MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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13th May 2026

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board

<u>Wednesday 20th May 2026</u>

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Commissioners to be hosted at the Lamb & Flag, Welney PE14 9RB at 9:30am on Wednesday 20th 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

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

Wednesday 20th May 2026 9:30am

Lamb & Flag, Welney PE14 9RB

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 - 17	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership	Pages 18 - 20	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 21 - 25	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	To follow	Sofi
7	Consulting Engineer's Reports	Pages 26 - 34	Clerk or Engineer
8	Health & Safety	Pages 35 - 46	Chair
9	District Superintendent's Report	Pages 47 - 48	DO
10	Governance • Annual Return 2024/2025 • Auditors report 2024/2025 (link) • Annual Governance Statement	Pages 49 - 51 Pages 52 – 56 Page 57	Clerk
11	Finance Report: looking back • Budget Review • Payments 2025/26 • Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/26	Pages 58 -59 Page 60 Pages 61 - 62 Pages 63 - 67	Clerk
12	Finance Report: looking forward • Finance Officer's summary	Pages 68	Clerk
13	Date of Next Meeting 27th January 2027 10am	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.)

MANEA AND WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners
Held at The Lamb and Flag, Welney on Wednesday 28th January 2026.

PRESENT

J Heading (Chair)
R Sears (Vice Chair)
J Carney (FDC)
N Cook
C Crofts (BCKLWN)
M Fairey
R Gladwin
W Gladwin
K Goodger
M Heading
C Marks (FDC)
A Morris
N Walker

The Lead Clerk Mrs Ruth Martin representing the Clerk, and Mr Andrew Wool MLC Head of Finance were in attendance.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from C Barnes, J Hawes, P Hawes and C Sears.

C.1064 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 Commissioners.

Members agreed to declare any interests during the course of the meeting.

C.1065 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chair reported that although the Vice Chair was not present at the meeting, he had indicated that he would like to stand down as Vice Chair. The Chair asked the Commissioners to consider who would be suitable to stand for election to the role at the Summer Commissioners Meeting.

The minutes were confirmed as a true record, and no Matters Arising were identified.

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 28th May 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

Presentation by Gary Roberts

The Chair introduced Mr Gary Roberts to the Commissioners. He explained that Mr Roberts is working as a consultant to the EA and would be presenting a report on the Old Bedford and Associated Infrastructure.

Mr Roberts explained that the presentation revolved around the Cranbrook Counter Drain, also known as the Old Bedford and the associated Strategy. He explained that the Cranbrook Counter Drain Strategy was last reviewed in 2018 and covers the management of water in the Old Bedford Catchment area. The EA are now looking at creating water storage areas primarily in the sand and gravel extraction areas of Block Fen, looking at water resource and environmental benefits as well as water management. The EA have been undertaking modelling to establish if the water storage is needed, and if adequate storage is available. This work is being undertaken by Mott MacDonald. The work also includes looking at land use restoration following mineral extraction. This is not just looking at filling the holes with water, but as many of the areas will not be wet all of the time, considering other land uses. Enabling works will also be required, looking at how storage areas are connected to IDB systems and how the water will be moved between the two.

The work includes looking at the planning strategy, with consultation and engagement with the mineral extraction companies, particularly Tarmac, who are working on the Western Extension proposals at present. The Minerals and Waste Plan Update starts in July of this year and this work will inform this update. The Provisions and Principles document is being updated to feed into the Plan.

The Enabling Works are focussing around the Tarmac controlled areas, with restorations planned from 2030 to the early 2040's. These will be looking at how to get water in and out, and how to move water around. This will include connecting to Sutton & Mepal IDB drains. The intricacies of the planning process means that some enabling works may not fall within the minerals planning and could need planning permission, but they could also fall within Land Drainage permitted development.

A key question is can storage be provided in an area that equates to Welches Dam pumping at a 1 in 25 year event rate, and for resilience doubling that figure. Stored water will be held longer and there is a risk of multiple events. In 2008 it was calculated that 11 million cubic metres of storage would be required, and this was increased in 2018 to 16 million cubic metres. This was increased further in 2025 following further modelling.

With the restoration proposals in mind and more information around the restored land contours and more detail on the storage volumes, modelling suggests that Block Fen cannot provide all of the storage required. The best options gives around 10 million cubic metres of storage. This is still equivalent to the volume pumped through Welches Dam but does eat into the overall resilience. They are keen on identifying more storage within the catchment but are trying to avoid above ground storage. All storage will be clay lined.

The preferred option is to create storage to reduce the amount of pumping needed, as the 2018 strategy. In 2008 Welches Dam Pumping Station was given a 25-year design life, but the current condition indicates it will not achieve this and 2035 is the next significant milestone for the pumping station. It will need new pumps, which will need to comply with fish and eel regulations and so they will be looking at complete pump replacements, which brings affordability challenges. The sand and gravel extraction is taking longer than originally planned, and the Fens Reservoir has introduced opportunities for the strategy and also brings the potential for partnership funding from the Fens Reservoir. The strategy is evolving from the 2018 version to look ahead to the 2040s, taking into account the Fens 2100+ strategy which sits above.

The timings were discussed, with four phases being identified. Phase 1, the restorations of the Tarmac sites, is planned for the early 2030's, and the Phase 2 planning application is currently being worked on. Hanson and Mick George are still looking at the mid to late 2040's before they will be in the restoration phase. It is assumed that Phase 4 will follow on. They are looking at creating the storage areas over the next 25 years and so considering how to manage the system as storage areas come on stream.

It is looking like the EA will need to continue to pump and so they are looking at ways to manage the system with and without Welches Dam. Options being considered include keeping Welches Dam and discharging into the Ouse Washes as at present, not pumping at Welches Dam and more pumping elsewhere, such as the Old Bedford end of the system and pumping into the tidal River, but the Old Beford Sluice needs major refurbishment. Combining two projects into one could give efficiencies. The Sluice is a gravity discharge but also a navigation structure. The structure also allows water abstraction into the counter drain. A like for like replacement for Welches Dam would provide a 10 cubic metre capacity replacement. Modelling is being carried out, and the initial results are showing a change in pumping location is looking possible.

The Cranbrook Counter Drain needs maintenance with essential desilting. This may also include the regrading of the Old Beford section.

The Old Bedford Counter Drain is part of the Ouse Washes Environment Designation and a Special Area of Conservation. The river has been identified as Spine Loach Habitat, a species thar prefer managed watercourses. Habitat restoration will also be needed. The Old Bedford is also a navigable watercourse, giving another reason for the works. In the longer term, water management of the resource within the Old Bedford Counter Drain is needed as water only comes in through the Old Bedford Sluice.

The plan for 2026 and beyond was outlined. The strategy work is still primarily around water storage, updating the masterplan and the EA Water Storage 'Principles' document. Consultation with Tarmac around their restorations continues. There are two projects looking at system changes, one is moving the Pumping Station location on the Old Bedford, the other looking at the restoration of the Old Bedford.

There will be an increase in the level of consultation with IDBs. The leading option is still the removal of Welches Dam Pumping Station. Consultation in a planning context will increase.

The Chair thanked Mr Roberts for the informative presentation and invited the Commissioners to ask questions. He added that the Old Bedford was cut in 1630, and the Manea & Welney District was formed about 100 years later. This Board along with the Sutton & Mepal and Upwell Boards are totally reliant on the Old Bedford and have been for the last 300 years. Like the EA, the Commissioners have elderly pumps in their pumping station, and any works need to be completed and paid for. They believe that the capacity of the Old Bedford is one third of its original design. To return it to its original state would give an increase in capacity. Since Christmas, Welches Dam Pumping Station has been running continuously despite the dry summer and a not very wet winter so far. He added that he could not believe that the storage this project provides would negate all of that. Manea & Welney are totally dependent on the Old Bedford to enable them to maintain their summer and winter levels, and he does not believe that the right proposal has been developed yet, finding some of the proposals already identified strange. He pointed out the water flowing through the Ouse Washes at present and hopes that by talking to Boards the EA would develop a better resolution to the problem.

Mr M Heading asked when there would be a plan developed, observing that the EA have been talking about the proposals for nearly 20 years. Mr Roberts replied that the strategy will need to be reviewed and the current 2 projects will allow this within the next 12-18 months. This will confirm the preferred option, which is likely to be one that had been identified in 2018. He thought that this would still require some element of pumping. There are two business cases with a similar timescale, with the Old Bedford Sluice project deciding where the right place to pump out the system might be, although this may not be for another 12-18 months. The Chair added that he had been expecting a resolution for the last 5 years. Mr Roberts added that the project is on programme to deal with seepage at the Sluice.

Mr Marks observed that no pumping had been mentioned. With the construction of the new reservoir, locally there is some concern that residents may not be able to get home insurance due to water being stored at a higher level than the surrounding land. Mr Roberts said that this would be considered as part of the works. The objective is to manage the system as at present, allowing for climate change. It is not intended to make things worse and will most likely require pumping. Whatever is pumped out at present is lost to the sea, and so large areas of storage capacity are needed for water management. The solution needs to be the most efficient solution, especially as presently the water is pumped twice. This needs to be looked at closely as pumping is more expensive than storing water and using the water more productively would give a cost benefit. Mr Marks commented that on Boxing Day the water level was so high it was almost overtopping, which is concerning. Mr Roberts added that Anglian Water are looking at reinstating Horseway Lock as part of the reservoir works.

Ms Morris asked about the filling of the reservoir, with one option being publicised as taking water from the Ouse Washes at Welches Dam. She asked if there had been any joined-up thinking. Mr Roberts advised that the EA have been heavily engaged with Anglian Water and are consulting on the reservoir proposals. There are lots of opportunities that could benefit this strategy, especially here. This gives a good opportunity for the extraction structure to be built at Welches Dam, with overlapping benefits. There are water quality concerns which is presenting another positive reason of moving discharging water on the Ouse Washes. However the designations of the Ouse Washes is impacting this, and the pumping regime at Welches Dam needs to consider this legislation. Significant investment is needed here – at least 20% of the asset cost – and this is likely to be the point at which pumps will need replacing which will have to comply with current legislation around fish and eel. Water quality is also likely to trigger this requirement.

Ms Morris asked if Anglian Water are aware they will need to do some kind of water treatment before discharging into the reservoir. Mr Roberts responded that the other issue here is costs. The way the EA fund projects is changing, and they will need to look to partnership contributions other than Grant in Aid. Anglian Water could represent a significant contribution. Creating an alternative to Welches Dam would save the EA some cost. The Forty Foot Drain has been mentioned, and part of the Strategy has included the restoration of the Forty Foot. The EA are the Navigation Authority from Horseway Lock to the Counter Drain. To reinstate the navigation but with the restoration of the channel as a water conveyor is a preferred option. If this is combined with the Fens Reservoir proposals this could bring further investment from Anglian Water.

The Chair asked if they were looking at creating an alternative to water storage as water quality has always been an issue. Mr Roberts responded that the majority of the Ouse Washes water supply is from the Upper Bedford Catchment. The Chair had always understood that the water quality in the Old Bedford had been good, but that the Delph had poor water quality. Mr Roberts understood that the issue was the other way around, with the Delph at Earith having poor water quality. Anglian Water have suggested that there are high concentrations of sulphates in the Old Bedford/Cranbrook Counter Drain and this creates significant challenges in terms of treatment costs. The removal of that contribution brings the dial down in terms of water treatment. Anglian Water would be keen to see that removal, but this has an impact on water yield. The catchment contributes 10% of what could be stored on the Ouse Washes in a wet year. Other than rainfall, the only water flowing is abstracted at the Old Bedford Sluice via backflow. They will still need to pump but this makes better use of the pumping. They are looking at gravity to fill the storage areas, for example by diverting flow from the Sutton & Mepal IDB catchment. This Board and Upwell IDB operate in the high-level system and so cannot connect in the same way – it would not be possible to link all 3 Boards together. Although the storage areas would be gravity filled, they would need to utilise pumping to empty out. The Chair advised that due to the difference in the 3 Boards' locations, Manea & Welney have needed to pump every day since Christmas but Upwell had hardly pumped at all. Mr Walker asked if the Old Bedford refurbishment plan would see the channel being restored to its original capacity and raised a concern over the landside bank being porous. Mr Roberts responded that they felt that the main issue was seepage around the structure. The Old Bedford Sluice has closed to navigation, and the situation could not increase capacity. The tidal river levels rarely allow the Sluice to gravity discharge, and the Old Bedford Sluice project is focused purely on the Sluice. The remainder of the channel would be included in the Cranbrook Counter Drain programme. There is a plan to survey the whole river imminently, but they know they will be looking at removing a large volume of material in order to reinstate its conveyance and storage capacity.

The Chair observed that the Old Bedford is 30km long, and restoring this would be relatively cheap compared to the other proposals. Mr Roberts disagreed with this statement, but this work would be undertaken for flood risk storage conveyance and also for environmental condition. The Spine Loach habitat in the channel is the primary driver as they regularly suffer from oxygen level issues in the channel. The Chair had been told that the water quality in the Old Bedford is good, and fish stocks are high, but Mr Roberts said to maintain this they would need to improve the channel. Mr M Heading said the same argument had been used the previous year for not doing the works, but Mr Roberts said that restoring 30km of watercourse is not a cheap option.

With no further questions or discussion, the Chair thanked Mr Roberts for attending the meeting and advised that the Commissioners would like to contribute further to the proposals in the future. Mr Roberts was invited to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

C.1066 Constitution & Membership

The Chair thanked the Commissioners for their continuing good attendance at meetings. He added that the attendance of the elected members who were from the Districts agricultural community was much better than that of the appointed members from the local authority, and urged the appointed members present to encourage their colleagues to attend all meetings. It was noted that 3 of the 4 appointed members were present at this meeting, and Mr Carney gave apologies at this point on behalf of Mr Imafidon.

Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Finance Committee

The Commissioners agreed that Mr J Heading be appointed as Chairman of the Board. This was proposed by Ms Morris and seconded by Mr Crofts. Mr Heading accepted the nomination and asked the Commissioners if they thought it was time to consider someone else taking the Chair, but he is in the fortunate position to be able to continue to do this. However, he urged the Commissioners to consider the future of the Commissioners and who may step up in the future.

As previously reported, Mr R Sears has decided to step down as Vice Chair, and the Commissioners thanked Mr R Sears in his absence for all of the work he has put into the role. The Chair suggested that the Commissioners consider the election of the Vice Chair at the next meeting of the Commissioners, to allow members to consider the position. This was agreed by the Commissioners.

The Commissioners considered the composition of the Finance Committee. The Chair reported that Mr R Sears had indicated that he wished to continue as a member of the Finance Committee. The Chair proposed that the Finance Committee membership remain as at present, and this was seconded by Mr Walker.

RESOLVED

That Mr J Heading be appointed as Chair of the Board.

That the appointment of the Vice Chair of the Board be deferred to the next meeting.

That Mr J Heading, Mr C Crofts, Mr R Sears, Mr M Fairey, Mr R Gladwin and Ms A Morris be members of the Finance Committee.

Amalgamation

The Chair reported on the issue of amalgamation, adding that he thought it would happen at some point. He has discussed the possibility with the Chair of Upwell IDB and thinks that this Board is unlikely to amalgamate with Sutton & Mepal IDB but he can see scope for a future amalgamation with Upwell IDB,

Commissioners were asked to complete the training matrix circulated and were reminded that Board training is now reported on the IDB1 form and asked to advise the Clerk of any training completed or required.

C.1067 Clerk's Report

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

IDB Fund

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

- Mobile Pumps – Phase 2 - £1.2m
- St Germans Pumping Station Resilience Phase 2 - £1m
- Bevill's Pond Resilience - £0.3m (MLC and Sawtry IDB)
- Asset Resilience – Pumps and Channels - £2m (MLC and IDBs)

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

The Commissioners discussed differing ways in which they could source funding and will continue to consider this in the future.

The Chair asked Mrs Martin to investigate the progress of works previously requested by the Commissioners.

Data Provision

We are receiving an increasing number of data requests from a variety of sources. These can be complex and time consuming to service, sometimes for projects or purposes with little to no direct benefit to the Commissioners and our administered IDBs (where we act as their data controller).
To better protect our interests, we have developed and are now using a formal data sharing agreement with third parties. We will introduce a cost recovery approach to servicing such requests.

Electricity Service

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

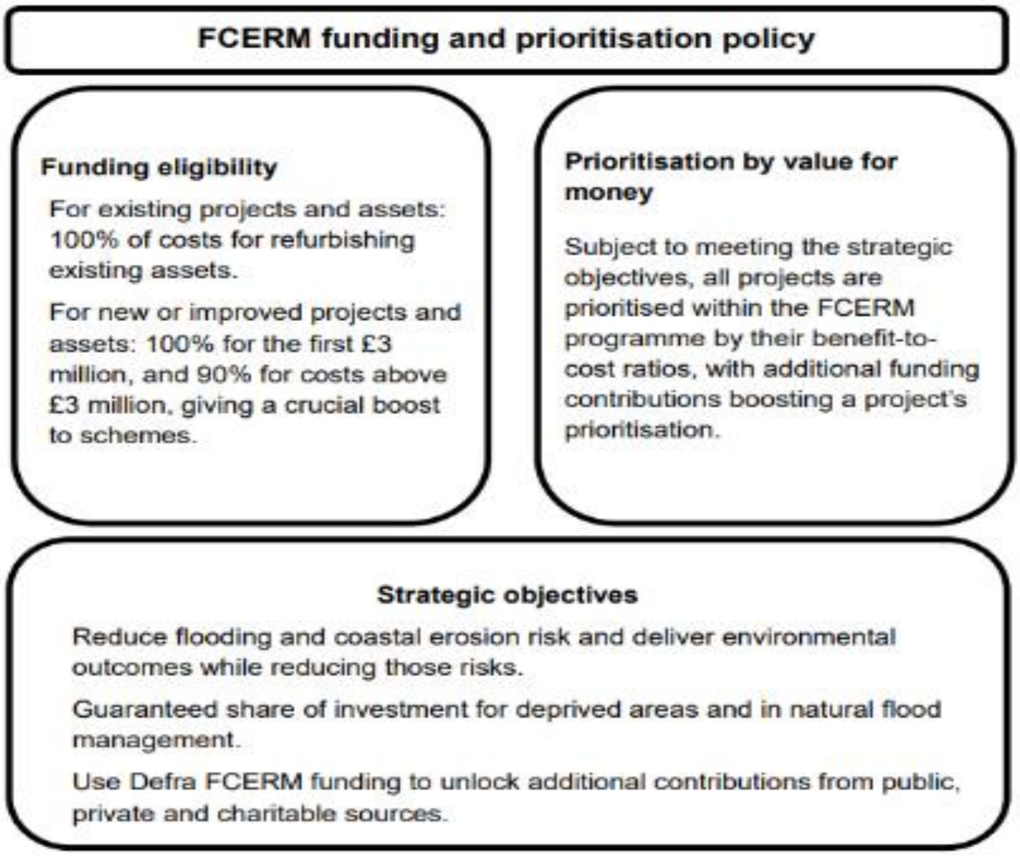
A sub-committee of MLC Board Members and IDB Chairmen reviewed options alongside MLC staff. We are now in contract with British Gas and are self-managing this within the Finance team for the 12-months to 30th September 2026.

Mr Walker raised a concern that when some brokers have gone into liquidation, it has become clear that contracts have no longer been valid. The Chair reported that the electricity bills are very complex.

Defra Flood Funding Policy

Following consultation earlier in the year, Defra has finalised its new funding policy and responded to the consultation. We provided and published a comprehensive response.

This policy is for capital flood grant and goes live from 1st April 2026.



Key points for MLC and IDBs:

a) Refurbishment is a significant fix on an asset that can't be addressed by routine maintenance alone. Further guidance is expected on this aspect.
b) When applying for Defra FCERM funding for refurbishment of existing assets, asset owners will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken whole life asset management and routine maintenance.
c) As partnership contributions increase, the amount of Defra FCERM funding needed decreases, leading to higher project prioritisation. The more significant the partnership contribution, the larger the likelihood of boosting prioritisation.
d) The '2012' rule has been removed meaning new development can be included within benefit assessments. We will commission an economic and benefits refresh across the Middle Level to update our base information.
e) The need to demonstrate a reduction in flood risk band as a result of works has been removed.
f) Defra acknowledge concerns from other risk management authorities that they are at a disadvantage compared to the Environment Agency. The policy states that all risk management authorities should have equal access to FCERM funding.

The Chair raised his concerns regarding the need for Highland Water. A good proportion of this District is below sea level. The Commissioners do a lot of work for little return, and the move to abolish Highland Water continues.

IDB Funding & Costs Research

A joint Defra and MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) IDB funding and costs research project is now underway. It is being led by ICF, a consultancy with expertise in economic and financial analysis, particularly in evaluating the costs and benefits of environmental and regulatory policies in the water and land use sector. Supporting ICF is Logika, a consultancy specialising in flood risk management, drainage, and sustainable development and valuable experience from the water sector. The project is scheduled to conclude by July 2026.

The overarching goal of the project is to conduct a comprehensive review of IDBs' operations, focusing on financial efficiency and value for money, with the aim of assessing whether changes are needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of IDBs. The research is structured around three core objectives:

1. Funding and Financial Review: To analyse IDB funding mechanisms, operational costs and financial pressures over the past decade and explore future funding options.
2. Benefit Evaluation: To assess the economic and social value of IDBs' work, both locally and nationally.
3. Data Modernisation: To explore how the annual IDB1 Form can be improved and modernised for better data collection and reporting.

The project will include:

- an evidence review,
- analysis of financial information and IDB1 reports,
- interviews with selected IDBs and stakeholders,
- an IDB survey to identify any gaps in the data, and
- case studies.

We have been in touch with the consultants leading the work and provided them with information to get them started. Given we collectively represent c25% of the IDB sector nationally, we will, in one way shape or form, inform their results and associated recommendations for change. Whilst this research is an opportunity to highlight and influence much needed policy change for collective benefit, there is equally the likelihood that it will draw out some uncomfortable truths.

One of the key issues the research will be assessing is the impact that special levies to IDBs is having on Local Authorities. This issue is being promoted by a Local Government Association 'IDB Levey Special Interest Group'.

Around 40 councils across England are working together to lobby the Government for reform to the funding system that supports the vital work of Internal Drainage Boards. IDBs are primarily funded through drainage rates charged directly on the occupiers of agricultural land within each drainage district and a special levy on district and unitary councils on behalf of the non-agricultural land within each district. Each council primarily funds the cost of the special levy through a combination of central government grants, their share of business rates and revenue from council tax levied on local properties. Due to rising costs in such things as electricity that power the pumping stations at times of flooding and sustained heavy rain, the special levy amount has been increasingly significantly in recent years.

On the evening of Tuesday 2nd September 2025 there was a parliamentary meeting of the LGA's IDB Levy Special Interest Group. The meeting was attended by the leaders and portfolio holders from a number of special levy paying local authorities at the House of Commons alongside several members of parliament. ADA and IDBs were also represented by Robert Caudwell, Michael Sly, Daniel Withnall (Black Sluice IDB), and Paul Burrows (Middle Level Commissioners).

Reflecting on the meeting within the ADA Gazette, Paul Burrows said:

"It's pleasing that Local Authorities and MPs appreciate the criticality of the work the Internal Drainage Board sector play in enabling prosperous local communities. After all, every other Council service relies on keeping homes, business, land and infrastructure dry. We need to be mindful of potential unintended consequences within any call for funding reform, particularly the special levies that Councils raise on our behalf. It is

important that the IDB Costs & Funding Research commissioned by Defra gets under the skin of the issues and makes considered and well-evaluated recommendations."

IDB1

There is another step-change in reporting expectations on us all both in terms of financial and non-financial information we provide annually to Defra within the 2024/25 IDB1. This will take additional time to pull together and is an indication as to the increased expectations Government have on us in terms of governance and responsibilities.

Whilst we can derive the majority of the financial and non-financial information on behalf of our administered IDBs, there are questions where we require information from the Boards directly. To assist Sam Ablett in preparing the form for return, each Chairman has been asked to respond with information covering a list of questions which will be provided, but include details around watercourse maintenance, Health and Safety, Board members training, and public and press engagement.

Mr Wool advised that at a recent meeting with consultants working on behalf of Defra, he asked them what the information provided in the IDB1 form is used for, and he queried what value this information provided gives. He did not receive an answer to the question.

RESOLVED

That the Clerks Report is noted.

C.1068 Environment Officers Report

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

BAPS & LNRS

The launch of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire (LNRS), which formally sets the priorities for nature conservation across our region, was significantly delayed in 2025 but was finally published on the 23rd December 2025. IDBs have a statutory duty to have regard for the objectives of the LNRS so the IDB Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPS) are necessarily centred around the priorities the LNRS. The final drafts of the BAPS are therefore being drafted and will be available for review very soon and will require approval by the May.

Standard Operating Procedures

SOPs for all regular routine maintenance were launched last year and are available either from the website or from the Ecology Department. New Tree / Hedge & Scrub cutting protocol has also just been launched. Please note that adherence to all the SOPS is mandatory for all those working for and on behalf of the IDB and to retain the Ecological Service Package from MLC.

Planning and Evidencing Compliant Works

We look forward to meeting Board representatives to compile a channel categorisation map, reasoning record and works schedule. The Commissioners are asked to contact the office to make an appointment for this and to complete environmental review ASAP for review and approval at the next Commissioners meeting.

Ecological Performance Review

From April 2026, the standard Environmental Performance Indicators will be launched which will help to assess and report the environmental compliance and delivery of each IDB in a consistent way. This will help to ensure that any areas of environmental risk are flagged promptly and the successes of the Board in achieving biodiversity enhancements are recognised. The following deliverables/actions are some of those that may form part of the assessment:

- A current channel categorisation map and maintenance plan (flail mowing and desilting), with reasoning completed, for review and approval at the Board meeting
- From 2027, the previous years' maintenance record available for review
- The annual schedule of works reviewed by the Ecology Department and survey requirements/mitigations highlighted ahead of board Approval/ESRs submitted
- Biodiversity budget set and defined as part of Board meeting
- Attendance at a biodiversity training/information day each year
- Environmental review completed including BAP review with 75% or more objectives on target for completion on time
- No net loss of open watercourse

We look forward to meeting with the Chair, Vice Chair and District Officer to discuss the above in the next few weeks

Newsletter

Please look out for the first refreshed edition of "Life on the Edge" environmental newsletter for IDBs which is in planning and will be published in March and October each year.

Environmental & waste permits

A review of Environmental and waste permits is required and will be planned with the Chair and VC in the coming months.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Officers Report is noted.

C.1069 Consulting Engineers' Reports

The Commissioners considered the Consulting Engineers' report, and it was taken as read.

Enforcement and Compliance

Mrs Martin reported that the new Enforcement and Compliance Officers had seen some successes. The Commissioners were asked to authorise the Chair and Vice Chair to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Commissioners, having taken advice from MLC officers. They will engage with other Commissioners as they see appropriate and determine whether a Special Meeting of the Commissioners is needed on a risk and complexity basis.

Mr Marks said that he had been hearing through the Planning Committees that there have been improvements in Enforcement and welcomed the approach. The Commissioners agreed with the requested decision-making process.

RESOLVED

That the Chair and Vice Chair are authorised to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Commissioners with advice from MLC

Mechanical & Electrical

Referring to the Mechanical & Electrical Engineers report, the Commissioners were advised to consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. However, the Chair advised that this was already in place.

Purls Bridge Pumping Station

The Commissioners reviewed the outcome of the recent inspection. The Chair advised that in his opinion there are two views, to comply with the Engineers report or if things are working effectively, to leave them. His current thought is that the Commissioners need to keep the equipment up to date and that they have already programmed the update to the control equipment for the current year. He added that he was concerned that at a Ministerial level Boards like Manea & Welney IDB do not have much influence and that grants are likely to become less available. The Commissioners would therefore need to fund any works themselves.

The Chair advised that he will respond to any recommendations.

He also advised the Commissioners that the MLC Chief Engineer is now a Fellow of the Institute of Civil Engineers. The Commissioners asked that a note of congratulations be sent to Mrs Oldfield in recognition of this achievement.

RESOLVED

That the Chair discuss the outcome of the last routine inspection of the Pumping Station with Mr Bantoft.

That Mrs Oldfield be sent a note of congratulations.

C.1070 Health & Safety

The Chair provided a verbal report, advising the Commissioners that he had recently met with a representative from AW Safety (formerly COPE) to carry out inspections of the pumping stations. At Glenhouse it was reported that the control panel steps have subsided, and it has been recommended that the foundations are reinstated, and the steps replaced. This is likely to cost in the region of £20k. However, the Inspector was happy with the Commissioners current arrangements.

The inspection highlighted that there was no fire extinguisher in the workshop and recommended that this be resolved. The Chair advised that he has purchased an extinguisher and it has been installed. He also thinks that the Commissioners should consider fitting them to the Boards vehicles.

The Chair concluded by reporting that Health & Safety inspections will continue to be held on an annual basis.

C.1071 District Superintendents Report

The written report of the District Superintendent was considered, with the Chair advising that the Commissioners are relied upon to read all of the reports prior to the meeting. Mr Crofts commented that the District Superintendents report was excellent as always, and Mr Marks asked that the Commissioners' thanks be passed to the District Superintendent for the brilliant job he has been doing in the Manea area.

C.1072 Governance

Mrs Martin asked the Commissioners to consider the Governance report and that its content be noted.

RESOLVED

Completion of the Annual Return of the Commissioners – 2024/2025

i) The Commissioners considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year that ended on the 31st March 2025.

ii) The Commissioners considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year that ended on the 31st March 2025

The Commissioners noted the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.

Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

The Commissioners did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Commissioners' 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.

Insured Values

The Insurance Valuation was reviewed, and the Commissioners agreed that they were content with the valuation.

Exercise of Public Rights

Mrs Martin 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.

Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Mrs Martin reported that as part of the Annual Governance review the Commissioners 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 Commissioners that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

C.1073 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

Mr Wool drew the Commissioners' attention to his key finance messages, noting that the expenditure for the Financial Year 2025/26 was currently in line with the budget set.

Payments for 2025

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

Highland Water Contributions

The Commissioners noted the Highland Water contributions.

C.1074 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Finance officer's review and key messages

Mr Wool reviewed his report, and the Commissioners considered and noted the key finance messages. He reminded the Commissioners that the estimates for 2026/27 and the associated rate had been discussed at the earlier Finance Committee meeting.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

District Superintendent

The Commissioners agreed with the Finance Committee's recommendation that the Chair would deal with this matter outside of the meeting.

ADA subscription

Mrs Martin reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 5.0% for 2026, and therefore the annual fee will be £811 (plus VAT).

RESOLVED

That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 is paid.

Precept

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

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

The precept for 2025 was £83,109.85.

RESOLVED

That the Precept is paid in full.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2026/27.

Budget

The Chair advised the Commissioners that the Finance Committee had reviewed the proposed budget for the year 2026/27 and recommended its approval. The Commissioners agreed with this proposal.

RESOLVED

That the budget is agreed.

Rate Requirement for 2026/27

The Chair advised that the budget provisions indicated a rate requirement of 54.0p in the £, but that the Finance Committee recommended that a rate of 55.0p in the £ be set. He added that he suspected that this is one of the more cautious Boards in the way in which they spend money. There was some relief in the pumps still running on diesel.

Ms Morris added that the Finance Committee's reasoning behind increasing to 55.0p was due to the projection that the rate would need to rise to 56.5p in the £ for the year 2027/28, which would be a big step change, and hence the proposal to increase to 55.0p this year.

Mr Marks and Mr Crofts advised that due to the planned creation of the new Combined Authorities from May 2027, they would both be unlikely to be present at next year's budget setting meetings, and that the Special Levy would be paid from different budgets. The Commissioners discussed the future of appointed Board members, although it is still not known how this will be addressed.

Ms Morris then proposed that the rate of 55.0p in the £, as recommended by the Finance Committee, be accepted by the Commissioners. This proposal was seconded by Mr Marks and was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £263,020 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

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 are £187,709 and £75,311.

iv) That a rate of 55.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District. (Area 2 = 75% of the main area rate)

v) That Special Levies of £48,133 and £27,178 be made and issued to Fenland District Council and The Borough Council for Kings Lynn & West Norfolk respectively for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

vi) That the seal of the Commissioners be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies referred to in resolution v).

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

C.1075 Date of next Meeting

The Chair reported that several Commissioners had requested an inspection of Glenhouse. Mr M Heading suggested that the RSPB have a meeting room at Welches Dam, and the Commissioners could convene there. Mr Roberts offered to take the Commissioners on a tour of the EA's Welches Dam pumping station, which was accepted.

RESOLVED

That the next meeting be held on Wednesday 20th May commencing with an inspection of the Welches Dam Pumping Station.

That the Environment Officer be invited to attend the next meeting.

C.1076 Any Other Business

Mr Marks reported that he has been trying to arrange an open inspection of the AD plant in Manea and asked if the Commissioners would support this event by opening up the Old Pumping Station to visitors, to publicise the work of the Commissioners. The Commissioners agreed that the Chair and Mr M Heading would liaise with Mr Marks to organise a suitable time and date.

With no other items raised, the meeting closed at 1.10pm.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**MANEA & WELNEY DDC**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Wednesday 20th 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. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
C. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
D. Outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training.

1. Current status

1.1 The table below outline the current composition of the Board and the quorum as detailed in the standing orders.

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	14	N/A		5
Actual	12	3 FDC, 1 KLWN	16	
Vacancies	2		2	

1.2 The table below details the current elected members of the Board

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	Christopher Barnes	Ratepayer	
2	Neil Cook	Co-opted member to vacancy - ratepayer	Oddfellows rep
3	Michael Fairey	Nominee of Ratepayer (M Crouch)	
4	Roger Gladwin	Ratepayer	
5	James Hawes	Nominee of Ratepayer (Westfield Farms)	
6	John Heading	Ratepayer	Chairman
7	Marc Heading	Ratepayer	
8	Alison Morris	Ratepayer	
9	Charles Sears	Ratepayer	
10	Robert Sears	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
11	Verden Walker	Nominee of ratepayer (M Crouch)	
12	Will Gladwin	Nominee of Ratepayer (Barry Scott)	
13			
14			

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	James Carney	(FDC)	Councillor
2	Christopher Crofts	(BCKLWN)	Councillor
3	Sidney Imafidon	(FDC)	Councillor
4	Charlie Marks	(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	28/1/2026	28/5/2025	22/1/2025	13/6/2024
1	Christopher Barnes	Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies
2	Neil Cook	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	Michael Fairey	Present	Present	Present	Present
4	Roger Gladwin	Present	Present	Present	Present
5	James Hawes	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Apologies
6	John Heading	Present	Present	Present	Present
7	Marc Heading	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
8	Alison Morris	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
9	Charles Sears	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
10	Robert Sears	Present	Present	Present	Present
11	Verden Walker	Present	Apologies	Present	Apologies
12	Will Gladwin	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A
13					
14					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	John Heading	Apologies	Present	apologies	attended

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	28/1/2026	28/5/2025	22/1/2025	13/6/2024
1	James Carney (FDC)	Present		Apologies	Apologies
2	Christopher Crofts (BCKLWN)	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	Sidney Imafidon (FDC)			Present	Present
4	Charlie Marks (FDC)	Present	Apologies	Present	Present

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 To consider the appointment of a Vice Chair

3.2 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 40 years, and the tenure of the current Vice Chairman is 8 years.

4. Composition and amalgamations

4.1 The Board is encouraged to continually monitor and review its membership, financial and climate resilience, along with assessing its influence locally, regionally and nationally. These are all factors that may lead the Board to consider changing its composition and/or amalgamation with (an)other Board(s).

4.2 Amalgamations and composition changes are not swift processes and can take a number of years. They require planning and additional/specialist resourcing by the MLC as your clerk, Environment Agency and Defra. Therefore, the Board is encouraged to think ahead five to ten years in its decision making, thinking about the next generation.

5. Training

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

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

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

5.4 The Board are asked to outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training. Members are asked to identify any topics areas they would value further training on as well as any site inspections that would help them undertake their role on the Board more effectively.

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

Author Name: Gemma Ashby
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Meeting:	MANEA & WELNEY DDC	Subject:	CLERK'S REPORT
Date:	Wednesday 20th 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.

This paper was drafted in February 2026 for use within all the MLC administered IDB agendas over the Spring 2026 meeting season. Verbal updates to the content below will be provided as necessary.

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 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.

9. 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

Meeting:	**MANEA & WELNEY DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**Wednesday 20th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the recommendations for the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and grant funding and to confirm acceptance of recommendations to the Consulting Engineer.
B. Confirm if it wishes to include the development of a refurbishment/replacement plan for Glenhouse for inclusion on the GiA programme.
C. Confirm they are happy to go ahead with the replacement of the main contactor and overload unit on pump 1 to aid the fault finding of the low resistance**.**

1. 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.

2. 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.

The team was joined by Project Manager, Ellie Edwards at the end of April. She will be assisting the Engineer in planning and delivering capital projects, significantly increasing our capacity to deliver the developing works programme.

3. 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

The Consulting Engineer will prioritise workload based primarily on Key Health Indicators.

The Board is asked to:

- **Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement taking account of the recommendations made in the M&E Report in Appendix 4,**
- **Liaise with the Consulting Engineer to determine project suitability and timescales,**
- **Consider and agree to making a contribution towards the project costs to aid funding prioritisation, and**
- **Confirm acceptance of recommendations so we can prioritise developing funding bids ASAP.**

4. Capital Programme

The Board's current Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 1.

Given the critical age of Glenhouse Pumping Station an estimated replacement cost has been included. It is advised that Board starts planning for a major refurbishment or replacement of the pumping station.

The Board is asked to confirm if it wishes to include the development of a refurbishment/replacement plan for inclusion on the GiA programme.

Future replacement of Purls Bridge is also included on the plan to be considered as part of any investment plan.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme
Appendix 2: Applications responded to since last meeting
Appendix 3: M&E Report

Appendix 1

Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners

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
Glenhouse p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1500.0
	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	200.0	200.0
	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	15.0	15.0
	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
Purls Bridge p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,600.0	5600.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	180.0	0.0	130.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	310.0
	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
	John Deere Tractor - *purchased April 2020 - £111,480*	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.0
	Herder Cavalier Flail Mower - *purchased June 2020 - £71,100*	4	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	65.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	69.0
	Citroen van - *purchased 13/03/2015 - £8,753*	0	0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
Drainage Channels		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
		4	**0**	**15**	**180**	**0**	**130**	**1,500**	**0**	**150**	**0**	**0**	**5,815**	**7,794**

Appendix 2

There have been 8 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

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

There have been 2 applications for Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) granted since the last meeting.

There have been 1 infiltration device applications acknowledged since the last meeting.

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**MANEA & WELNEY DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**	
Date:	**Wednesday 20th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Dave Bantoft**

1. M&E key messages and advice

Other than the matters described below or previously reported, 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, pumps and control panels 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. 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 (not M&W site) 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.



Key Health Indicators

Station	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul		Controls	Weedscreen Bars	WSC	WSC Overhaul	Controls
Glenhouse	1948/ 1997	1997	1997		1997	1997	1997	2021	1997
Purls Bridge	1978	1999 (1) 1986 (2)	2016 (1)	1986 (2)	1978	2008	2008	2008	2008

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The pumps range from 29 to 40 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 10 to 40 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump refurbishment/replacement plan for the pumps that are overdue refurbishment. Having a plan in place and underway helps to secure further grant funding when it comes available, such as the recent IDB Recovery Fund.

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 have to be reverse engineered. Costs can be in the range £30k to £100k depending on pump condition.

1.2 Electricity Readings

Andy Maddams supplies regular monthly meter readings and pump hours which are greatly appreciated and allow efficient verification of electricity bills.

1.3 Purls Bridge

The insulation resistance of pump 1 has deteriorated and due to the age and deterioration of the control panel equipment we have not investigated further as the works are likely mean that the contactors and overloads once disconnected will not be able to be reconnected and will need to be replaced. This is likely to cost c£2k.

Please confirm the board are happy to go ahead with the replacement of the main contactor and overload unit on pump 1 to aid the fault finding of the low resistance.

Bedford Pumps have advised that a replacement pump of this type would be in the range of £70k to £100k.

Pump 2 had a slight wobble and will need to be monitored closely, this does sometimes happen will a build-up of debris on the impellor, which can clear itself. It may also be a sign of a pump issue that will need to be rectified if it continues. There is no record of a pump overhaul since its fitting in 1986. An overhaul of this type of pump is likely to be in the region of £50k.

The electrical control panels are at an age where reliability is a concern and plans should be put in place for their replacement. They are likely to cost in the region of £20k to £30k.

The last routine inspection took place at Purls Bridge Pump Station on 24th March 2026.

Recommendations / remarks include:

1) Siphon Heater Failed.
2) Pump 2 Motor Heater not powered.
3) Recommend replacement electrical panels due to the age and deterioration of the equipment.

4) Pump 2 has a little bit of a wobble when running.
5) Pump 1 – Unable to split starter / motor circuit (risk of damage to contactor terminals)

WSC inspected (1 basket tine is missing but not causing an issue).

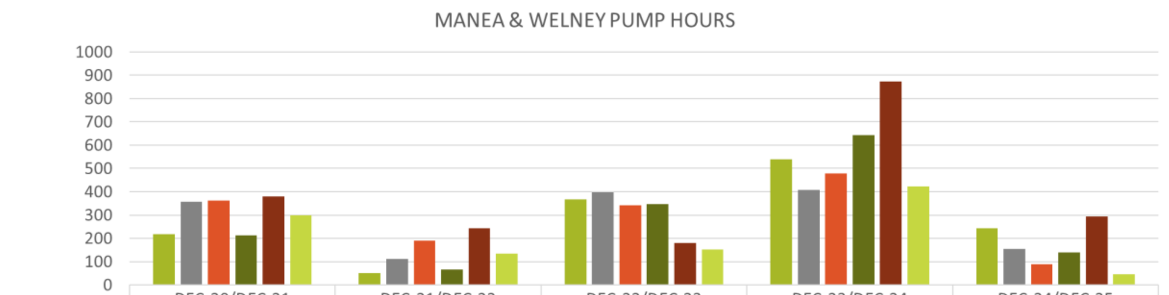
1.4 **Glenhouse**

Inspections carried out by Andy Maddams, not MLC.

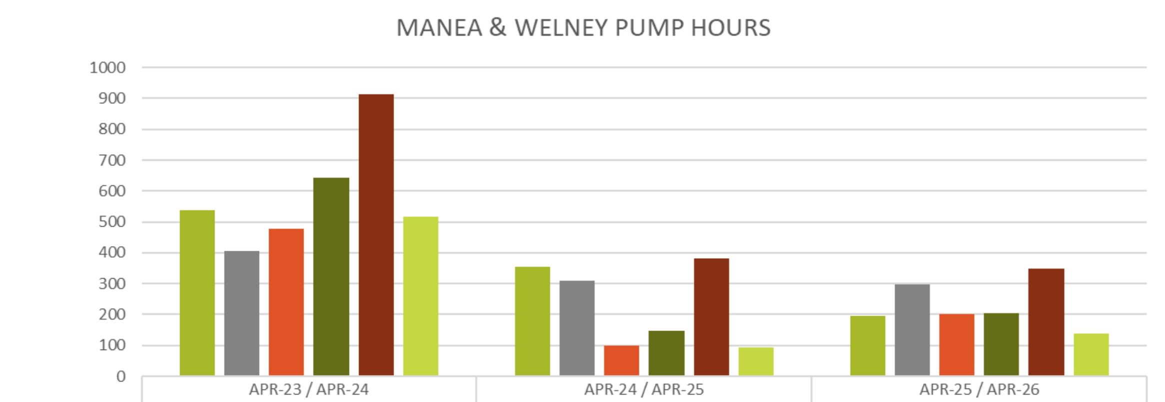
2. Pumping summary

Historically the pump hours for Manea and Welney have been provided December to December, many boards now have the hours April to April.

Please confirm if the board would prefer pump hours December to December or April to April, both have been provided below.



	DEC-20/DEC-21	DEC-21/DEC-22	DEC-22/DEC-23	DEC-23/DEC-24	DEC-24/DEC-25
GH PUMP 1	219	50	367	538	243
GH PUMP 2	356	112	398	407	155
GH PUMP 3	363	191	342	479	90
GH PUMP 4	213	66	346	643	140
PB PUMP 1	379	244	180	872	295
PB PUMP 2	298	135	152	424	46



	APR-23 / APR-24	APR-24 / APR-25	APR-25 / APR-26
GH PUMP 1	538	354	196
GH PUMP 2	407	309	297
GH PUMP 3	479	100	202
GH PUMP 4	643	148	203
PB PUMP 1	913	383	348
PB PUMP 2	517	94	139

3. Inspections

3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspection for insurance at Purls Bridge was carried out during September 2025. Glenhouse Inspection date to be confirmed as WSC out of commission in September 2025.

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

Glenhouse	06-Nov-2025	06-Nov-2030
Purls Bridge	06-Nov-2025	06-Nov-2030

4. Water level Management

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

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

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**Manea & Welney DDC**	**Subject:**	**HEALTH & SAFETY**
Date:	**Wednesday 20th 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 (eg pumping stations), however there is a diminishing value in repeat inspections of the same asset. It is also not clear whether Board's are making use of the ad hoc advice arrangements that they are paying for.

Where MLC are delivering specific operational services for an IDB (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

Health and Safety Workplace Inspection

Manea and Welney DDC

Purls Bridge Pumping Station

carried out on

Thursday, 08 January 2026

by

AW Safety Management Ltd

Key Information	
Client:	Manea and Welney DDC
Site:	Purls Bridge Pumping Station
Site Contact:	Andy Maddams, John Heading
Site Contact E-mail:	enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
Inspection date:	08/01/2026
Inspected by:	Martin Watson
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 Date
High	Serious 'material breach' of legislation and / or serious and imminent danger to persons	0-3 Months
Medium	Significant control weakness exposing persons to moderate degree of risk	3-6 Months
Low	General guidance or areas where there are opportunities to implement better practice and reduce exposure to risk	6-12 Months

Executive Summary / Additional Comments

Thank you for your time during the visit to the small, unmanned pumping station. The inspection was undertaken to review general health and safety arrangements and site conditions. No observations were identified that require action at this time. The site was found to be in good order at the time of the visit; however, continued routine monitoring is recommended to maintain current standards.

Action Plan					
High Priority			0-3 Months		
Medium Priority			3-6 Months		
Low Priority			6-12 Months		

Reference Number	Additional Controls / Actions / Comments	Supporting Photographs / Pictures	Person(s) Responsible	Risk Rating	Action Complete When / Who
	No observations noted that require action			Choose an item.	

General Comments	
Audit Carried out on Behalf of:	AW Safety Management Ltd / IRM Safety Ltd
Contact Information (Edwinstowe Office):	Edwinstowe House High Street Edwinstowe Mansfield NG21 9PR 01623 821516
Contact Information (Brampton Office):	Low Cross Buildings 4 Low Cross Street Brampton Cumbria CA8 1NP 01697 270020
Website:	www.awsafety.co.uk / www.integratedrisk.org.uk
Note:	It is important to note that this Audit Report 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 auditor any potentially unsafe conditions or practices which were not apparent during the Audit, 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.

Health and Safety Workplace Inspection

Manea and Welney DDB
Glen House Pumping Station

carried out on

Thursday, 08 January 2026

by

AW Safety Management Ltd

Key Information	
Client:	Manea and Welney DDB
Site:	Glen House Pumping Station
Site Contact:	Andy Maddams, John Heading
Site Contact E-mail:	enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
Inspection date:	08/01/2026
Inspected by:	Martin Watson
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 Date
High	Serious 'material breach' of legislation and / or serious and imminent danger to persons	0-3 Months
Medium	Significant control weakness exposing persons to moderate degree of risk	3-6 Months
Low	General guidance or areas where there are opportunities to implement better practice and reduce exposure to risk	6-12 Months

Executive Summary / Additional Comments

Thank you for your time during the visit to the pumping station within the Fens. The inspection was completed to review general health and safety arrangements and site conditions. No major actions were identified at the time of the visit; however, a small number of minor observations have been captured within the action plan below for completeness and continuous improvement. Please review and address these items as appropriate.

The risks associated with lone working, particularly when working near open water, were discussed during the inspection. The company should ensure lone working has appropriate control measures implemented, including clear check-in procedures, emergency response arrangements, and staff awareness. Best practice would include the provision of a lone worker device, such as a dead man phone or pager, to automatically raise an alert or allow emergency contact if assistance is required or inactivity is noted.

Action Plan	
High Priority	0-3 Months
Medium Priority	3-6 Months
Low Priority	6-12 Months

Reference Number	Additional Controls / Actions / Comments	Supporting Photographs / Pictures	Person(s) Responsible	Risk Rating	Action Complete When / Who
1	The external steps leading down to the pumps were noted to be degrading, with sections sunken and uneven. The company must ensure the steps are repaired, re-levelled, or replaced to provide a safe and even walking surface. This is necessary to reduce the risk of slips, trips, and falls, particularly during wet or icy conditions, and to ensure safe access for staff and visitors.		John Heading / Andy Maddams	Low	
2	No hazard identification signage was present in the vicinity of the diesel tank and fuel pump. The company must ensure appropriate warning and hazard signage is installed to clearly identify the presence of flammable substances and associated risks. This will help raise awareness, control unauthorised activities, and reduce the risk of fire, spills, or other fuel-related incidents.	 	John Heading / Andy Maddams	Low	

Action Plan					
High Priority			0-3 Months		
Medium Priority			3-6 Months		
Low Priority			6-12 Months		
Reference Number	**Additional Controls / Actions / Comments**	**Supporting Photographs / Pictures**	**Person(s) Responsible**	**Risk Rating**	**Action Complete When / Who**
3	No fire extinguishers were provided in the vicinity of electrical systems or within the workshop, and no fire blanket was available in the cooking area. The company must ensure suitable fire-fighting equipment is installed, including CO_2 extinguishers for electrical risks, appropriate extinguishers for fuel risks, and a fire blanket adjacent to cooking equipment. This is required under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure occupants can safely tackle small fires and reduce escalation risk in locations where personnel frequent site.	 	John Heading / Andy Maddams	Medium	

General Comments	
Audit Carried out on Behalf of:	AW Safety Management Ltd / IRM Safety Ltd
Contact Information (Edwinstowe Office):	Edwinstowe House High Street Edwinstowe Mansfield NG21 9PR 01623 821516
Contact Information (Brampton Office):	Low Cross Buildings 4 Low Cross Street Brampton Cumbria CA8 1NP 01697 270020
Website:	www.awsafety.co.uk / www.integratedrisk.org.uk
Note:	It is important to note that this Audit Report 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 auditor any potentially unsafe conditions or practices which were not apparent during the Audit, 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.

Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners
District Superintendents Report May 2026

Goodness, May already, where did those four months go?

A reasonably wet January has gently drifted into a very dry spell. The first four months rainfall recorded 70mm, 56mm, 24.5mm and 2.5mm. There is little rainfall on the horizon, and I am glad the District levels are nicely up. I switched the pumps off at Glen House on March 3rd and at Purls Bridge on March 16th. With a drying breeze the level began to drop off by April 8th, and I opened the slacker to ½ bore for twenty-four hours to make up the loss and then shut it down to ¼ to maintain the level. The slacker has remained open since that time with minor adjustments to the opening to keep the level at 98.05 as a minimum at Glen House and 98.00 at Purls Bridge. This has not been made any easier due to the level in the Old Bedford River being hardly sufficient for purpose. Indeed, by April 27th I was concerned the level would fall below the slacker sill and leave us with no water. The EA, seemingly unaware of the very dry conditions, and therefore no gravity filling of the OBR continued to pump the river down, the last run of Welches Dam being the night of March 30th/31st. The rather clunky nature of their management structure concerning the OBR generally means a wait of four days between a conversation suggesting they should be transferring and the slackers at Salters Lode actually being opened. I'm afraid I have had a few rather robust conversations with them regarding the general lack of water in the river and the foolishness of believing they will be able to maintain things adequately by relying on transfers. So far, the river has just crept up to the normal summer low level of 1m after three weeks of potential transferring. Experience dictates the EA are going to struggle, especially if we end up with a hot, dry July and August. Time will tell.

Bank mowing began on March 23rd and at the time of writing I am nearly halfway through a second trip through the District. Prior to starting the mowing, I had fully serviced the Herder, flail head and fitted some new knives to the reed basket. Being fiscally prudent, I recycled the knives that take the pressure arms. Although the drive buttons were worn, the cutting edges were still serviceable and with the buttons cut off, they make good replacements for other damaged knives. The tractor decided to disgrace itself when the battery failed. A dead cell was unretrievable and so a replacement battery had to be obtained.
The Berlingo van was treated to its annual service and MOT at the beginning of March, and some suspension repairs. Still in generally good condition, the van does take a battering at times, tyres and front suspension being the usual victims. The wear and tear is not all down to the off-road nature of much of the vans use, the appalling state of the roads in the area make some bank sides seem quite smooth.
Once the pumps were switched off, I took the opportunity to grease them and the syphon valves. The pumps and weedscreen cleaners will be briefly exercised on a monthly basis to keep everything running as it should.

As well as the drainside vegetation growing at quite a rate, nature has been getting on with that which she does best. Reed beds are a twitter with the busy sounds of Reed and Sedge Warblers, as well as Reed Buntings. Meadow Pipits and Skylarks are busy on fields where crops are still short, or where there are bare patches. Cuckoos are Cuckooing and the Swallows and Martins have returned and are swooping low over the drains collecting water and feeding on the already abundant insects. The wild ducks are pairing up and as usual there are about three males to every female, especially with Mallard, and the resulting squabbles are quite entertaining. Voles are plentiful, both in their appearances in the grass and as food for the Kestrels. Egrets of all three types are seen about the District as are Herons. There are regular overflights of Cranes, and I expect there will be big numbers of those enjoying the stubbles later in the year. My current favourite sighting is of an albino Pied Wagtail. This little fellow is often foraging on the Middle Level Barrier Bank, or around Glen House and the Colony Lake.

All in all, things are running along nicely, but we need some rain and if we don’t get some soon, it is going to be a long and challenging summer.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**10**
Meeting:	**MANEA & WELNEY DDC**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Wednesday 20th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Annual Return 2024/2025
B. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor and consider the Internal Auditors Report for 2024/2025 (link)
C. Consider any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions occurring during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the Board.
D. Review the effectiveness of existing Internal Controls and identify any new or strengthened Internal Controls that they may require.
E. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
F. 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. To review and approve the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2026 and authorising the Chair and Clerk to sign the statement.

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 (e.g. 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:

MANEA & WELNEY DDC
INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS 2026-2027

PUMPING STATIONS

	As at 1st April 2026	
PURLS BRIDGE PUMPING STATION	969,458.00	
GLEN HOUSE PUMPING STATION	1,977,165.00	
OLD GLENHOUSE PUMPING STATION	390,282.00	
WELCHES DAM	6,504.00	
	3,343,409.00	Index linked

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.

6. Annual Governance

6.1 That the Chair be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the board for the financial year ended 31st March 2026 (Appendix 2**)**

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 Annual Return 2024/2025
Appendix 2 Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026

Appendix 1

Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners

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 Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners 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 Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners

The Clerk
Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners
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 Commissioners

Date of Announcement: 22nd September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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

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

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

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
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

15/05/2025 30/05/2025 03/06/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

WHITINGS LLP

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

Date 03/06/2025

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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	Agreed 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:

28/05/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

C.1059

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

Chair John E Heading

Clerk R Martin

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

	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	446,897	445,888	*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	224,408	238,847	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	19,373	68,312	*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	40,855	44,086	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	203,935	166,649	*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	445,888	542,312	*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	529,376	575,633	*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	2,611,078	2,611,078	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

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

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

A.Wool

Date 13.05.2025

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

28/05/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

C.1050

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

John S Hiading

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

In respect of **Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners – DB0046**

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 15/09/2025

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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 2026, that:

	Agreed Yes	*Agreed* 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 have assured 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.*
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✓		*has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.*

***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:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Wednesday 20th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Budgeting review.
B. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 2.
C. 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 review and key messages

Accounts to 31st March 2025

At the Commissioners meeting on 28th January 2026 a 'probable actual' position had been drafted, based around actual expenditure recorded to the end of November 2025 and estimates/forecasts to the 31st of March 2026.

The probable actual figures were also based around forecasting areas of expenditure to budget allocations. Savings were made against Channel Maintenance and Repairs and renewals. The most significant savings made against budget was fuel costs due to lower than anticipated pumping costs. The rating estimates for 2025/2026 included an allowance of £25,000 for future plant overhauls/refurbishments which was transferred in the year to the Asset Replacement Fund.

Overall, this gave an increase in the general fund balances of £3,202 (After taking into consideration for Depreciation (£31,005) to a balance of £348,244 on 31st March 2026, this currently being more than a year's expenditure in hand.

The balances are reflected in the Commissioners accounts and Annual Return, which they are asked to review and approve.

1. **Budgeting**

1.1 The budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2026 is included as Appendix 1.

2. Payments for 2026

2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 2.

3. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026:

3.1 Annual Return 2025/2026:

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

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

Appendix 1	**Budget Review**
Appendix 2	**Payments for 2025/2026**
Appendix 3	**Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/2026**

Appendix 1

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
Monitoring - Accounts/Estimates 2025/2026

	Approved Estimates 2025/2026	Probable Actual 2025/2026	Accounts 2025/2026
1 CHANNEL MAINTENANCE	20,000	20,000	12,417
2 LABOUR	48,500	48,500	47,681
3 REPAIRS AND RENEWALS	12,000	12,000	7,244
Pump overhaul	15,000	15,000	15,000
4 FUEL	45,000	59,162	27,392
5 RATES, INSURANCES & TELEPHONES	6,500	6,672	6,672
6 ADMINISTRATION	19,700	0	20,284
7 TECHNICAL SERVICES	3,000	2,750	1,822
8 E. A. PRECEPT	83,110	83,110	83,110
9 PLANT REPLACEMENT	10,000	10,000	10,000
	262,810	**257,194**	**231,621**
INCOME	**4,572**	**9,388**	**7,638**
Net Expenditure	**258,238**	**247,807**	**223,983**
Rate Requirement	**0.5400**		

Gen. Fund balance	Opening		345,042	345,042
Rates raised		*Rate set - 50.00*	184,248	184,248
Special Levy			73,942	73,942
Depreciation				(31,005)
Write Back Of Provision				-
Net Expenditure			247,807	(223,983)
Closing Balance			355,425	348,244

Rate Meeting was held on 28th January 2026
Probable Actual was based on expenditure to 30th November 2025 with provisions to year end.

Appendix 2

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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

Bank charges	3.00
Information Commissioners - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling, health & safety contract and storm recovery - tranche 1 claim	10,472.32
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	938.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	340.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Road tax for AU15 XHB	335.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of hour meter and frame (Account from RS Components)	55.85
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	65.09
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	295.51
Middle Level Commissioners - Board ID cards x 2	14.74
Middle Level Commissioners - Court fees	0.50
Ratatak - Pest control (April - June 2025)	90.40
Wave - Metered water supply	30.34
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	15.53
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	8,534.02
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	1,187.41
Environment Agency - Precept	41,554.93
Ratatak - AF Rat boxes	192.00
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	718.56
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	246.63
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.01
Mr Willis - Rates refund	103.68
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	61.02
N L Hydraulics - Hydraulic hose and spiral hose guard	302.62
Ben Burgess Coates - 3,750 hour service of John Deere Tractor - AO20 NWL	1,028.01
LW Vehicle Services Limited - Supply and fit new gear cables	311.21
Ruth Martin - Expenses in connection with Board meeting (Account from Lamb & Flag)	310.25
LW Vehicle Services Limited - Supply, fit and balance tyre	86.92
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel, sand cement mortar and card fee	32.92
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	618.76
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	129.43
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.11
Bank charges	6.00
FJS Services Ltd - 27 x 400g Lithium grease gun cartrdiges and broom	96.94
Ratatak - Pest control (July - September 2025)	94.01
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.11
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	609.41
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	66.12
Wave - Metered water supply	26.78
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	295.51
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	64.40
Anglia Farmers - Card fee	1.21
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.11
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	563.48
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	195.36
LW Vehicle Services Limited - Supply and fit new reservoir and brake fluid	209.86
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	557.81
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	171.28
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.11
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	880.20
IMServ - Half hourly electricity data collection charge to 22 October 2026	201.22
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	71.62
IMServ - Electricity meter annual maintenance contract to 22nd October 2026	79.22
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fee (2024-2025 accounts)	1,008.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges and Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2024-2025 accounts)	10,468.37
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	117.91

Ratatak - Pest control (October - December 2025)	94.01
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	6,377.15
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of death in service insurance	176.34
Wave - Metered water supply	39.62
Fen Group - Drain maintenance	5,138.40
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	561.44
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	138.11
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.11
Anglia Farmers -3,001 litres of gas oil and road diesel	2,382.47
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner at Glenhouse pumping station	958.54
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	308.71
Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd - 4 pressure arms, locknuts, rivets, 8 toothed knives and 4 cases of screws	489.98
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of bearing (Account from RS Components)	28.88
Environment Agency - Precept	41,554.92
Fen Group - Drain maintenance	6,796.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	170.40
Cambridgeshire County Council - Annual rent (Right of access)	180.00
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.11
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	587.97
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	258.28
British Gas - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	78.98
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	57.08
British Gas - Purls Bridge Pumping Station	716.53
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	71.66
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.11
EDF Energy - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	8.05
British Gas - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	173.80
British Gas - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	1,229.31
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.31
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	308.71
LW Vehicle Services Limited - Supply, fit and balance tyres	175.22
British Gas - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	166.23
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2026	973.20
Ratatak - Pest control (January to March 2026)	94.01
British Gas - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	1,649.29
Lamb & Flag Inn - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	256.00
Anglia Farmers - 15,000 litres of gas oil and road diesel	11,909.16
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	72.00
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.30
British Gas - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	172.25
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	62.26
British Gas - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	2,292.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Electrical installation condition report and supply of 11 pin relay base (Accounts from CMS Electrical and RS Components)	217.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Electrical installation condition report and supply of universal joint and fuses (Accounts from CMS Electrical and RS Components)	345.73
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of signage	26.83
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of road tax AU15 XHB (Account from DVLA)	345.00
Information Commissioners - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
Ben Burgess Coates - Supply of a 12v battery	279.58
A Maddams - Fuel cooler for AU15 XHB (Account from SCB Car Parts)	79.95
LWS Vehicle Services Ltd - Service and MOT of AU15 XHB	815.25
Vodafone - Mobile telephone charges	16.30
Anglia Farmers - Road diesel	61.75
British Gas - Electricity charges Glenhouse Pumping Station	187.00
British Gas - Electricity charges Purls Bridge Pumping Station	2,071.15
LWS Vehicle Services Ltd - Repairs to AU15 XHB	109.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling, health & safety, ecological and environmental services	13,724.95
District labour	39,774.07
NEST Pension Contributions	7,717.10
	236,604.55

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

MANEA AND WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026
GENERAL FUND

2026				2025			
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		345,041.99
	Precept		83,109.85	2026			
				Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	258,190.16	
	Rates, Insurances, Telephones	6,672.48			Interest on Deposit Accounts	3,499.58	
	Repairs & Renewals	7,243.79			Highland Water Contributions	1,358.09	
	Fuel	27,391.90			Development Charges Account	2,730.00	
	Drainworks	12,417.00			Consents	50.00	265,827.83
	District Labour	47,681.08					
	Administration	20,283.56					
	Technical Services	1,821.50	123,511.31				
	Transfer to Asset Replacement Fund		25,000.00				
	Depreciation Charge		31,005.00				
	Balance carried forward		348,243.72				
			610,869.88				610,869.82

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities			Assets		
			Pumping Stations	2,415,000.00	
			Plant Assets	7,637.82	
Capital Provisions		2,415,000.00			2,422,637.82

Revenue Section

General Fund			Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		10,582.75
Revenue	340,605.84		Stock		4,090.40
Capital	7,637.82	348,243.66	Value added tax - Refunds due		6,061.22
Sundry Creditors		28,966.23	Sundry Debtors		886.92
Development Contributions		52,326.94			
Contributions holding account		21,294.34	Balance in hand:-		
Asset Replacement Fund		187,974.48	Barclays - Current Account	70,000.00	
Grant Aid Received in Advance		7,445.02	Barclays - Business Premium Account	546,991.56	
				-	616,991.56
		3,061,250.67			3,061,250.67

Manea & Welney Internal Drainage Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025			31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward		575,633.49	Payments made during the year	236,604.55
31st March 2026				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	272,070.29			
Interest on deposit accounts	5,892.33			
		277,962.62	Balance carried forward	616,991.56
		853,596.11		**853,596.11**

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2026	70,000.00
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
O/S lodgement	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	**70,000.00**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**70,000.00**
Business Premium Account	**546,991.56**
Treasury Deposit	**0.00**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**616,991.56**

Manea & Welney DDC
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2026

				Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**			
	General Fund	306,399.17		
	Development charges account	53,494.37		
	Asset Replacement Fund	161,338.11		
	Contributions Holding Account	21,080.53		
			542,312.18	**542,312**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	184,295.92		
	Special Levies	73,942.00		
	Penalty	27.24		
	Costs	-75.00		
	Write-off	0.00		
			258,190.16	**258,190**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	3,499.58		
	Development charges account	542.57		
	Asset Replacement Fund	1,636.37		
	Contributions Holdings Account	213.81		
	Highland Water	1,358.09		
	Discharge contributions	1,020.00		
	Consents	50.00		
	Water Transfer - EA	0.00		
	Insurance Claim	0.00		
	Write Back of Provisions	0.00		
			8,320.42	**8,321**
Line 4	**Staff costs**			
	Wages/salaries	38,949.11		
	National insurance contributions	5,091.77		
	Pension costs	3,640.20		
	Travelling expenses	0.00		
			47,681.08	**47,681**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**			
	PWLB - Principal	0.00		
	PWLB - Interest	0.00		
			0.00	**0**

Line 6	All other payments			
	Precept	83,109.85		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	6,672.48		
	Repairs and renewals	7,243.79		
	Fuel	27,391.90		
	Drainworks	12,417.00		
	Administration	20,283.56		
	Development charges fees	0.00		
	Planning fees	1,821.50		
	Purchase of Asset	0.00		
			158,940.08	**158,940**

Manea & Welney DDC
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2026				Per Annual Return
Line 7	Balances carried forward			
	General Fund	340,605.84		
	Development charges account	52,326.94		
	Asset Replacement Fund	187,974.48		
	Contributions Holdings Account	21,294.34		
			602,201.60	**602,202**

Reconciliation		
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6		602,201.60
Rounding		0.00

Reconciliation to Accounts

Balances carried forward per Annual Return - As above		602,201.60
Add Back:-		
Adjustments for Prior Years	38,642.82	
Depreciation	-31,005.00	
Purchase of Asset	0.00	
		7,637.82
Balances carried forward per Accounts		
General Fund	348,243.66	
Development charges account	52,326.94	
Asset Replacement Fund	187,974.48	
Contributions Holdings Account	21,294.34	
		609,839.42

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

	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	445,888	542,312	*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	238,847	258,190	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	68,312	8,321	*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	44,086	47,681	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	166,649	158,940	*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	542,312	602,202	*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	575,633	616,992	*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	2,611,078	2,611,078	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?			*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

AWool

Date 14 05 2026

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	13
Meeting:	**MANEA & WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Wednesday 20th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the Finance Officer's summary
B. 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

At the Commissioners meeting on 28th January 2026 a rate of 55.00p was approved. Since then, the conflict in the Middle East has put uncertainty over Energy and Fuel prices. A new supply contract will come into force from October 2026 with no current indications of possible unit costs. The provision made in the Estimates allowed for an increase.

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

1.1 Reported in January meeting.

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

2.1 Reported in January meeting.

3. Contributions from Developer

4. Estimates for 2025/26

4.1 Reported in January meeting.

5. Rate Requirements for 2025/26

5.1 Reported in January meeting.

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