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30th October 2025

Dear Board Members

Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
Thursday 6th November 2025

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Baptist Hall, Station Road, Haddenham at 7.15pm on Thursday 6th November 2025.

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

Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners

Thursday 6th November 2025 – 7.15pm

The Baptist Hall, Station Road, Haddenham

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 - 14	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership • Attendance • Vacancies & appointments • Composition and amalgamations • Training	Pages 15 - 17	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Verbal	Clerk
6	Chairman's Items • Mick George – non-payment – since Sept 2024 to present • Slacker – Claytons Bridge • Culverts – Hoghill Drove • Pumping Station signage	verbal	Chair
7	Environment Report	verbal	Env Rep
8	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: • Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Pages 18 - 22	Clerk
9	Health & Safety	Verbal	Chair/DO
10	District Officer's Report	Verbal	DO
11	Governance • Completion of the Annual return for 2024/2025 • Internal Auditor report 2024/2025 • Risk Assessment • Exercise of Public Rights	Page 23 Pages 24 - 28 Pages 29 - 35	Clerk
12	Finance Report • Highland Water • Storm Recovery Grant – T2B • Budget Monitoring 2025/2026	Pages 36 - 37 Pages 38	Chair
13	Date of Next Meeting	Verbal	Chair
14	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

HADDENHAM LEVEL DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Haddenham Level District Drainage Commissioners held at the Baptist Hall, Haddenham on Thursday 24th April 2025.

PRESENT

M Church (Chair)	R Darby	K Robinson
C Bidwell	Mrs R Dennis	N Tebbitt
I Chambers	R Flint	E Veal
T Chambers	K Furness	R Waddelow
S Cheetham (ECDC)	T Hughes	G Wilson (ECDC)
E Claydon-Lee	R Lee	N Wright
J Darby	A Lensen	A Yarrow
Mrs M Darby	P Mappledoram	

Miss Ablett representing the Clerk and Mr David Jordan (District Engineer) were in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Dennis, W Dennis and Mrs L Flint.

C.557 Declarations of Interest

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

Mrs Rachel Dennis declared an interest in any item in the agenda concerning the construction of the irrigation reservoirs.

The Chairman declared an interest in all matters relating to the District Officer.

C.558 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 7th November 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.559 Matters Arising

The Chairman referred to minute no. C.549 c) and reported the new Atlas excavator had been delivered on 31st January 2025 and was working well.

He also referred to minute no. C.553 and confirmed the repairs to the culvert at Cracknell Drove had been completed satisfactorily.

C.560 Constitution & Membership

The Commissioners considered the report.

The Chairman introduced Ed Claydon-Lee and advised he had been appointed as a representative of A G Wright & Sons (Farms) Ltd and welcomed him to the Commissioners.

Annual Appointments

The Chairman reported that it was necessary for the Commissioners to appoint a Vice-Chairman and enquired whether there were any proposals.

Mr R Darby proposed Ed Claydon-Lee, which was seconded by Mr R Lee. As there were no further proposals, it was agreed that Mr Claydon-Lee be appointed as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

That Michael Church be appointed as Chairman of the Commissioners

That Ed Claydon-Lee be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Commissioners

C.561 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett drew the Commissioners attention to the Clerks Report and asked members to note its content.

C.562 Transfer of Service Provision

The Chairman reported that as advised at the last meeting he and Jack Smith had met with both the Ely Group and the Water Management Alliance (WMA) and considered the latter to be more favourable as the Ely Group required the Commissioners to amalgamate with the other Boards who were transferring to them.

The Chairman further reported that another meeting with the WMA had taken place to which Mr N Wright, Mr R Lee and Mr E Clayton-Lee had accompanied him.

Mr Wright advised Members that the meeting had gone well and in his opinion the proposal put forward was excellent. Mr Lee advised that he had been impressed at the meeting and considered the WMA to be a professional organisation with the resources available to provide the Commissioners with a good service. He added that as part of the package the Commissioners would only be charged for the services used and he advised the WMA were happy to attend the Commissioners' meetings in the evening at Baptist Hall in Haddenham.

The Chairman advised he had received quotes from the Ely Group and the WMA being £19,427 and £19,812, respectively. He added that these were slightly higher than the amount of £17,500 being charged by the Middle Level Commissioners.

Mr R Lee proposed that the WMA be the future service provider for the Commissioners. This was seconded by Mr N Wright.

It was then voted upon and agreed unanimously to move to WMA.

Mr Wright considered the Commissioners should move to the WMA as soon as possible and enquired whether there was any reason they had to wait until the 1st of April 2026.

Miss Ablett advised that transferring services part way through a financial year would not be advisable and would not be practical for any of the parties involved. She advised the Clerk had already had a conversation with the WMA who had confirmed they would not wish to provide their services part way through a financial year. She added that transferring the service on 1st April 2026 would allow all parties sufficient time to undertake the transition and handover with confidence.

Miss Ablett advised the Middle Level Commissioners would deal with matters until 1st April 2026, although some finance works may need to be handled by Middle Level Commissioners until later in the year. This is likely to include end of year accounts and preparation and submission of the IDB1 return.

Mr Wright did not expect the Commissioners to pay any extra money to facilitate the transition especially as the Middle Level Commissioners had asked the Commissioners to find an alternative service provider. Miss Ablett confirmed she would convey this to the Clerk.

Miss Ablett advised the Commissioners that there were a number of resolutions required to enable the effective transfer of services to the new service provider.

The Chairman proposed that these resolutions be approved, and this was seconded by Mr R Lee.

The Commissioners approved the resolutions unanimously and for the transition arrangements to be completed by 1st April 2026.

RESOLVED

The Commissioners approved that their future service provider would be the Water Management Alliance and resolved that the Chairman continue to finalise arrangements with them.

Service	**Organisation**
Clerking (inc Office functions, Finance, Governance, Insurance & Utilities)	Water Management Alliance
Environmental	Water Management Alliance
Planning & Consenting	Water Management Alliance
Capital Works and other Technical Services	Water Management Alliance

The Commissioners made the following resolutions to enable the effective transfer of services from the Middle Level Commissioners to the Water Management Alliance.

A That the position of clerk to the IDB transfer from Middle Level Commissioners to the Water Management Alliance at or as close to 1st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date.

B That the RFO from the Water Management Alliance be added to the Barclays Bank PLC Mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board. Once handover of Financial services is complete, then MLC staff are resolved to be removed from the mandate and authorisations. The Board also approve to change banks, if required, by the Water Management Alliance.

C That the RFO from the Water Management Alliance be added as an additional administrator to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform and once handover of Financial services is complete, they will become the primary administrator and MLC staff are resolved to be removed as administrators.

D That the position of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to the IDB in transferred from the Middle Level Commissioners' Head of Finance to the RFO of the Water Management Alliance at or as close to 1st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date. At this point the Board will need to adopt new Financial Regulations and Internal Controls.

E That at the point of handover, the IDB are removed from the Middle Level Commissioners group banking arrangements with Barclays Bank PLC.

F That the Middle Level Commissioners will finalise and submit accounts for 2025/26 and the IDB1 return.

G That the preparation of 2026/27 budget estimates and rate assessment be developed by both parties, but any meetings and decisions made after the position of clerk has been handed-over be led by the Water Management Alliance. The issuing and collection of drainage rates for 2026/27 along with collection of past debt will be undertaken by the Water Management Alliance after handover of banking arrangements and the RFO role.

H That the Board's internal audit services move from the Middle Level Commissioners' group arrangements with Whitings LLP to that as agreed with the Water Management Alliance as of April 2026.

I That the Water Management Alliance provides a named person who becomes a shadow Data Protection Officer on behalf of the Board alongside the Lead Clerk of the Middle Level Commissioners and that both parties are considered as 'Data Handlers' on behalf of the Board who is 'Data Controller'.

J Once handover of all data and information for all areas of service provision has been completed, then the person nominated in I above becomes the Board's sole Data Protection Officer.

K That the Board authorise their 'Data Handlers' to transfer all relevant data and information, including personal data and any operational information held.

L Authorise the Water Management Alliance to develop a shadow webpage for the Board and the removal of the MLC hosted webpage once clerkship services have transferred. At this point the Board approve to adopt their new supplier's Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure with the new supplier being the new public and partner point of contact for the Board at this point for all incoming/outgoing correspondence.

M Other than the Board's Financial Regulations, Internal Controls, Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure, the Board's other existing policies will remain in place until new or adapted policies are proposed by the Water Management Alliance.

N That the Board will remain within the Middle Level Commissioners Group insurance policy until they are included within the Water Management Alliance arrangements.

O The Board will adopt the model Reserved Matters, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation of the Water Management Alliance from 1 April 2026.

p The IDB H&S lead and the Water Management Alliance will let the MLC know, if appropriate to the IDB, whether the current services of COPE Safety Management as advisors to the Board (within MLC Group arrangements with COPE) will continue or whether there will be a new approach.
The IDB H&S lead will inform the Water Management Alliance of all details relating to any near miss, learning events, or other relevant Health and Safety related events or information pertaining to the IDB and its operation.

Q The MLC will provide transfer all details and IPR relating to capital projects and their management and admin underway or in a medium-term plan for the IDB and will inform the Environment Agency and DEFRA of the change of service provider where required.

R That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the board are authorised to agree with the MLC Chief Executive and/or Chief Engineer and the Water Management Alliance to the transition arrangements (including timescales and fees) associated with the transition of M&E, Environmental, Planning & Consenting, Capital Works and other Technical Services.

<u>C.563 Environment Officers' Report</u>

Miss Ablett referred to the Environment Officer's Report

Miss Ablett advised It was imperative that all Commissioners take note of the matters included in the report as this was an area that could have a significant impact on the Commissioners and if the current legislation was not adhered to, it could lead to criminal proceedings and significant fines.

She referred Members to the Environmental Services package that had been developed to help the Commissioners to meet their minimum statutory environmental compliance.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment with the service provided by the Environmental Officer as she had only met with him on one occasion and had still not made arrangements for training concerning working around badgers and licencing.

Miss Ablett referred to the Environment Officer's report and advised the training had been postponed following a successful legal challenge to Natural England, which had been made by the Middle Level Commissioners and representatives from three other IDBs.

The Chairman advised he considered the increase in fee from £775 to £2,375 to be excessive and advised the Commissioners that they did have the option to opt out and use an external consultant to provide Ecological Services.

Miss Ablett advised that the cost of using external consultants would be far more expensive than using Ms Lloyd and her IDB colleagues and she referred to the cost comparison regarding water vole displacements shown in the Environment Officer's report as an example.

After some discussion Members agreed to the Environmental Services package and the associated increased fee.

Miss Ablett advised the new Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and policies were being drawn up for approval and enquired whether Members were happy for the drafts to be sent to the Chairman for his approval.

Members agreed this was the best course of action.

RESOLVED

> That the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager's Report be approved.
>
> That the draft Biodiversity Action Plan and polices are sent to the Chairman for his consideration and approval on behalf of the Commissioners.

C.564 Chairman's Items

The Chairman advised there were several points he wished to raise.

a) Discharge complaint

The Chairman reported he had received a complaint from a Ratepayer, which had resulted in them refusing to pay their drainage rates. The complaint related to the quality of water being discharged into the drain from the settling pond, which had infiltrated the drain adjacent to their property, together with the damage this could cause to wildlife.

The Chairman advised that he agreed with the Ratepayer regarding the water quality and reported the Environment Officer had attended site to inspect the ditch, as he had asked for her opinion, however he had not yet received a response.

Miss Ablett advised that the Environment Officer had included a response in her report, shown under Water Quality Issues.

The Chairman reported he had discussed the situation with the Ratepayer and invited them to attend a Commissioners' meeting, which they had declined. The Chairman added that following various communications with the Ratepayer and they had now paid their drainage rates in full.

b) Construction of irrigation reservoirs

The Chairman reported he had asked Andrew Woodcock of Mick George for an update regarding the construction of the reservoir, but nothing had been received.

He advised that all invoices raised to date had been paid and an invoice to 31st March 2025 had been raised recently.

The Chairman reported that problems were arising with extracting the data from the meters as they were breaking on a regular basis due to sand slipping into the settling pond and sediment having built up over time. He added that the broken meters were being replaced, but the reads extracted from these were at times being disputed by Mick George.

The Chairman reported that Martin Redding of Middle Level Commissioners had advised that Mick George should record all the reads/units and provide these records to the Commissioners on a regular basis.

This matter was discussed further and Members agreed that if meters are replaced then the read should be assumed as having started at zero and all units charged by the Commissioners. It was hoped this may result in the appropriate action being taken by Mick George to prevent the sediment build up from occurring.

The Vice Chairman advised that he will contact Andrew Woodcock and would work with him to try and resolve the issue.

RESOLVED

> That meter reads be taken and charged from zero if a meter is replaced.
>
> That the Chairman contact Marting Redding at Middle Level Commissioners, if considered necessary.

c) Culverts Hoghill to Aldreth

The Chairman reported there had been no progress regarding the installation of the culverts from Hoghill to Aldreth.

He advised that his first point of contact had been very helpful but had unfortunately since moved departments and the matter had been transferred to another department who the Chairman had been unable to contact.

He further advised that the Council would not authorise the repairs as they interpreted that the pipes would need to be larger, the proposed pipes were smaller. The pipes need to be deeper in the ditch due to shrinkage of the land in the Fens. He added that the pipe at Dairy Drove had deteriorated significantly, and as the pipe which was now required was a similar size but this matter needed to be dealt with and authorised by the bridges department.

He has since been unable to contact anyone at the Council to discuss the matter further.

Mr T Chambers offered to assist the Chairman if required and the Chairman thanked him and advised he would try contacting the Council again.

d) Purchase of Height Limiter

The Chairman reported that as a result of the accident involving the excavator, it was necessary to purchase a height limiter for the new Atlas excavator. He advised the cost would be in the region of £4,500 and enquired whether the Commissioners were happy to proceed with the purchase. Members agreed for the height limiter to be purchased.

RESOLVED

That a height limiter be purchased for the new Atlas excavator.

e) Weedscreen Cleaner at Sutton Gault Pumping Station

The Chairman reported the weedscreen cleaner control system at Sutton Gault pumping station had not been refurbished as it had been unclear whether any Tranche 2a funding would be made available. He advised that the Commissioners had not been successful in securing any funding and added the refurbishment would be undertaken in May 2025 at a cost of £9,845.

C.565 Consulting Engineers' Reports

The Commissioners considered the reports of the Consulting Engineers and agreed to take the reports as read.

Technical Services

Miss Ablett reminded the Commissioners they had previously approved to support the need to review the charging model and she reported this had been implemented and been in use since 1st April. She added the charges would be payable by the applicant and not the Commissioners and it was hoped this would encourage applicants to enter into a pre app and therefore reduce costs to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners acknowledged and approved the interim charges approach.

Capital Programme

Miss Ablett reported that current indications were that there was no allocation of funding within the current FCRM Grant-In-Aid programme and it was not known what funding would be available from the Environment Agency or what the process for application would be.

Miss Ablett asked the Commissioners to consider what funding was required for capital works so when the process and funding availability was known a submission to the Environment Agency could be made promptly.

RESOLVED

That the reports be approved.

C.566 Health & Safety

The Chairman gave a verbal update following his meeting with COPE Safety Management on 4th February 2025 and reported the visit had gone well and no further concerns or recommendations had been raised.

He added the only matter which remained outstanding was that warning signage for the pumping stations had not yet been fitted. He advised the Middle Level Commissioners were going to source the signage, but this had not yet been supplied.

Miss Ablett advised that the Middle Level Commissioners could supply the signage at a cost in the region of £110 per sign and showed Members an example of the signage suggested, which would require an email address as a contact.

It was agreed by Members that as contact details were required and in view of the Commissioners transferring to Water Management Alliance next year, that the Commissioners would obtain the signage themselves.

C.567 District Officers Report

The Chairman gave a verbal report.

He reported the pumps had worked well during the year and the pumping hours had reduced considerably compared to the previous year due to less rainfall. He advised that following the accident involving the Commissioners' excavator, a hired machine had been used to undertake the necessary drain maintenance, giving rise to additional costs.

He further reported that £69,112 had been received in the form of a storm recovery grant during the year and advised Members that repairs to the weedscreen cleaner at Haddenham Pumping Station, had been completed at a cost of £6,880 net of VAT.

C.568 Governance

Miss Ablett referred to the recommendations and resolutions the Commissioners had been asked to make.

a) Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Commissioners – 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.

The Commissioners noted the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.

b) Policy Reviews

The Commissioners considered and reviewed the policies.

RESOLVED

i) The Commissioners approved the publication of the Financial Regulations policies.

ii) The Commissioners approved their updated policy statement.

c) Risk Management Assessment & Insured Values

The Commissioners considered their Risk Management Strategy and insured sums.

RESOLVED

i) The Commissioners approved the sums insured.
ii) The Commissioners did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Commissioners Risk Management Strategy (published in 2024 and on the website).

d) Review of Internal Controls

Miss Ablett reported that the internal controls the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Commissioners are available on the Commissioner's webpage.

The Commissioners considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls and did not highlight the requirement for any additional controls.

e) DEFRA IDB1 Return

Miss Ablett referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2023/2024 which the Commissioners noted and approved.

f) Annual Governance Statement

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Commissioners for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

g) Exercise of Public Rights

Miss Ablett 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.

Miss Ablett 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. She 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 Commissioners that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

C.569 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Commissioners reviewed and noted the key finance messages of the Responsible Finance Officer.

The attention of the Commissioners was drawn to the Storm Recovery Grant and a claim for £72,509.44 being received.

Payments 2025.

The Commissioners considered and approved the Payments for 2024/2025.

(NB: The Chairman declared an interest in the payments made to him as District Officer.)

Highland Water Contributions

Miss Ablett referred to the Highland Water Contributions received for 2024/2025, noting the adjustment against the claim as a result of the Storm Recovery Grant.

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2024/2025.

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual accounts and Finance Papers for the year ended 31st March 2025, as required in the Audit regulations.

RESOLVED

> That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Commissioners for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

C.570 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Finance officer's summary and key messages

Miss Ablett advised that when considering the rating estimates and the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2025/2026, the Commissioners should note that as a result of the Storm Recovery Grant being received in 2024/2025 the General Fund balance at the year end amounted to £257,090, which represented just over a year in hand for expenditure.

She further advised that estimates for pumping costs were as problematical as last year in that an 'average' pumping year needed to be factored in, as well as considering the impact of climate change. She added that a new electricity supply contract would be entered into from October 2025 with no indications of potential unit rates. The budget is therefore an estimate of pumping volumes at an estimated unit rate being a 5% increase on the 2024-2025 rates.

She advised that Members should also consider the impact of any proposed development within the District and the impact this could have on the drainage system and pumping stations.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

i) ADA subscription

Miss Ablett reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 6.5% for 2025, from £724 to £ 772 (plus VAT).

RESOLVED

That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 be paid.

ii) District Officer's Fee

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

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners agree that the sum of up to £3,080 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2025/2026.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest in this item as District Officer.

iii) District Engineer's Wage Increase 2025/2026

Miss Ablett reported the District Engineer's wages would increase in accordance with the Middle Level Commissioners pay award.

iv) Charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work

Consideration was given to whether any revisions were necessary in the Commissioners' charges for hiring plant for private work (last reviewed – April 2024): -

Atlas 360 Wheeled Excavator

Present charges inclusive of operator's wages and travelling time:

- £30.00 per hour in the District
- £45.00 per hour outside the District

RESOLVED

That no change be made to the hire charges.

Precept to the Environment Agency

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 £38,905.82.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2025/2026

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed budget for 2025/2026.

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 Miss Ablett that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 64.28.% and 35.72%.

Miss Ablett reported the rate required to meet the estimated net expenditure for 2025-2026 was 48p, which the Chairman advised was a 2p reduction compared to the rate set for 2024-2025.

Mr Andrew Lensen proposed a rate of 48p be set to meet the estimated net expenditure for 2025/26, which was seconded by Mr Toby Chambers.

Miss Ablett enquired whether there were any other proposals.

Mr Nick Wright proposed the rate should remain at 50p, the same as last year, as there were a lot of unknown factors facing the Commissioners and they needed to have sufficient funds to run efficiently. This was seconded by Mr Tim Hughes.

Miss Ablett advised that two rates had been proposed, both of which had been seconded so a vote was required. Following a vote on the proposals a rate of 50p was set.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £253,224 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 £162,783 and £90,441 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 50.00p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special levy of £90,441 be made and issued to the East Cambs District Council 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 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.571 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next Meeting of the Commissioners be held on Thursday 6th November 2025 at 7.15pm at the Baptist Hall, Haddenham.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 6th November 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. To authorise adding Vice-Chairman to the bank mandate.
D. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
E. 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	24	N/A		
Actual	24	2 ECDC	26	6
Vacancies	0			

1.2 The table below details the current appointed Commissioners

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	C Bidwell	Landowner/ratepayer	
2	C Chambers	Landowner/ratepayer	
3	I Chambers	Landowner/ratepayer	
4	T Chambers	Landowner/ratepayer	
5	M Church	Representative of A G Wright & Sons	Chairman
6	J Darby	Landowner/ratepayer	
7	M Darby	Landowner/ratepayer	
8	R Darby	Landowner/ratepayer	
9	J Dennis	Landowner/ratepayer	
10	R Dennis	Landowner/ratepayer	
11	W Dennis	Landowner/ratepayer	
12	L Flint	Nominee of Mrs L Burton	
13	R Flint	Nominee of Mrs L Burton	
14	K Furness	Representative of E R Everett & Son	
15	T Hughes	Representative of BS Pell Trust	
16	R Lee	Landowner/ratepayer	
17	A Lensen	Representative of A G Reserves Ltd	
18	P Mappledoram	Landowner/ratepayer	
19	K Robinson	Representative of Sutton Smallholders	
	J Smith	Representative of A G Wright & Sons	Vice-Chair resigned 10/1/2025
20	N Tebbitt	Landowner/ratepayer	
21	E Veal	Landowner/ratepayer	
22	R Waddelow	Landowner/ratepayer	
23	N Wright	Landowner/ratepayer	
24	A Yarrow	Landowner/ratepayer	

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

No	Name	Appointing Council as at July 2023	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	S Cheetham	HPC	Councillor
2	G Wilson	ECDC	Councillor
3			
4			

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

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

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	25/04/2025	7/11/2024	18/09/2024	25/04/2024
1	C Bidwell	Present		Present	Present
2	C Chambers				
3	I Chambers	Present		Present	Present
4	T Chambers	Present	Apologies		Present
5	M Church	Present	Present	Present	Present
6	A J Darby	Present	Present	Present	Present
7	M Darby	Present	Apologies		Present
8	R Darby	Present	Present	Present	Present
9	J Dennis	Apologies	Apologies		
10	R Dennis	Present	Present	n/a	n/a
11	W Dennis	Apologies	Apologies		
12	L Flint	Apologies	Apologies		Apologies
13	R Flint	Present	Apologies		Present
14	K Furness	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
15	T Hughes	Present		Present	Present
16	R Lee	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
17	A Lensen	Present	Present		Present
18	P Mappledoram	Present	Apologies		Apologies
19	K Robinson	Present	Present		Present
	J Smith		Present	Apologies	Present
20	N Tebbitt	Present		Present	Present
21	E Veal	Present			Apologies
22	R Waddelow	Present			Present
23	N Wright	Present	Apologies		Apologies
24	A Yarrow	Present	Present	Present	Present

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/04/2022
1	M Church	Present	Present	Present	Present

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	24/04/2025	7/11/2024	18/09/2024	25/04/2024
1	Cllr S Cheetham HPC	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	Cllr G Wilson ECDC	Present	Apologies	Apologies	Present
3					
4					

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 To authorise the Vice-Chair to be added to the bank mandate. (Ed Claydon-Lee)

4. Training

4.1 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/

4.2 To date 1 of 26 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 1 of 26 Board members have reported viewing 1 of the five videos
To date 17 of 26 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the five videos
To date 1 of 26 Board members have reported viewing 4 of the five videos

4.3 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.

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

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners</td><td colspan="2">Item No:</td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting:</td><td>HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS (Hereafter referred to as the Board)</td><td>Subject:</td><td colspan="2">CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY, TECHNICAL SERVICES, M&E & CAPITAL PROGRAMME</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td>Thursday 6th November 2025</td><td colspan="2">Officer Responsible:</td><td>Nicola Oldfield</td></tr>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Confirm how it wishes to proceed with developing a plan for refurbishment or replacement of Sutton Gault Pumping Station.**
B. **Review the pumping station key dates and inform the Consulting Engineer of any discrepancies or additional information.**

1. **IDB Fund**

Following the initial, unsuccessful bid for funding, the Environment Agency subsequently awarded funding for the 'Asset Resilience Pumps & Channels' package in June 2025. These works are due for completion by March 2026.

Works being delivered for this district include the following:

- Weedscreen refurbishment at Sutton Gault Pumping Station

2. **Update on Willow Hall Farm irrigation reservoirs**

Ongoing problems continue at Willow Hall Farm Quarry and other Mick George Ltd (MG Ltd) quarry sites in the wider MLC catchment. Primarily, this relates to erroneous and sporadic discharge pump meter readings when faulty meters which are not zero re-calibrated are replaced by second or third hand meters. This is coupled with too many fines (sand and silt) continually being discharged when dewatering sites and goes against Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 permits issued by the Environment Agency, written clauses in our own discharge consents, and best practice discharge guidelines in the Quarry Regulations 1999. MG Ltd continually question 6-monthly meter reading audits taken by the Chairman and District Officer. Often, there's no start reading or date given when uncalibrated meters are installed, inevitably leading to questionable readings about actual discharge volumes. This causes untimely delays issuing invoices leading to late payment of a significant sum. The previous October 2024 to April 2025 invoice remains outstanding.

Excess fines in IDB and riparian watercourses are causing them to progressively becoming turbid and frequently chocked with silt and sand, stifling vegetation growth which ordinarily helps clean waterborne particulates. A knock-on effect of habitat loss negatively impacts biomass in those watercourses (i.e. water voles, fish and eels, amphibians, invertebrates etc) and those species that feed on them. At Willow Hall and Block Fen, these quarries reside in proximity to the internationally designated Ouse Washes wetland site, so wading birds seeking shelter off the washes to feed in nearby drains are subjected to declining habitat and species loss. It's worth acknowledging many of these watercourses are seen as important for biodiversity to the IDB and residents. Some are designated non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites, while others are statutory County Wildlife Sites. Nowadays, a majority of these are ecologically classed as in a 'poor' state, whereas they were previously in a 'moderate' to 'good' state. As the Board is responsible for managing these sites and their routine maintenance regime hasn't changed, there's only one common denominator for their decline in status.

Moreover, the District Officer undertaking annual works to keep these channels clear is routinely encountering considerable quantities of unwanted sediment which needs clearing. Consequently, annual maintenance, which used to be a formality prior to quarry discharge, is now becoming time onerous, and adjacent landowners [rate payers] dislike having nutrient poor silt and sand spread on their land. Fundamentally, IDB's have obligations under the Water Framework Directive to ensure there is no detriment to water quality and to maintain a healthy aquatic ecosystem resulting from their management activities, just as MG Ltd as an operator has a 'Duty of Care' to ensure minimal environmental impact results from their quarry operations.

In recent months, MG Ltd has been requested to ensure pump roses fitted to any 6" dewatering pumps must not be laid on the quarry floor/sump and be held 0.6-1m in the water column above using floats to avoid fines intake being discharged for the quarry's life. Additionally, the Board and MLC have demanded their individual pump meter readings be provided electronically on a quarterly basis in an Excel spreadsheet from the working site. Any broken or defective meter changes must be recorded and dated on their records to compare with those taken. The Board will still require occasional unfettered access to any pump(s) to gather their own records as they see fit. To date, we are still awaiting any dewatering figures from their sites, while continuing to be subject to them questioning the accuracy of readings taken.

3. Capital Programme

The grant-in-aid programme is oversubscribed for 2026/27 and there is no grant-in-aid indicative allocation for 2026/27.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: M&E Report
Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting

APPENDIX 1

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**HADDENHAM LEVEL DC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**
Date:	**Thursday 6th November 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Dave Bantoft**

1. M&E Key Messages

1.1 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.

Other than the matters described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

The last recorded overhaul of the pump at Sutton Gault was 1990, the station piles are considerably corroded. A plan for refurbishment or replacement of this station needs to be a priority.

1.2 Minor Works

1.2.1 ***Sutton Gault***

The weed screen control and trolley refurbishment is under way with onsite fitment of trolley and panel planned for late 2025. The key health indicators have been updated to show this works.

1.2.2 ***Haddenham***

Only routine inspections have been carried out at Haddenham this period.

1.3 Inspections

1.3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out at Haddenham and Sutton Gault Pump Stations on 8th September 2025.

1.3.2 EICR Test and Due dates as below. Inspections were successfully completed at Sutton Gault and Haddenham Bungalow in March 2024.

LOCATION		EICR	
Board	**Station**	**EICR Pass Date**	**EICR Due**
Haddenham	Haddenham Bungalow	29-Mar-24	29-Mar-2027
Haddenham	Haddenham PS	19-Mar-21	19-Mar-2026
Haddenham	Sutton Gault	29-Mar-24	29-Mar-2029

1.4 Pumping Station Key Dates

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	Misc
Haddenham PS	2011	2011	2011	2011	
Sutton Gault	1971	1971	1990	2016	Slip ring O/H 2024

	Weedscreen			
Station	**Bars**	**WSC**	**WSC O/H**	**Controls**
Haddenham PS	2011	2011	2011	2011
Sutton Gault	1998	2025	2025	2025

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Appendix 2

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

MLC Ref.	***Council Ref.***	***Applicant***	***Type of Development***	***Location***
020	Enquiry	Fred Adams	Development (3 units)	Midfeather Villas, Earith

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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**HADDENHAM LEVEL DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Thursday 6th November 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Review and approve the Annual & Auditor's Reports for the year ending 31st March 2025
B. Consider the Auditor report 2024/25
C. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
D. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments

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

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

1.2 The Board/Commissioners to consider:

- the comments of the auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2025. (Appendix 1)
- the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended 31st March 2025. (Appendix 2)

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

2. Risk Assessment

2.1 The Commissioners are asked to consider their Risk Management policy.

3. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:

3.1 The clerk to report.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 **Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 2025**
Appendix 2 **Internal Audit Report 2025**

Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2025

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
Section 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 /234)

1 The Audit of accounts for the Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners for the year ended 31st March 2025 has been completed and the accounts have been published.

2 The Annual Governance & Accountability Return including the auditor's certificate and opinion is available for inspection and copying by any local government elector of the area of Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners on application to:

The Clerk
Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AH

between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm on Mondays to Fridays (excluding public holidays), when any local elector may make copies of the Annual Return.

3 Copies will be provided to any local elector on payment of £2.40 for each copy of the Annual Return

Announcement made by: P Burrows - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 24th September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 14/04/2025 28/04/2025 28/04/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: WHITINGS LLP

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: G. GEECH – WHITINGS LLP

Date: 28/04/2025

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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

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

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

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

24/04/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

C. 567

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

Chair M. Clue

Clerk S. Abblett

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	256,201	201,008	*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	223,465	253,713	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	71,357	289,718	*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	44,438	49,778	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	42,964	42,964	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	262,613	367,170	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	201,008	284,527	*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	339,223	266,970	*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	2,493,805	2,521,030	*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	202,855	217,558	*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 11-04-2025

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

24/04/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

C.568

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

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners – DB0035**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Date	17/09/2025

Whitings
Chartered Accountants LLP
Fenland House, 15B Hostmoor Avenue
March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AX
t: 01354 652304
e: march@whitingsllp.co.uk
w: whitingsllp.co.uk

BB/MM053
30 June 2025

Messrs. P Burrows, A Wool and S Ablett
Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambs.
PE15 0AH

Dear Messrs. P Burrows, A Wool, and S Ablett,

MLC administered Internal Drainage Boards - Internal Audit 2024-2025

Having completed the internal audit work for the various Internal Drainage Boards administered by the Middle Level Commissioners officers for the year ended 31 March 2025, we are pleased to provide you with the following recommendations to be considered for implementation. We have included some general points and some points which are related to specific boards.

General points

1. **Employee Benefits**

   As of 6 April 2025, HMRC has implemented a significant change in the tax treatment of double cab pickups. These vehicles are now generally classified as cars rather than vans for Benefit-in-Kind (BIK) purposes, unless they are primarily suited for the conveyance of goods.

   As a result, BIK charges will now be based on CO_2 emissions, which could lead to higher tax liabilities for employees and increased Class 1A National Insurance contributions for employers. However, vehicles that were purchased, leased, or ordered before 6 April 2025 may continue to be treated as vans until the earlier of disposal, lease expiry, or 5 April 2029.

   We recommend that businesses review their fleet policies and carefully consider the tax implications when acquiring new vehicles.

   In relation to other employee benefits, we note that, where applicable, these are being correctly recognised as Benefit-in-Kind and disclosed on form P11D. We encourage employers to regularly review the valuation of such benefits to ensure they accurately reflect what the employee receives—particularly in cases where living accommodation or similar provisions are offered.

Client comment:

This was considered and new double cab pickups ordered before 6th April 2025. This will be reviewed again before 5th April 2029.

An audit of Benefits-in-Kind declared and P11D's has been arranged for October.

2. Provisions

We are pleased to note that, in the main; provisions recognised within the accounts of applicable boards are being monitored and written back as required. There are still isolated cases where provisions are "brought forward and carried forward" that relate in excess of the standard life of debt, being 6 years. Whilst we are satisfied there is reasonable rationale for their retention we would question whether payments could be reinforced if the life of debt has been exceeded, with the exception of amounts recognised in respect of development contributions. We would encourage continued review of provisions brought forward from prior years, especially those exceeding the standard life of debt, writing these off as appropriate, with board approval as appropriate.

Client comment:

As part of the year end accounting procedures, provisions/balances are looked at on an individual basis and decisions made on relevance as to retain or to write back.

3. Surplus Funds –

In previous years we have communicated the importance of investing cash assets that are not required to fund operational needs, to combat the erosion of these liquid assets through inflation. We are pleased to see that the organisation have taken heed of this advice and made a number of deposits with Barclays, in addition to discussing the potential pooling of cash resources with IDB's under their administration to gain access to higher rates of interest. Although inflation has now eased to 3.4% as of May 2025, it remains essential to continue reinvesting and actively managing these assets to preserve and grow their value over time.

Client comment:

We are currently making treasury deposits for individual Boards within the mandated authority given by each authority but need to manage this with specific cashflow requirements while also making consideration to having balances available for potential event situations requiring immediate cash. We will be monitoring additional staff time required to manage this while discussing matters further with our bankers.

4. Rental of Land

It was previously noted that some IDB's were renting out land to tenants at lower than market rate and that this should be reviewed to ensure value for money principles were being applied.

We are happy to note that some IDB's have increased the rental values of land to market rates, although there are still some IDB's where the rental value is significantly below market value and we advise that the market values are increased for these boards to ensure value for money principles are applied going forwards.

Client comment:

Boards which have land holding for rent generally review rents in accordance with tenancy agreements and use local land agents for guidance. Several Boards have small holdings of land which are let at reasonable rates with a view to keep the land tidy and in good order therefore they are not necessarily commercially viable. Several Boards have slamp land, which cannot be considered the same as general agricultural land for rental purposes. All Boards look to get the best rents available, but these are relevant to the size and type of land being let.

5. Bank Transfers

We are satisfied with the accuracy of bank and cash balances and have successfully reconciled these to the underlying accounting records. We note that transfers between bank accounts are being recorded as movement per-month in the accounting records, on enquiry this was due to time constraints experienced within the finance department during the financial year. Whilst we are satisfied that reconciliations have been carried out manually correctly, we would recommend that all bank movements are fully reflected in the postings to the accounting software of the board.

Client comment:

Concerning audit point 3 - surplus funds, to maximise returns within the mandated authority with Barclays we are required to operate linked accounts, with receipts/payments being made from the standard current account. This account has a fixed balance which is adjusted following receipts/payments to it - surplus balances above the fixed limit transferred to the Business Premium account, deficit balances below the fixed amount transferred from the Business Premium account to the current account. These transfers are adjusted through the accounting software in relation to the statement frequency, with both accounts being fully reconciled - a credit in one account being matched with a debit in the other. Current staff resources do not allow for additional time to be spent transferring individual values, the net transfer for the statement being made - as we are doing this for around 28 accounts this currently provides the best value for money to the boards.

6. **Bank reconciliation and verification**

We are pleased to note that bank reconciliations have been conducted on a monthly basis throughout the year. However, we observed that verification was not completed for the first two months of the year across all Boards.

We acknowledge that this period coincides with a particularly demanding time for the staff from financial department, who are focused on preparing year-end financial reports for submission ahead of the 1st July 2025 deadline for external audit.

Nonetheless, we would like to emphasise that timely and documented verification of bank reconciliations is a fundamental internal control. It plays a critical role in ensuring the accuracy and integrity of financial records. We therefore recommend that verification be consistently performed and evidenced on a monthly basis, including during peak reporting periods.

Client comment:

Control accounts and bank reconciliations are carried out for the quarter to 30th June every year and we do not have the capacity to complete these monthly at that time. Accounts are still be prepared in this time and adjustments made, therefore closing/opening balances have not been confirmed.

7. **Website Publication**

We are pleased to note that, for several years, a substantial amount of information has been made publicly available and is generally kept up to date, with links directing users to the most current versions. However, we have occasionally observed inaccuracies—such as links pointing to outdated or incorrect documents. For example, a link may reference the Capital Improvement Programme for the 2023/24 financial year instead of the current 2024/25 version. We also note that the most relevant version of this document is available within the published meeting minutes.

Nonetheless, we would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the importance of ensuring that all published information is accurate and up to date.

Client comment:

Every effort is made to update the relevant pages of all authorities in an efficient and timely manner and in accordance with the regulations.

Your comment is noted, and procedures are being amended concerning this for the future.

8. **Fees for the service of District Officers and Pump Attendants**

We have noted that not all boards are approving payment rates for the services rendered by District Officers and/or Pumping Attendant during the board meetings, instead approval is confirmed as a percentage increase, generally being in line with the Middle Level Commissioners award.

We appreciate that the board is approving the payment lists, where the amount is specified. However, we would suggest to include the amount to the discussion during the meeting and confirm the approved sum in the minutes as per prior years.

Client comment:

District officer/pump attendants are contracted services, and the boards are approving an amount for the provision of these services, however, the point is noted and the actual amount payable discussed at the meeting should be recorded in the minutes.

Specific Points

Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB – Joint Pumping Arrangement

As in previous years it is noted that there is a discrepancy between debtor held in Waldersey IDB and the creditor held in Hundred of Wisbech IDB.

Waldersey IDB – Debtor	£37,696.50
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	£40,000.00
Difference	**£2,303.50**

We are pleased to note that this difference is insignificant for the current year. The difference arises due to the accounts of Hundred of Wisbech IDB being completed before Waldersey IDB, leading to a provision being required in the former's books in the absence of more accurate information being available. The difference is adjusted in the following year's Accounts for Hundred of Wisbech.

We have also noted that the closing debtors balance in Waldersey IDB and the closing creditors balance in Hundred of Wisbech IDB were overstated in the previous financial year by £38,700.30. This discrepancy arose because the Boards were not aware that a grant recovery would be available later in the year to offset excess pumping costs incurred during the 2023/24 financial year. This issue only came to light following the completion of the audit for that year.

We can confirm that the overstated amounts have been correctly adjusted during the current financial year in both Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB.

We note that there have been discussions to potentially amalgamate the two boards, this would eradicate the anomaly. However, in the absence of this, we suggest that meetings and account preparation periods be brought into line, if possible, to eradicate this issue.

Client comment:

These costs relate to the contribution for the costs of the shared pumping facility and at the time of production of the year end accounting statements discussions were taking place concerning potential changes to the contribution because of changes in land use. A new proposal had been put forward which was broadly approved by both Boards.

There are no current plans to change meeting dates so as one set of accounts is finalised before the other there is likely to remain creditor/debtor position in both sets of accounts although now that all older balances have been cleared, any in-year balance should be cleared, generally a year in arrears.

At the 2024 meetings for both Boards amalgamation was discussed and both Boards approved to enter discussions concerning a potential amalgamation between the Boards. It is unlikely that any amalgamation will be completed by 31st March 2026 at which time both Boards are moving to the Water Management Alliance.

Waldersey IDB

We have noted that the Board owns two parcels of land, located at Green Drove and Crooked Bank. We understand that the Green Drove land has been professionally revalued and is situated near the pumping station. However, the Crooked Bank land, which is located next to the former pumping station, has not been revalued. Based on our discussions during the course of the audit, it would appear that the Board currently has no plans to undertake a revaluation of this land.

Both parcels of land should be revalued and recorded in the Board's fixed asset register to ensure these assets are properly reflected in the financial records of the Board.

Client comment:

Clerking and administration of Waldersey IDB is being transferred to the Water Management Alliance in 2026. Board approval would be required to action this request. We would advise the board to approve for a valuation exercise to take place at their next Board meeting which is in June 2026.

Manea & Welney IDB

During our review, it was noted that the Debtors Report showed a significant unallocated amount of £1,625,843.45. We understand that this is an isolated incident related to software issue that has subsequently been rectified and hasn't affected the accuracy of the financial statements prepared.

Client comment:

Your comment is noted.

Upwell IDB

We observed that the new hire purchase agreement applies the straight-line interest allocation method. We have recommended adopting the effective interest method, which more accurately reflects the cost of borrowing over the life of the agreement and is in line with UK accounting standards.

Based on our discussions during the course of the audit, we understand that this recommendation will be implemented in the accounts for the next financial year. The impact on the current financial statements is not considered material.

Client comment:

Your comment is noted.

We take this opportunity to thank your staff involved in our audit for their assistance and cooperation in achieving substantial completion by the stated target deadlines. We trust that the engagement team have not caused significant disruption during the execution of their procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Whitings LLP

Whitings LLP

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		12
Meeting:	**HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT**	
Date:	**Thursday 6th November 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Highland Water Contributions
B. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B
C. Review Budget Monitoring 2025/2026

1. Highland Water Contributions

1.1 Under Section 57 of Land Drainage Act 1991 the Board can make a claim for funding to the Environment Agency for the additional costs of the onward management of water from the district's highland. It is at the Environment Agency's discretion if they pay the contribution, and it is accounted for within the local team's annual maintenance budget.

1.2 When completing the budget proposal claims were estimated against the likely out-turn for 2024/2025 and the budgeted expenditure for 2025/2026. The highland water claim included within the rating estimates was £12,556.77. The final submitted claim amounted to £23,169.14 (£17,141.70 representing 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/26 plus £6,027.44 representing the balance of the financial year 2024/25).

2.2 Payment of the submitted highland water claims are currently outstanding although the Environment Agency has recently been in contact seeking additional information concerning submitted claims. The forecast has been completed using the submitted claims.

2. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B

2.1 At the beginning of the year MLC were successful in securing Grant Aid on behalf of some of the IDB's that they administer. The following work has been successfully in being 100% Grant funded:

Work Scheduled to Be Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
Sutton Gault PS – WSC Trolley Overhaul and Control Panel Refurb	£59,616	11.8p

3. Budget monitoring

The current forecast for income/expenditure to 31st March 2026 shows that expenditure could be in-line with the budget against which rates were set.

However, members are advised that these figures are estimating pumping costs to be in-line with the budget proposal against which the rates have been set and should therefore also consider the significant financial implications major storm events can have on drainage Board budgets.

The budget figures include a provision of £6,000 for weedscreen repairs at Sutton gault pumping station as recommended by the engineer. As outlined above a grant has been received to complete a full overhaul of the Trolley and Control panel and so the £6,000 has been removed from the Forecast.

There will be a full reconciliation of balances at the financial year end.

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett
Role: Responsible Finance Officer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Budget Monitoring

Appendix 1

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026

		Approved Budget 2025/2026	Actual to 30th September 2025	Forecast to 31st March 2026
1	CHANNEL MAINTENANCE	18,000	4,354 [A]	18,000 [B]
2	LABOUR	56,250	24,978	56,250
3	REPAIRS AND RENEWALS	13,500 [C]	2,797	7,500 [D]
4	FUEL	88,000 [E]	26,403	88,000
5	RATES, INSURANCES & TELEPHONES	16,000	8,450	21,250 [F]
6	ADMINISTRATION	17,000	7,649	18,100
7	ASSET REPLACEMENT	10,000	0	10,000
8	E. A. PRECEPT	39,684	39,684	39,684
9	LOAN REPAYMENT	41,458	0	41,458 [G]
10	IMPROVEMENT WORKS	0	0	59,616 [H]
		299,892	**114,316**	**359,858**
	INCOME	**67,044**	**40,518**	**131,707** [I]
	Net Expenditure	**232,848**	**73,799**	**228,152**
	Rate set/Rate Requirement	**50.00** p		

A -	Includes for:	
	Flail mowing - Contractor	3,810
		3,810
B -	Includes provision for Flail Mowing	8,000
C -	Includes Weedscreen Cleaner Repair - Sutton Gault	6,000
D -	Weedscreen Cleaner Repair Sutton Gault Removed	
E -	Based on 2 Year Average Usage and current rate, assume 5% increase in rates from October 2025	
F -	Increased Insurance Premium	
G -	First repayments for addition loan for excavator replacement	
H -	Sutton Gault Weedscreen and Control Panel Overhaul	
I -	Includes Metered Discharge	33,000
	Includes Calculated Highland Water Claim	26,887
	Includes Storm Recovery Grant	59,616
	Includes Private Work	5,000
	Includes Water recharges	5,954
		130,457