SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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Administered by:

15th December 2025

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Thursday 15th January 2026

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Chatteris Cricket Club, PE16 6UX at 8.30am on Thursday 15th January 2026.

Bacon Rolls, teas and coffees will be available before the meeting.

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

SUTTON & MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Thursday 15th January 2026 – 8.30am

Chatteris Cricket Club, PE16 6UX

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	Verbal	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	Verbal	Clerk
7	Chairmans Items	Verbal	Chair
8	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: • Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Pages 17 - 23	Clerk or Engineer
9	Health & Safety	Verbal	Chair
10	District Officer's Report	verbal	Chair
11	Finance Report • Finance officer's Review • Budget Monitoring 2025/26 • Fees, remuneration and subscriptions • Determination of annual Values, Rate Arrears • Highland Water Contributions from the Environment Agency • Precept to the Environment Agency	Pages 24 - 25 Page 26 Page 27	Clerk
12	Date of Next Meeting	Verbal	Chair
13	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.)

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Sutton and Mepal Internal Drainage Board
Held at the Chatteris Cricket Club on 22nd May 2025.

PRESENT

M Latta (Chair)	E Jackson
C Lee (Vice-Chair)	M Jackson
R Angood	R Lee
C Baker	J Sole
S Criswell (HDC)	P Sole
T Edgley	E Veal
M Heading	W Veal

Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) representing the Clerk and Ms Sofi Lloyd, Ecology and Environmental Services Manager were in attendance.

B.2385 Inspection of the Pumping Station

The Board were joined by Zack Robinson, the new District Officer and he was introduced to the Board. The Chair advised that he wants the Board to visit the pumping station every year. He advised that the bungalow has now been let and new fencing has been installed. The gate at the bottom of the garden has been removed so that there is no longer access directly from the bungalow to the pumping station, and a new gateway has been created at the front of the pumping station and gate fitted. The Chair updated the Board on the works that had been completed to the bungalow. He advised that the external lighting to the pumping station has also been improved.

The digger was viewed and the Board advised that a recent breakdown resulted in the seals on the ram being replaced under warranty. All the machinery is in good condition although the heater in the pumping station is still to be replaced. It is planned to install an outside tap that will allow for pressure washing of the digger.

The diesel pumps were reviewed and the Board advised that there is a leak on the suction side of pump 2. Mr Robinson has been trying to source parts for the pumps although this is becoming more difficult due to the age of the pumps.

The electric pumps were then viewed. Mr Robinson advised that there has been an issue with a sensor, and the Chair advised that there is no level board on the Board's side and so he has instructed Mr Robinson to arrange for the sensors to be repaired and for a level board to be installed.

The Chair observed that much of the equipment is at the end of its design life, and that although it is all in good working order, it is dated and requires significant maintenance. He asked the Board to bear this in mind when they later discuss these items.

The newly installed CCTV cameras and lighting were reviewed, and it was agreed that an additional camera would be installed. Ms Lloyd drew the Boards attention to the barn owl box that had been installed on the pump house that was now home to bats and advised the Board to do nothing further with the box.

The Chair reminded the Board that it is 10 years since the basin has been desilted and that it needs to be addressed. A long reach and amphibious digger was used last time and worked well. The Board considered where arisings could be placed.

Drainworks across the district were considered, with Mr P Sole requesting that spoil be spread further the previously. It was agreed that a dumper and bulldozer with low loader could be hired in for a few days in order to do this. The Chair reminded the Board that they were not obliged to do this, but he felt that it was the right thing to do. The Board agreed with the Chair.

Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Mr Zack Robinson, the Board's District Officer, and Ms Sofi Lloyd, the Middle Level's Ecology and Environmental Services Manager.

Apologies for absence were received from A Allan, D Griffiths and R Smith.

B.2386 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.

The Chair and Mr Heading declared an interest (as a member of the Middle Level Board) on any matters relating to the Middle Level.

Mr P Sole declared an interest in planning applications received for A Sole & Son and Mr P Sole.

B.2387 Minutes of last meeting

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 16th January 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.2388 Matters Arising

The Chair advised that following the last meeting the District Officer continues to check the meter readings on the Block Fen discharge points, and that the readings are being received. He has also been made aware of a possible new discharge point from the Tarmac quarry at Block Fen, which he will investigate with the District Officer.

There were no other matters arising.

B.2389 Constitution & Membership

Vacancies and Elections

Mrs Martin advised the Board that there are currently no vacancies. The next Elections will be in 2026.

Training

Mrs Martin advised that the updated version of the ADA Good Governance Guide has now been printed and copies were handed to Board members. She advised that it is not yet clear what supporting training material will follow, but that the original training videos are still available to view.

Board members were asked to complete the training matrix as circulated at the meeting, and to advise the office if any further training is undertaken.

B.2390 Clerk's Report

Mrs Martin advised that the Clerks Report would be taken largely as read, asking for further consideration to be made of the following points.

Planning and Consenting Charging Model

The new planning and consenting charging model has been implemented and been in use since 1st April. Mrs Martin reported that it is planned to review the fees every year, and that the Clerk invites feedback.

Mr Criswell said that there are increasing pressures being put onto developers, including looking for more biodiversity nett gain in developments, and consideration of viability being key. This may bring more challenges as more sites become available to developers. The Chair advised that the Board are looking to recover their costs even if development does not go ahead. Mrs Martin advised that enforcement and recovery also form part of the new model and that any unconsented work will be dealt with more effectively. Mr Angood observed that the Middle Level Planning and Consenting process has seen a lot of changes, with lots of development getting through in the past as Middle Level have not been able to respond. However, this has now promoted earlier developer contact and this is a positive step.

Mr Heading arrived at the meeting.

Highland Water and IDB Precept

Mrs Martin outlined the issues detailed in the Clerks Report, and that after being advised that claims would not be paid in full, a formal appeal was narrowly avoided after the shortfall was met by the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC). Following this the Clerk has written 'The Highland Water Conundrum' document which has been submitted to the Minister, Defra, the EA and our local authorities, and also circulated to all Board members.

Mrs Martin reminded the Board that they had agreed to delegate the decision as to whether to appeal against the increased payment to the Clerk acting with the Chair, but that no appeal had been lodged to date.

Insurance

Mrs Martin drew the Board to the reporting of the potential increase in insurance premiums from 2026-27 due to the issues identified in the Clerks report. Mr Angood asked if this was due to the size of claims, but it was generally understood that it was due to the risks that Internal Drainage Boards present.

Fens Reservoir

Mrs Martin gave a short verbal update, advising that legal representation has now been secured. The Board have previously agreed to act with the Middle Level and other impacted IDBs and this is now moving forward.

B.2391 Environment Officers' Report

Mr M Jackson and Mr E Jackson arrived during the Environment Officers' report.

The Chair advised the Board that he had invited Ms Lloyd to the meeting so that the Board could all meet her, but also for Ms Lloyd to present to the Board on the importance of Biodiversity Nett Gain, and how the Board should be carrying out works in a compliant way. He added that as Mr Robinson carries out a significant proportion of the Boards works that it was important for him to attend this part of the meeting, but also as Mr Robinson had been working with Ms Lloyd on the Boards Biodiversity Action Plan, he would be available to answer any questions.

Ms Lloyd began by explaining that she saw the Boards role as Environmental Risk Management, rather than Conservation. She added that where there are laws in place, these can be broken, and she sees her role as helping Boards to find ways to mitigate these risks. These laws are actively enforced and IDBs are being investigated and prosecuted.

Her presentation included details of the non-routine works process, and explaining how works can be timed without impacting protected species. Ms Lloyd explained the process of developing a Biodiversity Action Plan, and also explained what would be included in the new works package being introduced. She explained that funding could be available for works that show an environmental benefit but to be eligible for this funding applicants would need to be able to demonstrate environmental competence. Ms Lloyd gave guidance on working near badgers and water voles, and on suitable methods of flail mowing and other regular operations. She stressed the importance of record keeping, and reminded the Board that she and Abigail Leach are available to support the Board if they are unsure of anything.

The Chair thanked Ms Lloyd for her presentation, and the Board agreed that it had been useful and informative.

The Chair then suggested that the Board consider changing their policy on verge cutting, changing to alternate sides each year. The Board agreed to this, although Mr R Lee was concerned that this approach may impact flow and so this would need to be monitored.

Ms Lloyd then left the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Officer's Report be approved.

That the Board's policy on verge cutting changes to alternate sides each year.

District Officers Report

The Chair asked the Board to divert from the published agenda and move to the District Officers Report. The report was given verbally by the Chair, who explained that as the District Officer had only recently taken the role, there was no written report but he advised that a written report would be presented at the next meeting. He said that Mr Robinson is finding his feet and making the role his own. He added that there is nothing further to report, although Mr Robinson said he would like to purchase a new lawn mower.

There were no questions for Mr Robinson, and he left the meeting.

B.2392 Consulting Engineers' Reports

The Board considered the report of the Consulting Engineer, which was taken as read.

Cranbrook/Counter Drain Flood Risk Management Strategy

Mrs Martin referred to the Report, where the Board is asked to support the reallocation of the GiA funding to CCD Strategy. The Chief Engineer has asked for the Board to support this provided that the Engineer and a Board representative are included in scoping and sign off of the project.

The Chair explained the background of the strategy and the Board agreed to the modelling. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair would be the points of contact representing the Board. The Chair has been involved to date, but the future of the pumping station, how water is moved through the district, and any future amalgamations all depend on the outcome of the report.

Planning and Consent Applications

The Chair advised that he continues to deal with small items but will bring items that require further guidance to the Board. He explained to the Board a situation that has arisen where the Board previously gave a landowner permission to infill a dyke on his land and part of a drain. It was agreed that he would fit perorated pipe in his own drain with a pipe to his lake, using this as a conveyor of water. Since this was installed the neighbouring land has changed hands. His consent allowed for their connection to his drain, and the Chair further explained the previous consents circumstances to the Board. The neighbouring landowner seems to be developing the land potentially without planning permission, and the landowner has raised a concern about effluent from the tank reaching his lake which has been stocked with fish. He now wishes to remove the pipe to the lake and install a new pipe, and also not to fill in the last section of drain. Some discussion ensued regarding the land, with Mr Chiswell advising the Huntingdonshire District Council has been involved with the site. He thought that in the circumstances the landowner's approach was pragmatic, and Mr R Lee agreed, adding that HDCs response gave him some confidence. The Chair advised that this is not a Board drain, and that he would like to see it removed from the Boards district and to sit with the EA. Many of the Board members agreed that the land has historically flooded. The Chair was grateful for the feedback from the Board.

The Chair advised that a consent application has also been received from UK Power Networks who want to place a cable 2m from a Board drain, near Block Fen. He asked for the Boards thoughts on this proposal. Mr R Lee thought that as the Byelaws state 9m this would be difficult to accept, and that any consent should include a clause making the applicant responsible for the cost of moving the cable should the Board need to widen the drain. The Chair advised that the proposal is to place the cable as close to the building as possible with a caveat in the deeds that the landowner would be responsible for moving the cable at the landowner's costs in the future. This was agreed by the Board and Mrs Martin was asked to report this back to the Planning Officer.

Mr Heading commented that there is lots going on with the Tithe Farm development in Chatteris, but there have been no updates. The Chair advised that the Board's Sub Committee was not happy with the original proposals, and that they had received an email last week advising that a meeting is being arranged. Mr Heading thought that with all of the development planned for the area it is important that the Board are engaged.

Capital Programme

Mrs Martin asked the Board to review the Capital Programme as included in the agenda, bearing in mind that current indications are that there will be no funding allocation within the current spending review period. The Chair reminded the Board that they are raising £25k each year for their Capital Works fund. Referring to the Capital Programme, he suggested that the replacement boat could be pushed back a few years provided that the current maintenance regime is continued. It was agreed that the planned boat replacement could be pushed back for two years. The control equipment replacement at the pumping station which had been programmed for 2025/26 could be moved back 12 or 24 months. The Board agreed that there would be no point investing in new controls if a new pumping station is being planned. The Board agreed to carry out repairs when needed but did not feel the need to replace equipment just to keep it up to date. It was also agreed to move the planned weed screen equipment works back 12 months.

RESOLVED

That the Board supports the approach to the Cranbrook/Counter Drain Flood Risk Management Strategy and that the Chair and Vice Chair are to be the Boards representatives in scoping and sign off.

That the Boards comments regarding Mr Newmans consent application are fed back through the Planning Officer.

That the Capital Programme is amended as agreed.

Mechanical and Electrical Report

Mrs Martin referred to the report and the Board reviewed its content. It was noted that the equipment is ageing and that failures must be expected, but they now effectively have 3 new pumps. The Board acknowledged that the old pump that was last replaced has been retained as an emergency spare, but that this pump may not be reliable. However the diesel pumps can move the same volume of water and can be considered an emergency back up. The Board agreed that they were comfortable with this situation, and that they were happy to keep the original pump as the spare.

Mr Heading advised the Board that the Middle Level Commissioners have purchasing a number of mobile pumps as part of the Tranche 2 funding and so they would be better resourced for emergency situations.

RESOLVED

That the report be approved but no works agreed.

B.2393 Health & Safety

The Vice Chair reported that the Health and Safety visit was carried out in February, and he and the District Officer attended. The visit identified that the District Officer will require training on operating the weed boat, and the Vice Chair has been looking to source suitable training. He confirmed that the District Officer has had training in Abrasive Wheels and Working at Height and Ladder Training have been arranged. The Chair is organising training on the 360 machine.

There is an oil leak on the suction side of the diesel pumps, as reported at the Pumping Station Inspection, and following lighting being identified during the visit as a risk, new LED lighting has been installed. It was suggested that further signage is needed at the Pumping Station but Cope have suggested to the Middle Level Commissioners that all Boards could have this installed together. The Chair suggested that this is something that could be reported at the Chair's Meeting later in the year, suggesting that signage could be standardised.

The Vice Chair reported that other than the minor issues identified, all was compliant. Mr Heading suggested that the Middle Level be asked if they can assist with the weed boat training, and Mrs Martin agreed to ask the Middle Level's Operations Manager (Health and Safety) to contact the Chair.

B.2394 Governance

Mrs Martin advised that the report would be taken as read and drew the Boards attention to the resolutions contained therein.

RESOLVED

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

i) The Board/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 Board/Commissioners considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year that ended on the 31st March 2024

The Board noted the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor

b) Policy Reviews

RESOLVED

That the Board reviewed and approved the publication of the Boards Policy Statement.

That the Clerk confirms that there is no Water Level Management Plan in place as noted in the Policy Statement.

c) Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

The Board did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Board's Risk Management Strategy (published in 2024 and on the website), noted the system of financial Internal Controls (as published on website) and no additional controls were highlighted as required.

d) Review of Internal Controls

Mrs Martin reported that the internal controls that the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Board have now been summarised and are available on the Boards web-page.

RESOLVED

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

e) Insured Values

The Board reviewed the insurance values and agreed that they should continue to be index linked.

f) Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk 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.

g) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Mrs Martin reported that as part of the Annual Governance review the Board were required to consider if there were any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the authority. 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 Board that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

h) DEFRA IDB1 Return

RESOLVED

Mrs Martin referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2023/2024 which the Board noted and approved.

i) Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

The Board approved that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Board for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

B.2395 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board considered and noted the key finance messages of the Finance Officer, and the payments detailed for 2024. The Board noted the Storm Recovery Grant Fund bids and that the Board received £118,255.97 for excess winter pumping costs, and £43,487 was received to fund the replacement of pump 2. The Board is now in the recommended 'year in hand' position.

The Chair asked that it be minuted that the Boards thanks are given to all Middle Level staff who assisted with the Tranche 1 and 2 funding bids.

a) Payments for 2024

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

b) Highland Water Contributions

The Board noted the Highland Water contributions.

c) Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2024/2025

The Board 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 Board for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

B.2396 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board considered and noted the key finance messages of the Responsible Finance Officer.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions :

a) ADA subscription

The Clerk reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 6.5% for 2025, from £805 to £858 (plus VAT).

RESOLVED

That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 be paid.

b) District Officers Salary

The Chair proposed that as the District Officer is new in post, and that the salary had been negotiated when he was appointed, that a review is currently not required. Mr Heading proposed that the salary be reviewed in January and this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That the District Officers salary be reviewed in January 2026.

c) Chair and Vice Chair Expenses

Mr C Lee gave his appreciation for all that the Chair and Vice Chair do, and the Chair advised that at present the Board is fortunate that the Chair and Vice Chair are able to carry out their duties without payment, but future incumbents of the roles may not be in the position to do this. Mr Angood proposed that any fee levels increases be index linked, but it would be useful to understand what those levels would be. It was agreed not to make any changes, but that the figures be presented at the next meeting.

d) Plant Charges

Mr Heading thought that the current charges look to be in line with other providers. The Chair agreed that they look to be good value, but that the Board must bear in mind that they have a new operative who is less experienced at present but this will change in time. It was agreed to leave the rates the same.

e) Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2025/26.

The Board reviewed the proposed budget for 2025/2026.

RESOLVED

That the budget is agreed.

f) Rate Requirement for 2025/26

The Chair advised that he is thrilled that the budgets enable the Board to be able to consider a reduction in the rate. Mr Angood asked if the additional Ecology Services costs were included in the budget and the Chair confirmed that they were. Mr P Sole said that as a Board they had always increased the rate when they needed to, and so he would like to see the reverse happen, and Mr R Lee added that it is good to support the rate payers in difficult times.

Mr R Lee proposed that the rate of 56.5p be set and this was agreed unanimously.

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2025/2026. and were informed by the Clerk 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 80.38% and 19.62%.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £357,793 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 £287,609 and £80,184.

iv) That a rate of 56.50p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special Levy of £12,957 be made and issued to the East Cambridgeshire District Council, £32,885 be made and issued to Fenland District Council, and £24,342 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.2397 Middle Level IDB Change

Mrs Martin referred to the Clerks Report relating to the Middle Level IDB Change and provided a precis of the report. Mr Angood added that the main suggestion of the report is that the Board amalgamate with Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners.

Mrs Martin advised the Board that their comments were sought and that they were requested to provide their feedback through the Chair. Mr Criswell was concerned that there were questions not covered in the report, including the local government perspective, economies of scale, and efficiencies. He thought that a scoring rating would help to identify the most appropriate solution. He wanted to understand the amount of cost savings, the resilience of the options, the risk/difficulties of amalgamations, and the bottom line scoring of these options. He agreed to email his views to the Chair for feeding back.

Mr Heading added that the potential changes apply to Boards within the Middle Level catchment area. Amalgamations are slow and the piecemeal approach of the past may not be suitable for today. This kind of review occurs only once in a generation. Mr R Lee hoped that the Board would gain from the future Block Fen Flood Alleviation proposals, and asked how new assets would be shared with neighbours. The Chair thought that future amalgamations would pull Boards into working together, with large scale infrastructure like St Germans in place, and allowing Welches Dam to be removed.

The Board agreed that they would feed back their thoughts to the Chair and he would submit their response. The Board also agreed to the requested financial contribution to the next stage of the study.

RESOLVED

That a £300 contribution be made by the Board towards the cost of developing the detailed design.

That thoughts be fed back to the Chair for his submission.

B.2398 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

> That next Meetings of the Board be held on 15th January 2026 at 8.30am, and 21st May 2026 at 8.30am including inspection, both at Chatteris Cricket Club.

B.2399 Any Other Business

The Chair advised the Board of an issue where a short length of drain has been allowed to grow over, and the 9m Byelaw strip has not been enforced. There has been a change of ownership in the land, and the District Officer would like access to the strip to carry out works. The previous owners allowed spoil to be deposited on one side, but there has been a change of views and the Board would now like to deposit spoil on both sides but this is not possible.

He advised that he is raising this as all Board members need to keep a close eye on all of the district drains. Once things become the norm it is difficult to go back to how they should be. If a landowner agrees to take spoil only on their side this needs to be recorded in writing, this can then be reversed in future. Once an area becomes woody and tree lined, it is difficult to go back.

Mr R Lee advised that he had previously purchased land with a covenant that spoil cannot be taken, but the Chair pointed out that from a Board point of view the easiest solution is to avoid these things happening in the first place.

With no other items being raised the meeting closed at 12.10pm.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 15th January 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Polly Tombleson**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Election Notice
B. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
C. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
D. There are currently **0** vacancies
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	16	N/A		8
Actual	16	1 HDC	17	
Vacancies	0		0	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	A Allan	Nominee of ratepayer (Allan Partners)	
2	R Angood	Ratepayer	
3	T Edgley	Nominee of ratepayer (R A Latta Farms Ltd)	
4	D Griffiths	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mick George Ltd)	
5	M Heading	Ratepayer	
6	M Jackson	Nominee of ratepayer (DJ & MO Jackson)	
7	M Latta	Ratepayer	Chairman
8	C Lee	Nominee of ratepayer (P J Lee & Sons)	Vice-Chair
9	R Lee	Nominee of ratepayer (P J Lee & Sons)	
10	R Smith	Ratepayer	
11	J Sole	Nominee of ratepayer (A Sole & Son)	
12	P Sole	Nominee of ratepayer (A Sole & Son)	
13	E Veal	Ratepayer	
14	W Veal	Ratepayer	
15	C Baker	Nominee of ratepayer (A G Heading)	
16	E Jackson	Nominee of ratepayer (DJ & MO Jackson)	

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	Stephen Criswell	HDC	Councillor
2			

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	22/05/2025	16/01/2025	23/05/2024	23/05/2024
1	A Allan	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
2	R Angood	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	C Baker	Present	Present	Present	Present
4	T Edgley	Present	Present	Present	Present
5	D Griffiths	Apologies	Present	N/A	N/A
6	M Heading	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
7	E Jackson	Present	Present	Present	Present
8	M Jackson	Present	Present	Present	Present
9	M Latta	Present	Present	Present	Present
10	C Lee		Present	Present	Present
11	R Lee	Present	Present	Present	Present
12	R Smith	Apologies	Present		
13	J Sole	Present	Present		
14	P Sole	Present	Present	Present	Present
15	E Veal	Present	Present		
16	W Veal	Present	Present	Apologies	Apologies

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	M Latta		Attended	Attended	Attended

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	22/05/2025	16/01/2025	23/05/2024	18/01/2024
1	Stephen Criswell HDC	Present	Present	Present	Present
2					
3					

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

(ADA Good Governance Guide - 3.8.3 – The Chair of your IDB should, withstanding exceptional circumstances, follow the principles within the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments 2016, which states that there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve more than two terms of three years or serve in any one post for more than ten years.)

(If there are any changes in Chair or Vice-Chair, the Bank mandates will be changed to match the current Chair or Vice-chair)

3.1 The Election of members of the Board will take place this year. Members will receive an election notice during July/August and are requested to return their complete slip as soon as possible. This term for current members ends on 31st October 2026.

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 0 of 15 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 7 of 15 Board Members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**Thursday 15 January 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **The Board authorises the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice form MLC.**
B. **Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board is asked to instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
C. **Confirm the action to be taken regarding the pump 1.**

1. Enforcement

Our Enforcement and Compliance Officers Dave Coles and Tony Payne joined us on the 23 June 2025 as a job share. They are currently investigating cases across 17 boards plus Middle Level Commissioners, including:

- 47 active enforcement cases,
- 23 surface water or surface water and foul discharges,
- 24 byelaw cases.

Cases already concluded:

- Eight cases in the last two months including trespass, unlicenced moorings, unauthorised structures and encroachment,
- Six major developments have been referred to Technical Services following enforcement action, as consent applications for outstanding discharge consents.

In September and October, they were successful in recovering more than £70,000 of historic outstanding drainage charges for three developments across two boards and the MLC.

It is recommended that the Board authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board, having taken advice from MLC Officers. They will engage other Board Members as they see appropriate and determine whether a Special Meeting of the Board is needed on a risk and complexity basis.

2. Specific Issues

<u>Cranbrook/Counter Drain (CCD) Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy</u>

Representatives from the Board and MLC met with the Environment Agency who informed us that they are no longer in a position to progress their project as planned.

We have agreed to use the allocated GiA funding to deliver a control panel refurbishment.

3. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

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 to upgrade the weed screen cleaner are in progress.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Applications responded to since last report
Appendix 2: M&E Report

Appendix 1

There have been 8 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There has been 1 Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) processed since the last meeting.

There have been 2 Byelaw Consents (to discharge to a watercourse) processed since the last meeting.

There has been 1 infiltration device application processed since the last meeting.

Dewatering Discharge Consent: Block Fen revised quarry phase plan 2025-26

In July, Tetra Tech Limited, a company specialising in hydraulic modelling, submitted a robust report and supporting information for discharge consent on behalf of Mick George Ltd.

MLC are content to issue consent subject to Board approval, but on the proviso that it is conditioned in addition to those detailed and approved by the Environment Agency Environmental Permitting Regulations. As with other Mick George quarries, there are numerous ongoing problems that flout criteria issued in EPR/MB3640KE guidance dated 5th June 2025, and the Quarry Regulations 1999.

These include too many fines (silt and sand) being discharged when dewatering, causing IDB and riparian watercourses progressively becoming turbid and occasionally chocked with silt and sand, stifling vegetation growth which ordinarily helps clean waterborne particulates. A knock-on effect of habitat loss impacts all biomass in those watercourses (i.e. water voles, fish & eels, amphibians, invertebrates etc) and those species that feed in them. Many of these watercourses are seen as important for biodiversity to the IDB, while others are statutory County Wildlife Sites. Nowadays, a majority of these are ecologically classed as in a ‘poor’ state, whereas previously they were in a ‘moderate’ to ‘good’ state. As the Board is responsible for managing these drains and their routine maintenance regime hasn’t changed, there’s only one common denominator for their decline in status.

To that end, the following clauses will apply for consent: The Board insists roses fitted to any 6” dewatering pumps must not rest on the quarry floor/sump and be held using buoyancy floats 0.6-1m above in the water column to avoid fines intake being discharged for the quarry’s life; this authority requires individual pump meter readings to 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 by Mick George Ltd. Finally, the Boards D/O requires occasional unfettered access to any pump(s) readings to gather their own records to verify and concur those given by as an accurate audit to invoice bi-annually.

Appendix 2

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**SUTTON & MEPAL IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**	
Date:	**Thursday 15 January 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Dave Bantoft**

1. M&E key messages and advice

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 the station is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition. The station and control panels are at an age where reliability is starting to become a concern.

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 M&E Equipment Key Health Indicators

Over the past 2 years we have been compiling and verifying Pumping Station Key Date to allow easier identification of equipment age and the need for refurbishment to assist in developing an investment plan for asset refurbishment or replacement. The details below include any works already scheduled and funded to be completed this year. For example, the Weed screen upgrade works with CW Engineering.

To ensure reliability, resilience and longevity of the pumping equipment it needs to be refurbished or replaced at suitable intervals. We have experienced examples lately of pumps being left too long and failing, or when they are removed for overhaul, the condition is very poor and the pump overall lifetime has been reduced significantly, which is not cost-effective use of the asset. The same is true for control panels, component failures often damage other components incurring costly repairs and machine downtime. Overall, it is more cost effective to run well maintained equipment.

The pictures below are of pump bolts that have been in situ for 20 years and have corroded to the point of failure as shown by the gap between the flanges. Although now rebuilt with stainless steel bolts they were not in the past. The pump tubes are also heavily corroded which reduces pump life considerably. Ideally pumps should be refurbished every 10 years because by the time they reach 15 to 20 years it is likely the corrosion will heavily impact their overall residual life.

	Station				Weedscreen		
Station	Built	Pump Canisters	Pump Overhaul	Controls	WSC	WSC O/H	Controls
Mepal	1929/ 1990	1990	Pump 1: new 2025, Pump 2: new 2023, Pump 3: new 2019	1990	1990	2025	2025

1.2 Pumps

Pump 1 - New unit fitted Oct 2025, **2 -** New unit fitted Oct 2023, **3** New unit fitted Oct 2019

Pump 1 was replaced in October 2025, the pump that was removed had low insulation resistance and was noisy and although it was still runnable it cannot be deemed as a reliable spare. Although this pump could be refurbished previous experience and costs have shown that refurbishment is not usually cost effective on pumps of this type and age. The board has previously resolved to keep a spare pump in stock.

Please confirm if the board would like to have this pump overhauled, order a new pump as spare unit or wait and order a pump if any of the 3 pumps start to show signs of deterioration.

There has recently been a fault on pump 1 which we believe to be the motor overload failing, this unit is now 35 years old and has been replaced with a modern unit. The start delta contactors may also need to be changed to rectify this issue.

The pump control panel is now 35 years old, and replacement should be considered to ensure continuing reliability. Replacement of this control panel is likely to cost in the region of £40k to £70k. It may be viable to overhaul the current panels with modern components.

A quote has been requested for refurbishment of this control panel to include a generator change over switch. An application is being made for Grant in Aid to cover the control panel manufacture, if granted there is likely to be some cost to the board for installation during summer 2026. If not granted, then the board will need to fund the refurbishment of this control panel as it is becoming unreliable.

There have been two routine inspections at Mepal Pump Station since the last board meeting in May 2025. These inspections took place on 27th June 2025 and 6th November 2025. The last inspection confirms the following recommendations/remarks:

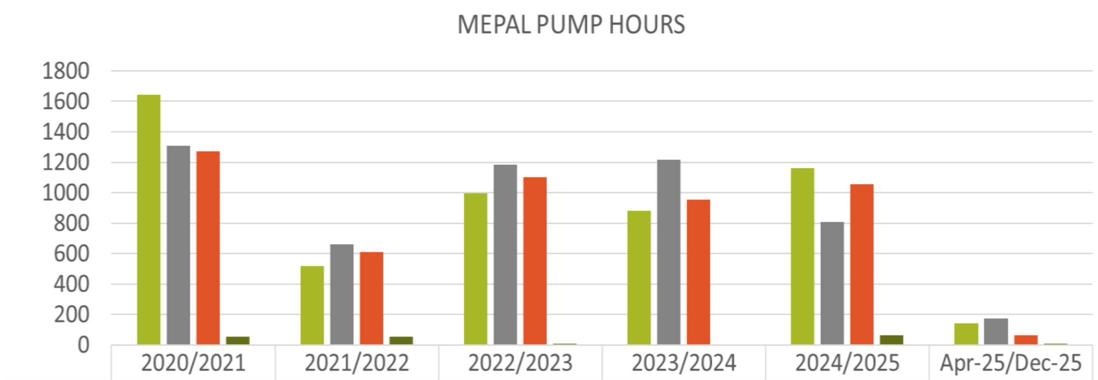
1) Pump 4 rails are showing signs of corrosion and should be planned in to replace with stainless tube.

2) Pump 1 & 3 cable protection has corroded and needs repair.

3) Pump order 2, 3, 1. 4) Swapped Duty to Pump 2 as Insulation Resistance Low.

4) The Power factor correction has failed on Pump 1.

2. Pumping summary



	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Apr-25/Dec-25
PUMP 1	1644	517	997	882	1160	140
PUMP 2	1310	659	1185	1214	806	172
PUMP 3	1271	611	1102	955	1057	65
PUMP 4	55	55	8	1	63	7

3. Inspections

3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out during May 2025.

3.2 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Report (due every 5 years) was successfully completed in August 2024.

Board	Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Sutton & Mepal	Mepal	30-Aug-2024	30-Aug-2029

4. Water level Management

The pumping stations have summer and winter pump level references based on historic values which serve as very good reference points. I would actively encourage pump attendants to vary these to suit their current catchment conditions. For example, running pump start and stop levels at intermediate settings above the base winter settings during times of high Soil Moisture Deficit and then reducing towards winter level setpoints as the SMD reduces or if there is heavy rainfall forecast. This needs to be balanced with ensuring the pump has a good operating range so it is never short cycling (hunting). This can also be used to ensure maximum benefit of the lower night electricity rate.

Ultimately this takes more operator time but will produce more efficient running and reduce costs. We can advise on this if needed and show some good and bad examples to help with setting and monitoring your pumps.

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		11
Meeting:	**SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT**	
Date:	**Thursday 16th January 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS
The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the Financial Officer's summary
B. Note the Budgeting review within Appendix 1.
C. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
D. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B
E. Note the Highland Water Contributions
F. Determination of annual values & Rate arrears – Appendix 2
G. Note the Precept to the Environmental Agency

Finance Officer's review and key messages

Storm Recovery Grant (T2b)
In March 2025 the Government pledged a further £16 million towards helping internal drainage boards (IDBs) recover from the very damaging floods of the 2023/24 winter period and to modernise and upgrade IDB assets and waterways to ensure they are fit for the future.

Claims were submitted for combined IDB works against the Storm Recovery resilience works (T2b), the Environmental Agency have approved these schemes. Works are underway in order to get these works delivered by the 31st of March 2026 deadline.

1. **Budget Monitoring**

1.1 The current forecast for income/expenditure to 31st March 2026 shows that expenditure could be below budget against which rates were set. Appendix 1

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 take into account the significant financial implications major storm events can have on Drainage Board budgets.

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

2. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions

2.1 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 5%, from £755 to £793 for 2026.

3. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B

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

Work Scheduled to Be Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
Mepal Pumping Station – Weed Screen Replacement	£50,000	7.90p
Total	£50,000	7.90p

5. Highland Water Contributions

5.1 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.

5.2 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 £10,612. The final submitted claim amounted to £11,314.85 (£8,400.43 representing 80% of the Boards' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/26 plus £2,914.42 representing the balance of claim for the financial year 2024/25).

6. Determination of land for rating purposes and rate arrears – Appendix 2

7. Precept to the Environmental 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 precept for 2025/2026 is £124,839.54 (2024/2025: £118,826.90).

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2026

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett
Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Budget Monitoring
Appendix 2 Determination of annual values & rate arrears

Appendix 1

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026

		Approved budget 2025/2026 £	Actual to 30th November 2025 £	Forcasted Expenditure At 31st March 2026 £
1	Rates, Telephones and Insurances	10,500	13,031 [A]	13,031 [A]
2	Drainworks, Repairs and Renewals (including Environmental measures)	32,500 [B]	11,917 [C]	32,500
	Drainage Channel - Cranbrook	-	-	
3	Oil and Electricity	138,500	17,668	100,500 [D]
4	District Labour	53,250	35,506	53,250
5	Administration Charge, Health and Safety Contract, Audit Fee, Printing, Stationery, Advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions Etc.	24,500	10,287	24,500
6	Environment Agency - Precept	124,840	124,840	124,840
7	Plant Replacement	25,000 [E]	-	25,000 [E]
8	Reinstatement Of Balances	-	-	-
9	Improvement Work	-	-	50,000 [F]
		409,090	213,249	423,621
	LESS : Revenue Income	51,296	22,638	101,296 [G]
		357,793	190,611	322,324
	Rate Raised 2025/2026	56.50p		

Remarks

A -	Increased Insurance Premium	
B -	Includes for:	
	Maintenance/general	17,000
	Service/repairs to excavator	3,000
	Pumping station/general repairs	12,500
		32,500
C -	Includes for:	
	Maintenance/general	1,651
	Service/repairs to excavator	0
	Pumping station/general repairs	9,746
	Bungalow Refurbishment	520
		11,917
D -	Provision based on 23/24 Consumption at new rates	
E -	Provision for plant replacement strategy	25,000
F -	Weed Screen Cleaner Replacement	50,000
G -	Includes:	
	Metered discharge (not paid)	20,000
	Highland Water Claim - Actual	11,315
	Rental Income - Bungalow	10,800

SUTTON & MEPAL IDB

Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes — June 2026

2026-2027

	Location	Transfer value to Special Levy - £202.367 per hectare	Area (Hectares)	Agricultural Land	Special Levies Fenland	Hunts DC	East Cambs	TOTAL	Rate W/Offs
		Opening Values (£)	4638.127	**509,042**	**60,733**	**43,084**	**22,933**	**635,792**	
		Opening %		80.06%	9.55%	6.78%	3.61%	100.00%	
	Location	Reason for change.							
Unknown Occupiers	Old Halves Farm Somersham	Developed land to domestic dwellings	1.365	-169	276			107	201.53
								0	
								0	
								0	
								0	
								0	
								0	
								0	
								0	
		Total determinations	4638.127	-169	276	0	0	107	
		Closing Values (£)		**508,873**	**61,009**	**43,084**	**22,933**	**635,899**	
		Closing %		80.02%	9.59%	6.78%	3.61%	100.00%	
									£201.53