CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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5th May 2026

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Tuesday 12th May 2026

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Middle Level Offices, PE15 0AH at 2pm on Tuesday 12th May 2026.

As you'll be aware, we administer twenty-three 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

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Tuesday 12th May 2026 – 2pm
Middle Level Offices, PE15 0AH

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 3 - 16	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership	Pages 17-19	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 20 -24	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	Pages 25 - 26	Clerk
7	Chairman's Items • Flail mowing for 2025/2026	Verbal	Chair
8	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including:	Pages 27 - 42	Clerk or Engineer
9	Health & Safety	Pages 43 - 53	Chair
10	Governance • Accounts Return for 2024/2025 • Auditors report for 2024/2025	Pages 54 - 56 Pages 57-61	Clerk
11	Finance Report: looking back • Payments 2025 • Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026	Pages 62 - 63 Page 64 Pages 65 - 69	Clerk
12	Finance Report: looking forward • Determination of Annual Values & Rate Arrears • Rating Estimates for 2025/2026 • Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements or 2025/2026	Pages 70 - 71 Page 72 Page 73 Page 74	Clerk
13	Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 11th 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.)

CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Curf and Wimblington Combined IDB
Held at the Middle Level Offices, March on 13th May 2025.

PRESENT

M Heading (Chair)	R Mason
R Gowler (Vice-Chair)	Ms A Morris
R Angood	D Morris
C Gowler	D Nicholas
T Martin	G Wakeham

S Murphy

P Burrows (Clerk and MLC Chief Executive) and Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) were in attendance, and M Lakey (Operations Engineer) and D Bantoft (M&E Engineer) were in attendance for part of the meeting.

Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mr Tobias Martin and Mr Sam Murphy to the Board.

Apologies for absence were received from S Edgley, C Martin & L Nicholas.

B.587 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded Members of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any individual on the Board.

Mr Heading, Ms Morris, Mr R Gowler and Mr C Gowler declared an interest in the Fens Reservoir.

Mr Heading and Ms Morris declared an interest in matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners as Middle Level Board members.

B.588 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

There were no matters arising and the Minutes of the Last Meeting were agreed.

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 14th May 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.589 Constitution & Membership

Vacancies and Elections

The Chair welcomed Mr Murphy and Mr Martin to the Board and advised that their appointments had filled the two vacancies on the Board. However, it was noted that Mr Wakeham had advised of his intention to stand down at the end of this meeting.

Mr Wakeham suggested that Mr Tom Noble who is Mr Wakeham's tenant, has shown an interest in joining the Board and Mr Wakeham would be happy to support Mr Noble as his nominee. This was agreed by the Board

RESOLVED

That Mr Tom Noble be invited to join the Board as a nominee of Mr G Wakeham

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Board agreed that Mr Heading be appointed as Chairman of the Commissioners. This was proposed by Mr R Mason and seconded by Mr R Gowler

The Board agreed that Mr R Gowler be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Commissioners. This was proposed by Mr R Mason and seconded by Mr Wakeham.

RESOLVED

That Mr Heading be appointed as Chairman of the Commissioners.

That Mr R Gowler be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Commissioners.

Training

The Clerk advised that the updated version of the ADA Good Governance Guide has been printed and that copies are being sent for distribution amongst Board members. It is not yet clear what supporting training material will follow.

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

B.590 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised that his Report would be taken largely as read, asking for further consideration to be made of the following points.

Planning and Consenting Charging Model

The Clerk spoke of the need to rationalise and review services to stop staff being spread so thinly. The key area that has been focused on is planning and consenting charging model, with developers' fees reflecting volume as well as flow, increasing consent fees where we can. The new model means that developers pay for staff time more which results in less time being billed to the IDBs.

The Middle Level Board also agreed to the recruitment of an Enforcement Officer, who will be charged with bringing income in now the fee model is in place. The intent is they will become self-funding.
The Clerk drew the Board's attention to the resolutions contained within the report, and invited questions on his report. With no questions being raised the Board noted their agreement to the Clerks report and resolutions contained therein.

RESOLVED

> The Board agreed to delegate the decision on whether to appeal the IDB Precept (under s40 of the Water Resources Act) to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman. Any appeal must be lodged within 6 weeks of formal notification.

Fens Reservoir

The Clerk gave an update on the position of the Fen Reservoir and advised that MLC are in advanced talks with Burgess Salmon and a contract is about to be entered into. It is quite a complicated arrangement with the clustering arrangement to cover all Boards administered by Middle Level. We still need the Board resolutions confirming that Middle Level Commissioners can act on the Boards behalf. Anglian Water will be covering the majority of the legal costs. More broadly, conversations continue around the reservoir, and we are currently updating our Service Level Agreement with Anglian Water to cover staff time. We have a new Reservoir Project Support Officer starting at the end of the month, a role that will be funded by Anglian Water, but this is going to be quite a project to keep pace with.

The Chair asked that as the reservoir is largely in the Board's area, for this Board when do discussions with Anglian Water need to start. The Clerk advised that discussions have already started, although the conversations so far have been more board and not focused on the geography, but these discussions are now starting to increase. More detailed conversations are now needed, and we have received correspondence from Fisher German (Anglian Water's land agent) this week regarding the pipeline routes. We have asked for a meeting as the pipeline will be significant to many Boards. The Clerk advised that Anglian Water's plans are still maturing and not yet at the detailed stage they wanted to be at.

Mr Wakeham asked if it would be possible to mitigate any legal fees Anglian Water will not cover, and the Clerk advised that the list of fees that will be covered are listed in the Clerks report, but we will also have the conversation with our legal advisor to keep costs to the Boards to an absolute minimum. The Board would only be recharged for any legal works that they are asked to do that are over and above that relating to the Fens Reservoir, but this would be kept under review. The Clerk explained the impact of the DCO on byelaws but added that we will have an assurance role during the construction phase.

Mr R Mason raised some concerns about winter water levels, but the Clerk responded that he was as sure as he could be that water will still be available where required, but this would be checked. He added that this is such a big project that not all Anglian Water staff will know the answers to all of the questions raised.

The Clerk asked the Board if they are comfortable with the resolutions, and these were agreed.

RESOLVED

> 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.
>
> Acknowledge 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.591 Environment Officers' Report

Mr Lakey referred to the Environment Officer's Report, advising that the report would be taken as read. He reminded the Board of the Revised Environmental Services Package and associated fee increase.

Mr Lakey advised that the Biodiversity Action Plan visit and review has been undertaken and that the report is being produced.

Mr Lakey drew the Boards attention to the changes in the Hedgerow Regulations and also reminded the Board that they will need to consider bats if any works affect trees adding that the Ecology team have now received additional training in this regard. Non-routine maintenance works require a survey before works commence, and the Ecology Team have an environmental screening form that needs to be completed, but Mr Lakey advised that he completes this for the Board prior to the works. This is all included in the service package unless it is a large scheme. Mr Lakey also takes care of the Boards badger returns.
Mr Lakey reminded the Board of their culverting policy, and that culverts are now considered a last resort and that habitat loss must be considered. Environmental screening reports are needed for all works, and Mr Lakey asked the Board to report any bank slips as soon as possible as the slip is likely to have displaced any water voles which will allow repairs to be undertaken straight away. If the slip is left and the voles recolonise, repairs may be delayed. The window for works where water voles are identified is the 2nd week of February to the end of April, and during September and October. Mr Lakey referred the Board to the 'Water Voles – Myth Busting' within the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager's report.

The grant funded works this spring have required some water vole displacement and an external ecologist had to be appointed due to the extent of works being undertaken. Ms Morris asked if there is a record of where water voles are located as she was aware of water vole surveys being undertaken, and Mr Lakey advised that although surveys are ongoing throughout the district, water voles are all over the District so it is safer to assume they are everywhere.

Ms Morris observed that the closure of badger setts moves the badgers on to adjacent land and was concerned about the impact on the Fens Reservoir and that the Board would have more badgers in the District. Mr Lakey advised that artificial setts will have to be provided, and their ecologists will have to prove that the badgers have moved on before any setts can be closed.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Report be approved.

B.592 Chairman's Items

The Chairman advised that he had nothing particular to report. The flail mowing as included in the agenda has now been resolved and this agenda item can be removed.

B.593 Consulting Engineers' Reports

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

Highland Water

The Chair thought that Manea is considered Highland, and looking at the Engineers Report there is a significant amount of development planned for Manea. The water from these developments will come to the Board, including additional flow from Anglian Water's Sewage Treatment Plant, which is an issue. The

Engineering report has recommended to refuse consent. The Chair does not know where to go from here, but this will be an issue in the future, especially as this is outside of the Board's area. Mr Mason asked if the Clerk should write to the local councils, but the Clerk advised that this had already been done. The Clerk reported that planning feedback has improved over recent years, we have developed standing advice, and we are better at flagging where consents come our way. Enforcement will give us greater capability. Mr Angood added that the sewage treatment works not being extended could be a problem, with the Chair adding that Anglian Water have told developers that they cannot accept any new connections to the works, so all new developments are constructing private treatment plants which discharge into the Boards drains. The Clerk added that we are working under the assumption all of our Boards will say they are at capacity as the Middle Level system that they discharge into is at capacity.

Operational Services Report

Mr Lakey reported that works were been undertaken as agreed in the programme, and that heavy weed growth had required some additional cleansing, which was agreed with the Chair. A recent inspection of the Board's drains has shown that they are in good condition, with a few small slips noted and these are being monitored. Finchams Farm pump drain has been included in this year's works as agreed in previous years.

Mr Lakey drew the Boards attention to the proposed programme for 2025/26 and the associated costs. Mr R Gowler advised that a small slip has been noted near point 41, and Mr Lakey agreed to investigate.

Mechanical and Electrical Report

Mr Bantoft referred the Board to his report. He advised that repairs at Wimblington Common, Stonea Fen and Finchams Pumping Stations have been undertaken as a result of the successful T2A Funding bids, with over £80k of work being completed. Going forward Mr Bantoft advised that the Finchams Pump will need an overhaul, but the roof will need to be removed to enable this work. Mr Bantoft suggested that the Board consider if the drains can be altered so that water is directed towards Stonea and reflected that for Finchams Pumping Station it would be better to overhaul the pump that replace.

Mr Bantoft advised that the Wimblington Common pump control panel is now over 50 years old, and that the Board should have a plan for its replacement. Curf Pumping Station is in good order, but it was agreed last year to replace pump no. 2 at Bensons and a quotation for this work has been received. The pump cost is £57,602.20 but due to the age of the electrical control panels (in excess of 35 years old) it is recommended that the panel is also refurbished. This is expected to cost around £15k, so allowing for a 10% contingency the project cost is £72k. Mr Bantoft has discussed this with the Chair and established that there is a 12–16-week lead time on the pump. If the Board were to agree at this meeting to do the works, the pump should be delivered and the works completed before the winter pumping season commences. However, if the pump is not delivered before November, then it would be necessary to push the works into next year. It was acknowledged that Bensons Pumping Station would be the first pumping station affected by the Fens Reservoir, but not carrying out the works is not really an option. Anglian Water may need the pumping station, but some type of agreement would need to be in place before this can happen. The Clerk advised that Anglian Water have been asked if they need the station and when this may be, but the design is still far off. We still do not know at which point they will become a landowner/ratepayer, and if and when they may need to buy the assets from the Board. The Chair added that we still do not know what will happen with the reservoir, but we still need the pumping station to serve the remainder of the district and that the Board agreed last year doing nothing is too big a risk to take, hence why it has been included in this year's Capital Works programme. The Clerk advised that a loan function had been approved, but the Board will need to draw this down if they wish to use it.

Mr Bantoft advised that no payments for the pumps will be required up front unless the installation is postponed, at which time a 50% payment will be required with the balance paid on delivery. If the other pump fails, this would give some resilience even if it is not fitted this year and could act as a spare. He asked the Board to consider their investment programme for the next few years, and the Chair added that it is concerning when looking at the ages of the assets.

Mr C Gowler returned to the issue of diverting flow from Finchams to Stonea Pumping Station. This prompted some discussion around the table, and Mr Lakey suggested that taking some levels would show if this were feasible. The Clerk reminded the Board that a GiA application had previously been made for a District Survey, but this was not successful. The Board agreed to the Middle Level surveyor's time to establish levels and to work with Mr Lakey to establish if what had been discussed would be possible. Mr Lakey would then discuss any proposal with the Chair and seek quotations for the work if appropriate to present at the next meeting of the Board.

The Chair thanked Mr Bantoft, Mr Lakey and everyone involved with the Storm Recovery Grant bids and works.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

That Mr Lakey investigates a slip near point 41.

That the pump replacement at Benson's Pumping Station goes ahead

To fund the Middle Level surveyors time to establish levels; Mr Lakey to then establish if what had been discussed would be possible.
If appropriate and agreed with the Chair, Mr Lakey to seek quotations for the work if appropriate to present at the next meeting of the Board.

That the reports be approved.

<u>B.594 Health & Safety</u>

The Chairman reported that Mr C Gowler met with Cope Safety Management in January. Nothing significant has been reported although the signage is still outstanding from the last report. Mr C Gowler reported that the railings at Stonea Fen had been included in the Grant Funded works.

The Clerk reported that the contract MLC currently have with Cope will end in July, and that a quotation for a new contract has been received. However, before committing to a new contract MLC are carrying out due diligence and reviewing the service against other providers. He added that there have been some personnel changes within Cope and also invites any feedback from the Board. The Chair added that they Board have a good relationship with Cope but would be happy to use whoever MLC recommend.

<u>B.595 Governance</u>

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

<u>RESOLVED</u>

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

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

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

The Board noted the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor

b) Review of Internal Controls

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

RESOLVED

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

c) Approval of authorised officers for operational/regulatory roles

RESOLVED

The Board confirm that all employees and contractors of the Middle Level Commissioners are considered as duly authorised offices and therefore able to use the Board's powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

The Board confirm that their Chairman, Vice Chairman, District Officer(s), pump attendants and employees (if applicable) are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Board's powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

d) Responsible Finance Officer

Following the retirement of Robert Hill, the MLC Treasurer and the appointment of Andrew Wool as the new MLC Head of Finance, the Board approved the relevant resolutions to manage the transition.

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 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.

iv) 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.

v) 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.

e) Policy Reviews

The Clerk referred to the Boards Finance Regulations and Finance Code Policy which has been reviewed and updated by the clerk and responsible financial officer. The Board also reviewed the Complaints Procedure, Privacy Policy and Anti-Bribery policy, reviewed and approved the Boards Policy Statement, and approved the Data Protection Officer.

RESOLVED

That the update and re-publication of the Complaints Procedure and Privacy Policy is approved.

That the Board reviewed and approved the publication of an Anti-Bribery policy, and the Financial Regulations policy.

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

That the MLC Lead Clerk, currently Ruth Martin, acts as the Board's Data Protection Officer and acknowledges that this role will be associated within the incumbent employee role of MLC Lead Clerk.

f) Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

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

g) Exercise of Public Rights

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

h) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

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

RESOLVED

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

i) DEFRA IDB1 Return

RESOLVED

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

j) Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

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

B.596 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board considered and noted the key finance messages of the Finance Officer, and the payments detailed for 2024. The Clerk added that last year's rate had been set before knowing about the Storm Recovery Grant Fund, and that the funds received had been a good outcome for the Board.

The Accounts were reviewed, and the Chair referred to the Storm Recovery Grant Fund bids in Tranches 1 and 2. This Board were fortunate to receive £82k for repair works and thanks were recorded to all those involved in submission and completion of works. This means that the finances are better than expected this time last year. The Clerk advised that a further £16 million of funds are available to be bid for this year as the fund is extended.

The Chair added that MLC have also received £1 million of funding for mobile pumps which can be deployed to assist any of the Boards serviced by MLC. The Clerk reported that this year there will be a project to establish how these pumps are deployed and the additional equipment that may be needed, but funding has already been allocated to do this. He added that funding has also been received to install solar panels at the MLC Depot and at St Germans Pumping Station, along with a solar array on land at St Germans. This will help reduce electricity costs which is good for the Middle Level ratepayers, which includes most of the people on this Board and within the district. Mr Angood asked if the energy contracts were being renegotiated this year, and the Clerk advised that they were and that better deals are available than the last time the contact was negotiated.

Payments for 2024

Mr Wakeham asked about the large payments shown on account to Corona Energy and asked if this was covering previous shortfalls. The Clerk advised that the figure would be due to disputes in previous years, but he would check with the Finance Department and seek clarification.

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

Highland Water Contributions

The Chair observed that Highland Water is going to be an ongoing challenge and looking forward there are potential difficulties. As an industry we will need to look at how Highland Water is funded. We are taking water from outside of the district but having to deal with it within our infrastructure. The Clerk advised that the current Government has indicated that they will be carrying out a review IDB financing, and this is likely to start in the summer and take 12 months. The forthcoming changes to local government and the precept may have prompted this review.

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2024/2025

The Board considered and approved the Annual accounts and Finance Papers for the year ended 31st March 2025, as required in the Audit regulations.

RESOLVED

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

B.597 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Finance officer's review and key messages

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

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

i) ADA subscription

The Clerk reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 6.5% for 2025, from £724 to £ 772 (plus VAT).

RESOLVED

> That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 be paid.

ii) Pump Attendants Fee

The Board gave consideration to the payment in respect of pumping station duties for 2025-2026, with the Chair observing that previously the Board had used the Middle Level pay award as an indicator.

RESOLVED

> That the Board agree that the Pump Attendants fees increase to £6,937 for 2025/2026.

iii) Annual Letting of Herbage

RESOLVED

> The present lettings will continue with the same annual fees.

iv) Precept

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

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2025.

The precept for 2024 was £10,951.63.

RESOLVED

That the Precept is paid in full unless a decision to appeal against the Precept is made.

v) Contributions from Developers.

The Board considered the Developers Contributions.

vi) Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2025/26.

The Board reviewed the proposed budget for 2025/2026.

The Chair advised that the budget included the £80k of works previously agreed at Bensons Pumping Station, and that at the previous meeting of the Board it had been agreed that this could be funded via a Public Works Loan. However, an alternative approach would be to fund the works through the Boards balances, with repayments to reinstate balances rather than loan repayments. Ms Morris asked if the Accounts included the previously agreed loan function, and the Chair thought they did, although there would be no reason why the Board could not fund from balances and then pay this back. The Board have over £220k across 3 accounts. The Clerk advised that ideally the Board should keep a year's expense in hand so the remaining amount could be available to the Board to either reduce the loan taken, or to use in lieu of a loan. Mr Wakeham suggested that the Board should consider the impact of the Boards balances on any future amalgamations, but also that the balances should be there to be used. The Chair advised that he had discussed with the Responsible Financial Officer the position of using the Board funds and repaying the amount over 10 years.

The Clerk asked the Boards confirmation that they wished to fund the £80k required for the pump replacement/control panel scheme from the Development Charges Account and the Asset Replacement Fund, and that the loan is not to be drawn but the budgeted repayments are to be used to replenish the Asset Replacement Fund. In addition, if the control panel does go wrong, a replacement panel could potentially be funded from the previously agreed loan.

The Clerk added that in order to carry out this out it will be necessary for the Developer Charges Fund to be checked to ensure that none of the funding has been 'ring-fenced', and that the general fund still has adequate funds to cover a full year's expenses. Ms Morris asked that, as the Board had previously agreed to a £100k loan facility, if the full £100k had to be drawn, but the Clerk confirmed that the Board could draw only the funds they needed, to a maximum of £100k.

The Chair added that electricity had been budgeted to reflect a new rate, and that the formula used in the previous year based on 125% of an average year's pumping had been used.

RESOLVED

That the budget is agreed.

The Board wish to fund the £80k required for the pump replacement/control panel scheme from the Development Charges Account and the Asset Replacement Fund.

That the £100k loan is not to be drawn at present but the budgeted repayments are to be used to repay the accounts.

That if the control panel goes wrong, a replacement panel can be funded from the previously agreed loan facility.

Rate Requirement for 2025/26

The Chair advised that based on the budget forecast that a rate of 31p in the £ would be required, which would be a reduction in the rate from last year. Therefore, the proposal from the Chair is that a rate of 31p in the £ is agreed.

No other rate proposals were made, and it was agreed unanimously that the rate be set at 31p in the £.

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2025/2026. and were informed by the Clerk that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 85.67% and 14.33%.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £129,617 be raised by drainage rates and special levy and by way of a contribution from Middle Level Commissioners.

iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy and contribution from Middle Level Commissioners are £110,357 and 13,168 and £6,093 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 31.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special Levy of £13,168 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

vi) That a contribution of £6,093 be received from the Middle Level Commissioners in respect of Byall Fen.

vii) 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 v).

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

The Clerk advised that he intended to write to Anglian Water on the Board's behalf, asking if they would consider contributing to the costs of the works at Bensons Pumping Station. Mr C Gowler asked if it would be worth the Board asking for an Anglian Water representative to be in attendance at next year's meeting, but the Clerk thought that this may be too early to secure a representative from a senior enough level.

B.598 Middle Level IDB Change

The Clerk referred to his Report relating the Middle Level IDB Change. He advised that the current IDB model in the Middle Level is generally considered not fit for the future, and that a number of the Boards are not in a healthy position. Even simple amalgamations take a long time to complete. So, he decided to start looking to see if there is something we can do collectively to move this forward. He is looking for a sensible model and when the working group next meet after the summer, he would like to have the perspective of all of the Boards.

Mr Angood asked which Board it was suggested that the Board 'buddies' up with, especially as the reservoir will change the Board significantly. The Clerk suggested that Nightlayers IDB would be a good fit, as they are neighbouring Boards that are both affected by the reservoir. The reservoir may provide the resources we need to make these changes, and if we have a solution ready then it would all be to the good.

The Chair thought the view would need to radical, and something that will last another 30-40 years. Mr Wakeham added that if you were starting now, it wouldn't be with the structure we currently have. The Clerk advised that the initial paper written by George Dann has shown that changing to 1 or 2 IDBs in the Middle Level would create Boards that were too big, and that 5 or 6 Boards would be too small. Therefore 3 or 4 Boards seems to be the answer, but the next question would be where the Board boundaries would fall. Mr Martin suggested that it would make sense for the reservoir to sit in the middle of a Board, with the Chair adding that he thought it would be necessary to look at much bigger Boards. The Clerk suggested that this change would need to be driven forward by the Boards. This report is not due to MLC trying to conceive something for the Boards, but we do not want our Boards to be behind the curve.

The Chair suggested that the paperwork involved in the non-drainage functions of the Boards is ever increasing, and that there could be some financial savings to be made if this could be reduced, but the Clerk did not think that the cost savings would be huge although he thought it would give the Boards the ability to drive forward other things. There is a concern that amalgamations would mean the loss of local decision making, but if this is taken out of the Boards hands and governance moves to London or Bristol, that local knowledge is lost anyway. The Clerk considers that the future would be Boards with operational districts with their own budgets raised for specific works. This is how other large boards across the country work.

Mr Wakeham asked if anyone did not think the proposals were not a good idea. The Board has to move forward, with a sensible and pragmatic approach and that it is better to steer the design. Ms Morris commented that this Board has good membership, and the Clerk suggested that a leadership message from this Board would be powerful. The Chair thought that from the outside everyone views the Boards as 'The Middle Level'.

Mr C Gowler asked how many Boards the Clerk thought would be the right number, and the Clerk advised that the initial report findings were that 3 or 4 Boards would be the optimum. Mr Wakeham thought that emphasis on local control is important, and districts give the local control. Ms Morris asked if the Board maintenance plan currently used is the same across all Boards, and Mr Wakeham thought it should be based on engineering need.

The Clerk advised that the full report had been sent electronically to all Board members, but it was agreed that it would be helpful for this to be resent.

The Chair asked the Board if they were happy to make a £300 contribution towards the cost of developing the detail design, and this was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

> That a £300 contribution be made by the Board towards the cost of developing the detailed design.
>
> That the report be resent electronically to all Board members.

B.599 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

> That next Meeting of the Board be held on 12th May 2026 at 2pm at The Middle Level Offices, March.

B.600 Any Other Business

The Chair noted that this meeting would be the last attended by Mr Guy Wakeham, and the Board joined the Chair in thanking Mr Wakeham for his service to the Board and wishing him a happy retirement.

With no other items being raised by the Board, the meeting was closed at 3.55pm.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Tuesday 12th 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	14	N/A		5
Actual	14	1 FDC	15	
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	Richard Angood	Ratepayer	
2	Stephen Edgley	Nominee of Ratepayer (A Edgley & Son Ltd)	
3	Christopher Gowler	Nominee of Ratepayer (Lawrence Bridge Farm)	
4	Robin Gowler	Ratepayer	Vice-Chairman
5	Marc Heading	Ratepayer	Chairman
6	Clive Martin	Nominee of Ratepayer (M F Martin Ltd)	
7	Raymond Mason	Nominee of Ratepayer (E Mason & Son)	
8	Alison Morris	Nominee of Ratepayer (E H Morris Stonea Ltd)	
9	Donald Morris	Ratepayer	
10	David Nicholas	Ratepayer	
11	Leslie Nicholas	Ratepayer	
12	Tobias Martin	Nominee of Ratepayer (M F Martin Ltd)	
13	Sam Murphy	Nominee of Ratepayer (E H Morris Stonea Ltd)	
14	Tom Noble	Ratepayer	

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	Maureen Davis	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	13/5/2025	14/5/2024	9/5/2023	10/5/2022
1	Richard Angood	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	Stephen Edgley	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
3	Christopher Gowler	Present	Present	Present	Present
4	Robin Gowler	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
5	Marc Heading	Present	Present	Present	Present
6	Clive Martin	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	Present
7	Raymond Mason	Present	Present	Present	Present
8	Alison Morris	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
9	Donald Morris	Present	Present	Present	Present
10	David Nicholas	Present	Present	Present	Present
11	Leslie Nicholas	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Present
12	Tobias Martin	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A
13	Sam Murphy	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A
14	Tom Noble	N/A	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	MARC HEADING	PRESENT	APOLOGIES	PRESENT	

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	13/5/2025	14/5/2024	9/5/2023	10/5/2022
	Alan Gowler (FDC)			N/A	N/A
1	Maureen Davis (FDC)				

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 In appointing the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Board is expected to follow the principles within the Cabinet Office’s Governance Code on Public Appointments. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve in any one post for more than ten years. The tenure of the current Chairman is 23 years, and the tenure of the current Vice Chairman is 21 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 complete 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.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Tuesday 12th 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:	**CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB**	**Subject:**	**ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT**
Date:	**Tuesday 12th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Sofi Lloyd**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Review and approve the new Biodiversity Action Plan (available from the Boards website at https://middlelevel.gov.uk/curf-wimblington/)**

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 the purchase of Swift Boxes and collect possible offers of locations for it to be put up (high buildings e.g. Ag. sheds)

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

Review of Key Environmental Compliance Indicators (KCIs)

Key:	Not Achieved / Information Not Available	Partly complete / A date has been set for completion (provide date and resource)	Complete
Name of Board Environmental Representative:		**Marc Heading**	
KCI:	**Description of KCI:**	**Status:**	**Comments:**
1.	A current channel categorisation map & reasoning is available		Yes. ML Completed
2.	Standard Operating Procedures audit has been undertaken and works considered compliant		Yes. ML Completed
3.	The previous year's maintenance record is available for review and to inform the following year's works planning.		Yes. ML Completed
4.	A channel maintenance plan (flail mowing and desilting) has been prepared for Board review and approval.		Yes. ML Completed
5.	All non-routine works undertaken in the previous year were screened for environmental impacts and opportunities using the ESR process		None done in 2025
6.	The Biodiversity Action Plan has been reviewed and objectives for the previous year have been met and following objectives set		New BAP to be approved
7.	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		In progress (first year)
9.	There has been no net loss of open watercourse (via culverting or other) in the district in the previous year		SL Checked
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 with ML.

middle level commissioners

Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB

Annual Environmental Review - Notes from Meeting

Attended by: Marc Heading, Sofi Lloyd, Morgan Lakey

Date: 28/04/2026

Point No.	Notes	Action by and due date
1	The KCI's for the Board report were reviewed & completed	
2	Discussed the rationale and benefits of the current district-wide flail mowing rotation of mowing alternate banks each year, leaving a margin of vegetation of 1m up the banks unless the area has desilting works programmed, and if so, the bank is mowed to the waters' edge.	
3	ML highlighted that were marginal vegetation is left, less bank slips are being observed, particularly where there is a large differential between the summer and winter levels. ML explained that C&W DDC is held up as an exemplar in bank management.	
4	Confirmed the desilting rotation is 3-4 years mostly. Finchams pump drain is cleared every year but mostly for weed.	
5	Discussed that if Finchams catchment is joined to Stonea between points 39-28, a new water level control structure will be needed as there is an approx. 1m level difference between the 2 catchments.	
6	Confirmed that the 16ft bank top and rear face is owned by the IDB between roughly Boots bridge to Honey Bridge. SL to confirm exact points of ownership. Discussion around what more could be done with the owned land that would be of benefit to the IDB and to biodiversity such as BNG.	**SL 2026**
7	ML & MH to confirm the ownership of the old PS adjacent to point 71 on the back of the 16ft bank.	**ML/MH 2026**
8	There is a small reedbed in the side channel leading up to Bensons PS that could be set aside and managed as a reedbed. SL to survey & progress	**SL 2026**
9	SL to check the district boundary difference between BAP maps and District map on website as there are some fields included along the 40ft bank that are missing from the district map ****SL checked and confirmed that the BAP maps are correct and the district map will be amended.**	**SL Apr 2026**
10	The area highlighted as highland in Manea may actually drain to Manea & Welney rather than C&W DDC. SL to confirm	**SL 2026**
11	Discussed that the IDB may be able to contribute towards the CWS objectives at Wimblington Common Gravel Pits (Skylark) due to the proximity to the ditch at point 41. SL to confirm details of the site objectives	**SL 2026**
12	ML/MH believe that the CFPGM at points 84-83 may now all be arable. SL to check.	**SL 2026**
13	Discussed the meaning of the LNRS habitat opportunity mapping.	
14	ML confirmed that eels have previously been found at point 22.	
15	Discussed the huge value that the botanical surveys that were undertaken in the district last year have been on benchmarking biodiversity in the district and that further surveys are encouraged.	
16	Discussed the extensive badger sett survey undertaken in January and the impact that the presence of badgers has on works planning and progressing.	
17	Remaining points captured in the draft BAP.	

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners</td><td colspan="2">Item No:</td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting:</td><td>CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)</td><td>Subject:</td><td colspan="2">CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td>Tuesday 12th May 2026</td><td colspan="2">Officer Responsible:</td><td>Nicola Oldfield</td></tr>
</table>

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. **Liaise with the Consulting Engineer to develop an asset improvement plan taking account of the recommendations in the M&E Report.**
C. **Confirm if they will provide monthly meter readings, or if they would prefer MLC to take monthly or quarterly readings 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 authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board, having taken advice from MLC Officers. They will engage other Board Members as they see appropriate and determine whether a Special Meeting of the Board is needed on a risk and complexity basis.

2. 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 were due for completion by March 2026.

Works delivered for this district included pump canister and panel replacement, and access improvements 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

6. Capital Improvement Programme

Based on age alone, pumping stations will be due for replacement starting next year with Finchmans Farm. These are indicated highlighted green on the Capital Improvement Programme. It should be noted that it takes 2-3 years to properly develop a plan, design and procure a replacement asset, where required. Replacement or refurbishment needs will be driven by KHIs and a detailed asset condition survey. These will inform the development of a more robust costed plan of works.

The Board is strongly advised to liaise with the Consulting Engineer to develop an asset improvement plan taking account of the recommendations in the M&E Report.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme
Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting
Appendix 3: Operational Services Report
Appendix 4: M&E Report

Appendix 1

Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board

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
Bensons p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	80.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	144.6
	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	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	10.0	10.0
Curf p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,000.0	0.0	0.0	5000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	134.6
	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	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
Finchams Farm p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment 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	0.0
	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	0.0

Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board

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
Stonea Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7,500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	30.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	150.0	204.6
	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	30.0	30.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	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
Wimblington Common p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	50.0
	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
	Pump overhaul programme	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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
		18	**0.0**	**50**	**120**	**40**	**1,100**	**3,500**	**7,500**	**5,000**	**5,000**	**0**	**270**	**22,598**

Appendix 2

There have been 29 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been 4 applications for Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) granted since the last meeting.

There have been 4 applications for Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) granted since the last meeting.

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

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**		**8**
Meeting:	**CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES**	
Date:	**Tuesday 12th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Morgan Lakey**

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

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

A Roundup herbicide application was applied to the Board's drains included within last year's machine cleansing programme, and to other District drains where it was required to control sporadic growths of emergent aquatic vegetation.

The Board were successful last year in obtaining funding from the DEFRA tranche package, allowing fully funded improvement works to be carried out at each of the Board's pumping stations, to allow the deployment of mobile pumps in the event of a breakdown. Due to the level of improvements required at Curf Pumping Station, it was agreed with the Chairman to jointly fund the works with the grant fund and an additional sum from the Imbanking Commissioners fund, that is available for roadways and track maintenance.

Curf & Finchams Pumping Station improvements works above.

A recent inspection of the Board's drains has revealed that the majority are in a generally satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. The inspection did highlight several relatively small and insignificant areas of bank subsidence. These currently pose no threat to water conveyance and majority of them have already began to self-heal. To ensure they do not deteriorate any further, they will be monitored going forward and the appropriate action taken if required.

Following the Board's agreement at the annual meeting in 2016, Finchams Farm pump drain, reach 38-39, is included within the Board's phased machine cleansing programme on an annual basis. Board members will be aware of the historic, on-going reactive/emergency machine cleansing that was required for several seasons along this drain, prior to the Board's annual cleansing programme's implementation. In anticipation this will be an on-going situation, a sum to allow for the cleansing work to be undertaken has been included within the Board's estimated costs.

A sum has also been included within the estimate to allow for drains that fall within this year's phased machine cleansing programme, and any others that require a Roundup application to control aquatic weed growth, to be treated later in the growing season.

The Board's flail mowing requirements were undertaken by M&C Agri 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.

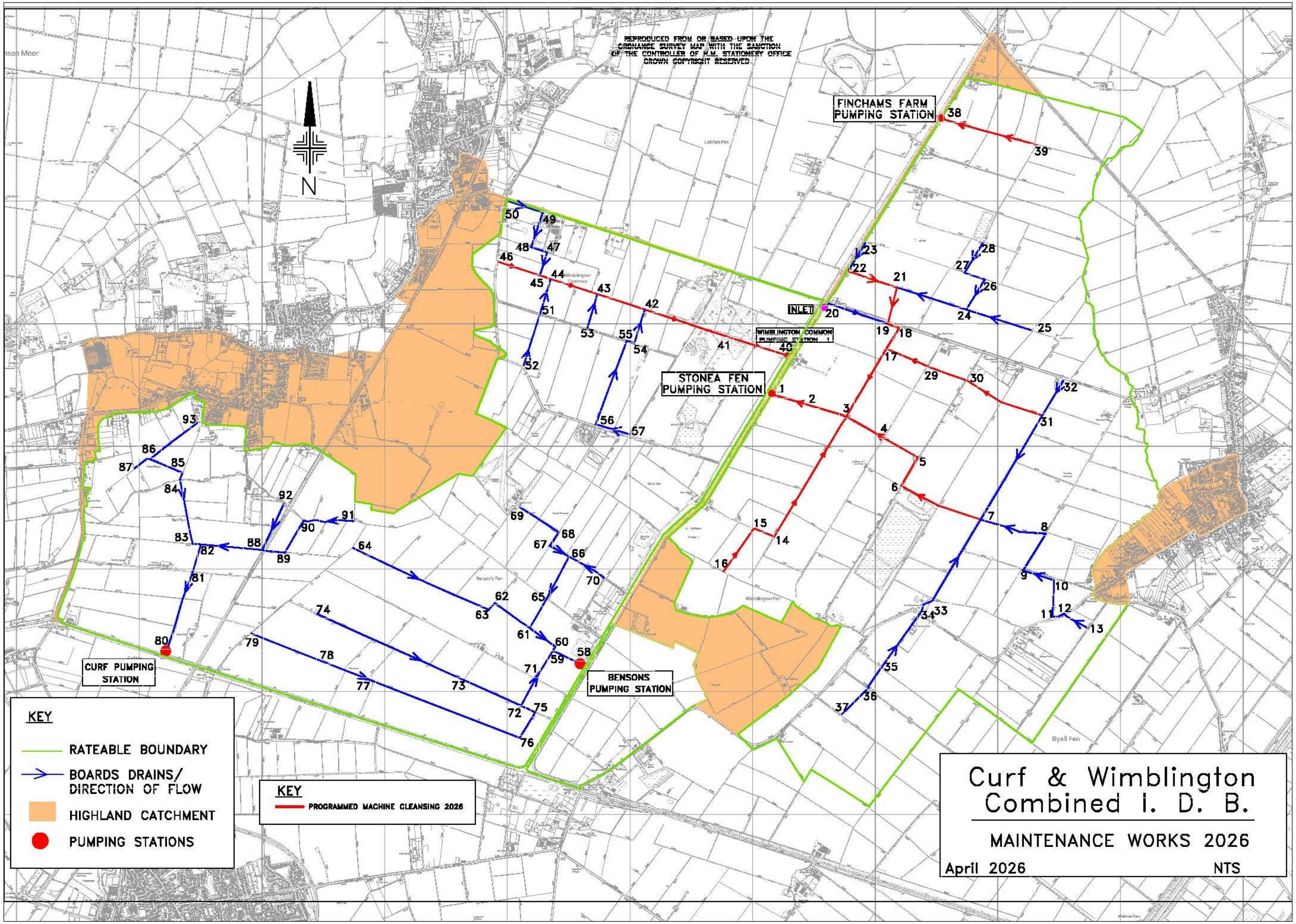
2. Estimated Costs of Anticipated Drain Maintenance and Weed Control Programme

The estimated cost of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain Maintenance programme is as follows, see previous district plan for locations.

1.	Machine cleanse reaches within this year's Phased Cleansing Programme:					
	<u>Finchams Farm Catchment</u>					
	• Reach 38-39	800	m	@	1.20	960.00
	<u>Stonea Fen Catchment</u>					
	• Reach 1-2-3-4-5-6-7	2300	m	@	1.50	3450.00
	• Reach 18-17-3-14-15-16	2600	m	@	1.40	3640.00
	• Reach 18-19-21-22	850	m	@	1.40	1190.00
	• Reach 17-29-30-31	1400	m	@	1.40	1960.00
	<u>Wimblington Common Catchment</u>					
	• Reach 40-41-42-43-44-45-46	2500	m	@	1.40	3500.00
2.	Allow sum for Roundup application to District Drains	Item		Sum		1500.00
3.	Flail mowing of District drains	Item		Sum		8000.00
4.	Provisional Item Allow sum for emergency cott clearance, culvert clearance or bank slip repair works	Item		Sum		1500.00
5.	Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Board, arrangement and supervision of herbicide application and maintenance works	Item		Sum		2600.00
				TOTAL	**£**	**28,300.00**

Orders for the application of Roundup herbicide by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that they are weather dependant, and they will not be held responsible for the efficacy or failure of any treatments.

Author Name: Morgan Lakey
Role: Operations Manager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N
FINCHAMS FARM PUMPING STATION
STONEA FEN PUMPING STATION
WIMBLINGTON COMMON PUMPING STATION 1
INLET
BENSONS PUMPING STATION
CURF PUMPING STATION
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
KEY
PROGRAMMED MACHINE CLEANSING 2026
Curf & Wimblington Combined I. D. B.
MAINTENANCE WORKS 2026
April 2026
NTS

Appendix 4

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**8**
Meeting:	**CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**
Date:	**Tuesday 12th 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 works at Bensons including new pump, replacement motor control centre and ramp works. To ensure reliability, resilience and longevity of the pumping equipment it needs to be refurbished or replaced at suitable intervals. We have experienced examples lately of pumps being left too long and failing, or when they are removed for overhaul, the condition is very poor and the pump overall lifetime has been reduced significantly, which is not cost-effective use of the asset. The same is true for control panels, component failures often damage other components incurring costly repairs and machine downtime. Overall, it is more cost effective to run well maintained equipment.

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



Table 1: Key Health Indicators

Station	Station Built	Pump 1	Pump 2	Pump 1 O/H	Pump 2 O/H	Control Panel
Finchams Farm	1959	1959	N/A	1980	N/A	1986
Wimblington Common	1971	1971	N/A	2002	N/A	1971
Curf	1981	1981	1981	2006	2005	1981
Stonea Fen	1975	1975	1975	2009	1993	1975
Bensons	1976	2018	2025	2018	2025	2025

Station	Weedscreen WSC	WSC O/H	WSC Controls
Finchams Farm	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wimblington Common	2003	2024	2024
Curf	2017	2017	2017
Stonea Fen	1998	2018	2025
Bensons	2017	2017	2017

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps and control panels. The pumps range from 1 to 77 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 1 to 46 years ago. The control panels range from 1 to 55 years old. 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.

Submersible pumps are often not cost effective to repair and lead time on new pumps can be up to a year. Standard pumps are normally cost effective to repair and lead times can be as short as 4 weeks or can be over a year if impellors are damaged and must be reverse engineered. Costs can be in the range £30k to £100k depending on pump condition.

Standard pumps of the type at all Curf stations except Bensons are normally cost effective to repair and lead times can be as short as 4 weeks or can be over a year depending on contractor availability and pump condition. Costs can be in the range £30k to £100k depending on pump condition. Pump control panels are in the region of £20k per pump.

The Board is requested to confirm if it wants the Engineer to develop an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement.

Finchams

The last routine inspection at Finchams took place 2nd October 2025. Recommendations/remarks were as follows:

1) Steelwork supporting probes and floorplate has corroded and requires repair.
2) Pump wobble evident during test.
3) Weedscreen blocked up very badly – removed blockage at the screen.
4) Overhead crane needs lubricating. Next inspection (6 monthly) due in April 2026.

The pump at Finchams has no record of an overhaul and should be overhauled or replaced soon along with the control panel to ensure the stations reliability.

Wimblington Common

The last routine inspection at Wimblington Common took place 2nd October 2025. Recommendations/remarks were as follows:

1 Oultlet door frame separated from wall, temporary repair carried out 2021 which has now failed and requires a permanent repair. Siphon is worn and sticks, required overhaul or replacement.
2) Ultrasonic head mounting is broken, requires replacement.
3) Timeclock failed and requires replacement.
4) Recommend replacement pump panel due to age of components.

The pump at Wimblington Common was last overhauled in 2002 and should be overhauled soon along with the control panel to ensure the stations reliability.

Stonea Fen

The last routine inspection at Stonea Fen took place 1st October 2025. Recommendations/remarks were as follows:

Recommend replacement electrical panels due to age of the equipment and known faults. Weedscreen Cleaner Inspected – bump stop damaged/missing and cross travel noisy in operation.

The pump at Wimblington Common was last overhauled in 2002 and should be overhauled soon along with the control panel to ensure the stations reliability.

Bensons

Pump 2 pump has been replaced with a brand-new canister unit and the control panel has also been replaced with a brand-new bespoke control panel totalling c£90k which was funded by the Storm and Recovery GiA. This pump has some hydraulic noise which Sulzer will investigate when working on Pump 1. It may be due to build up of silt in the sump as before.

Unfortunately Pump 1 which was fitted in 2018 has developed a fault and cannot be used. Sulzer are quoting 2 options. Firstly, to remove strip, report and then overhaul the pump, the second option is to remove and refit a new pump. As a refurbishment will require 2 crane days whereas new replacement will only require 1 crane day it is highly likely that it will be more cost effective to fit a new pump rather than overhaul the old pump. The quotes have not yet been received but are expected to be in the region of £38k for new pump fitted, £30k for old pump overhaul. The refurb costs will not be confirmed until stripped and submersible overhauls are not always reliable. I recommend going with the new pump option.

Please approve up to £40k for the replacement of Pump 1 at Bensons so that the pump can be ordered asap, the current lead time is quoted at 26 weeks.

Curf

The Pumps at Curf were last overhauled in 2005 and 2006 and should be overhauled soon along with the control panel to ensure the stations reliability.

1.2 <u>Electricity Readings</u>

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.

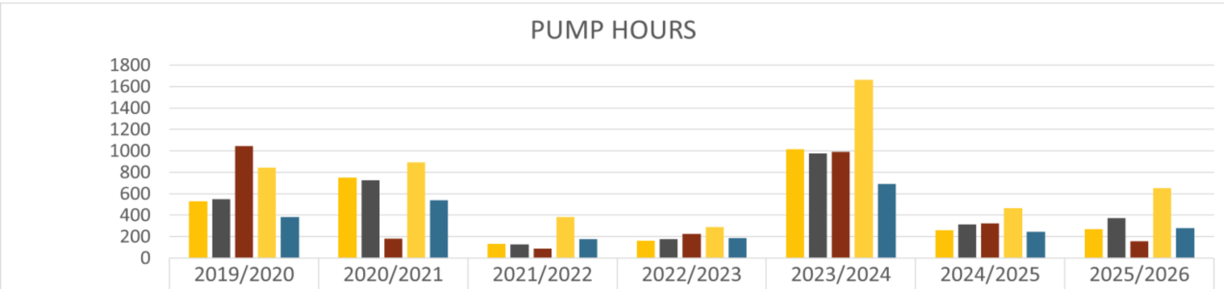
If you are unable to provide readings, or would prefer, the MLC can take monthly or quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board for the time and mileage involved.

Please approve this if it is required. Estimated cost will be £126.00 (to cover all 5 stations) 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>



	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
BENSONS	530	749	131	161	1017	258	270
CURF	551	728	128	178	977	313	373
FINCHAMS	1043	179	89	226	991	325	155
STONEA FEN	843	893	384	289	1662	467	654
WIMB. COM	384	540	176	188	692	246	277

3. Inspections

3.1 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Reports (due every 5 years) are in date:

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Finchams Farm	21-Aug-2025	21-Aug-2030
Wimblington Common	17-Jan-2025	17-Jan-2030
Curf	23-Apr-2024	23-Apr-2029
Stonea Fen	23-Apr-2024	23-Apr-2029
Bensons	22-May-2024	22-May-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:	9
Meeting:	**CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB**	**Subject:**	**HEALTH & SAFETY**
Date:	**Tuesday 12th 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

Curf & Wimblington (WfWbc)

carried out on

Wednesday, 28 January 2026

by

AW Safety Management

Key Information	
Client:	Curf & Wimblington (WfWbc)
Site:	Skylark Garden Centre, Manea Road, March, PE15 0PE
Site Contact:	Marc Heading
Site Contact E-mail:	enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
Inspection date:	28/01/2026
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 Marc Heading and Chris and 5 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	**Wimblington Common** It was observed that rakes have been left outside in unsecured positions. 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	
02	**Wimblington Common** It was observed that an external light fitting has a damaged cover. This may allow water ingress or expose electrical components, increasing the risk of electric shock or failure. It is recommended that the damaged cover is replaced to ensure the fitting remains safe and weatherproof.			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**
03	**Finchams Farm** It was observed that a wooden gate is in a deteriorated, near-rotten condition. This may present a risk of collapse or injury if it fails. It is recommended that the gate's necessity is reviewed and that it is either removed if no longer required or repaired/replaced to ensure it remains safe and secure.			Medium	
04	**Finchams Farm** It was observed that, after being removed from the water, straw is being thrown over the fence. This activity may increase the risk of manual handling injuries and slips. It is recommended that suitable control measures are implemented, including the use of appropriate PPE such as eye protection, and that the method of handling and transferring the straw is reviewed to reduce the risk of injury.			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**
05	**Finchams Farm** It was observed that overhead lifting equipment, including chains and hooks, is present on site but not in use. If no longer required, this may create unnecessary clutter or risk of deterioration. It is recommended that unused lifting equipment is either removed from the area or stored correctly and inspected in accordance with lifting equipment requirements.			Medium	
06	**Stonea Fen** It was observed that a ladder is stored outside. Exposure to weather conditions may lead to deterioration and compromise its integrity. It is recommended that the ladder is inspected to confirm it is safe for use, that regular checks are recorded, and that it is either stored in a dry, secure location or removed from site if it is no longer required.			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
07	**Stonea Fen** It was observed that the emergency stop button signage is faded. This may reduce visibility and delay identification in an emergency. It is recommended that the faded signage is replaced to ensure the emergency stop can be clearly and quickly identified.			Low	
08	**Curf** It was observed that a step providing access to the riverbank is damaged and chipped in the middle. This creates a potential trip or slip hazard, particularly in wet conditions. It is recommended that the step is repaired or replaced to ensure safe access.			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
09	It was observed that old first aid kits are present on sites and appear not to have been used. As it was understood that people attending the sites carry their own first aid provision, it is recommended that these kits are removed from site to avoid confusion and ensure that only current and appropriate first aid equipment is relied upon.			Medium	

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:	10
Meeting:	**CURF & WIMBLINGON COMBINED IDB**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Tuesday 12th 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.middlelevel.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:

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
INSURED VALUES OF PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2026
Bensons Pumping Station	957,490.00
Curf Pumping Station	1,135,719.00
Finchams Farm Pumping Station	433,213.00
Stonea Fen Pumping Station	1,163,037.00
Wimblington Common Pumping Station	712,911.00
	4,402,370.00

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

Curf & Wimblington Combined 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 Curf & Wimblington Combined 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 Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AH

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

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

Announcement made by: P Burrows - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 10th September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

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

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

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

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

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 08/05/2025 12/05/2025 15/05/2025

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: B. GEELH – WHITINGS LLP

Date: 15/05/2025

***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:

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED 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.*
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.	Yes	No	N/A	*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:

13/05/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

B.595

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

Chair [signature]

Clerk [signature]

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED 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	176,499	137,494	*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	123,937	137,130	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	18,690	154,273	*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	10,988	10,988	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	170,644	198,509	*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	137,494	219,400	*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	225,934	269,341	*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	3,164,000	3,164,000	*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	42,198	31,935	*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 08/05/2025

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

13/05/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

B.596

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

Marc Edleaty

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

In respect of **Curf and Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board – DB0020**

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	07/09/2025

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**CURF & WIMBLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Tuesday 12th 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 2024/2025 within Appendix 2.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

For 2025/2026 the Board set a rate of 31.00p to raise a total of £128,819 in agricultural rates and special levies.

Actual expenditure for the year was £91,416 because of the dry summer, less than anticipated drain works and the provision for loan repayment not spent due to works approved being funded through the Storm Recovery Grant.

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 Control Panel and Pump 1 were both replaced at Bensons Pumping Station at a cost of £107,692. Also, as part of the Mobile Pump package funding was approved for Access Improvements for the deployment of the Mobile Pumps. £23,331 is Included in Improvement works for the works completed and has also been 100% funded.

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.

This will leave the General fund balance as of 31st March 2026 at £172,289. The Asset Replacement Fund as of 31st March is £63,779. The Development fund balance as of 31st March 2026 is £27,545. 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 £7,924.40.

Following the submission of claims for contributions the net sum of £(2,364.01) (10,488.69 less £12,852.70 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 £8,370.41 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 2025/2026 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
Bensons PS – New Pump	£72,655	17.48p
Bensons PS – New Control Panel	£35,038	8.43p
Access Improvements – Mobile Pump Deployment	£23,331	5.61p
	£131,024	31.52p

4. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2024/2025:

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

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of remedial health & safety signage	348.00
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2024/25, planning and development applications)	3,269.40
Public Works Loan - Loan Repayment	5,494.22
Middle Level Commissioners - Board ID card	7.37
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	165.00
J Carson - Pumping station duties (Curf pumping station)	1,017.50
Environment Agency - Precept	5,585.33
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	2,729.66
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	285.84
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2025	926.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,003.41
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	165.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	165.00
Anglia Farmers - Timber	236.51
R & J A Gowler - Pumping station duties (Stonea Fen, Bensons and Wimblington Common pumping stations)	1,134.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Drainage rates	37.52
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	165.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid storm recovery T2a scheme works	94,529.44
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid received for storm recovery T2a scheme	-52,528.94
R & J A Gowler - Pumping station duties (Stonea Fen, Bensons and Wimblington Common pumping stations)	1,134.60
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fees (2024-2025 accounts)	756.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	165.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning & development applications)	1,301.40
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	165.00
IMServ - Electricity meter operator agreement to 22nd October 2026	178.85
IMServ - Annual half hourly electricity data collection to 22nd October 2026	553.34
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flail mowing	3,696.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Weedscreen cleaner HSB insurance checks and inspection)	317.28
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, storm recovery tranche 2A claim, IDB change contribution and internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners 2024-2025)	9,397.79
Public Works Loan - Loan Repayment	5,494.22
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical installation condituion reports for pumping station (Account from CMS Electrical)	156.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Attempt to repair flap door	139.30
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	3,347.81
Environment Agency - Precept	5,585.33
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner (Wimblington Common pumping station)	410.29
Middle Level Commissioners - Refill automatic weedscreen cleaner with oil (Curf pumping station)	189.94
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,046.49
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	302.76
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	165.00
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flail mowing	3,957.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning & development applications)	460.80
J Carson - Pumping station duties (Curf pumping station)	1,059.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	111.96
Aspect Tree and Garden Services - Clearing vegetation around Fincham Farm pumping station	225.00
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flail mowing	187.20
Ransonmoor DDC - Sales ledger refund (Underwood)	350.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Discharge consent application - Marfleet & Bradshaw)	562.37
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2026	973.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	209.04
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flail mowing	187.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of signage	53.66
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works at Curf pumping station	327.13
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works, repair motor and pump panel at Bensons pumping station	1,568.94
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works at Finchams pumping station	94.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works at Stonea Fen pumping station	132.91
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works and repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner at Wimblington Common pumping station (Account from R S Components)	412.96
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply land registry searches (Account from Land Registry)	14.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District Drains	1,965.65
R & J A Gowler - Pumping station duties (Stonea Fen, Bensons and Wimblington Common pumping stations)	1,134.60
R & J A Gowler - Pumping station duties (Stonea Fen, Bensons and Wimblington Common pumping stations)	1,134.60
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	180.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning & Development applications)	
B J Plant Hire Ltd - Drain maintenance	
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling, health & safety, public works loan application and storm recovery tranche 1 claim	
S Murphy - Pumping station duties (Finchams pumping station)	
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Curf pumping station)	9,107.03
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Bensons pumping station)	9,257.22
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Finchams Farm pumping station)	1,337.10
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Stonea Fen pumping station)	13,016.54
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Wimblington Common pumping station)	4,202.10
British Gas - Electricity supply (Curf pumping station)	6,077.53
British Gas - Electricity supply (Bensons pumping station)	3,638.81
British Gas - Electricity supply (Finchams Farm pumping station)	546.29
British Gas - Electricity supply (Stonea Fen pumping station)	8,404.43
British Gas - Electricity supply (Wimblington Common pumping station)	3,258.68
	173,439.47

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 2

CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED 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		134,651.51
	Precept		11,170.66				
	Insurances	3,231.84		2026			
	Repairs & Renewals	6,197.10		Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	129,593.41	
	Fuel	30,476.58			Less Irrecoverables	0.00	129,593.41
	Drainworks	12,582.54					
	Contractors Charges	6,937.00			Interest on Deposit Accounts		1,526.42
	Administration charge, Audit fee,						
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	17,380.72	76,805.78		Highland Water contributions	6,006.40	
					Rents	16.00	6,022.40
	Loan charges - Principal	10,451.63					
	- Interest	536.81	10,988.44				
					Storm Recovery Grant - T2b		131,023.70
	Improvement Works:						
	Bensons PS - New Pump	72,654.36					
	Bensons PS - New Control Panel	35,038.14					
	Access Improvements - Mobile Pumps Deployment	23,331.20	131,023.70				
	Balance carried forward		172,828.86				
			402,817.44				402,817.44

BALANCE SHEET
Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
Capital Provisions	3,132,065.08	Bensons Pumping Station	690,000.00	
		Curf Pumping Station	815,000.00	
Public Works Loan Board - Loan Outstanding	31,934.92	Finchams Pumping Station	312,000.00	
		Stonea Fen Pumping Station	835,000.00	
	3,164,000.00	Common Pumping Station	512,000.00	3,164,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	172,828.86	Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		3,387.38
Development Charges Account	27,544.59	Value added Tax - Refunds due		31,483.25
Sundry Creditors	57,655.91	Sundry Debtors		10,065.90
Asset Replacement Fund	63,779.41			
Rent Account	38.00	Balance in hand - Treasurer's Accounts		
		Barclays - Treasurer's account	50,000.00	
		Barclays - Business premium account	225,623.43	
		Natrional Savings Account	1,286.81	276,910.24
	3,485,846.77			3,485,846.77

Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal District Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Barclays - Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025			31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward		268,066.55	Payments made during the year	173,439.47
31st March 2026				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	178,521.96			
Interest on deposit accounts	2,474.39	180,996.35	Balance carried forward	275,623.43
		449,062.90		**449,062.90**

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2024/2025

1st April 2025		31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward	1,274.07	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2026			
Interest on deposit accounts	12.74	Balance carried forward	1,286.81
	1,286.81		**1,286.81**

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

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

Cash balances as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**50,000.00**
Buisness Premium Account	**225,623.43**

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook as at 31st March 2026	**1,286.81**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**276,910.24**

Curf & Wimblington Combined 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	134,651.51		
	Development charges account	21,683.52		
	Contributions holding account	0.00		
	Asset replacement fund	63,064.51		
			219,399.54	**219,400**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	110,332.41		
	Special Levies	13,168.00		
	Byall Fen contribution	6,093.00		
	Penalty	0.00		
	Costs	0.00		
	Write-off	0.00		
			129,593.41	**129,593**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	1,526.42		
	Development charges account	245.81		
	Asset replacement fund	714.90		
	Write back of Provisions	0.00		
	Consent applications	0.00		
	Rent	16.00		
	Highland Water	6,006.40		
	Discharge contributions	6,083.91		
	Storm Recovery Grant T1a	131,023.70		
			145,617.14	**145,617**
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	10,451.63		
	PWLB - Interest	536.81		
			10,988.44	**10,988**

Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return
Financial year ended 31st March 2026

				Per Annual Return
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	11,170.66		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	3,194.32		
	Repairs and renewals	6,197.10		
	Fuel	30,476.58		
	Drainworks	12,620.06		
	Administration	17,380.72		
	Contractors charges	6,937.00		
	Development charges fees	468.65		
	Improvement costs	131,023.70		
			219,468.79	**219,469**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	172,828.86		
	Development charges account	27,544.59		
	Contributions holding account	0.00		
	Asset replacement fund	63,779.41		
			264,152.86	**264,153**
	Reconciliation			
	Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6		264,152.86	
	Balances carried forward			
	Per Annual return		**0.00**	

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

CURF & WIMBLINGTON COMBINED 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	137,494	219,400	*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	137,130	129,593	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	154,273	145,617	*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	10,988	10,988	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	198,509	219,469	*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	219,400	264,153	*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	269,341	276,910	*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	3,164,000	3,164,000	*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	31,935	21,483	*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.

AWool

Date 05/05/2026

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

as recorded in minute reference:

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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	12
Meeting:	**CURF & WIMBLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Tuesday 12th 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. Review & approve Determination of land for rating purposes & Rate arrears
D. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency
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 Ease.

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 £36,341 for the replacement of the Pump at Bensons PS. It is proposed subject to Board approval that this be funded by the Underspend against Budget in 2025/2026.
No provision has been made for other Improvement works.

The estimated expenditure for the year is £128,794, equivalent to a rate of 31.00p, the rate for 2025/2026 was set at 31.00p.

1. Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions

1.1 Consider Pump Attendant fees.

The sum of £1036.00 was allowed for services of the Pump Attendant

1.2 Consider annual letting of herbage fees for 2027:

The present lettings are: -

i) Narrow Drove, Green Drove (from Narrow Drove to the South Bank) and South Bank (from the Boards' Pumping Station to Block Fen Drove) to Mr Robin Gowler for £10 per annum.

ii) North Bank (from Boots Bridge to the Boards' Pumping Station) to M F Martin Limited for £5 per annum.

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 £11,170.66.

3. Determination of Annual Values & Rate Arrears

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 Determination of Annual Values & Rate Arrears
Appendix 2 Estimates for 2026/27
Appendix 3 Rate Requirements for 2026/27

Appendix 1

CURF WIMBLINGTON COMBINED IDB

Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes

June 2026

2026-2027

Transfer value to Special Levy - £531.562 per hectare	Area (Hectares)	Agricultural Land	Special Levies Fenland	Special Levies TOTAL	Rate W/Offs
Opening Values (£)	2667.948	**372,758**	**42,786**	**415,544**	
Opening %		89.70%	10.30%	100.00%	

Location	Reason for change.	Area (Hectares)	Agricultural Land	Fenland	TOTAL	Rate W/Offs
Curf Fen	GIS revaluation review	-0.708	-78			24.18
	Total determinations	2667.240	-78	0	0	
	Closing Values (£)		**372,680**	**42,786**	**415,466**	
	Closing %		89.70%	10.30%	100.00%	
						£24.18

APPENDIX 2

CURF AND WIMBLINGTON COMBINED INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET PROPOSAL 2026/2027

		Approved 2025/2026 £	Actual to 31/03/2026 £	Proposed Budget 2026/2027 £
1	Insurances	3,400	3,194	3,525 [A]
2	Repairs and renewals	10,000	6,197	11,000
3	Fuel (electricity)	36,750	30,477	40,250 [B]
4	District labour	7,000	6,937	7,350
5	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	32,250	12,620 [C]	33,500 [D]
6	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage subscriptions etc	15,945	17,381	18,500
7	Environment Agency - Precept	11,171	11,171	11,394
8	Improvement works	80,000	131,024 [E]	36,341 [F]
9	Asset Replacement Fund	0	0	0
10	Public Works Loan Repayment - 1	10,988	10,988	10,988
	Public Works Loan Repayment - 2	10,254	0	-
11	Reinstatement of balances	0	0	-
		217,758	229,989	172,849
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, Highland Water and Storm Recovery Grant	88,939	138,573 [G]	44,055 [H]
		128,819	91,416	128,794

Remarks:

A -	Assume Increase of 10% in premiums.	
B -	Based on 3 year average usage assuming a 20% Increase in rates from October 2026	
C -	Includes:	
	Flailing	6,690
	Slubbing	6,706
	Slubbing - Credit from 24/25 (T2A Work)	(9,235)
	Fees - Planning and Development	4,789
	Conservation Officer	1,995
	Weed Control	1,638
		12,583
D -	Includes Engineering Items	28,300
E -	Bensons PS - New Pump *	72,655
	Bensons PS - New Control Panel *	35,038
	Access Improvements *	23,331
		131,024
F -	Bensons PS - New Pump.	36,341
G -	Includes:	
	Interest Received	1,526
	Highland Water	6,006
	Storm Recovery Grant *	131,024
H -	Includes:	
	Highland Water	5,791
	Use of Funds	36,341

APPENDIX 3

Curf & Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

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

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector - 90.40%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Fenland District Council – 9.60%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £3,756

In 2026/2027 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £4,154.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2026 - £172,829.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2026/2027, without raising additional funds for future improvement schemes is £128,794, is equivalent to: -

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 31.00p and

b) a Special Levy on Fenland District Council of £12,369.

c) a Contribution from Middle Level Commissioners in respect of Byall Fen of £6,095.

IN 2025/2026 A RATE OF 31.00P IN THE £ WAS RAISED TOGETHER WITH A SPECIAL LEVY OF £13,168 ON FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL AND A CONTRIBUTION FROM MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS OF £6,093 IN RESPECT OF BYALL FEN.

P BURROWS,

Clerk to the Board

12th May 2026