

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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19th May 2025

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board Wednesday 28th May 2025

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Commissioners to be hosted at the Lamb & Flag, Welney PE14 9RB at 10.00am on Wednesday 28th May 2025, for the Inspection, then meeting followed by lunch.

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

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

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

Yours truly

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Board

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

Wednesday 28th May 2025 – 10am

Lamb & Flag, Welney PE14 9RB

Agenda:

Item No	Topic	Format	Lead
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 3 - 13	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership - Attendance - Vacancies & appointments - Composition and amalgamations - Training	Pages 14 - 16	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 17 - 18	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	Pages 19 - 26	Clerk
7	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Pages 27 - 36	Clerk or Engineer
8	Health & Safety	Pages 37 - 40	Chair
9	District Officer's Report	Pages 41 - 43	DO
10	Governance - Banking - Risk Management Assessment/Strategy - Review Policy Statement - Review of internal controls - Exercise of Public Rights - Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments - IDB1 - Annual Governance Statement	Pages 44 - 45 Pages 46 - 52 Pages 53 - 63 Page 64	Clerk
11	Finance Report: looking back - Finance officer's review - Budgeting - Payments 2023/2024 - Highland Water Contributions - Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2023/2024	Pages 65 - 66 Page 67 Pages 68 - 70 Pages 71 - 75	Clerk
12	Finance Report: looking forward - Finance Officer's summary - Fees, remuneration and subscriptions - Precept to the Environment Agency	Pages 76	Clerk
13	Middle Level IDB Changes	Pages 77 - 79	Clerk
14	Date of Next Meeting	Verbal	Chair
15	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

(NB: If required for any agenda item:

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

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

**At a Meeting of the Manea & Welney District Commissioners
held at the Lamb & Flag, Welney on Wednesday 22nd January 2025.**

PRESENT

J Heading (Chairman)	P Hawes
R Sears (Vice-Chair)	S Imafidon (FDC)
C Barnes	M Heading
N Cook	C Marks (FDC)
C Crofts (BCKLWN)	C Sears
M Fairey	V Walker
R Gladwin	

Mr Robert Hill representing the Clerk and Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners) were in attendance.

Welcome

The Chairman thanked members for attending today's meeting and welcomed Mrs Ruth Martin, who was attending today's meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Carney, J H Hawes & A J Morris.

C.1037 Declarations of Interest

Mr R Hill reminded Commissioners of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any Commissioner.

The Chairman, Cllr C Crofts and M Heading declared interests (as members of the Middle Level Board) in the payments made to and any matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners.

Cllr C Crofts, R Gladwin and Cllr C Marks declared interests (as members of Upwell IDB) in any matters concerning Upwell IDB.

Cllr C Marks declared an interest (as a member of the planning committee of Fenland District Council) in any planning matters concerning Fenland District Council.

C.1038 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 13th June 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.1039 Constitution & Membership

The Commissioners considered the report.

a) Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That J E Heading be appointed Chairman of the Commissioners

b) Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED

That R M C Sears be appointed Vice-Chair of the Commissioners

c) Appointment of Finance Committee

RESOLVED

That the Finance Committee be constituted as follows:

Cllr C Crofts, M D R Fairey, R D Gladwin, J E Heading, Cllr C Marks, Ms A Morris & R M C Sears.

Composition & Amalgamations

The Chairman referred to the future governance of drainage boards within the Middle Level and reminded members of previous discussions between Manea & Welney DDC, Sutton & Mepal and Upwell IDB concerning possible amalgamation. He considered this option would be best for the three authorities as they had a common discharge into in the Old Bedford River. He referred to Upwell IDB which had catchments which discharges into Old Bedford River and others which discharged into the Middle Level system.

Mr R Sears referred to previous discussions between these boards, which initially looked at possible cost savings and closer working practises.

Mr S Imifadon asked if any possible amalgamations would align with possible future local authority re-organisation.

Mr R Gladwin reminded members that amalgamations were not a quick process.

In response to Mr Fairey, Mr Hill outlined the current position with regards to differential rating.

Mr M Heading referred to the current position concerning possible amalgamations and considered the boards which discharged into the Old Bedford River were strong and well represented. He considered Defra would not be looking for a lot of individual amalgamations and that it would be beneficial for amalgamations to be developed together.

The Chairman considered that the Manea & Welney Commissioners needed to look to take opportunities when they arise and should look to progress matters in the immediate future. He considered the three boards were very similar in that they all have staff, machinery and use the Middle Level services.

RESOLVED

The Chairman be authorised to meet with the Chairmen of Sutton & Mepal IDB and Upwell IDB to discuss amalgamation and closer/shared working practises.

Training

The Commissioners were reminded to view the Good Governance videos if they have not already done so and asked to advise the Clerk once completed.

RESOLVED

That Middle Level to re-circulate the links to the ADA training videos to all members.

C.1040 Clerk's Report

The Commissioners considered and approved the report and its content.

MLC Services to IDB's

The Chairman referred to changes within the Middle Level Service provision and that notice had been given to those boards outside the Middle Level concerning future services. He referred to both the Manea & Welney and Sutton & Mepal service provision being continued while there was possible water management connectivity with the Middle Level system and possible amalgamation with the other boards that discharged to the Old Bedford River.

Mr Hil referred to the Clerk carrying out a review of the clerkship services to develop a service catalogue and associated fee structure. This would clearly define what services were included and if other services beyond the standard service level would need to be paid as additional charges.

The Chairman referred to the Fens 2100 programme and implications for the area and encouraged all members to take an interest as this would develop a fens-wide flood resilience investment strategy for the next 20 – 25 years management of flood risk.

RESOLVED

The Commissioners support proposals for charging for planning and consenting.

Fens Reservoir

The Chairman referred to the increase in cost estimate and the wide range of interest which the reservoir would affect.

Members discussed the need for timely response and acknowledged the delegation of decision making was a necessity. Mr V Walker considered that delegation of decision would require proper consultation and engagement with boards. Mrs R Martin referred to the process and engagement required prior to the consent order being put forward.

NB: Messers J & M Heading declared an interest in this item.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Commissioners act as one with the Middle Level Commissioners and other impacted IDBs. Therefore, the Middle Level Commissioners staff, consultants and legal service provider are authorised to act on behalf of and represent the Board.
- ii) That the Commissioners acknowledge that the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Board and delegate the decision making on this to the Clerk, engaging with the Chairman/Vice Chairman as he sees fit.

C.1041 Environment Officers' Report

Mr Hill reported that there was no report available for the Ecology department at this time as time had been devoted to developing a service catalogue to ensure boards achieve minimum statutory environment compliance. He reported that this equates to 6 ¼ days with an estimated cost of £2,000 - £2,500 per annum and that these service provisions and charges would be put in place from 2025/2026.

C.1042 Consulting Engineers' Reports

The Commissioners considered the reports of the Consulting Engineers.

The Chairman referred to delays concerning the promotion of a scheme for the electrification of two pumping units at Glenhouse pumping station and that he had requested the Clerk put forward a scheme for Storm Recovery T2b grant funding for solar panels and battery storage at Glenhouse pumping station (old building).

The Chairman referred to the discussions earlier at the finance committee concerning Manea Town Lots WRC and that it was their view that the Commissioners needed to object to proposed development until such time that the WRC had been upgraded. Concerning this, they also supported the development of standing advice notes for the district.

Capital Programme

Mr Hill reported that the Capital Programme submitted by the Engineer was still being developed and would be directed by the engineer success in developing business cases for grant-in-aid applications and Storm Recovery grant bids.

RESOLVED

- i) That the report be approved
- ii) That the Commissioners support the approach to introduce interim charges for responding to applicant's questions.
- iii) That the Commissioners approve to create, adopt and issue standing advice notes for its district and that the Chairman liaise with the consulting engineer accordingly.
- iv) The Commissioners approve for the submission of Storm Recovery grant T2b for:
 - a) The electrification of pumping units at Glenhouse pumping station
 - b) The installation of solar panels and battery storage to the old pumping house building at Glenhouse pumping station
- v) The Commissioners approve the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement.
- vi) That the Capital programme be approved in principal and that the engineer continues to develop the programme alongside applications for grant-in-aid and Storm Recovery Grant bids.

C.1043 Health & Safety

The Chairman referred to the Health & Safety inspections carried out by Cope Safety Management and that any matters raised have been addressed. He reported that the District Superintendent used 'What3Words' app and had arrangements in place concerning his lone working.

C.1044 District Superintendent's report

The Chairman referred to the district Superintendents report and confirmed that he had regular meetings with the superintendent and that he had total confidence in him and that his work was of a very high standard and was very much appreciated.

Cllr Crofts considered the District Superintendents report to be the most comprehensive he sees from the drainage boards he sits on, and the District Superintendent should be thanked for both the quality of his work in the district and also his reports.

Maintenance

The Chairman reported that the Commissioners policy to attend to as much of the district system as possible had been followed this year and he considered the system was in good order and the policy provided benefit. It allowed the system to deal with successive rainfall events if required. He confirmed that it was again intended to continue with the policy of regular light maintenance across the district to maintain the system to allow water to be evacuated quickly.

He asked that if any member had concerns on any section of the district system, they should contact him.

Vehicle

The Chairman referred to the District Superintendents vehicle and the recommendation of the finance committee that the replacement is deferred until next year.

Private Works

The Chairman referred to the increase in channel maintenance works during the year which was due to the replacement of culverts and referred to the earlier discussions of the finance committee concerning culverts and private works being carried out by the District Superintendent.

RESOLVED

- i) That the District superintendents report and actions therein be approved.
- ii) That the Chairman thank the Superintendent for the quality of his report and his service over the preceding year.
- iii) That the Commissioners continue with their annual maintenance policy for 2025/2026.
- iv) That the replacement of the Superintendents vehicle be deferred until next year and that the chairman obtains quotations for its replacement in order for the finance committee to make a recommendation at next year's meeting.
- v) That the Commissioners charge £32 per hours for any private works carried out by the District Superintendent.

C.1045 Governance

a) Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2023/2024

- i) The Commissioners considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year that ended on the 31st March 2024
- ii) The Commissioners considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year that ended on the 31st March 2024

b) Review of Internal Controls

Mr Hill reported that there had been no changes to the internal controls in place and that these are now set out in a summary document on the website. He further reported that these controls were generally financial, and it was proposed to look at formalising 'controls' for the internal management process of the boards.

RESOLVED

The Commissioners considered that they are satisfied with the current system of internal controls.

c) Risk Management Assessment & Insured Values

The Commissioners gave consideration to their current Risk Management policy and the Chairman referred to the discussions of the finance committee concerning this. He further referred to the discussions of the finance committee concerning the valuation of the pumping stations and the recommendation of the finance committee concerning this matter.

RESOLVED

- i) That individual valuations are carried out at the Commissioners two main pumping stations.
- ii) The Commissioners considered and approved the Commissioners' Risk Management Strategy.

d) Authorisations

The Board considered the review of authorisations.

RESOLVED

- i) The Board considered and authorised that all employees and contractors of the Middle Level Commissioners are considered as duly authorised officers and are therefore able to use the Boards powers and IDB byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.
- ii) The Board confirmed their stance that their Chairman, Vice-Chair and District Officers, Pump Attendants and employees are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Boards powers and IDB byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

e) Responsible Finance Officer

RESOLVED

The Board considered and approved the recommendations that:

- i) That the role of the position of Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners is to include the appointment as Responsible Financial Officer to the Commissioners.
- ii) That the person appointed as Head of Finance for the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Commissioners.
- iii) That the Chairman and Vice-Chair be approved to be added to the Barclays Bank Plc mandate.
- iv) That the person appointed as clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and be authorised to sign cheques and to authorise payments on behalf of the Commissioners.
- v) That the person appointed as Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners will be appointed as the administrator on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Middle Level Commissioners.
- vi) That following Mr Robert Hill leaving the employment of the Middle Level Commissioners that the Head of Finance of the Middle Level Commissioners be delegated the authority to appoint a member of the finance team to be an additional administrator on the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Commissioners.

f) Policy Reviews & DPO

The Board considered the review of the policies and the role of Data Protection Officer

RESOLVED

- i) The Board considered and approved the policy reviews for the Complaints Procedure, Privacy policy, Anti-Bribery policy and financial regulations policy.
- ii) That the Board approve that while there is a service level agreement for provision of clerking services in place between the Board and the Middle Level Commissioners, the Middle Level Commissioner's Lead Clerk acts as their Data Protection Officer.

g) 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.

h) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Mr Hill reported that as part of the Annual Governance review the Commissioners 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/Commissioners that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

C.1046 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Commissioners considered & noted the key finance messages of the Responsible Finance Officer.

Budget monitoring

The Commissioners considered and approved the budget comparison of the forecast to the budget for the financial year ending 31st March 2024

Payments 2024

The Commissioners considered and approved the Payments amounting to £213,559.05 between 1st April – 30th November 2024

(NB: The Chairman, Cllr Crofts & Mr M Heading all declared an interest in the payments made to MLC (as members of the MLC Board))

C.1047 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Commissioners considered & noted the key finance messages of the Responsible Finance Officer.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions :

i) ADA subscription

Mr Hill reported that ADA increased subscriptions by 6.5% for 2025, from £724 to £772.

RESOLVED

That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 be paid.

ii) Water Resources East

Mr Hill reported that there would now not be an ADA appointment sitting on the WRE board and it was the recommendation of ADA that no payments should be made.

The Chairman expressed disappointment with this position and considered it important for drainage boards to have representation at this time.

RESOLVED

That no contribution be paid for 2025 and that the Chairman be authorised to discuss the matter further with relevant parties.

iii) District Superintendent's Fee

The Commissioners gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2025-2026.

The Chairman reported that the District Superintendent enjoys his work and that he considers he does an excellent job. He reminded members that his wages had previously been increased to a level commensurate with his experience and responsibilities and that subsequent increases would be inflationary only.

He further reported that the Commissioners had previously agreed to match the pension contributions of the District Superintendent up to a maximum of 10% and confirmed that the current contributions were:

Employee	14%	Employer	10%.
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The Chairman reported that he had not yet discussed the matter with the District Superintendent and that it was the recommendation of the finance committee that he be authorised to review a pay award with the District Superintendent during March.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman be authorised to discuss a pay award with the District Superintendent and to make any arrangements concerning the pay of the superintendent as he considers appropriate.
- ii) That the Commissioners pensions contributions remain unchanged.

iv) Highland Water Contributions & Precept

When completing the budget proposal claims were estimated against the likely out-turn for 2023/2024 and the budgeted expenditure for 2024/2025. The winter storm events gave claims significantly in excess of

previous claims but following an understanding that the Environment Agency were able to switch funding within their revenue/capital programmes the full estimated claims were included in the rating proposals. The highland water claim included within the rating estimates was £912. Following an earlier Government announcement, details were eventually released concerning the Storm Recovery Grant and a claim for excess pumping costs for the first tranche (T1) was submitted in the sum of £40,310.

The highland water claims totalling £2,248.77 were submitted based on actual out-turn. Against this adjustments for the Storm recovery elements of £837.50 were made, leaving a net claim of £1,411.27. He further reported that notification has been received from the Environment Agency that they will not be able to meet all payments in full for this year and the payment will be £1,172.54. a shortfall in year of £238.73 against the claims.

Further, early indications are that for 2025/2026 Highland Water claims will be capped at around £650.00.

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.

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2025.

The precept for 2024 was £81,480.24

The Board were advised that it would be possible to appeal against the shortfall in Highland Water claim payments alongside the increase in the IDB Precept.

RESOLVED

- i) The Commissioners agrees to delegate the decision to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman on whether to appeal under S57(4) of the Land Drainage Act any reduced or non-payment of its Highland Water Claims. The Board supports the packaging any such appeal with similar appeals from MLC administered IDBs and potentially IDBs from the wider Gt Ouse catchment. Any appeal must be lodged within 6-weeks of formal notification.
- ii) The Commissioners agreed to delegate the decision on whether to appeal the IDB Precept (under s40 of the Water Resources Act) to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman. Any appeal must be lodged withing 6-weeks of formal notification.

v) Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes.

The Commissioners considered the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

- i) That the determination recommended be adopted by the Commissioners
- ii) That the Clerk be empowered to serve notices and to take such other action as may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements.
- iii) That the Chairman and the Clerk be empowered to authorise appropriate action on behalf of the Commissioners in connection with any appeal against the determination.

vi) Rate Arrears

The Commissioners considered the writing-off rate arrears of £188.00

RESOLVED

That the rate arrears amounting to £188.00 be written off.

vii) Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2025/26.

The Chairman referred to the discussions of the finance committee who considered reasonable allowances had been included and had approved the estimated net expenditure for 2025/2026.

He reported that after reviewing the estimate and rate requirement in detail it was the recommendation of the finance committee that the rate for 2025/2026 should be set at 54.0p.

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2025/2026 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 agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 71.40 % and 28.6 %.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £258,238 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 £184,296 and £73,942 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 54.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
(Area 2 = 75% of the main area rate)
- v) That a Special Levies of £47,258 & £26,684 be made and issued to the Fenland District Council and Borough Council for Kings Lynn & West Norfolk respectively for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Commissioners be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levy/levies 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.

C.1048 Date of next Meeting

The Chairman reported that the finance committee had suggested area to look at on the district inspection and that he would need to liaise with other parties to ensure relevant staff and access was available.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman be authorised to liaise with relevant parties to arrange an inspection for the summer meeting.
- ii) When a suitable date has been agreed the Chairman will inform the clerk who would send notification to all members.

C.1049 Any Other Business

Mr John Heading reported that Mr Robert Hill would be leaving his employment with the Middle Level Commissioners at the end of January 2025. He expressed his and the Commissioners appreciations for all his help and support over the years and wished him all the very best for the future.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DDC	Subject:	CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP
Date:	Wednesday 28 th May 2025	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
- D. To consider previous discussions of amalgamation – SM, MWe & Up.
- E. Reinforce the need for members to view all five ‘Good Governance’ videos.
- F. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.

1. Current status

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

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	14	N/A		5
Actual	12	3 FDC, 1 KLWN	16	
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	Christopher Barnes	Ratepayer	
2	Neil Cook	Co-opted member to vacancy - ratepayer	Oddfellows rep
3	Michael Fairey	Nominee of Ratepayer (M Crouch)	
4	Roger Gladwin	Ratepayer	
5	James Hawes	Nominee of Ratepayer (Westfield Farms)	
6	Peter Hawes	Ratepayer	
7	John Heading	Ratepayer	Chairman
8	Marc Heading	Ratepayer	
9	Alison Morris	Ratepayer	
10	Charles Sears	Ratepayer	
11	Robert Sears	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
12	Verden Walker	Nominee of ratepayer (M Crouch)	
13			
14			

- 1.3 The table below details the current appointed members of the Board.
- 1.4 Special levy paying District Councils appoint members to Boards and their role is to be part of the Board representing all the non-agricultural interests within the Board’s district. The Council must consider appointing members who have relevant knowledge or experience that is relevant to the Board and its district.
- 1.5 Appointed members do not need to be councillors or employees of the Council, therefore can represent wider relevant interests within the district, eg major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	James Carney	(FDC)	Councillor
2	Christopher Crofts	(BCKLWN)	Councillor
3	Sidney Imafidon	(FDC)	Councillor
4	Charlie Marks	(FDC)	Councillor

- 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	22/1/2025	13/6/2024	10/1/2024	8/6/2023
1	Christopher Barnes	Present	Apologies	Present	apologies
2	Neil Cook	Present	Present	Present	attended
3	Michael Fairey	Present	Present	Present	attended
4	Roger Gladwin	Present	Present	Present	apologies
5	James Hawes	Apologies	Apologies	Present	attended
6	Peter Hawes	Present	Present	Apologies	attended
7	John Heading	Present	Present	Present	attended
8	Marc Heading	Present	Apologies	Present	attended
9	Alison Morris	Apologies	Present	Present	attended
10	Charles Sears	Present	Present	Apologies	apologies
11	Robert Sears	Present	Present	Present	attended
12	Verden Walker	Present	Apologies	Present	apologies
13					
14					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022
1	John Heading	Present	apologies	attended	

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	22/1/2025	13/6/2024	10/1/2024	8/6/2023
1	James Carney (FDC)	Apologies	Apologies	Present	
2	Christopher Crofts (BCKLWN)	Present	Present	Present	attended
3	Sidney Imafidon (FDC)	Present	Present	Apologies	
4	Charlie Marks (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	attended

3. Vacancies & appointments

- 3.1 Appointment of Chairman – (Present Chairman – John Heading)
- 3.2 Appointment of Vice-Chair – (Present Vice-Chair – Robert Sears)
- 3.3 To appoint the Finance Committee – (Present Committee – Cllr C Crofts, R Gladwin, J Heading, Ms A Morris, R Sears)
- 3.4 There are currently 2 vacancies.

4. Composition and amalgamations

- 4.1 The Board is encouraged to continually monitor and review its membership, financial and climate resilience, along with assessing its influence locally, regionally and nationally. These are all factors that may lead the Board to consider changing its composition and/or amalgamation with (an)other Board(s).
- 4.2 Amalgamations and composition changes are not swift processes and can take a number of years. They require planning and additional/specialist resourcing by the MLC as your clerk, Environment Agency and Defra. Therefore, the Board is encouraged to think ahead five to ten years in its decision making, thinking about the next generation.
- 4.3 The Chair to report on previous discussions regarding a possible amalgamation between – SM, MWe & Up.

5. Training

- 5.1 All Members are asked to digest the Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Boards published by the Association of Drainage Authorities and view the five accompanying videos intended to bring the guide to life. They are available via <https://middlelevel.gov.uk/about/idb-governance/>
- 5.2 To date 1 of 16 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 4 of 16 Board Members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 videos.
To date 1 of 16 Board Members has reported viewing 3 of the 5 videos.
- 5.3 Members are asked to identify any topics areas they would value further training on as well as any site inspections that would help them undertake their role on the Board more effectively.
- 5.4 Member training is reported to Defra as part of the annual IDB1 return.

Author Name: Polly Tombleson

Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	CLERK'S REPORT
Date:	Wednesday 28 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Paul Burrows

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.

1. Charging for Planning & Consenting

As previously reported, we have for a long time been reactive and had insufficient resources to cater for the amount and range of planning and consenting workload for the Commissioners and IDBs with an inability to step back and identify and implement improvements. Our reputation has suffered, and we receive regular complaints.

With new leadership capacity and capability within Technical Services, we are now in a healthier position to identify and drive improvements. A key foundation of improvement is a review and implementation of our charging approach for developers and consent applicants. We have identified that we are significantly out of sync with neighbours and have likely been missing out on substantial income over many years. This is income that could in part be reinvested into developing our capacity and capability to improve our service, as well as contributing to asset improvement budgets.

The Board is asked to support the need to review our charging model to maximise income. The new model will be implemented from the 1st April 2025. This will be reviewed annually, and the Clerk invites feedback.

2. Highland Water & IDB Precept.

A formal appeal to the Minister under Section 57 (4) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 was thankfully narrowly avoided in 2024/25 given that the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) agreed a one-off approach to covering the shortfall in the Environment Agency's budget to ensure highland water claims (HWC) to local IDBs were met.

In addition, the Environment Agency's HWC budget for 2025/26 was increased from that which was indicatively allocated. Had the indicative allocation stood, the forecast budget shortfall would have essentially resulted in the Environment Agency imposing an active withdrawal of management of a number of districts and the Middle Level catchment without any underpinning consultation with those affected, impact assessment, any clear policy position or procedure.

However, without a programme of reform and mitigations, we will potentially be in an appeal situation at some not too distant point in the future. The time that would have been spent drafting and lodging an appeal has been used more constructively to develop 'The Highland Water Conundrum' document. This has been submitted to the Minister, Defra, the Environment Agency and our Local Authorities.

There are a range of measures that are outside of the control or influence of ourselves and IDBs that would make a positive difference. I have identified these as recommendations within the document. Many of these recommendations are for the Environment Agency to consider and implement as

appropriate. I would be happy to discuss further and contribute directly to any reviews that take account of this matter.

We feel that it is unfair that HWC payments are under threat without mitigations being available that provide us and IDBs with a greater degree of control, influence and/or choice. We and IDBs have no choice but to receive and manage water that flows into our/their districts from highland areas. We/they are providing a public service to beneficiaries within (and of) highland areas and we/they have no choice to not provide this service.

The 'Highland Water Conundrum' document is available to Middle Level Board Members and Commissioners upon request.

3. Insurance

Our insurance has been arranged using Towergate insurance brokers for the year to 31st March 2025. AXA offered a 2-year extension of the tripartite agreement we had previously signed and this was accepted as they offered to keep our business combined policy premium at the same rate for 2025-2026, subject to there not being any changes to the existing cover, i.e. increase in valuations.

Covering MLC and our administered IDBs, the business combined policy premium has increased this year by £16,875, due to the significant increase in pumping station valuations following the meetings last year. The fleet policy premium has also increased considerably due to the both the number and size of claims during the year, together with there being additional vehicles and plant. We have been warned that AXA capped the increase in the fleet premium, but if this had gone out to tender would probably have been in the region of £110,000 plus 12% Insurance Premium Tax. This equates to an increase of £68,000.

More concerningly, AXA will no longer be offering a specific policy for IDBs going forward so this is likely to have a significant impact on the premium for 2026-2027 as there are only a few insurance companies that will quote for our business. NFU have declined to quote.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DDC	Subject:	ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT
Date:	Wednesday 28 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Sofi Lloyd

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Note the updated Environmental Services Package will take effect from April 2025.
- B. Be informed that an environmental review and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) update meeting has taken place and the new Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and policies are being drawn up for acceptance. Please make interim provision for the new BAP to be reviewed, agreed and adopted prior to the next Board meeting.
- C. Note that the new Hedgerow Regulations 2024 prohibits the cutting of any hedge growing on agricultural land between the 1st March - 31st August inclusive.
- D. Please contact the ecology team ASAP to book a survey of any trees that require felling or trimming this year as this is the best time of year to survey for bats.
- E. Be reminded that any non-routine maintenance including bank slip repairs or reprofiling, culvert installation or replacements, tree felling, established scrub removal and channel de-watering require environmental screening well ahead of the planned works, to ensure works are compliant, using the request form available on the MLC website: [Conservation – Middle Level](#)
- F. Be aware that you will require licenced supervision of certain works that take place around badger setts, which MLC can provide.
- G. Note that a Board Representative will be required to attend a biodiversity training day in 2025. Those who have some control over the works undertaken within the district is best placed to attend.
- H. A reminder that the Board has a culverting policy and a presumption against culverting unless no other feasible option is available: [Standing Advice – Middle Level](#).
- I. Report bank slips that require remedial works as soon as they occur or are noticed.
- J. Review the water vole myth busting summary attached as an Appendix to the Board Report.

1) Environmental Services Package Update

Further to the update and discussion at the Middle Level IDB Chairs meeting in December 2024, you will have seen and heard us over the previous 12 months, setting out our plans and reasoning for focussing, updating and re-defining the range of services that we provide to IDBs across and beyond the Middle Level. This will take time and the ambition is to have a catalogue defined and ready to implement on 1st April 2026.

However, within all our service provision it is ecological and environmental compliance that carries greatest risk to Boards, Board Members, Board employees, the Middle Level Commissioners and their staff. A step-change in service is overdue and we have been building towards this over the last two-years as reflected in the 2024/25 fee adjustment. Therefore, we plan to launch the new Environmental Services Package in 2025/26, as this will help IDBs to begin to significantly improve and evidence their environment compliance and delivery straight away. This also ensures that the Middle Level Commissioners are not under-writing other IDBs environmental responsibilities.

Background

Historically, IDBs have made a small contribution towards the MLC Environment Officers' salary to access ecological and environmental advice and guidance if required, in a mostly re-active manner. There has been little definition around what services have been included.

However, protecting and improving biodiversity and the environment are higher than ever on the political agenda, and the Government is looking for strong and proactive environmental delivery from Public Bodies

to contribute towards their own challenging statutory environmental targets. As such, legislation and scrutiny has strengthened significantly around how IDBs deliver their statutory environmental duties. This is demonstrated by the recent changes to the information Defra requests via the IDB1 report.

Also, the general public is nowadays much better informed and aware of the state of nature and have more confidence in challenging IDBs about their environmental delivery and compliance. For these reasons, it is more important than ever for IDBs to be able to evidence how they have considered the environment when determining their approaches to flood risk and water level management.

Inevitably, this has meant that IDBs now require greater support to meet and evidence their statutory environmental duties. There has also been a growth in demand for suitably capable and qualified ecologists and the market hasn't kept pace with the demand, therefore salaries have increased similarly to other in-demand professional services. This also reflects that these days ecologists also take personal liability, thus if something goes wrong on their watch then, notwithstanding the responsibility and prosecution risk for IDB Board members, they can also be 'struck-off', a bit like doctors. They therefore need to be reassured about who they are working for and the associated commitment to compliance of the organisation.

Going forward

As outlined at the Chairs meeting in December 2024, we have developed an Environmental Service Package that aims to support IDBs to achieve minimum statutory environmental compliance. The details of the new package are set out below:

Environmental Services Package

Ref:	Category:	Details:	Days Equivalent:
1.	General Consultancy <i>(inc. retained service)</i>	Up to 2 days general consultancy which can be used for: • Screening and assessment of non-routine works using the ESR (Environmental Screening Report) process. • Preliminary habitat and species surveys & reporting* • Ad-hoc advice and guidance. • Initial advice & communications for pollution incidents • INNS identification and advice. • Biodiversity Action Plan BAP ditch survey & reporting**	2
2.	Environmental Compliance Health Checking	• One environmental review with MLC Env. & Ecol. staff per year & subsequent reporting. • Review must include budget setting & expenditure recording for reporting to Defra (IDB1). • Review & assessment of proposed annual programme of works prior to Board approval. • BAP report & review for Board.	1.25
3.	Planning Ecology Services	• Up to 1 day for consent applications advice & guidance^ • Over 1 day will be charged on a time and materials basis. This includes responses to Local Plans and Strategies on the IDBs behalf.	1
4.	Keeping up-to-date	• Communication of relevant updates in policy, legislation, regulation and best practice.	1
5.	Training	• Attendance for up to 2 candidates at 1 environmental training day per year.	1
Total:			6.25

	days p.a.
Cost (2025/26)	£2,375
Notes: *Any surveys or mitigations that follow on from preliminary surveys, including licenced work such as water vole displacement, will be charged on a time and materials basis or can be contracted out if MLC staff are fully booked. ** Any unused consultancy balance can be used to cover the recommended annual 1-day BAP ditch survey, with any shortfall charged separately. If any pre-works surveys (ESRs) are undertaken in the year, they will be extended so that they count as the BAP ditch survey for efficiency. ^ For activity not rechargeable to developers/consent applicants. Unused category balances can be used to cover shortfalls in other categories within the financial year as mutually agreed. Unused balances cannot be carried forward outside the financial year but its use can be discussed with MLC with potential for it to be used to contribute towards assisting the IDB to progress a BAP objective instead if capacity allows. For IDBs who also contract operational services from MLC (via Morgan Lakey, Operations Manager), there will be a 16% reduction in fees, reflective of the efficiency gained from being able to integrate your environmental compliance procedures into our operational processes and communicate freely with your other service providers, taking the annual charge down to £1995 (2025/26).	

We are confident that the above service provision will deliver the range of support that is most frequently requested and required by IDBs and reflects what is necessary to achieve and demonstrate minimum environmental compliance.

However, the minimum service package is not exhaustive and is not all-inclusive, therefore additional ad-hoc consultancy, charged on a time and materials basis will still be available if needed and where MLC staff capacity allows. This could include:

- Supervision of Licenced CL27 drainage operations over a badger sett
- Licenced protected species activities including water vole displacements and badger sett disturbance / closures etc.
- Habitat creation or enhancement consultancy and habitat condition assessments
- Invasive species control

Where we have insufficient capacity to deliver additional consultancy, we will be able to advise on your selection of third-party supplier and provide them with advice, however the IDB would take on the client role and be the organisation commissioning the supplier, overseeing their delivery and performance.

Benefits of a service provided by MLC

Our commitment is that our fees will remain not for profit and will be very competitive compared with peer IDBs and those of qualified external profit-making environmental consultants.

It is our intention that from 1st April 2025, the service package fees will be charged. For IDBs who also contract their operational services from us via Morgan Lakey, there will be a 16% reduction in fees, reflective of the efficiency gained from being able to integrate your environmental compliance procedures into our operational processes and communicate freely with your other service providers, taking the annual charge down to £1995.

IDB ecology and the IDB industry is quite niche (e.g. bespoke ecological and environmental licenses and permits). Our ecologists specialise in and represent the local and national IDB industry interests and challenge local and national policy where it is not enabling of our work. We have strength of voice in representing the largest number of IDBs in the country. An example of this is the successful legal challenge made to Natural England last year to clarify and amend the conditions within the IDB-specific badger licence (CL27) to make it more enabling of our routine maintenance work taking place around badger setts. This was not something that ADA, our national representative was able to progress for us, despite the implications for IDBs nationally. Our ecologists also hold multiple IDB-relevant protected species licences and can carry out licenced activities most commonly required by IDBs for a much-reduced cost compared to an external ecological consultancy.

There are an increasing number of funding opportunities available for a wide range of environmental improvements, including those which could be of benefit to IDBs. This includes biodiversity net gain funding,

peat conservation and developer contributions such as Section 106 funding. Many of these require use of local, regional and national networks, personal relationships and partnerships, along with a landscape scale view. We provide this as we invest in it to benefit the Middle Level Commissioners. We therefore can help IDBs to be better placed and more competitive to access such funding by evidencing their experience and competence in delivering positive outcomes for biodiversity in a consistent way and in partnership with other local environmental managers.

Some of the benefits you will have received to date from the ecology and environmental services department are not always visible and would be difficult for an external consultancy to replicate in the same efficient manner. A lot of work has taken place in the background to significantly improve the way that you can evidence your environmental compliance. This has included:

- Assessment of all relevant consent applications on behalf of many IDBs to ensure their statutory duties in relation to the environment are discharged and evidenced. This sometimes includes site visits, meetings and reports. It also includes the development and publication of new pre-application environmental guidance for consent applicants, for all IDBs.
- Influencing and contributing towards national, regional and local policy and strategy development. This includes wildlife licencing, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, which IDBs have a statutory duty to consider, Local Plans, Fens Reservoir planning and Environmental Stewardship options which will benefit IDBs.
- New templates, processes and services available to all IDBs to help them deliver and evidence their environmental compliance in relation to non-routine works using the ESR (Environmental Screening Report) process.
- Development and launch of compliant standard operating procedures for routine works including flail mowing and desilting. Associated training provided to a number of IDB contractors.
- A retained ecological consultancy service (which you may have chosen not to use)
- Monitoring, influencing and communicating legislative changes that affect IDBs such as badger licenses and Hedgerow Regulations
- A scheduled environmental review and BAP refresh visit (the BAP is required to deliver an IDBs statutory biodiversity duty)

We hope that this has provided you with sufficient information regarding the new service package from 1st April 2025. I appreciate that the step-change in fee may not be universally well received by Board Members that are less engaged and aware of their personal and collective environmental liabilities and risks. We will work on the premise that your Board will opt in and engage with the Environmental Service Package. Indeed, it's success and your compliance requires a two-way relationship and input.

You may choose to benchmark this package against other service providers and opt-out. If so, please feel free to use the information above to secure comparable quotes. You will also need to bear in mind the following:

- The additional Board members responsibilities and associated training and expertise required to become an intelligent client in commissioning ecological and environmental services. You need to know what service you are asking for and what standards are required.
- Alternative suppliers will likely still require inputs from Middle Level Commissioners staff which will be billed at an hourly rate and liaising with alternative suppliers may impact the cost, timeliness and quality of other services we provide your Board.
- Alternative suppliers will need to consider how they invest in the IDB sector locally, regionally and nationally and the myriad of partnership activity there is within and around the Middle Level.

Your clerk will need to be reassured that any alternative service provider will support and enable your environmental compliance to report on your behalf to Defra with due confidence.

We commit to reviewing the Service Package both qualitatively and quantitatively as it beds-in to ensure continued value for money for the IDBs and the Middle Level Commissioners.

2) The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024

In May 2024, Defra announced The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024 which put the baseline for hedgerow management practices into law, and replaced the regulation of management previously provided for via cross compliance. The Regulations require:

- 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).

These Regulations apply to any hedgerow growing on land used for agriculture if that hedgerow has:

- a continuous length of 20 metres or more; or
- a continuous length of less than 20 metres and, at each end, meets (whether by intersection or junction) another hedgerow.

Please advise your workforce / contractors of the change and programme such works to take place within the compliant period: [Hedgerow management rules: cutting and trimming - GOV.UK](#)

3) Licensing of IDB works around badger setts.

Previously, MLC had planned to roll out training and licence administration services to enable all IDBs to access the CL27 Badger Licence and to conduct their routine and periodic maintenance work compliantly around badger setts. However there were some issues with licence returns in 2023 which highlighted some regional variation in the regulation and enforcement of CL27 licence requirements within Natural England, and some developing impractical licence requirements. MLC and representatives from 3 other IDBs made a successful legal challenge to Natural England regarding the issues and have secured some positive changes to the licence which are more enabling of our low-risk routine maintenance work taking place around badger setts. This has removed the need for all IDBs to hold their own badger licences (although they may wish to do so anyway) and makes it much easier for MLC to continue to provide qualified and licenced supervision of works where necessary. Any work that carries any risk of damaging a badger sett or disturbing a badger within a sett, even if the risk is deemed to be small, is still licensable and MLC should be contacted for further advice where such works are planned. This includes desilting over or near to a badger sett. Where there is uncertainty, if any works are planned within 30m of a badger sett, please contact MLC for advice and guidance. Please see the updated CL27 licence on-line for full details of activities that are likely to be licensable: [Licence to interfere with badger setts for watercourse and drainage purposes \(CL27\) - GOV.UK](#)

4) Improved advice and guidance provision:

- a) We have developed some extended pre-application advice and guidance for consent applicants to help them understand what environmental considerations they need to make before submitting an application to us. This includes helping them to secure the correct ecological advice and what ecological assessments they need to submit with their application. This will help applicants to avoid delays in us processing their application until such information is received. It has already reduced the number of queries and frequently asked questions that we have had to respond to. It also helps to ensure more efficient delivery of the IDBs statutory responsibilities regarding the environment that are associated with consenting the work of others in and around IDB channels. Please take a look on the website for more information.
- b) We have welcomed new ecological resource at MLC who will be assisting with delivering the new service package to IDBs. **Abigail Leach** has a wealth of relevant knowledge and experience that she has brought with her, most recently from working at the Broads Authority, and is very well regarded in the industry. Abigail has already revised and updated the **biosecurity policy** and will be launching it later this year at the next IDB training event.

5) Water Vole Displacement Myth Busting

A number of recent, licenced IDB water vole displacements have taken place throughout the MLC area, which have enabled some of the DEFRA-funded improvement works to be completed. There appears to be some mis-information circulating amongst some IDBs around the need for and cost of water vole displacements which is causing some concern and confusion. To help all stakeholders to be better informed, we have produced a myth-busting document, attached as an Appendix to the Board report. We will also circulate a pamphlet summarising what activity, presence and timescales landowners and farmers can expect when a water vole displacement is taking place on their land along with the notice of entry for all future displacements to help to set expectations correctly. Please contact us should you have any further questions.

Author Name: Sofi Lloyd Role: Ecology and Environmental Services Manager

Water Voles - Myth Busting

	Claim - <i>Water vole displacements cost a lot of money!</i> Fact - Water vole displacements do add some additional costs to bank works but if MLC services are used, this is much less than some may think. It is most certainly an incalculable amount less than legal, financial and reputational costs if criminal proceedings were progressed in relation to a water vole offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.						
1.	Approx. cost of bank repair per 150m (no water voles): <table border="1"> <tr> <td>£4,680 – 5,140</td><td>£31-34 per metre</td></tr> </table> Additional cost of MLC-progressed water vole displacement per 150m <table border="1"> <tr> <td>£2,110 - £2,260</td><td>£14-15 per metre</td></tr> </table> Cost of using external consultants for displacement per 150m <table border="1"> <tr> <td>£4,810 - £9,810</td><td>£32-65 per metre</td></tr> </table>	£4,680 – 5,140	£31-34 per metre	£2,110 - £2,260	£14-15 per metre	£4,810 - £9,810	£32-65 per metre
£4,680 – 5,140	£31-34 per metre						
£2,110 - £2,260	£14-15 per metre						
£4,810 - £9,810	£32-65 per metre						
2.	Claim – <i>Other IDBs and RMAs and farmers etc. just get on with bank work without surveying for or displacing water voles and they aren't getting into trouble.</i> Fact – Other IDBs and RMAs do displace water voles under licence before bank works as our ecologists have worked with them to do so. Where bank works take place without water vole displacements, it is likely that no water vole have been found in the works area to displace. There are also an increasing number of investigations and prosecutions where water vole offences have been committed in areas of bank works.						
3.	Claim – <i>If you are undertaking flood risk management work, you are exempt from needing to displace water voles as you are keeping land and property safe from flooding.</i> Fact – Protected species legislation is law and no-one is exempt so routine and regular bank works must be undertaken compliantly. Urgent has a different legal meaning to emergency. Urgent works are those that require prompt action to resolve an expected but not imminent threat to public health and safety such as a bank slip. It is not likely that a repairing a bank slip after harvest to avoid damaging crops, that had originally occurred months previously will be seen legally as either an emergency or urgent works because sufficient time would have passed to allow for the works to be planned compliantly with a displacement if necessary. An emergency would be where an unexpected event requires immediate works to prevent or alleviate a significant threat to public health and						

	safety, such as the sudden collapse of a bank and flood water threatening surrounding residential or developed areas. In an emergency it may be necessary to fix the problem first but be confident that you can provide evidence of threat to public health and safety to the Regulator as soon as possible after the works, as is legally required. The emergency declaration must always be made in partnership with a range of professionals including an ecologist.
4.	Claim – <i>You can't do any bank works or maintenance where there are water voles anymore.</i> Fact – There are safe standard operating procedures that allow routine work such as desilting and flail mowing to be undertaken compliantly where there are water voles which help to avoid or minimise the risk of committing an offence. Any invasive work that breaks ground on the bank toe or bank face should be informed by a water vole survey, undertaken in the right season, well before works begin. For small areas of impact, for example a field drain or headwall installation, of a metre or so wide, it may be possible to reposition the works away from burrows under ecological supervision so a licenced displacement is not required. For longer lengths of bank impacts such as culvert installation or bank reprofile or repair, if a survey showed that water vole were present a displacement under licence would be required.
5.	Claim - <i>You can get rid of water voles to avoid the need for a displacement if you flail all the banks and marginal vegetation before a survey or dewater a channel.</i> Fact – Dewatering a channel where water voles were known to be present is a licensable activity could be classed as an offence if it were not for specific and very short-term purposes or where a survey had not taken place to determine their presence or absence. Cutting bankside vegetation alone would be unlikely to displace water voles but could be classed as an offence if it damaged burrows or disturbed water voles in their burrows.
6.	Claim – <i>If you fix a bank slip straight away it is unlikely to require a water vole displacement.</i> Fact – A survey would still be needed but it is likely that water vole burrows would have been destroyed or damaged during the slip in many cases and they may have therefore left the damaged areas. If the survey proved this to be the case, then the slip could be repaired as usual without the need for a licenced displacement.
7.	Claim – <i>Water voles are still in our ditches and we have done bank works before without displacing them so it can't bother them that much.</i> Fact – Regardless of this, damaging water vole burrows or disturbing them in their burrows is unlawful and carries a custodial sentence and/or a fine if found guilty. The law is based on huge volumes of scientific evidence which demonstrates that habitat damage and loss is a key factor in the drastic decline in water vole populations. The displacement approaches are shown to conserve and enhance water vole populations.
8.	Claim - <i>You can only repair one 150m length of bank where there are water voles.</i> Fact - The IDB water vole licence states that you can only legally displace from 150m at a time when you are displacing from both banks. You have to leave a 150m bank length for refuge in-between repaired sections. If only one bank is being repaired, theoretically you could displace from an unlimited length but only if an ecologist calculated that the opposite and adjacent habitat was suitable to take an increased number of water vole from the impacted area, which in most cases is unlikely. The usual maximum licensable displacement length for IDBs in all cases is 150m.
9.	Claim – <i>You can only displace water voles during a few specific weeks of the year.</i>

	Fact – This is true as licenced displacements during these weeks are shown to impact the water vole population the least and it avoids their dormant and breeding seasons. Displacement licence periods are from 15th Feb-15th April or 15th Sept to 31st Oct. You can also only survey for water voles between 15th Feb to 31st Oct as they are dormant during winter.
10.	Claim – <i>It is best not to tell anyone that you have water voles as they can stop you doing the work that you want to do, and don't allow surveys</i> Fact – It is assumed that water voles are everywhere in IDB ditches and drains so a survey would always be required ahead of any invasive works. Demonstrating transparency and competence in supporting biodiversity is likely to be attractive to potential funding partners and sources whereas having a lack of biodiversity data and evidence or being evasive can be conspicuous and can attract scrutiny.
NOTE! Water Vole displacement are only needed where there are water voles! If a survey shows they are not, then bank works can go ahead.	

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Wednesday 28th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. **Consider the development of a capital investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
- B. **Review pumping station key dates and inform the Consulting Engineer of any discrepancies or additional information.**

1. Summary

The Chief Engineer is currently developing capital investment programmes across the catchment, starting with estimated refurbishment/replacement costs based on the age of assets.

A new FCERM grant in aid programme will start in 2026/27.

2. Summary of key planning issues

2.1 Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - Open consultation

Following the change of government in July an open consultation was held between 30th July and 24th September 2024 on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system.

As the NPPF sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, it is therefore a significant driver and influence on development related planning policy, and it was essential that a suitable response be made.

During August the Boards' Chairs were given the opportunity to comment on the issues raised within the draft consultation document and provide comments and any other related items of unease that the Boards had.

A response, which was primarily providing answers to specific questions, was submitted before the deadline.

One of the big issues related to development of the "green belt" and the introduction of the "grey belt" but the consultation also included decision making, climate change, flood risk, and environmental related issues. Responses to specific questions contained within the consultation included:

1. The advantages and disadvantages of restoring the 5-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS).
2. Further supporting effective co-operation on cross boundary and strategic planning matters.

3. The LPA's need to understand, consider and acknowledge the impact of new development on their special levy and future funding requests under Defra's Partnership Funding Policy. Under this policy housing built or converted after January 2012 is not included in FCERM government grant in aid calculations.
4. The need to consider the adoption of appropriate measures that consider the whole water cycle process such as rainwater harvesting and the re-use of as much water as possible.
5. The need for bodies involved in the planning process but which are not LPAs to be provided with suitable compensation, benefit and other incentives for contributing to and enabling the aspirational growth and local economy.

The opportunity was taken to raise some issues not covered by the reform consultation as a concern by many Boards, in the hope that these points are heard and acted upon. These included:

- A. The Fenland Situation – special requirements needed due to the low-lying topography, the managed flood risk and land drainage systems, the provision of enabling infrastructure to allow life to continue and also accommodate current growth aspirations.
- B. The flawed methodology used by LPAs and poor decisions made by the LPAs when considering and allocating sites often caused by the need to meet government targets.
- C. The impacts of growth and climate change and the need to revise nationally accepted design standards.

The revised NPPF constitutes a significant departure from previous versions with 810 changes. It was issued during December and its contents are currently being reviewed.

2.2 **Cranbrook/Counter Drain (CCD) Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy**

The previous request for outcomes associated with the Strategy, Lidar, ground water, topographical survey, hydraulic modelling etc have not yet been received.

The Environment Agency continues to work on this strategy.

2.3 **Manea-Town Lots Water Recycling Centre (WRC)**

A draft Standing Advice/Position Statement document has been prepared and will be completed following the receipt of a decision from the adjoining Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB.

Anglian Water have now replaced its previous DWMP & Water Recycling Growth Manager but, unfortunately, the previously proposed meeting to discuss issues with both this and other WRC's of interest has not yet occurred. A request will be issued for such a meeting to be held in the next few months.

3. **Specific Issues**

Manea

Residential development on land to the west of the Fire Station, Westfield Road, Manea - F Crouch on behalf of F & S Crouch & Maurice Crouch Growers Ltd (MLC Ref. No. 692) & Savills (MLC Ref No 700)

A post was seen by a member of MLC staff on Facebook, regarding a public exhibition for a proposal by BDW/Savills for a development of 105 new homes at land to the south of Westfield Road, Manea. Savills were sent a request for further information, and a Flood Risk Information request was received

from Betts Hydro, the consultants for the project. Betts Hydro were asked to undertake a pre-application process, and the application form has recently been received. The consultants will be advised of the Board's requirements and advised of the current capacity issues with AWS.

Permission in principle to erect up to 9 x self-build dwellings on land to the south of Poppyfields, Wimblington Road, Manea - Mr Daniel Samuel (MLC Ref. No. 692)

This planning application was for a Nine plot development within a constrained site. Following the receipt of concerns from a neighbour concerning flooding. With the Chairs approval a bespoke response was submitted to the District Council advising of the Boards initial concerns:

- A. That the area has a history of poor drainage and localised flooding some of which is unsubstantiated or has not been formally reported and referring to the concerns received from the members of the public which specifically refer to this issue.
- B. Treated foul effluent water discharges into the Boards system via Manea Town Lots WRC.

The application was subsequently refused by the District Council for many reasons including, the application site is located in an area of potential deep peat, insufficient information has been submitted to inform the Habitat Regulations Assessment in respect to the close proximity to the Ouse Washes and the site lies wholly within Flood Zone 3.

4. Strategic Issues

4.1 Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk

Consultation to IDBs

Following a request a copy of the Board's GIS files have been issued.

Local Plan 2021-2040

The Council advised in February that the draft Local Plan has been found to be 'sound' which means that it meets the legal requirements as well as the policy tests which are set out in national planning policy. It marks the end of the examination process and means that the Plan can be formally adopted.

3.2 Norfolk County Council

Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan (NM&WLP)

The independent examination of the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan (NM&WLP) has now concluded, with the publication of the Planning Inspector's Report on 24th March. The proposed adoption of the NM&WLP will be considered at a meeting of the Full Council in May.

4.2 Fenland District Council

Fenland District Council Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation

This high level document is currently the subject of a consultation.

It is a statutory requirement for Local Planning Authorities to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of their Local Plan. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is an iterative process which forms an integral to the plan making process and is used to appraise the social, environmental, and economic effects of the Local Plan.

It should provide a sound evidence base for the plan, form an integrated part of the plan preparation process and will help ensure that decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development.

The SA Scoping Report is the first stage in the SA process. Through an assessment of the current situation in Fenland, the SA Scoping Report identifies which issues need to be addressed and identifies objectives to test the Plan and policies against. This assessment will help to establish the Issues, Vision and Objectives of the emerging Local Plan.

The document is primarily aimed at Historic England, Natural England and The Environment Agency but comments are welcome from any organisation or individual.

At the time of writing the document is being considered with the intention of issuing a response by the deadline.

4.3 Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Flood and Water (C&P FloW) Partnership

In addition to the items discussed above, the following issues of interest to the Board have been raised:

a. Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Programme

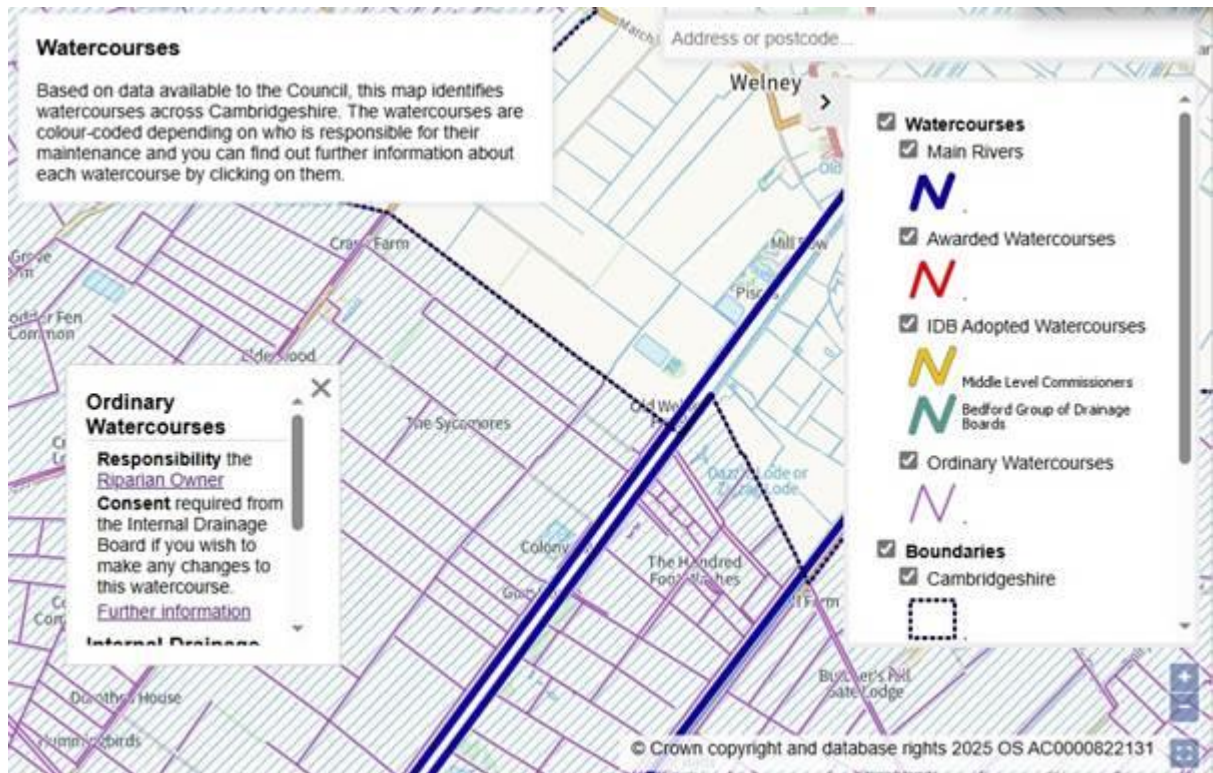
Given that a year has passed since the workshop and no meaningful correspondence or outcomes appear to have been received, the Commissioners requested an update on this programme. However, it is understood that these sites are included in the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy: 2024 Action Plan Review. See below.

b. Community Flood Action programme

Further copies of the Community Flood and Water newsletter have been issued. You can view previous editions and subscribe to receive the newsletter automatically at [Community flood action programme | Cambridgeshire County Council](#).

c. Watercourse Mapping Tool

The Flood Risk team has published a Watercourse Mapping Tool - Watercourse management | [Cambridgeshire County Council](#) that can be used to identify location of, and responsibility for different, watercourses.



Extract from the CCC Watercourse Mapping Tool showing part of the Boards area

4.4 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy (FRMS): 2024 Action Plan Review

A plan review has been prepared to provide an update on the progress of actions listed in the Cambridgeshire FRMS, which was adopted in 2022, highlighting contributions, completed work and any risks or challenges.

The contents are currently being reviewed in detail, but it summarises that:

“Progress has already been made against 54 of the 58 actions with 6 actions now having been completed. There are several obstacles that impede progress in some areas, these are outlined below. Despite that and the persisting wet weather conditions, headway has been made across most actions and by multiple partners.

The importance of clear communication remains in focus, whilst the impactful action led by community groups and local landowners continues to provide positive results.

There is still some uncertainty from external factors that influence the work we do. In response to this we take an adaptive approach so we can be prepared for the changing circumstances.”

5. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

Funding allocations for Tranche 2 were confirmed in mid-November and work has now been completed including repairs to weed screens, pumps and controls and channel repairs.

Works were included in a second bid for Tranche 2B to be delivered by March 2026, but the bid was unsuccessful.

The criteria for bids were for the modernisation, innovation, and upgrade of IDB assets and waterways, making them more effective, sustainable, environmentally friendly for agricultural land, flood risk and rural communities.

6. Capital Programme

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Board considers the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. Pumping station refurbishment and replacement costs are included on the capital programme. Further investment will be needed in the interim and will be developed further in line with the Key Health Indicators.

The Board is asked to consider the development of a capital investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.

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

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield

Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme

Appendix 2: List of applications responded to since last meeting

Appendix 3: M&E Report

Appendix 1

Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners														
Capital Improvement Programme (2025/2026)		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
Glenhouse p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	1,500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	200.0	200.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Purls Bridge p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,600.0	5600.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	180.0	0.0	0.0	56.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	56.0	292.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	John Deere Tractor - <i>purchased April 2020 - £111,480</i>	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.0
	Herder Cavalier Flail Mower - <i>purchased June 2020 - £71,100</i>	4	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	65.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	69.0
	Citroen van - <i>purchased 13/03/2015 - £8,753</i>	0	0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
System Study	To inform future refurb needs	0	0	10.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
Drainage Channels		0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		4	0	25	200	1,500	0	56	0	150	0	0	5,871	7,806

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

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
690		Mr M Sheldrake	Residence (New dwelling)	Hurn Drove, Welney
691	F/YR24/0996/F	Mrs E Mason	Residence (New dwelling)	Station Road, Manea
692	F/YR25/0036/PIP	Mr D Samuel	Residential (Up to 9 x dwellings)	Wimblington Road, Manea
693	24/02217/F	Mr Lukasz Kazmierczak	Residence (Extension)	March Road, Welney
694	F/YR25/00074/F	S Sheppard & H Purse	Residence (Extension & Double garage)	Station Road, Manea
695	F/YR25/00073/F	Mr & Mrs Parsonage	Change of use (Business use to annexe)	Charlemont Drive, Manea
696	F/YR25/0060/F	Bethy Booth	Residence (Extension)	Charlemont Drive, Manea
697	25/00087/F	Mike Smith	Residence (Extension & cart lodge with workshop)	Main Street, Welney
698	F/YR25/0121/PNC04	Mr & Mrs AC Howell	Change of use (Agricultural to dwelling)	Straight Road, Manea
699	F/YR25/0124/PIP	Mr E Selimaj	Residential (Up to 3 x dwellings)	Fallow Corner Drove, Manea
700			Residential (105 x dwellings)	Westfield Road, Manea
701	F/YR25/0184/F	Mr & Mrs Howell	Residence (Extension)	Straight Road, Manea
702	F/YR25/0198/F	Alasdair Hughes	Change of use (Business to additional accommodation)	Charlemont Drive, Manea
703	F/YR25/0238/O	FJS Services Ltd	Residential (Up to 6 x dwellings)	Fallow Corner Drove, Manea
704	F/YR25/0262/F	Miss K Smith	Change of use (Land to 1 x travellers plot)	Purls Bridge Drove, Manea
705	F/YR25/0278/F	Mr C Sykes	Residence (Extension)	Scholars Close, Manea
706	Enquiry	James Development Co Ltd	Residential Development Phase 3	Fallow Corner Drove, Manea

No infiltration device applications have been acknowledged since the last report.

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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Wednesday 28 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E key messages and advice

In light of uncertainty of GiA funding the Board is strongly advised to consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board is asked to instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.

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

1.2 Electricity Readings

Andy Maddams supplies regular monthly meter readings and pump hours which are greatly appreciated and allow efficient verification of electricity bills.

1.3 Purls Bridge

The insulation resistance of pump 1 had deteriorated to 12 M ohm at the September 2023 routine inspection; this pump has been set to duty through this pumping season and the resistance has improved considerably to 283 M ohm at the April 2024 routine inspection and 202 m Ohm in November 2024, the latest inspection in March 2025 was 98Mohm. The value is fluctuating and improves with use. This shows there may be moisture ingress into the pump which has improved with the heat of regular running. This will continue to be monitored. It should be run regularly to help prevent the ingress of water. This pump was last overhauled in 2016. Overhauling this unit again is not recommended as due to its age it is unlikely to be viable or reliable. The insulation resistance of the pump deteriorated slowly over several years before the last overhaul and may do again, but its reliability is a concern. Bedford Pumps have advised that a replacement of this type would be in the range of £70k to £100k.

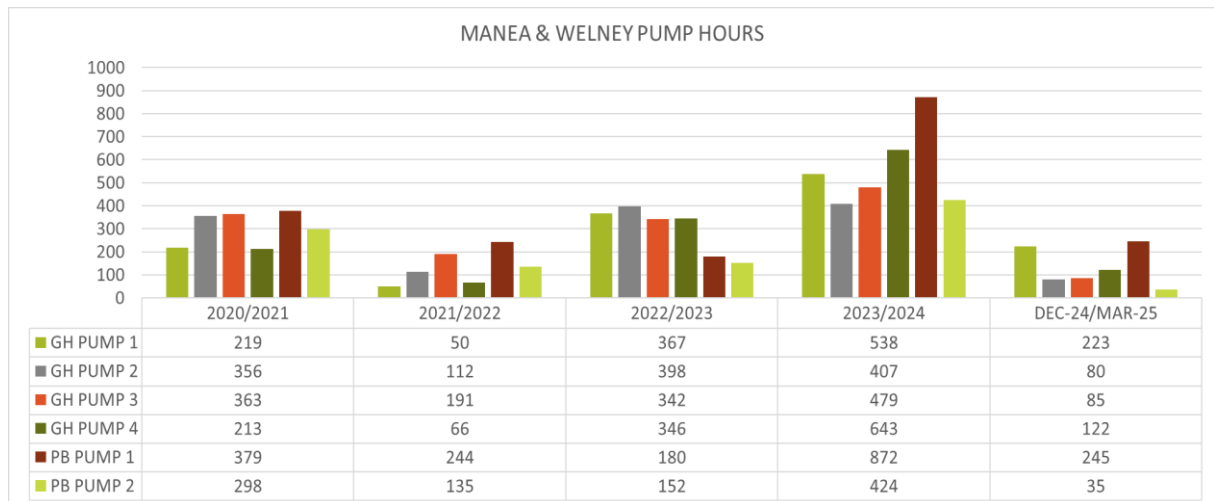
Pump 2 had a slight wobble and will need to be monitored closely, this does sometimes happen with a build up of debris on the impellor, which can clear itself. It was fine at the last inspection. It may also be a sign of a pump issue that will need to be rectified if it continues. There is no record of a pump overhaul since its fitting in 1986. An overhaul of this type of pump is likely to be in the region of £50k.

The electrical control panels are at an age where reliability is a concern and plans should be put in place for their replacement. They are likely to cost in the region of £20k to £30k.

Glenhouse

Hours run meter failed and new supplied for one engine.

2. Pumping summary



3. Inspections

- 3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspection for insurance at Purls Bridge was carried out during September 2024. Glenhouse Inspection date to be confirmed as out of commission in September 2024.
- 3.2 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Reports (due every 5 years) are in date and reinspection will be booked for this year.

Glenhouse	12-Nov-2020	12-Nov-2025
Purls Bridge	12-Nov-2020	12-Nov-2025

4. Pumping Station Key Dates

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

Station	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Controls	Weedscreen Bars	WSC	WSC Overhaul	Controls
Glenhouse	1948/ 1997	1997	1997	1997	1997	1997	2021	1997
Purls Bridge	1978	1999 (1) 1986 (2)	2016 (1) 1986 (2)	1978	2008	2008	2008	2008

Author Name: Dave Bantoft

Role: M&E Engineer



Site Safety Inspection Record

Manea and Welney IDB SSI 280225

Complete

Name of organisation:	Middle Level Commissioners - Manea and Welney IDB
Date of site visit	28.02.2025 11:46 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Glen House Pumping Station Old Bedford Bank Manea PE14 8TB
Name of Advisor	Kathryn Simmonds
Time of arrival at site:	28.02.2025 11:46 GMT
Audit Name	Manea and Welney IDB SSI 280225

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Andy Maddams

1

As mentioned in the previous visit, it was observed that the access steps to the pumps and weed clearer are unlevel and becoming loose. It is recommended that these are levelled and secured to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.



Photo 1

2

The levels of lighting were reviewed. It was noted that some lighting is provided and reported to increase visibility across the rear of the station in times of darkness. It is also understood that you carry head torches, etc. when work is required on the pumps as the current lighting available cannot reach these areas. Additional lighting is available on the gantry of the cleaner, however these do not currently function due to water ingress. It is recommended that these are repaired/replaced and suitably sealed to prevent further ingress.

Upon the approach to the site, it should be noted that there is no lighting provided, and the available road is unlevel with a number of potholes. It is recommended that conversations are undertaken with the owner of the land to ensure that these are adequately maintained to prevent damage to vehicles.



Photo 2

3

It was reported that the weed pile is managed by removing a quantity at a time to be burnt in a suitable location, with the remaining being removed from the local farmer, who attends with a trailer. It was noted that access is available through a double gate and sloped access which appears to be in good condition.



Photo 3

4

Signage to the site was noted to be replaced since the last visit, which was good to note. The signage available also displayed the following information:

- Name of pumping station
- Emergency contact
- Location

-Warning of automatic machinery

Consideration should be given to add a warning for deep water.



Photo 4

5

It was reported that lone working is undertaken, and you may not be in contact with anyone for a significant period of time. It is understood that there have been previous occasions where no contact has been maintained for around 10-12 days. It is recommended that regular checking in is implemented to ensure no issues have arisen, and that you are aware of works being carried out that day. Contact upon arriving and leaving the site could also suffice.

6

Purils Bridge pump station was visited. It was verbally confirmed that this site is only visited when necessary and similar practices are undertaken as at Glen House Pumping Station.

Site was found to be secured with access gates on approach as well as a padlocked pedestrian gate and vehicle access gate near the screed cleaner.

Minimal lighting is provided to the site, and the provision of additional lighting should be reviewed to ensure adequate visibility in times of darkness.

Signage was found to display the same information at Glen House, and is also recommended that displaying warning signage for deep water is considered.

Ground surface on the site was found to be in a suitable condition and well maintained, with little vegetation on pedestrian and vehicles routes once on the site.

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature



Kathryn Simmonds
28.02.2025 13:01 GMT

Departure time

28.02.2025 13:03 GMT

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments

0
From 0 to 99

Media summary



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners

District Superintendents Report May 2025

Goodness knows how it can possibly be mid May already, but here goes.

By January the knives on the mowing basket were beginning to look a little sad, and so some replacements were waiting to be fitted. Before doing so, I helped the RSPB out on their grassland project at Purls Bridge by cutting the main feeder drains that divide the ten fields and a length of their header drain. This will enable Mike to move his water around much more efficiently and make better use of what he abstracts from the IDB. The lads at the RSPB often help me out by lending me tools, holding ladders, giving me decent second hand fence posts and so on, so it was nice to be able to return a few favours. Once that job was out of the way I dropped the basket into the workshop and pulled it to bits. I replaced about half of the knives, the cups on the pressure arms and a seal on the drive shaft. The basket is now ready for the late summer attack on our reed fringes when I prepare the way for the incoming 360. January also saw a short spate of punctures on the van which I always seem to notice in the muddiest, wettest locations.

In February I pressure washed the steps at the rear of the Glen House buildings, the ramp in the yard and, because it now showed how bad it all looked, the rest of the concrete around the engines. I began the process of burning last year's reed piles from the weedscreen cleaners at both stations, which is an easy job at Purls Bridge, and an absolute pain at Glen House. I also greased the Purls Bridge pumps and syphon valves.

At Glen House I serviced all four engines and for the first time managed to persuade the automatic bleeding system on the fuel lines to work properly, which was very satisfying. The van was sent to the garage for its annual service and MOT and on the 24th I was visited for our annual H&S visit by Cope, who apparently found no major issues at either station.

March arrived with undue haste, or so it seemed, and I stripped the flail head down, gave it a full service and fitted a set of new flails. The old ones had lasted five cutting seasons and were well worn, but we used to eke the Bomford ones out for eighteen months at best, so maybe it wasn't too bad a record. I cut down all the selfset elders that had grown up around the old building both inside and out of the compound, I laid the brash along the side of the drive to dry out before attempting to burn it all and tidied the fence. The pumps were switched off on the 10th and we began to attain our summer retention level in the drains. It had been a relatively dry start to the year, despite seeming to be permanently overcast, and the drains took a while to build up to the usual level of 98.00. I began mowing the banks on the 31st. The vegetation hadn't grown particularly but it was a way of encouraging prospective ground nesting birds to go across to the uncut side for their own safety.

In April, along with continuing the early mowing, I burnt the elder brash on the little hardstanding by the old building and ran a brushcutter over the grass around the pumping station and generally tidied the place up. I have been putting the mink traps out around Glen House but there have been no visits, so I will probably not bother for many more days, maybe having a little go in the autumn when family groups break up. I think it is clear that the campaign to eliminate mink from the Fens has been a great success.

May began with more mowing, and when I spotted a damp patch on one the hose protectors on the flail head I was glad that investigation showed not one, but both main drive hoses were just about to fail on a chafe point. I had new hoses made up and fitted some extra protection to the hoses and hope to reduce the chance of a repeat. I re cemented two old manhole covers into place near the old building to prevent myself, or anyone else, from taking an unobservant tumble which could well have ended up with a broken leg. As I write this report, the tractor has just received its 3750 hours service, and the Berlingo is stranded at the garage waiting for a set of gear change cables which suddenly went so stiff as to leave me without 2nd, 4th or reverse gears in the course of a journey to March and back. I'm

not sure my fifty six year old Morris Traveller is really appreciating the trip to Glen House in the meantime, but needs must and all that.

Looking forward, we seem to be in a very dry weather pattern which has the potential to last right through to the Autumn or beyond, and I shall manage the water levels accordingly with, hopefully, help from the EA in the form of adequate supplies in the Old Bedford River. The mowing will continue, reed cutting will start and I am confident that our usual maintenance regime will see us ready to face the winter in good shape as always. On the wildlife front, the usual suspects are all present, plenty of breeding duck, including my favourite Gadwall pair. The reeds are a'twitter with warblers, who will probably get a visit from the cuckoo. There are several hunting Barn Owls about the place and a pair of Red Kite are in residence around the old colony pit. Deer, hare, stoats and weasels are all busily nipping about and the rough areas of the District are teeming with life. I have also observed a large pike lurking in the discharge chamber at Glen House, he soon darts for the cover of some lily pads when I cross his line of vision.

As always, I keep in regular contact with our Chairman and he in return is always supportive and helpful with sage advice that can only come from many years experience of the IDB business.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	10
Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	GOVERNANCE
Date:	Wednesday 28 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Paul Burrows

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Review and approve the updated Policy Statement (appendix 1).
- B. 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.
- C. To review and approve the publishing of Exercise of Public Rights
- D. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments
- E. To note and approve the submission of the IDB1 return made on its behalf to Defra.
- F. To review and approve the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2025 and authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement.

1. Risk Assessment and Insured Values

- 1.1 The Board are asked to consider and approve their Risk Management Strategy.
- 1.2 The insured values for the Board's assets are detailed below:

MANEA & WELNEY DDC INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2025
PURLS BRIDGE PUMPING STATION	903,257.00
GLEN HOUSE PUMPING STATION	1,842,150.00
OLD GLENHOUSE PUMPING STATION	363,630.00
WELCHES DAM	6,060.00
	<u>3,115,097.00</u> Index linked

2. Policy Reviews

We have an ongoing review and update of policies. Within this we are also improving our management of Freedom of Information requests. The update to the Privacy Policy has identified some area of Data Protection that require further attention. It is timely to schedule a Data Audit, which will help to identify any further areas that require updating. Additional staff and Board/IDB training will be a likely result, along with some other strengthening of procedures across the business.

The Board are asked to review and approve the Board's Policy Statement (Appendix 1).

3. IDB1

- 3.1 To note and support the IDB1 return submitted on their behalf for the year 2023/24 is included as Appendix 2.

4. Annual Governance Statement:

- 4.1 To review and approve the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 and authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement. (Appendix 3)

5. Exercise of Public Rights

- 5.1 For completion of the Annual Governance Statement the Board is required to confirm that they provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 5.2 In order to warrant a positive response to this assertion 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.

- 5.3 In addition, a notice of the conclusion of the external auditor's limited assurance review of the annual return, together with relevant accompanying information, has been published in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. We also display the ['Local Authority Accounts – A Summary of Your Rights'](#) with the notice.
- 5.4 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.

6. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:

- 6.1 The clerk to report.

Author Name: Paul Burrows

Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 Policy Statement

Appendix 2 IDB1

Appendix 3 Annual Governance Statement

Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners

Administered by:



Governance

Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management

1 Issued

- 1.1 This policy is issued and has been adopted by the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners.
- 1.2 The policy was last reviewed and republished in June 2025 and will be reviewed at least every five years.

2 Introduction

Purpose

- 2.1 This policy statement has been prepared by the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners to provide a public statement of the Commissioners approach to its management of water levels and flood risk within their District (the District). The Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners are constituted by order of Parliament operating under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991 and is designated as a flood risk and coastal erosion 'Risk Management Authority' (RMA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- 2.2 The Commissioners serve the local community by managing water levels in ordinary watercourses and other water infrastructures within the District to mitigate against the risks from flooding and drought. In delivering its functions the Commissioners will meet its environmental obligations and commitments and seek opportunities to enhance the environment. The Commissioners recognise their responsibility for good governance, local accountability and financial security, achieving value for money from all its activities. As an independent public body the Commissioners are committed to the pursuit of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 2.3 It should be noted that although this document refers to 'flood and coastal erosion risk management' (FCERM) the District is not affected by coastal erosion.

Background

- 2.4 The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. The Environment Agency is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion. Lead Local Flood Authorities (unitary authorities or county councils) are responsible for developing, maintaining and applying a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas. Delivery is the responsibility of a

number of flood risk and coastal erosion “Risk Management Authorities” (RMA), which includes the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners.

- 2.5 This Policy Statement sets out the Commissioners approach to meeting the national policy aims and objectives in this area, as stated in the *National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England 2020* (the National Strategy); the statement will be revised to reflect future revisions of the National Strategy. It summaries what plans the Commissioners have in place to manage water levels and reduce flood risk, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment, and ensuring good governance and local accountability. Copies of this Policy Statement are available from the Commissioners office at Middle Level Offices, 85 Whittlesey Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AH. Digital copies can be downloaded from the Middle Level Commissioners’ website: www.middlelevel.gov.uk.

3. Governance and local accountability

- 3.1 The Commissioners will ensure that its policies and procedures enable effective representation of and accountability to drainage rate payers and the occupiers of non-agricultural land within the district, including elections in line with the requirements of the Land Drainage Act 1991, and timely engagement with charging authorities to fill vacancies in seats allocated to appointed members.
- 3.2 Board members must take decisions objectively in their best interest and uphold the ethical standards expected of public officeholders. Board members must adhere to the Board’s Members Code of Conduct, including the seven principles of public life (Nolan Principles). The Commissioners will make sure that there is suitable training in place for board members and staff, including on financial and environmental matters as appropriate.
- 3.3 Board members must declare financial and other interests relevant to their function with the Commissioners. Board members will recuse themselves as appropriate where conflicts of interest may occur in relation to procurement, contract management and decision making.

4. Delivering the National Strategy’s policy aim and objectives

Aim

- 4.1 The overall aim of the National Strategy is to ensure the risk of flooding and coastal erosion is properly managed by using the full range of options in a co-ordinated way. The Strategy states that communities, individuals, voluntary groups and private and public sector organisations will work together to manage the risk to people and their property, facilitate decision-making and action at the appropriate level, and achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

Objectives

- 4.2 The 2011 Strategy sets out five objectives in pursuance of the overall aim as follows.
- understand the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, working together to put in place long term sustainable plans to manage these risks and making sure that other plans take account of them;
 - avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood and coastal erosion risk and being careful to manage land elsewhere to avoid increasing risks;
 - build, maintain and improve flood and coastal erosion management infrastructure and systems to reduce the likelihood of harm to people and damage to the economy, environment and society as well as achieving wider environmental benefits;
 - increase public awareness of the risk that remains and engaging with people at risk to encourage them to take action to manage the risks that they face and to make their property mor resilient; and

- improving the detection, forecasting and issue of warnings of flooding, co-ordinating a rapid response to flood emergencies and promoting faster recovery from flooding.

4.3 The Commissioners support the national aim and objectives for the management of flood risk and water levels and the Commissioners policy and approach will be consistent with them.

5. Flood risk and water level management in the Commissioners District

5.1 The District has been determined to derive benefit, or avoid danger, as a result of drainage operations. As such the whole of the District is at some risk from flooding, but that risk is managed wherever it is practically, environmentally and financially viable¹.

5.2 The Commissioners make decisions regarding flood risk within the District taking into account the following:

- assets in place considering design standard and life;
- Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority flood risk strategies, plans and maps; and
- other information such as the history of flooding and land use impacts.

5.3 The following outlines the key details of the District:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Total area of the drainage district: | 3102 ha |
| • Catchment area draining to and including the District: | 3148 ha |
| • Area of Agricultural Land: | 2896 ha |
| • Area of other (non-agricultural) land: | 206 ha |

5.4 Assets for which the Commissioners have operational responsibility:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| • Water Level Control Structures: | 5 No |
| • Watercourses (maintained): | 33 km |
| • Raised embankments: | 0 km |
| • Reservoirs: | 0 ha |
| • Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS): | 0 no |
| • Pumping Stations: | 3 no |

5.5 Assets within or adjacent to the District that are maintained by the Environment Agency:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| • Main Rivers: | 13.5 km |
| • Raised embankments/flood walls: | 10 km |
| • Pumping Stations: | 1 no |

¹ It should be noted that the Land Drainage Act 1991 provides the Commissioners with statutory powers to carry out works of maintenance and improvement for land drainage and flood defence purposes, rather than imposing a duty on the Commissioners to carry out such works.

6. Building, maintaining and improving flood and coastal erosion risk management systems

- 6.1 Through the operation, maintenance and improvement of watercourses and other water control assets within the District, the Commissioners seek to achieve a general standard of water level management that enables navigation, the drainage and irrigation of agricultural land, reduces flood risk to developed areas, and sustains environmental features throughout the District.
- 6.2 The Commissioners monitor and review the condition of its watercourses and other assets, particularly those designated as critical, over-spilling from which could affect people and property. Consistent with the resultant needs established, a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the assets is commensurate with the standards required. The programme is reviewed periodically by the Commissioners to ensure it is delivering the appropriate condition.
- 6.3 Where standards are not at the desired level, improvement works will be sought where they are considered to be practical and financially viable by the Commissioners. Where improvement works meet the criteria set by Defra, financial support will be sought from the Government's Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding. Where appropriate works will be undertaken in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities and take opportunities to work with natural processes.
- 6.4 Work for and by the Commissioners will be carried out in accordance with best practice and to deliver best value for money taking due regard of local flood risk management requirements and strategies, opportunities for partnership working, environmental obligations and guidance available from Defra, the Environment Agency and other organisations.
- 6.5 The Commissioners powers to carry out water level and flood risk management works are permissive (i.e. the Commissioners are not obliged to carry out works) and their resources are limited. The Commissioners policy is therefore to designate what they consider to be the most important watercourses in the District as "District Drains" and prioritise their resources to the appropriate maintenance and, where necessary, improvement of such channels and associated structures. The watercourses and structures so designated will change over time as necessary but the current designated watercourses and structures are shown on the plan attached to this Statement.
- 6.6 Other watercourses usually are the responsibility of other bodies or the adjoining owners. The Commissioners will only take action in respect of these latter watercourses where resources are available and where it is in all the circumstances appropriate for the Commissioners to become involved, bearing in mind the powers available to other persons or bodies.
- 6.7 The Commissioners have a supervisory duty, under section 1(2)(d) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 over all matters relating to the drainage of land in their District and will, under this duty where appropriate advise others regarding the undertaking of works when it is not appropriate for the Commissioners to exercise its own powers.
- 6.8 The Commissioners will also seek to ensure, where possible that assets managed by other risk Management Authorities, which also reduce flood risk to the District, are maintained at a satisfactory standard and may enter into a Public Sector Co-operation Agreement with another Risk Management Authority to achieve better value for money when carrying out work to reduce flood risk.

7. Regulation of activities – avoiding inappropriate development and land management

- 7.1 The Commissioners will take appropriate steps to help riparian owners understand their responsibilities for maintenance, byelaw compliance and environmental regulations.
- 7.2 The Commissioners will regulate as necessary, using available legislative powers and byelaws, the activity of others to ensure their actions within, alongside, and otherwise impacting its drainage system do not increase flood risk, prevent the efficient working of drainage systems, or adversely impact the environment.
- 7.3 The potential impact on flood risk from future development both within the District and the wider catchment draining into the District, is fully recognised by the Commissioners. The Commissioners will take an active role in the assessment of local plans, major development and, individual (planning) applications, to prevent inappropriate development and land use to ensure that flood risk is not increased. This will include, where appropriate, providing pre-application advice and checking of flood risk assessments.
- 7.4 Where appropriate the Commissioners will seek contributions from developers to cover the cost of consultations and advice and for both immediate and longer term works necessary to mitigate against any resultant increase in flood risk. Such contributions will be recorded in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and associated technical guidance.
- 7.5 The Commissioners will where appropriate designate structures or features affecting flood risk using Section 30 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- 8. Communication and transparency**
- 8.1 The Commissioners will publicise the local risks from flooding, the reasons for managing water levels within the District and articulate the efforts being undertaken by the Commissioners to manage water levels and flood risk as well as the steps the local community and land managers can take to assist in its management.
- 8.2 The Commissioners will be open and transparent in its actions and decisions. The Commissioners will comply with the requirements set out in the relevant Local Government transparency code.
- 8.3 The Commissioners will provide an overview of the objectives and costs of its water level management operations by publishing on its website:-
- A record of the watercourses it periodically maintains;
 - A statement of the types of general maintenance activities it routinely undertakes and why;
 - Its Annual Report to Defra (IDB1 Form); and
 - Approved Board minutes and papers.
- 8.4 The Commissioners will seek views and respond to enquiries from the local general public in this regard and work with local partners to build a culture within which watercourses are seen as vital to managing flood risk, and enhancing habitat and amenity. Every effort will be made to dissuade abuse of watercourses.
- 8.5 The Commissioners invite any comments regarding the condition of its system, which could assist with the management of water levels.

9. Working together

- 9.1 The Commissioners will co-operate and share information with other relevant authorities in the exercise of their flood and coastal erosion flood risk management function. The Commissioners will contribute to strategies, plans and consultations relevant to its catchment and functions.
- 9.2 The Commissioners will assist the Environment Agency wherever possible in its provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems, and assist Risk Management Authorities where necessary during flood emergencies. The Commissioners will participate as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures.
- 9.3 The Commissioners have provided the Environment Agency and other local Risk Management Authorities with information on the major flood defence assets for which they are responsible. The information is available from the Environment Agency.
- 9.4 The Commissioners will seek to work with all relevant local organisations, in carrying out its flood and coastal erosion risk management functions and environmental obligations.

10. Environmental Measures

- 10.1 The Commissioners have nature conservation duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017, the Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009 and Amendments 2011, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, the Environment Act 2021, and as a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Commissioners will fulfil these in a positive way.
 - 10.1.1 Further to the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, the Commissioners will review their Water Level Management Plans and Biodiversity Action Plans with reference to the local nature recovery strategy and relevant species conservation or protected site strategy for their areas.
- 10.2 Much of the Commissioners' watercourse maintenance work constitutes vegetation control and desilting and is often a vital and routine requirement. Whilst inevitably some short-term impacts will arise, this management is often essential to maintain the distinct assemblage of aquatic habitat and species present in the District. Such work will be carried out in a way that manages the potential risks to the environment. The Commissioners have access to environmental expertise from their Ecology and Environmental Services Manager and have a Biodiversity Action Plan, developed according to ADA and Natural England guidelines, which indicate the way in which their functions can be carried out in a way appropriate to the environment and how the environment can be enhanced. The Commissioners maintain only a small proportion of the total watercourse length in the District, the significant majority being the responsibility of the adjoining land owners or of other bodies.
- 10.3 When carrying out work, be it maintenance or improvement, and consistent with the need to maintain satisfactory flood protection standards, the Commissioners will aim to:-
 - Avoid any unnecessary or long term damage to agricultural interests and to natural habitats and species;
 - Carry out the monitoring of any gains and losses of biodiversity and report annually to the Environment Agency; and
 - Take appropriate opportunities to achieve multiple environmental outcomes and work with natural processes, wherever possible, including the enhancement of habitats and water bodies within the District.

- 10.4 The District encompasses no sites of national and international biological or geological interest.
- 10.5 The Commissioners have no Water Level Management Plan.
- 10.6 The Commissioners will play its full role in sustaining the Water Level Management Plans prepared for SSSIs to maintain, or bring sites into, favourable condition, in conjunction with Natural England and other interested parties and review the plans in accordance with guidance.



Annual Report for the year ended

31 March 2024

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

No later than 28 February 2025 a copy must be provided to:

- Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs via flood.reports@defra.gov.uk
- Asset Management and Engineering, Environment Agency via lbfund@environment-agency.gov.uk
- The Chief Executives of:
 - all local authorities that pay special levies to the Board;
 - all County Councils or London Boroughs within which the Board is situated.

Please complete the form electronically, and please answer **ALL QUESTIONS**.

Please round all cash figures down to nearest whole £.

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

Section A – Financial information

Preliminary information on special levies issued by the Board for 2024-25

Special levies information for financial year 2024-25	
Name of local authority	£
1. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	42,723
2. KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL	24,704
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	67,427

Section A – Financial information (continued)

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2024

All internal drainage boards must ensure that the Income and Expenditure information provided below is consistent with the Board's annual accounting statements which have been prepared in accordance with proper practices found in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners' Guide to proper practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements March 2023*¹

	Notes	Year ending 31 March 2024 £
INCOME		
A. Drainage Rates		161,023
B. Special Levies		63,385
C. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		854
D. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		10,905
E. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		
F. PSCAs overall total		
Breakdown:		
from EA		
from other RMAs		
G. Loans		
H. Rechargeable Works		
I. Interest and Investment Income		6,720
J. Rents and Acknowledgements		
K. Other Income		
Wayleave		276
Write back of provisions		469
Consents		150
Total income		243,782
EXPENDITURE		
L. New Works and Improvement Works		
M. Total precept to the Environment Agency		79,107
N. Watercourse maintenance		71,682
O. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		18,099
P. Administration		17,649

¹ https://saas.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PractitionersGuide_2023.pdf

Q. PSCAs		
R. Rechargeable Works		
S. Finance Charges		
T. Biodiversity enhancement and conservation – overall total		493
Breakdown:		
General, across the whole region	493	
SSSI specific, where relevant		
U. Other Expenditure		
Insurance		3,940
Electricity costs – overall total		50,683
Breakdown (if possible):		
Standing charge (per annum)	2,884	
Unit charge (per annum)	47,799	
Fuel (petrol and diesel costs) – overall total		34,357
Breakdown:		
Pumping stations	25,424	
Fleet and plant machinery	8,933	
Total expenditure		276,010
EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
V. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		(32,228)
W. Developers Funds income not applied in year		66,321
X. Grant income not applied in year		7,445

Value of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

0.978 %
£ 1,571.05

Value of special levies outstanding at year end?

0 %
£ 0

Notes:

K. Include all other Income, such as absorption account surpluses (for example plant and labour absorption accounts). Please include sub-total of all other income in the first row and then a breakdown in separate rows below.

- L. State the gross cost of undertaking minor capital works that have not been capitalised and the annual depreciation charges of all major schemes that have been capitalised. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the schemes.
- M. State the total precept demanded for the year as properly issued by the Environment Agency, in accordance with section 141 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Providing that the precept has been properly issued as before stated it should always be included here, even when the Board has appealed against the amount of contribution, in accordance with section 140 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Where the Board knows with certainty the outcome of any such appeal, it should also include the appropriate accrual/prepayment.
- N. State all costs associated with the maintenance of watercourses, meaning work associated with open channels, pipelines, culverts, bridges, etc. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the maintenance programme. Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.
- O. State all costs associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.
- P. Include the cost of non-technical staff only, office accommodation, annual depreciation of office equipment that has been capitalised, minor office equipment that has not been capitalised, postages, telecoms, stationery, printing, advertising, auditing of accounts, general insurances and all other costs associated with supporting the organisation. Please note that this does not include support costs, which are directly associated with the delivery of front line services. Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.
- Q. State all costs associated with the PSCA.
- R. State all costs associated with undertaking work for third parties. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with undertaking the rechargeable work.
- S. Include the cost of servicing any borrowing, in terms of bank/loan/hire purchase interest payable.
- T. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – that are likely intended to help enhance and/or conserve biodiversity. These costs are likely to be incurred in implementing actions set out in an IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan or other conservation actions. If possible, you should identify the overall costs and break them down into two groups: general across the whole IDB area, and SSSI specific areas (in implementing actions set out in SSSI Water Level Management Plans or SSSI River Restoration Plans). Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.
- U. Include all other expenditure, such as a provision for bad/doubtful debts, write-offs, and absorption account deficits (for example plant and labour absorption accounts). Please include sub-total of all other expenditure in the first row and then a breakdown in separate rows below.
- V. For the disposal of assets, state the difference between any proceeds from the sale/disposal of the asset and the cost of the asset less accumulated depreciation.
- W. Total balance of developer fund year end.
- X. Unspent grant at year end.

Section B – IDB Reporting

Please answer **ALL QUESTIONS**. We will assume a negative response for any that are not answered.

Policy Delivery Statement

Boards are required to produce a publicly available policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aims and objectives. It is recommended that these statements be published on Boards' websites where they have them and reviewed every three years.

1. Is an up to date statement in place and copy (or weblink) provided to Defra, and EA? Yes ☒ No ☐
2. What year was your statement last updated?..... 2019

Biodiversity

3. Please indicate whether your Board has a Biodiversity Action Plan Yes ☒ No ☐
4. If "yes" is the Biodiversity Action Plan available on your website? Yes ☒ No ☐
5. What year was your Biodiversity Action Plan last updated?..... 2022
6. Have you reported progress on BAP implementation on your website?..... Yes ☐ No ☒
7. When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)?..... 13/06/2024
8. Do you have a biosecurity process?..... Yes ☒ No ☐

SSSI water level management plans

9. Are you responsible for any SSSI water level management plans?..... Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, please complete the following table:

Name	Partners	Date of last review	Date of last update

10. Do you contribute towards any SSSI water level management plans?..... Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, please complete the following table:

Name	Partners	Date of last review	Date of last update

11. Area of SSSI with IDB responsible for water level management plan/s.....	0 hectares
12. Area of SSSI with IDB contribution towards water level management plan/s.....	0 hectares
13. Area of SSSI where IDB water level management activities are contributing to recovering or favourable condition?.....	0 hectares
14. Area of SSSI where IDB water level management actions are needed to achieve recovering or favourable condition?.....	0 hectares

Access to environmental expertise

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

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

If so, please list:

Public sector cooperation agreements (PSCAs)

21. How many active PSCAs are you working on?	0
22. Which risk management authorities are you working with on a PSCA?	
Environment Agency	☐
Lead local flood authority	☐
Local authority (not a lead local flood authority)	☐
Internal drainage board	☐
Water company	☐
Other	☐

If other, please list:

--

23. Please indicate the type of work being undertaken.

Routine maintenance
Asset operation and monitoring
Asset repairs
Support during flood incident
Support during flood recovery
Other

If other, please list:

--

Asset Management

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

24. ADIS ☐
25. Paper Records ☐
26. Other Electronic System ☒

If so, please list:

Excel

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

28. What is the cumulative total of identified watercourse that the Board periodically maintains?

32.5 kilometres

29. How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

2 pumping stations

30. How many pumps does the Board operate?

electric
 diesel
 renewable energy pumps (e.g. directly powered by wind, solar, hydro, etc)
 temporary / mobile pumps
 other type of pumps

2
4

31. If other, please list:

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

5.12 cm3/sec

Health and Safety

33. Does the Board have a current Health and Safety policy in place? Yes ☒ No ☐

34. Does the Board have a Board Member focused on ensuring that Health and Safety is considered when board decisions are made? Yes ☒ No ☐

35. Does the Board have a responsible officer for Health and Safety? Yes ☒ No ☐

36. Have there been any reportable incidents in the past year? Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, please summarise in the box below:

Guidance and Best Practice

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

Has your IDB provided, or accessed via a third party, training for board members in the last year in any of the following areas?

38. Governance ☒

39. Finance ☒

40. Environment ☒

41. Health, safety and welfare ☐

42. Communications and engagement ☐

43. Other

☐

If so, please specify:

--

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

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

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

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

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

Has your Board adopted the following governance documents:

49. Standing Orders Yes ☒ No ☐

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

51. Byelaws Yes ☒ No ☐

If you have Byelaws, have:

52. you adopted the 2021 model byelaws. Yes ☒ No ☐

53. Or have you adopted the 2012 model byelaws. Yes ☐ No ☒

54. the byelaws been approved by Ministers. Yes ☒ No ☐

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

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

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

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

Board membership and attendance

59. How many Board members (in total – elected and appointed) do you have on your IDB?

16

60. Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

6

61. Number of elected members on the board at year end.

12

62. Number of appointed members on the board at year end.

4

63. Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.

9

64. Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.

3

65. Have you held elections (with or without a vote) within the last three years?.....Yes ☐ No ☒

66. If you have held elections, did they comply with the requirements specified by the Secretary of State under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938? N/A.....Yes ☐ No ☐

Complaints procedure

67. Is the procedure for a member of the public to make a complaint about the IDB accessible from the front page of its website?.....Yes ☒ No ☐

68. Number of complaints received in the financial year?

0

69. Number of complaints outstanding in the financial year?

0

70. Number of complaints referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman?

0

71. Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman?

0

Public Engagement

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

Published:

72. your completed IDB1 Form

☒

73. press release/s

☐

74. newsletter/s

☐

75. notice/s

☒

76. public consultation

☐

77. updated your IDB website

☒

Media engagement with:

78. national and/or local media e.g. TV, radio, etc

☐

79. national and/or local media e.g. newspaper, magazine, etc

☐

80. trade media

☐

81. social media

☐

Public meetings:

82. Held public meeting/s

☒

83. Attended meetings e.g. Parish Council, local interest group, local flood group, etc

☒

Public events:

84. attended show/event/s e.g. county shows, fairs, etc ☒
85. attended trade event e.g. Flood and Coast, Flood and Water Live, etc ☒
86. hosted IDB open day ☐

Section B: NOTES

Guidance and Best Practice

Has your Board published **all** minutes of meetings on the website? In answering this question, this should apply to all the main Board meetings held in the year and any appropriate meetings the Board has held with external stakeholders.

Board membership and attendance

When referring to **elected members** of the Board, this relates to the number of landowners/drainage rate payers that are elected to the Board.

When referring to **appointed members** of the Board, this relates to the number of members appointed by the local authorities to represent the local council taxpayers.

When referring to mean average number of elected and appointed members in attendance at meetings at each board meeting – **this should be expressed as a number of attendees** and not as a percentage attendance.

With regard to elections, under Schedule 1 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, elected members should hold office for three years, at which point a further election is held. When elections are held, they should comply with the requirements under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938 – to advertise and notify local stakeholders accordingly.

Section C – Declaration

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
--

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

Signature

Date

Name in BLOCK LETTERS

Designation

Email address


18/02/2025
MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT
ASSISTANT TREASURER
sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		Yes means that this authority:
	Yes	No?	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to ensure 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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Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK
Date:	Wednesday 28th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Note the Budgeting review.
- B. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 1.

Finance Officer's review and key messages

Accounts to 31st March 2025

At the Commissioners meeting 10th January 2025 a 'probable actual' position had been drafted, based around actual expenditure recorded to the end of November 2024 and estimates/forecasts to the 31st March 2024. At this point no invoices had been received from the electricity supplier.

The probable actual figures were also based around forecasting areas of expenditure to budget allocations. Savings were made against Channel Maintenance and Repairs and renewals. The most significant savings made against budget was fuel costs due to lower than anticipated pumping costs. The rating estimates for 2024/2025 included an allowance of £25,000 for future plant overhauls/refurbishments which was transferred in the year to the Capital Reserve Fund. Changes to the banking arrangements allowed for additional interest to be accrued, a total of £6,693.31 being received in the year.

As previously reported an application on behalf of the Commissioners for recovery of 2023/24 excess pumping costs was made against the Storm Recovery Grant scheme (Tranche 1) announced by the government in February 2024. This was successful and a claim for £40,310.07 was made and received.

Overall this gave an increase in the general fund balances of £60,339 to a balance of £306,399 at 31st March 2025, this currently being in excess of a years expenditure in hand.

The balances are reflected in the Commissioners accounts and Annual Return, which they are asked 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 2025 is included as Appendix 1.

2. Payments for 2025

- 2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 2.

3. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2024/2025:

- 3.1 Annual Return 2024/2025:

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2025 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations. Appendix 3

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Budget Review

Appendix 2 Payments for 2023/24

Appendix 3 Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2024/25

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
Monitoring - Accounts/Estimates 2024/25

	<u>Approved Budget</u> <u>2024/2025</u>	<u>Probable Actual</u> <u>2024/2025</u>	<u>Accounts</u> <u>2024/2025</u>
1 <u>CHANNEL MAINTENANCE</u>	18,500	21,500	19,095
2 <u>LABOUR</u>	44,250	44,500	44,086
3 <u>REPAIRS AND RENEWALS</u>	10,500	12,500	9,784
Pump overhaul	15,000	15,000	15,000
4 <u>FUEL</u>	38,000	38,200	27,312
5 <u>RATES, INSURANCES & TELEPHONES</u>	4,500	6,250	6,125
6 <u>ADMINISTRATION</u>	18,750	18,750	19,508
7 <u>TECHNICAL SERVICES</u>	3,000	3,000	3,344
8 <u>E. A. PRECEPT</u>	81,480	81,480	81,480
9 <u>PLANT REPLACEMENT</u>	10,000	10,000	10,000
	243,980	251,180	235,735
<u>INCOME</u>	3,862	7,173	57,227
Net Expenditure	240,118	244,008	178,508
Rate Requirement	0.5000		

Rate Meeting was held on 10th January 2025
 Probable actuals based on
 expenditure to 30th November 2024
 With provisions to year-end.

Storm Recovery Grant T1a included in Actuals

General Fund

Opening Balance
 Rates and Special Levies
 Net Expenditure

Rate set - 50.00p

246,060
 238,847
 244,008

Closing Balance

240,899 **306,399**

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERSPayments 2024/2025 (1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025)

Wave - Metered water supply	21.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner (Purls Bridge pumping station)	362.71
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	182.70
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Travelling	9,211.90
Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & Safety Re-charge 2023-2024 (Account from COPE Safety Management)	408.00
FJS Services Ltd - Nuts, bolts, washers, supply of radiator and 25 litres of antifreeze Qualube	491.82
Ratatak - Pest control (April - June 2024)	90.40
Bank charges	3.00
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.37
Anglia Farmers - 15,000 litres of gas oil	13,336.16
Water Resources East - Contribution to operating costs 2024-2025	180.00
Wave - Metered water supply	31.74
Environment Agency - Precept	40,740.12
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	80.85
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.43
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.08
LW Vehicle Services Limited - Supply, fit and balance tyre	85.72
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply (Payment on account)	9,550.00
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply (Payment on account)	9,550.00
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	68.24
Anglia Farmers - CV battery	728.28
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	592.79
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.08
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply (Payment on account)	9,550.00
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Purls Bridge pumping station)	678.11
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Purls Bridge pumping station)	1,336.25
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Glenhouse pumping station)	217.70
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Glenhouse pumping station)	289.97
Ratatak - Pest control (July - September 2024)	90.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Court fees	0.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Road tax for AU15 XHB	320.00
Wave - Metered water supply	91.77
Anglia Farmers - Allstar monthly card fee	1.21
Bank charges	30.00
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.08
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply (Payment on account)	9,550.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2023-2024 accounts)	1,023.00
Ben Burgess Coates - Battery charger and manual mirror	289.16
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	78.75
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Glenhouse pumping station)	346.25
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Purls Bridge pumping station)	477.63
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Glenhouse pumping station)	181.83
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Purls Bridge pumping station)	455.37
Ben Burgess Coates - 3000 hour service of John Deere Tractor - AO20 NWL	2,667.17

FJS Services Ltd - Hex sets, spring washers and 5 litres of gear oil	23.59
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,766.40
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply (Payment on account)	9,501.99
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fee (2023-2024 accounts)	756.00
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.53
N L Hydraulics - 10.4 metres of hydraulic hose and fittings	217.39
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Purls Bridge pumping station)	462.95
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Glenhouse pumping station)	170.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	8,626.52
Ratatak - Pest control (October - December 2024)	90.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Telemetry charges	576.00
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	75.35
Wave - Metered water supply	41.71
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	5,665.39
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.53
Environment Agency - Precept	40,740.12
Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd - Knives, lock nuts and cases with screws	252.91
LW Vehicle Services Limited - Repairs to AU15 XHB	215.77
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	113.11
Middle Level Commissioners - Death in service insurance premium (Account from Unum)	176.34
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	495.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to pump low level control (Purls Bridge pumping station)	184.78
Middle Level Commissioners - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	358.51
Anglia Farmers - Charge for the fuel card	1.21
Bank charges	3.00
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.53
Fen Group - Drain maintenance	21,982.68
Cambridgeshire County Council - Annual rent (Right of access)	100.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	295.51
Ben Burgess Coates - Repairs to tractor A020 NWL	1,453.93
Adept Property solutions Ltd - Replacement of watwer heater	225.00
Bank charges	3.00
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.53
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel and 15,000 litres of gas oil	11,988.99
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Purls Bridge pumping station)	799.52
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	775.75
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	295.51
IMServ - Meter operator agreement to 22/10/2025	73.52
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.08
Ratatak - Pest control (January - March 2025)	90.40
Bank charges	3.00
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	61.21
Wave - Metered water supply	41.71
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2024	926.40
IMServ - Electricity data collection agreement to 22/10/2025	170.96
Bank charges	3.00
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.53
LW Vehicle Services Limited - Puncture repair	24.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of ticket for ADA conference	180.00
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	62.90

Bank charges	3.00
FJS Services Ltd - Hex set, Hex bolts, flat washers, full nuts, grease gun extension hose and ends, together with grinding disc	25.18
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	813.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution towards retirement gift	360.00
LW Vehicle Services Limited - Repairs to AU15 XHB	668.26
Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd - Flail, bearings, rubber strip, mx joint rings and bolts for flail	1,465.74
Anglia Farmers - Charge for the fuel card	1.21
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.53
District labour	39,147.91
NEST Pension Contributions	7,165.91
	<u>273,301.32</u>

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

MANEA AND WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025
GENERAL FUND

2025				2024			
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		315,707.80
	Precept		81,480.24	2025			
				Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	238,846.87	
	Rates, Insurances, Telephones	6,125.01			Interest on Deposit Accounts	6,693.31	
	Repairs & Renewals	9,783.97			Highland Water Contributions	1,411.27	
	Fuel	27,312.13			Water Transfer - EA	-	
	Drainworks	19,094.65			Consents	50.00	
	District Labour	44,086.24			Write back of provisions	9,461.54	
	Administration	19,508.22			Storm recovery Grant	40,310.07	296,773.06
	Technical Services	3,344.42	129,254.64				
	Transfer to Capital Reserve Fund		25,000.00				
	Write Back of Development Fees		698.99				
	Depreciation Charge		31,005.00				
	Balance carried forward		345,041.99				
			<u>612,480.86</u>				<u>612,480.86</u>

BALANCE SHEET

<u>Liabilities</u>			<u>Capital Section</u>		<u>Assets</u>		
					Pumping Stations	2,415,000.00	
Capital Provisions		2,415,000.00			Plant Assets	<u>38,642.82</u>	2,453,642.82
			<u>Revenue Section</u>				
General Fund					Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		11,497.38
Revenue	306,399.17				Stock		6,216.93
Capital	<u>38,642.82</u>	345,041.99			Value added tax - Refunds due		4,270.69
Sundry Creditors		49,156.54			Sundry Debtors		1,295.25
Development Contributions		53,494.37					
Contributions holding account		21,080.53			Balance in hand:-		
Capital Reserve Fund		161,338.11			Barclays Current Account	70,000.00	
Grant Aid Received in Advance		7,445.02			Barclays Business Premium Accot	505,633.49	
					Barclays treasury Deposit Account	<u>-</u>	575,633.49
			<u>3,052,556.56</u>				<u>3,052,556.56</u>

Manea & Welney Internal Drainage Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2025

Treasurers Account 2024/2025

1st April 2024		31st March 2025	
Balance brought forward	529,375.66	Payments made during the year	273,301.32
31st March 2025			
Receipts during the year			
Clerk's collection account	308,623.11		
Interest on deposit accounts	<u>10,936.04</u>		
	319,559.15	Balance carried forward	575,633.49
	<u>848,934.81</u>		<u>848,934.81</u>

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2025

Barclays Bank PLC

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2025	70,000.00
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
O/S lodgement	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>70,000.00</u>

Cash balances as at 31st March 2025

Barclays Bank PLC

Current Account	70,000.00
Business Premium Account	505,633.49
Treasury Deposit	0.00
<u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u>	<u>575,633.49</u>

Manea & Welney DDC**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2025****Per Annual
Return**

Line 1	Balances brought forward			
	General Fund	246,059.98		
	Development charges account	51,699.30		
	Capital reserve account	133,507.62		
	Contributions Holdings Account	14,621.47		
			445,888.37	445,888
Line 2	Rates and Special Levies			
	Agricultural rates	170,832.38		
	Special Levies	67,431.00		
	Penalty	696.49		
	Costs	75.00		
	Write-off	-188.00		
			238,846.87	238,847
Line 3	Total other receipts			
	Interest			
	General fund	6,693.31		
	Development charges account	1,096.08		
	Capital reserve account	2,830.49		
	Highland Water	2,248.77		
	Discharge contributions	6,459.06		
	Consents	50.00		
	Water Transfer - EA	0.00		
	Insurance Claim	0.00		
	Write Back of Provisions	9,461.54		
	Storm Recovery Grant T1a	39,472.57		
			68,311.82	68,312
Line 4	Staff costs			
	Wages/salaries	36,872.87		
	National insurance contributions	3,833.22		
	Pension costs	3,380.15		
	Travelling expenses	0.00		
			44,086.24	44,086
Line 5	Loan repayments			
	PWLB - Principal	0.00		
	PWLB - Interest	0.00		
			0.00	0
Line 6	All other payments			
	Precept	81,480.24		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	6,125.01		
	Repairs and renewals	9,783.97		
	Fuel	27,312.13		
	Drainworks	19,094.65		
	Administration	19,508.22		
	Development charges fees	0.00		
	Planning fees	3,344.42		
	Purchase of Asset	0.00		
	Improvements	0.00		
			166,648.64	166,649

Manea & Welney DDC**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2025****Per Annual
Return****Line 7**

Balances carried forward	
General Fund	306,399.17
Development charges account	53,494.37
Capital reserve account	161,338.11
Contributions Holding Account	21,080.53
	542,312.18

542,312

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6

542,312.18

Rounding

0.00

Reconciliation to Accounts

Balances carried forward per Annual Return - As above

542,312.18

Add Back:-

Adjustments for Prior Years

69,647.82

Depreciation

-31,005.00

Purchase of Asset

0.00

38,642.82

Balances carried forward per Accounts

General Fund

345,041.99

Development charges account

53,494.37

Capital reserve account

161,338.11

Contributions Holdings Account

21,080.53

580,955.00

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

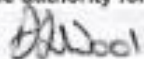
MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	446,897	445,888	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	224,408	238,847	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	19,373	68,312	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	40,855	44,086	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	203,935	166,649	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	445,888	542,312	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	529,376	575,633	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,611,078	2,611,078	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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



Date

13.05.2025

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

as recorded in minute reference:

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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	13
Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD
Date:	Wednesday 28 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the Finance Officer's summary

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

As a result of the Storm Recovery Grants being received in 2024/25 (T1a £40,310.07 (adjusted for Highland Water) the General Fund sits at £345,042 which represents over a year in hand for expenditure.

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

1.1 Reported in January meeting.

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

2.1 Reported in January meeting.

3. Highland Water Contributions

It was reported in the January meeting that the Environment Agency were not able to meet all Highland Water payments in full for 2024/2025, however the RFCC have since made up the difference and we can confirm that the full Highland Water claims have been now paid.

4. Estimates for 2024/25

4.1 Reported in January meeting.

5. Rate Requirements for 2024/25

5.1 Reported in January meeting.

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	14
Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DDC	Subject:	MIDDLE LEVEL IDB CHANGE
Date:	Wednesday 28 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Paul Burrows On behalf of the working group
RECOMMENDATIONS The Board is asked to: A. Have an open and objective discussion about their health, their fitness for the future and their reliance and interdependency with the health of all other IDBs within the Middle Level and the Middle Level Commissioners. B. Respond to the questions posed to inform the approach to detailed design. C. Gauge the degree of support for taking control of change proactively locally. D. Provide a £300 contribution towards the costs of developing the detailed design.			

1. Recap

- 1.1 As previously reported to the MLC Board and IDBs administered by the MLC, 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. The consensus from those who attended was that we needed to act and a small working group has been identified to draft an initial case for change.
- 1.2 The working group met on 5th September 2024 and were joined by Innes Thomson, ADA Chief Executive. The group used the 'Geoff Beel' vision from 2009 as a starting point to discuss the primary drivers for change and the key concerns that any proposed new model would need to take account of. A summary note from the meeting was issued on 9th September 2024.
- 1.3 The Middle Level Board of the Middle Level Commissioners, recognising their leadership, convening and facilitating role, as well as their interest in the governance and operational health of IDBs within their catchment, approved £10k of seed funding used to commission an outline design report. Gradeas Consulting Limited was engaged to undertake this work.
- 1.4 The working group met on 16th January 2025 to review the draft report and agree the approach to crucial engagement with IDBs that is essential in moving forward with the work into a detailed design phase.
- 1.5 The outline design report has been made available to IDB Chairman and Board Members to be read in conjunction with this paper.

2. Case for Change – Key Messages

- 2.1 There are a variety of factors that contribute to the view that the current IDB governance model within the Middle Level is not sufficiently robust for future generations, with an increasing number of IDBs being in poor financial and membership health today.
 - a) Changes in agriculture and land-ownership, with fewer family farms reducing the scale of hands-on active IDB membership, along with a general aging demographic.
 - b) Degradation of pumping stations the majority of which are at the end of their reliable life, with insufficient funds and complex governance arrangements stifling proactive and efficient investment.

- c) A steady increase in legislative and statutory responsibilities, along with increased societal and government expectations of IDBs meaning the resources and costs associated with these overheads have become a sizeable proportion of overall expenditure, particularly for smaller IDBs. This is set to increase further.
 - d) Increasing operational pressures as climate change accelerates and IDBs have to adapt to dealing with extremes of drought and high, intense rainfall, whilst being highly vulnerable to energy costs.
 - e) The inherent financial dependence upon eligibility, availability and leverage of government grant with responsible investment strategies being beyond the reach of many IDBs' rate and levy payer base.
- 2.2 Given the two-tier nature of water management within the Middle Level **we collectively are only as strong as the weakest link**, so whilst an IDB may be or may consider themselves relatively fit for the future, they ought to consider the landscape scale position.
- 2.3 Boards need to be mindful that the scale of change potentially needed in the Middle Level would be beyond the 'business as usual' IDB amalgamations that are ongoing or have happened in recent history and would therefore need significant resourcing to enact and implement. This would need to be programmed and resourced with the Environment Agency and Defra. Even with dedicated and bespoke drive, realistically any change we stimulate now would take a 5-15 year period to come to fruition. The problem ought not to be left to the next generation to fix.
- 2.4 The five key messages the working group would encourage the Board to consider are:
- 1. The need to **future-proof** – thinking about the next two generations of farmer, land manager and beneficiary.
 - 2. The ambition to **retain local control** – the increasing risk of change being designed and directed nationally.
 - 3. Our collective ability to inform and **influence** locally, regionally and nationally to strengthen our negotiating position to **lever investment** and policy change, as well as **deliver efficiently and effectively to avoid higher future costs**.
 - 4. The **changing representation** within IDB membership given changes in land-use, development and water level management.
 - 5. The need for a more **cost-effective delivery model** with overhead costs proportionate to expenditure.

3. Outline Design – Questions for IDBs and individual Board Members

- 3.1 The approach taken to the outline design has been an objective, analytical one driven by readily available data. Collectively we need to add the operational view and Middle Level knowledge to focus and scope the next stage of detailed design.
- 3.2 Having reviewed the draft outline design report the working group debated the outline options and despite a range of differing views, they suggest that:
- a) The option of one or two IDBs is not progressed to detailed design as it was felt that this would create an entity that is too big and would arguably be as cumbersome to govern and service as the existing model. There is little appetite for becoming the largest IDB in the country.
 - b) Options for five or six IDBs are not developed, supporting the view and rationale presented within the report (Section 7).
 - c) Options for three and four IDBs are progressed to detailed design.
- 3.3 Alongside seeking the views of IDBs via this paper the working group suggested that an online form be made available for individual Board Members to also submit their views and that in parallel to this engagement we write to the following seeking their view and steer:

- a) Local Authorities, including Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs)
- b) Environment Agency
- c) Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC)
- d) Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA)
- e) Defra

3.4 Questions for IDBs to consider and feedback via the Chairman to the MLC Chief Executive by close on Friday 4th July 2025.

Q1	On a scale of 1-10, do you consider that there is a need for change? 1 = don't see a need to change to 10 = radical reform is long overdue.
Q2	What are your hopes and fears for the future and within any new model?
Q3	Do you consider that your IDB is fit for the future? Yes or No – Please explain your answer.
Q4	What are the current strengths of your IDB that you wish to see retained within any new model and what are the weaknesses you wish to see mitigated?
Q5	Do you agree that the options of one, two, five and six IDBs are not progressed to detailed design? Yes or No – Please explain your rationale if you disagree.
Q6	Which options to you feel warrant progressing to detailed design, or have you an alternative suggestion?
Q7	Do you have a preferred option from within the outline design options of three and four IDBs? Yes or No - If yes, which option and explain why.
Q8	The report references a number of considerations that could be considered further within detailed design <i>eg specific boundaries, differential rates, ringfencing accrued budgets, operational districts, employee and the service delivery model.</i> Which of these is most important to you and why? Have you any specific issues or observations you would like to be assessed?
Q9	Are you supportive of any change being designed and led locally and what role would you like to play within this?
Q10	Have you any other feedback or issues that you feel have not been considered within the work so far?

4. Next steps and potential timescales

- 4.1 The aim is for feedback to be consolidated over summer and reviewed by the working group in September 2025.
- 4.2 If human and financial resources are available and the feedback corroborates the need to act, the detailed design will then be scoped and commissioned with the ambition to present the results and seek IDB approval to a preferred option at their 2026 meetings.

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Role:

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Hugh Whittome, Marc Heading, Richard Price, Paul Burrows (plus other MLC staff inputs)**