

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At an Inspection and Meeting of the Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB
Held at Lakeside Lodge on Thursday 27th November 2025.

PRESENT

D Brown (Chair)	J German
T Noble (Vice-Chair)	I Johnson
J Armstrong	S Johnson
D Cornwell – meeting only	Ms C Lowe – meeting only
D Edwards	Ms L Munns
D England	J Short
D Fabb	H Whittome

Paul Burrows (Clerk) representing the Clerk was in attendance with Andrew Wool (MLC Head of Finance), Tracy Driver (Finance Officer) and David Coles (Compliance & Enforcement Officer) attending for part of the meeting. Alwyn Sweeney (District Officer) was also in attendance.

Inspection

Board Members went on a tour of parts of the district, starting at Puddock Pumping Station where 2025 slubbing works of the basin by BJ Plant were reviewed and the performance of the new Komassu machine discussed. The District Officer and D Fabb highlighted the teething trouble issues with the new machine and the flail, many of which have been resolved. This includes it being registered as an industrial vehicle; new latching button on flail controls; slew motor seeping and setting up of the hydraulic flows and fittings. The machine is good on the road and has a much better reach than the old machine which has provided beneficial for recent works. The Chairman highlighted that the extension is not to be attached for driving on the road as that would be dangerous.

The District Officer highlighted how an additional smaller bucket for the machine would be valuable for smaller drains and to tackle cot effectively. The Chairman sought view on what to do with the old machine and other attachments stored at the station.

Board Members then inspected four locations within the district along critical conveyance channels of Fenton Lode/Fillenham's Drain scope future drain/bank maintenance work and see locations where riparian owner action is needed. The Board also inspected their drainage system downstream of the pocket park discharge, identifying maintenance and culvert screen repair works.

RESOLVED

Arrange for the old machine (plus spare tyres) to be auctioned at Cheffins Action Services. A reserve price of £8,000 was considered appropriate and the Chairman authorised to confirm having taken advice from the auctioneers.

To consider using a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the old machine for an additional bucket and associated equipment and to keep the various attachments.

D Fabb to secure a price to refurbish the grill at the culvert on the border with Sutton & Mepal IDB and the Chairman authorised to approve works accordingly.

Meeting

Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed members including D Cornwell and C Lowe who could not attend the inspection. He started by thanking all the staff of the Middle Level Commissioners for their fantastic delivery efforts on behalf of the Board. The Chairman paid thanks to three previous Board Members who did not stand for election, Charles Leadbetter the previous Chairman and Mark England as a previous Chairman and member of 25 years. He also thanked Stephen Whittome for this dedicated and longstanding service to the Board. Board Members wholeheartedly agreed.

Apologies were received from Cllr J Carney, S Edgley and M Heading.

The Chairman added that in his two years in the role so far, he could not have managed without the dedicated help and advice from a number of Board Members. He thanks I Johnson for his support to the District Officer with pumping and T Noble as Vice Chairman. He passed gratitude to D Fabb for his involvement with the new digger and to S Johnson for his involvement in the Middle Level IDB Change Working Group. However, he added that he would value more Board members actively contributing.

T Noble supported the Chairman's remark and passed his thanks for the Chairman's excellent steering of the Board on behalf of himself and other members.

B.1948 Declarations of Interest

The Chair 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.

H Whittome declared an interest as a Middle Level Board Member.

B.1949 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed, and no matters arising were raised.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 30th May 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1950 Constitution & Membership

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Subject:	CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP
Date:	Thursday 27 th November 2025	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. Consider the **3** vacancies on the Board
- E. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
- F. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
- G. 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	21	N/A	24	12
Actual	15	1 FDC, 2 HDC	18	
Vacancies	6			

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	Jacob Armstrong	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr C Armstrong)	
2	Daniel Brown	Ratepayer	Chairman
3	David Cornwell	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr D Cornwell)	
4	Stephen Edgley	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mr A Edgley)	
5	Daniel Edwards	Ratepayer	
6	David England	Ratepayer	
	Mark England	Ratepayer	Did not stand for re-election
7	Daniel Fabb	Ratepayer	
8	James German	Ratepayer	
9	Marc Heading	Ratepayer	
10	Ian Johnson	Ratepayer	
11	Sam Johnson	Ratepayer	
	Charles Leadbetter	Ratepayer	Did not stand for re-election
12	Lucy Munns	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr G Munns)	
13	Thomas Noble	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
14	Jonathan Short	Ratepayer	
	Rupert Waters	Nominee of ratepayer (Abbots Ripton Farming)	Removed from Board 29/5/2025
15	Hugh Whittome	Ratepayer	
	Stephen Whittome	Ratepayer	Did not stand for re-election
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			

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

- 1.4 Special levy paying District Councils appoint members to Boards and their role is to be part of the Board representing all the non-agricultural interests within the Board's district. The

Council must consider appointing members who have relevant knowledge or experience that is relevant to the Board and its district.

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

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	James Carney	FDC	Councillor
2	Adela Costello	HDC	Councillor
3	Charlotte Lowe	HDC	Councillor

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	29/05/2025	24/02/2025	28/11/2024	06/06/2024
1	Jacob Armstrong	Present	Present		Apologies
2	Daniel Brown	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	David Cornwell		Present	Present	Apologies
	Lord de Ramsey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Stephen Edgley	Present	Present	Apologies	Apologies
5	Daniel Edwards	Present	Present	Apologies	Apologies
6	David England	Present	Present	Present	Present
	Mark England		Present	Apologies	Present
7	Daniel Fabb	Present	Present	Present	Present
8	James German	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
9	Marc Heading	Apologies	Apologies		Present
10	Ian Johnson	Present	Present	Present	Present
11	Sam Johnson	Present	Present	Present	Present
	Charles Leadbetter			Present	Apologies
12	Lucy Munns	Present	Apologies	Apologies	Present
13	Thomas Noble	Present	Present	Present	Present
14	Jonathan Short	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
15	Rupert Waters				
16	Hugh Whittome	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
	Stephen Whittome	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	Dan Brown	This years	Present	N/A	N/A

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	29/05/2025	25/02/2025	28/11/2024	06/06/2024
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1	James Carney (FDC)	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Apologies
2	Adela Costello (HDC) substitute if C Lowe not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	Charlotte Lowe (HDC)	Present	Present	Present	Present

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 Clerk will report that as the number of candidates for membership did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (21), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from 1st November 2025, viz:-

ARMSTRONG Jacob	HEADING Marc E
BROWN Daniel D	JOHNSON Ian
CORNWELL David W	JOHNSON Sam
EDGLEY Stephen	MUNNS Lucy C A
EDWARDS Daniel J	NOBLE Thomas E A
ENGLAND David W	SHORT Jonathan
FABB Daniel	WHITTOME Hugh W
GERMAN James	

- 3.2 There are currently 6 vacancies on the Board – not to fill due to re-constitution.
- 3.3 To consider the appointments of the Chairman of the Board (present Chairman - Daniel Brown)
- 3.4 To consider the appointment of the Vice-Chairman of the board (present Vice-Chair – Thomas Noble)
- 3.5 To appoint the Finance Committee – (present Finance Committee – Daniel Brown, David England, Daniel Fabb, James German, Ian Johnson, Sam Johnson, Charles Leadbetter, Thomas Noble & Hugh Whittome)

4. Composition and amalgamations

- 4.1 The Clerk to provide an update on the reconstitution of the Board.

5. Training

- 5.1 All Members are asked to digest the Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Boards published by the Association of Drainage Authorities and view the five accompanying videos intended to bring the guide to life. They are available via <https://middlelevel.gov.uk/about/idb-governance/>
- 5.2 To date 0 of 21 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.

To date 12 of 21 Board Members have reported viewing 2 or the 5 videos.

- 5.3 Members are asked to identify any topics areas they would value further training on as well as any site inspections that would help them undertake their role on the Board more effectively.
- 5.4 Member training is reported to Defra as part of the annual IDB1 return.

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Elections

The Clerk reported that as the number of candidates for membership did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (21), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from 1st November 2025, viz:-

ARMSTRONG Jacob	HEADING Marc E
BROWN Daniel D	JOHNSON Ian
CORNWELL David W	JOHNSON Sam
EDGLEY Stephen	MUNNS Lucy C A
EDWARDS Daniel J	NOBLE Thomas E A
ENGLAND David W	SHORT Jonathan
FABB Daniel	WHITTOME Hugh W
GERMAN James	

The Chair and Vice Chair agreed to continue in their roles, and this was unanimously agreed by the Board. J Short agreed to replace C Leadbetter on the Finance Committee and the Chairman advised that he welcomes any member to attend the Finance Committee.

P Burrows summarised the latest in terms of the reconstitution of the Board. The current elected membership of 15 being the number needed for the reconstituted Board. He added that the Environment Agency have advised that Defra are ready to advertise the schedule within the London Gazette with consultation lasting 4-6 weeks. Following this they will then write the Statutory Instrument with a further advertisement period ahead of rubber-stamping through Parliament. Then an Instrument of Appointment is needed to be developed between Defra and the Board. This is not published and the names and addresses of the first members of the newly constituted Board are needed to demonstrate members have a relationship with the district.

RESOLVED

Existing Board Members were comfortable in their names and addresses being included within the Instrument of Appointment for the reconstituted Board.

B.1951 Chairman's Items

The Chairman reported the latest on the Bartlett's agreement for their service crossings across the Board's asset at Washways PS. They have four years of payment outstanding, approximately £5,000.

The agreement should have been reviewed every 2 years and as such a revaluation has taken place. Ruth Martin, MLC Lead Clerk is actively moving this forward in terms of an updated agreement and invoicing.

The Chairman handed over to I Johnson to update on the Pocket Park and a recent encouraging meeting with the landowners I Johnson reported that they are now aligned with the landowners in that a gravity solution is the optimal and most sustainable solution. The Chairman thanks Dave Bantoft at the MLC for his overview within that meeting. The action is now for both parties to write to Tarmac. He added that on the inspection Members saw how works were required at the culvert where the receiving drain from the pocket park does under the road and then Board responsibilities start downstream.

The Chairman highlighted that the drain maintenance programme for 2026 needs to focus on Fenton Lode and High Fen, with some of the critical sections seen by Members on the inspection. H Whittome enquired about how we can better work around cropping and what ought the Board to do in the case that farmers ignore notices and don't remove their crop to enable efficient Board maintenance. A discussion was had where other Boards were cited that would go on and maintain regardless.

The District Officer added that his aim was to now get notices out a year ahead of works such that there is then no excuse for not adjusting cropping.

The Chairman thanks S Ablett at the MLC for her work leading the electricity contract for MLC and the IDBs highlighting to Members that we are now with British Gas. He thanks D Cornwell again for agreeing to join the Electricity Committee on behalf of the Board. The District Officer added that British Gas have been in touch to replace two smart meters that have not been dialling in their readings.

B.1952 Clerk's Report

P Burrows provided the following report.

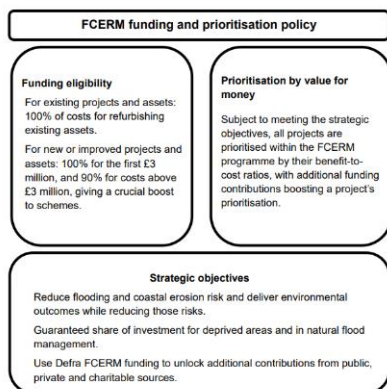
Data Provision

We are receiving an increasing number of data requests from a variety of sources. These can be complex and time consuming to service, sometimes for projects or purposes with little to no direct benefit to the Commissioners and our administered IDBs (where we act as their data controller). To better protect our interests, we have developed and are now using a formal data sharing agreement with third parties. We will introduce a cost recovery approach to servicing such requests.

Defra Flood Funding Policy

Following consultation earlier in the year, Defra has finalised its new funding [policy](#) and [responded](#) to the consultation. We provided and published a [comprehensive response](#).

This policy is for capital flood grant and goes live from 1st April 2026.



Key points for MLC and IDBs:

- a) Refurbishment is a significant fix on an asset that can't be addressed by routine maintenance alone. Further guidance is expected on this aspect.
- b) When applying for Defra FCERM funding for refurbishment of existing assets, asset owners will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken whole life asset management and routine maintenance.
- c) As partnership contributions increase, the amount of Defra FCERM funding needed decreases, leading to higher project prioritisation. The more significant the partnership contribution, the larger the likelihood of boosting prioritisation.
- d) The '2012' rule has been removed meaning new development can be included within benefit assessments. We will commission an economic and benefits refresh across the Middle Level to update our base information.
- e) The need to demonstrate a reduction in flood risk band as a result of works has been removed.
- f) Defra acknowledge concerns from other risk management authorities that they are at a disadvantage compared to the Environment Agency. The policy states that all risk management authorities should have equal access to FCERM funding.

IDB Funding & Costs Research

A joint Defra and MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) IDB funding and costs research project is now underway. It is being led by ICF, a consultancy with expertise in economic and financial analysis, particularly in evaluating the costs and benefits of environmental and regulatory policies in the water and land use sector. Supporting ICF is Logika, a consultancy specialising in flood risk management, drainage, and sustainable development and valuable experience from the water sector. The project is scheduled to conclude by July 2026.

The overarching goal of the project is to conduct a comprehensive review of IDBs' operations, focusing on financial efficiency and value for money, with the aim of assessing whether changes are needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of IDBs. The research is structured around three core objectives:

1. Funding and Financial Review: To analyse IDB funding mechanisms, operational costs and financial pressures over the past decade and explore future funding options.
2. Benefit Evaluation: To assess the economic and social value of IDBs' work, both locally and nationally.
3. Data Modernisation: To explore how the annual IDB1 Form can be improved and modernised for better data collection and reporting.

The project will include:

- an evidence review,
- analysis of financial information and IDB1 reports,
- interviews with selected IDBs and stakeholders,
- an IDB survey to identify any gaps in the data, and
- case studies.

We have been in touch with the consultants leading the work and provided them with information to get them started. Whilst this research is an opportunity to highlight and influence much needed policy change for collective benefit, there is equally the likelihood that it will draw out some uncomfortable truths.

One of the key issues the research will be assessing is the impact that special levies to IDBs is having on Local Authorities. This issue is being promoted by a Local Government Association 'IDB Levy Special Interest Group'.

Around 40 councils across England are working together to lobby the Government for reform to the funding system that supports the vital work of Internal Drainage Boards. IDBs are primarily funded through drainage rates charged directly on the occupiers of agricultural land within each drainage district and a special levy on district and unitary councils on behalf of the non-agricultural land within each district. Each council primarily funds the cost of the special levy through a combination of central government grants, their share of business rates and revenue from council tax levied on local properties. Due to rising costs in such things as electricity that power the pumping stations at times of flooding and sustained heavy rain, the special levy amount has been increasingly significantly in recent years.

On the evening of Tuesday 2nd September 2025 there was a parliamentary meeting of the LGA's IDB Levy Special Interest Group. The meeting was attended by the leaders and portfolio holders from a number of special levy paying local authorities at the House of Commons alongside several members of parliament. ADA and IDBs were also represented by Robert Caudwell, Michael Sly, Daniel Withnall (Black Sluice IDB), and Paul Burrows (Middle Level Commissioners).

Reflecting on the meeting within the ADA Gazette, Paul Burrows said:

"It's pleasing that Local Authorities and MPs appreciate the criticality of the work the Internal Drainage Board sector play in enabling prosperous local communities. After all, every other Council service relies on keeping homes, business, land and infrastructure dry. We need to be mindful of potential unintended consequences within any call for funding reform, particularly the special levies that Councils raise on our behalf. It is important that the IDB Costs & Funding Research commissioned by Defra gets under the skin of the issues and makes considered and well-evaluated recommendations."

IDB1

There is another step-change in reporting expectations on us all both in terms of financial and non-financial information we provide annually to Defra within the 2024/25 IDB1. This will take additional time to pull together and is an indication as to the increased expectations Government have on us in terms of governance and responsibilities.

Whilst we can derive the majority of the financial and non-financial information on behalf of our administered IDBs, there are questions where we require information from the Boards directly. Board Chairman are being asked to reply to Sam Ablett by 1st January 2026 in order to assist her in preparing the form for return. This Board's Chair has already provided this which is appreciated. The questions posed include providing details around watercourse maintenance, Health and Safety, Board members training, and public and press engagement.

B.1953 Consulting Engineer's Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME	
Date:	Thursday 27 th Nov 2025	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield	

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Consider alternative sources of funding for any critical capital works and put a capital investment plan in place, to include:**
 - a. A plan to refurbish or replace (as needed) a minimum of 1 pump during summer of 2026 at the Board's cost; and**
 - b. A Pump Refurbishment/Replacement Plan for all pumps; and**
 - c. Instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
- B. Review the pumping station key dates and inform the Engineer if there are any discrepancies or additional detail to be added.**

1. Enforcement & Compliance Overview

Our Enforcement and Compliance Officers Dave Coles and Tony Payne joined us on the 23rd 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, unlicensed 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.

2. 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 being delivered for this district include the following:

- 1) Weedscreen Cleaner Upgrade Works (CW Engineering) at Washways Pump Station due to be carried out during the winter months, dates to be confirmed.
- 2) Weedscreen Cleaner Upgrade Works (CW Engineering) at Pidley Pump Station due to be carried out during the winter months, dates to be confirmed.

3. Capital Programme

Development of the capital investment programmes continues with the identification of staff resources required to deliver an extensive, multi-million-pound programme of works across the whole of the Middle Level.

We will be refining the Board's capital programme and developing a pipeline of works based on asset condition and need. Projects require a certain amount of development before they can be an FCERM grant-in-aid application can be submitted. For future projects the Board should be aware that there may be some up-front costs associated with this. When we have further information and resources in place, we will discuss specific needs with the Board. This includes the pump refurbishment plan described in the Mechanical & Electrical Report.

The new FCERM grant in aid programme will start in 2026/27 and we are awaiting the new grant funding guidance before we submit new project proposals.

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

The Board is advised to consider alternative sources of funding for any critical capital works and put a capital investment plan in place.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield

Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: List of planning applications since last report

Appendix 2: M&E Report

Appendix 1

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

MLC Ref.	Council Ref	Applicant	Type of development	Location
1328	F/YR25/0352/F	Mrs Carver	Change of use (Land to residence)	Honeysome Road, Chatteris
1329	F/YR25/0344/RM	Mr B Tozsu	Residence(New dwelling)	London Road, Chatteris
1330	25/00566/PIP	Mr David Hopkins	Residence (New dwelling)	Warboys Road, Pidley
1331	25/0925/PMBPA	Mr & Mrs Robinson	Change of use (Agricultural to 3 x dwellings)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1332	F/YR25/0394/O	Mr & Mrs Gates	Residential (4 x dwellings)	Clare Street, Chatteris
1333	25/00900/PIP	Mr & Mrs Robinson	Residential (4 to 9 x dwellings)	Heath Road, Warboys
1334	F/YR25/0421/F	Mr A Pritchard	Residence (Extension)	The Hawthorns, Chatteris
1335	25/00958/FUL	J Rigby	Replacement building	Parkhall Road, Somersham
1336	25/00950/FUL	Mr & Mrs S Robinson	Conversion (Agricultural to dwelling)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1337	F/YR25/0470/F	Jody Rowell	Residential (Up to 9 x dwellings)	Doddington Road, Chatteris
1338	25/01157/PIP	Mr D Hopkins	Residential (Up to 8 x dwellings)	Warboys Road, Pidley
1339	25/01168/PIP	Mr D Hopkins	Residential (Up to 2 x dwellings)	Warboys Road, Pidley
1340	F/YR25/3078/COND	Minister Property Group	Residential (70 x dwellings)	West Street, Chatteris
1341	25/01195/FUL	Mr M Riggall	Residential (2 x dwellings)	Parkhall Road, Somersham
1342	F/YR25/3097/COND	Burmor Construction	Residential (Up to 50 x dwellings)	Fairbairn Way, Chatteris
1343	25/01278/OUT	Mr A Austin	Residential (2 x dwellings)	Fen Road, Pidley
1344	25/0179/FUL	Amplius Living	Residential (43 x dwellings)	Station Road, Warboys
1345	25/01468/HHFUL	Amandeep Dhaliwal	Residence (Extension)	Parkhill Road, Somersham
1346	F/YR25/0576/F	Mrs B Grimshaw	Residence (Extension)	Westbourne Road, Chatteris
1347	25/01441/PIP	Mr A Augstein	Residential (4 x dwellings)	Padgetts Lane, Fenton
1348	25/01482/AGDET	Mr T Noble	Agricultural	Warboys Bridleway 16 and Millers Way, Warboys
1349	F/YR25/0639/F	Campa Portfolio Ltd	Residence (New dwelling)	High Street, Chatteris
1350	F/YR25/3118/COND	Minister Property Group	Residential (70 x dwellings)	West Street, Chatteris
1351	F/YR25/0632/F	Mr T Behagg	Residence (Extension)	London Road, Chatteris
1352	F/YR25/0626/F	Lindsay Butler	Residence (Extension)	Westbourne Road, Chatteris

The following applications for Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) have been granted since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	Council Ref	Consent No	Applicant	Description of Works	Location	Date consent granted
524, 528, 1036, 1040, 1066, 1177, 1246 & 1249		WSP/BC/88	Persimmon Homes	Construction of a headwall and guard rail	Fillenhams Way (Abbot Walk), Chatteris	16/07/2025

The following applications for Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) have been granted since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	Council Ref	Consent No	Applicant	Location	Date consent granted
521, 532, 544, 562, 563, 573, 786, 992 & 1240	18/00840/FUL, 22/02501/FUL & 23/02358/FUL	WSP/DC/83	Mr F Adams	Chatteris Road, Somersham	11/09/2025

The following infiltration device applications have been acknowledged since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	Council Ref	Option 1 (Self-certification) or Option 2 (Checking Form)	Location	Date acknowledged
1312	F/YR25/0034/F	Option 1	Southampton Place, Chatteris	15/07/2025

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Thursday 27 th November 2025	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E key messages and advice

Other than the matters previously reported or 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 stations and pumps are at an age where reliability is a concern and a plan should be put in place to overhaul or replace items as necessary to ensure ongoing reliability.

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 weedscreen cleaner overhauls at Washways and Pidley. 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.



Table 1: Key Health Indicators

			Pump		Weedscreen			
Station	Built	Pump	Overhaul	Control Panel	Weedscreen Bars	WSC Gantry	WSC O/H	WSC Controls
Acre Fen	1984	1984	2006	1984	1984	N/A	N/A	N/A
High Fen	1976	2021 (1) 2009 (2)	2021 (1)	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
			2009 (2)					
Pidley	1940s	1979	2005 (1)	2016	2003	2003	2025	2025
			2007 (2)					
Puddock	1992	1992	2004 (1)	1992	1992	N/A	N/A	N/A
Washways	1975	1975	2016	2016	1998	1998	2025	2025
Westmoor	1962	1962	2007 (1)	2011	2000	2016	2016	2016
			2008 (2)					

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The pumps range from 4 to 63 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 4 to 21 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump refurbishment/replacement plan for the 7 pumps that are overdue refurbishment. Having a plan in place and underway helps to secure further grant funding when it comes available, such as the recent IDB Recovery Fund.

The Board is advised that it should plan to refurbish or replace (as needed) a minimum of 1 pump during summer of 2026 at the Board's cost.

Submersible pumps such as those at Puddock and High Fen are often not cost effective to repair and lead time on new pumps can be upto a year. Standard pumps are normally cost effective to repair and lead times can be as short as 4 weeks or can be over a year if impellers are damaged and have to be reverse engineered. Costs can be in the range £30k to £100k depending on pump condition.

The Board is requested to confirm if it wants the Engineer to produce a Pump Refurbishment/Replacement Plan for all pumps for the subcommittee.

2. Minor Works

2.1 Puddock

As previously reported the pumps are now at an age when overhaul or replacement is needed. Initial inspection of the slacker shows that there may be a possibility of fitting a smaller modern unit to the existing headwall. This will be investigated further once the main drain is down to winter levels.

The recent drain works will improve water flow to the pumping station and reduce weedscreen blockages. This will greatly improve the operational efficiency of the station, allowing cleaner water flow, less differential across the screen and preventing the pump from hunting, which causes excess wear and increased energy costs.

2.2 Westmoor

Pump 2 has run well since the thrust bearing was replaced. The weedscreen hose drums are starting to corrode and would benefit from recoating. This should be included in next WSC overhaul as it is more cost effective to do it at that time.

2.3 Acre Fen

The Pump Cabinet is heavily corroded, and replacement should be considered. The control panel is from 1984 and the oldest of the WS&P control panels so should be replaced. This is likely to cost in the region of £12k.

2.4 High Fen

Routine inspections have identified that Pump 2 insulation resistance has been fluctuating over the last few years. This may be an indication of water ingress into the motor. Pump 2 has been set to duty and will continue to be monitored. If Pump 2 requires replacement the support frame will also need replacing as it is heavily corroded. Pump 2 discharge pipe is weeping which needs to be investigated to determine the repair required. Pumps of this type are often not viable to repair and replacements can be over 6 months lead time.

2.5 Washways

The weed screen cleaner at Washways will be overhauled this winter as part of the IDB Fund Tranche 2B - IDB Asset Resilience GiA package. This means it could be out of service for 10 to 14 days during the pumping season. This overhaul will include the surface clean modifications that had previously been discussed. This is one of the hardest working weed screen cleaners in the whole MLC catchment and it is likely that assistance will be required from Board members for screen cleaning during the works.

There is some pump vibration on Pump 1 which needs investigating and some remedial works on the trolley to ensure its reliability until it is replaced.

2.6 Pidley

The weed screen cleaner at Pidley will be overhauled this winter as part of the IDB Fund Tranche 2B - IDB Asset Resilience GiA package. This will mean it could be out of service for 10 to 14 days during pumping season. The overhaul will include the surface clean modifications that had previously been discussed. It is likely that assistance will be required from Board members for screen cleaning during the works.

Pump 1 has some noise which needs to be monitored and investigated.

3. Inspections

3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out on 4th September 2025 at Westmoor, High Fen, Pidley & Washways. All weedscreen cleaners passed inspections with no advisories.

3.2 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Reports (due every 5 years) were completed successfully in December 2023.

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Acre Fen	6-Dec-2023	6-Dec-2028
High Fen	6-Dec-2023	6-Dec-2028
Pidley	13-Dec-2023	13-Dec-2028
Puddock	13-Dec-2023	13-Dec-2028
Washways	6-Dec-2023	6-Dec-2028
Westmoor	13-Dec-2023	13-Dec-2028

4. Pumping Station Key Dates

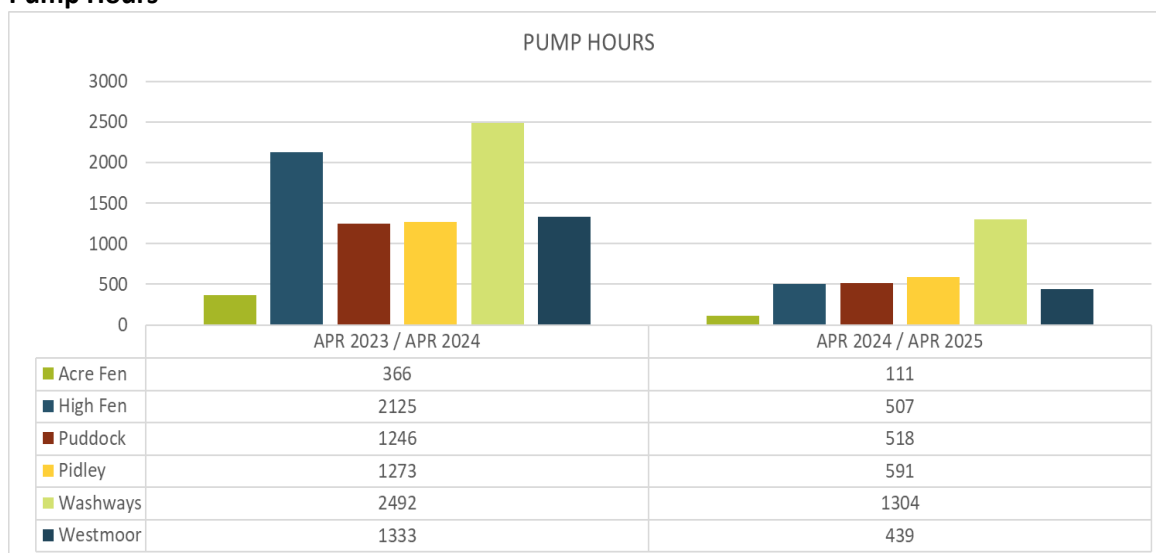
- 4.1 The key dates are an important reference and will feed into the Key Health Indicators and Investment Plan.

The Board is asked to review the pumping station key dates below, if there are any discrepancies or you can add any details, please inform the Engineer.

Station	Built	Pump	Weedscreen					
			Pump Overhaul	Control Panel	Weedscreen Bars	WSC Gantry	WSC O/H	WSC Controls
Acre Fen	1984	1984	2006	1984	1984	N/A	N/A	N/A
High Fen	1976	2021 (1) 2009 (2)	2021 (1)	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
			2009 (2)					
Pidley	1940s	1979	2005 (1)	2016	2003	2003	2025	2025
			2007 (2)					
Puddock	1992	1992	2004 (1)	1992	1992	N/A	N/A	N/A
Washways	1975	1975	2016	2016	1998	1998	2025	2025
Westmoor	1962	1962	2007 (1)	2011	2000	2016	2016	2016
			2008 (2)					

5.

Pump Hours



6 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

P Burrows highlighted that potential and ongoing specific enforcement matters ought to be dealt with confidentially. D Coles (MLC Compliance & Enforcement Officer) joined for this 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.)

P Burrows referred to the Consulting Engineer's summary and M&E Reports.

In terms of compliance and enforcement, P Burrows added to the report highlighting that overall fees from developers are on the increase and together with an increasing number of cost recovery agreements, the costs to Boards is reducing. He added that greater enforcement is bringing with it an increase in consenting workload which was already high. To address this the Middle Level Board has agreed to increase staffing to serve MLC and IDBs.

He added that to be agile and responsive with compliance and enforcement cases, his officers need direction and approval from the Board in good time and this often cannot wait until the next Board meeting. He therefore asked the Board to consider delegating approval to the Chairman and Vice Chair.

The Board reviewed the M&E Engineer's Report and H Whittome highlighted the recommendation to plan for a pump removal and overhaul every year, starting with Puddock and then Washways.

I Johnson advised that he felt Pidley PS was the Board's biggest risk but that it had a PTO connection as back-up, adding that all pumps won't go down at once and Washways can divert to Puddock. He feels that it would be a waste of money and that electric outage is a bigger issue for the district. He added that High Fen has a spare pump so has resilience. H Whittome suggested there needs to be a happy medium found between an annual overhaul and relying on system resilience. D Fabb added the MLC have a stock of mobile pumps. P Burrows added that this package was still being developed and deployment plans need to be developed. D Fabb added that there may be simple fixes the Board can manage with a more detailed inspection, for example lowering water levels to access bolt corrosion and replacing in-situ rather than a full overhaul.

P Burrows asked about Acre Fen control panel as per the M&E Engineer's recommendation. I Johnson added that this station was somewhat of a contingency for Westmoor so less of a risk. On Westmoor

the District Officer highlighted that the station may need a new cover or security fencing, given its condition and local anti-social behaviour.

The Chairman passed the Board's thanks to D Bantoft for the upcoming grant funded refurbishments of two weedscreen cleaners and confirmed that Board Members and the District Officer will be on-hand to manage any weed build-up whilst the cleaners are out of action.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman and Vice Chairman are authorised 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.

B.1954 District Officers Report

The Chairman thanked the District Officer who is now in his 2nd year of dredging works, adding that he is extremely happy with his performance. He is working hard in summer putting in lots of hours and needs to take that time back in lieu over winter.

The District Officer reported on the following additional matters than were not covered on the inspection or earlier in the meeting.

His truck has now done 122,000 miles and following its MOT has had new brake discs and pads and suspension issues addressed. He added that there is an issue with it slipping out of second gear. H Whittome advised that this should be diagnosed from a H&S perspective with the Chairman to agree any resultant fix. The Board concurred.

He reported issues with the sensor at Westmoor with a low level tripping the sensor. This could be resolved with either a telemetry alarm fix or potential move to a different position within the pump well. He will work with the M&E Engineer on this.

He asked whether the Board would purchase a suitable chainsaw to help address some of the issues that affect access to undertake drain maintenance. Board Members highlighted that suitable training, certification, PPE and lone worker issues would need to be considered and addressed. J Armstrong, who has the relevant equipment, PPE and certification, offered to spend a day with the District Officer to tackle key issues across the district. The Chairman thanked J Armstrong for this generous offer.

The District Officer referred to examples seen on the inspection where access to Board drains is difficult due to collapsed or missing culverts across riparian ditches. He added that this is understandable in places given hare coursing but does affect the efficiency and effectiveness of his work for the Board. He asked whether there was any budget for culvert works and for a pull-through. Following some discussion, H Whittome suggest the District Officer develop a prioritised strategic plan of what he felt was needed. P Burrows added that if this was also costed it could be used by the Chairman and RFO in building options for 2026 rates and estimate. H Whittome added that significant planning would be needed including an Environmental Screening Report provided well ahead of any proposed works so that any mitigations could also be planned.

B.1955 Finance Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	10
Meeting:	WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT
Date:	Thursday 27th November 2025	Officer Responsible:	Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Consider the Finance Officer's Summary
- B. Note the Budgeting Review within Appendix 1.
- C. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B
- D. Note the Highland Water contributions
- E. Review and approve Determination of Land for rating purposes and Rate arrears (Confidential papers)
- F. Note the Precept to the Environmental Agency

Finance Officer's review and key messages

For the rating estimates for 2025/2026 standard provisions were made for general expenditure with specific items included where known. Standard figures had been reviewed and approved by the finance committee.

A special meeting was held in February 2025 and at that meeting it was approved that a new excavator for the Board was to be purchased with a budget of £160,000 to £170,000 with the purchase to be funded with funds from the Development account. The finance committee approved the repayment of a proportion of the funds and an amount had been included in the budget. The new excavator was subsequently purchased in July 2025 at a cost of £161,000. A detailed calculation of the repayment will be completed for the year end accounts.

For several years, a small amount of land in the district has been rated but because of being unable to identify the occupier a balance of unpaid rates has built up. The action is to identify the occupiers of the current unrated land so that rate demands can be issued to the correct occupier. Under the Land Drainage Act it is only possible to issue a rate demand for the current year and the preceding year. Therefore, **the Board are asked to approve that the Responsible Finance Officer can write off any rates that are unable to be collected.**

1. Budget Monitoring

- 1.1 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. 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 consider the significant financial implications major storm events can have on drainage Board budgets.

The budget figure included a provision for weed screen overhaul at Washways pumping station. As outlined below a grant has been received for both weed screens to be overhauled at Washways Pumping Station and Pidley Pumping Station respectively. Included in the forecast is the amount for the overhaul to be used for other works, namely the slacker at Puddock.

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 that they administer. The following work has been successfully in being 100% Grant funded:

<u>Work Scheduled to Be Done</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Penny rate equivalent</u>
Washways PS – WSC Overhaul and Program Modifications	£58,061	7.0p
Pidley PS – WSC Overhaul and Program Modifications	£58,061	7.0p
Total	<u>£116,122</u>	<u>14.0p</u>

3. Highland Water Contributions

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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 £27,850. The final submitted claim amounted to £22,974.64 (£27,042.99 representing 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/26 less £4,068.35 representing an over claim of the financial year 2024/25).
- 3.3 Payment of the submitted highland water claims have been received in full. The forecast has been completed using the submitted claims.

4. Determination of land for rating purposes and rate arrears – Confidential papers

5. 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 precept for 2025/2026 is £24,147 (2024/2026: £23,674).

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett
Role: Head of Finance/Assistant Treasurer

Enclosure 1 Determination of Land Values for Rating (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)
Rate Arrears (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)

Appendix 1 Budget Monitoring

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026**

	Approved budget 2025/2026 £	Expenditure to 31.10.2025 £	Est. Expenditure 01.11.25 to 31.03.26	Estimated out-turn at 31.03.2025 £	Variance to budget £	Actual 2024/2025 £
1 District labour (including District Officer's salary)	47,000	27,811	19,865	47,676 ^A	676	42,449
2 Rates, insurances and telephones	7,000	6,980	-	6,980 ^B	(20)	6,557
3 Repairs and renewals	33,750 ^C	15,368 ^C	18,382	33,750 ^C	-	37,509
4 Drainworks	35,000 ^D	3,239 ^D	28,095	31,334 ^D	(3,666)	15,970
Piling works						
5 Fuel (oil and electricity)-including District Officer's travelling	107,500 ^E	38,065 ^F	69,435 ^F	107,500 ^F	-	85,364
6 Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	29,000	13,144	15,857	29,000	-	28,729
7 Environment Agency - Precept	24,147	24,147	-	24,147	-	23,673
8 Capital Reserve Fund	- ^G	-	- ^G	- ^G	-	-
9 Internal Loan Repayment	12,447	-	12,447	12,447	-	-
	295,844	128,753	164,080	292,833	(3,011)	240,252
Improvement Works	-	-	116,122 ^I	116,122	116,122	16,371
Bad debt provision	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Less income</u>						
Budgeted income	38,422 ^F	31,256 ^F	120,372	151,628 ^F	113,205	157,611
	257,422	97,497	159,830	257,328	(94)	99,012
<i>Rate Requirement</i>						
Rate set						

<u>General Fund</u>					
Opening balance	239,764	239,764	399,688	239,764	73,438
Rate income	257,422	257,422	-	257,422	265,338
Write back of provisions					-
Net expenditure	257,422	97,497	159,830	257,328	99,012
Use of balances	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	239,764	399,688	239,857	239,857	239,764

A Wool referred to the Budget Monitoring report and he reported that spending is currently broadly on budget and adhering to the estimates, recognising that winter pumping was an unknown. He highlighted from his report that the IDB Fund income of circa £116,000 meant that there was budget available for possible works to the slacker at Washways PS and that the Chairman would advise on a course of action.

T Driver was invited to the Board by the Chairman to outline the current situation with rating of land and the complexity of resolving changes and addressing unrated land. T Driver summarised that the Board has a rateable area of 5,335.905 ha with 89.11% of the district subject to drainage rates and 10.89% special levy (including roadway and tracks). She added that currently there are 114 ratepayers with 262 assessments across 1711 fields, reminding Members that most are also rated by the Middle Level Commissioners. Currently there are 163 fields that are unlinked to a ratepayer, adding that this will also include tracks and roadways. This equates to 72.606 ha with an annual value of £10,768 which raises a drainage rate of £3,300. This sum is uncollected because it is not linked to a ratepayer and therefore forms a deficit against budgeted estimates. Under the Land Drainage Act we can only recover the current and previous financial year's uncollected rates once an owner is identified, therefore any previous year's uncollected rates must be written-off. A Wool added that formally writing off what cannot be recovered will also resolve an issue highlighted by the Internal Auditor.

In addition to the unknown landowner issue, T Driver highlighted the complexities of managing changes in tenancy and landownership to ensure the distribution of rates was also correct. She added that we are unable to maximise the use of the DRS rating system and provide ratepayers with maps. We are also reliant on ratepayers proactively letting us know if they are under or over-rated and when there is change in their landholding or tenancies. This does not routinely happen and rate reviews are ad hoc and there's a growing number of these to undertake across all administered IDBs and the MLC. She added that there is also a complexity in that in some cases we understand that landowners pay the rates on behalf of tenants. To resolve this matter requires a dedicated focus without other work distractions. The only Board that is in a strong position is Sutton & Mepal IDB where a project took 3 years to address these issues. Ratepayers of this IDB now receive a map with their rate demand that they can return with any changes.

A Wool added that an initial step ahead of fully scoping and resourcing any activity would be for Board Members to mark-up maps with their local knowledge. This will help address any unrated land and identify how much of an issue for the Board the distribution of rates may be. Board Members agreed to take the maps away and complete the initial activity.

RESOLVED

The Board approved that the Responsible Finance Officer can write-off any rates that are unable under legislation to be collected.

The Board reviewed and approved the determination of land for rating purposes and write-off of associated rate arrears.

B.1956 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next Meeting of the Board be held on Thursday 21st May 2026 at the Lakeside Lodge, Pidley at 5:30pm

B.1957 Any Other Business

The District Officer highlighted the peat mapping work being undertaken by Fenland SOIL a farmer led cooperative, and that they will be in touch with farmers in the district. H Whittome encouraged engagement as it was a valuable process to bring truth and local evidence regarding the presence or otherwise of peat.

.....
Chair

.....
Date