

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice from 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, unlicensed moorings, unauthorised structures and encroachment,
- Six major developments have been referred to Technical Services following enforcement action, as consent applications for outstanding discharge consents.

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

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)

Asset Refurbishment Projects

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

[illegible]

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
Drainage Channels	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
	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.

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 begun 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:

Finchams Farm Catchment

• Reach 38-39	800	m	@	1.20	960.00
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Stonea Fen Catchment

• 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

Wimblington Common Catchment

• Reach 40-41-42-43-44-45-46	2500	m	@	1.40	3500.00
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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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FINCHAM'S FARM
PUMPING STATION

INLET

STONEA FEN
PUMPING STATION

BENSONS
PUMPING STATION

CURF PUMPING
STATION

KEY

- RATEABLE BOUNDARY
- BOARDS DRAINS/
DIRECTION OF FLOW
- HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
- PUMPING STATIONS

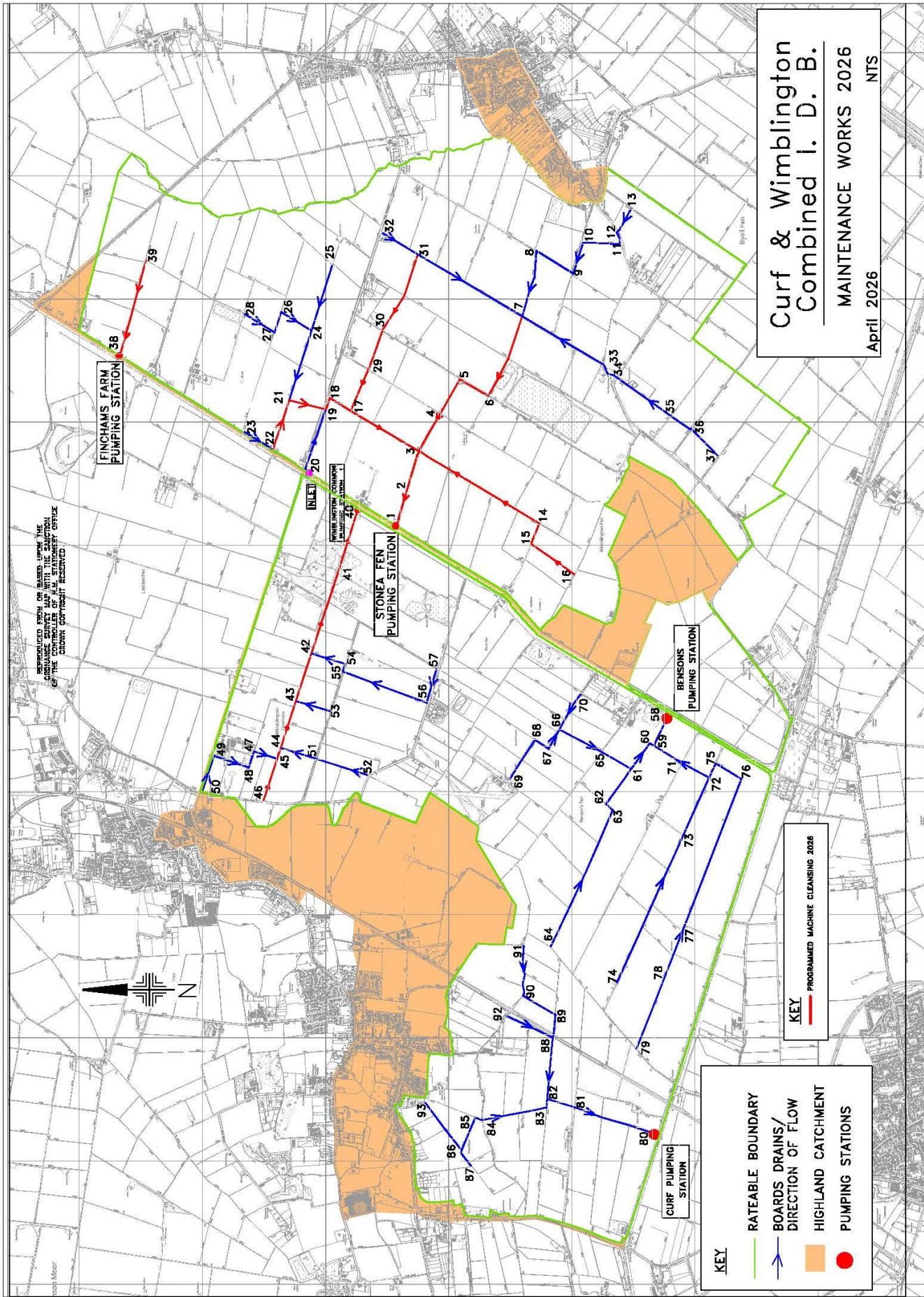
KEY

- PROGRAMMED MACHINE CLEANSING 2026

**Curf & Wimblington
Combined I. D. B.**

MAINTENANCE WORKS 2026

April 2026 NTS



Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	CURF & WIMBLINGON 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

	Weedscreen		
Station	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 impellers 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) Outlet 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 Electricity Readings

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

Moving forward it is requested that the Pump Attendants/District Officers take electricity meter readings and pump run hours readings monthly (as close to the 1st of each month as they can) and then forward them onto the M&E Engineer David Bantoft on david.bantoft@middlelevel.gov.uk or 07768 026119.

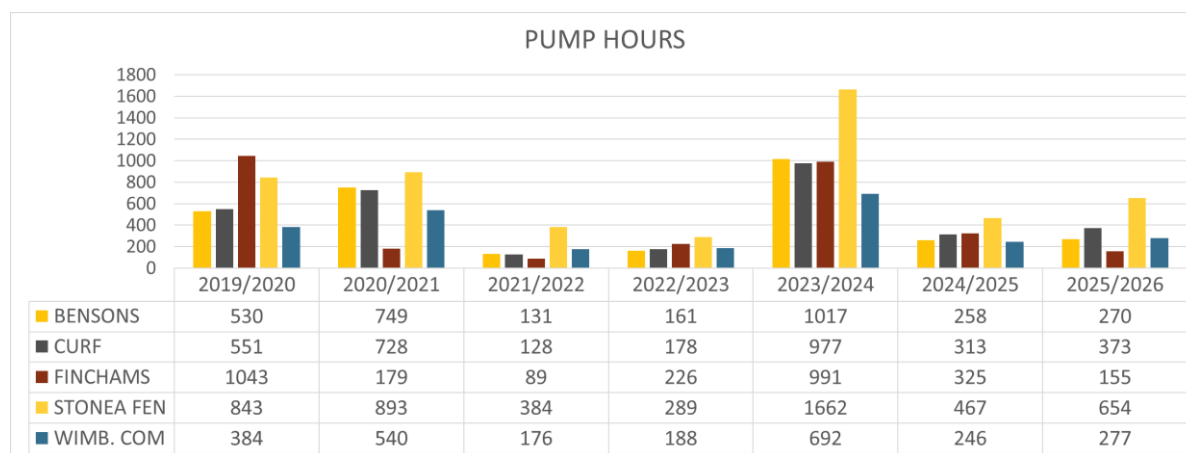
If you are unable to provide readings, or would prefer, the MLC can take monthly or quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board for the time and mileage involved.

Please approve this if it is required. Estimated cost will be £126.00 (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 Pumping Hours



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