NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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Administered by:

12th May 2026

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Tuesday 19th May 2026

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Middle Level Offices, PE15 0AH on Tuesday 19th May 2026

Meal to follow at The Seven Stars, March

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

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Tuesday 19th May 2026 – 6.00pm
At Middle Level Offices, PE15 0AH

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 3 - 13	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership	Pages 14 - 16	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 17 - 21	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	To follow	Clerk
7	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including:	Pages 22 - 32	Clerk or Engineer
8	Health & Safety	Pages 33 - 41	Chair
9	District Officer's Report	Verbal	DO
10	Governance • Accounts Return for 2024/2025 • Auditors report for 2024/2025 (link) • Annual Governance statement	Pages 42 - 44 Pages 45 - 49 Page 50	Clerk
11	Finance Report: looking back • Budgeting • Payments 2025 • Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026	Pages 51 - 52 Page 53 Page 54 Pages 55 - 59	Clerk
12	Finance Report: looking forward • Determination of land for rating purposes • Rating Estimates for 2026/2027 • Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements or 2026/2027	Pages 60 - 61 Page 62 Page 63 Page 64	Clerk
13	Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 18th May 2027 6pm	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.)

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board
hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Tuesday 21st May 2025

PRESENT

A Edgley (Chair)	M Graves
S Edgley (Vice-Chair)	S Graves
I Benney (FDC)	Ms A Hay (FDC)
D Collett	C Marks (FDC)
L Edgley	A Miscandlon (FDC)
T Edgley	M Smalley
Ms J French (FDC)	T Taylor (FDC)

Miss Sam Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from M Peter Murphy, Mr James Edgley and Mr Chris Boden.

B.1239 Declarations of Interest

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

The Chairman declared an interest in all matters relating to the District Officer.

Mrs Jan French declared an interest in all planning matters concerning Fenland District Council.

B.1240 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 21st May 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1241 Matters Arising

Miss Ablett reported that the lead Clerk had spoken with the Chairman of Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB and had advised that the item would be discussed at their meeting on 29th May. She added the outcome from this meeting will be reported to the Chairman.

B.1242 Constitution & Membership

The Board considered the report.

Annual Appointments

The Board considered the annual appointments of the Chairman & Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

That Afe Edgley be appointed as Chairman of the Commissioners.

That Stephen Edgley be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Commissioners.

Amalgamations

The Chairman advised that he had not made contact with the Chairman of Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB and the matter had not been progressed.

Training

Miss Ablett circulated a training matrix for each member, with the record of attendance and asked Members to complete it and advise the Middle Level office if any further training had been undertaken.

She added that it was important that the videos are viewed as the data must be reported to the EA and DEFRA each year as part of the IDB 1 return and she encouraged members to undertake the training so this could be reported.

B.1243 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett drew the Commissioners attention to the Clerks Report and asked members to note its content.

Planning and Consenting Charging Model

The new planning and consenting charging model has been implemented and been in use since 1st April. Miss Ablett reported that it is planned to review the fees every year, and that the Clerk invites feedback.

The Board expressed their satisfaction with the model.

Highland Water and IDB Precept

Miss Ablett outlined the issues detailed in the Clerks Report, and that after being advised that claims would not be paid in full, a formal appeal was narrowly avoided after the shortfall was met by the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC). Following this the Clerk has written 'The Highland Water Conundrum' document which has been submitted to the Minister, Defra, the EA and our local authorities, and circulated to all Board members.

Miss Ablett advised that the IDB Precept had increased by 2% this year, and that the Clerk was considering whether an appeal should be lodged, and if this would have greater gravitas if this were on behalf of all the Boards administered by Middle Level Commissioners. She added that any appeal must be lodged within 6 weeks of formal notification.

She enquired whether the Board were content to delegate this decision to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman.

RESOLVED

The Board agreed to delegate the decision on whether to appeal the IDB Precept (under s40 of the Water Resources Act) to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman.

Fens Reservoir

Miss Ablett introduced the paper and outlined that the Board is likely to be directly affected by the proposed reservoir.

She reported that Anglian Water have confirmed they are prepared to cover reasonable costs associated with activities that assist in the Development Consent Order process/implementation of the scheme. Once the order is in place, existing statutory powers will be overwritten so it is essential to have the right provisions in place. She added that conversations continue around the reservoir and the Middle Level Commissioners are currently updating the Service Level Agreement with Anglian Water to cover staff time. She advised the Middle Level Commissioners have a new Reservoir Project Support Officer starting at the end of the month, a role that will be funded by Anglian Water.

She advised that Board resolutions confirming that Middle Level Commissioners can act on the Board's behalf, were required.

RESOLVED

> That the Board act as one with the Middle Level Commissioners and other impacted IDBs. Therefore, the Middle Level Commissioners staff, consultants and legal service provider are authorised to act on behalf of and represent the Board.
>
> That the Board acknowledge the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Board and delegate the decision making on this to the Clerk, engaging with the Chairman/Vice Chairman as he sees fit.

B.1244 Environment Officers' Report

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

Mr Lakey advised that the Biodiversity Action Plan update meeting with the Chairman and Vice Chairman will take place later in the week.

Mr Lakey drew the Boards attention to the changes in the Hedgerow Regulations and also reminded the Board that they will need to consider bats if any works affect trees adding that the Ecology team have now received additional training in this regard.

Mr Lakey advised that non-routine maintenance works require a survey before works commence, and the Ecology Team have an environmental screening form that needs to be completed, which he completes on behalf of the Board prior to the works and he further advised that he also takes care of the Boards badger returns, where licences are required.

Mr Lakey reminded the Board of their culverting policy, and that culverts are now considered a last resort and that habitat loss must be considered. Environmental screening reports are needed for all works, and Mr Lakey asked the Board to report any bank slips as soon as possible as the slip is likely to have displaced any water voles which will allow repairs to be undertaken straight away. If the slip is left and the voles recolonise, repairs may be delayed. The window for works where water voles are identified is the 2nd week of February to the end of April, and during September and October. Mr Lakey referred the Board to the 'Water Voles – Myth Busting' within the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager's report.

Mr Lakey reported that Board Members are invited to attend a biodiversity training day, although all of this work is undertaken by Mr Lakey on behalf of the Board.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

> That the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager's Report be approved.
>
> That the draft Biodiversity Action Plan and polices are sent to the Chairman for his consideration and approval on behalf of the Commissioners.

<u>B.1244 Consulting Engineers' Reports</u>

The Board considered the Reports of the Consulting Engineers.

<u>a) Planning</u>

Miss Ablett advised that most of the planning report could be taken as read.

She referred Members to the Planning Engineer's comments regarding planning application (MLC Ref. Nos. 312, 716 & 934) and asked for the Board's comments and instruction.

Mrs French advised that the planning application had been passed in April 2025. She advised that Lee Bevens of L Bevens Associates Ltd. had been speaking with landowners in the area regarding ownership of the channel and he may be able to discuss the issues regarding the site, with the Planning Engineer.

Members agreed that if Mr Bevens was unable to provide the Planning Engineer with further information, then the Planning Engineer is to advise various parties involved of their maintenance rights and responsibilities.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

> That the Planning Engineer contacts Lee Bevens of L Bevens Associates Ltd. in Chatteris regarding the matters relating to planning application (MLC Ref. Nos. 312, 766 & 934)
>
> That if Mr Bevens unable to provide the Planning Engineer with further information, then the Planning Engineer is to advise various parties involved of their maintenance rights and responsibilities.

<u>b) Operational Services</u>

Mr Lakey reported on the works undertaken over the past year and of future works, together with the associated costs.

<u>c) Mechanical & Electrical</u>

Miss Ablett referred to the Consulting Engineer's comments regarding the age and reliability of the pumps and his recommendation that a plan is put in place to overhaul or replace items as necessary.

She highlighted that the pump has some signs of water ingress and is likely to need an overhaul or replacement and advised that this would cost in the region of £40,000 to £60,000, dependent on the station and degree of work involved based on the condition of pump, once lifted.
Miss Ablett referred to the electrical control panel, which is 45 years old and again is likely to require replacement, at a cost of in the region of £15,000 to £20,000.

Miss Ablett advised there may be some GiA allocation available for 2026-2027 and the Board may wish to include these works in a bid for GiA to sustain the operation of the pumping station given the uncertainty of the impacts of the proposed Fens Reservoir on the Board's assets.
She warned the criteria regarding GiA applications was not yet known so there is no guarantee funding would be received and as the cost of these works totals between £55,000 to £80,000 the Board needed to consider how this would be funded if GiA was not available.

She enquired whether the Board wished for these works to be included in the bid for GiA.

Miss Ablett referred to the issues experienced over the last few years with the weed screen PLC controller and added that as software is now obsolete the controller would benefit from being replaced and this would cost around £5k. She enquired whether the Board wished for this to be replaced.

RESOLVED

> That the electrical control panel and pump overhaul/replacement be included in the GiA bid for 2026-2027.
>
> That the weed screen PLC controller be replaced and paid from the development fund.

RESOLVED

That the reports be approved.

a) i) That the Planning Engineer contacts Lee Bevens of L Bevens Associates Ltd. in Chatteris regarding the matters relating to planning application (MLC Ref. Nos. 312, 766 & 934)

ii) That if Mr Bevens unable to provide the Planning Engineer with further information, then the Planning Engineer is to advise various parties involved of their maintenance rights and responsibilities.

c) i) That the electrical control panel and pump overhaul/replacement be included in the GiA bid for 2026-2027.

ii) That the weed screen PLC controller be replaced and paid from the development fund.

B.1245 Health & Safety

The Vice Chairman gave a verbal update following his meeting with COPE Safety Management on 28th January 2025 and reported the visit had gone well.

He added the only matters raised related to the wooden ladder, which they recommended should be removed and the outstanding signage, which was supplied by the Consulting Engineer.

The Vice Chairman advised that the ladder would be removed and Mr Lakey reported that the signage was now available, which was to be installed by the Vice Chairman.

B.1246 District Officer’s Report

The Chairman gave a verbal report.

He advised that that an inspection of the District had identified a couple of slips, which needed to be monitored, and small amounts of slubbing were required. He added there had be no serious incidents, despite the rainfall leading up to Christmas giving rise to a build-up of weed. He reported that most drains were in good order.

B.1247 Governance

Miss Ablett referred to the recommendations and resolutions the Board had been asked to make.

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

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

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

The Board noted the continued appointment of Whitings as its internal auditor.

b) Review of Internal Controls

Miss Ablett reported that the internal controls the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Board are available on the Board’s webpage.

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls and did not highlight the requirement for any additional controls.

c) Authorisations

The Board considered the review of authorisations.

RESOLVED

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

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

d) Responsible Finance Officer

RESOLVED

The Board considered and approved the recommendations:

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

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

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

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

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

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

e) <u>Risk Management Assessment & Insured Values</u>

The Board considered their Risk Management Strategy and insured sums.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

i) The Board approved the sums insured.

ii) The Board did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Boards Risk Management Strategy (published in 2024 and on the website).

f) <u>Policy Reviews & DPO</u>

The Board considered the review of the policies.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

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

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

g) <u>DEFRA IDB1 Return</u>

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

h) Annual Governance Statement

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

i) Exercise of Public Rights

Miss Ablett 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.

j) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments

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

Members gave consideration to the position.

RESOLVED

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

B.1248 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

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

The attention of the Commissioners was drawn to the Storm Recovery Grant and that a claim for £19,971.12 had been received.

Highland Water Contributions

Miss Ablett referred to the Highland Water Contributions received for 2024/2025 and the adjustment against the claim as a result of the Storm Recovery Grant.

Payments 2025.

The Board considered and approved the Payments for 2024/2025.

(NB: The Chairman declared an interest in the payments made to him as District Officer.)

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2024/2025.

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

RESOLVED

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

B.1249 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Finance officer's summary and key messages

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

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

a) ADA subscription

Miss Ablett reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 6.5% for 2025, from £636 to £678 (plus VAT).

RESOLVED

That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 be paid.

b) District Officer's Fee

The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2025-2026.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of up to £5,034 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2025/2026.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest in this item as District Officer.

c) Precept

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

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

The precept for 2024 was £3,647.18.

d) Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes.

The Board considered the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

i) That the determination recommended be adopted by the Board.
ii) That the Clerk be empowered to serve notices and to take such other action as may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements.
iii) That the Chairman and the Clerk be empowered to authorise appropriate action on behalf of the Board in connection with any appeal against the determination.

e) Rate Arrears

The Board considered the writing-off rate arrears of £56.82.
RESOLVED

That the rate arrears amounting to £56.82 be written off.

f) Contributions from Developers

The Clerk confirmed receipt of the contributions from developers as shown on the confidential papers.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2025/2026

The Board reviewed the proposed budget for 2025/2026.

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2025/2026 and were informed by Miss Ablett that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 14.95% and 85.05%.

Mr Stephen Edgley proposed a rate of 9p as he considered there were a lot of unknown factors facing the Board, which needed to have sufficient funds to run efficiently.

Miss Ablett enquired whether there were any other proposals. As no other proposals were put forward Miss Ablett enquired whether Members considered the rate proposed of 9p acceptable or whether they wished to set the rate of 8.1p in order to meet the budget.

Members approved a rate of 9p should be set in view of the potential expenditure outlined by the Consulting Engineer in his report.

She reminded Members of the works that may become necessary relating to the replacement of the electrical control panel and undertaking a pump overhaul/replacement and advised they needed to consider how this would be funded should GiA not become available.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £54,983 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 £8,221 and £46,763 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 9p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special levy of £46,763 be made and issued to the Fenland District Council 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 and to the special levy 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.

viii) That any surplus arising in 2025-2026 be transferred to a plant refurbishment fund.

B.1250 Middle Level IDB Change

Miss Ablett referred to the Clerk's Report relating the Middle Level IDB.

Miss Ablett advised that the outline design report had previously been sent to all IDB Chairman and Board members for them to review all the various options surrounding amalgamations.

She reported that Boards were being asked to consider the ten questions listed in the agenda regarding change and amalgamation options and to respond to the questions via the Chairman by 4th July 2025 so any feedback can be consolidated over the summer and reviewed by the working group in September 2025.

Miss Ablett enquired whether the Board would consider providing a £300 contribution towards the cost of developing the detailed design.

RESOLVED

That a £300 contribution be made by the Board towards the cost of developing the detailed design.

B.1251 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday 19th May 2026 at 6pm at the Middle Level Offices.

B.1252 Any Other Business

Mr. Taylor referred to the Board's previous resolution in 2024, which asked for a standard document to be drafted advising that Nightlayers IDB system is at capacity. He asked that the standard advice notes are to be sent to the Council's planning department.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**NIGHTLAYERS IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Gemma Ashby**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the position regarding elections and consider the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments within its appointment of officials.
B. Approve the proposed Register of Electors
C. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
D. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
E. Outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training.

1. Current status

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

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	9	N/A		5
Actual	9	8 FDC	17	
Vacancies	0		0	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	David Collett	Ratepayer	
2	Afe Edgley	Ratepayer	Chair & District Officer
3	James Edgley	Nominee of Ratepayer (Nightlayers Leek Co Ltd)	
4	Luke Edgley	Nominee of Ratepayer (A Edgley Ltd)	
5	Stephen Edgley	Nominee of Ratepayer (A Edgley Ltd)	Vice-Chair
6	Trevor Edgley	Nominee of Ratepayer (A Edgley Ltd)	
7	Martin Graves	Nominee of Ratepayer (Graves Bros)	
8	Stephen Graves	Nominee of Ratepayer (Graves Bros)	
9	Michael Smalley	Nominee of Ratepayer (Abbots Ripton Farming Co Ltd)	

1.3 The table below details the current appointed members of the Board.

1.4 Special levy paying District Councils appoint members to Boards and their role is to be part of the Board representing all the non-agricultural interests within the Board's district. The Council must consider appointing members who have relevant knowledge or experience that is relevant to the Board and its district.

1.5 Appointed members do not need to be councillors or employees of the Council, therefore can represent wider relevant interests within the district, e.g. major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	Ian Benney	FDC	Councillor
2	Lucie Foice-Beard	FDC	Councillor
3	Jan French	FDC	Councillor
4	Alan Gowler	FDC	Councillor
5	Anne Hay	FDC	Councillor
6	Charlie Marks	FDC	Councillor
7	Peter Murphy	FDC	Councillor
8	Tim Taylor	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	20/5/2025	21/5/2024	23/5/2023	7/2/2023
1	David Collett	Present		Present	Apologies
2	Afe Edgley	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	James Edgley	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	Present
4	Luke Edgley	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
5	Stephen Edgley	Present	Present	Present	Present
6	Trevor Edgley	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
7	Stephen Graves	Present	Present	Present	Present
8	Michael Smalley	Present	Present	Present	Present
9	Martin Graves	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	Afe Edgley	-		Present	Present

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	20/5/2025	21/5/2024	23/5/2023	7/2/2023
1	Ian Benney (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	
	Chris Boden (FDC)	Apologies	Apologies	Present	N/A
2	Jan French (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	
3	Alan Gowler (FDC)			Present	N/A
4	Anne Hay (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
5	Charlie Marks (FDC)	Present	Apologies	Present	N/A
	Alex Miscandlon (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	N/A
6	Peter Murphy (FDC)	Apologies	Present	Present	
7	Tim Taylor (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	N/A
8	Lucie Foice-Beard (FDC)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 To consider the appointments of a Chair and 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 36 years, and the tenure of the current Vice Chairman is 13 years.

3.3 The Election of members of the Board will take place this year. Members will receive an election notice during July/August and are requested to return their complete slip as soon as possible. This term for current members ends on 31st October 2026.

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

4. Composition and amalgamations

4.1 The Board is encouraged to continually monitor and review its membership, financial and climate resilience, along with assessing its influence locally, regionally and nationally. These are all factors that may lead the Board to consider changing its composition and/or amalgamation with (an)other Board(s). See 'The IDB governance future within the Middle Level of the Fen' within the Clerk's Report.

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

5. Training

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

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

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

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

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

Author Name: Gemma Ashby
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**NIGHTLAYERS IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

1. MLC Overview

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

This fund, coming with fewer constraints than FCRM grant-in-aid, has enabled us to think and invest differently. We are starting to change gear in terms of our business model and philosophy to become more commercially minded within the boundaries of a not-for-profit public authority. At St Germans Pumping Station for example, we now are starting to gear our infrastructure, turning our assets from feeling like a financial burden into engines that drive our business more efficiently. Whilst there remains work to do within our improvement and modernisation journey, our organisational foundations are now in a much healthier position to build from, albeit our base staff capacity and capability are a constraint to what needs to be, and could be, achieved. We will need to identify and nurture partnerships not only with traditional partners but with the innovators within our local agricultural and the development sectors.

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

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

2. MLC Services to IDBs

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

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

3. Policy Reviews

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

Planned new policies include:

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

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

4. Waste Exemptions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This proposal aims to provide:

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

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

6. Data Provision

We are receiving an increasing number of data requests from a variety of sources. These can be complex and time consuming to service, sometimes for projects or purposes with little to no direct benefit to the Commissioners and our administered IDBs (where we act as their data controller).

To better protect our interests, we have developed and are now using a formal data sharing agreement with third parties. We will introduce a cost recovery approach to servicing such requests.

7. Electricity

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

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

8. IDB Funding & Costs Research

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

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

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

The project will include:

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

We have been in touch with the consultants leading the work and provided them with information to get them started and provided them with the information we have to hand for their data requests. W also hosted a case study visit in January 2026. Given we collectively represent c25% of the IDB sector nationally, we will, in one way shape or form, inform their results and associated recommendations for change. Whilst this research is an opportunity to highlight and influence much needed policy change for collective benefit, there is equally the likelihood that it will draw out some uncomfortable truths.

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

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

9. IDB 1 (Annual Reporting to Defra)

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

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

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

10. IDB Precept

Section 139(1) of the Water Resources Act 1991 (WRA 1991) empowers the Environment Agency to require a contribution from Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) each year towards its operational costs. The mechanism for collecting the contribution is for the Environment Agency to issue a precept to the relevant IDBs requiring payment of the amount due.

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

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

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

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**NIGHTLAYERS IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**	
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice from MLC.**
B. **Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board is asked to instruct the Consulting Engineer, accordingly, AND**
C. **Confirm how it wishes to progress the "Nightlayers Pumping Station Refurbishment" project.**

1. Enforcement & Compliance

Our Enforcement and Compliance Officers Dave Coles and Tony Payne joined us on the 23 June 2025 as a job share. They are currently investigating cases across 17 boards plus Middle Level Commissioners, including:

- 47 active enforcement cases,
- 23 surface water or surface water and foul discharges,
- 24 byelaw cases.

Cases already concluded:

- Eight cases in the last two months including trespass, unlicenced moorings, unauthorised structures and encroachment,
- Six major developments have been referred to Technical Services following enforcement action, as consent applications for outstanding discharge consents.

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

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

2. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

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

This included works to the weed screen control system (including new PLC, HMI and level sensors) at Nightlayers Pumping Station which supplements the weed screen overhaul work funded under T2A.

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)

<u>Asset Refurbishment Projects</u>

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

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

It does not include asset replacement projects where an existing asset at the end of its life is replaced with another like for like asset which sustains the standard of service.
Under the 2025 FCERM funding policy existing FCERM assets are eligible for 100% of funding for refurbishment.

<u>New or Improved Asset Projects</u>

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.

<u>Applying for funding</u>

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
- delivery 2027/28 onwards

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

The Board had a project "Nightlayers Pumping Station Refurbishment" identified on the FCERM investment programme with an indicative allocation of £160,000 for 26/27. However, the EA indicated at the January 2026 RFCC meeting that this allocation has been deferred.

It is recommended that Board develops an asset investment plan, to include the items identified in the M&E Report and shown on the Capital Programme, and to confirm how it wishes to progress the "Nightlayers Pumping Station Refurbishment" project.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

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

Appendix 1

Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board

Capital Improvement Programme (2026/2027)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Nightlayers 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	5,000.0	5000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	130.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Telemetry	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drainage Channels														
		4.8	**0**	**0**	**0**	**30**	**30**	**50**	**50**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**5,000**	**5,165**

There have been 22 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been 6 applications for Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) granted since the last meeting.

There have been 5 applications for Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) granted since the last meeting.

There have been 4 infiltration device applications acknowledged since the last meeting.

Planning updates & Consultations

<u>Residential development involving the demolition of existing dwelling and stables on land to the east of 13B Bridge Street, Chatteris – Mr J McGarvie (JMC Construction Ltd)</u> (320/PL/910 & 971)

A Reserved Matters planning application has been submitted for the erection of seven dwellings on the former cattle field and stables off Black Horse Lane.

Following concerns received from local residents the Boards Chair gave approval for a bespoke response to be made to the District Council. This advises of the:

A. History of the previous issues created by the surrounding development and includes a reference to the subsequent Ombudsman’s Report.
B. Incomplete remedial works that were requested as part of the Ombudsman’s Report.
C. Flooding that continues to affect the surrounding area following rainfall events with some residents advising that this restricts the enjoyment of their property.

The response also advises that the development of this site provides the opportunity to rectify the unresolved issues and requests a meeting to be attended by all the relevant parties i.e. developer/agent, Board, District Council, LLFA and Anglian Water to mitigate and hopefully solve these issues but no subsequent correspondence or response has yet been received from either the applicant, the agent or the District Council.

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**		**7**
Meeting:	**NIGHTLAYERS IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES**	
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Morgan Lakey**

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

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

A recent joint inspection of the Board's drains has been undertaken with the Chairman, revealing that most drains remain in a generally satisfactory condition and are being maintained to a good standard. The success of last year's herbicide application is evident in several Board's drains and the sporadic stands of fresh emergent aquatic vegetation identified during the inspection, will be included in this year's programme. It was also noted the revetment works completed in early 2025 under the storm recovery grant are still holding well and the grass has re-established. Historically these reaches of the Campole drain continually suffer from bank subsidence, however at the time of the inspection, they remain stable and will be continually checked throughout the summer.


Successful herbicide application at point 4 & 2025 bank revetment works at point 25

The inspection also highlighted accumulations of silt in the reaches downstream of New Drove. In agreement with the Chairman, the reaches from New Drove to the main pump drain will be included in this year's proposed machine cleansing programme, maintaining water conveyance and allowing the arisings to be incorporated easily into the adjacent arable fields, by working on the 'little and often approach' to maintain the channel. In anticipation of the Board's agreement, a sum has been included in the estimated costs for the works to be completed following the harvest of the adjacent crops.

At the Chairman's request, a provisional sum has been allocated within this year's estimated expenditure for any other emergency machine cleansing, Cott removal, culvert clearance or bank slip repair works that may be required within the Board's drains later in the year.

The Board's previous flail mowing contractor, Mr Ashman will no longer be available due to retiring at the end of last year. For the previous 3 seasons, Mr Ashman has been assisted by M&C Agri and they are available to undertake the flail mowing requirements this year if the Board wish to proceed with them. A sum for the completion of flail mowing of Board's drains for the ensuing year has been included in the estimated costs.

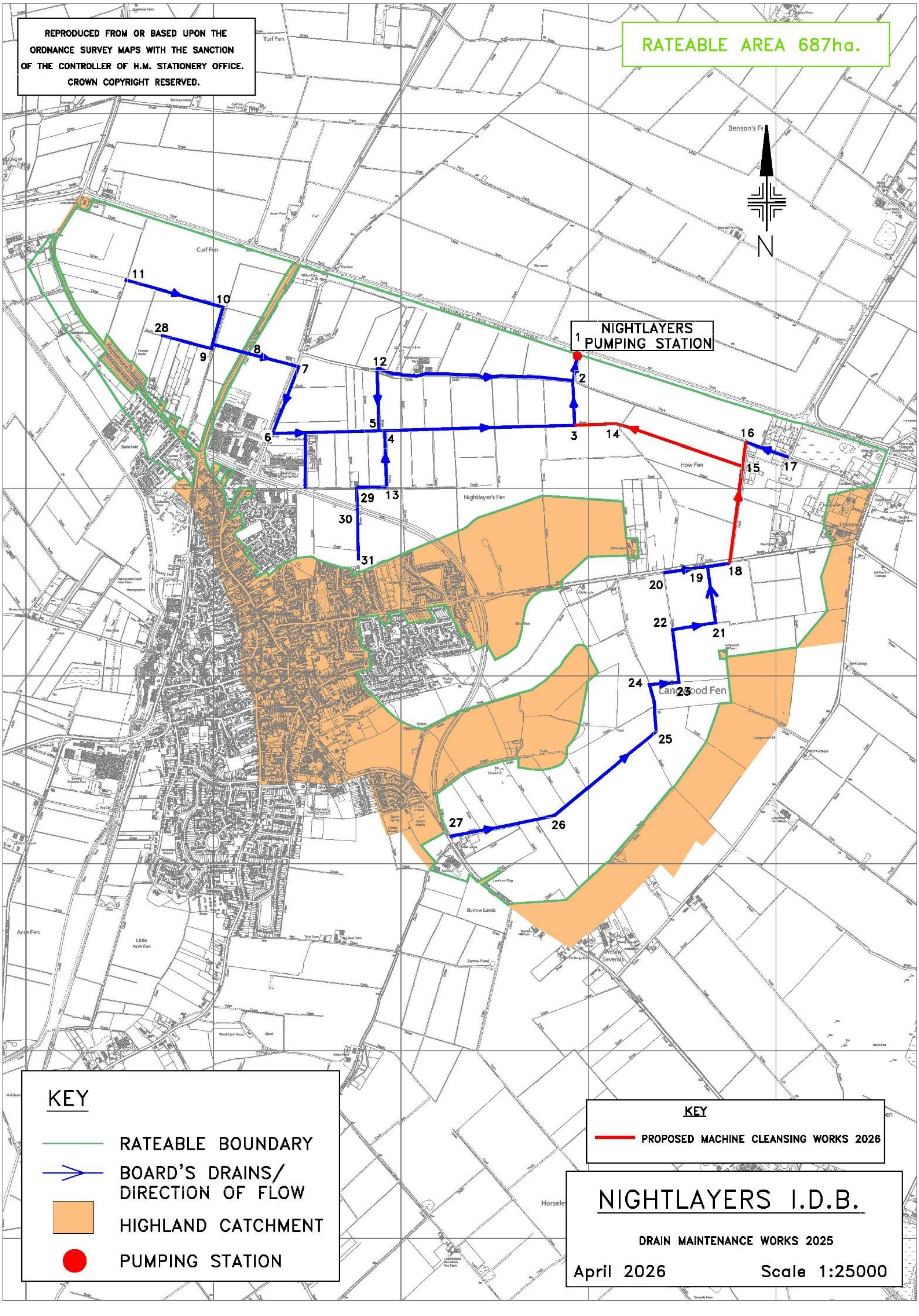
2. Estimated Costs of Anticipated Drain Maintenance and Weed Control Programme

The recommended Weed Control and Drain maintenance programme is as follows, see following site plan for locations.

1) Roundup applications to control emergent aquatic weed and reed growth in District Drains		Item	Sum	1400.00
2) **<u>Machine Cleansing</u>** Reaches 3-14-15-16-18	1600m	@	2.00	3200.00
3) Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing, Cott removal, culvert clearance works in Board's Drains		Item	Sum	1750.00
4) Flail mowing district drains		Item	Sum	3500.00
5) Fees for inspection, preparation and Submission of report to the Board, Arrangement and supervision of herbicide Applications and maintenance works		Item	Sum	1450.00
			TOTAL	**£11,300.00**

Orders for the application of herbicides by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that they will not be held responsible for the failure or efficacy of any treatments.

Author Name: Morgan Lakey
Role: Operations Manager


REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE. CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED.
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Turf Fen
Benson's Fen
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Nightlayer's Fen
Langwood Fen
Burrow Lands
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KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARD'S DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATION
KEY
PROPOSED MACHINE CLEANSING WORKS 2026
NIGHTLAYERS I.D.B.
DRAIN MAINTENANCE WORKS 2025
April 2026
Scale 1:25000

Appendix 4

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**NIGHTLAYERS IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**	
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Dave Bantoft**

1. M&E key messages and advice

Other than the matters previously reported or described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition. The stations and pumps are at an age where reliability is a concern, and a plan should be put in place to overhaul or replace items as necessary to ensure ongoing reliability.

The Board is strongly advised to consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board is asked to instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.

1.1 M&E Equipment Key Health Indicators

Over the past 2 years we have been compiling and verifying Pumping Station Key Date to allow easier identification of equipment age and the need for refurbishment to assist in developing an investment plan for asset refurbishment or replacement. The details below include any works already scheduled and funded to be completed this year. For example, the Weed Screen Cleaner Control System Works (CW Engineering). To ensure reliability, resilience and longevity of the pumping equipment it needs to be refurbished or replaced at suitable intervals. We have experienced examples lately of pumps being left too long and failing, or when they are removed for overhaul, the condition is very poor and the pump overall lifetime has been reduced significantly, which is not cost-effective use of the asset. The same is true for control panels, component failures often damage other components incurring costly repairs and machine downtime. Overall, it is more cost effective to run well maintained equipment.

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



Table 1: Key Health Indicators

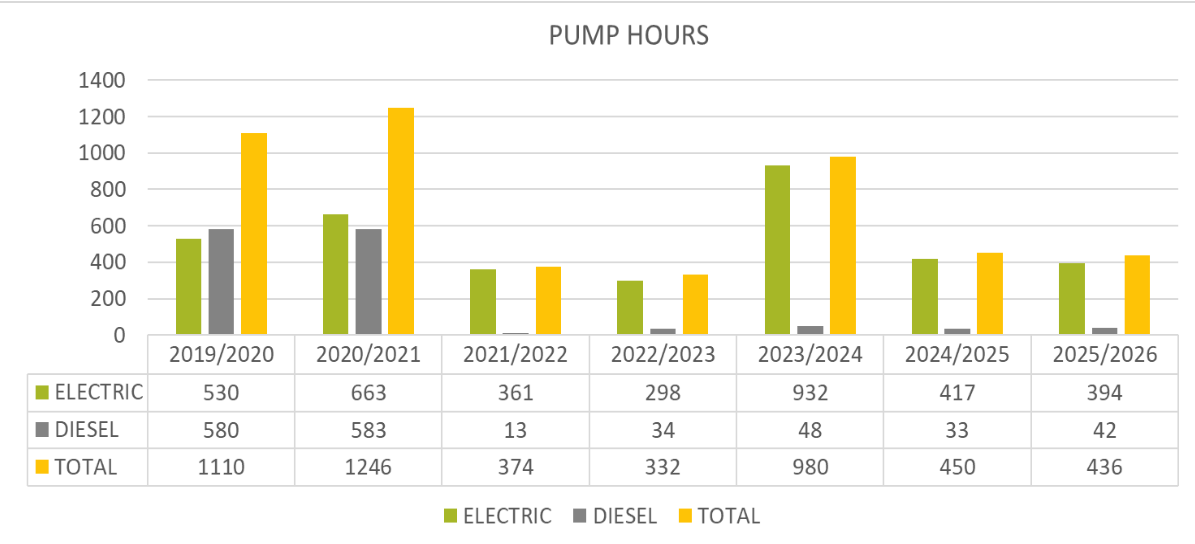
Station	Built	Pump 1	Pump 2	Pump 1 O/H	Pump 2 O/H	Control Panel
Nightlayers	1952	1952	1996	2012	1996	1979
Station	**Weedscreen Bars**	**WSC**	**WSC O/H**	**WSC Controls**		
Nightlayers	2010	1996	2024	2026		

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The pumps range from 29 to 73 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 13 to 29 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump refurbishment/replacement plan for the pumps that are overdue refurbishment. Having a plan in place and underway helps to secure further grant funding when it comes available, such as the recent IDB Recovery Fund. The pump control panel needs to be replaced and is likely to cost in the region of £20 to £30k.

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.

2. Pumping summary

2.1. Pumping Hours



	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
ELECTRIC	530	663	361	298	932	417	394
DIESEL	580	583	13	34	48	33	42
TOTAL	1110	1246	374	332	980	450	436

2.2 Pumping Station

The electric pump motor insulation resistance had improved at the last inspection but will continue to be monitored closely. This reading shows that the pump has some signs of water ingress and is likely to need overhaul or replacement.

The electrical control panel is 45 years old and need replacing to ensure its reliability. This is likely to cost in the region of £20k to £30k.

The weed screen PLC controller is due to be replaced imminently.

The ultrasonic level controller failed during this season and had to be replaced; a new duct is to be installed so that the sensor cable can be replaced.

3. Inspections

3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out during September 2025.

3.2 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Report was completed April 2024.

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Nightlayers	23-Apr-2024	23-Apr-2029

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:	**NIGHTLAYERS IDB**	**Subject:**	**HEALTH & SAFETY**
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

1. Introduction

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

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

2. Clarification of H&S accountabilities

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

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

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

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

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

3. Strengthening IDB H&S governance

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

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

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

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Site Safety Inspection

Nightlayers (Ni)

carried out on

Wednesday, 28 January 2026

by

AW Safety Management

Key Information	
Client:	Nightlayers (Ni)
Site:	Nightlayers Pumping startion Long Nightlayers Drove, Chatteris, PE16 6UP
Site Contact:	Afe Edgeley
Site Contact E-mail:	enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
Inspection date:	28/01/2026
Inspected by:	Elena Spataru
Introduction:	This health and safety Inspection Report is part of the annual support programme from AW Safety Management and is designed to review the practical implementation of health and safety arrangements within the Company. The purpose of the inspection was to assess systems, management controls, working practices and identification of hazards and the controls in place. The aim was to conduct an examination to ensure that best practice is used and there has been compliance within set standards and any relevant legislation. We plan our work to ensure that we have a reasonable expectation of detecting any significant control weaknesses, however, our processes alone are not a guarantee that all operational conditions / activities will be witnessed, this is particularly relevant for any off-site activities. The responsibility for maintaining suitable controls for the safety of employees and anyone else who may be affected and safe operation of the business rests with the management of the Company. Subject areas that require action are detailed in the 'Action Plan' section of the report. Each subject is given a brief outline and the suggested remedial action required, a target completion date (based on the priority rating) and the person responsible for ensuring that the action is addressed. The person responsible listed against the action is based on our visit to site and understanding of the Company structure. Each subject area is given a priority rating, which is based on the auditor/s knowledge, understanding & judgement and is selected to highlight areas of non-compliance and provide general guidance on safe working. Where applicable, a number of key photographs are included in the report, these are referenced to the relevant subject area reference number. These can be used as a reminder of conditions at the time of inspection and provide additional guidance on the action required.

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

Purpose of Inspection / Executive Summary

The opening meeting was held with Afe Edgeley.

Please see below recommendations following the site inspection.

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

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

Reference Number	Additional Controls / Actions / Comments	Supporting Photographs / Pictures	Person(s) Responsible	Risk Rating	Action Complete When / Who
01	It was observed that overhead lifting equipment, including chains and hooks, is present on site but not in use. If no longer required, this may create unnecessary clutter or risk of deterioration. It is recommended that unused lifting equipment is either removed from the area or stored correctly and inspected in accordance with lifting equipment requirements.			Medium	
02	It was observed that wooden ladders are present on site. Wooden ladders may deteriorate over time, are more difficult to inspect for defects and they present a high slip hazard. It is recommended that consideration is given to replacing them with suitable modern alternatives.			Medium	

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

Reference Number	Additional Controls / Actions / Comments	Supporting Photographs / Pictures	Person(s) Responsible	Risk Rating	Action Complete When / Who
03	It was observed that the emergency stop button signage is faded. This may reduce visibility and delay identification in an emergency. It is recommended that the faded signage is replaced to ensure the emergency stop can be clearly and quickly identified.			Low	
04	It was observed that a trailer load of straw is stacked at a significant height. This may create a risk of instability or falling materials, which could result in injury. It is recommended that loads are kept within safe height limits, and the trailer is emptied frequently to prevent excessive build-up.			Medium	

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

Reference Number	Additional Controls / Actions / Comments	Supporting Photographs / Pictures	Person(s) Responsible	Risk Rating	Action Complete When / Who
05	It was observed that straw, wood, and plastic materials are present on the premises. This may create slips, trips, and fire risks. It is recommended that the area is cleared and that good housekeeping standards are maintained to prevent the accumulation of waste materials.			Medium	
06	It was observed that the fire extinguisher inspection was overdue. This may result in equipment not functioning correctly in the event of a fire. It is recommended that the fire extinguisher is inspected by a competent person and that routine inspection schedules are scheduled and maintained.			High	

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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

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

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

2.5 If the Member also has a lead role for the Board (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:

NIGHTLAYERS IDB

INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATION

	As At 1st April 2026	
NIGHTLAYERS PUMPING STATION	3,219,876.00	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 Statement

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

Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

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

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

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

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

The Clerk
Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AH

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

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

Announcement made by: P Burrows - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 22nd September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

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

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

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

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 21/05/2025 27/05/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

WHITINGS LLP

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

Date 27/05/2025

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

	Agreed Yes	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.

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

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

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

20/05/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

B.1247

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

Chair

Clerk

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	203,735	257,563	*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	35,647	70,075	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	91,641	108,189	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	73,460	106,125	*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	257,563	329,702	*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	305,416	348,042	*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	1,100,000	1,100,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

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

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

AHWool

Date 09-05-2025

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

20/05/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

B.1248

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

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

In respect of **Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board – DB0059**

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:

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 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:	**NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

Actual Expenditure against Budget

For 2025/2026 the Board set a rate of 9.00p to raise a total of £54,983 in agricultural rates and special levies.

Actual expenditure for the year was £36,997 because of the dry summer and less than anticipated drain works.

As agreed at last year's board meeting the surplus for the year of £17,929 has been transferred to the Asset Replacement Fund.

Following the setting of the rates for 2025/2026 additional funding became available in respect of the Storm Recovery Grant, MLC were successful in acquiring additional funding. As part of the Asset Resilience package the Weedscreen Control Panel was refurbished at a cost of £11,967. Also, as part of the Mobile Pump package funding was approved for Access Improvements for the deployment of the Mobile Pumps. £2,841 is Included in Improvement works for the works completed and both projects have been 100% funded.

Note that we will be introducing a consistent naming convention for MLC and IDB Reserves during 2026/27, this will include some rationalisation of funds.

This will leave the General fund balance as of 31st March 2026 at £86,833. The Asset Replacement Fund as of 31st March is £97,929. The Development fund balance as of 31st March 2026 is £224,553. This position is reflected in the Boards financial statements and Annual Return which they are requested 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 1.

3. Highland Water Contributions

3.1 Under Section 57 of Land Drainage Act 1991 the Board can make a claim for funding to the Environment Agency for the additional costs of the onward management of water from the district's highland. It is at the Environment Agency's discretion if they pay the contribution and it is accounted for within the local team's annual maintenance budget.

When completing the budget proposal claims were estimated against the likely out-turn for 2024/2025 and the budgeted expenditure for 2025/2026. The highland water claim included within the rating estimates was £3,095.83.

Following the submission of claims for contributions the net sum of £(3,870.84) (£7,216.59 less £11,087.43 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) was netted off against the 2024/2025 claim based on the Boards' actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £6,657.75 in respect of 80% of the Boards' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/2026.

4. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B

4.1 During the year MLC were successful in securing Grant Aid on behalf of some of the IDB's that they administer. Specific works that meet the criteria to be Grant eligible were submitted and approved. The following work was done and was 100% Grant funded as a result:

Work Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
Nightlayers PS – Weed Screen Control Panel Refurbishment	£11,967	1.86p
Access Improvements – Mobile Pump Deployment	£2,841	0.44p
	£14,808	2.30p

5. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026:

5.1 Annual Return 2025/2026:

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

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

Appendix 1 Budget Review
Appendix 2 Payments for 2025/26
Appendix 3 Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/26

Appendix 1

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING - 2025/2026

		Approved Budget 2025/2026 £	Actual to 30/11/2025 £	Forecast to 31/03/2026 £
1	Insurances and telephone	2,425	2,834	2,834 A
2	Repairs and renewals	3,650	860	3,650
3	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	16,500	4,749	16,500 B
4	Fuel (oil and electricity)	18,500	3,604 C	18,500 D
5	District labour	5,000	-	5,000
6	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	7,500	3,451	7,500
7	Environment Agency Precept	3,720	3,720	3,720
8	Improvement works	8,000	-	18,000 E
9	Reinstatement of balances	-	-	-
		65,295	19,219	75,704
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, Development Charges etc	10,312	4,684 F	20,312 G
		54,983	14,535	55,392

Remarks

A - Includes increased premiums

B - Includes Engineers Estimates

C - Includes accounts to October 2025

D - Provision based on 2 year average plus increase in rates of 5% from October 2025

E -	Outline Business Case	8,000
	Weedscreen Control Panel	10,000
		18,000

F -	Includes:	
	Full Highland Water Claim	2,787

G -	Includes:	
	Full Highland Water Claim	2,787
	Storm Recovery Grant - T2B	10,000

Appendix 2

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling, health and safety contract and storm recovery tranche 1 claim	3,530.28
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2024/2025, planning and development applications)	1,468.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Finding fault on diesel pump and replacing batteries (Account from Allertons)	539.09
Middle Level Commissioners - Finding fault on pump panel and fitting level controller (Account from Pulsar)	2,327.81
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	285.84
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply remedial health and safety signage	69.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Board ID cards	14.74
Environment Agency - Precept	1,860.07
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2025	813.60
A Edgley - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	221.55
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,976.54
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	285.84
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid storm recovery T2a scheme works	63,629.99
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid received for storm recovery T2a scheme	(54,672.11)
G Ashman - Flail mowing	3,042.00
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,170.00
IMServ - Electricity meter operator agreement to 24th October 2026	44.71
IMServ - Electricity meter operator agreement to 24th October 2026	138.34
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2024-2025 accounts)	504.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, storm recovery tranche 2A claim, IDB change contribution and internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners 2024-2025)	3,957.82
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Weedscreen cleaner HSB insurance check)	108.24
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Discharge consent application - Floorspan)	129.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	2,985.37
Environment Agency - Precept	1,860.06
Middle Level Commissioners - Find fault on automatic weedscreen cleaner	338.83
Middle Level Commissioners - Assist digger move at Fernton Way	71.54
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	299.04
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	807.30
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	299.04
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2026	854.40
B J Plant Hire Ltd - Drain maintenance	3,252.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Discharge consent application - James Latham (Tungsten Properties))	54,500.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works	93.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of signage	13.42
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District Drains	694.68
Information Commissioner - Renewal of Data Protection registration	52.00
Mr A Edgley - District Officer's fee 2025-2026 including additional works and expenses	5,884.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	299.04
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	332.16
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, health and safety contract, storm recovery tranche 2b claim, ecological and environmental services	6,380.09
Corona Energy - Electricity supply	1,514.09
EDF Energy - Electricity supply	12,471.19
British Gas - Electricity supply	8,813.25
	133,260.63

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026
GENERAL FUND

2026				2025			
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		86,832.80
	Precept		3,720.13	2026	Rate income & Special levy	54,926.69	
				Mar-31	Interest on Deposit Accounts	1,439.16	
	Insurances	2,833.90			Highland Water Contributions -	2,786.91	
	Repairs & Renewals	2,997.91			Consents	250.00	
	Fuel	11,332.68			Grant-in-aid - Telemetry installation	-	
	Drainworks	12,276.79					59,402.76
	Contractors Charges	5,034.00			By Development Charges Account		
	Administration charge, Audit fee,				Maintenance	4,495.00	4,495.00
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	7,773.05	42,248.33				
					Storm Recovery Grant - T2b		12,769.88
	Improvement Works		12,769.88				
	Transfer to Asset Improvement Fund		17,929.30				
	Balance carried forward		86,832.80				
			163,500.44				163,500.44

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
Capital Provisions	1,100,000.00	Pumping Station		1,100,000.00
		Stock		165.88

Revenue Section

General Fund	86,832.80	Value added Tax - Refunds due		5,285.61
Development Charges Account	224,552.59	Sundry Debtors		4,711.96
Asset Replacement Fund	97,929.30	Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		1,991.84
Contributions Holding Account	1,399.41	Balance in hand -		
Sundry Creditors	13,537.07	Barclays - Treasurer's Account	17,988.66	
		Barclays - Business Premium Account	387,472.19	
		National Savings - Treasurer's Account	6,635.03	412,095.88
	1,524,251.17			1,524,251.17

Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board

Barclays - Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025			31st March 2026		
Balance brought forward		341,472.82	Payments made during the year		133,260.63
31st March 2026					
Receipts during the year					
Clerk's collection account	193,175.80				
Interest on deposit accounts	4,072.86	197,248.66	Balance carried forward		405,460.85
		538,721.48			**538,721.48**

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025		31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward	6,569.34	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2026			
Interest on deposit accounts	65.69	Balance carried forward	6,635.03
	6,635.03		**6,635.03**

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2026		24,368.75
Less unpresented cheques	30/03/2026 2025/27	6,380.09
Add outstanding lodgements		0.00
Balance per Trial Balance		**17,988.66**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**17,988.66**
Clients Premium Account	**387,472.19**
Treasury Deposit	**0.00**
	405,460.85

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook	**6,635.03**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**412,095.88**

Nightlayers IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return
Financial year ended 31st March 2026

					Per Annual
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**				
	General Fund		86,832.80		
	Development charges account		161,492.70		
	Contributions holding account		1,376.59		
	Capital Realisation Accounts		80,000.00		
				329,702.09	**329,702**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**				
	Agricultural rates		8,220.51		
	Special Levies		46,763.00		
	Penalty		0.00		
	Costs		0.00		
	Write-off		-56.82		
				54,926.69	**54,927**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**				
	Interest				
		General fund	1,439.16		
		Development charges account	2,676.57		
		Contributions Holding account	22.82		
	Highland Water		2,786.91		
	Discharge contributions		64,986.32		
	Consents		250.00		
	Storm Recovery Grant		12,769.88		
	Write back of Provisions		0.00		
				84,931.66	**84,932**
Line 4	**Staff costs**				
	Wages/salaries		0.00		
	National insurance contributions		0.00		
	Pension costs		0.00		
	Travelling expenses		0.00		
				0.00	**0**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**				
	PWLB - Principal		0.00		
	PWLB - Interest		0.00		
				0.00	**0**

Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	3,720.13		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	2,833.90		
	Repairs and renewals	2,997.91		
	Fuel	11,332.68		
	Drainworks	12,276.79		
	Administration	7,773.05		
	Development charges fees	108.00		
	Contractors charges	5,034.00		
	Improvements	12,769.88		
			58,846.34	**58,847**

Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	86,832.64		
	Development charges account	224,552.59		
	Contributions holding account	1,399.41		
	Capital Realisation Accounts	97,929.30		
			410,713.94	**410,714**

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 410,714.10

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures **must** agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	257,563	329,702	*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	70,075	54,927	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	108,189	84,932	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	106,125	58,847	*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	329,702	410,714	*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	348,042	412,096	*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	1,100,000	1,100,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	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 [signature]

Date 07/05/2026

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:	12
Meeting:	**NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Tuesday 19th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

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

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

Members are also reminded about the use of funds prior to setting the rate and the potential inappropriate use of the Development Account, together with the possible future implications concerning the availability of grant-in-aid for capital improvement works should the Board continue to use capital funds for revenue purposes.
Overall, there is a reduction on the 2025/2026 rate raised. Any savings made in the 2025/2026 budget should be transferred to a Plant Refurbishment Fund as a future contingency for works identified by M&E.

The estimated expenditure for the year is £48,370, equivalent to a rate of 7.50p, the rate for 2025/2026 was set at 9.00p.

Development charges account:
This is monies paid by developers who discharge directly into the district system from their development. Run-off from a developed area reaches the district system immediately, giving a greater call on the upkeep of watercourses to convey the increased flows and at the pumping station to evacuate them. The payment made is to take the increased flows in perpetuity and are for immediate or future works required because of the development. They are therefore "ring-fenced" for future specific works that can be directly related to dealing with the increased flows.
The use of the development charges account is therefore restricted to these types of works.
Their use for any other purposes could lead to funding problems if grant-in-aid schemes are developed – the Environment Agency could take the view that grant should be restricted based on the board using capital funding to subsidise revenue works.

Members are also reminded that they are elected/appointed to the Board to represent the agricultural/non-agricultural ratepayers within the district. Decisions should therefore be for the best interest of the Board and not influenced by other outside factors. Members should be aware of the need to declare interest or recuse themselves if this may be the case.

Members should also consider the impact of proposed development within the district and the impact this will have on the Boards drainage system and pumping station.

1. Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions

1.1 Consider the District Officer's fees.

The sum of £5034.00 was allowed for services of the District Officer 2025/26

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

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

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

The precept for 2025 was £3,720.13.

3. Determination of land for rating purposes, rate arrears and contributions from developers

3.1 Shown in Appendix 1

4. Estimates for 2026/27

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

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

5. Rate Requirements for 2026/27

5.1 Appendix 2 details the rate requirement that needs to be set and approved by the Board in order to raise sufficient rate and special levy income to cover the budget estimate.

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

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

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

Appendix 1

NIGHTLAYERS IDB Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes June 2026

2026-2027

Transfer value to Special Levy - £4907.553 per hectare		Area (Hectares)	Agricultural Land	Special Levies Fenland	Special Levies TOTAL	Rate W/Offs
	Opening Values (£)	588.155	**91,339**	**519,586**	**610,925**	
	Opening %		14.95%	85.05%	100.00%	
Location	Reason for change.					
Fenton Way, Chatteris	Change to aircraft hanger	7.171	-1,183	35,192	34,009	106.47
					0	
					0	
					0	
					0	
					0	
					0	
					0	
	Total determinations	588.155	-1,183	35,192	34,009	
	Closing Values (£)		**90,156**	**554,778**	**644,934**	
	Closing %		13.98%	86.02%	100.00%	
						£106.47

Appendix 2

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET PROPOSAL - 2026/2027

		Approved Budget 2025/2026	Actual to 31/03/2026	Proposed Budget 2026/2027
		£	£	£
1	Insurances and telephone	2,425	2,834	3,175 [A]
2	Repairs and renewals	3,650	2,998	3,800
3	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	16,500	12,277 [B]	17,000 [C]
4	Fuel (oil and electricity)	18,500	11,333	18,000 [D]
5	District labour	5,000	5,034	5,300
6	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	7,500	7,773	8,300
7	Environment Agency Precept	3,720	3,720	3,795
8	Improvement works	8,000	12,770 [E]	-
9	Asset Replacement Fund	-	17,929 [F]	-
		65,295	76,668	59,370
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, Development Charges etc	10,312	21,741 [G]	10,999 [H]
		54,983	54,927	48,370

Remarks

A -	Assume Increase of 10% in premiums.	
B -	Includes:	
	Flail Mowing	3,042
	Slubbing	2,818
	Fees - Planning and Development	3,338
	Conservation Officer	1,995
	Weed Control	1,085
		12,277
C -	Includes Engineering Items	11,300
D -	Based on 3 year average usage assuming a 20% Increase in rates from October 2026	
E -	Weedscreen Control Panel refurbishment *	11,967
	Access Improvements *	2,841
	Storm Recovery T2A Overprovision *	(2,037)
		12,770
F -	Surplus transferred to Asset Replacement Fund	17,929
G -	Includes:	
	Full Highland Water Claim	2,787
	Storm Recovery Grant	12,770
H -	Includes:	
	Projected Highland Water Claim	6,195

Appendix 3

Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

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

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 13.98%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Fenland District Council – 86.02%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £902.

In 2026/2027 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £6,449.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2026 - £104,762.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2026/2027 is £48,370 and equivalent to: -

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 7.50p and

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £41,609.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 9.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £46,763 on Fenland District Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

May 2026