# HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board
held at Middle Level Offices, March on Monday 10th June 2024

PRESENT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| M G Day Esq (Chairman) | Ms J French | Ms A Pinder |
| N Buttress Esq (Vice Chairman) | Ms S Hoy | D Roy Esq |
| F D Leach (Deputy Vice Chairman) | S Imafidon Esq | C Seaton Esq |
| N J Harrison Esq | G L Lake Esq | B Wales Esq |
| Ms B Barber | J Leach Esq | L Foice-Beard |
| C Boden Esq | A Miscandlon Esq | |
| Ms M Davis | H Duncalfe Esq | |

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Graham Moore representing the Consulting Engineers were in attendance.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from G Booth Esq, H Nawaz Esq and D Oliver Esq.

The Chairman thanked members for attending todays meeting and welcomed Lucie Foice-Beard to her first meeting of the Board.

B.2123 Declarations of Interest

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

Mr Miscandlon declared an interest (as a member of the Middle Level Board) in any matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners.

Mr Harrison declared an interest in any item in relation to the maintenance work of the Board.

Mr Harrison, Mr Wales and Alex Miscandlon (as members of Waldersey IDB). declared interests in any matters concerning Waldersey IDB.

The Chairman, Messrs Buttress and Leach declared interests in items concerning the District Officers & related fees.

The Chairman and Mr Lake declared interests in any matters relating to the Thomas Squire Charity.

B.2124 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 16th November 2023 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.2125 Constitution & Membership

Viz:

| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners | | Item No: | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Meeting:** | **HUNDRED OF WISBECH IBD** | **Subject:** | **CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP** |
| **Date:** | **Monday 10th June 2024** | **Officer Responsible:** | **Polly Tombleson** |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
B. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
C. There are currently **2** vacancies on the Board.
D. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
E. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
F. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.

## 1. Current status

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

| | Elected Members | Appointed Members | Total Members | Quorum |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Composition | 14 | N/A | | 8 |
| Actual | 12 | 15 FDC | 27 | |
| Vacancies | 2 | | 2 | |

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

| No | Name | Status (one of four categories) | Commentary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | J Bunning | Co-opted member - Hutchinsons | |
| 2 | N Buttress | Nominee of rate payer (DG Bullard) | Vice-Chair & District Officer |
| 3 | M Day | Ratepayer | Chairman |
| 4 | H Duncalfe | Ratepayer | |
| 5 | N Harrison | Ratepayer | |
| 6 | G Lake | Ratepayer | |
| 7 | F Leach | Nominee of rate payer (W Norman) | Dep Vice-Chair & District Officer |
| 8 | J Leach | Nominee of rate payer (W Norman) | |
| 9 | A Pinder | Ratepayer | |
| 10 | C Smart | Ratepayer | |
| 11 | B Wales | Co-opted member to vacancy – non-ratepayer | |
| 12 | N Pooley | Co-opted member to vacancy – non-ratepayer | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |

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

| No | Name | Appointing Council as at July 2023 | Commentary (one of three categories) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | B Barber | FDC | Councillor |
| 2 | C Boden | FDC | Councillor |
| 3 | G Booth | FDC | Councillor |
| 4 | M Davis | FDC | Councillor |
| 5 | J French | FDC | Councillor |
| 6 | R Gerstner | FDC | Councillor |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | S Hoy | FDC | Councillor |
| 8 | S Imafidon | FDC | Councillor |
| 9 | D Laws | FDC | Councillor |
| 10 | C Marks | FDC | Councillor |
| 11 | A Miscandlon | FDC | Councillor |
| 12 | H Nawaz | FDC | Councillor |
| 13 | D Oliver | FDC | Councillor |
| 14 | D Roy | FDC | Councillor |
| 15 | C Seaton | FDC | Councillor |

1.4 Special levy paying District Councils appoint members to Boards and their role is to be part of the Board representing all the non-agricultural interests within the Board's district. The Council must consider appointing members who have relevant knowledge or experience that is relevant to the Board and its district.

1.5 Appointed members do not need to be councillors or employees of the Council, therefore can represent wider relevant interests within the district, eg major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

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

## 2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

| No | Name | 16/11/2023 | 14/6/2023 | 17/11/2022 | 16/5/2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | J Bunning | | Apologies | Present | Apologies |
| 2 | N Buttress | Present | Present | Present | Present |
| 3 | M Day | Present | Present | Present | Present |
| 4 | H Duncalfe | Present | Present | Present | n/a |
| 5 | N Harrison | Present | Present | Present | Present |
| 6 | G Lake | Present | Present | Present | Present |
| 7 | F Leach | Present | Present | Present | Present |
| 8 | J Leach | Present | Present | Present | Apologies |
| 9 | A Pinder | Present | Apologies | Present | n/a |
| 10 | C Smart | Present | | | Present |
| 11 | P Tegerdine – no longer on the board | Present | Apologies | Present | Present |
| 12 | B Wales – only just on board | Apologies | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 13 | N Pooley– only just on board (Nov 23) | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 14 | | | | | |

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

| No | Name | 6/10/2023 | 13/12/2022 | 12/04/2022 | 2/11/2021 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | M Day | Present | Present | Present | Present |

Appointed Members (current and previous)

| No | Name (Council) | 16/11/2023 | 14/6/2023 | 17/11/2022 | 16/5/2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | B Barber | Present | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 2 | C Boden | | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 3 | G Booth | Apologies | Present | Apologies | n/a |
| 4 | M Davis | Apologies | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 5 | J French | Apologies | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 6 | R Gerstner | Apologies | Present | n/a | n/a |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | S Hoy | Present | Present | Apologies | Present |
| 8 | S Imafidon | | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 9 | D Laws | Apologies | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 10 | C Marks | Present | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 11 | A Miscandlon | Present | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 12 | H Nawaz | Present | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 13 | D Oliver | Apologies | Present | n/a | n/a |
| 14 | D Roy | Present | Apologies | n/a | n/a |
| 15 | C Seaton | Present | Apologies | n/a | n/a |

**3. Elections, vacancies & appointments**

3.1 Current vacancies – May 2024 – **2** elected

**4. Composition and amalgamations**

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

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

4.3 Joint working agreement - HW & W – amalgamation update

**5. Training**

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

5.2 To date 0 of 27 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 1 of 27 Board members have reported viewing 3 of the five videos.
To date 9 of 27 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the five videos

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

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

**Author Name: Polly Tombleson**
**Role: Senior Business Support Officer**

Mr Hill reported that Mr Tegerdine had confirmed his resignation from the Board and all other boards he represented Waldersey Farms on. Mr Harrison reported that he would be meeting with representatives of Waldersey Farms shortly and he would ask if they would nominate a representative to become a member of the Board.

Mr Boden reported that Lucie Foice-Beard had been appointed to the Board in the place of D Laws.

In response to Mr F Leach, Mr Hill reported that members should inform the office to update the register when they had completed the training videos.

In response to Mr Boden, Mr Hill reported that it was likely that the Waldersey IDB would view a potential amalgamation with Hundred of Wisbech IDB more favourably and they would be meeting on 19th June 2024 and would be discussing this matter. He considered that if discussions were to proceed the board should have, although previously agreed, a current approval concerning an amalgamation.

In response to Mr Boden, Mr Hill considered it may be possible to get an amalgamation finalised within 2 years, but timescales would be dictated by the workloads and priorities of both the Environment Agency and Defra.

RESOLVED

i) The Board support, in principle, a proposal to amalgamate with Waldersey IDB and instruct the Clerk to engage Waldersey IDB with regards to the proposal with a view to discussing the matter further.

ii) That a sub-committee, consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Mr F Leach and Mr Miscandlon be appointed and authorised to discuss an amalgamation with members of Waldersey IDB

B.2126 Clerks Report

Viz:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners | | **Item No:** | **5** |
| **Meeting:** | **HUNDRED FOF WISBECH IDB** | **Subject:** | **CLERK'S REPORT** |
| **Date:** | **Monday 10th June 2024** | **Officer Responsible:** | **Paul Burrows** |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.
B. Support the proposed approach to determining the next electricity contract.
C. Boards are asked to note the banking overview and that unless there is collective approval, they will not be maximising their interest on available balances.

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

1.1 At the MLC and IDB Chairs session on 6th October 2023, Paul Burrows shared the observations from his first suite of IDB meetings and outlined the viability concerns of Conington & Holme IDB that have been escalated to Defra. Observations include that some Boards:

1. struggle for membership and attendance.
2. want to amalgamate but with no one willing to amalgamate with
3. have with no clear succession for critical roles
4. are underwritten by the hands-on inputs of a few (with costs not always passed on within rates)
5. where there's limited involvement from all members around the table
6. with limited financial reserves
7. with aging assets and limited capital reserves
8. will potentially struggle to afford to deliver their ever-increasing statutory duties, powers & governance standards

1.2 The Chairs explored the following question;
*Beneath the surface, how healthy is your Board today, for tomorrow and for the next generation?*

- What worries you?
- Do we have a good picture of the relative strengths and weaknesses of our Boards?
- How do we ensure risks and issues are tackled proactively?
- How can we better share success, learning and support across Boards?

1.3 The intent is to develop a suite of 'Key Health Indicators' (KHIs) and comparison metrics for the Middle Level Commissioners and administered IDBs. These will help Boards better understand and proactively address their key risks and understand their relative health. KHIs will also help the Middle Level Commissioners assure and focus their service provision for IDBs.

1.4 The picture created will provide an evidence base to inform a business case for change in terms of the IDB landscape within the Middle Level, as the Chairs reflected back to work undertaken by Geoff Beal a number of years ago. Chairs were supportive of the need to develop future options, assess costs:benefits and identify a preferred option proactively locally, rather than risk a national instruction to change. Any business case for change will need to be properly planned and resourced, with considerable engagement included within any scope. This will need to be scoped in due course.

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

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

**2. Association of Drainage Authorities - Summary**

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

**3. Electricity and Insurance**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**4. Banking**

4.1 As has previously been reported, due to regulatory changes from our bankers, the type of accounts held by all authorities had changed. The current arrangements within our delegations from all the Boards we administer are that we have free banking in return for a non-interest-bearing current account and an interest-bearing Business Premium account within which higher interest could be gained on 'surplus' balances by putting them on deposit for fixed periods. The minimum balance for the Business Premium account is £100,000 and higher rates of interest are available for higher deposit amounts and longer periods of investments.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**5. Rating**

5.1 On 7th September 2023 we were advised that South Holland IDB and the Water Management Alliance will no longer be supporting DRS operating on local area networks after 31 March 2025. This rating and election management software has been in place for 25 years. DRS is owned by South Holland IDB and was originally developed by this Board around the year 2000, primarily for its own use.

5.2 Since that time, most other IDBs have decided to use DRS under licence and it is therefore their view today that the next rating system should be controlled and developed by ADA, for use by its IDB membership should they want to, given that all but 3 IDBs and 1 DDC in England and Wales now use DRS. ADA have confirmed that they are in positive discussions on this matter.

5.3 This presents a significant risk to the Middle Level Commissioners as well as to the clerking service we provide to our administered IDBs which all rely on this system. However, it also presents an opportunity for an improved system as we are currently unable to efficiently and optimally use the full capabilities of the system, as it doesn't cater well for dual rated areas and penalties. We have asked to be part of any team scoping any future system and/or system support.

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

**6. MLC Staffing**

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

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

6.3 Sofi Lloyd our Environment Officer has been promoted into a new role of Ecology & Environmental Services Manager. The Environment Act 2021 was a game-changer for IDBs and our journey towards enhancing the environment as part of our delivering our wide range of services now comes with greater expectations, greater responsibilities, greater scrutiny, greater risk and a necessity to work in partnership and collaboration with an increasing variety of groups and organisations. There is also now the opportunity we need to unlock to use our land, assets, operations and waterways to enable the biodiversity net gain responsibilities of others and bring in some income. The MLC Executive

Committee recognised this and the need to scale up our ecological capacity and capability. We will be looking to recruit to an Ecologist/Environment Officer role reporting to Sofi in due course as part of the suite of new roles needed to enable the delivery of the increased MLC and IDB capital programme.

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

**Author Name: Paul Burrows**
**Role: Clerk**

The Board considered and noted the Clerks report.

Mr Boden queried the maximum age at which personal accident cover would be applicable and if as previously discussed, this had been relayed to these members. Mr Hill reported that the report referred to cover in place for the 2023/2024 year and would be update with regards to the 2024/2025 policy renewals.

RESOLVED

That a note be sent to all members reminding them of the current age limit for personal accident cover if engaged on the Boards business.

Banking

Mr Boden commented that, following from last years meeting, it was good to see banking accounts had been revised and there was a better return on interest being achieved. He expressed some disappointment regarding the comments in the report concerning the Boards not achieving possible maximum benefit and in reply Mr Hill explained that these comments were with regards to the smaller Boards with balances that did not reach the maximum balance. He confirmed that Hundred of Wisbech had sufficient balances to enable the Board to achieve higher tiers of interest and deposit for longer periods in its own right and although a pooling arrangement could possibly give a better return, any difference would be marginal and dependant on all boards entering into the arrangement, which at this point none were in favour of.

Rating

In response to Mr Boden, Mr Hill outlined the likely benefits for the Middle Level office gaining rating software which included facilities to run penalty application and accommodates dual rating better. He confirmed that although Middle Level were not represented on the development committee, the Clerk was in regular contact and was liaising with ADA on this matter.
In response to the Chairman, Mr Hill reported on the two new members of staff as detailed in the reports.

B.2127 Environment Officers Report
Viz:

| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners | | **Item No:** | **6** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Meeting:** | **HUNDRED OF WISBECH IDB** | **Subject:** | **ENVIRONMENT OFFICER'S REPORT** |
| **Date:** | **10th June 2024** | **Officer Responsible:** | **Sofi Lloyd** |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

A. Review their current BAP ahead of Env Officers' visit
B. Ensure an Ecological Screening Report (ESR) is completed and submitted to Sofi well in advance of any non-routine work
C. Note and comply with the provided flail mowing, badger, water vole and weed screen guidance

**1. Services provision to the Board.**

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

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

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

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

**2. Pollution**

It is encouraging to know that all the reports of pollution we have collectively made to the EA have resulted in some action being taken by way of their recent targeted inspections and visits on Algores Way with Anglian Water. We can look forward to the report of their findings on the 14th June. It is unlikely that the recent inspections and investigations will eliminate the pollution issues but at least it may act as a deterrent for those who are knowingly causing the issues. Please continue to report to the EA any pollution issues as they arise as it is clear that making multiple reports ensures that action in the area is prioritised.

**3. BAP Refresh Visit**

Sofi has undertaken a district visit with the Vice Chair. Approaches discussed will be able to inform the BAP refresh. Please in the meantime review the most current BAP, which is available on the MLC website: Appendix 1 (middlelevel.wpenginepowered.com)

**4. New Hedgerow Regulations**

The new Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024 puts the baseline for hedgerow management practices into law, providing a consistent approach for their protection across the country. This includes:

- a 2-metre buffer strip, measured from the centre of a hedgerow, where a green cover must be established and maintained. Also, no cultivation or the application of pesticides or fertilisers should take place within this buffer strip
- a hedgerow cutting ban from 1 March to 31 August (inclusive).

You can find guidance on these rules and exemptions in the buffer strip guidance and the cutting and trimming guidance here: Hedgerow regulations now law – Farming (blog.gov.uk)

**5. Work Package Ecological Screening Report (ESR)**

Please be reminded that any non-routine maintenance works may require environmental screening in order to identify any ecological or environmental risks and their mitigations. This will ensure that the work is completed compliantly. Please contact Sofi for the ESR template for any such works. This will include bank reprofiling, culverts, piling and significant extents of woody vegetation removal. If there is any uncertainty, please contact Sofi.

**6. Flail mowing and compliance**

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

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

**7. Badgers and licences**

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

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

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

**8. Water Voles**

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

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

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

**9. Mink Control**

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

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

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

**10. Weed screen spoil heaps**

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

**11. Invasive species**

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

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

**Author Name: Sofi Lloyd**
**Role: Ecology & Environmental Services Manager**

Mr Buttress reported that he had spent time going around the district with the Environment Officer and considered that the Board were generally complying with the requirements placed upon them. He reported that following discussions with the Board’s contractor, the Boards policy was to only flail one side of the watercourse at any one time. He informed members of nesting birds in longer grass and that he intended to walk the banksides ahead of flail mowing to check for nesting birds.

He commented on the visit to the industrial estate by the Environment Agency and although officers of the Board were involved with the inspections, they did not take part in site visits to premises.

He further commented that during the inspections with the Environment Officer, it was noted there was a lack of diversity of species and although the Board had previously discussed putting berms along the watercourses this action had been put on hold until the outcome of the District Study was received.

The Chairman commented that there were likely to be increased costs for the Board in meeting their statutory obligations.

Mr Wales confirmed he was happy to be the Boards responder should the Board purchase a mink raft.

RESOLVED

i) Mr Buttress be appointed the Board’s Environment representative.
ii) The Board purchase a mink raft for the district and Mr Wales to be a designated responder.

B.2128 Consulting Engineers Reports

Viz:

| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners | | **Item No:** | **7** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Meeting:** | **HUNDRED OF WISBECH IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)** | **Subject:** | **CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME** |
| **Date:** | **Monday 10th June 2024** | **Officer Responsible:** | **Nicola Oldfield** |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

**A. Provide its views on item 2.2.1 *New developments and the use of SuDS*.**

**1. Chief Engineer's summary**

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

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

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

**2. Technical Services**

2.1 A list of the planning, consent and infiltration device applications responded to since the last report are provided as Appendix 2.

2.2 <u>Summary of key planning issues</u>

Note that we will continue to seek the Board's input as and when required, rather than wait for Board meetings. This will be done via correspondence with the Chair, Vice Chair and Deputy Vice Chair.

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

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

In addition, current design does not allow for the complex network of water level and flood risk management systems within the Fens particularly when they are "at capacity" during October to

April and/or where flows can become “locked” due to high water levels taking many days to return to a “normal” level.

Therefore, consideration is being given to requiring designs to:

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

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

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

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

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

**The Board’s views on this would be appreciated.**

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

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

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

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

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

With these factors in mind, we have published our first 'standing advice note' which is included as Appendix 3 and is available on our website https://middlelevel.gov.uk/standing-advice-2/. Standing Advice Note MLC001 effectively declares our flood and drainage infrastructure 'at capacity'. The intent is to develop and publish further notes over the coming months.

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

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

2.3 A list of the planning, consent and infiltration device applications responded to since the last report are provided as Appendix 2.

2.4 The MLC Planning Engineer is currently on indeterminate sick leave and there are no additional planning updates provided in this report. If the Board would like updates on specific items in the absence of the Planning Engineer please contact the Chief Engineer.

2.5 Anglian Water - Peterborough to Bexwell Pipeline
Work to install the Peterborough to Bexwell section of new water pipeline should recommence in earnest in the next few weeks as this was delayed to weather condition/waterlogged fields. Extra resources are being employed to accelerate the works to meet the deadline for completion. This work does not cross any of the Board's maintained watercourses.

**3. Capital Programme**

3.1 The Board's Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 1.

3.2 The Capital Programme will be updated on completion of the Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study.

3.3 Attenuation Area near Point 29 (Project Ref 346/23)
The Board's Solicitor has advised that the Land Transfer will be completed imminently.

A hydraulic model of the sub-catchment is needed to determine the parameters for the outfall structure and inform the final design. The consultant for the main catchment study has been asked about incorporating the attenuation pond modelling and is currently working on providing a price for it. Subject to them providing an acceptable quote, it is hoped that it can be included as a compensation event within the original budget of the Catchment Study.

3.4 Culverting Works near Point 66 (Project Ref 346/24)
The project was completed in November 2023 after issues with the chain link fencing were resolved to a satisfactory level by the contractor. The metal grills on the inspection chamber were also changed by the contractor to the correct versions as per the design and with the required security

bolts. The previously fitted grills were not sufficient thickness for the span and had a central support which would have impeded maintenance for the Board in the future.

**Completed works looking downstream, from the upstream extent**

**Improved chain link fencing at downstream end**

**Corrected inspection chamber grills and brackets with security bolts**

3.5 Flood Alleviation Investigation (Project Ref 346/25): Hundred of Wisbech IDB & Waldersey IDB

*Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study*

The joint Catchment Study is progressing with close collaboration between the Engineer, the Board's Works Committee and HaskoningDHV. The decision was taken to spend longer on collecting and sharing more data with HaskoningDHV on the basis that the improvements it would bring to providing a more accurate and better quality model of the Boards' systems, far outweigh the relatively small extra cost and impact of extending the timescale. They are currently reviewing the data provided, have issued the notes from the site inspections held at the end of last year and are producing the final version of the survey spec so that this can be tendered by surveying contractors. In addition to this, they provided a quote for including additional CCTV of culverts on the system, which was accepted. Much of this had been on hold due to the approval letter not being received from the EA to confirm the funding. After nearly six months, this was finally received in April 2024. Short update meetings are being held with HaskoningDHV on a fortnightly basis and monthly Boad meetings are planned to start when required to keep an eye on progress.

Further discussions around the Anglian Water pipeline and if this will impact on the survey works have been carried out and this will continue to be considered. Anglian Water have also finally responded and will hopefully supply HaskoningDHV with the information regarding their outfalls into the Boards' systems to inform the model more accurately.

Our Consenting Officer has been working proactively with Anglian Water to ensure that their pipeline does not adversely affect the Boards' future works and maintenance operations.

**Author Name: Nicola Oldfield**
**Role: Chief Engineer**

**Appendix 1:** **Capital Programme**
**Appendix 2:** **List of planning applications since last report**
**Appendix 3:** **MLC001 Middle Level Flood and Drainage Infrastructure Capacity**

**Appendix 1**

| **Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Capital Improvement Programme (2024/2025)** | | | **PREVIOUS YEARS** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** | **2028/29** | **2029/30** | **2030/31** | **2031/32** | **2032/33** | **FUTURE YEARS** | **ALL YEARS** |
| | | | **Pre Yr 0** | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Year 4** | **Year 5** | **Year 6** | **Year 7** | **Year 8** | **Year 9** | **Year 10** | **Post Year 10** | **Total Expenditure** |
| Structures | Gravity outfall/overspill refurbishment/replacement | B | 14.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 14.6 |
| | Control structure refurbishment/replacement | | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Joint pumping station refurbishment/replacement | | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.5 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drainage Channels | Sleeving existing pipework | | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| | Open ditch lining - Point 66 | | 0.7 | 250 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 250.7 |
| | Culverts under the A47 - Highways improvement works | | 0.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| | Pipeline replacement - The Stitch, phase ii | A | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Fridaybridge improvement works - 99 - 101 | B | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 55.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 55.0 |
| | Channel improvement works 29 - 31 (Copart to bypass) | B | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.0 |
| | Channel improvement works 53 - (Halfpenny Lane) | D | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 160.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 160.0 |
| | Storage area - Point 29 | B | 0.1 | 150 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 150.1 |
| | Culvert replacement - Point 3 | B | 1.3 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.9 |
| | Walkway and handrail improvements to structures | A | 0.0 | 6.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.0 |
| | Water control structures improvement scheme | B | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | District wide flood alleviation improvement scheme | A | 0.3 | 25.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 25.3 |
| | Surveys and studies | A | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.0 |
| South Brink p/s | Improvement/refurbishment works | | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Plant & Vehicles | | | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | | | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | **18.9** | **431.6** | **11** | **165** | **60** | **5** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **692** |

**Appendix 2**

| *MLC Ref.* | *Council Ref* | *Applicant* | *Type of development* | *Location* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1721 | F/YR23/0952/F | Cobra Engineering UK Ltd | Engineering (Workshop) | Redmoor Lane, Wisbech |
| 1722 | F/YR23/0913/F | Ms S Cork | Residence (Extension) | Kingfisher Drive, Wisbech |
| 1723 | F/YR23/0904/O | Mr R Crofts | Residential (Up to 5 dwellings) | Gosmoor Lane, Elm |
| 1724 | F/YR23/0921/F | Elmsport Ltd | Change of Use (Public House Car Park) | Main Road, Elm |
| 1725 | F/YR23/0956/F | Mr J Holland | Residence | Broad Drove, Wisbech |
| 1726 | F/YR23/3151/COND | Fenmarc Produce Ltd | Solar Farm | Gosmoor Lane, Elm |
| 1727 | F/YR23/1009/F | Tankcare Engineering Ltd | Industrial (3 units [B2 use]) | Weasenham Lane, Wisbech |
| 1728 | F/YR23/3153/COND | D Brown Building Contractors Ltd | Residential (63 dwellings) | Gosmoor Lane, Elm |
| 1729 | F/YR23/1021/F | Construct Reason Ltd | Residential (13 dwellings) | South Brink accessed via Ellerby Drive, Wisbech |
| 1730 | 23/02178/O | Mr & Mrs Clarke | Residential (TBC) | Elm High Road, Emneth |
| 1731 | F/YR23/1057/O | Ms L Carrick | Residential (2 dwellings) | Kings Walk, Wisbech |
| 1732 | F/YR24/0026/O | Cannon Kirk (UK) Ltd | Industrial/Storage/ Commercial (Up to 10,340sqm floor space) | Cromwell Road. Wisbech |
| 1733 | F/YR24/0071/F | Mr S Sweeney & Ms E Dennis | Residence (rooflights and extension) | Oldfield Avenue, Elm |
| 1734 | F/YR24/0064/O + 24/00209/CON | Mr & Mrs Clarke | Residential (2 dwellings) | Low Road, Elm |
| 1735 | F/YR24/0128/F | Mr & Mrs B Wiles | Residence | Victory Road, Wisbech |
| 1736 | F/YR24/0124/F | Mr M Sheldrake | Residence (change of use of land for domestic purposes and extension) | The Stitch, Friday Bridge |
| 1737 | F/YR24/3020/COND | AMS Recovery Trucks | Industrial (10 workshops) | Sandall Road, Wisbech |
| 1738 | F/YR24/0144/F | Lamb Weston/Meijer | Security fence (2.4m max height) | Weasenham Lane, Wisbech |
| 1739 | F/YR24/3042/COND | UA Asset Management 2 Ltd | Storage (2 units [B8 use]) | Cromwell Road, Wisbech |
| 1740 | 24/00630/F | Mr & Mrs D Browett | Residence (Extension) | Elm High Road, Emneth |
| 1741 | F/YR24/0366/F | A&L Construction Services Ltd | Residential (2 dwellings) | Elm Low Road, Wisbech |

There have been no Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses or to discharge to a watercourse) or infiltration device applications processed since the last meeting.

**Appendix 3**

middle level commissioners

*Proudly managing water levels in the Fens since 1862*

## Standing Advice Note MLC001:

## Middle Level Flood and Drainage Infrastructure Capacity

## Issued: 01 May 2024 (Version 1)

**Key messages**

A. **Our flood and drainage infrastructure should be considered as 'at capacity' during October to April.**
B. **Unless there is a compelling exception case, we will not consent surface water discharges greater than greenfield run-off rate and/or any new water entering our catchment across a watershed.**
C. **We consider that the cumulative impact of attenuating surface water from developments and timing of discharges has been to elongate the duration that our system is under stress. This increases our operational costs and could increase the risk of flooding.**
D. **We are concerned that there is seemingly no post-construction review of SuDS against their design and performance reviews through their lifecycle. Therefore, even well-designed SuDS may not be performing as expected/consented and there may be a cumulative impact of this across our catchment. Long term appropriate maintenance and inspection is considered a deficiency.**
E. **The opportunity to release stored water into our system during May to September should be actively explored within strategic flood risk assessments, development masterplans and local flood risk management strategies and in consultation with our engineers.**
F. **In considering and granting planning permission, Local Planning Authorities need to understand, consider and acknowledge the impact of new development upon their special levy and future funding requests under Defra's Partnership Funding policy. It should be noted that under this policy housing built or converted after January 2012 is not included within FCRM government grant-in-aid calculations.**
G. **Prior to granting outline planning permission, Local Planning Authorities must consider whether any proposed Biodiversity Net Gain provisions will be compatible with the flood risk management activities undertaken by MLC and other IDBs, for the full 30-year registration period. If this is not known, the LPA should seek advice from MLC prior to granting outline planning permission.**
H. **In considering and granting planning permission, Local Planning Authorities ought to secure funding from developers towards future capital investment in our water management infrastructure.**
I. **The Environment Agency needs to understand, consider and acknowledge the impact of new development and sub-optimal SuDS upon the Highland Water claims from the Middle Level Commissioners.**

J. **As statutory consultees and fellow Risk Management Authorities under the Flood & Water Management Act, Lead Local Flood Authorities and the Environment Agency need to consider and reflect this advice within their responses to Local Planning Authorities so as not to increase flood risk within the Middle Level.**
K. **Developers and Local Planning Authorities ought to consider the adoption of measures such as rainwater harvesting and re-use to avoid as much water as possible from entering the drainage network.**
L. **When considering abstraction licences for unrestricted winter fill applications from irrigators within the Middle Level catchment, the Environment Agency should take account of the potential benefit to the capacity of the system, operational costs, Highland Water costs and their responsibility to reduce flood risk within their determinations.**
M. **In addressing historic mis-connections to the foul sewer network and within changes to discharges of treated effluent water, Anglian Water and Local Authorities need to appreciate the potential impact on the surface water drainage network and receiving system.**
N. **Internal Drainage Boards within the Middle Level catchment may wish to consider adopting similar Standing Advice. They also need to appreciate and plan for the limitations in the capacity of the MLC system withing their own pumping station improvement schemes.**

**Advice Primarily For:**

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

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

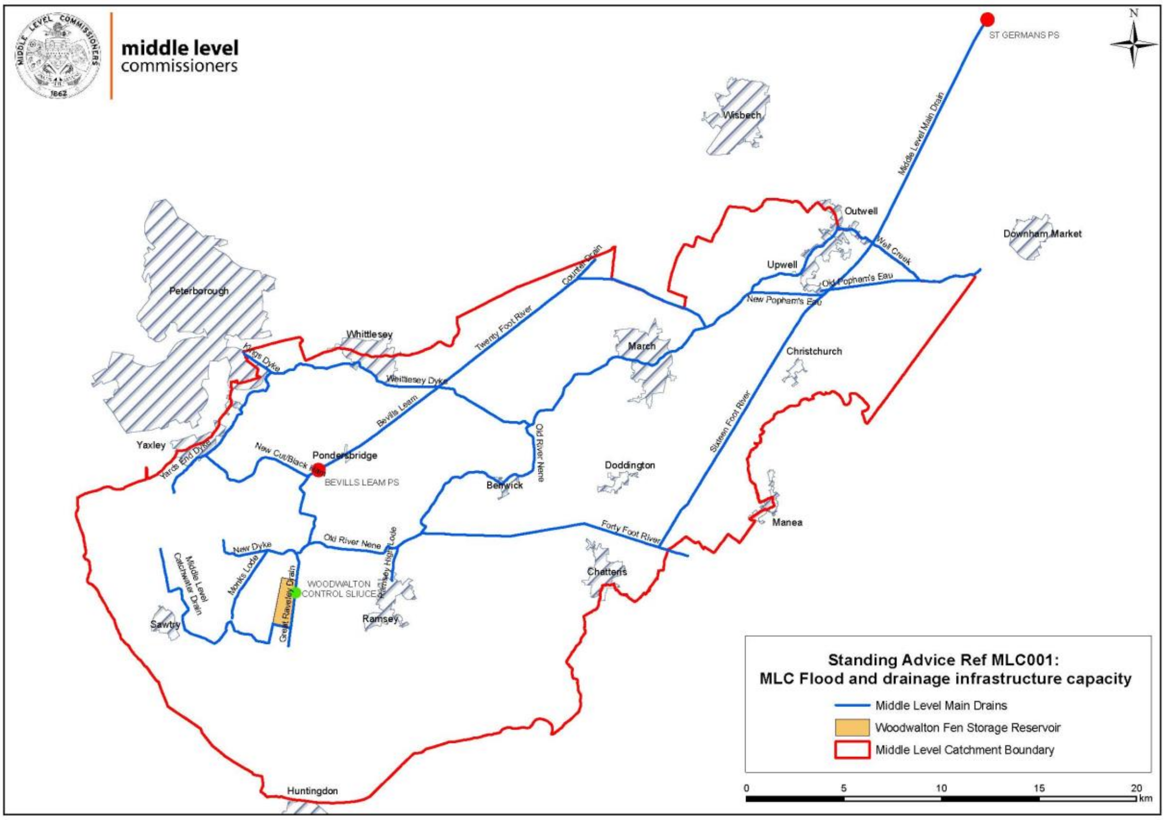
The Commissioners elect a Board and, via an Executive Committee, appoint a Chief Executive who leads a staffing structure to deliver their various statutory duties and responsibilities.

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

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

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

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




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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 May 2024

Mr Moore referred to the Mechanical & Electrical Engineers works of the winter and how the backlog of works resulting from the constant use over-winter was being addressed.
He reported on the use of SuDs and although there were not many such systems within the Board's system, he raised concerns about their effectiveness with ever changing weather patterns. Mr Boden raised concerns over enforceability should the Board consider a policy of higher standards as it was likely that systems would be designed to comply with current standards as these were standards set by the government.

Mr Moore considered that the Board would need to demonstrate an increased flood risk/increased financial risk resulting from the use of these systems and Mr Boden considered the next step should be for a full discussion on these issues with the new head of planning at Fenland District Council.
Mr Moore referred to the standing advice note issued by the Middle Level Commissioners and referred to areas of the Boards systems which could be considered at capacity and asked if the Board would consider issuing a similar advice note.

The Chairman referred to the District Study currently being carried out and considered this would identify specific problem areas and that the Board should wait until this information is received before giving consideration.

In response to Mr Boden, Mr Moore confirmed that it had been hoped to have the District Study completed this October but following a slight delay it was now hoped that it would be completed early in 2025.

Mr Boden raised concerns over the Standing Advice Note, particularly regarding overall attitude and approach to Capital Funding. He considered current IDB models for Capital funding were outdated and were an area for discussion between Chief Executives of the Middle Level and Fenland District Council.

Concerning the Capital Programme produced by the engineer, Mr Moore referred to the culverting works at point 66 which were now complete. Mr Buttress reported that he had recently seen highways engineers inspecting the culverts under the A47. Mr Moore informed the meeting that it was hoped to get modelling work for the attenuation area at point 27 included in the District Study.

RESOLVED

> For the Capital programme to be approved in principle and for it to be updated following the conclusion of the District Study

B.2129 Health & Safety

Viz:

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT H.W.IDB

AS YOU ARE AWARE I TRY TO COMBINE HEALTH AND SAFETY WITH MY DISTRICT OFFICERS ROLE TO MINIMISE COSTS WHERE POSSIBLE. IN ADDITION TO THE DISTRICT OFFICER REPORT I HAVE BEEN COMPILING A LIST OF WHAT 3 WORDS ON STOWAWAYS THIS WILL ASSIST IN NUMEROUS WAYS GOING FORWARD, WHEN COMPLETE I WILL HAND A COPY TO TOM POLLENDINE AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL FOR HIM TO PASS ON TO HASQVIG WHO ARE PREPARING THE MODELLING OF OUR SYSTEM. IN ADDITION IF WE HAVE A BLOCKED CULVERT IT WILL BE STRAIGHTFORWARD TO PASS THIS INFORMATION TO OUR CONTRACTOR SAVING TIME. HAC HAVE NOW COMPLETED THE STEPS DOWN TO THE OUTFALL AND THE STEPS AND PLATFORM AT OLDFIELD LANE NEAR THE SCOUT HUT THESE WILL ALSO BE MARKED WITH WHAT 3 WORDS FOR FUTURE REFEFERENCE. APOLOGIES FOR LABOURING THIS POINT BUT IT WILL HELP FULFILLING OUR OBLIGATIONS WITH OUR CONTRACTOR' ON THAT NOTE I BELIEVE THAT A MAP OF THE DISTRICT MARKING ALL POLES /HAZARDS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO THE CONTRACTOR THE WORKS COMMITTEE APROVED FOR ME TO DO THIS .

AS MENTIONED IN OUR DISTRICT OFFICER REPORT HAC ARE DOING A GREAT JOB THE INFORMATION I RECEIVE FROM THERE OPERATORS HELPS MY ROLE CONSIDERABLY.NOW THAT WE OWN THE ATTENUATION POND ON THE A47 NEW WARNING SIGNS HAVE BEEN ERECTED AS PER NFU ADVICE FROM OUR LAST FORMAL HSE VISIT. THAT BASICALLY CONCLUDES MY REPORT.

I HAVE 62 HOURS TOTAL WHICH INCLUDES ALL OF MY WORK.

KIND REGARDS NEIL

Mr Buttress referred to his report and all matters had either been dealt with or were being dealt with. He noted the identification of culverts with the What3Words app which will provide many benefits to the Board.

RESOLVED

i) That the Board noted and approved the report from Mr Buttress

ii) That Mr Buttress be thanked for his work on the Health & Safety matters over the preceding year.

B.2130 District Officer's Reports

Viz:

District Officer, Fred Leach. Neil Buttress. November to June.

I see our primary role as District Officer, to keep an eye on the condition of the drains, and to assist the boards contractors with operations, and to help with queries that arise by third parties in relation to private drainage and access to the Hundred network of drains.

We regularly meet, and report to the chairman and contractor, and several hours were taken up with initial discussions and site visits, showing Royal Haskoning the area and pumps. They continue with modelling the Hundred and Waldersea districts to ensure they are fit for the future.

There are always new planning applications to consider, some of which cause considerable concern, as drainage is not necessarily the main concern of builders. Often several site visits and meetings with our engineers are required to try and ensure that one, these new sites don't flood and two, that the Hundred system can accommodate the extra run off. There are regular discussions resulting in modifications to drainage with businesses in our area, who for health and safety reasons or new legislation require changes to drainage. Some are extremely understanding and helpful (Lamb Weston, CoPart for example), while some are the reverse and obstruct access for works and maintenance (SB Components, and William Stobarts for example). Sometimes these visits can be extremely challenging, and in places maintenance is now NOT being done. At our last meeting, considerable discussion took place around enforcement of the access strip beside our drains. With no legal action and or enforcement being backed by either the Middle Level or Ada, its difficult to see where our relatively small board can progress on our own. As a result, we now have areas of main drain serving Wisbech, without flail or dredging taking place. Unless we can access these areas there will be upstream problems in the future

Neil recently arranged a demonstration with a remote-controlled mower, which we had hoped would work within the drain, to operate around obstructions on the brink. Unfortunately, this still required an access along the brink.

The rural area is in good condition. Invasive weed is becoming an issue in parts of the system. When we have high rainfall events, these plants get washed along the watercourse and clog the pipe grills. Water then backs up behind, requiring a fast response to clear. All drains are well looked after by H A C, and our thanks go to them for their swift responses times when problems occur and for the quality of work.

Pollution continues to be an issue. Recently, the Environment Agency with support from the Middle Level and ourselves spent a day visiting the industrial area, highlighting the importance of contamination and drainage. Approx 30 EA staff were involved and able to visit many businesses

I've logged 33.5 hours for approval this period. I know that if all phone calls and discussions were included it would be considerably more, as with such large industrial and housing areas within the district, there are constant problems.

M F Leach reported that access issues continue to be a problem and it is frustrating that even after giving proper notice of entry, access can still be denied. He accepted that although the Board does have a right of entry, enforcing that right can be problematic.

He referred to the S B Components site which is a particular problem. Ms Hoy queried why, if the S B Components site is owned by Fenland District Council, is this causing a problem for the Board.

Mr Boden requested that Mr Miscandlon check the position and conditions in the lease to see if there are avenues for Fenland District Council, as landlord to the site, to assist the Board with access to carry out the drain maintenance works.
The Chairman reported that the Board had investigated other methods of cleansing the watercourses but generally the banksides are to steep and these remote access machines will not work in these conditions.

Mr Harrison considered the Board needed to decide if it is either going to enforce the byelaws or find alternative methods to cleanse these channels.

In response to Mr Seaton, Mr Buttress reported that although there were some structures with planning in the 9m byelaw distance, the main problems concerned moveable items.

Mr Moore reported on other drainage Boards who had started a policy of not allowing anything within the 9m byelaw distance.

Mr F Leach considered that enforcement of such a policy was a major issue.

Mr Boden considered that the Board should refer all matters to the planning authority for consideration when reviewing application or to planning enforcement for breaches of conditions.

In, response to Ms Pinder, Mr Boden confirmed that IDB requirement can only be taken into account for planning if the IDB brings their concerns/requirements to the attention of the planning committee.

Mr Miscandlon considered that as Boards are not statutory consultees, they must make representation to the planning authority.

Ms Davis queried that if the Board have a list of planning applications, why not write in concerning them. Mr Moore reported that there had been issues in the past with representations being made by Board's but then was being ignored by the planning authority. Mr Boden accepted that there had been problems in the past but this has now changed and urged Board's too make representation to the planning committee, who would take notice and act on matters brought to their attention.

Mr Moore informed the meeting that he would require specific instruction from the Board to enable him to make standard comments/objections, which would incur an additional cost to the Board.

Mr Boden accepted there would be additional cost involved in dealing with applications, but he considered this would be significantly less than having to deal with matters later if the Boards requirement had not been taken into account.

Members discussed the timescales for response and how notifications are made between the Middle Level planning department, the Board and Fenland District Council. Ms French referred to, if there was a major development proposed, the board sending a representative to the planning committee to raise concerns.

Mr F Leach proposed that the policy for the Board should be for the Officers of the Board to respond with comments regarding planning applications to Mr Moore, who would be authorised to respond to Fenland District Council planning department within the 21-day response window. Mr Boden seconded the proposal and this was approved by the Board.

Ms French requested that the Chairman should write (email) to the Middle Level Commissioners to detail the Boards requirements in dealing with planning applications.

B.2131 Works Report
Viz:

Works Report

It has been a very challenging year !! We were able to cut the majority of the agricultural district, although doing any work beyond October on the later crops became very difficult, unfortunately the weather continued into the new year and our usual work on the industrial side did not get completed till last week. We still have ongoing access issues in certain places although recent visits to Pallet Network and Porters went relatively smoothly. A second cut on the industrial side will take place before harvest. We have intentionally left the aquatic weed in the drains to allow us to spray off ,this process will be undertaken on the week starting 3rd June.

Many thanks again go to Neil and Fred for all their help.

Regards Nigel

Mr Harrison referred to his report and reported on weed build up which had recently been chemically treated and was being monitored before removal from the watercourses to ensure a good kill rate.

Mr Hill referred to the current contract ending February 2025 and what actions were the Board considering concerning works beyond this date.

Mr Harrison left the room while this matter was being discussed.

In response to Mr Boden, Mr Hill reported that although Middle Level have a number of contractors who quote regularly, this is generally for routine annual work and Middle Level do not have any 3 -5-year contract arrangements.

Mr Buttress further reported that much of the works within the industrial area are more specialised, required different machinery and it is only providing a longer-term agreement that makes these works viable.

He reported further on the level of supervision required in the industrial area and that the longer-term agreement allows the contractor to develop his own understanding/knowledge of what is required rather than having to supervise different contractors on an annual basis.

Mr Boden considered the Board needed to be able to demonstrate value for money and have full transparency for the process.

Mr F Leach reported that he had started to consider the requirements of a new contract and that having a local contractor who was able to provide an out of hours response was vitally important to the Board.
RESOLVED

> That the report was considered and approved.
>
> That the works committee be authorise to start a tendering process for the Board's drain maintenance contract to commence March 2025.

B.2132 Governance

Viz:

| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners | | Item No: | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Meeting:** | **HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD** | **Subject:** | **GOVERNANCE** |
| **Date:** | **Monday 10th June 2024** | **Officer Responsible:** | **Paul Burrows** |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.
B. Review and approve the updated Risk Management Strategy.
C. Review and approve the Financial Regulations & Financial Code
D. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
E. Note the system of financial Internal Controls that are in place and consider whether additional controls are required within the running and decision making of the Board.
F. Exercise of Public Rights
G. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments
H. Authorise the Chairman to sign the annual return for 2024.

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

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

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

1.3 The Board is asked to act on the advice of the Auditor within its decision making.

**2. Internal Controls**

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

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

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

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

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

**3. Risk Assessment**

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

**4. Financial Regulations & Code**

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

**5. Annual Governance Statement:**

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

**6. Exercise of Public Rights**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**7. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:**

7.1 The clerk to report.

**Author Name: Paul Burrows**
**Role: Clerk**

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

**Appendix 1**

# HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

*Administered by:*

## Governance

## Risk Management Strategy 2024 - 2027

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

Risk Management Principles

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

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

Risk Definition

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

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

Risk Categorisation

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

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

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

Risk (and Issue) Management Choices

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

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

Risk Management Approach

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

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

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Strategy published: January 2024

**Appendix 2**

# HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## Financial Regulations

## INDEX

## A. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. "The Board" shall mean the Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board.

## B. CONTRACTS

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

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

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

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

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

## C. RESPONSIBILITY OF OFFICERS

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

## D. ESTIMATES

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

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

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

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

## E. BANKING

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

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

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

   a) Where payment is made by cheque:-

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

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

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

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

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

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

## F. INCOME

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## G. PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## H. EMPLOYEES

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

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

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

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

## I. STORES

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

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

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

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

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

## J. ASSETS

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

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

3. The asset register shall be placed before the Board for inspection at the earliest opportunity following the completion of the annual Accounts.
4. Any sale of Board assets will be undertaken either through competitive Tender or in the manner approved of by the Board.

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

## K. AUDIT

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

2. Authority of Internal Audit

   Auditors are authorised to:

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

   Auditors are not authorised to:

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

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

## L. FRAUD OR OTHER IRREGULARITIES

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

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

## M. WRITE OFFS

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

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

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

- details of the item or debt to be written off
- the circumstances necessitating the write off
- the reasons why he/she considers that the debt is irrecoverable or that no proceeds on sale would accrue to the Board

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

## N. SALARIES, WAGES AND PENSIONS

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

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

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

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

## O. BOARD EMPLOYEES etc

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

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

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

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

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

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

## P. MEMBERS' AND EMPLOYEES' ALLOWANCES

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

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

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

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

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

## Q. INSURANCES

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

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

3. Responsible employees, officers or members shall promptly notify the Clerk of any loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to a claim on any Board policy, and shall where appropriate notify the police of the relevant circumstances.
4. All appropriate employees of the Board shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

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

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

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

## R. SECURITY

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

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

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

## S. PROTECTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

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

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

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

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

## T. REVIEW

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

# HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## FINANCIAL CODE

## A SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## B SCHEME OF BUDGET DELEGATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## C MANAGING BUDGETS & REPORTING

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

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

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

4. The Clerk shall ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for alerting the Clerk immediately should a Local Authority fail to make their Special Levy payment at the agreed time, or where Drainage Rates are outstanding following reminder.
5. Every budget holder is responsible for seeking to ensure that actual expenditure on each of their budgets does not exceed the budget as approved and shall regularly monitor income/expenditure to this end. Budget holders shall whenever practicable get approval for material adverse variances to any of their budgets that are anticipated. Approval shall be sought in accordance with the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations.

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

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

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

## D PURCHASING GOODS & SERVICES (INCLUDING PLANT)

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

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

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

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

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

4. A budget holder must never agree to permit a third party to provide them with goods/services where tenders or quotations are required without obtaining a copy of their terms of business beforehand.
5. Budget holders shall fully comply with all competition law and the Bribery Act 2010 and shall so far as is reasonable, satisfy themselves as to the insurance policies of contractors, and their systems of work before awarding works contracts.

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

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

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

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

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

    i. The name of the supplier.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**E BANK MANDATE AND INVESTMENTS**

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

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

    1. The Chairman

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

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

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

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

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

**F INVESTMENTS AND LOANS STRATEGY**

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

    - The Board's investment activities are limited by statute

    - The Board may invest in major Banks and Building Societies

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

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

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

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

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

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

**G COLLECTING MONEY**

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

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

**H SUNDRY DEBTORS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**I EMPLOYING/MANAGING STAFF**

1. The Chairman and/or the Vice Chairman or other person appointed by the Board shall be responsible to the Board for all matters regarding any employees.

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

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

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

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

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

**J STOCK IN STORES/DELIVERED TO SITE**

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

**K ASSET ACCOUNTING/MANAGEMENT**

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

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

**L AUDIT**

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

**M SALARIES AND WAGES**

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

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

3. All annual holiday entitlements (including any carried forward provisions) shall be agreed with the Chairman and/or the District Officer at the beginning of every financial

year and signed off by him/her as such, in accordance with the Board's terms and conditions of employment.

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

**N INSURANCES**

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

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

**O SECURITY**

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

**P REVIEW OF FINANCIAL CODE**

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

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

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

**Appendix 3**

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

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

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

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

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chair

Clerk

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Mr Hill referred the Board to the Governance report and summarised its content.

a) Internal Controls

The Board expressed satisfaction with the current internal controls

b) Risk Management Strategy

Mr Hill outlined that the Board's Risk Management Strategy had been due an update, that the Clerk had drafted and published an updated strategy for all IDBs clerked by the Middle Level Commissioners. The new strategy will run from 2024 to 2027 and outlines how Members and the Middle Level Commissioners staff govern the Board's risks.

The Board approved their new risk management strategy.

c) Finance Regulations & Finance Code

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

RESOLVED

> That the Board's current Finance regulations and Finance Code Policy be approved for a further year and the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer be authorised to carry out a full review of both and report at next year's meeting.

d) Exercise of Public Rights

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

e) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments

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

RESOLVED

> That there are no such events that would have an adverse financial impact on the Board that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2024.

f) Annual Governance Statement

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED

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

B.2133 Finance – Looking Back
Viz:

| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners | | **Item No:** | **11** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Meeting:** | **HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD** | **Subject:** | **FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK** |
| **Date:** | **Monday 10th June 2024** | **Officer Responsible:** | **Robert Hill/Sam Ablett** |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

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

## Finance Officer's review and key messages

For 2023/2024 the Board had estimated expenditure for the year of £246,459 which gave a rate requirement of 7.90p. It was approved by the Board to utilise £31,197 of balances to suppress the rate to the same as the previous year and set a rate of 6.90p to raise £215,262 in agricultural drainage rates and special levies. The rate setting process was centred around the new electricity contract and the uncertainty of the impact of a significant rainfall event. As members will be aware 2023/2024 became an ongoing rainfall event.

A budget monitoring exercise was carried out for the winter board meeting and this was reviewed in January 2024 based on figures to December 2023 which at that point gave an indicative estimate that electricity costs could be in the region of £30,000 more than that previously estimated. Subsequently we had further significant rainfall in January and the wettest February on record. Accounts have now been received from the supplier to February 2024 and an estimate has been made for the month of March 2024 based on meter reads, giving a total cost for the year of £126,007, the Boards shared costs being £81,904.

Although additional drain maintenance works were carried out these were monitored and managed in light of the ongoing weather events and increased pumping. Other areas of expenditure have been generally in-line with budget provisions.

Changes to the Boards banking arrangements have accessed further interest and during the period £22,742.84 interest has been accrued. £9,894.75 interest has been allocated to the Boards general fund account with the remainder apportioned to the other funds.

Over-all, with the approved use of balances to subsidise the rate and the increased spend on pumping, there was a decrease in the Boards General Fund of £46,369 to a balance of £259,135 at 31st March 2024. This is now less than a current average year's expenditure in-hand and the Board will need to address this in-line with the conditions approved at last year's meeting.

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

## 1. Budgeting

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

## 2. Payments for 2023

2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 2

## 3. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2023/2024:

3.1 Annual Return 2023/2024:

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2024 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations. Appendix 3

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

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

**Appendix 1**

Page no.

## HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
## BUDGET MONITORING 2023/2024

| | | Approved budget 2023/2024 £ | Actual to 30.09.2023 £ | Forecast to 31.03.2024 £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rates, Insurances and telephones | 1,250 | 830 | 1,000 |
| 2 | Drainworks (incl District Officer's fee & expenses and Environmental measures | 81,500 | 32,885 [A] | 81,500 [B] |
| 3 | Joint Plant Maintenance (with Waldersey IDB) | 47,500 [C/D] | 16,000 [C/D] | 52,000 [C/D/E] |
| 4 | Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc | 22,075 | 9,332 | 22,075 |
| 5 | Planning Applications | 9,000 | 3,478 | 9,000 |
| 6 | Environment Agency Precept | 17,780 | 8,890 | 17,780 |
| 7 | Loan Charges | 74,628 | 37,314 | 74,628 |
| 8 | Asset Replacement Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | Studies and Surveys | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | Improvement Works - (per programme) | 431,600 [F] | 72,793 [G] | 431,600 [H] |
| | | 685,333 | 181,521 | 689,583 |
| | Improvement works - Funding | 425,600 [I] | 71,969 [I] | 425,600 [I] |
| | LESS Rents, Deposit Accounts interest etc | 274 | 1,350 | 5,000 |
| | General Fund - Use of balances | 44,197 [J/M] | 1,719 [K/N] | 43,702 [L/O] |
| | annual value - 3,119,734 | 215,262 | 106,484 | 215,281 |

| GENERAL FUND | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opening balance | 305,505 | 305,505 | 305,505 |
| rates raised (2023/24 6.90p) | 215,262 | 103,278 | 215,281 |
| net expenditure | 215,262 | 106,484 | 215,281 |
| Balances | -44,197 | -1,719 | -43,702 |
| Close balance | 261,308 | 300,580 | 261,803 |

**Remarks**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A - | Includes:- | |
| | Contractors charges | 13,144 |
| | Slubbing/slip repairs | 4,916 |
| | Spoil disposal | 10,000 |
| | | 28,060 |
| B - | Includes provision for: | |
| | Contractors charges | 31,475 |
| | Proposed slubbing programme (year 3/5) | 25,000 |
| | additional work/Fuel changeover/surcharge | 8,000 |
| | Spoil disposal | 12,000 |
| | | 76,475 |
| C - | Provision based on new calculation | |
| D - | Includes estimate for new electricty contract - | |
| E - | Includes for additional standing charges | |
| F - | Open ditch lining - point 66 (Scout hut) | 250,000 |
| | Storage area - point 29 (Hutchinsons) | 150,000 |
| | District System Attenuation | 25,000 |
| | Health & Safety improvements | 6,000 |
| | Holly Bank culvert (spoil storage) | 600 |
| | | 431,600 |
| G - | Expenditure per capital programme | |
| H - | Expenditure per capital programme | |
| | *engineer to update on progress of schemes* | |
| I - | Funding (Improvement programme) | |
| | *engineer to update on progress and funding sources* | |
| J,K,L | Includes - use of funds - | |
| J - | provision towards new slubbing programme | 10,000 |
| J - | Provision towards H & S improvements | 3,000 |
| K - | provision towards new slubbing programme | 1,307 |
| K - | Provision towards H & S improvements | 412 |
| L - | provision towards new slubbing programme | 10,000 |
| L - | Provision towards H & S improvements | 3,000 |
| M,N,O | Agreed at meeting to set same rate and subsidise from balances: | |
| M - | use of general fund balances | 31,197 |
| N - | use of general fund balances | 0 |
| O - | use of general fund balances | 30,702 |

**Appendix 2**

**HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Middle Level Commissioners - Court costs (Liability orders) | 0.50 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Meeting with the Chairman, planning and development applications) | 821.70 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and traveling | 11,010.05 |
| NFU Mutual - Consultancy fees (Health & safety) | 810.90 |
| Mick George Limited - Sample and analysis of spoil | 360.00 |
| Needham & Laddus IDB - Contribution in lieu of drainage rates (Drainage of land through Needham Bank) | 142.00 |
| E & H Grab Services - Disposal of spoil | 600.00 |
| Environment Agency - Precept | 8,890.00 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution in lieu of drainage rates (Drainage of land through Needham Bank) | 592.92 |
| Public Works Loan Board - Loan repayment | 24,866.38 |
| KMA Utilities Limited - Disposal of spoil | 6,000.00 |
| Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Quarterly maintenance work and rubbish removal at Bar Drove and Redmoore | 9,750.71 |
| D Brown Building Ltd - Refund of duplicated payment of consent application | 50.00 |
| KMA Utilities Limited - Disposal of spoil | 4,500.00 |
| Water Resources East (WRE) Ltd - Contribution to operating costs 2023-2024 | 150.00 |
| KMA Utilities Limited - Disposal of spoil | 1,500.00 |
| Mr N Buttress - District Officers fees from 21st November 2022 to 16th May 2023 | 800.00 |
| Public Works Loan Board - Loan repayment | 12,447.77 |
| Waldersey IDB - Joint pumping costs - South Brink pumping station 2021-2022 | 25,936.95 |
| Waldersey IDB - Joint pumping costs - South Brink pumping station 2022-2023 | 26,387.31 |
| W Norman & Sons Ltd - District Officers fees to May 2023 | 510.00 |
| Mr N Buttress - Supply of padlocks | 79.14 |
| Sign Trade Supplies Ltd. - Brackets or signage | 45.83 |
| Fen Group - Work in connection with culvert replacement at Oldfield Lane | 33,625.20 |
| PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2022-2023 accounts) | 756.00 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, attendance at meetings, planning & development applications) | 6,864.19 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2022-2023 accounts) | 1,596.00 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges | 10,273.21 |
| 3B Design & Print - Signage | 864.00 |
| Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Quarterly maintenance work, diesel surcharge, slubbing, culvert replacement and other miscellaneous drainworks | 16,441.47 |
| Barclays Bank Plc - Repayment of labour account balance refunded to Board twice in error | 2,856.44 |
| KMA Utilities Limited - Disposal of spoil | 1,920.00 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances | 193.61 |
| Fen Group - Work in connection with culvert replacement at Oldfield Lane | 50,046.08 |
| Environment Agency - Precept | 8,890.00 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Supply pressure treated square rails (Account from English Bros) | 12.53 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Meeting with Chairman and District Officer concerning various issues, projects and proposed road improvement works at New Bridge Land, planning & development applications) | 9,376.50 |
| Hunt & Coombs LLP - Legal fees and disbursements relating to the transfer of land from Hutchinson Group Limited | 1,901.66 |
| Fen Group - Work in connection with culvert replacement at Oldfield Lane | 5,346.14 |
| Bank charges - Same day charge for payment to Fen Group | 15.00 |
| Fen Group - Work in connection with culvert replacement at Oldfield Lane | 46,209.16 |
| W Norman & Sons Ltd - District Officers fees to October 2023 | 645.00 |
| Public Works Loan Board - Loan repayment | 24,866.38 |
| The Crown Lodge Hotel - Expenses in connection with Board meeting | 701.20 |
| Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Quarterly maintenance work to 30th November 2023 | 9,426.71 |
| Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Construction of new structure for new drain near Scout Hut | 3,300.00 |
| Public Works Loan Board - Loan repayment | 12,447.77 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning & development applications) | 9,338.17 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution - Conservation officer | 371.00 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Catchment Study stage 1 (Account from Royal Haskoning) | 660.00 |
| Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal | 40.00 |
| Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Quarterly maintenance work, removal of tyres from drain, disposal of tyres and banksman. | 10,512.35 |
| Mr N Buttress - District Officers fees to 15th November 2023 | 1,537.50 |
| Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply 2023/2024 - Redmoor Depot | 20.02 |
| | 407,305.45 |

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

**Appendix 3**

**HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**
**ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024**
**GENERAL FUND**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2024 | | | | 2023 | | | |
| Mar-31 | Expenditure during the year | | | Apr-01 | Balance brought forward | | 305,504.86 |
| | Precept | | 17,780.00 | 2024 | | | |
| | Rates, insurances, telephone | 829.71 | | Mar-31 | Rate income & Special levies | 215,261.64 | |
| | Fuel:- | 0.00 | | | less irrecoverables | 0.00 | 215,261.64 |
| | Drainworks | 55,106.50 | | | | | |
| | Administration charge, Audit fee, | | | | Interest on Deposit Accounts | | 9,894.75 |
| | printing, stationery, advertising etc | 21,500.20 | | | Consents and byelaws | | 200.00 |
| | Fees (Planning applications) | 7,299.97 | | | | | |
| | Joint Pumping Account- | | | | | | |
| | Payments due to Waldersey IDB | 93,807.27 | 178,543.65 | | By Joint pumping station replacement fund: | | |
| | | | | | Telemetry installation at South Brink p/s | | 0.00 |
| | Under provision in previous years - *Joint Pumping* | | 0.00 | | | | |
| | | | | | By Development Charges Account | | |
| | Loan charges - Principal | 50,578.09 | | | - Sleeving pipework | 0.00 | |
| | Interest | 24,050.21 | 74,628.30 | | - Storage area - point 29 (Hutchinsons) | 1,598.26 | |
| | | | | | - Gravity outfall pipe replacement | 0.00 | |
| | Improvement Works:- | | | | - Holly Bank culvert | 0.00 | 1,598.26 |
| | Attenuation pond point 29 | 1,598.26 | | | | | |
| | Culvert installation - Point 66 | 127,182.33 | | | By Public Works Loan Funding: | | |
| | Highways culverts under A47 | 201.00 | | | - Culvert point 66 | | 127182.33 |
| | District Wide Flood Alleviation Study | 11,704.75 | | | | | |
| | Health & Safety works | 824.14 | | | By Asset fund: | | |
| | | | 141,510.48 | | - Highway culverts - A47 | | 201.00 |
| | Balance carried forward | | 259,135.16 | | Grant-in-aid | | |
| | | | | | - District Wide Flood Alleviation Study | | 11,704.75 |
| | | | 671,597.59 | | | | 671,547.59 |

**BALANCE SHEET**
Capital Section

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Liabilities | | | Assets | | |
| Revaluation Reserve | -1,065,995.45 | | | | |
| Public Works Loan Board - | | | Joint Pumping Station Scheme | 239,500.00 | |
| Loan outstanding | 1,310,495.45 | 244,500.00 | Land at Point 29 (attenuation lagoon) | 5,000.00 | 244,500.00 |

Revenue Section

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| General Fund Account | | 259,135.16 | Ratepayers' Account - Arrears | | 4,693.77 |
| Capital Improvement scheme fund (Loan) | | 367,644.09 | Sundry Debtors Account | | 3,630.01 |
| Development Charges Account | | 31,940.51 | Value added Tax | | 6,869.19 |
| Joint Pumping Station Replacement Fund | | 184,069.79 | | | |
| Sundry Creditors | | 122,251.07 | Grant-in-aid | | 11,704.75 |
| Contributions Holding Account | | 69,134.23 | | | |
| Asset Replacement Fund | | 136,752.86 | Balance in hand - | | |
| Capital Realisation Account | | 54,976.73 | Barclays Current Account | 100,000.00 | |
| | | | Barclays Business premium Account | 93,707.12 | |
| | | | Barclays Treasury Deposit | 1,000,000.00 | |
| | | | National Savings Account | 5,299.60 | 1,199,006.72 |
| | | 1,470,404.44 | | | 1,470,404.44 |

**Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board**

**Treasurers Account 2023/2024**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st April 2023 | | | 31st March 2024 | |
| Balance brought forward | | 1,324,108.60 | Payments made during the year | 407,305.45 |
| 31st March 2024 | | | | |
| Receipts during the year | | | | |
| Clerk's collection account | 257,259.87 | | | |
| Interest on deposit accounts | 19,644.10 | 276,903.97 | | |
| Write back of old outstanding cheques | | 0.00 | | |
| | | | Balance carried forward | 1,193,707.12 |
| | | **1,601,012.57** | | **1,601,012.57** |

**National Savings - Treasurers Account 2023/2024**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st April 2023 | | 31st March 2024 | |
| Balance brought forward | 5,264.60 | Payments made during the year | 0.00 |
| 31st March 2024 | | | |
| Interest on deposit accounts | 35.00 | Balance carried forward | 5,299.60 |
| | **5,299.60** | | **5,299.60** |

**Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2024**

**Barclays Bank PLc**

Current Account

| | |
|---|---|
| Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2024 | 100,000.00 |
| Less unpresented cheques | 0.00 |
| Add outstanding lodgements | 0.00 |
| Balance per Trial Balance | **100,000.00** |

**Cash balances as at 31st March 2024**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Barclays Bank PLc** | |
| Current Account | **100,000.00** |
| Business Premium Account | **93,707.12** |
| Treasury Deposit | **1,000,000.00** |
| **National Savings** | |
| Investment Account per passbook | **5,299.60** |
| **Total reconciled cash balances per accounts** | **1,199,006.72** |

**Hundred of Wisbech IDB**
**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return**

**Financial year ended 31st March 2024**

| | | | | Per Annual Return |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Line 1** | **Balances brought forward** | | | |
| | General Fund | 305,504.86 | | |
| | Development charges account | 32,486.59 | | |
| | Pumping station replacement fund | 178,295.14 | | |
| | Asset replacement fund | 627,483.75 | | |
| | Contributions holding account | 67,648.52 | | |
| | Future works | 53,252.00 | | |
| | | | **1,264,670.86** | **1,264,671** |
| **Line 2** | **Rates and Special Levies** | | | |
| | Agricultural rates | 10,438.64 | | |
| | Special Levies | 204,823.00 | | |
| | Penalty | 0.00 | | |
| | Costs | 0.00 | | |
| | Write-off | 0.00 | | |
| | | | **215,261.64** | **215,262** |
| **Line 3** | **Total other receipts** | | | |
| | Interest | | | |
| | General fund | 9,894.75 | | |
| | Development charges account | 1,052.18 | | |
| | Joint pumping account | 5,774.65 | | |
| | Asset replacement fund | 4,296.53 | | |
| | Future works | 1,724.73 | | |
| | Consent applications | 200.00 | | |
| | Private works | 0.00 | | |
| | Discharge contributions | 1,485.71 | | |
| | Write Back of Provisions | 50.00 | | |
| | Sale of Assets | 0.00 | | |
| | Grant in Aid | 11,704.75 | | |
| | | | **36,183.30** | **36,183** |
| **Line 4** | **Staff costs** | | | |
| | Wages/salaries | 0.00 | | |
| | National insurance contributions | 0.00 | | |
| | Pension costs | 0.00 | | |
| | Travelling expenses | 0.00 | | |
| | | | **0.00** | **0** |
| **Line 5** | **Loan repayments** | | | |
| | PWLB - Principal | 50,578.09 | | |
| | PWLB - Interest | 24,050.21 | | |
| | | | **74,628.30** | **74,628** |

**Hundred of Wisbech IDB**

**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return**

**Financial year ended 31st March 2024**

| | | | | Per Annual Return |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Line 6 | **All other payments** | | | |
| | Precept | 17,780.00 | | |
| | Rates, insurances, telephones | 829.71 | | |
| | Repairs and renewals | 0.00 | | |
| | Fuel - Expenditure in year | 0.00 | | |
| | Drainworks | 55,106.50 | | |
| | Health & Safety | 0.00 | | |
| | Administration | 21,500.20 | | |
| | Costs for Sale of Depot | 0.00 | | |
| | Fees | 7,299.97 | | |
| | Development charges fees | 0.00 | | |
| | Write back of sales ledger balance | 0.00 | | |
| | Improvement works | 141,510.48 | | |
| | Joint pumping | 93,919.96 | | |
| | Under provision in previous year - Joint pumping | -112.69 | | |
| | | | **337,834.13** | **337,835** |
| Line 7 | **Balances carried forward** | | | |
| | General Fund | 259,135.16 | | |
| | Development charges account | 31,940.51 | | |
| | Pumping station replacement fund | 184,069.79 | | |
| | Asset replacement fund | 504,396.95 | | |
| | Contributions holding account | 69,134.23 | | |
| | Future works account | 54,976.73 | | |
| | | | **1,103,653.37** | **1,103,653** |

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 1,103,653.37

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

| | Year ending | | Notes and guidance |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 31 March 2023 £ | 31 March 2024 £ | *Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.* |
| 1. Balances brought forward | 1,264,110 | 1,264,671 | *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 | 215,434 | 215,262 | *Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.* |
| 3. (+) Total other receipts | 830 | 36,183 | *Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.* |
| 4. (-) Staff costs | 0 | 0 | *Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.* |
| 5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments | 74,628 | 74,628 | *Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).* |
| 6. (-) All other payments | 141,075 | 337,835 | *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 | 1,264,671 | 1,103,653 | *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 | 1,329,373 | 1,199,007 | *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 | 239,500 | 244,500 | *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 | 1,361,074 | 1,310,495 | *The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).* |

| For Local Councils Only | Yes | No | N/A | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) | | | | *The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.* |
| 11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) | | | | *The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.* |

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

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 21/05/2024

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Mr Hill referred to the comments concerning the 2023/2024 which were noted.

Mr Boden referred to the bank interest accrued during the year and that he did not consider it correct treatment to apportion this between separate funds, he considered that all interest should be applied to the general fund. In response Mr Hill reported that this has been the historic method of dealing with interest and the Board has never questioned this.

Mr Boden proposed and Mr Imafidon seconded a proposal that from 2024/2025 all interest received is allocated to the general fund. This was approved and resolved as Board policy.

Payments

The Board considered and approved the payments amounting to £407,305.45 which had been made during the financial year ending 31st March 2024.

NB: Mr Miscandlon declared an interest in payments made to Middle Level Commissioners (as a member of the Middle Level Board)
NB: Mr N Harrison declared an interest in payments made to Harrison Agricultural Contractor Ltd
NB: Mr N Buttress declared an interest in the payment to the District Officer
NB: Mr F Leach declared an interest in the payment to W Norman & Sons Ltd

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2023/2024

Mr Hill referred to the land at Point 29 which had been transferred to the board during the year and the valuation had been made at £5,000 following a review between the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, District Officer and RFO. Members approved the valuation as being reasonable for the area and land use.

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended 31st March 2024 as required in the Audit Regulations, and authorised the Chairman to complete and sign the Annual Return 2023/2024.

RESOLVED

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

B.2134 Finance – Looking Forward
Viz:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners | | **Item No:** | **12** |
| **Meeting:** | **HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD** | **Subject:** | **FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD** |
| **Date:** | **Monday 10th June 2024** | **Officer Responsible:** | **Robert Hill/Sam Ablett** |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the Finance Officer's summary
B. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
C. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency
D. Review & Approve Rating Estimates for 2024/2025
E. Consider & approve the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2024/2025

## Finance Officer's summary and key messages

For the rating estimates for 2024/2025 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known. Estimates for pumping costs are as problematical as last year in that we need to factor in an 'average' pumping year, taking-into-account the impact of climate change. Further, we will have a new electricity supply contract from October 2024 with no current indications of possible unit costs. The provision is therefore an estimate of pumping volumes at an estimate of possible new contract rates. Members should therefore consider if they think the provision is reasonable when setting the rate.

Estimates for drain maintenance works have been assessed at the previous years level with a full programme of works in place. The South Brink joint pumping station maintenance provisions includes for a full overhaul of the automatic weed-screen cleaning equipment (estimated and £25,000) and it is proposed that the Boards share of these costs are funded from the joint pumping station replacement fund. The Joint Flood Alleviation Study is now underway and these costs are fully grant aided.

In accordance with the principle approved at last years meeting that the Board should hold a year's expenditure in hand the budget proposal includes for the recovery of balances depleted during winter 2023/2024 pumping. It is proposed to recover balances to this level over a three-year period.

When considering the rate for 2024/2025 members should also consider likely future capital investment requirements which will be identified through the district wide flood alleviation study.

**1. Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions**

1.1 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 6.5%, from £915 to £975. The Board is also asked to consider and reaffirm its contribution estimated to be £150 towards the Board Member role representing local IDBs within Water Resources East (WRE).

**2. Precept to the Environment Agency**

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

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

2.3 The precept for 2022/2023 was £17,780.

**3. Estimates for 2024/25**

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

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

**4. Rate Requirements for 2024/25**

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

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

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

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

**Appendix 1**

**HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**
**BUDGET 2024/2025**

| | | Approved budget 2023/2024 £ | Actual 2023/2024 £ | Buget 2024/2025 £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rates, Insurances and telephones | 1,250 | 830 | 1,600 |
| 2 | Drainworks (incl District Officer's fee & expenses and Environmental measures | 81,500 | 55,107 [A] | 83,500 [B] |
| 3 | Joint Plant Maintenance (with Waldersey IDB) | 47,500 [C/D] | 93,807 [C/D] | 110,000 [C/D/E] |
| 4 | Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc | 22,075 | 21,500 | 23,250 |
| 5 | Planning Applications | 9,000 | 7,300 | 9,000 |
| 6 | Environment Agency Precept | 17,780 | 17,780 | 17,780 |
| 7 | Loan Charges | 74,628 | 74,628 | 74,628 |
| 8 | Reinstatement of balances Year *1 of 3* | 0 | 0 | 13,621 |
| 9 | Studies and Surveys | 25,000 | 11,705 | 250,000 |
| 10 | Improvement Works - (per programme) | 406,600 | 129,806 [F] | 26,000 [G] |
| | | 685,333 | 412,462 | 609,379 |
| | Improvement works - Funding | 425,600 [H] | 140,686 [H] | 270,000 [H] |
| | LESS Rents, Deposit Accounts interest etc | 31,471 [M] | 41,342 [M] | 4,916 |
| | General Fund - Use of balances | 13,000 [J] | 1,220 [K] | 16,250 [L] |
| | annual value - 3,119,734 | 215,262 | 229,214 | 318,213 |

| GENERAL FUND | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opening balance | 305,505 | 305,505 | 259,135 |
| rates raised (2023/24 6.90p) | 215,262 | 215,262 | 318,213 |
| net expenditure | 215,262 | 229,214 | 318,213 |
| Balances | -44,197 | -32,417 | 13,621 |
| Close balance | 261,308 | 259,135 | 272,756 |

**Remarks**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A - | Includes:- | |
| | Contractors charges | 31,475 |
| | Slubbing/culvert replace/drainworks | 5,025 |
| | Spoil disposal | 11,600 |
| | | 48,100 |
| B - | Includes provision for: | |
| | Contractors charges | 32,500 |
| | Proposed slubbing programme (year 3/5) | 25,000 |
| | additional work/Fuel changeover/surcharge | 14,000 |
| | Spoil disposal | 6,000 |
| | | 77,500 |
| C - | Provision based on new calculation | |
| D - | Includes for new electricty contract - | |
| E - | Includes for weedscreen cleaner overhaul (gross £25k) | |
| F - | Open ditch lining - point 66 (Scout hut) | 127,183 |
| | Storage area - point 29 (Hutchinsons) | 1,598 |
| | Health & Safety improvements | 824 |
| | A47 culverts | 201 |
| | | 129,806 |
| G - | Channel improvement works - 87-14 | 20,000 |
| | Health & Safety improvements (structures) | 6,000 |
| H - | Funding (Improvement programme) | |
| J,K,L | Includes - use of funds - | |
| J - | provision towards slubbing programme | 10,000 |
| J - | Provision towards H & S improvements | 3,000 |
| K - | provision towards new slubbing programme | 808 |
| K - | Provision towards H & S improvements | 412 |
| L - | Use of pumping station replacement fund - | 0 |
| | South Brink p/s w/s/c overhaul | 16,250 |
| M - | use of general fund balances-(rate subsidy) | 31,197 |

**Appendix 2**

Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

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

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 4.85%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levies issued to:-

Fenland District Council – 94.60%
Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk – 0.55%
95.15%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £1,513.

In 2024/2025 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £31,120.

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Revenue balance in hand on 31st March 2024 - £259,135

The estimated net expenditure of £318,213 in 2024/2025 is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 10.20p

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £301,017 and

c) a Special levy on Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk of £1,765

In 2023/2024 a rate of 6.90p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £203,629 on Fenland District Council and £1,194 on Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

May 2024

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board considered & approved the key finance messages of Mr Hill.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

i) ADA subscription

Approve continued membership of ADA with payment of £975 to be paid.

ii) Water Resources East

Approved to reaffirm its contribution of £150 to WRE

iii) District Officer's Fee

For the District Officer to continue submitting invoices for hours worked.

iv) Precept

That there was no increase for the Precept for the Anglian Region (Northern) RFCC's Area.

v) Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2024/25

Mr Boden reported that as Fenland District Council were responsible for funding approx. 95% of the Bords expenditure, he considered that there should be better consultation ahead of the rate setting process.

He reported on a planning meeting with the Middle Level Chief Executive at which he would start discussions as to how this can be achieved.

Mr Boden referred to the previous decision concerning the allocation of bank interest and estimated that a further £20,000 could hopefully be achieved during 2024/2025. He referred to the government announcement of the £75m Storm Recovery Fund which he accepted quite rightly had not been taken into account when drafting the budget proposal.

Mr Hill reported on the current position concerning the submission of claims and that there was no indication of what might be payable to each Board.

Mr Boden considered that although there was no indication of how the Storm Recovery Fund may be distributed, the board should not look to replace general fund balances this year but to fully review next year.

Mr F Leach was not confident that the Board might receive all or any funding and that it would be prudent for the Board to start reinstating balances as had been proposed.

It was proposed by Mr Boden & seconded by Mr Miscandlon that the figure of £13,621 towards the reinstatement of balances should be removed from the rating estimates for the financial year 2024/2025 and for the balances to be fully reviewed at next year's rate setting meeting with the agreement that the boards general fund balance should be retained at a minimum of one year's expenditure.

There were no amendments or counter proposals made.

On a vote there were 10 members in favour of the proposals and 0 members against. The remainder of members at the meeting abstained from the vote.

The Board considered and approved estimates of expenditure and proposals for Special levy and Drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2024/2025 and were informed by Mr Hill that under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by Drainage rates on Agriculture hereditaments and by Special levy on Local Billing Authorities would be respectively 4.85% and 95.15%

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £284,581 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 £13,800 and £270,781 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 9.122p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District

v) a) That a Special levy of £269,203 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

b) That a Special levy of £1,578 be made and issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.2135 Date of next meeting

Mr Hill confirmed that the date of the next meeting had been set for Thursday 14th November 2024 at 2pm at the Middle Level Offices.

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Chairman

………………………..
Date