

Friday 9th January 2026

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board
Held at the Old Nene Golf Club, Ramsey on 9th January 2026.

PRESENT

R Blackhurst (Acting chair)
T Bedford
A Butler
L Butler

J Clarke
J Edwards
M McKenna
C Wilkinson

Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) representing the Clerk was in attendance.

Welcome and Apologies

The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Board for their work.

Apologies for absence were received from S Bedford, S Corney, S Cornwell, A Roberts & A Wagstaffe.

B.1466 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.

Mr L Butler and Mr A Butler declared an interest in any matters relating to E. M. Butler Ltd.

Mr L Butler declared an interest in any matters relating to the District Officer.

B.1467 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Mr Wilkinson reminded the Board of the discussion with Mr Edwards at the last meeting regarding the lack for freeboard in the drains around Mr Edwards' land. Mr Wilkinson advised that he is also experiencing the same issue around his land but does not know what to do. Even in the winter months there is either none or hardly any freeboard which prevents water from draining from his land. He asked if there had been any conclusion to Mr Edwards' issue.

The Vice Chair asked if the Upwood Common pump had been running. The District Officer advised that the pumping station sits in a basin with no holding area for water. The Vice Chair added that in the past the Board have talked about dropping the levels held in the drain in the summer although Mr Wilkinson did not have an issue with summer levels. The District Officer agreed to go and have a look to see if he could see any issues.

Mr Clarke asked if the issue could be traced back to the width of the drains, observing that they are not very wide. Mr A Butler agreed and added that at Upwood Common there is an issue with weed but it is not possible to empty the drain. The District Officer had pumped to the lowest level he could the previous day, and Mr Wilkinson advised he did not know what effect that had on his land. It was agreed that next time the District Officer was able to do this, he would contact Mr Wilkinson so they could review the impact. The Vice Chair added that this information would help with any decisions made.

The Vice Chair asked for further information relating to the pumping at Upwood Common, and it was established that the District Officer manages the levels according to the weather. The Board thanked him for his work in this respect.

Friday 9th January 2026

The Vice Chair suggested that Mr Wilkinson and the District Officer trial the pumping levels as previously discussed, and the Board carry out an inspection in the summer to look at the potential to widen ditches to provide additional capacity. Mr A Butler suggested that the issue could be due to weed and the regime to slub every three years. The Vice Chair added that he had previously suggested slubbing every other year, and the benefits of slubbing annually were discussed.

Mr Clarke asked if it would be beneficial to ask MLC to survey and take the water levels, and Mr A Butler asked that, as the drain was three quarters full of weed, if the Board could start spraying. The Vice Chair added that previously the Board would spray regularly in conjunction with 3 yearly slubbing, but this was no longer an option available to the Board. Mr Clarke suggested that a further meeting of the Board be held between now and the June meeting, to discuss the various options. Mrs Martin suggested that the Board could seek advice from Morgan Lakey at MLC due to his wide-ranging experience in this regard.

RESOLVED

That the Board meet during March to discuss further the issues around drain clearance and widening/maintaining drains and invite Morgan Lakey of MLC to attend.

MLC to extend the drain survey area to include Mr Wilkinsons land as well as Mr Edwards.

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 9th January 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1468 Constitution & Membership

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB	Subject:	CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP
Date:	Friday 9 th 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. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
- 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

Friday 9th January 2026

- 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	12	N/A		6
Actual	12	2 HDC	14	
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	Stuart Bedford	Ratepayer	
2	Thomas Bedford	Ratepayer	
3	Richard Blackhurst	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
4	Ashley Butler	Nominee of Ratepayer (J&H Edwards)	
5	Stuart Cornwell	Ratepayer	
6	Jason Edwards	Ratepayer	
7	Michael Lambert	Ratepayer	
8	Mike Mckenna	Nominee of Ratepayer (AG Reserves)	
9	Andrew Roberts	Nominee of Ratepayer (D C Roberts)	Chairman
10	Andrew Wagstaffe	Ratepayer	
11	Christopher Wilkinson	Ratepayer	
12	Leo Butler	Nominee of Ratepayer (J&H Edwards)	District Officer

- 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	J Clarke	HDC	Councillor
2	S Corney	HDC	Councillor
3			

- 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	30/5/2025	10/2/2025	08/05/2024	04/01/2024
1	Stuart Bedford	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
2	Thomas Bedford	Present	Present	Apologies	Apologies
3	Richard Blackhurst	Present	Present	Apologies	present
4	Ashley Butler	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
5	Stuart Cornwell	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
6	Jason Edwards	Present	Present	Present	Present
7	Michael Lambert	Present	Present	Apologies	Apologies
8	Mike Mckenna		Apologies	Present	Present

Friday 9th January 2026

9	Andrew Roberts	Present	Apologies	Present	Apologies
10	Andrew Wagstaffe	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
11	Christopher Wilkinson		Apologies	Apologies	Present
12	Leo Butler	Present	Present	Present	Present

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	Andrew Roberts	Present	Present	apologies	attended

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	30/5/2025	9/1/2025	08/05/2024	04/01/2024
1	J Clarke (HDC)	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
2	S Corney (HDC)		Present	Apologies	Present
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. Composition and amalgamations

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

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 2 of 14 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 3 of 14 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 videos.
To date 2 of 14 Board members have reported viewing 3 of the 5 videos.

Friday 9th January 2026

- 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, Vacancies and Appointments

Mrs Martin advised that there are currently no vacancies on the Board, and that the next election of the Board will be later this year.

The importance of attendance was discussed, with the Vice Chair observing that some members struggle to attend regularly, and they should consider if they should stand down. He added that he would like to see more younger Board members joining.

Training

Mrs Martin reminded the Board that the updated version of the ADA Good Governance Guide is available, and that the original training videos are still available to view online. She advised the Board that training is now included in the IDB1 report and so Board member training is reported on.

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.1469 Clerk's Report

Mrs Martin gave a verbal report on behalf of the Clerk.

IDB Fund

2025/26 has begun how 2024/25 ended with delivery being the primary focus. MLC were successful in securing approximately £4.5m of grant for a number of IDB Fund (Tranche 2b) submissions and the administration and delivery of these commitments has been a primary focus particular for staff in M&E, Operations, Environment & Ecology and Finance, meaning some 'business as usual' activity has been impacted:

- Mobile Pumps – Phase 2 - £1.2m
- St Germans Pumping Station Resilience Phase 2 - £1m
- Bevill's Pond Resilience - £0.3m (MLC and Sawtry IDB)
- Asset Resilience – Pumps and Channels - £2m (MLC and IDBs) – including Upwood Common and Green Dyke PS Control Panel replacements - £25k

This fund, coming with less constraints than FCRM grant-in-aid, is enabling us to think and invest differently. In the Clerks view we need to change gear in terms of our business model and philosophy to become more commercially minded within the boundaries of a not-for-profit public authority. Whilst there remains work to do within our improvement and modernisation journey, our organisational foundations are now in a much healthier position to build from, albeit our base capacity and capability are a constraint to what needs to be, and could be, achieved. We will need to identify and nurture partnerships not only with traditional partners but with the innovators within our local agricultural and the development sectors.

Friday 9th January 2026

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.

Electricity Service

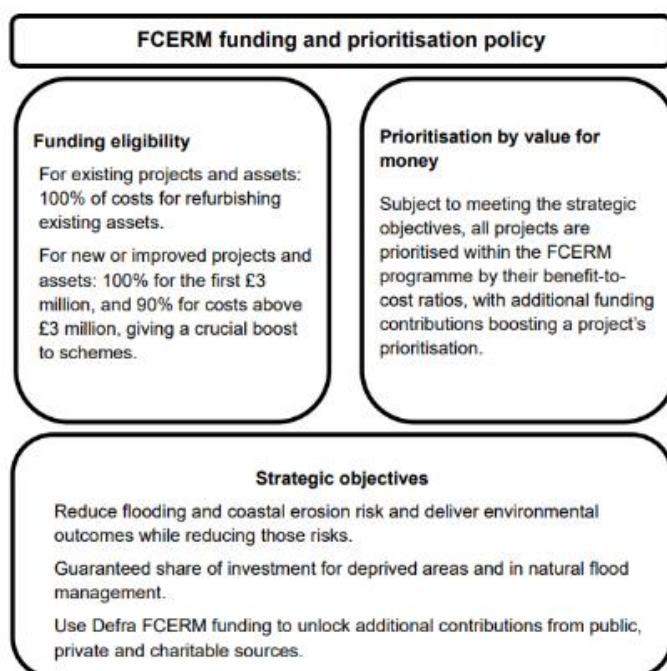
The 12-month group (MLC and IDBs) contract with EDF Energy ceased on 30th September 2025. This contract was facilitated by brokers GEAB.

A sub-Committee of MLC Board Members and IDB Chairman reviewed options alongside MLC staff. We are now in contact with British Gas and are self-managing this within the Finance team for the 12-months to 30th September 2026.

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

Friday 9th January 2026

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. Given we collectively represent c25% of the IDB sector nationally, we will, in one way shape or form, inform their results and associated recommendations for change. 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."

Friday 9th January 2026

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. To assist Sam Ablett in preparing the form for return, each Chairman has been asked to respond with information covering a list of questions which has been provided, but include details around watercourse maintenance, Health and Safety, Board members training, and public and press engagement.

Mr Wilkinson asked if a detailed written report could be provided prior to the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Clerks Report be approved.

B.1470 Environment Officers' Report

Mrs Martin gave a verbal report on behalf of the Environment Officer.

Environmental Risk Management

Environmental Compliance and Standard Operations

This year we have developed and published a new suite of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all routine channel maintenance operations, for both MLC and IDBs. The procedures set out, in practical terms, how operatives should undertake each activity in order to remain compliant with a wide range of environmental law including around protected species. The SOPs are also provided to all contractors working for or on behalf of MLC and IDBs to ensure that there is harmony in the way all IDB channels are managed across the district. The SOPs cover flail mowing, desilting and weed-cutting basket work, managing aquatic plants with weed boats, biosecurity procedures and managing dissolved oxygen levels. This helps to evidence our competence in environmental management, which helps to increase opportunities to access funding for further environmental enhancements that would benefit our water level management activities. It also helps to reduce the risk of prosecution and the associated costs for non-compliance.

Environmental Screening of non-routine works

A huge number of non-routine works have been assessed by the department this year to identify and mitigate for environmental impacts. Assessments have included large DEFRA-funded projects such as St Germans solar project and Bevill's Leam pump overhaul, IDB tranche 2 works including bank repairs and culvert replacements and for residual MLSRMS activities, such as bank reinstatement and cutter-suction dredging preparation. These assessments have been undertaken alongside a full book of "normal" IDB and MLC non-routine projects such as culvert repairs, tree and scrub encroachment management, invasive non-native species control and aquatic vegetation control. This has helped MLC and IDBs to ensure their compliance with a full spectrum of environmental and wildlife laws.

Website

The "Ecology and Environment" web pages on the MLC website have been updated to showcase all the great work we do and the approaches we take to support our local wildlife to thrive, alongside our flood risk and water level management. News of our latest activities and surveys are published along with a library of resources and links to help others to better support nature in and around IDB channels. A dedicated page for

Friday 9th January 2026

IDBs has been developed which includes a library of advice, guidance, templates and much more to help them achieve and excel in environmental compliance and delivery.

Biosecurity & Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Our biosecurity procedure has been updated and published this year, along with new biosecurity kits for all operatives and refreshed biosecurity training. This is well timed as a number of extremely problematic invasive non-native species (INNS), such as floating pennywort, are getting ever closer to us in bordering systems. We have renewed our efforts to ensure that everyone that uses or works in our channels are better informed of common INNS and what to do if they are spotted. Alerts have been refreshed and reissued to all stakeholders, partners, contractors and IDBs; flyers are being handed out to all boaters and the planning department are to begin to include an alert with all consent application responses. This should help to strengthen our borders, for now at least.

IDB Service Packages

IDB service package delivery has progressed well in its first season since launching. We have met with nearly all IDBs to discuss their environmental compliance and delivery and new Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are being drafted for each. The new SOPs and other resources, templates and procedures have been disseminated and are available through the IDB portal on the MLC website. A number of annual surveys have been completed and published which helps to benchmark the effect that current operations have on biodiversity. We can then be more confident in promoting the positive effects our management has on biodiversity, or in adapting regimes to improve environmental outcomes.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Development

We are grateful to have led the development of the “Fen Main Drain” and “Drainage Ditches” sections of the new (draft) Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Cambridgeshire. The LNRS will be key to focussing efforts to conserve and enhance biodiversity in our local area and it recognises that the habitats we manage are of significant importance in our area for biodiversity. Our driving role has ensured that only activities and enhancements that are compatible with our flood risk and water level management operations are promoted for consideration via development or funding. For IDBs, the Strategy could generate significant funding opportunities where the IDB can demonstrate that biodiversity will be enhanced by improving flood risk and water level management. Such measures may include the funding of additional or improved water level control structures, such as solar-powered tilting weirs, which could provide more localised and flexible water level management within IDB catchments in a more efficient and dynamic way. The Strategy is likely to encourage more funding for riparian margins to be taken out of cultivation to benefit biodiversity but will also allow more flexible and efficient management access for IDB operations.

Similarly to the Clerks Report, Mr Wilkinson asked if a detailed written report could be provided prior to the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Report be approved.

B.1471 Chairmans Items

The Vice Chair gave a verbal report.

He advised that the Chair had discussed the issue of amalgamation with other Board Chairs at the Chairs Meeting in December. The Chair felt that other Boards were not keen on the idea of amalgamation. The Chair spoke at the Chairs meeting and reported on this Boards feelings about amalgamation.

It was agreed at the last meeting that the vegetation at New Fen Pumping Station would be removed. Mr L Butler advised that he thought the Environmental Screening Report and subsequent survey had been completed. Mr A Butler thought that the bushes were on the Chair’s land and that he could go ahead with

Friday 9th January 2026

the works as he saw fit. The Vice Chair asked that as this item had not been resolved that it should be picked up at the next meeting of the Board. The project needs to continue so as to address the subsidence at the pumping station.

The Vice Chair raised the issue of the Upwood Common Pumping Station roadway, and that he would like to come to an agreement regarding the roadway. Mr A Butler did not think that the Board needed to contribute to the costs of repairing the roadway, and that the Board discuss the roadway and the issues with trees and road surface at every meeting. The Board have an interest to get to the bottom of the issues with the roadway. Mr A Butler and Mr L Butler declared an interest in this item and the Vice Chair asked them both to leave the room whilst the Board discussed the issues further.

The Vice Chair explained that as a Board they needed access along the full extent of the roadway in order to access and maintain the Upwood Common pumping station. Following a recent incident when electricity had to be supplied via a generator, the access road was unsuitable for the vehicles required to deliver the generator and alternative access had to be found.

Mrs Martin explained the situation relating to the ownership of the Drovers to the Board, advising that a report had been given to the Board in 2017 on this issue. Mr Clarke advised that a previous Clerk to the Board had also provided a Statement of Truth explaining the same.

The Vice Chair suggested that this item should not be discussed further at this meeting but asked that the earlier report and Statement be provided to the Chair and Vice Chair, and the issue discussed further when the Board next meet. The Board agreed this as a suitable way forward.

Mr L Butler and Mr A Butler re-joined the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the vegetation clearance at New Fen Pumping Station be reported upon at the next meeting.

That the report and Statement of Truth relating to the Drovers be provided to the Chair and Vice Chair.

That the issues relating to the roadway to Upwood Common Pumping Station be discussed further at the next meeting.

B.1472 Consulting Engineers' Reports

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Friday 9th January 2026	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

Friday 9th January 2026**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board is asked to:

- A. Approve the application for consent for works at Ugg Mere Court Road, Ramsey Heights.**
- B. Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board is asked to instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
- C. Review pumping station key dates and inform the Consulting Engineer of any discrepancies or additional information.**
- D. Plan to refurbish or replace (as needed) a minimum of 1 pump during summer of 2026 at the Board's cost.**
- E. Confirm if it wishes to provide quarterly meter readings or would prefer the Consulting Engineer to do this at cost.**
- F. Confirm it wishes to approve the Ugg Mere Court Road discharge application.**

1. Enforcement & Compliance Overview

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, 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. Planning

Ramsey Business Park – Galliard Homes Limited Mixed use development on land opposite Viscount Garage, St Marys Road, Ramsey (Phase 1 only) - 328/PL/210, 225, 278, 300, 354, 357, 359, 402, 403 & 416

We have issued notice of intention to issue Surface Water Discharge Consent for Ramsey Business Park (Phase 1 only) and have advised the developer of the Surface Water Drainage contribution due. This in addition to a Byelaw Consent for the outfall structure, which will be issued when the contribution has been paid and the consent conditions agreed by the developer.

Ugg Mere Court Road, Ramsey Heights (328/1)

On November 24th, Mantair Ltd., applied on behalf of their clients of Ugg Mere Court Road, to install a new bio-unit to replace their failing septic tank. They also asked if it was possible to install a positive

Friday 9th January 2026

discharge pipe c.70m along the rear of the curtilage to outfall in a riparian headwater ditch, immediately eastwards of Green Dyke at node 69.

It is recommended that the Board approves this application.

A separate unconsented outfall at this location is currently subject to investigation.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

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

Appendix 1

There have been 7 planning applications since the last meeting.

There has been 1 Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) application granted since the last meeting.

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

Appendix 2

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Friday 9 th January 2026	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. 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

Friday 9th January 2026

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

Please review the pumping station key dates below, if there are any discrepancies or you can add any details, please let me know. The key dates are an important reference and will feed into the upcoming Key Health Indicators, District Studies and development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement.

	Station			
Station	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Controls
Green Dyke	1954	1977	1986	2025
New Fen	1949	1964 (1) 2005 (2)	2021 (1) 2005 (2)	2005
Upwood Common	1966	1966	2014	2025

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The pumps range from 20 to 60 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 4 to 39 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump refurbishment/replacement plan for the 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.

1.2 Electricity Readings

Taking regular and accurate manual electricity meter readings is very important; even for sites with meters that are read remotely. There have been cases of significant variances between bills and actual usage, regular meter readings and pump hours readings are essential for verifying bills and forecasting usage.

Moving forward it is requested that the Pump Attendants/District Officers take electricity meter readings and pump run hours readings monthly (as close to the 1st of each month as they can) and

Friday 9th January 2026

then forward them onto the M&E Engineer David Bantoft on david.bantoft@middlelevel.gov.uk or 07768 026119.

If you are unable to provide readings, or would prefer, the MLC can take quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board for the time and mileage involved. Please approve this if it is required. Approximate cost will be £60 per station per quarter.

Without regular electricity meter readings, the MLC cannot verify electrical bills.

2. Maintenance and minor works

2.1 Upwood Common Pumping Station

Pump Control Panel Refurbishment & Pulsar Ultimate will be installed this winter as part of the IDB Fund Tranche 2B – IDB Asset Resilience GIA package.

Since the last board meeting two Routine Inspections have been carried out at Upwood Common on 11th June 2025 and 22nd August 2025. The most recent inspection remarks are as follows: 1) Weedscreen corroded at the top, monitor for further deterioration. 2) New timer required – casing has come away. This timer will be replaced as part of the control panel refurbishment.

2.2 New Fen Pumping Station

Since the last board meeting two Routine Inspections have been carried out at New Fen on 11th June 2025 and 22nd August 2025. The most recent inspection remarks are as follows: Subsidence gauge spacing at 10.8mm.

The ground stability is a major concern at this site as there is movement of the surge chamber and the slab for the control room.

2.3 Green Dyke

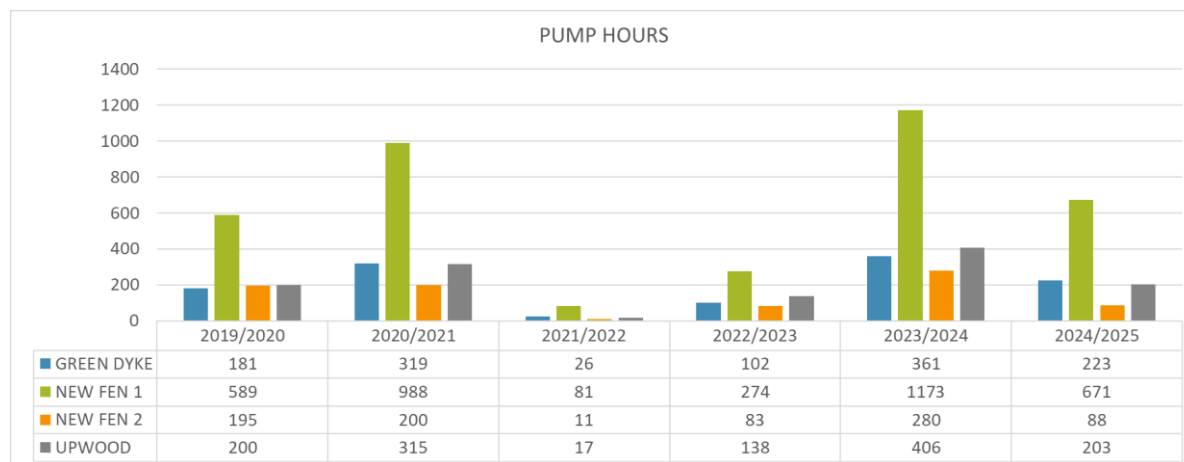
The control panel recently failed to start the pump due to a worn-out key switch, a temporary repair has been made and the full Pump Control Panel with Pulsar Ultimate will be installed this winter as part of the IDB Fund Tranche 2B – IDB Asset Resilience GIA package.

Since the last board meeting two Routine Inspections have been carried out at Green Dyke on 11th June 2025 and 22nd August 2025. The most recent inspection remarks are as follows: 1) Grease pump needs a new flexible coupling. 2) Weed screen heavily corroded at the top and around the waterline. 3) Flap door knocking on pump shutdown. 4) MLC investigating new undervoltage protection systems. 5) Concrete breaking up around outlet piles.

The last recorded overhaul of the pump is 1986. It had issues with noises and vibration which are thought to have been caused by something trapped within the pump. **The pump is currently running ok, but due to age is due for complete overhaul which is likely to cost in the region of £40k to £60k.** This depends on the amount of wear and how complexity of the removal and reinstallation.

The discharge flap door is noisy which to be investigated fully will need the discharge area to be dammed to allow full inspection and plan for repair.

3. Pumping summary (Up to April 2025)

Friday 9th January 2026

4. Inspections

- 4.1 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Reports (due every 5 years) are in date as shown below.

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley	Green Dyke	12-Jul-2022	12-Jul-2027
Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley	New Fen	12-Jul-2022	12-Jul-2027
Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley	Upwood Common	12-Jul-2022	12-Jul-2027

5. 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

The Board considered the report of the Consulting Engineer and it was taken as read.

Enforcement & Compliance Overview

Mrs Martin reported that the Enforcement & Compliance Officers have been successful in recovering the outstanding drainage charges relating to the discharge from the Ramsey Tesco site. The Board expressed their satisfaction in the resolution of this matter.

Friday 9th January 2026

Planning

The Board were asked to consider a discharge consent application received in relation to a new bio-unit at Egg Mere Court Road. The Board did not think enough information had been provided in the agenda to allow them to make an informed decision and were concerned that a wayleave consent over third party land would also be required in order to reach an outfall point. They resolved further information should be provided to the Chair, and that the final decision as to whether to give consent should rest with the Chair.

Mechanical and Electrical

The Board considered the report of the Mechanical and Electrical Engineer. His key message is that the Board's 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. The Board agreed that an investment plan be developed by the Consulting Engineer.

The Vice Chair advised that he had discussed the need to overhaul Green Dyke pump with the Chair. The pump was last overhauled in 1986, and the pump is almost 50 years old. Mr A Butler raised his concern that the refurbishment be appropriate to the Board's requirements and asked for more detail regarding what would be looked at. The Vice Chair hoped that modifications could be made to allow the pump to be run using a Power Take-off (PTO). Mr L Butler asked if a non-return valve (NRV) could be installed under the floor, to give further protection to the existing configuration.

The Board agreed that the overhaul go ahead with the budget costs of £40-60k as reported. The Board also asked that the issues with the discharge flap door as reported also be addressed within the budget if possible.

Mr A Butler reported that the Green Dyke pumping station doors had been replaced with a roller shutter door, which meant that the door could not be left ajar whilst still secured when the pump was running as previously, so that there was no way to cool the motor. The Vice Chair suggested that the advice of Mr Bantoft be sought in relation to this.

Electricity Meter Readings

Mrs Martin reminded the Board of the importance of providing electricity meter readings and how these affect the accuracy of the electricity billing process. The Board acknowledged this and the District Officer agreed to endeavour to provide monthly readings.

RESOLVED

That the Planning Engineer liaise with the Chair regarding the discharge consent at Ugg Mere Court Road, and that the Chair should make the final consenting decision.

The refurbishment of 1 pump go-ahead during summer of 2026, and this should be at Green Dyke Pumping Station.

That the Consulting Engineer liaise with Mr L Butler regarding the pump refurbishment at Green Dyke Pumping Station.

That Mr L Butler liaise with Mr Bantoft regarding the roller shutter door at Green Dyke Pumping Station.

That the reports are noted.

Friday 9th January 2026

B.1473 Health & Safety

The Vice Chair gave a verbal report on behalf of the Chair. He felt that the Board were working well with the Health & Safety Consultants, and other than waiting for the delivery of some signage from MLC, there was nothing to report.

B.1458 District Officers Report

The District Officer gave a verbal report. He advised the Board that drain works completed during 2025 were completed satisfactorily.

He reported that there had been an issue with the electricity supply to the Upwood Common pumping station resulting in the loss of a supply phase at the end of November. Because of the leaning electricity supply poles, it was not possible for UKPN to gain access with their lorry, they could not repair the leaning pole, and they could not bridge the supply as the cable was brittle. A 200kVA generator had to be supplied to the pumping station on the back of a lorry but access issues were encountered. The circumstances resulted in the pumping station being without a power supply for 12 hours.

The Board discussed their frustration with the ongoing issues regarding the main power supplies in the area, and the leaning supply poles which were seen to be a significant Health & Safety risk. It was believed that both the issues with the leaning power supply poles and the issues with the overhanging trees have been raised before with the appropriate people but still neither issue has been satisfactorily resolved.

The Vice Chair asked the District Officer if the pumping station could have been run using a PTO if the power failure had continued. The District Officer confirmed that the pumps could have run, but it would not have been possible to grease the bearings as this is usually managed by a three-phase motor, and there are no grease points.

The District Officer was thanked for his report.

B.1474 Finance Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT
Date:	Friday 9 th January 2026	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. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B
- D. Note the Highland Water Contributions

Friday 9th January 2026

E. Contributions from Developers – Confidential papers

F. 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

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 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. 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>
Control Panel Replacement - Upwood Common	£10,000	3.05p
Control Panel Replacement - Green Dyke	£15,000	4.58p
Total	£25,000	7.63p

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 £12,973. The final submitted claim amounted to £10,322.58 (£12,305.25 representing 80% of the Boards' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/26 less £1,982.67 representing an over claim of the financial year 2024/25).

Friday 9th January 2026

- 4. Determination of land for rating purposes and rate arrears – Confidential papers**
- 5. 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 £5,771.02 (2024/2025: £5,657.86).

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

Enclosure 1 Contributions from Developers (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)

Appendix 1 Budget Review

Friday 9th January 2026

APPENDIX 1

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026

	<u>Approved budget</u> <u>2025/2026</u> £	<u>Actual to</u> <u>30th November 2025</u> £	<u>Estimated Out-turn</u> <u>at 31st March 2026</u> £	<u>Variance</u> <u>To Budget</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1 Rates and Insurances	2,150	2,382 ^A	2,382 ^A	232	A - Premiums higher than anticipated
2 Repairs and Renewals	4,750	1,286	4,750	-	B - Provision based on 2 year average consumption plus estimate for new contract rates from October 2025 (5% Increase)
3 Fuel	30,000 ^B	5,588	30,000 ^C	-	C - Forecast kept at budget level due to unpredictable pumping volumes.
4 Drainworks (including District Officer's Fee)	30,250 ^D	23,623 ^E	40,260 ^F	10,010	D - Forecast kept at budget level due to unpredictable pumping volumes.
5 Administration Charge, Health and Safety Contract, Audit Fee, Printing, Stationery, Advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions Etc.	9,700	4,859	10,350	650	E - Forecast Includes for :- Flail mowing & tree cutting 8,100 Slubbing 12,000 20,100
6 Environment Agency Precept	5,771	5,771	5,771	-	F - Forecast Includes for :- Flail mowing & tree cutting 8,100 Slubbing 12,000 2024/25 Works 10,010 30,110
7 Plant Refurbishment Funding	20,581 ^G	0 ^G	20,581 ^G	-	G - Future works at pumping stations
8 Improvement Works	0	0	25,000 ^H	25,000	H - Control Panel Replacement - Upwood Common 10,000 Control Panel Replacement - Green Dyke 15,000 25,000
9 Reinstatement Of Balances	13,932 ^I	0	255	(13,677)	I - Provision for recovery of balances reduced by winter 2023/24 pumping. Recover over 3 years
	117,134	43,511	139,349	22,215	
LESS: Government Grant, Revenue Income Etc.	15,515 ^J	11,463	37,730 ^K	22,215	
	101,619	32,048	101,619	0	
<u>Estimated General Fund</u>					J - Includes:
Opening balance	176,587	176,587	176,587		Bank interest 2,250 Highland Water 12,973
Rates raised	101,492	101,492	101,492		
Net expenditure	101,619	32,048	101,619		K - Includes for:
Transfer to Future Works Fund					Highland Water Claim 10,323 Storm Recovery Grant - T2b 25,000 Bank interest 2,250
Closing balance	<u>176,459</u>	<u>246,031</u>	<u>176,459</u>		

Friday 9th January 2026

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board considered and noted the key finance messages of the Finance Officer, and the receipt of £25,000 Grant Aid from the T2B Storm Recovery Grant.

Budget Monitoring

The Board reviewed the forecast against the budget and noted that pumping costs are estimated.

Highland Water Contributions

The Board noted the Highland Water contributions.

Contributions from Developers – Confidential Papers

The Board noted the contributions.

Precept

Internal Drainage Boards are required to pay a Precept (IDB Precept) to the Environment Agency for their expenses managing water passing into main rivers. Predominantly, the Precept funds additional maintenance downstream of and/or benefitting IDB districts.

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2026, to £5,771.02.

B.1475 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That a meeting be held during March (date to be advised) as discussed.

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on 29th May 2026 at 2pm at the Old Nene Golf Club, Ramsey. An inspection will be held prior to the meeting.

B.1476 Any Other Business

The Vice Chair asked if the District Officer was aware of any works being undertaken on the Catchwater this year. Mr L Butler advised that a meeting had been held the previous day, and that it was proposed that maintenance be carried out from Bury Lane Farm to Berry Green Farm on the field side. No dates have been agreed but the works have been subject to an environmental review and works can commence straight away.

Mr Clarke advised that a planning application had been submitted by David Wilson Homes for a development on Biggin Lane and asked that MLC ensure they respond on behalf of the Board. He was particularly concerned that as MLC have advised their system is at capacity, the development would discharge into the Catchwater. Mrs Martin agreed to raise the issue with the Planning Engineer.

The Vice Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting, adding that he felt that the Board were responsible for making room for the growth of Ramsey, and for continuing to manage the resilience of the Board.

Friday 9th January 2026

Mr A Butler advised that there has been a small slip on the Catchwater Channel which has been reviewed by Sofi Lloyd and asked that this item be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

With no other items being raised by the Board, the meeting was closed at 4.15pm.

.....
Chair

.....
Date