CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Administered by:

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18th February 2026

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Monday 2nd March 2026

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Crown Lodge, Outwell PE14 8SE at 7pm on Monday 2nd March 2026.

As you'll be aware, we administer thirty Boards that mostly all meet within similar date ranges. Thank you to the majority of Members who already confirm their attendance proactively.

Please help us manage your Board effectively by **proactively letting Gemma know as soon as possible, by telephone or email, if you can attend the meeting, or not, or if you're uncertain.** This results in less abortive time and cost to the running of all Boards.

It is important that we have early confirmation whether or not the Board will be quorate.

Yours truly

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Board

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Monday 2nd March 2026 at 7pm

The Crown Lodge, Outwell PE14 8SE

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising • Upwell health centre	Pages 3 - 5	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership • Attendance • Elections, vacancies & appointments • Training	Pages 6 - 8	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 9 - 14	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	Page 15	Clerk
7	Chairman's Items	Verbal	Chair
8	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: • Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Pages 16 - 18	Clerk
9	Health & Safety • Visit 26/02/26	Pages 19 – 20 To follow	Chair
10	District Officer's Report	Page 21	DO
11	Governance • Internal Controls • Banking • Accounts Return for 2024/2025 • Auditors report for 2024/2025 • Risk Assessment • Exercise of Public Rights • Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities	Pages 22 - 24 Pages 25 - 29	Clerk
12	Finance Report: looking back • Finance Officer's Review • Payments for 2025 • Budget Monitoring	Page 30 Page 31	Clerk
13	Finance Report: looking forward • Finance Officer's summary • Fees, remuneration and subscriptions • Determination of land for rating & rate arrears • Precept to the Environment Agency • Estimates for 2026/27 • Rate requirements for 2026/27	Pages 32 - 33 Page 34 Page 35 Page 36	Clerk
14	Date of Next Meeting – Monday 19th April 2027	Verbal	Chair
15	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

(NB: If required for any agenda item:

In pursuance of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting when the above matters are being considered by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.)

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Virtual Meeting of the Churchfield and Plawfield Internal Drainage Board on Thursday 26th June 2025.

PRESENT

S Calton (Chair)
D Boyce (Vice-Chair)
C Crofts (BCKLWN)
K Harrison (BCKLWN)
D Lunn
C Rose (BCKLWN)

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

Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from G Boyce, M Fairey and J Lunn.

B.1247 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 Rose and Mr Crofts declared interests (as councillors of The Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk) in matters relating to planning applications.

B.1248 Minutes of last meeting

The Chair asked that two amendments be made to the minutes. The first related to minute B.1238 iv) Back Drove, Upwell, and that the Planning Officer should be responding to the claimant and not to the Planning Council.

Mr Rose advised in relation to minute B.1238 iii) Orchard View, 7 Baptist Road, Upwell, that the focal point should be 2.4m from the road and that the Borough Council should be asking for the wall to be reduced in height to achieve the vision splay.

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 12th March 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1249 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

B.1250 Governance

Mrs Martin went through the Governance report and the various Resolutions that the Board had been asked to make.

a) Insurance

Mrs Martin referred the Board to the Governance report, advising that the tripartite agreement is coming to an end which is likely to see insurance costs increasing for 2026/27.

b) Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

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

c) DEFRA IDB1 Return

RESOLVED

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

d) Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

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

e) Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk referred to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

The Board confirmed that they have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of elector's rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the documents listed have been published.

f) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Mrs Martin reported that as part of the Annual Governance review the Board were required to consider if there were any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the authority. She confirmed that there were no such matters that have been raised through the office of the clerk. Members gave consideration to the position.

RESOLVED

> That there are no such events that would have an adverse financial impact on the Board that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

B.1251 Finance Report

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board considered and noted the key finance messages of the Finance Officer, and the payments detailed for 2024.
The Budget Comparison was noted.

Payments for 2024

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2024/2025

The Board considered and approved the Annual accounts and Finance Papers for the year ended 31st March 2025, as required in the Audit regulations and that the Chair be authorised to sign the return.

RESOLVED

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

B.1252 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

> That next Meeting of the Board be held on Monday 2nd March 2026 at 7.00 pm at The Crown Lodge, Outwell.

B.1253 Any Other Business

Mr Rose asked the Board to review the cost of holding their meetings at The Crown Lodge, noting that most village halls cost around £10/hour to rent. Mr Crofts raised a concern, in that in his experience as a councillor, halls have been booked well in advance of meetings as dates have to be published, but then the venue is overbooked by a regular booking that occurs at the same time and their meeting has to be rearranged. Mr Dale Boyce advised that Upwell Parish Council are charged £20 for the village hall for their meetings.

The Board agreed to keep the booking for The Crown Lodge for 2026 but asked all Board members to look for other venues that the Board could consider.

With no other items being raised by the Board, the meeting was closed at 9.20am.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Monday 2nd March 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Gemma Ashby**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the position regarding elections and consider the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments within its appointment of officials.
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. Outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training.

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	8	N/A		5
Actual	8	4 KLWN	12	
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	P Allen	Ratepayer	
2	D J Boyce	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair & District Officer
3	G Boyce	Ratepayer	
4	S Calton	Nominee of Ratepayer (D J Boyce Outwell)	Chairman
5	P Cutting	Ratepayer	
6	M Fairey	Nominee of Ratepayer (Alderney Livestock Co Ltd)	
7	D Lunn	Ratepayer	
8	J Lunn		

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	C Crofts	BCKLWN	Councillor
2	J Kirk	BCKLWN	Councillor
3	C Rose	BCKLWN	Councillor
4	K Harrison	BCKLWN	Outside Council appointment

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	26/6/2025	3/3/2025	4/3/2024	6/3/2023
1	P Allen		Present	Present	Present
2	D J Boyce	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
3	G Boyce	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
4	S Calton	Present	Present	Present	Present
5	P Cutting		Present		Apologies
6	M Fairey	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Apologies
7	D Lunn	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
8	J Lunn	Apologies	Present	Present	N/A

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	S Calton	Present	Apologies	Present	Present

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	26/6/2025	3/3/2025	4/3/2024	6/3/2023
1	C Crofts (BCKLWN)	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	J Kirk (BCKLWN)				
3	C Rose (BCKLWN)	Present	Present	Present	Present
4	K Harrison (BCKLWN)	Present	Present	Present	Present

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 In appointing the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Board is expected to follow the principles within the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve in any one post for more than ten years. The tenure of the current Chairman is 9.3 years, and the tenure of the current Vice Chairman is 26.8 years.

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). See 'The IDB governance future within the Middle Level of the Fen' within the Clerk's Report.

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 IDBs are expected by Defra to support relevant externally accredited training and/or professional development of its Board Members, officers and employees (if appropriate). It is therefore recommended that the Board identifies and budgets for any such requirements.

5.2 In addition, IDBs are expected by Defra to provide in-house training and/or professional development opportunities for its Board Members, officers and employees (if appropriate).

5.3 Topics that Defra suggest are i) Governance ii) Ethics iii) Finance iv) Environment v) Health, safety & welfare and vi) Communications & engagement.

5.4 The Board are asked to outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training. 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

5.5 Member training is reported to **Defra as part of the annual IDB1** return

Author Name: Gemma Ashby
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Monday 2nd March 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.
B. The Board is asked to delegate the approval and publication of new and/or updated policies to the Clerk.
C. Ensure their District Officers keep records to enable completion of Questions 26 & 27 within the IDB1 Annual Report to Defra.

1. MLC Overview

Delivery has been the primary focus within 2025/26. We were successful in securing approximately £4.5m of grant for several IDB Fund (Tranche 2b) submissions and the administration and delivery of these commitments has been a primary focus, particularly for staff in M&E, Operations, Environment & Ecology and Finance, meaning some 'business as usual' activity has been impacted.

This fund, coming with fewer constraints than FCRM grant-in-aid, has enabled us to think and invest differently. We are starting 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. At St Germans Pumping Station for example, we now are starting to gear our infrastructure, turning our assets from feeling like a financial burden into engines that drive our business more efficiently. 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 staff 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.

It is also clear that MLC and the IDBs need to reduce our collective reliance on government grant in aid funding and highland water payments. Whilst we remain focussed on influencing and informing policy shifts, MLC and IDB assets are of the age that we cannot avoid the scale of capital works ahead of us that will cost hundreds of millions of pounds to develop and deliver. Collectively we have a significant gap in both capacity and capability, alongside a dependence on Fens 2100+ driving a case for change in how our assets are invested in.

Thanks to the support of the Middle Level Board, we now have greater capability to press our regulatory teeth and turn the significant development pressures we face within our catchment into a risk management and financial opportunity rather than seeing it negatively. A further increase in staff capacity has been approved to better cater for the workload, increase cost recovery to further reduce costs to ratepayers. Fees from developers are also a critical source of funding to develop and deliver the capital works on the MLC and/or IDB infrastructure that serves and benefits developments

2. MLC Services to IDBs

As previously reported, we have made the business decision to focus our clerking and technical services offer to IDBs within the Middle Level where there is water management connectivity with the Middle Level Commissioners' catchment.

Given that our focus in 2025/26 has been on establishing and strengthening our Planning, Compliance & Enforcement Service for MLC/IDBs, IDB Fund Delivery for MLC/IDBs and enabling the transfer of seven IDBs outside of the Middle Level to new service providers, the Service Guide and associated fee structure will continue to be developed during 2026 with a view to being ready to implement for 2027/28.

3. Policy Reviews

There are several new policies that need to be developed and published over the course of the next year, along with updates to existing policies. Given the nature of our catchment and our services to administered IDBs, most policies need to be consistent rather than bespoke for each IDB. Any policy also needs to come into effect at the same time across MLC and/or all relevant IDBs.

Planned new policies include:
- IT Policy
- Artificial Intelligence Policy
- Approach to CDM Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Act 2023
- Enforcement & Sanctions Policy (primarily to support our regulation of consent compliance, unconsented works and associated enforcement)

The Board is asked to delegate the approval and publication of new and/or updated policies to the Clerk.

4. Waste Exemptions

Defra and the Environment Agency introduced waste exemptions in circa 2008/09 and there is a suite of exemptions available to IDBs (including D1 exemption which allows for depositing waste from dredging inland waters). We followed Environment Agency advice at the time and have one suite of exemptions that covers the MLC and all our administered IDB operations.

This approach now requires improvement and mitigation to de-risk operations for IDBs and MLC individually and collectively. Following discussion with MLC and IDB Chairs, over the next 12-months we aim to move to MLC and each administered IDB having their own suite of waste exemptions and associated implementation controls. There will also likely be a need for associated training materials for IDBs and their District Officers.

We will likely require external resources/services to deliver this improvement and the cost associated with the work will be divided equally.

5. The IDB governance future within the Middle Level of the Fens

IDBs and Board members had the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on the outline design in Q1 of 2025/26. Members of the 'Case for Change' working group met in September 2025 to review the feedback on the Outline Design and agree next steps. The consensus is that people need something more specific to debate. We also, unsurprisingly, have people on either extreme of the spectrum between staying as we are and not seeing any need for change, and those that feel radical change is long overdue. Most are somewhere in-between.

A proposal has been conceived that the working group supports moving to 'Detailed Design'. This proposal is to move from the current 25 IDBs to 7 IDBs, in phases, over the next 15 years. The proposal aims to balance:

1 Hydrological common sense and logical alignment.
2 The Outline Design feedback.
3 Respective readiness for and need for change.
4 Likely trigger points for change.

This proposal aims to provide:

1 An option for detailed design and subsequent debate.
2 The ability to phase change and make it more bite sized.
3 Time for IDBs to make steps to align 'standards' ahead of amalgamation.
4 A meaningful change that will enable improvements and efficiency within MLC & IDB working.
5 A middle ground between the 'go big' and 'stay small' views.
6 A platform for further and quicker change should it be needed or if the Fens Reservoir enables.

We aim to have the Detailed Design undertaken by April 2026 so we can have an IDB Chairs session on it ahead of consultation through Autumn 2026. Depending upon response and agreement, Boards would be asked to approve any final proposal (particularly any Boards amalgamating in any Phase 1) at their 2027 AGMs.

6. 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.

7. Electricity

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 Chairmen 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.

8. Defra Flood Funding Policy (Capital Works)

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. At the time of writing (February 2026) the guidance associated with implementing the new policy is yet to be finalised and published. Given existing financial commitments within the Environment Agency's investment programme, there will likely be a transition period of a couple of years before the full programme reflects the new policy.

FCERM funding and prioritisation policy

Funding eligibility

For existing projects and assets: 100% of costs for refurbishing existing assets.

For new or improved projects and assets: 100% for the first £3 million, and 90% for costs above £3 million, giving a crucial boost to schemes.

Prioritisation by value for money

Subject to meeting the strategic objectives, all projects are prioritised within the FCERM programme by their benefit-to-cost ratios, with additional funding contributions boosting a project's prioritisation.

Strategic objectives

Reduce flooding and coastal erosion risk and deliver environmental outcomes while reducing those risks.

Guaranteed share of investment for deprived areas and in natural flood management.

Use Defra FCERM funding to unlock additional contributions from public, private and charitable sources.

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 acknowledges 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.

9. IDB Funding & Costs Research

A joint Defra and MHCLG 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 and provided them with the information we have to hand for their data requests. W also hosted a case study visit in January 2026. 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.

In September 2025 we also hosted the Local Delivery & Rural Floods Policy Team from Defra. We took them on a whistlestop tour from Stanground Lock through the Middle Level to St Germans Pumping Station and used the time and the backdrop to discuss and showcase our system and breadth of water management operations.

We highlighted the 'big ticket' areas of efficiency we are driving at the MLC, including how we are using the governments 'IDB Fund' wisely. We discussed the strengths and successes in how we work across the Middle Level but also the areas of policy and associated financing that are constraining our collective ability to plan and be as efficient and as effective as possible in a world that's changing, due largely to factors beyond our control.

10. IDB 1 (Annual Reporting to Defra)

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 has on the sector in terms of governance and responsibilities.

Whilst MLC can derive most of the financial and non-financial information on behalf of our administered IDBs, there are an increasing number of questions where we require information from the Boards directly. Including, for IDBs that do not use the MLC for their operational services their District Officer will need to keep records of the length (in kilometres) of i) the length of watercourse maintained by the Board in the financial year and ii) the cumulative length of works on maintained watercourses (Questions 26 & 27 in the form).

If no answers are received from Boards, then questions will be left blank within returned forms.

11. IDB Precept

Section 139(1) of the Water Resources Act 1991 (WRA 1991) empowers the Environment Agency to require a contribution from Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) each year towards its operational costs.

The mechanism for collecting the contribution is for the Environment Agency to issue a precept to the relevant IDBs requiring payment of the amount due.

There is a statutory duty to spend IDB precept revenue “only in the carrying out of the Environment Agency’s flood and coastal erosion risk management functions… in or for the benefit of the flood risk management region in which [the precept] is raised”.

The amount of the contribution should be what the Environment Agency considers to be ‘fair’ and the legislation places a duty upon the Environment Agency to provide to the IDB a statement which provides detail of the purposes of which the contribution demanded by precept will be applied and the basis of the calculation of the contribution.

The Environment Agency, via the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) has committed to improve the clarity and transparency of how and where IDB Precept is spent along with the associated calculation. The existing approach is rooted in discussions and agreements that have been lost in time with changing corporate knowledge; therefore, it is likely to take a few years of incremental improvement to get to a clearer position.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT**
Date:	**Monday 2nd March 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Sofi Lloyd**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Review and approve the new Biodiversity Action Plan**

B. Set a budget for biodiversity spend for the next year

C. Note that Key Environmental Compliance Indicators (KCIs), as below, have been launched this year to assess and report the environmental compliance of the IDB in a consistent way. This will help to ensure that any areas of environmental risk are flagged promptly, and the environmental achievements of the Board are recognised and published.

D. Note that a review of the IDBs Environmental and waste permits is required and will be planned with the Chair and VC in the coming months.

Review of Key Environmental Compliance Indicators (KCIs)

Key:	**Not Achieved / Information Not Available**	**Partly complete / A date has been set for completion (provide date and resource)**	**Complete**
Name of Board Environmental Representative:		**Dale Boyce**	
KCI:	**Description of KCI:**	**Status:**	**Comments:**
1.	A current channel categorisation map & reasoning is available	**In Progress**	In progress. Will check Autumn 2026
2.	Standard Operating Procedures audit has been undertaken and works considered compliant	**In Progress**	**DB** will undertake during ops in 2026 or delegate to the Ecol. team to do
3.	The previous year's maintenance record is available for review and to inform the following year's works planning.	**n/a**	This year is the first year so no previous available
4.	A channel maintenance plan (flail mowing and desilting) has been prepared for Board review and approval.		Board commits to ensuring the contractor flails and/or uses weed bucket in any channels they deem necessary at the time, according to SOPs. No desilting necessary as weed bucket work is effective.
5.	All non-routine works undertaken in the previous year were screened for environmental impacts and opportunities using the ESR process	**n/a**	No non-routine work undertaken
6.	The Biodiversity Action Plan has been reviewed and objectives for the previous year have been met and following objectives set		BAP issued for review and approval.
7.	Proposed biodiversity budget is set and defined		Will set at 2026 meeting & report
8.	At least one Board Representative has attended at least one biodiversity training / information event in the year and reported relevant details to the board	**n/a**	This is the first year. Attendance at the MLC Bio Day is planned and contractors will be offered training
9.	There has been no net loss of open watercourse (via culverting or other) in the district in the previous year	**n/a**	Reminded Board of Policy and will be reviewed next year for first time
10.	A current map of badger setts in the district is available and licensable works around them was undertaken compliantly and in line with licence conditions	**In progress**	In progress. **DB** will confirm at Autumn meeting.
Summary of environmental delivery and achievements for the year 2025-2026			
The screening of non-routine works (ESR) is already adopted by the Board effectively. Remaining objectives will be reviewed completely next year.			

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners</td><td>Item No:</td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting:</td><td>CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB</td><td>Subject:</td><td>CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT:
CHIEF ENGINEER’S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td>Monday 2 March 2026</td><td>Officer Responsible:</td><td>Nicola Oldfield</td></tr>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **The Board authorises the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice form MLC.**

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, unlicenced moorings, unauthorised structures and encroachment,
- Six major developments have been referred to Technical Services following enforcement action, as consent applications for outstanding discharge consents.

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

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

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Applications since last meeting
Appendix 2: Board’s District Plan

Appendix 1

There have been 21 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been 1 Byelaw Consent applications (to undertake works in and around watercourses) have been granted since the last meeting:

There have been 1 Byelaw Consent applications (to discharge to a watercourse) application processed since the last meeting.

There have been 2 infiltration device applications acknowledged since the last meeting:

Planning Updates & Consultations

Domestic Garden Water Logging at Small Lode, Upwell

The Board are advised that we have been contacted by the LLFA regarding a riparian dispute relating to the infill of a ditch, allegedly resulting in flooding to adjacent garden. We will respond to the LLFA to confirm that similarly to the LLFA in their assessment, the Board has limited powers in such circumstances. This matter has previously been passed to the District Officer, and we believe there are complicated factors outside the remit of the Board or MLC

Pinfold Road area

Four dwellings at 5 Pinfold Road, Upwell – Fountain Construction (MLC Ref No 677)

Consent for partly attenuated surface water discharge was granted by the Board in March 2024.

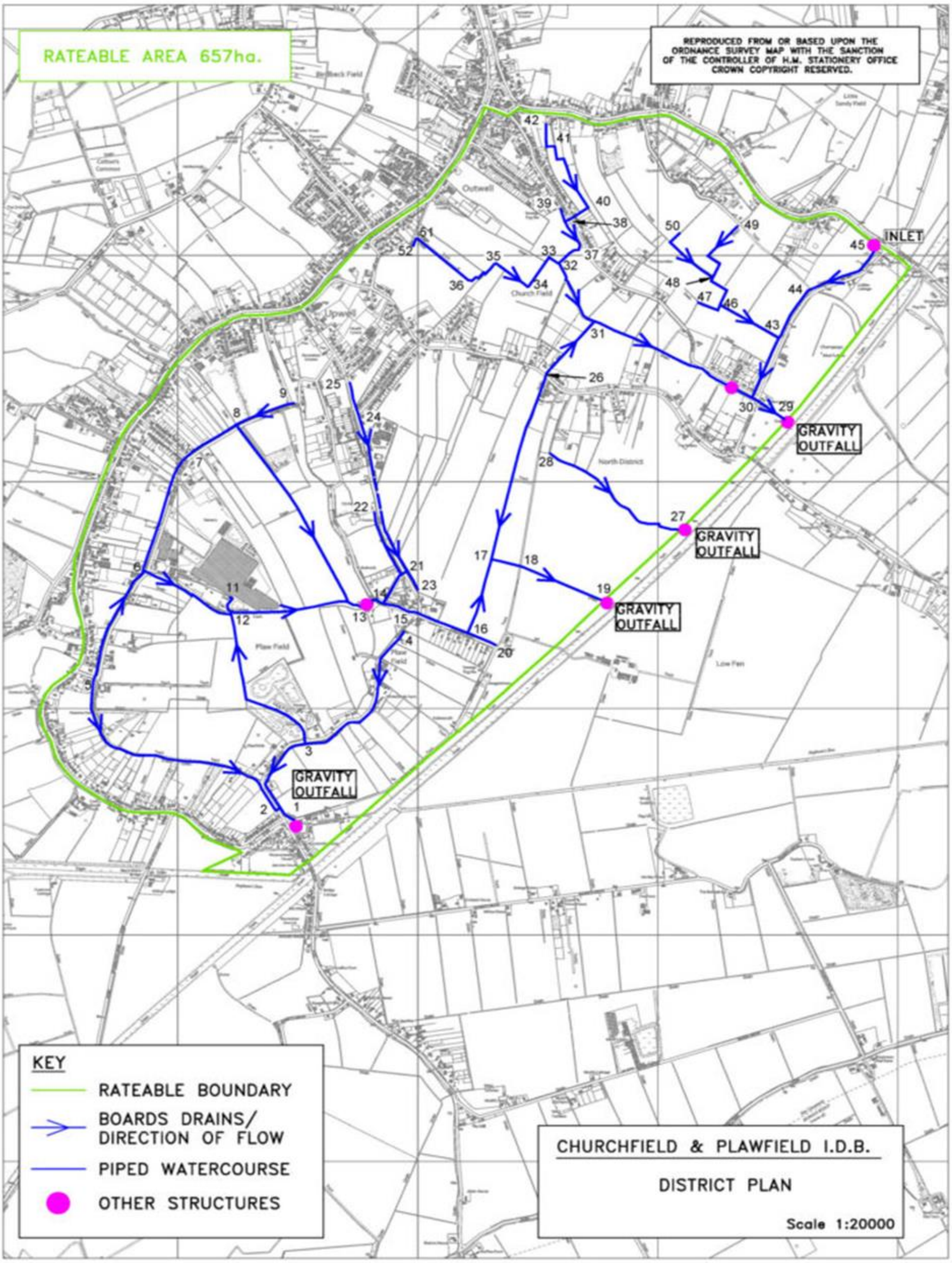
As reported in the last Consulting Engineer's report, a Section 23 application was refused regarding piping the watercourse to the rear of the development. However, it was discovered by the Enforcement team that the watercourse has been infilled, with a small pipe installed. After discussion with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, it has been decided to allow the culvert and small pipe to remain, but the applicant has been advised that the work is unconsented, and the Board may request the works to be removed at any time if so required. The householders will be written to, advising them of the situation.

Upwell, Stonehouse Road blocked or collapsed riparian access culvert

The owner of a property close to the junction with Stonehouse Road and New Bridge Road called MLC claiming his access culvert had collapsed. As the District Officer was otherwise engaged, an officer from MLC attended site on January 22nd, 2026. After meeting the owner to ascertain details on the property and culvert, an inspection was done using a surveying level staff and arm to feel the culvert from each end due to high water levels in the IDB drain covering the culvert. Both ends of the culvert are blocked with silt, and it seems to be a 350mm diameter concrete pipe. As it resides at the gravity flow split in the drain, it's not holding any water up to worry about.

MLC subsequently advised the District Officer of the survey findings who requested MLC contact a local contractor to provide a quote swiftly to either rod, jet, or pull this culvert through, along with a further thirteen others on a 600m reach along the same drain between nodes 6 to 9. Ideally, this is to include the NCC Highways culvert at the juncture with New Bridge and Stonehouse Roads. Subject to any quote being acceptable to progress matters, MLC Operations will pursue the matter on the Board's behalf. A temporary road closure may be required to undertake such works for which there will be fee payable, and road space will need booking in advance.

Appendix 2



RATEABLE AREA 657ha.
REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED.
INLET
GRAVITY OUTFALL
GRAVITY OUTFALL
GRAVITY OUTFALL
GRAVITY OUTFALL
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
PIPED WATERCOURSE
OTHER STRUCTURES
CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD I.D.B.
DISTRICT PLAN
Scale 1:20000

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	9
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**HEALTH & SAFETY**
Date:	**Monday 2nd March 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note its Health & Safety accountabilities.
B. Take initial actions to strengthen its governance of Health & Safety (Section 3).

1. Introduction

The ADA Good Governance Guide covers Health & Safety (P90-91) and there is a new guide in development that will go much deeper into responsibilities and standards. The Annual Report (IDB1) to Defra also asks the following questions:

- Whether the Board has a current Health & Safety Policy
- Whether the Board has a Board Member focussed on ensuring that Health & Safety is considered when Board decisions are made.
- Whether the Board has a responsible officer for Health & Safety.
- The number of 'near miss' incidents in the reporting period.
- Details of any reportable incidents in the reporting period.

2. Clarification of H&S accountabilities

For the avoidance of doubt, an IDB and the MLC are each different public bodies, independent from each other. In the UK, a public body can delegate specific health and safety *tasks* and *functions* to another body, but it cannot transfer its ultimate legal accountability or liability for ensuring that those duties are carried out safely. The original public body retains overall responsibility. Accountabilities and responsibilities cannot be outsourced to H&S service providers either.

Delegation of statutory functions requires explicit laws to enable, and these do not exist within MLC and IDB legislation. Specific day-to-day tasks can be delegated to competent individuals or organisations, provided there are clear arrangements for supervision, monitoring, and reporting. Delegation should be set out in formal, robust contracts or agreements (e.g., a written contract or a scheme of delegation) that clearly define roles, responsibilities, reporting arrangements, and monitoring procedures.

Currently, the only H&S task that MLC provides for administered IDBs is to facilitate specialist H&S advice via a group arrangement currently with AW Safety Management Ltd (previously COPE) as the supplier. As MLC further matures their own Health & Safety capacity, capability and standards, it may be that they can offer a broader service to administered IDBs.

The specific scope of services/advice that each IDB wants or needs from AW Safety Management Ltd is within their gift and responsibility to determine. Each Board essentially pays for an annual day with the H&S advisor as well as their ad hoc advice as required. These days have in recent years been focussed on a site inspection (eg pumping stations), however there is a diminishing value in repeat inspections of the same asset. It is also not clear whether Board's are making use of the ad hoc advice arrangements that they are paying for.

Where MLC are delivering specific operational services for an IDB (eg overseeing the maintenance programme, M&E works, ecological surveys) then they have responsibility to manage the H&S associated with those activities and any contractors they use. The IDB remains accountable for assuring themselves of MLC's competence in this regard.

3. Strengthening IDB H&S governance

It is recommended that the Board review its governance of its Health & Safety accountabilities. This should include the following initial actions, but not necessarily be limited to these:

a) Reconfirm if they have a lead Board Member and responsible official for H&S, and if so who they are.
b) Confirming which Board Members and officials (eg District Officers, Pump Attendants) have been suitably trained in H&S leadership (eg IOSH Managing Safely) via their 'day job' employers, providing certification to MLC so it can be held on the Board's file.
c) Identifying Members and Officials (and employees) who ought to be trained*. This will then need to be budgeted for and arranged.
d) Review the Board's near miss and accident reporting approach and ensure any records are sent to MLC Offices for inclusion on the Board's file. MLC have template forms for their own H&S management that can be provided.
e) Consider its wider H&S risk exposure and target the days with AW Safety Management Ltd accordingly.
f) Provide feedback as to whether a broader H&S service from the MLC would be valued (reducing or replacing the need for a 3rd party service provider) and what range of services would be most valuable.

**The Institution of Occupational Health & Safety (IOSH) Manging Safely Course is a 3-day classroom style course costing circa £600 (exc VAT). There are also online learning options available.*

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

District Officer’s report 2025/26

Maintenance work was again completed by The King’s Lynn Consortium of Internal Drainage Boards. This season’s work was initially completed by a different operator and, unfortunately, this officer was unable to supervise at the time which meant a return visit as the weed bucket had not been used in important areas.

As previously reported, remedial work between Points 35 and 36 is still to be completed satisfactorily. Flow is severely restricted.

The control structure at Point 14 is being monitored and has caused no problems but damage is apparent to the safety rails.

There have been problems again between points 5 and 9 (Stonehouse Road and Baptist Road). Clearing and jetting of culverts is being organised.

The two culverts very close to each other on Baptist Road, South of Point 7, need the small section of ditch between them clearing. The weed bucket will not fit successfully. They also require jetting/clearing.

A stretch of former Board’s Drain (the old Point 10), to the rear of the recently built properties, has been piped and filled without the correct consent. There are no inspection chambers apparent.

Fly-tipping has, again, been a nuisance. Where possible, it has been manually removed.

Maintenance for the forthcoming season:
The usual flailing, weed raking and jetting, as and when required, should be sufficient.
Board members to advise on further potential issues please.

Finally, I would like to say Thank You to all involved for assistance given throughout the year.

DjwB 2026

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Monday 2nd March 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider and approve the Annual Return 2024/2025
B. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor and consider the Internal Auditors Report for 2024/2025 (link)
C. Consider any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions occurring during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the Board.
D. Review the effectiveness of existing Internal Controls and identify any new or strengthened Internal Controls that they may require.
E. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
F. Note the submission of the IDB1 form to Defra. (link)
G. Assure themselves that they provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
H. Continue with a limited assurance review approach.

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

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

1.2 As part of their AGAR return, the Board is asked whether it has considered any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions occurring during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the Board.

1.3 The Board to consider the comments of the auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2025. (Appendix 1)

1.4 The Board to consider the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended 31st March 2025. (here)

1.5 The Board are reminded that Whitings LLP were appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28). The Board is asked to act on the advice of the Auditor within its decision making.

1.6 The latest report of the Internal Auditor is available on the MLC website for the consideration. This report covers the MLC and all administered IDBs.

2. Internal Controls

2.1 Within the financial operations at the Middle Level offices there are a series of controls in place to ensure the segregation of duties, so as far as practical within a small workforce, that no one person has control of a single operation from start to finish. The Internal Controls are available via the website within the 'Governance' section on the Board's page.

2.2 Note the Financial Regulations for the Board is also available on its page via www.middlevel.gov.uk

2.3 The Board needs to ensure there is adequate separation of duties within its running and decision making. Members are asked to refresh themselves as to the Member Code of Conduct (available within the Governance Documents on the Board's webpage) and ensure their declarations of interests are clear and up to date.

2.4 If a Board Member (or their business) undertakes contracted work (or bids for such work) for the Board it is recommended that they be excluded from any decision making as a matter of course and that appropriate contractual arrangements are in place.

2.5 If the Member also has a lead role for the Board (eg Chair/Vice Chair) then it is important that the Board puts in place safeguards to ensure a separation of duties, particularly being clear on who is acting as lead client for the contractor.

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 The Board are asked to consider their Risk Management Strategy.

4. IDB1 (Annual Report to Defra)

4.1 All IDBs are required to report annually to Defra via an Annual Report called an IDB1 form. These reports are copied to the Environment Agency and to the relevant District Councils. The most recent form submitted on behalf of the Board is available on the Board's webpage.

5. Exercise of Public Rights

5.1 For completion of the Annual Governance Statement the Board is required to confirm that they provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

5.2 In order to warrant a positive response to this assertion the authority needs to have taken the following actions in respect of the previous annual return:

Exercise of Public Rights: The authority provided for the exercise of public rights set out in Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Part 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the RFO to have published including on the authority's website or other website:

- Sections 1 and 2 of the annual return
- A declaration that the status of the statement of accounts is 'unaudited;' and
- A statement that sets out details of how public rights can be exercised, as set out in Regulation 15(2)(b), which includes the period for the exercise of public rights.

5.3 In addition, a notice of the conclusion of the external auditor's limited assurance review of the annual return, together with relevant accompanying information, has been published in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. We also display the 'Local Authority Accounts – A Summary of Your Rights' with the notice.

5.4 The Clerk to refer to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

6. Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

6.1 In previous years the Board has continued with a limited assurance review approach and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 Annual Return 2024/2025

Appendix 1

Churchfield & Plawfield Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

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

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

1 The Audit of accounts for the Churchfield & Plawfield Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2025 has been completed and the accounts have been published.

2 The Annual Governance & Accountability Return including the auditor's certificate and opinion is available for inspection and copying by any local government elector of the area of Churchfield & Plawfield Internal Drainage Board

The Clerk
Churchfield & Plawfield Internal Drainage Board
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AH

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

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

Announcement made by: P Burrows - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 10th September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

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

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

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

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

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 13/06/2025 22/06/2025 30/06/2025

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

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

Date: 30/06/2025

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

	Yes	No	N/A	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.				*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

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

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

26/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

B. 1250

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

Chair

Clerk RMartin

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	50,730	74,668	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	43,713	46,778	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	8,583	1,688	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	28,358	36,994	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	74,668	86,140	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	79,147	92,014	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	0	0	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				*The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

AHWool.

Date 12/06/2025

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

26/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

B: 1251

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

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

In respect of **Churchfield and Plawfield Internal Drainage Board – DB0017**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

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

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2024/25

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

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

None

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

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

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature | Date 05/09/2025

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners	**Item No:**	**12**

Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Monday 2nd March 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Budgeting review.

B. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 1.

Finance Officer's review and key messages

Forecast for Income/Expenditure against Budget

For 2025/2026 the Board set a rate of 10.00p to raise a total of £49,498 in agricultural drainage rates and special levies. The rating estimates included the sum of £15,300 for current and future improvement works.

A budget monitoring exercise was carried out based on figures to 31st January 2025 which gave a forecast out-turn of £49,356, this included areas of forecasting the budget allocation where applicable, however District work and repairs are higher than budgeted. This would mean less than budgeted transfer to the Improvements fund.

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

1. **Budgeting**

1.1 For 2025/2026 the estimated expenditure for the Board was £49,498 and a rate of 10.00p was set to raise this through agricultural drainage rates and special levy.

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

2. **Payments for 2025**

2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

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

Appendix 1 Payments for 2025

CHURCHFIELD AND PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Payments made 2024/2025 (1st January 2025 - 31st March 2025)

Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution towards retirement gift	25.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	735.90
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
District Officer's expenses 2024/2025	4,526.90
Crown Lodge Hotel - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	213.00
	5,552.80

Payments made 2025/2026 (1st April 2025 - 31st January 2026)

Middle Level Commissioners - Land registry search fees (Account from Land Registry)	7.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,905.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling and health & safety contract	4,042.58
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of ID card	7.37
Environment Agency - Precept	1,566.44
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fee (2024-2025 accounts)	252.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	525.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	572.96
Middle Level Commissioners - Land registry search fees (Account from Land Registry)	7.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, IDB change contribution and Internal audit fees (Whitings LLP 2024/2025 accounts)	4,746.67
H & H Farms - Refund of drainage rates	131.27
Environment Agency - Precept	1,566.43
Upwell Charities - Refund of drainage rates	5.63
King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board - Flail mowing & drain maintenance	12,973.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	192.00
King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board - Flail mowing & drain maintenance	1,080.00
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2026	854.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	
	30,435.85

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**13**
Meeting:	**CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD IDB**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Monday 2nd March 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the District Officer Remuneration.
B. Review & approve Determination of land for rating purposes & Rate arrears.
C. Approved the increase of payment for Precept funds.
D. Consider and approve a budget estimate for 2026/27.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages.

When considering the rate for 2026/2027 members should also consider likely future capital investment requirements at the pumping stations.

The estimated expenditure for the year is £52,234, equivalent to a rate of 10.50p, the rate for 2025/2026 being 10.00p.

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

1.1 To consider the DISTRICT OFFICER WAGES/FEES for the ensuing year.

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

2.1 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.

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

2.3 The precept for 2025/2026 was £3,132.87.

3. **Determination of Annual Values, Rate Arrears and Contributions from Developers** Appendix 1

4. Estimates for 2026/27

4.1 The estimated budget for 2026/27 is shown in Appendix 2.

5. Rate Requirements for 2026/27

5.1 Appendix 3 details the rate requirement that needs to be set and approved by the Board to raise sufficient rate and special levy income to cover the budget estimate.

5.2 Board Members are welcome to propose alternative rate requirements and invite these for consideration by the Board along with their supporting rationale and proposed mechanism for catering within the budget estimate and/or the Board's investment strategy.

5.3 There has been no indicator for possible insurance costs, and a general inflationary increase has been included.

These budget provisions indicate a rate requirement for 2026/2027 of 10.50p, the rate set for 2025/2026 being 10.00p.

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

Appendix 1 Determination of Land Values for Rating & Rate Arrears
Appendix 2 Estimates for 2026/27
Appendix 3 Rate Requirements for 2026/27

Appendix 1

Churchfield & Plawfield IDB

Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes — Apr-26

2026-2027

Location	Transfer value to Special Levy - £3177.00 per hectare	Area (Hectares)	Agricultural Land	Special Levies: Kings Lynn DC	Special Levies: TOTAL	Rate W/Offs
	Opening Values (£)	530.615	**85,589**	**409,388**	**494,977**	
	Opening %		17.29%	82.71%	100.00%	
Location	Reason for change.					
Church Drove Upwell	Barn conversion to domestic dwelling	0.825	-131	2,621	2,490	37.33
	Total determinations	530.615	-131	2,621	2,490	
	Closing Values (£)		**85,458**	**412,009**	**497,467**	
	Closing %		17.18%	82.82%	100.00%	
						£37.33

Appendix 2

CHURCHFIELD AND PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET PROPOSAL 2026/2027

		Budget 2025/2026	Actual to 31/01/2026 £	Probable actual 2025/2026 £	Budget proposal 2026/2027 £
1	Insurances	551	573	573	625 [A]
2	District work and repairs and renewals (including Environmental measures)	23,700	12,309 [B]	22,950	24,600 [C]
3	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising etc	8,022	2,974	7,700	8,800
4	Improvement works	15,300 [D]	-	15,300 [D]	15,300 [D]
5	Environment Agency Precept	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,196
		50,706	18,989	49,656	52,521
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest	1,208	287	300	287
		49,498	18,702	49,356	52,234
	Rate Raised/Rate Required	10.00 p			10.50 p

Remarks

A -	Proposed 5% Increase on 2026/2027	
		13,692
B -	Includes for:	
	Flail mowing/weed cutting	10,811
	Engineering Fees	598
	Digger Hire	900
C -	Includes provision for:	
	Slubbing	4,350
	Flail mower	11,000
D -	Culvert refurbishment/future works	

Appendix 3

Churchfield & Plawfield Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements.

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Board must be borne for 2026/2027 is: -

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 17.18%.

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk – 82.82%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £855.

In 2026/2027 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £4,975

Estimated revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2026 – £30,100.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2026/2027 is £52,234, is equivalent to: -

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 10.50p and

b) a Special levy on the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk of £43,261.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 10.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £40,940 on the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

Members should consider funding requirements for future improvement works and the impact of inflationary pressures on future budgets when setting the rate.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

February 2026