

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

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 choked 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

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:

<i>MLC Ref.</i>	<i>Council Ref.</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Location</i>
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.