MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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Administered by:

29th April 2026

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Wednesday 6th May 2026

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Middle Level Offices PE15 0AH at 10am on Wednesday 6th May 2026.

A buffet lunch will be provided at the conclusion of the meeting.

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

Please help us manage your Board effectively by **proactively letting 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

MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Agenda: Wednesday 6th May 2026 – 10:00am
Middle Level Offices, PE15 0AH

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 3 - 10	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership	Pages 11 - 13	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 14 - 18	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	Pages 19 - 21	Clerk
7	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including:	Pages 22 - 37	Clerk or Engineer
8	Health & Safety	Pages 38 - 46	Chair
9	Governance • Audit Return for 2023/2024 • Auditors report for 2023/2024	Pages 47 - 49 Page 50 - 54 (Link)	Clerk
10	Finance Report: looking back • Payments 2025/26 • Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026	Pages 55 - 56 Page 57 Pages 58 - 62	Clerk
11	Finance Report: looking forward • Rating Estimates for 2026/2027 • Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements or 2026/2027	Pages 63 - 64 Page 65 Page 66	Clerk
13	Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 5th May 2027	Verbal	Chair
14	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.)

MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the March West & White Fen IDB
Held at the Middle Level Offices on 6th May 2025

PRESENT

M Mottram (Chair)	T Taylor (FDC)
J Brown	C White
Ms J French (FDC)	H Whittome
Ms D Laws (FDC)	A Woollard (FDC)
A Miscandlon (FDC)	

Paul Burrows the Clerk was in attendance along with Morgan Lakey representing the Consulting Engineer.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ms E Alterton, D Fountain, P Hayes, H Kisby, & D West (VC).

B.335 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.

i) Messrs Brown, Whittome and Miscandlon declared an interest in all matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners as members of the Middle level Board.

ii) Messrs Mottram and Whittome declared an interest in the matter relating to pump attendants.

iii) Councillor French declared an interest in all planning matters as a member of Fenland District Council's Planning Committee

B.336 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 7th May 2024, are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.337 Matters Arising

P Burrows reported that there had been no response regarding the Crazy Acres tree encroachment onto the Board's Byelaw strip. The issue is not in itself a huge constraint to the Board's operations and there are wider issues at the site. D Laws asked that if it were a significant issue to the Board, it be escalated to her and she'll raise with Fenland DC planning enforcement and traveller liaison. The Chairman added that there may be similar issues at Austria Farm and D Laws confirmed that FDC Planning Enforcement were dealing with that issue.

B.338 Constitution & Membership

RESOLVED

M Mottram reappointed as Chairman
D West reappointed as Vice Chairman

B.339 Clerk's Report

The Board considered the report and its content. P Burrows highlighted the improvement work that has been undertaken in terms of planning and consenting and the importance of the new fee model that has been launched. He added that the Middle Level Board have now supported the creation of a new compliance and enforcement role to work in conjunction with the new fee model to better manage risks and bring in income for the IDBs and Middle Level Commissioners. The Board were supportive of the measures.

Fens Reservoir

Paul Burrows introduced the paper and outlined that, whilst not directly affected, the Board will have an indirect interest given they pump water into the Middle Level Commissioners system which will be the reservoir's primary source of water. He added that the recommended resolutions are to cover the eventuality that the Commissioners' interests need legal support. C White asked about the Reservoir's likely draw on water during summer months and the impact on irrigators. H Whittome confirmed that there will be no impact as the Reservoir is winter fill and that there was work being undertaken to assess whether the Reservoir could also provide benefit to irrigators during the summer.

RESOLVED

Approved that the Board act as one with the Middle Level Commissioners and other impacted IDBs. Therefore, the Middle Level Commissioners staff, consultants and legal service provider are authorised to act on behalf of and represent the Board.

Acknowledged that the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Board and delegate the decision making on this to the Clerk, engaging with the Chairman/Vice Chairman as he sees fit.

B.340 Environment Officer's Report

M Lakey introduced the report highlighting the new service package arrangement and increase fee, highlighting that this has been developed to help IDBs meet their minimum statutory compliance. He reported that the BAP was a legal requirement and meeting has been arranged with the Chairman as part of the review and update. He added that in his operational role on behalf of the Board, he ensures environmental compliance, and the Board receives a reduction in their environmental service package fee.

M Lakey also advised the Board on the approach they ought to take regarding future bank-slips and the need for prompt action should piling be needed in order to reduce the likelihood of needing water vole displacement which add costs and working window constraint to such works. He also reminded the Board as to their culverting policy, in that culverting is a last resort.

P Burrows added that there was planned to be improved landowner materials ahead of future water vole displacements based on feedback.

B.341 Consulting Engineers' Reports

P Burrows introduced the planning section as a matter of report with no decisions required on the Board. J French reported that the flood issue on Gypsy Lane had been resolved and related to a fat blockage in the sewer. She added that Lime Tree Close remains unresolved and that the County Council are leading.

The Chairman added that T Alterton asked why there had been no correspondence regarding drainage at the Aldi site and that this was because it was brownfield development with no change to underpinning drainage.

M Lakey outlined summarised his operational services report, recommending that the Board continue with their current appointed contractor. He added that there had been significant activity between December 2024 and March 2025 because of the IDB Fund timeline to which the Board had benefitted from approximately 530m of piling and revetments works funded by grant. He added that because of the timescale, external ecologists were needed in support of the water vole displacements. He added that the government fund had also been used to address issues at White Fen pumping station.

In terms of this year's work, M Lakey advised that the Board's drains were generally in good condition and that bank slips could be addresses within the machine cleansing programme. H Whittome enquired as to the 150m length limit of works to cater for water vole management and enquired what the next sections could be as there was another 150-200m that he considered were poor. M Lakey advised that future works would depend upon the reestablishment of vole to the recently delivered section of works.

The Chairman thanked the MLC staff and landowners as prompt delivery has benefitted the Board by approximately £130k. D Laws asked about the contractor's capability and M Lakey advised that he undertook the assurance checks and the contractor is involved in MLC led training.

The Board identified c£15k or 300m of works that are needed at points 51-57, 57-58 and 55-18.

M Lakey summarised the M&E report, highlighting the important of meter readings. He added that the smart meters installed often struggled for connection hence the need for manual readings to help assure and validate bills. H Whittome enquired regarding fitting external aerials to mitigate this issue and M Lakey agreed to discuss with D Bantoft.

M Lakey added that the Board had benefitted in terms of its stations from the government's IDB Fund however the two control panels at West Fen and Beggars Bridge, along with Stafford's Bridge weed screen motor, were the main risks for the Board.

The Chairman added that he had spoken with D Bantoft and changing the contacts has brought time, however the risk if there over the next 2-3 years. He added they have approximately £50k of financial risk within their M&E needs and a £41k budget within their plant refurbishment fund. They can therefore cover a couple of items in an emergency or if urgent and then fund retrospectively within the rate the year afterwards.

RESOLVED

> M Lakey to arrange water vole survey targeted at points 51-57, 57-58 and 55-18 as well as the locations of 2024/25 works to check for re-establishment. The Board delegate the decision on works delivery to the Chairman in conjunction with H Whittome.
>
> The Board delegates the decision to the Chairman in terms of use of the plant replacement fund in an emergency or to urgently address any failure or accelerated degradation of the West Fen PS and/or Beggars Bridge PS control panels and/or Staffurth's Bridge weed screen motor.

B.342 Health & Safety

M Lakey mentioned that the signs were ready and just needed to be installed.

B.343 Governance

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

i) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year that ended on the 31st March 2024

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

b) Review of Internal Controls

Paul Burrows reported that the internal controls that the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Board have now been summarised and are available on the Board's web-page.

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

c) Risk Management Assessment & Insured Values

The Board considered its Risk Management Strategy and insured sums.

RESOLVED

i) The Board approved the sums insured.
ii) 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).

d) Authorisations

The Board considered the review of authorisations.

RESOLVED

i) The Board considered and authorised that all employees and contractors of the Middle Level Commissioners are considered as duly authorised officers and are therefore able to use the Boards powers and IDB byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

ii) The Board confirmed their stance that their Chairman, Vice-Chair and Superintendents are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Boards powers and IDB byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

e) Responsible Finance Officer

RESOLVED

The Board considered and approved the recommendations that:

i) That the role of the position of Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners is to include the appointment as Responsible Financial Officer to the Board.

ii) That the person appointed as Head of Finance for the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board.

iii) That the Chairman and Vice-Chair be approved to be added to the Barclays Bank Plc mandate.

iv) That the person appointed as clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and be authorised to sign cheques and to authorise payments on behalf of the Board.

v) That the person appointed as Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners will be appointed as the administrator on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Middle Level Commissioners.

vi) That following Mr Robert Hill leaving the employment of the Middle Level Commissioners that the Head of Finance of the Middle Level Commissioners be delegated the authority to appoint a member of the finance team to be an additional administrator on the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Board.

f) Policy Reviews & DPO

The Board considered the review of the policies.

RESOLVED

i) The Board considered and approved the policy reviews for the Complaints Procedure, Privacy policy and the Anti-Bribery policy.

ii) The Board considered and approved adoption of updated Finance Regulations covering the period 2025-2035.

iii) The Board considered & approved their updated Policy Statement.

iv) That the Board approve that while there is a service level agreement for provision of clerking services in place between the Board and the Middle Level Commissioners, the Middle Level Commissioner's Lead Clerk acts as their Data Protection Officer.

g) IDB1 and Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

The Board noted and supported the IDB1 return for 2023/2024 submitted on their behalf.

The Board noted and approved the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2025 authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement.

g) Exercise of Public Rights

Paul Burrows 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.

h) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

P Burrows 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. He 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.344 Finance Report – Looking Back

The Board reviewed and noted the Finance Officers' report and key messages. The Chairman highlighted how positive it was that the Board had benefitted from the IDB Fund to reinflate its balances back to a satisfactory level.

J Brown enquired as to this Board's financial health compared to others. P Burrows mentioned that the Key Health Indicators are not as well developed as he would have liked given other delivery pressures, however from his perspective this Board is in a relatively healthy position.

Referring to future works, H Whittome added that the best long-term solution for this Board's bigger channels would be to have stone revetment. M Lakey advised that this means permanent displacement of water vole and therefore like for like replacement habitat would be required elsewhere.

RESOLVED

That all payments and developer contributions noted.
The Board considered and approved their annual accounts for 2024/25

B.345 Finance Report – Looking Forward

The Board considered the paper from their Responsible Finance Officer. M Lakey added that if the repairs and renewals budgeted could not be spent due to the timings of works then this would be added to their Board's plant refurbishment fund. H Whittome asked about previous rates that were set prior to the large increase caused by the exceptionally wet 2023/24. The Chair reported that it was 14.5p in 2022/23 and ten 17p in 2023/24 with the jump to 24p. Therefore, the proposed 19p for 2025/26 represented an inflationary increase over the period. He added that catering for 2023/24 weather exposed the vulnerabilities within the Board's financing as balances were quickly eroded and that they now have a general fund equivalent to the yardstick of a year in hand.

J Brown proposed the recommended rate of 19p and this was seconded by T Taylor and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

a) To continue to subscribe to be a member of the Association of Drainage Authorities.

b) Pump attendant fees agreed up to the sum of £1182.00.

c) Drainage rates:

i) That a total sum of £186,443 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

ii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are 70.07% and 29.92% respectively.

iii) That a rate of 19p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

iv) That a Special levy of £55,797 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.346 Middle Level IDB Change

P Burrows summarised the work and referred to the report that was sent to Members separately. J Brown commended the report and the assessment urging the Board to consider the future. H Whittome outlined the dilemma of enabling democratic input however most Boards may want directing towards a couple of options.

The Board provided the following feedback on the questions posed:

Q1 On a scale of 1-10, do you consider that there is a need for change?
1 = don't see a need to change to 10 = radical reform is long overdue.

8-10

Q2 What are your hopes and fears for the future and within any new model?

Loss of local knowledge, however this can be mitigated and potentially strengthen by employment of staff.

Q3, Do you consider that your IDB is fit for the future?

0-5 years – Yes, 5-10 years – Less so, 10 years onwards - No

Q4 What are the current strengths of your IDB that you wish to see retained within any new model and what are the weaknesses you wish to see mitigated?

Representation and local knowledge

Q5, Do you agree that the options of one, two, five and six IDBs are not progressed to detailed design?
Yes or No – Please explain your rationale if you disagree.

Yes

Q6 Which options to you feel warrant progressing to detailed design, or have you an alternative suggestion?

3-4 IDBs

Q7 Do you have a preferred option from within the outline design options of three and four IDBs? Yes or No - If yes, which option and explain why.

No

Q8 The report references a number of considerations that could be considered further within detailed design *eg specific boundaries, differential rates, ringfencing accrued budgets, operational districts, employee and the service delivery model.* Which of these is most important to you and why? Have you any specific issues or observations you would like to be assessed?

Nothing to add at this stage. The use of differential rates and ringfencing on legacy budgets will be crucial.

Q9 Are you supportive of any change being designed and led locally and what role would you like to play within this?

Yes, many Board Members are already part of the Working Group

Q10 Have you any other feedback or issues that you feel have not been considered within the work so far?

No

RESOLVED

To prove a £300 contribution towards the costs of developing the detailed design.

B.347 Date of next Meeting

The Chairman advised that an inspection hadn't been formally undertaken for a number of years and enquired as to whether members would be interested. He added that an inspection post-harvest would be better and would need approx. 4-5 4x4s and it'd be important that the pump attendants join.

RESOLVED

That an inspection is held in mid-late September 2025 – date TBC

That next meeting of the Board will be 6th May 2026, 10AM at the Middle Level Offices.

B.348 Any Other Business

The Chairman reported that he had been approached by Fenland SOIL regarding the prospect of undertaking peat and soils 'opportunity mapping' covering the Board's district to add to and compliment similar mapping for other IDB districts. He added that this could provide crucial balancing evidence to support and better engage within lowland peat conversations. H Whittome agreed and reported his experience from his farm elsewhere within the Middle Level, adding it is a unintrusive exercise and provides useful data. The Board are comfortable generally in engaging with Fenland SOIL.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**IDB MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 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. Approve the proposed register of Electors
C. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
D. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
E. 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	13	N/A		8
Actual	13	5 FDC	18	
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	Emma Alterton	Ratepayer	
2	Tony Alterton	Ratepayer	
3	Nigel Bates	Nominee of Ratepayer (G R & P Easton)	
4	Jonathan Brown	Ratepayer	
5	Ricky Dring	Nominee of Ratepayer (Lavenham Fen Farms Ltd)	
6	David Fountain	Ratepayer	
7	Paul Hayes	Nominee of Ratepayer (E C Brown & Son)	
8	Henry Kisby	Nominee of Ratepayer (M C Kisby)	
9	Michael Mottram	Ratepayer	Chair
10	James Neal	Ratepayer	
11	Daniel West	Nominee of Ratepayer (M C Kisby)	Vice- Chair
12	Hugh Whittome	Ratepayer	
13	Chris White	Nominee of Ratepayer (Turves Farms Ltd)	

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, e.g. major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	Jan French	FDC	Councillor
2	Dee Laws	FDC	Councillor
3	Alex Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor
4	Tim Taylor	FDC	Councillor
5	Andrew Woollard	FDC	Councillor

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	6/5/2025	7/5/2024	9/5/2023	9/5/2022
1	Emma Alterton	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Apologies
2	Tony Alterton		Present	Present	Present
3	Nigel Bates		Present	Present	Present
4	Jonathan Brown	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
5	Ricky Dring			Apologies	Present
6	David Fountain	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
7	Paul Hayes	Apologies			apologies
8	Henry Kisby	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
9	Michael Mottram	Present	Present	Present	Present
10	James Neal			apologies	Present
11	Daniel West	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
12	Hugh Whittome	Present	Present	Present	Present
13	Chris White	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	Michael Mottram	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	6/5/2025	7/5/2024	9/5/2023	9/5/2022
1	Jan French	Present	Present		Present
2	Dee Laws	Present	Apologies	Present	apologies
3	Alex Miscandlon	Present	Present		apologies
4	Tim Taylor	Present			
5	Andrew Woollard	Present	Apologies		

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 Chair is 4.9 years, and the tenure of the current Vice Chair is 4.9 years.

3.2 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 completed slip as soon as possible. This term for current members ends on 31st October 2026.

3.3 The proposed Register of Electors which is applicable to this Election will be available to the Board for approval.

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:	**IDB MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 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
- Compliance & Enforcement 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. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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:	**MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN IDB**	**Subject:**	**ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Sofi Lloyd**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Review and approve the new Biodiversity Action Plan**
B. 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.
C. Propose to set the biodiversity budget at £250 for swift boxes and a barn owl box.
D. Request 2 options for swift box locations on tall sheds near water in the district.
E. 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:		**Mick Mottram**	
KCI:	**Description of KCI:**	**Status:**	**Comments:**
1.	A current channel categorisation map & reasoning is available		Now a working document
2.	Standard Operating Procedures audit has been undertaken and works considered compliant		ML undertaken in 2025
3.	The previous year's maintenance record is available for review and to inform the following year's works planning.		
4.	A channel maintenance plan (flail mowing and desilting) has been prepared for Board review and approval.		ML prepared
5.	All non-routine works undertaken in the previous year were screened for environmental impacts and opportunities using the ESR process		Inc. Bank repairs at Staffurths
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 proposed and defined		As above
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		
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**	ML progressing

Annual Environmental Review - Notes from Meeting

Attended by: Sofi Lloyd, Mick Mottram, Morgan Lakey

Date: 21/04/2025

Point No.	Notes	Action by and due date
1	The KCI's for the Board report was completed	
2	ML explained that some Boards are moving to rotational bank management to reduce maintenance costs this year, and the Board could consider this. There are benefits to biodiversity of doing so too.	**ML 2026**
3	Note for MLC to find out how often the agricultural & other area calc is updated	**MLC 2026**
4	Discussed if any of the 7 water level control structures in the district are no longer required and can removed. Confirmed that most are used to separate out the pumped catchments. The structure at School farm should be checked as may need replacing. One of the structures is a weed screen on a culvert.	**ML 2026**
5	Discussed if any more water level control structures would be required to better manage levels anywhere. None identified at the moment but would like a visit to a solar powered tilting weir to understand more about them.	**SL 2026**
6	Fenland Soil has undertaken a peat assessment in the district. MM to cross ref the BAP peat desk surveys to the Fenland Soil ones.	
7	Stressed that because there are very few designated nature sites, either formally or identified priority habitats, within the catchment, that the ditches and drains are even more vital for wildlife as there is no-where else for them to go.	
8	It is a surprise that eels were not found to be present at the time the EDNA samples were taken in many of the pumping station vicinities as the sampling locations are known to be close to inlets form the Old River Nene which we expect eels are present within.	
9	MM explained that he would be interested in establishing an online pond. FWAG were not very encouraging of this as they saw little benefit, but SL explained they may have been thinking about great created newts which need a number of ponds in the local area to thrive, which they don't have in this area. But SL stressed even a small ditch intersection pond, or a small shallow online pond would be of value.	
10	MM explained that Japanese Knotweed is known to exist behind the settlement near to point 33 along the back of the railway bank. It hasn't increased in extent over a number of years but should ideally be dealt with before it spreads and becomes an issue for the IDB. The land is rented out by the council so MLC can request the tenant manages it and also inform the council. Failing that MLC can offer to manage it on their behalf but would charge them to do so.	**MLC 2026**
11	SL confirmed surveys for bank repairs are included in the service package (up to a point) as there are 6.5 days in the package to be used each year. More than these days would be chargeable.	
12	There are a number of bank slips that need repair between point 55-37. These will need surveying for the presence of water vole ASAP. If water vole displacements are needed, they can be done in Oct. ML & MM will send ESRs for the work to Ecol. after the Board meeting. Noted that some slips may be left to self-heal.	**ML May 2026**
13	There is a derelict channel that was the old pump drain between point 128-129 which is likely to be an untouched reedbed that hasn't been managed for many years and is likely to be valuable for wildlife. MM suggested that the IDB could consider adopting it if it were available and set it aside and manage it for biodiversity as it would be efficient as it was already established. SL will survey it and find out about ownership and current management.	**SL 2026**
14	There is a reedbed south of point 23. SL will survey and map it	**SL 2026**
15	The track to School Farm may be an old Fen Drove as is elevated, and the original course of the Old River Nene is known to pass alongside it. SL will check old maps. No others are suspected. Trees along the track were planted in the 80's by MM.	**SL 2026**
16	MM would be interested in planting Black Poplars and others down the School Farm track. SL to investigate.	**SL 2026**
17	SL will make details of the easement strip approach that South Holland have in place for MM to consider and promote to the Board if it is appropriate. SL confirmed that the easement strip could be put into stewardship.	**SL 2026**
18	West Fen could be a good location for a barn owl box. SL to investigate	**SL 2026**
19	Swift Boxes could be erected on MM's shed but MM will offer the option to all Board members this year.	**MM May 26**
20	Kingfishers known to exist between points 19-24.	
21	Not sure who the relevant parish councils are for the board other than Benwick. SL will find out. No contact with them regularly at the moment	**SL 2026**

22	There is a badger sett at point 15-13. ML is mapping rest.	
23	ML & SL confirmed that earth in a channel from badger excavations can be removed under the supervision of a licenced ecologist (ML or SL or others at MLC) providing it is done in line with the licence conditions. No cost for that. So long as no damage is done to the sett and we give Natural England notice that we are doing the work and when the work is done then it is possible.	
24	SL stressed that it was really important for all sightings of wildlife to be reported to MLC.	
25	ML explained that bird flu has prevented many of the barn owl box checks that MLC supported previously.	
26	Recommendation by SL for the Board to set aside £250 for swift boxes and a new Barn Owl box this year in the Bio budget.	**MM May 2026**
27	SL will update the BAP on todays' discussions and send to MM to review with the aim of having a final draft available ahead of the Board meeting for Board members to review and accept at the Board meeting.	**SL & MM Apr 26**
28	Remaining meeting points are captured in the BAP draft and Board Report KCIs.	**-**

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**	
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice form MLC.**
B. **Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
C. **Confirm which of these Asset Improvement works the board would like to approve for completion in 2026 and 2027.**
D. **Confirm if it wishes to consider submitting projects for inclusion in the FCERM Investment Programme (from July 2026) and agree the recommendations for prioritisation.**
E. **Confirm if the Board can provide readings or would prefer, the MLC take monthly or quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board.**

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

2. Summary of Key Planning Issues

We will, when possible, seek the Board's input, rather than wait for Board meetings. This will be done via correspondence with the Chair, Vice Chair, District Officer and any appropriate sub-committees.

3. Technical Services Overview

A new Senior Planning & Consenting Officer, Emma Ryder, joined the team at the beginning of March. She had been working for us on a consultancy basis since November last year and she has extensive experience in flood risk, economics and sustainable drainage. Emma is the first appointment in an ongoing recruitment campaign to better manage the increased planning and consenting workload resulting from new development across the Middle Level.

4. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

Following the initial, unsuccessful bid for funding, the Environment Agency subsequently awarded funding for the 'Asset Resilience Pumps & Channels' package in June 2025. These works are due for completion by March 2026.

Works being delivered for this district include the following:

- Weed screen overhaul
- Improvement works for mobile pump deployment

5. New FCERM grant funding guidance

The Government published new FCERM funding guidance on 3 March 2026.

To be eligible for funding a project must deliver strategic objectives and government policy. Governments' objectives most relevant to IDBs include:

- value for money (Net Present Value)
- reducing flood risk
- focusing on deprived areas
- prioritising projects with contributions from others (this would include funding provide by IDBs themselves)
- a percentage investment in Natural Flood Management (NFM) across the programme

Project types that are eligible for grant funding include:

- refurbishing or replacing existing assets
- building new assets
- NFM projects
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

<u>Asset Refurbishment Projects</u>

Asset refurbishment is a significant renewal to one or more components in an existing asset that is not covered by routine maintenance.

It includes work to mitigate for the loss of asset performance. This covers issues that asset maintenance cannot manage and that would be significant and permanent if not fixed.

It does not include asset replacement projects where an existing asset at the end of its life is replaced with another like for like asset which sustains the standard of service.

Under the new FCERM funding policy existing FCERM assets are eligible for 100% of funding for refurbishment.

New or Improved Asset Projects

Projects that are not refurbishment are eligible for 100% for the first £3 million, and 90% for costs above £3 million.

These include:
- projects replacing existing assets with a like for like replacement
- projects building new or improved assets
- projects with combined asset interventions

Projects cannot be artificially split into smaller components to fall below the £3 million fully funded threshold.

Applying for funding

It should be noted that there will be more projects that are eligible for investment than funding available. Projects will need to be prioritised to meet government targets and achieve best value for money.

Therefore, it is recommended that should the Board wish to apply for FCERM grant funding, they consider part-funding projects. This is similar to the funding rules that were in place prior to 2011 when IDBs only received 45% of project costs.

Should the Board wish to submit a new project to be considered for funding, the first step is to collate relevant cost and benefit data to submit to the Environment Agency from 1 July 2026. This requires collating costs and benefits and other relevant data required by the EA to determine a project's eligibility and prioritise the programme. The Consulting Engineer can provide resources to do this, and this will be recharged to the Board.

If a project already appears on the FCERM investment programme with an allocation for future years, an application for grant funding approval/business case will need to be submitted. The Consulting Engineer can provide resources to do this.

Timescales

The Consulting Engineer currently has limited resources to develop and deliver projects, although recruitment is currently in progress to address this. The likely timescales for project delivery are:

- submit for funding consideration July 2026 onwards
- prepare and submit applications for subsequent funding approval onwards
- delivery 2027/28 onwards

The Consulting Engineer will prioritise workload based primarily on Key Health Indicators. Refer to the Mechanical & Electrical report for specific recommendations.

The Board is asked to:

- **Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly**
- **Confirm if it wishes to consider submitting projects for inclusion in the FCERM Investment Programme (from July 2026)**
- **Liaise with the Consulting Engineer to determine project suitability and timescales**
- **Agree making a contribution towards the project costs to aid funding prioritisation**
- **Confirm acceptance of recommendations so we can prioritise developing funding bids ASAP.**

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme
Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting
Appendix 3: Operational Services
Appendix 4: Mechanical & Electrical Services

Appendix 1

March West & White Fen IDB

Capital Improvement Programme (2026/2027)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Beggars Bridge p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	500.0	0.0	0.0	500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	65.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Duncombes p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	500.0	500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	33.2	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	63.2
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Moores p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	500.0	500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

March West & White Fen IDB

Capital Improvement Programme (2026/2027)		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Staffurths Bridge p	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	500.0	500.0
	Pump and gearbox overhaul	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	500.0	0.0	500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pump o/h programme		10.0	10	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	110.0
Drainage Channels	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

March West & White Fen IDB

Capital Improvement Programme (2026/2027)		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
White Fen P/S	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	24.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.5
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pump o/h programme		2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	30.0
Drainage Channels	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		68.7	**12.5**	98.0	12.5	142.5	12.5	512.5	17.5	12.5	514.5	512.5	1,519.5	3,435.7

Appendix 2

There have been 23 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

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

There have been 3 applications for Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) have been granted since the last meeting.

There have been 2 infiltration device applications processed since the last meeting.

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**		**7**
Meeting:	**MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES**	
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Morgan Lakey**

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

1.1 The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations approved by the Board at its last annual meeting.

Health & Safety remedial works and access improvements at West Fen Pumping Station for deployment of Mobile Pumps in the event of a breakdown

The Board were successful in obtaining Government funding again last year, providing improvement works to assist the deployment of mobile pumps in the event of a breakdown. Health & Safety improvements, identified by the Boards Cope Safety Management consultants, were also completed at each pumping station.

Provisional notices for this year's intended machine cleansing works have been sent out and the extent of this year's phased programme of maintenance works is shown on the site location plan at the end of this report.

A recent inspection of the Board's district drains has revealed that the majority are in a generally satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. The inspection indicated that many of the district drains that fall within this year's phased machine cleansing programme will only require light machine cleansing to retain their good status.

Similar to last year's inspection, there are several relatively short lengths of bank subsidence throughout the district. The majority of these are reasonably insignificant and can, with periodic monitoring, hopefully be left to "self-heal". Should remedial intervention be required in the future, they can be prioritised in order of their severity and integrated when the machine cleansing is programmed for the affected reach, also ensuring any ecological requirements are met before any proposed bank re-instatement works take place. If a new area of bank subsidence is identified it is critical that it is reported as soon as possible to allow prompt intervention if required. This reduces the risk of water voles being present and the increased cost of displacing them. An ecological survey would still be required to prove their absence before any works could promptly commence.

As the Board's annual meeting falls during the early part of the growing season, it is proposed that an inspection of the Board's drains be undertaken during the summer months in order to identify other areas of bank subsidence, and then to prioritise the worst affected reaches such that they can be programmed and dealt with under the phased programme of bank revetment works. In this respect, a sum has been allocated in the Board's estimated costs to allow for toe board, and piling works to be undertaken to stabilise and return the side sloping banks to their original profile.

An allowance has been included within this year's estimated costs to allow for a Roundup Pro-Biactive herbicide application to be made in advance of the programmed machine cleansing work, and in any other district drains identified as requiring herbicide treatments, to control emergent weed and reed growths following the Board's inspection later in the summer months.

The Board's flail mowing requirements were undertaken by M&C Agric Services last year, and they have indicated they are available to undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements again for the ensuing year. A sum for the completion of flail mowing Board's drains has been included within the estimated costs.

A provisional sum has been allocated within the Board's estimated costs to allow for any emergency machine cleansing, Cott (filamentous algae) removal or culvert clearance works that may become necessary later in the year.

2. **Estimated Costs of Anticipated Drain Maintenance and Weed Control Programme**

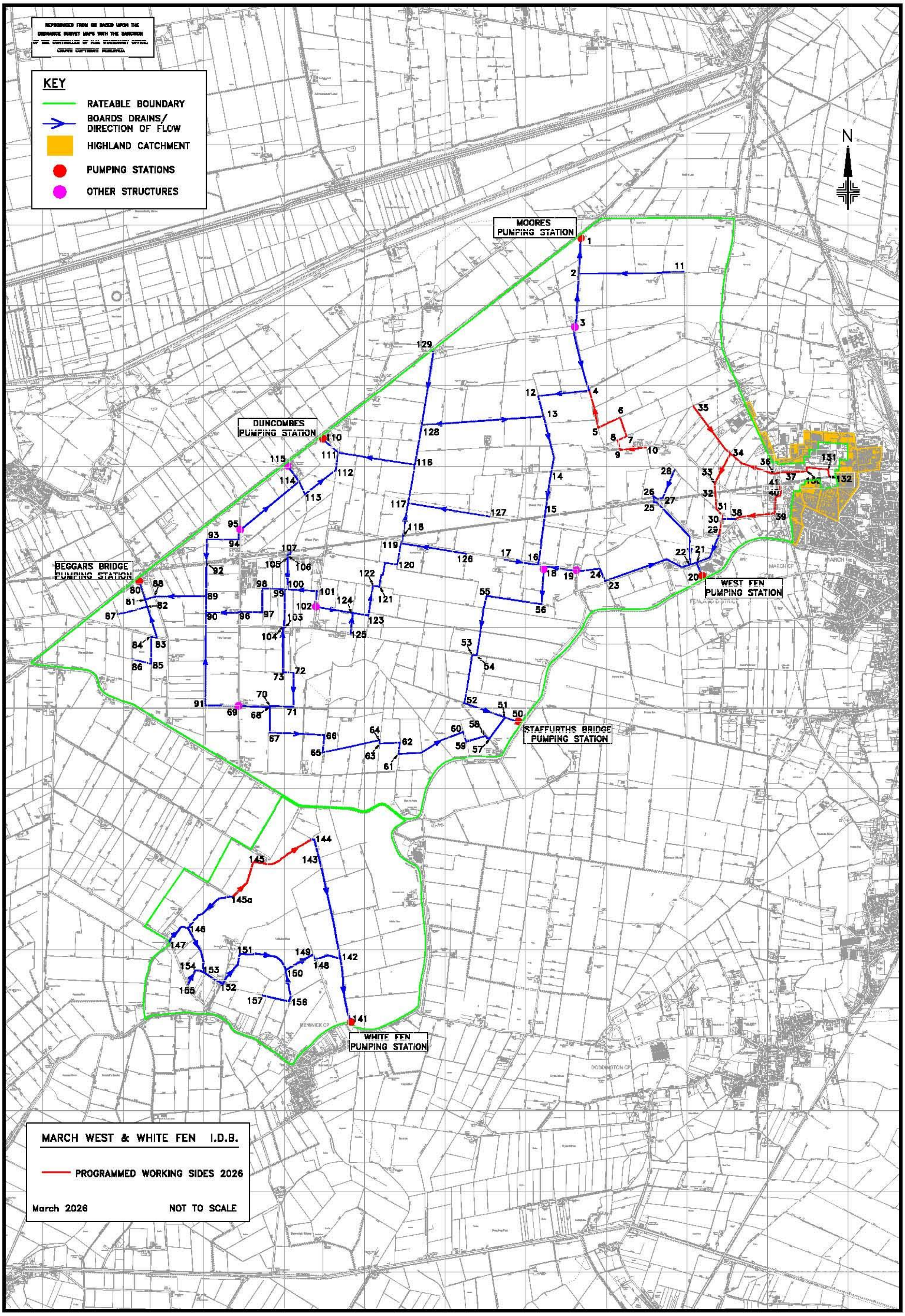
The estimated cost of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain maintenance works is as follows. Please refer to the following site plan for locations.

						£
1.	Machine cleanse the following reaches:					
	Duncombes Catchment Area					
	4-5-6-7-8-9-10	1500	m	@	1.30	1950.00
	West Fen Catchment Area					
	29-30-31-32-33-34	1100	m	@	1.30	1430.00
	36-34-35	1400	m	@	1.30	1820.00
	37-130-131-132	900	m	@	1.30	1170.00
	White Fen Catchment Area					
	143-144-145-145a	1400	m	@	1.30	1820.00
	Provisional Item/Estimated sum Allow sum for bank reinstatement works sub total	Item	Sum			15000.00
2.	Roundup herbicide application	Item	Sum			2400.00
3.	Flail mowing of District Drains	Item	Sum			14000.00
4.	Provisional Item Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing, Cott removal or culvert clearance	Item	Sum			3000.00
5.	Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of the report to the Board, arrangement and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance	Item	Sum			3700.00
		TOTAL				**£46,290.00**

Orders for the application of herbicides are accepted on condition that they are weather dependant, and the MLC will not be held responsible for the efficacy of any treatments.

Author Name: Morgan Lakey
Role: Operations Manager

Appendix 4


KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
OTHER STRUCTURES
N
MOORES PUMPING STATION
DUNCOMBES PUMPING STATION
BEGGARS BRIDGE PUMPING STATION
WEST FEN PUMPING STATION
STAFFURTHS BRIDGE PUMPING STATION
WHITE FEN PUMPING STATION
MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN I.D.B.
PROGRAMMED WORKING SIDES 2026
March 2026
NOT TO SCALE

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**	
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 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. For example, the Weed screen Upgrade works at Staffurths Bridge and West Fen. To ensure reliability, resilience and longevity of the pumping equipment it needs to be refurbished or replaced at suitable intervals. We have experienced examples lately of pumps being left too long and failing, or when they are removed for overhaul, the condition is very poor and the pump overall lifetime has been reduced significantly, which is not cost-effective use of the asset. The same is true for control panels, component failures often damage other components incurring costly repairs and machine downtime. Overall, it is more cost effective to run well maintained equipment.

The pictures below are of pump bolts (not a MWWF station) 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

Station	Station Built	Pump 1 NEW	Pump 2 NEW	Pump 1 O/H	Pump 2 O/H	Control Panel
Staffurths Bridge	1983	1983	1983	1983	2004	1983
White Fen	1964	1991	1991	1992	2014	2006
Turves (Beggars Bridge)	1972	1972	N/A	2004	N/A	1972
Moores	1989	1989	N/A	2018	N/A	1989
Duncombes	1993	2022	2025	2022	2025	1993
West Fen	1972	1972	N/A	2018	N/A	1972

Station	Weedscreen WSC	WSC O/H	WSC Controls
Staffurths Bridge	2006	2026	2026
White Fen	2017	2017	2017
Turves (Beggars Bridge)	2007	2007	2007
Moores	N/A	N/A	N/A
Duncombes	2004	2024	2004
West Fen	2002	2026	2026

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The pumps range from 1 to 62 years old with last Overhauls ranging from 1 to 43 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 short-term Asset Improvement works for consideration this year (in priority order) are

1. Overhaul Pump and gearbox at Staffurths, this is the pump that has been in the longest of all the boards pumps. Circa **£40k** depending to condition.
2. Replace control panels at West Fen and Beggars circa **£20k each, so c£40k total** advised doing together as both panels are the same and it would make parts easily interchangeable.
3. Overhaul Weed screen cleaner at Beggars circa **£30 to 50k** depending on condition.

Please confirm which of these Asset Improvement works the board would like to approve for completion in 2026 and 2027.

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

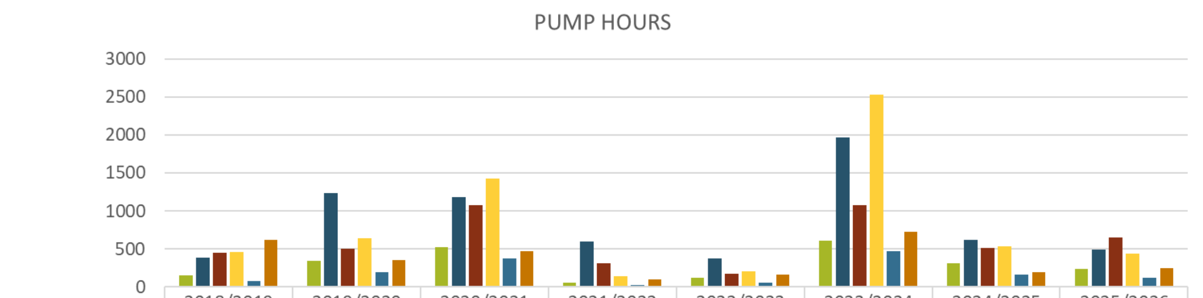
If you are unable to provide readings, or would prefer, the MLC can take monthly or quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board for the time and mileage involved.

Please approve this if it is required. Estimated cost will be £126.00 per month, or quarter as required.

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

2. Pumping summary

2.1 <u>Pumping Hours</u>



	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
BEGGARS	153	348	524	59	125	607	312	239
DUNCOMBES	383	1236	1183	596	379	1963	616	489
STAFFURTHS	455	504	1076	313	173	1073	511	656
WHITE FEN	466	638	1432	139	207	2529	538	441
MOORES	84	194	378	27	57	474	163	120
WEST FEN	618	353	477	103	162	731	193	245

2.2 Pumping station routine inspection issues are summarised below.

2.3 **West Fen**

The last routine inspection took place at West Fen Pump Station on 9/1/26. Recommendations / remarks include 1) Greased Pump – New Grease nipples required 2) Weed screen Cleaner – Hydraulic hoses have perished and two buffer rubbers are missing.

WSC Upgrade Works through T2B for West Fen Ordered – Dates TBC

2.4 **Duncombes**

The last routine inspection took place at Duncombes Pump Station on 9/1/26. Recommendations/remarks include 1) Pump 2 replaced 14/10/25, 2) Both outlets have broken bearing casings, 3) Outlet door not shutting fully.

2.5 **White Fen**

The last routine inspection took place at White Fen Pump Station on 5/1/26. Recommendations / remarks include 'PFC Capacitors failed on both panels – new capacitors and new contactors required. Pump 2 tripped on arrival. Weed screen Cleaner – right hand hose has slipped a notch on hose reel. -now rectified.

2.6 **Beggars Bridge (Turves)**

The last routine inspection took place at Beggars Bridge (Turves) Pump Station on 5/1/26. Recommendations / remarks include 1) Requires offset programming on Telemetry for accurate water level readings, 2) Flap Door held open, 3) Motor Insulation Resistance dropping significantly. This needs further investigation and may require motor overhaul this summer.

2.7 **Staffurths Bridge**

The last routine inspection took place at Staffurths Bridge Pump Station on 5/1/26. Recommendations / remarks include 1) Flap door held open. Flap door should only be open when letting in water. 2) Requires offset programming on Telemetry for accurate water level readings. 3) Control Levels currently set to drain works levels. Weed screen Cleaner inspected – squeaking from cable wheels and floodlight on WSC broken off.

WSC Upgrade Works through T2B for West Fen Ordered – Dates TBC

2.8 **Moores**

The last routine inspection took place at Moores Pump Station on 5/1/26. Recommendations / remarks include 1) Requires offset programming on Telemetry for accurate water level readings. Telemetry showing 98.68, level at station is 97.46. Telemetry has failed and needs repair. 2) Signs of subsidence and bank washing around the outlet. 3) Cables in motor terminal box damaged, temp repair made, needs further investigation and repair.

3. Inspections

3.1 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Reports (due every 5 years) at Staffurths Bridge, Beggars Bridge, Moores, Duncombes and West Fen were carried out in April 2024. The EICR at White Fen was carried out in Jan 2025.

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Staffurths Bridge	24-Apr-2024	24-Apr-2029
White Fen	23-Jan-2025	23-Jan-2030
Turves (Beggars Bridge)	24-Apr-2024	24-Apr-2029
Moores	23-Apr-2024	23-Apr-2029
Duncombes	24-Apr-2024	24-Apr-2029
West Fen	24-Apr-2024	24-Apr-2029

3.2 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out in September 2025.

4. Water level Management

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

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

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**IDB MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN IDB**	**Subject:**	**HEALTH & SAFETY**
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. District Officers, Pump Attendants) have been suitably trained in H&S leadership (e.g. 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

Site Safety Inspection

March West & White Fen (MWWF)

carried out on

Tuesday, 20 January 2026

by

AW Safety Management

Key Information	
Client:	March West & White Fen
Site:	Potash Farm, Whittlesey Road, March, Cambridgeshire PE15 0AH
Site Contact:	Michael Mottram
Site Contact E-mail:	enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
Inspection date:	20/01/2026
Inspected by:	Elena Spataru
Introduction:	This health and safety Inspection Report is part of the annual support programme from AW Safety Management and is designed to review the practical implementation of health and safety arrangements within the Company. The purpose of the inspection was to assess systems, management controls, working practices and identification of hazards and the controls in place. The aim was to conduct an examination to ensure that best practice is used and there has been compliance within set standards and any relevant legislation. We plan our work to ensure that we have a reasonable expectation of detecting any significant control weaknesses, however, our processes alone are not a guarantee that all operational conditions / activities will be witnessed, this is particularly relevant for any off-site activities. The responsibility for maintaining suitable controls for the safety of employees and anyone else who may be affected and safe operation of the business rests with the management of the Company. Subject areas that require action are detailed in the 'Action Plan' section of the report. Each subject is given a brief outline and the suggested remedial action required, a target completion date (based on the priority rating) and the person responsible for ensuring that the action is addressed. The person responsible listed against the action is based on our visit to site and understanding of the Company structure. Each subject area is given a priority rating, which is based on the auditor/s knowledge, understanding & judgement and is selected to highlight areas of non-compliance and provide general guidance on safe working. Where applicable, a number of key photographs are included in the report, these are referenced to the relevant subject area reference number. These can be used as a reminder of conditions at the time of inspection and provide additional guidance on the action required.

Priority Rating

Priority Rating	Effectiveness of Controls	Target Completion
High	Serious 'material breach' of legislation and / or serious and imminent danger to persons	Immediate Action Required
Medium	Significant control weakness exposing persons to moderate degree of risk	Planned Action Required
Low	General guidance or areas where there are opportunities to implement better practice and reduce exposure to risk	Actionable Comment

Purpose of Inspection / Executive Summary

The opening meeting was held with Michael Mottram and 6 pumping stations were visited.

No significant issues were raised in any location. The name of each specific station will be specified in the recommendations below, as required.

If you have any queries, please contact us at support@awsafety.co.uk.

Action Plan

High Priority	Immediate Action Required
Medium Priority	Planned Action Required
Low Priority	Actionable Comment

Reference Number	Additional Controls / Actions / Comments	Supporting Photographs / Pictures	Person(s) Responsible	Risk Rating	Action Complete When / Who
01	**West Fen** It was observed that waste materials are present within the premises. This may create hygiene issues, attract pests, and increase the risk of slips, trips, or fire. It is advised that waste is removed promptly, and that suitable waste management and housekeeping arrangements are maintained to ensure the premises remain clean and safe.			Low	
02	**Moores** It was observed that a small flammable container is stored on top of a high-voltage electrical enclosure. This presents a fire and electrical safety risk. It is advised that the container is removed immediately and that flammable materials are stored in a suitable designated location away from electrical equipment.			Medium	

Action Plan	
High Priority	Immediate Action Required
Medium Priority	Planned Action Required
Low Priority	Actionable Comment

Reference Number	Additional Controls / Actions / Comments	Supporting Photographs / Pictures	Person(s) Responsible	Risk Rating	Action Complete When / Who
03	**Duncombes** Some safety signage on site has become faded due to prolonged exposure to sunlight and weather conditions. It is recommended that a survey of all safety signage on site be undertaken, with any faded signage replaced, or removed where it is no longer required, to ensure that the visual impact and effectiveness of existing safety signage is maintained.	  		Low	
04	**Duncombes** It was observed that the main gate fence is damaged. This may pose a safety risk. It is advised that the fence is repaired or replaced to ensure the area remain safe.			Low	

Action Plan

High Priority	Immediate Action Required
Medium Priority	Planned Action Required
Low Priority	Actionable Comment

Reference Number	Additional Controls / Actions / Comments	Supporting Photographs / Pictures	Person(s) Responsible	Risk Rating	Action Complete When / Who
05	**White Fen** It was observed that new warning signage is installed on the fence; however, it is positioned some distance from the building. No warning signage is present on the building itself to indicate hazards such as "No unauthorized access" or "High Voltage." This may reduce the effectiveness of hazard communication for personnel or members of the public approaching the structure. It is advised that appropriate warning signage is installed directly on or adjacent to the building to ensure hazards are clearly identified.			Low	
06	It was observed that rakes have been left in unsecured positions at a couple of locations on site. This presents a risk of trips, falls, or impact injuries if the tools are knocked over or come into contact with personnel. It is advised that tools are stored securely in designated areas when not in use to maintain good housekeeping and reduce the risk of injury.	 		Low	

Contacts & Addendum	
Contact Information:	**AW Safety** **Nottingham Office:** Edwinstowe House, High Street, Edwinstowe, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG21 9PR **Lincolnshire Office:** Boston Enterprise Centre, Venture House, Enterprise Way, Lincolnshire, PE21 7TW **Cumbria Office:** Low Cross Buildings, 4 Low Cross Street, Brampton, Cumbria, CA8 1NP **Tel:** 0330 223 7470 **E-mail:** Support@awsafety.co.uk
Website:	www.awsafety.co.uk / www.irmconnect.co.uk
Note:	It is important to note that this Inspection highlights conditions at the time of the visit at the premises detailed on the front cover of the report. It remains the responsibility of the management and staff within the business to make known to the inspector any potentially unsafe conditions or practices which were not apparent during the Inspection, or that may take place at any off-site location. It is the ongoing responsibility of management to ensure that the business and its employees operate safely at all times and that any day-to-day health and safety issues are addressed immediately. Any queries or inaccuracies with this report should be raised immediately with the auditor.
AW Group	**AW Safety is a core division of the AW Group, designed to deliver end-to-end health, safety, and compliance solutions as part of our fully integrated service model.** **The AW Group also includes AW Human Resources, AW Training, and AW Facilities Management. Each division specialising in a critical area of organisational support. Together, we provide a holistic 360° service offering that helps you manage risk, improve performance, and maintain operational resilience across all aspects of your business.**

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**9**
Meeting:	**MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN IDB**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Annual Return submitted for 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. Review pumping station valuations for insurance purposes.
G. Note the submission of the IDB1 form to Defra. (link)
H. 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.
I. 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/Commissioners to consider the comments of the auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2025. (Appendix 1)

1.4 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.

1.5 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 and Insured Values

3.1 The Board are asked to consider their Risk Management Strategy and review the insured values for their pumping stations as detailed below:

PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2026
Dunscombe Pumping Station	2,146,584.00
Beggars Bridge Pumping Station	1,073,292.00
Staffurths Bridge Pumping Station	2,146,584.00
Moores Pumping Station	1,073,292.00
West Fen Pumping Station	1,073,292.00
White Fen Pumping Station	2,146,584.00
	9,659,628.00

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 assertation 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.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 Annual Return 2024/2025

March West & White Fen 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 March West & White Fen 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 March West & White Fen Internal Drainage Board

The Clerk
March West & White Fen 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: 22nd September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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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: 27/04/2025 07/05/2025 09/05/2025

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

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

Date: 09/05/2025

***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:

MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN 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:

06/05/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

B,343

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

Chair

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN 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	201,288	136,200	*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	167,006	234,633	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	5,068	237,877	*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	237,162	310,499	*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	136,200	298,211	*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	252,387	330,102	*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	3,444,200	3,444,200	*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

HWool

Date 29-04-2025

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

06/05/25

as recorded in minute reference:

B.344

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

MSHatton

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

In respect of **March West and White Fen IDB – DB0052**

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 PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date 16/09/2025

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		10
Meeting:	**MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**	
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Highland Water contributions
B. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 1.
C. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/2026 within Appendix 2.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

For 2025/2026 the Board set a rate of 19.00p to raise a total of £186,406 in agricultural rates and special levies.

Actual expenditure for the year was £154,580 because of the dry summer and less than anticipated drain works.

Following the setting of the rates for 2025/2026 additional funding became available in respect of the Storm Recovery Grant, MLC were successful in acquiring additional funding. As part of the Asset Resilience package the Weed screens at West Fen and Staffurths were overhauled at a cost of £131,022, this is included in Improvement works and has been 100% grant funded. Also, as part of the Mobile Pump package funding was approved for Access Improvements for the deployment of the Mobile Pumps. £3,249 is Included in Improvement works for the works completed and has also been 100% funded.

This will leave the General fund balance as of 31st March 2026 at £231,491. The Asset Replacement Fund as of 31st March is £41,337. The Development fund balance as of 31st March 2026 is £62,274. This position is reflected in the Boards financial statements and Annual Return which they are requested to review and approve.

1. Payments for 2025

1.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

2. Highland Water Contributions

2.1 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.

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 £445.08.

Following the submission of claims for contributions the net sum of £(565.81) (£1,414.39 less £1,980.20 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) was netted off against the 2025/2026 claim based on the Boards actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £1,043.03 in respect of 80% of the Boards estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/2026.

3. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B

3.1 During the year MLC were successful in securing Grant Aid on behalf of some of the IDB's that they administer. As a result of the decisions made when setting the rates for 2024/2025 works that had already been started or was to be started meet the criteria to be Grant eligible. The following work was done and was 100% Grant funded as a result:

Work Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
Staffurths PS – Weed Screen Cleaner	£66,552	6.78p
West Fen PS – Weed Screen Cleaner	£64,470	6.57p
Access Improvements – Mobile Pumps Deployment	£3,249	0.33p
	£134,271	13.68p

4. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026:

4.1 Annual Return 2025/2026:
To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2026 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations. Appendix 2

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

Appendix 1 Payments for 2025/26
Appendix 2 Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/26

Appendix 1

MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Payments 2025/2026 (1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026)

Bank charges	9.19
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner, pump contactor replacement and supply Pulsar level controller - West Fen pumping station (Accounts from March Electrical, RS Components & Pulsar)	4,863.59
Middle Level Commissioners - Replace contactors and overload	1,042.45
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply remedial Health & Safety signage (Account from 3B Design & Print)	417.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Finding fault on pump panel	96.32
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2024/25, planning and development applications)	3,975.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling, health & safety contract, public works loan application and storm recovery - tranche 1 claim	11,653.45
Middle Level Commissioners - Culvert clearance at Turves	1,248.38
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Beggard Bridge pumping station (Account from RS Components)	2,485.22
Middle Level Commissioners - Court costs	1.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Board ID card	7.37
J Bates & Sons - Pumping station duties 2024-2025 - Duncombes pumping station and Beggars Bridge pumping station	2,724.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Environment Agency - Precept	8,862.50
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2025	1,246.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,876.83
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,061.85
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	464.30
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Catering Supply - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	180.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Discharge consent application - Cobb Construction)	215.43
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Discharge consent application - Mr & Mrs Burke)	311.85
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,301.51
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid storm recovery T2a scheme works	198,451.77
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid received for storm recovery T2a scheme	-170,152.31
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	299.04
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Discharge consent application - Burmoor Construction)	370.79
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,400.69
IMServ - Meter operator agreement to 22nd October 2026	268.27
PKF Littlejohns LLP - Audit Fee (2024-2025 accounts)	1,260.00
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flailmowing	6,861.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	311.33
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, storm recovery tranche 2A claim, IDB change contribution, internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2024-2025 accounts)	12,042.60
IMServ - Annual half hourly electricity data collection to 22nd October 2026	830.02
Middle Level Commissioners - Fault finding and rope replacement on automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Duncombes pumping station (Account from T.M.C)	1,537.63
Middle Level Commissioners - Fault finding on pump 1, inspect and repair slacker	463.04
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to slacker	265.94
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to pump panel	233.32
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	5,238.48
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	296.06
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Environment Agency - Precept	8,862.49
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flailmowing	4,849.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	778.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,302.09
R Dring - Pumping Station duties - White Fen pumping station	1,182.00
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flailmowing	3,775.80
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2026	1,309.20
B J Plant Hire Ltd - Drain maintenance	26,820.00
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flailmowing	432.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,045.00
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	553.15
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District drains	2,410.57
Miss D White - Refund of drainage rates	12.42
Middle Level Commissioners - Refund of draiange rates UKPN	9.44
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner and health & safety remedial works	2,914.12
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works	227.62
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works and repair cable at pumping station	140.53
Middle Level Commissioners - Check operation of automatic weedscreen cleaner, health & safety remedial and works repairs to pump panel	724.35
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works (Account from Huws Gray)	2,508.07
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of signage	67.08
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	360.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, health & safety, storm recovery tranche 2b claim, ecological and environmental services	14,922.78
Whittome Farms - Pumping Station duties 2024/2025 - Staffurths Bridge pumping station	1,419.00
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (Duncombe pumping station)	264.77
Corona Energy - Electricity Supply - (West Fen pumping station)	7.61
EDF Energy - Electricity Supply - (Duncombe pumping station)	4,447.89
EDF Energy - Electricity Supply - (Moores pumping station)	1,836.83
EDF Energy - Electricity Supply - (Staffurths Bridge pumping station)	11,715.04
EDF Energy - Electricity Supply - (Beggars Bridge pumping station)	3,649.16
EDF Energy - Electricity Supply - (West Fen pumping station)	2,049.12
EDF Energy - Electricity Supply - (White Fen pumping station)	5,317.91
British Gas - Electricity Supply - (Duncombe pumping station)	2,367.26
British Gas - Electricity Supply - (Moores pumping station)	1,305.06
British Gas - Electricity Supply - (Staffurths Bridge pumping station)	8,387.11
British Gas - Electricity Supply - (Beggars Bridge pumping station)	2,614.31
British Gas - Electricity Supply - (West Fen pumping station)	658.32
British Gas - Electricity Supply - (White Fen pumping station)	2,718.63
	230,351.34

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 2

MARCH WEST AND WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2026
GENERAL FUND

2026				2025		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year			Apr-01	Balance brought forward	199,678.26
	Precept		17,724.99			
				2026	Rate income & Special levy	186,393.66
	Insurances and telephones	5,147.60		Mar-31	Interest on Deposit Accounts	2400.33
	Repairs & Renewals	19,290.50			Development Charges	3,182.00
	Fuel	23,859.00			Highland Water Contribution	477.23
	Drainworks	47,195.80			Wayleave rentals	11.92
	Contractors Charges	7,329.00			Grazing Rights	5.00
	Administration charge, Audit fee,				Storm Recovery Grant - T2b	134,270.55
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	23,012.79	125,834.69			
	To Improvement Works					
	Repairs to control panel	17,097.88				
	Access improvements	3,248.75				
	Weedscreen cleaner overhaul - Staffurths Bridge	66,551.65				
	Weedscreen cleaner overhaul - West Fen	64,470.15	151,368.43			
	Balance carried forward		231,490.84			
			526,418.95			526,418.95

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities			Assets		
Capital Provisions Account		3,444,200.00	Pumping Station (Valuation)		3,444,000.00
Public Works Loan Board -			Plant Assets		200.00
Loan Outstanding		0.00			
		3,444,200.00			3,444,200.00

Revenue Section

General Fund		231,490.84	Value added tax - Refunds due		45,225.67
Development Charges Account		62,273.78	Ratepayers - Arrears		6,181.16
Plant Refurbishment Fund	Area 1	41,336.50	Sundry Debtors		1,231.14
Sundry Creditors		67,926.60	Balance in hand -		
			Barclays - Treasurer's Account 1	50,000.00	
			Barclays - Business Premium	294,136.81	
			National Savings - Treasurer's Account	6,252.94	350,389.75
		3,847,227.72			3,847,227.72

March West & White Fen Internal Drainage Board

Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025			31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward		323,911.03	Payments made during the year	230,351.34
			Returned Direct Debits	1,710.38
31st March 2026				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	248,764.63			
Interest on deposit accounts	3,522.87			
		252,287.50	Balance carried forward	344,136.81
		576,198.53		**576,198.53**

National Savings Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025		31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward	6,191.03	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2026			
Interest on deposit accounts	61.91	Balance carried forward	6,252.94
	6,252.94		**6,252.94**

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Clients Current Account - 13350509

Account Closed

Clients Curent Account - 33059510

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2026		50,000.00	
Less unpresented cheques	0.00		
	0.00		
		0.00	
Add outstanding lodgements		0.00	
Balance per Trial Balance			**50,000.00**
			50,000.00

Cash balances as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Curent Account - 33059510	**50,000.00**
Business Premium Account	**294,136.81**
	344,136.81

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook	**6,252.94**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**350,389.75**

March West & White Fen IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2026

				Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**			
	General Fund	199,678.26		
	Development Charges Account	57,686.77		
	Plant Refurbishment Fund	40,845.50		
	Future Works	0.00		
			298,210.53	**298,211**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	130,646.66		
	Special Levies	55,797.00		
	Penalty	0.00		
	Costs	-50.00		
	Write-off	0.00		
			186,393.66	**186,394**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	2,400.33		
	Development charges account	693.45		
	Plant refurbishment fund	491.00		
	Consent applications	0.00		
	Wayleave	11.92		
	Discharge contributions	7,823.95		
	Grazing	5.00		
	Highland Water	477.23		
	Loan Advance	0.00		
	Write Back of Overprovision	0.00		
	Miscellaneous income	0.00		
	Storm Recovery Grant	134,270.55		
			146,173.43	**146,173**
Line 4	**Staff costs**			
	Wages/salaries	0.00		
	National insurance contributions	0.00		
	Pension costs	0.00		
	Travelling expenses	0.00		
			0.00	**0**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**			
	PWLB - Principal	0.00		
	PWLB - Interest	0.00		
			0.00	**0**

March West & White Fen IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2026

Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	17,724.99		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	5,147.60		
	Repairs and renewals	19,290.50		
	Fuel	23,859.00		
	Drainworks	47,195.80		
	Contractors charges	7,329.00		
	Administration	23,012.79		
	Development charges fees	748.39		
	Improvement works	151,368.43		
			295,676.50	**295,677**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	231,490.84		
	Development Charges Account	62,273.78		
	Plant Refurbishment Fund	41,336.50		
			335,101.12	**335,101**

Reconciliation	
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6	335,101.12
Balances carried forward	
Per Annual return	**335,101.00**

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*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	136,200	298,211	*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	234,633	186,394	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	237,877	146,173	*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	310,499	295,677	*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	298,211	335,101	*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	330,102	350,390	*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	3,444,200	3,444,200	*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	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?			*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 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.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED AHWool

Date 24 04 2026

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Wednesday 6th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the Finance Officer's summary
B. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
C. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency
D. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026
E. Review & Approve Rating Estimates for 2026/2027
F. Consider & approve the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2026/2027
G. Note that we will be introducing a consistent naming convention for MLC and IDB Reserves during 2026/27, this will include some rationalisation of funds.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

The rating estimates for 2026/2027 are made up of standard budget provisions and the engineers estimate for drain maintenance works for the coming year.

Estimates for pumping costs are as problematical as last year in that we need to factor in an 'average' pumping year, taking-into-account the impact of climate change. Further, we will have a new electricity supply contract from October 2026 with no current indications of possible unit costs, especially with the current uncertainty because of the conflicts within the Middle East. The provision is therefore an estimate of pumping volumes at an estimate of possible new contract rates (20% increase on 2025/26 rates). Members should therefore consider if they think the provision is reasonable when setting the rate. The Board also need to consider any increase in Contractor costs also with higher Fuel costs again as result of the conflict in the Middle East.

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

Included in the Budget is £40,000 for the Pump Overhaul of Staffurths PS. This is to be part funded by the Underspend against Budget in 2025/2026 (£30,509).
No provision has been made for other Improvement works, however if the board did approve works at West Fen PS, then these works could be funded from the Development Fund.

The estimated expenditure for the year is £182,000, equivalent to a rate of 18.50p, the rate for 2025/2026 was set at 19.00pp.

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

1.1 To consider the payments in respect of pumping station duties, assume a 5.25% increase (MLC Pay Award) in the Budget.

1.2 The sum of £1,182.00 was allowed for pumping station duties for 2025/26

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.

The precept for 2025 was £17,724.99

3. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026:

3.1 Annual Return 2025/2026:

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2026 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations. Appendix 3

4. Estimates for 2026/27

4.1 The estimated budget for 2026/27 is shown in Appendix 1.

4.2 The Board are reminded that it is standard practice to budget for an average year in terms of rainfall and associated pumping requirements.

5. Rate Requirements for 2026/27

5.1 Appendix 2 details the rate requirement that needs to be set and approved by the Board in order 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.

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

Appendix 1 Estimates for 2026/27
Appendix 2 Rate Requirements for 2026/27

Appendix 1

MARCH WEST & WHITE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET PROPOSAL 2026/2027

		Approved budget 2025/2026 £	Actual to 31st March 2026 £	Proposed Budget 2026/2027 £
1	Labour	7,330	7,329	7,633
2	Telephone and insurances	4,800 [A]	5,148 [A]	5,700 [A]
3	Repairs and renewals	15,208	19,291	20,208
4	Fuel	56,500	23,859	42,750 [B]
5	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	65,125	47,196 [C]	56,165 [D]
6	Administration charge, Health & Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	20,680	23,011	23,555
7	Improvement works	0	151,368 [E]	40,000 [F]
8	Environment Agency - Precept	17,725	17,725	18,079
		187,368	294,927	214,091
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest etc	962	140,347 [G]	32,091
		186,406	154,580	182,000

A - Includes increased premiums plus 10% increase

A - Based on 3 year average usage
assuming a 20% Increase in rates from October 2026

C - Includes:

Flailing	13,266
Slubbing	22,350
Fees - Planning and Development	7,576
Conservation Officer	1,995
Weed Control	2,009
	47,196

D - Includes Engineering Items 46,290

E -

West Fen PS - Weedscreen Cleaner Overhaul *	66,552
Staffurths PS - Weedscreen Cleaner Overhaul *	64,470
Access Improvements *	3,249
T2A Channel Works	17,098
	151,368

F - Staffurts PS - Pump Overhaul 40,000

G - Includes:

Interest Received	2,400
Highland Water	477
Storm Recovery Grant *	134,271

Rate raised 2025/26 - 19.00p and Rate requirement 2026/27 - 18.50p

APPENDIX 2

March West & White Fen Internal Drainage Board

Combined rate for amalgamated Board

Rate and levy requirements

UNDER SECTION 37 OF THE LAND DRAINAGE ACT 1991, THE APPROPRIATE PROPORTIONS IN WHICH THE NET EXPENDITURE OF THE COMMISSIONERS MUST BE BORNE FOR 2026/2027 IS: -

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 69.86%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Fenland District Council – 30.14%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £6,872.

In 2026/2027 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £9,838

Estimated Revenue balance in hand on 31st March 2026 - £231,491

The estimated net expenditure of £182,000 in 2026/2027 which does not include provision towards the plant refurbishment programme, is equivalent to: -

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 18.50p and

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £54,851

In 2025/2026 a rate 19.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special Levy of £55,797 on Fenland District Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

6th May 2026