNGALOW**

	As At 31st March 2023
Haddenham Pumping Station	1,420,000.00
Sutton Gault Pumping Station	805,000.00
Bungalow	114,920.00
	2,339,920.00

C.505 State-aided Schemes

No State-aided schemes are imminent at this time.

C.506 Environment Agency - Precept

Miss Ablett reported that at the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that there were exceptional circumstances to consider on the agreed 2% increase on the precepts on Internal Drainage Boards. The Committee voted for an additional 1% increase (reflecting exceptional circumstances) above the agreed 2% for the year ending 31st March 2024 – total of a 3% increase on the level of precept on Internal Drainage Boards for the year ending 31st March 2024.

The precept for 2022/2023 was £36,672

C.507 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Miss Ablett reported that following his submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £10,456.13 (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment Agency (£10,769.29 representing 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2022/23 less £313.16 overpaid in respect of the financial year 2021/22)

C.508 Association of Drainage Authorities

Miss Ablett reported that ADA has increased subscriptions by 4.5% for 2023 from £649 to £679.

RESOLVED

To pay the subscription fee in the sum of £679 for this year.

C.509 Appointment of Internal Auditor

Miss Ablett reported that following the conclusion of tendering Whittings LLP have been appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28), viz;



middle level
commissioners

**Internal Audit Tender Proposal to
Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage
Commissioners under the administration of the
Middle Level Commissioners**

November 2022



Index

	Page
1. Executive Summary	2
2. Your Requirements	3
3. Our Audit Approach	4
4. About Whittings LLP	9
5. Our Fees	10
6. Key Personnel and Career Summaries	11
7. Appendix A - Internal Audit Plan - Year Ending 31 March 2024	
8. Appendix B - List of Administered Boards	



Executive Summary

Whittings LLP are a regional firm of Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers, based in 11 locations throughout East Anglia.

The firm has broad range of experience in dealing with internal and external audits, serving a range of local organisations operating with the private and public sector.

On review of your invitation to tender we understand that the following requirements need to be met:

- Subject the financial statements to internal audit in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Upon conclusion of the internal audit prepare of a management letter to the board detailing any deficiencies in the internal systems, recommending improvements in addition to communicating whether in our opinion the organisation are ensuring value for money is being achieved.
- Completion of the Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return

We have had the pleasure as serving as your internal auditors for several years and have demonstrated our ability to meet the statutory deadlines set. We will strive to deliver this whilst also providing the following benefits:

- Ensuring staff continuity from year to year
- Quoting and sticking to an agreed fee for the duration of the five year appointment
- Providing a comprehensive and personable service, building on the strong working relationships that we already have with your organisation
- Pro-active in our approach to the engagement, seeking out ways to streamline the internal audit process to ensure minimal disruption to your day-to-day operations

Our fees for the first year ended 31 March 2024, excluding VAT, will be £21,250 (exc. VAT) for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners, a detailed breakdown of our fee structure for the five year appointment can be found on page 10 of this document.

Our clients rightly demand a service that provides high quality, specialist expertise, timeliness and cost effectiveness combined with local knowledge, an appreciation of local Fenland circumstances and district needs. Whittings LLP, having been established in the local area since 1928, have a proven track record of being able to meet these demands and continue to review and develop its business practices to ensure that this remains the case for many years to come.



Your Requirements

You have asked us to quote for providing the following services for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners:

- Subject the financial statements to internal audit in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Upon conclusion of the internal audit prepare of a management letter to the board detailing any deficiencies in the internal systems, recommending improvements in addition to communicating whether in our opinion the organisation are ensuring value for money is being achieved.
- Completion of the Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return

In order to obtain best value from our service, it is essential that our audit work is directed towards areas of greatest risk. You have indicated that you will maintain the accounting records, presenting our firm with accurate completed financial statements together with relevant and supporting schedules and reconciliations as required in a timely fashion.

The first accounts to be internally audited shall be for the year ended 31 March 2024. We will be able to carry out our work on these in accordance with your completion timetable which we provisionally understand to be 30 June 2024.



Our Audit Approach

Before the boards' year end, we would anticipate a pre-planning meeting between the audit team and members of the Middle Level Commissioners' finance team. At this meeting various formalities such as the timing of our procedures will be agreed, together with the identification of key audit areas. We would also at this stage confirm our understanding of the company's accounting systems and structure of internal controls.

This enables us to adopt an efficient and structured approach to risk assessment, analytical appraisal of results and the tailoring of audit testing to ensure that your accounts comply with all relevant legislation and regulations. The below internal audit strategy has been designed to be a high level statement of how our audit approach will be delivered and developed during the proposed engagement period.

Internal audit is an independent, objective assurance and pro-active consulting services designed to add value and improve the Board's operations. It provides an independent and objective opinion to the Board on the control environment that comprises risk management, control and governance.

All internal audit work will be undertaken with due regard to the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations having cognition of the Practitioners Guide.

It covers aspects of all financial systems annually, rather than just on a strict 3 year cyclical basis which is a fairly common alternative for Internal Audit functions. The plan is for minimal 'systems review' days as the financial systems are undertaken on a common basis due to the administration of the boards by the Middle Level Commissioners, so using a risk based audit approach these only require to be audited on a sample basis across the IDBs on an annual basis. The normal level of both System confirmation and Transaction testing is set to ensure that some transactions of all individual boards within the Middle Level Commissioners' administered area are covered each year such as will be appropriate to the Board's level of activity and/or strength of assessed internal controls; nonetheless all Boards will be covered in all areas across a 3 year period.

Even so, where issues are identified, major internal control systems/personnel changes occur, or problems are encountered in conduct or results of the internal audit then the scheduled rota may be amended on year by year basis.

In addition, substantial work is carried each year on every Board on certain areas to ensure compliance and correctness of the Annual Return form.



The following list summarises the main work done and frequency, taking into account the objectives set out in the Annual Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return:

A -Return, Accounts & Completion (Annually)

- Ensure IDB/DDC cashbook kept up to date
- Ensure that monthly bank reconciliations are carried out
- Check that verification of bank reconciliations has been carried out
- Ensure that the annual return and accounting record opening and comparative figures agree to prior years records
- Ensure that figures stated on the annual return agree to underlying accounting records
- Checking casting and arithmetic of schedules
- Review variance report and investigate reasons excessive variances
- Ensure that the IDB/DDC publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit
- Ensure that the IDB/DDC has complied with the publication requirements as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

B - Purchases (Cyclically)

- Ensure that the IDB/DDC has complied with its financial regulations and these are reviewed with sufficient regularity by the board
- Check proper purchase authority is recorded by the board in relation to IDB/DDC payments
- Carry out walkthrough testing in relation to IDB/DDC purchase system
- Agreement of purchase ledger balances to trial balance
- Ensuring payment of principal and interest in respect of loans is in accordance with agreed terms
- Confirm list of payments issued agrees to minutes
- Ensure that individual purchases are authorised by a relevant person



C - Minutes, Value for Money, Risk Management, Ethical Standard and Sustainability (Annually)

Minutes

- Review of minutes to check that risks relating to the boards are discussed
- Ensure that a formal risk assessment is carried out by the board
- Review the budget setting process
- Review minutes for unusual or extraordinary activities
- Check insurance review

Value for Money

- Ensure that value for money principles are being observed
- Obtain relevant tenders for capital purchases to ensure VFM principles are being considered.

Risk Management

- Ensure that the boards risk register is kept up to date and adequately covers potential areas of risk facing the board.
- Ensure that risk factors are taken into account in the board's decision making and implementation processes

Ethical Standards and Sustainability

- Ensure that decisions are made in an ethical manner by the board, bearing in mind environmental and other socioeconomic circumstances/responsibilities within the local community.
- Ensure that ethics is taken into account within the boards defined policies
- Ensure that long term sustainability is being taken into account in operational decisions.

D - Budget and Variance Analysis (Cyclically)

- Review variance analysis issued by the board
- Check that progress against budgets are regularly monitored
- Check that budgets are used for determining rates for the following year
- Review accruals for reasonableness and completeness

E - Sales (Cyclically)

- Perform walkthrough testing on the IDB/DDC rates system, including the treatment of special levies
- Review any rates write offs and ensure received board approval
- Perform walkthrough testing of other sales made by IDB/DDCs
- Review minutes to ensure all expected other income has been received and banked



F - Petty Cash (Cyclically)

- Not applicable at present, no petty cash function for any IDB/DDCs currently administered.

G - Wages (Cyclically)

- Performance of wages walkthrough
- Ensure that authorisation granted for overtime paid
- Review of P11Ds (where applicable)
- Ensure that non-pay rolled staff have been correctly taxed
- Confirm contractor expenses to invoices and that pay rates and payments are authorised within the minutes by the board

H - Assets (Cyclically)

- Vouch additions and review sales of fixed assets in the year
- Ensure assets are adequately covered by IDB/DDC insurance policies
- Ensure that asset movements in the year are reasonable and consistent with prior years
- Review fixed assets for indicators or impairment, both through physical review and by reference to the minutes

I - Bank (Annually)

- Ensure that regular reconciliations have occurred in the year and that these are reviewed by a senior individual within the finance department
- Recalculation of interim and year end bank reconciliations, ensuring clearance of any outstanding payments or lodgements following the reconciliation date
- Ensure that cashbook entries are based on transactions as made rather than in order of appearance on the bank statements
- Consideration of treasury management, including returns where significant bank balances are held by IDB/DDCs

J - Trial Balance & Nominal (Cyclically)

- Ensure Opera trial balance transferred to the accounts correctly
- Scrutinise creditors, accruals, debtors and prepayments
- Identify any transactions that are held within the audited figures that relate to prior or future periods
- Review and scrutiny of adjustment journals posting during the year and as part of the year end accounts process

All financial systems are to be documented and reviewed on an annual basis to provide the required level of assurance. Where appropriate probity audit work will be undertaken and the propriety, accuracy and recording of transactions sample tested.



In addition to the main work carried out on each board, the below areas are also considered to be valuable components in delivering a high quality and well-rounded internal audit service.

Consultancy and Advice

Internal Audit will be available to assist the Board with control or operational issues. During the year there might be emerging risks or issues that need an independent view or review. In addition, internal audit will be pro-active with suggestions and advice to management from information gained through experience, other organisations and networking groups.

Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption

Internal Audit will be pro-active in counter fraud work. Although it is not a function of Internal Audit to detect fraud, bribery and corruption (this is a responsibility of management and good system control) work will be undertaken to help ensure there are adequate systems and procedures to highlight potential instances.

Value for Money (VFM), Risk Management, Ethical Standards and Sustainability

As a part of the internal audit review, systems and controls established by management to secure VFM, risk management, ethical standards and sustainability will be examined and evaluated. Matters of an overall nature are also addressed within the annual work programme. Auditors may initiate, conduct or participate additionally in special reviews in these areas where need arises.

The above covers Boards administered throughout the year by MLC but where a new Board is added to the group administration facility, a special additional / fuller review will occur in the first year of involvement.

At the completion of each audit a report will be produced and released to the Middle Level Commissioners for distribution to the Boards. This report details the terms of reference and scope of the audit, findings, recommendations and a management action plan. An executive summary that includes an audit opinion on controls will also be included.

An annual internal audit report shall be produced to the Board to provide an overall opinion on controls and detail the audit work for the year.



About Whitings LLP

Whitings LLP are a regional firm of Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers. At the time of writing, the firm has 12 partners and 7 associates who are supported by approximately 165 staff. The firm operates from 11 offices within the East Anglia counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. We are registered by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales to undertake audit work.

Due to the size of the firm we are able to offer our clients with a comprehensive range of services whilst also providing specific insights into industry sectors which represent the key sectors that our client base operates within, these are detailed below:

Service Offerings

- Audit and Assurance
- Business Support
- Business Tax
- General Practice
- IT Services
- Payroll
- Private Client Tax
- Probate and Estate Administration
- Start Ups
- Tax Enquiry and Investigation Service
- Wealth Management

Sector Specialisms

- Agriculture and related industries
- Construction
- Contractors
- Creative Industries
- Manufacturing
- Not for Profit
- Property
- Retail
- Road Haulage
- Technology

More comprehensive information on the firm, its services, specialisms and culture can be found on the website www.whitingsllp.co.uk



Our Fees

We believe the fee scales we propose for this assignment are competitive and reflective of the work required to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations. We do not compromise on quality by issuing tenders for audit assignments that are clearly uneconomic.

Our fees for the year ended 31 March 2024 will be £21,250 (exc. VAT) for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners.

With regard to fees for future years, we would expect, on the assumption that the level of activities and quality of accounting records do not alter significantly that our fees would rise by no more than in line with our wage rate inflation, assumed to be 5% per annum. If, through efficiencies that we can introduce, we can provide the same services at a lower guide fee, then we shall pass on this discount to you.

On this premise, we quote the following four years' fees, excluding VAT, as: -

2024-25	£22,300
2025-26	£23,400
2026-27	£24,600
2027-28	£25,800

For normal ongoing continuous supply services, the initial payment request issued will not be a tax invoice for VAT purposes but will include a notional amount for VAT. On receipt of your payment a tax invoice will be issued to enable you to recover input tax where applicable. However, please note that a VAT invoice will be issued in certain rare circumstances for exceptional "non-continuous" work only.

You will be billed at appropriate intervals during the course of the year. We would expect most of the fees to be billed in a single fee note raised soon after the completion of the Internal Audit Report and issue of our management letter to the board. We would also propose to raise fee notes for any further specially agreed work on a quarterly basis. Payment of fees will be due within 30 days of the date of the payment request.



Key Personnel and Career Summaries

Our philosophy is to provide each client with a dedicated team responsible for their affairs, thus ensuring that we can provide both expertise and continuity of service.

All our audit staff are either qualified or studying for professional qualifications in either AAT, ACCA, or ACA. Our partners, associates and staff undertake a vigorous ongoing programme of continuing professional development, to maintain high technical standards.

Over many years we have experienced extremely high levels of staff retention, enabling us to staff audits with the same individual's year on year. This allows us to accumulate high levels of background understanding of your organisation and these mature relationships with clients makes two way communication both easy and friendly.

The proposed core audit team will be:

Your Audit Principle

It is intended that the audit principle responsible for this assignment will be Ben Beech, an Associate of the firm who is based at our March office. Ben began working for Whitings in 2011, qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 2016. He is in charge of the firm's audit and assurance offering within the Fenland and surrounding areas, dealing with many of the firm's larger clients operating in a range of sectors. He is also involved in the monitoring and development of the firm's professional standards and compliance procedures.

Your Relationship Manager

Your designated relationship manager for this assignment will be Aston Hinson who is also based at our March office. Aston has worked with Ben for many years supporting him in the provision of high quality audits to some of the firm's largest clients. Aston is also part of the firms Not for Profit team, assisting these organisations with their accounting and tax requirements.

Your Audit Team

The audit team will include a range of staff appropriate to the varying tasks involved ranging from qualified accountants to junior accounts technicians.



Appendix A - Internal Audit Plan - Year Ending 31 March 2024

The below is an indication of the number of working days required to carry out the internal audit of the 29 Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners under the administration of the Middle Level Commissioners. As a result, and taking into account the engagement timeframe, we are confident that we will be able to meet the deadlines set.

Audit Areas	Planned Days
Planning - discussions, clarification, summarising, AGAR requirement review	4
Systems - review and confirmation work	20
Transactions - testing and verification	20
Completion - collation of issues and recommendations, enquiries of management, reporting via the AGAR and management letter	6
TOTAL	50



Appendix B - List of Administered Boards

Benwick Internal Drainage Board
Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board
Churchfield and Plawfield Internal Drainage Board
Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board
Curf and Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board
Euximoor Internal Drainage Board
Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
Hundred Foot Washes Internal Drainage Board
Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board
Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners
March West and White Fen Internal Drainage Board
March East Internal Drainage Board
March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners
March Sixth District Drainage Commissioners
March Third District Drainage Commissioners
Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board
Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board
Nordelph Internal Drainage Board
Over and Willingham IDB
Ramsey First (Hollow) Internal Drainage Board
Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) Internal Drainage Board
Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board
Ransonmoor District Drainage Commissioners
Sawtry Internal Drainage Board
Sutton and Mepal Internal Drainage Board
Swavesey Internal Drainage Board
Upwell Internal Drainage Board
Waldersey Internal Drainage Board
Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board



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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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

	Agreed		Yes means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
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:

DDMMYYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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C.511 Payments 2022/2023

The Commissioners considered and approved payments amounting to £218,822.42 which had been made during the financial year 2022/2023, viz;

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

Payments 2022/2023 (1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023)

	NET	VAT	GROSS
East Cambridgeshire District Council - Council tax for 2022/2023	1,581.25	0.00	1,581.25
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning & development applications)	293.25	58.65	351.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Court Fees	0.50	0.00	0.50
British Telecom - Telephone charges	135.18	27.03	162.21
E-On Energy - Meter operator agreement	195.00	39.00	234.00
Cottenham Sawmills Limited - Larch Miscellaneous	140.83	28.17	169.00
British Telecom - Telephone charges	137.71	27.54	165.25
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	502.52	100.50	603.02
Water Resources East - Contribution to operating costs for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023	250.00	50.00	300.00
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2022	649.00	129.80	778.80
Rampton Motors - MOT and service of AK16 WNC	348.08	58.66	406.74
Environment Agency - Precept	18,336.23	0.00	18,336.23
NL Hydraulics - Supply of 20 litres of hydraulic oil	45.00	9.00	54.00
Haddenham Baptist Church - Room hire	40.00	0.00	40.00
Fenland Fire Appliance LLP - Servicing of fire extinguishers	39.35	7.87	47.22
Ken Skeels - Repairs to roof on workshop at Haddenham pumping station	260.00	52.00	312.00
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - 2 pairs of rigger gloves	7.00	1.40	8.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	150.26	30.05	180.31
British Telecom - Telephone charges	159.83	31.96	191.79
Public Works Loan Board - Loan Repayment	21,481.93	0.00	21,481.93
Mitchell & Mayle Ltd - Empty septic tank	140.00	0.00	140.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Road fund licences, AK16 WNC & AO19 OJO	455.00	0.00	455.00
A G Wright & Son - Diesel	584.60	116.92	701.52
British Telecom - Telephone charges	135.63	27.12	162.75
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - Remove old shaft bracket from rake and manufacture one	65.00	13.00	78.00
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - Jubilee clips, grease gun jaw and 2 pairs of rigger gloves	11.39	2.28	13.67
Haddenham Baptist Church - Room hire	40.00	0.00	40.00
645 Services Ltd - 2,263 litres gas oil	2,240.37	448.07	2,688.44
TDL Equipment - Service Atlas 140W Wheeled Excavator	958.93	191.79	1,150.72
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	3,384.52	12.73	3,397.25
L A Burton - Flail mowing	5,100.00	1,020.00	6,120.00
British Telecom - Telephone charges	149.07	29.81	178.88
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2021-2022 accounts)	600.00	120.00	720.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2021-2022 accounts)	775.00	155.00	930.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	502.52	100.50	603.02
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	5,113.40	1,022.68	6,136.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	467.50	0.00	467.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning & development applications)	402.75	80.55	483.30
Michael Church - District Officer's Fees for 6 months to 30th September 2022	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00
Bush Tyres - Fitting of 2 new tyre and wheel balancing to Atlas 140W Wheeled Excavator	2,041.50	408.30	2,449.80
British Telecom - Telephone charges	135.63	27.12	162.75
Environment Agency - Precept	18,336.24	0.00	18,336.24
TDL Equipment - Repairs to Atlas 140W Wheeled Excavator	764.22	152.84	917.06
TDL Equipment - Parts for repairs to Atlas 140W Wheeled Excavator	381.72	76.34	458.06
Haddenham Baptist Church - Room hire	40.00	0.00	40.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Lithium Complex, 2,355 litres of gas oil and 25 litres of WB70 oil	2,524.97	505.00	3,029.97
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	502.52	100.50	603.02
M D Contracting and Farming Ltd - Flail mowing	1,708.75	341.75	2,050.50
A G Wright & Son - Diesel	1,054.49	210.90	1,265.39
Public Works Loan Board - Loan Repayment	21,481.93	0.00	21,481.93
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,141.94	228.39	1,370.33
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning & development applications)	2,438.24	487.67	2,925.90
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2022-2023	30.00	6.00	36.00
British Telecom - Telephone charges	147.70	29.54	177.24
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	304.79	60.96	365.75
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Adblue and work carried out on Atlas 140W Wheeled Excavator (Accounts from K & W Mechanical and Watsons)	5,085.80	1,017.16	6,102.96
G & J Pecks Ltd - Rodent traps	13.43	2.69	16.12
British Telecom - Telephone charges	115.63	27.12	142.75
Wave - Water supply charges 9th February 2021 to 8th May 2021	17.16	0.00	17.16
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, attendance at board meeting, planning & development applications)	1,672.00	334.40	2,006.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of floor paint (Account from Witham Oils)	105.86	21.17	127.03
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	502.52	100.50	603.02
J C Beasley Plumbing - Service of boiler at bungalow	85.00	17.00	102.00
Information Commissioners - Renewal of Data Protection registration	40.00	0.00	40.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	70.49	14.10	84.59
District labour	36,965.10	0.00	36,965.10
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply - (Haddenham pumping station)	28,556.71	0.00	28,556.71
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply - (Sutton Gault pumping station)	16,763.81	0.00	16,763.81
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges - (Sutton Gault pumping station)	146.84	0.00	146.84
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges - (Haddenham pumping station)	146.84	0.00	146.84
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges - (Haddenham pumping station)	210.47	0.00	210.47
Input VAT on Electricity	-6,903.91	6,903.91	0.00
	203,756.99	15,065.44	218,822.42

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

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C.512 Annual Accounts of the commissioners – 2022/2023

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

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2022

GENERAL FUND

2022					2021				
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year				Apr-01	Balance brought forward			190,565.27
	Precept			35,953.40					
	Rates, insurances, telephones	9,883.69			2022	Rate income & Special levy			187,462.53
	Repairs & Renewals	10,135.29			Mar-31	Interest on Deposit Account			183.52
	Fuel	34,127.83				Highland water contributions			9,599.33
	Contractors Charges	2,318.00				Consents			100.00
	District Labour	36,720.41				Water recharge			3,219.78
	Drainworks	13,139.72				Private works			11,658.00
	Administration charge, printing, stationery					Development Charges			66.00
	advertising, Association of Drainage					Telephone charges			28.00
	Authorities subscription	13,147.08	119,472.02						
	Funds raised 2020/2021		7,500.00						
	Public Works Loan Repayment -								
	Principal	31,942.68							
	Interest	11,021.18	42,963.86						
	Balance carried forward		196,993.15						
			402,882.43						402,882.43

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2022

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

<u>Liabilities</u>						<u>Assets</u>				
Capital Provisions				2,131,013.07		Pumping Stations				2,225,000.00
Public Works Loan Board -						Bungalow				114,920.00
Loan outstanding				270,013.92		Heavy Plant				58,187.50
						Motor Vehicles				2,845.42
						Computer Equipment				74.07
				2,401,026.99						2,401,026.99

Revenue Section

General Fund				196,993.15		Ratepayers' Account - Arrears				0.00
						Sundry Debtors				6,910.86
Asset Replacement Fund				53,601.93		Value added Tax - Refunds due				4,384.34
						Stock				2,244.00
Development Contribution Fund				3,609.75		Balance in hand -				
						Barclays Account		237,239.64		
Sundry Creditors				15,885.35		Lloyds Accounts		19,311.34		256,550.98
				2,671,117.17						2,671,117.17

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023
GENERAL FUND

2023			2022		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year		Apr-01	Balance brought forward	195,729.29
	Precept	36,672.47			
	Rates, insurances, telephones	5,649.31	2023	Rate income & Special levy	192,882.33
	Repairs & Renewals	9,320.23	Mar-31		
	Fuel	41,804.85		Highland water contributions	10,385.64
	Contractors Charges	2,711.05		Consents	50.00
	District Labour	37,016.26		Water recharge	567.09
	Drainworks	23,901.64		Private works	9,116.00
	Administration charge, printing, stationery			Development Charges	180.00
	advertising, Association of Drainage			Telephone charges	27.70
	Authorities subscription	13,566.62		Metered discharge	14,173.43
		133,969.96		Grant-in-aid	4,625.83
	Improvement works:				
	Funds raised 2022/2023	7,500.00			
	Telemetry installation	9,251.66			
	Height restrictor - Atlas excavator	4,775.00			
	Write bsck of prior year provisions	935.00			
				Asset replacement fund:	
	Public Works Loan Repayment -			Height restrictor - Atlas excavator	4,775.00
	Principal	33,020.54		Wet well bolts - Sutton Gault p/s	3,857.70
	Interest	9,943.32		telemetry installation	4,625.83
		42,963.86			
					13,258.53
	Balance carried forward	204,927.89			
		440,995.84			440,995.84

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023
BALANCE SHEET

<u>Liabilities</u>		<u>Capital Section</u>		<u>Assets</u>	
Capital Provisions	2,153,034.46			Pumping Stations	2,225,000.00
Public Works Loan Board -				Bungalow	114,920.00
Loan outstanding	236,993.38			Heavy Plant	47,918.23
				Motor Vehicles	2,134.06
				Computer Equipment	55.55
	<u>2,390,027.84</u>				<u>2,390,027.84</u>
 <u>Revenue Section</u>					
General Fund	204,927.89			Ratepayers' Account - Arrears	0.00
				Sundry Debtors	1,018.09
Asset Replacement Fund	47,843.40			Value added Tax - Refunds due	8,476.35
				Stock	1,886.40
Development Contribution Fund	3,429.75			Balance in hand -	
				Barclays Account	260,816.81
Sundry Creditors	39,038.95			Lloyds Accounts	23,042.34
	<u>2,685,267.83</u>				<u>283,859.15</u>
					<u>2,685,267.83</u>

Haddenham Level DC**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2023****Per Annual
Return**

Line 1	Balances brought forward General Fund Asset replacement fund Development charges	195,729.29 53,601.93 3,609.75 252,940.97	252,941
Line 2	Rates and Special Levies Agricultural rates Special Levies Penalty Costs Write-off	123,715.46 68,735.00 356.87 75.00 0.00 192,882.33	192,882
Line 3	Total other receipts Interest General fund Asset replacement fund Development charges Discharge contribution Consent Telephone Charges Recoverable Highland Water Hire of Excavator Re-charge of expenses Grant in Aid	0.00 0.00 0.00 14,173.43 50.00 27.70 10,385.64 9,116.00 567.09 4,625.83 38,945.69	38,946
Line 4	Staff costs Wages/salaries National insurance contributions Pension costs Travelling expenses	27,963.75 3,040.30 6,012.21 0.00 37,016.26	37,016
Line 5	Loan repayments PWLB - Principal PWLB - Interest	33,020.54 9,943.32 42,963.86	42,964

Haddenham Level DC**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2023****Per Annual
Return**

<u>Line 6</u>	All other payments		
	Precept	36,672.47	
	Rates, insurances, telephones	5,649.31	
	Repairs and renewals	9,320.23	
	Fuel	41,804.85	
	Drainworks	23,901.64	
	Administration	13,566.62	
	Contractors charges	2,711.05	
	Write back of provisions	935.00	
	Improvements	9,251.66	
	Purchase of asset	4,775.00	
		148,587.83	148,588
<u>Line 7</u>	Balances carried forward		
	General Fund	204,927.89	
	Asset replacement fund	47,843.40	
	Development charges	3,429.75	
		256,201.04	256,201
Reconciliation			
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6		256,201.04	

Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners

Treasurers Account 2022/2023

1st April 2022		31st March 2023	
Balance brought forward	256,550.98	Payments made during the year	218,822.42
31st March 2023			
Receipts during the year			
Clerk's collection account	246,130.59		
Interest on deposit accounts	0.00	Balance carried forward	283,859.15
	<u>502,681.57</u>		<u>502,681.57</u>

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2023

Barclays Bank Plc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2023	260,816.81
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>260,816.81</u>

Lloyds Bank Plc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2023	23,042.34
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>23,042.34</u>

Cash balances as at 31st March 2023

Barclays Bank PLC

Current Account	260,816.81
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Lloyds Bank Plc

Current Account	23,042.34
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<u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u>	<u>283,859.15</u>
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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

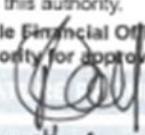
	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	237,463	252,941	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	187,463	192,882	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	27,668	38,946	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	36,720	37,016	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	42,964	42,964	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	119,969	148,588	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	252,941	256,201	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	256,551	283,859	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	2,489,030	2,493,805	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	270,014	236,993	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

 Date 15th April 2023

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

DO NOTLY YYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

The Chairman to close Lloyds Account and funds to be transferred to Barclays Premium Account.

C.513 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2023/2024

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2023/2024 and were informed by Miss Ablett 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 64.28% and 35.72%, viz;

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

BUDGET 2023/2024

	<u>Approved Budget</u> <u>2022/2023</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>2022/2023</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>2023/2024</u>	
1 <u>CHANNEL MAINTENANCE</u>	14,500	23,902 ^A	16,500	A - Includes for: Flail mowing 5,674 Planning & development consultancy fees 4,972 10,646
2 <u>LABOUR</u>	41,800 ^B	39,727 ^B	43,000 ^B	B - Provision for District labour and District Officer
3 <u>REPAIRS AND RENEWALS</u>	18,000 ^C	9,320	12,000	C - Includes provision to replace wet well bolts - Sutton Gault pumping station 6,000
4 <u>FUEL</u>	43,000	41,805	72,000 ^D	D - New supply contract with increased unit rates - estimated medium term provision increased for 2023/24
5 <u>RATES, INSURANCES & TELEPHONES</u>	11,300 ^E	5,649 ^E	11,850 ^E	E - Includes gross water charges (re-charged to 3rd party)
6 <u>ADMINISTRATION</u>	13,900 ^F	13,567 ^F	14,250 ^F	F - Includes for new Health & safety arrangements
7 <u>ASSET REPLACEMENT</u>	7,500 ^G	16,752 ^G	7,500 ^G	G - Funds raised for aset replacement fund <u>Asset replacement fund:</u> Balance at 01.04.22 53,602 Funds raised 2022/2023 7,500 Expenditure 2022/2023 -13,259 Estimated balance at 31.03.2023 47,843
8 <u>E. A. PRECEPT</u>	36,672	36,672	37,773	
9 <u>LOAN REPAYMENT</u>	42,964	42,964	42,964	
10 <u>REPLACEMENT EXCAVATOR</u>	0	0	0	
	229,636	230,358	257,837	
<u>INCOME</u>	29,590 ^H	47,609 ^I	35,000 ^H	H - Includes for average highland water, re-charge of water usage, metered discharge & and private works
				I - Includes calculated highland water claims, re-charge of water usage, metered discharge & private works
Net Expenditure	200,047	182,749	222,837	Includes asset funding for: Sutton Gault p/s wet well bolts 3,858 Grant-in-aid - telemetry 4,626 asset fund - telemetry 4,626 Asset fund - height restrictor for excavator 4,775
Rate Requirement	39.50 p		44.00 p	
Rate set				
AV 506,448				
Gen. Fund balance open	195,729	195,729	204,928	
Rates raised 38.00p	192,450	192,882	222,837	
net expenditure	200,047	182,749	222,837	
adj. balances	-6,425	-935	0	
closing balance	181,707	204,928	204,928	

Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners

Rate and levy requirements 2022/2023

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Board must be borne for 2023//2024 are:-

- a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 64.28%
- b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to East Cambridgeshire District Council - 35.72%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £3,256

In 2023/2024 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £5,064.

Revenue cash balance in hand at 31st March 2023 is - £204,928

Asset replacement fund at 31st March 2023 is £47,843.

The estimated net expenditure of £222,837 in 2023/2024 is equivalent to:-

- a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 44.00p
- b) a Special levy on the East Cambridgeshire District Council of £79,588

In 2022/2023 a rate of 38.00p in the £ was set together with a Special levy of £68,735 on East Cambridgeshire District Council.

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Commissioners

April 2023

Miss Ablett advised that when considering the rate for 2023/2024 members should take into account the significantly higher unit rates for electricity as from 1st April 2023. She explained the electricity estimate for 2023/2024 was based on a 5-year average to take account of the impact of climate change, but it did not include any provision for possible extremes.

Miss Ablett added that members should be aware that due to the increased unit rates, the direct pumping costs for a rainfall event would be significantly higher than the amount estimated.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £222,837 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £143,249 and £79,588 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 44p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £79,588 be made and issued to the East Cambridgeshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

C.514 Date of next meeting

The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting is Thursday 2nd November 2023 at 5pm at the Baptist Hall, Station Road, Haddenham.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date