BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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Administered by:

10th June 2026

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Wednesday 17th June 2026

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Ramsey Golf Club, PE26 1DD at 12pm on Wednesday 17th June 2026.

Please note that Ramsey Golf Club have a dress code of clean smart casual, a lunch will be at the conclusion of the meeting at approx. 1.30pm.

As you'll be aware, we administer over twenty 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 PSAg

Clerk to the Board

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Wednesday 17th June 2026 - 12:00pm

Ramsey Golf Club, PE26 1DD

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 - 9	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership	Pages 10 - 12	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 13 - 17	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	To follow	Clerk
7	Chairman's Items	Verbal	Chair
8	Consulting Engineer's Reports	Pages 18 - 31	Clerk or Engineer
9	Health & Safety	Pages 32 - 38	Chair
10	District Officer's Report	Verbal	DO
11	Governance • Accounts Return for 2024/2025 • Auditors report for 2024/2025 • Annual Governance Statement	Pages 39 - 41 Pages 42 - 46 Page 47	Clerk
12	Finance Report: looking back • Budgeting • Payments 2025 • Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026	Pages 48 - 49 Page 50 Pages 51 - 52 Pages 53 - 56	Clerk
13	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 57 - 58 Page 59 Page 60 Page 61	Clerk
14	Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 16th June 2027 12pm	Verbal	Chair
15	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.)

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Benwick IDB held at Ramsey Golf Club on Wednesday 18th June 2025

PRESENT

M Jackson (Chair)	A Miscandlon (FDC)
E Jackson (Vice-Chair)	R Stacey
R Brereton (HDC)	T Taylor (FDC)
D Caton	N Thacker
R Few	G Wakeham

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

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from T Caton, R Dring, P Fountain, Ms D Laws (FDC) and M Smalley.

B.1327 Declarations of Interest

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

The District Officer declared an interest in items relating to the District Officers fee.

Mr Miscandlon declared an interest (as a Member of the Middle Level Board) in any matters relating to the Middle Level Commissioners.

B.1328 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 19th June 2024. are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1329 Matters Arising

None raised.

B.1330 Constitution & Membership

G Wakeham confirmed that he would be steeping down from the Board after this session, creating a vacancy in membership. He added that T Noble, his tenant, was willing and able to join the Board should that be acceptable.

P Burrows highlighted that ADA had now updated their Good Governance Guide for IDB Board Members and distributed a hardcopy, adding that he understood a training package would be developed and made available by ADA later in the year.

RESOLVED

T Noble be co-opted to the Board
M Jackson reappointed as Chairman
E Jackson reappointed as Vice Chairman
R Few reappointed as District Officer

B.1331 Clerk's Report

P Burrows highlighted to the Board that the government had recently announced a long-awaited consultation on flood funding policy reform. It has been long felt that the Partnership Funding policy, introduced in 2011, has been overly complex and deficient in expediting efficient delivery, despite for IDBs largely being a financially positive policy as it removed the 45% grant cap that existed beforehand.

He added that the consultation seeks views on proposals to reform the floods funding approach and resolve those challenges by:

• Introducing a contribution free allowance so all flood and coastal erosion risk management projects have the first £3 million of their project costs fully funded by government.
• Applying a flat rate of 90% Defra funding to project costs above £3 million.
• Fully funding projects to refurbish existing assets which currently find it challenging to attract funding.

He added that project prioritisation would be important, given that the call on government funding from all potentially eligible projects typically exceeds the total amount of funding available from the government. Competition for government funding is likely to increase under the proposed new approach, given the more generous approach proposed to notionally funding projects.

He added that he would be providing a consultation response on behalf of the MLC and administered IDBs but also encouraged members to review and respond by the deadline of 29th July 2025, with the proposed implementation date being 1st April 2026.

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

Fens Reservoir

Paul Burrows introduced the paper and outlined that whilst not directly affected, the Board will have an indirect interest given they pump water into the Middle Level Commissioners system which will be the reservoir's primary source of water. He added that the recommended resolutions are to cover the eventuality that the Board's interests need legal support.

RESOLVED

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

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

B.1332 Environment Officer's Report

M Lakey introduced the report highlighting the new service package arrangement and increase fee, highlighting that this has been developed to help IDBs meet their minimum statutory compliance. He reported that the BAP was a legal requirement and meeting has been held with the Chairman as part of the review and update. He also advised the Board on the approach they ought to take regarding future bank-slips and the need for prompt action should piling be needed in order to reduce the likelihood of needing water vole displacement which add costs and working window constraint to such works. He highlighted the Board's culvert policy with culverting being a last report. He added that the majority of the operational environmental requirements were dealt with by him in his role on behalf of the Board.

B.1333 Consulting Engineers' Reports

M Lakey provided an overview of the Consulting Engineer's reports highlighting the proposed drain maintenance and weed control programme and the works recommended by the M&E Engineer. He highlighted that the Board would need to make their own arrangements for Pumping Station weed-pile clearance as this was no longer a service MLC could safely offer to IDBs. D Caton asked whether 'Marley Hill' had been looked at as yet. M Lakey advised that it had not as yet.

The Chairman asked whether there had been confirmation of IDB Fund (Tranche 2b) government grant as yet as this has not been confirmed when he met with the Responsible Finance Officer to discuss the budget and rate. M Lakey confirmed that a grant agreement for a package of IDB Pumps & Channels works for delivery in 2025/26 is now in place and that many of Benwick IDB's works had been included. He and the M&E Engineer were now planning delivery. He added that the Board's channel works within this package were the subject to needing road closures and this presented a risk to delivery.

P Burrows added that it was important that the Board understand the delivery and financial risk. He added that whilst his team would do all they can to deliver works using this funding within the challenging timescale involved, there was a risk that costs would increase beyond the grant available and factors such as road closures, or supplier issues could mean that aspects of delivery become impractical. He added that it is therefore important the Board budget and rate to cover this risk, then review matters next year.

Board Members were comfortable with this approach and the Chairman was grateful for the MLC team's efforts on behalf of the Board.

B.1334 Health & Safety

M Lakey reported that all matters highlight, whilst minor in nature, are all in hand.

B.1335 District Officer's report

R Few had nothing to add to M Lakey's earlier update.

Members raised the appearance of the Board's stations highlighting the doors, facias and fencing would benefit from painting. M Lakey highlighted that this was housekeeping that some Board's undertook directly via volunteer efforts to keep costs low. Members did not come forward with a volunteer approach therefore instructed M Lakey to seek a quote for such work from BJ Plant for the Chairman to authorise given this is a item not specifically budgeted for.

B.1336 Governance

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

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

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

b) Review of Internal Controls

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

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

c) Authorisations

The Board considered the review of authorisations.

RESOLVED

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

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

e) Responsible Finance Officer

RESOLVED

The Board considered and approved the recommendations that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

f) Policy Reviews & DPO

The Board considered the review of the policies.

RESOLVED

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

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

iii) 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.

iv) Continue to index link insurance valuations.

g) IDB1 and Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

The Board noted and supported the IDB1 return submitted on their behalf.

The Board noted and approved the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement.

g) Exercise of Public Rights

Paul Burrows referred to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and Right to inspect the Annual Return.

h) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

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

RESOLVED

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

B.1337 Finance Report – Looking Back

The Board considered the paper from their Responsible Finance Officer. P Burrows enquired as to whether anyone had been fulfilling pump attendant duties at Ibbersons Pumping Station. D Caton advised he had been popping in occasionally alongside his other duties.
RESOLVED

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

B.1338 Finance Report – Looking Forward

The Board considered the paper from their Responsible Finance Officer. The Chairman advised that he had discussed the draft budget with the RFO and at that point there was uncertainty regarding whether the government grant would be finalised. He added that the initial conversation had been with a view to a slight increase in the rate.

He added that he felt it important that even with the government grant in a more certain place, it was important for the Board to ensure they had sufficient reserves to act if anything goes wrong given the aging nature of the pumps.

The Board unanimously agreed the budget and rate as recommended.

RESOLVED

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

b) District Officer fees agreed to pay up to the sum of £672.

c) Pumping Station duties agreed to pay up to the sum of £1210. D Caton to take on duties at Ibbersons Pumping Station.

d) Drainage rates:

i) That a total sum of £131,978 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

ii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are 67.75% and 32.25% respectively.

iii) That a rate of 25.50p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

iv) That a Special levy of £3,381 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council and £39,185 on Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.1339 Middle Level IDB Change

P Burrows summarised the work and referred to the report that was sent to Members separately. G Wakeham highlighted that collectively we can't stay as we are and need to look forward. R Few agreed but added that bigger was not necessarily better. T Taylor outlined the local government reform options that are being considered highlighting that any future councils will likely have less councillors to consider for appointment to IDBs. The Chairman concluded that we need to investigate options and the Board were supportive of doing so.

RESOLVED

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

B.1340 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next meeting of the Board will be 17th June 2026, 12:00 at Ramsey Golf Club

B.1341 Any Other Business

D Caton asked about irrigation from the Middle Level watercourses and weed management approaches given the restrictions that has just been announced. M Lakey outlined the current challenges and the weed management approach.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**BENWICK IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Wednesday 17th June 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	11			4
Actual	11	3 FDC	14	
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 Caton	Ratepayer	
2	Ricky Dring	Nominee of Ratepayer (Lavenham Fen Farm)	
3	Reg Few	Ratepayer	District Officer
4	Philip Fountain	Ratepayer	
5	Edward Jackson	Ratepayer	Vice Chairman
6	Martin Jackson	Ratepayer	Chairman
7	Michael Smalley	Nominee of Ratepayer (DJ/MO Jackson)	
8	Robert Stacey	Ratepayer	
9	Nigel Thacker	Ratepayer	
10	Tom Caton	Nominee of Ratepayer (J A Caton & Sons)	
11	Thomas Noble	Ratepayer	

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

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

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

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	Alex Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor
2	Tim Taylor	FDC	Councillor
3	Dee Laws	FDC	Councillor
4	Awaiting appointment	HDC	

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	18/6/2025	19/6/2024	13/6/2023	1/12/2022
1	David Caton	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	Ricky Dring	Apologies		Apologies	
3	Reg Few	Present	Apologies	Present	Apologies
4	Philip Fountain	Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies
5	Edward Jackson	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
6	Martin Jackson	Present	Present	Present	Present
7	Michael Smalley	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
8	Robert Stacey	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
9	Nigel Thacker	Present	Apologies	Present	
10	Tom Caton	Apologies	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Thomas Noble				

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	Martin Jackson	Apologies	Present	Apologies	

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	18/6/2025	19/6/2024	13/6/2023	1/12/2022
1	Roger Brereton (HDC)	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	Alex Miscandlon (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
3	Tim Taylor (FDC)	Present	Present		
4	Ms D Laws	Apologies	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 In appointing the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Board is expected to follow the principles within the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve in any one post for more than ten years. The tenure of the current Chairman is 5 years, and the tenure of the current Vice Chairman is 1 years.

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

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

4. Composition and amalgamations

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

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

5. Training

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

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

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

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

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

Author Name: Gemma Ashby
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**BENWICK IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 17th June 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

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

1. MLC Overview

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

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

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

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

2. MLC Services to IDBs

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

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

3. Policy Reviews

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

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

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

4. Waste Exemptions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This proposal aims to provide:

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

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

6. Data Provision

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

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

7. Electricity

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

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

8. IDB 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:	8
Meeting:	**BENWICK IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**Wednesday 17th June 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice from MLC.
B. Liaise with the Consulting Engineer to agree project scope and timescales for a capital refurbishment project.
C. Consider the recommendations for the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and grant funding and to confirm acceptance of recommendations to the Consulting Engineer.
D. Arrange weed pile clearance for the upcoming pumping season

1. Enforcement & Compliance Overview

Our Enforcement and Compliance Officers Dave Coles and Tony Payne joined us on the 23 June 2025 as a job share. They are currently investigating cases across 22 boards plus Middle Level Commissioners.

We have a total of 102 investigations of which 47 are currently active including:

- 29 surface water or surface water and foul discharges,
- 12 byelaw cases.

The Officers will also be taking over some aspects of Navigation Enforcement.

Since joining they have successfully recovered £445,000 of outstanding discharge contributions across IDBs and the MLC.

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

2. Summary of Key Planning Issues

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

Refer to Appendix 2 for more details.

3. Technical Services Overview

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

4. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

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

Works delivered for this district include the following:

- Weedscreen and pump overhauls
- Control panel replacements
- Culvert improvements

5. New FCERM grant funding guidance

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

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

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

Project types that are eligible for grant funding include:

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

<u>Asset Refurbishment Projects</u>

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

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

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

New or Improved Asset Projects

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

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

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

Applying for funding

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

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

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

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

Timescales

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

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

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

The Board has a project "Benwick System Study" identified on the FCERM investment programme with and indicative allocation of £30k for 26/27. The Engineer will review and scope this project which is most likely to lead to an asset refurbishment project that can be funded by GiA when further allocations are secured.

The Board is asked to liaise with the Consulting Engineer to agree project scope and timescales for a capital refurbishment project.

6. Capital Programme

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

It is recommended that the Board considers the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. Pumping station replacement costs are included on the capital programme. Further investment will be needed in the interim and will be developed further in line with the Key Health Indicators.

The Board is asked to consider the development of a capital investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.

Having a well-developed asset investment plan may improve the priority of future funding allocations.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

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

Appendix 1

Benwick 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
Beezlings 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	1,285.0	1285.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.9
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Benwick Mere 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	12,750.0	12750.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	65.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	67.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bettys Nose 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	2,550.0	2550.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	65.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	65.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Broadalls 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	2,125.0	2125.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	2.4	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	64.4
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Copalder 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	6,250.0	6250.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	95.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	95.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ramsey Mere 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	1,625.0	1625.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	4	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Drainage Channels		0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		6.4	**2.0**	**0**	**97**	**0**	**210**	**125**	**13**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**26,585**	**27,038**

Appendix 2

There have been 15 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been no applications for Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) or (to discharge to a watercourse) or infiltration device applications processed since the last meeting.

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		8
Meeting:	**BENWICK IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES**	
Date:	**Wednesday 17th June 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 the last Annual Meeting.

Advanced notices of this year's machine cleansing programme (approved by the Board at its 2007 meeting) have been sent out.

Point 52, Culvert Replacement. New 1800mm pipe in the bottom of picture & old silted up 900mm pipe in the top.

The Board was successful in securing funding for improvement works from the DEFRA IDB assets resilience grant and the mobile pumps package. This allowed for fully funded culvert replacement at point 52 on the Ramsey Road to the West of Benwick village. Historically Bettys Nose pumping station has struggled to evacuate the water from the village of Benwick, with long delays at the pumping station, before the water levels equalled the same as the ones in the village. Once the works commenced, it was evident the 900mm culvert was not only too small, but it was almost full with silt as water depths at the culvert would have required the drain to be dammed off and dewatered, to allow the old culvert to be cleaned out. The replacement 1800mm twin-wall plastic pipe, will provide a much greater water conveyance and suffer less from silting up in the future due to the greater diameter and part of the pipe being above water level.

Works carried out under the mobile pumps package included improvements to 4 of the Board's Pumping Stations. Hard standings were installed at each station to allow the deployment of mobile pumping equipment in the event of a pump breakdown.

A recent inspection of the Board's system has been undertaken. The inspection revealed that most watercourses are generally in a satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. The self-sown willow saplings, in the Lilyholt drain area, were treated with herbicide and forestry flailed during the machine cleansing works. They will be monitored for any future regrowth and managed as required.

Sporadic stands of reed and emergent aquatic vegetation are also evident throughout the district. It is recommended that Roundup herbicide is applied to drains within this year's phased machine cleansing works, and to any other Board's drains where it is deemed necessary to control the emergent aquatic weed growth and any self-sown saplings. A sum for the cost of Roundup treatment has been included within the estimated costs.

Flail mowing in advance of the machine cleansing works will be required to afford the machine operator maximum visibility. 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 Agricultural services, 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.

A provisional sum has also been included within the Board's estimated costs for any emergency cleansing, culvert clearance or bank reinstatement works that may be required later in the year.

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

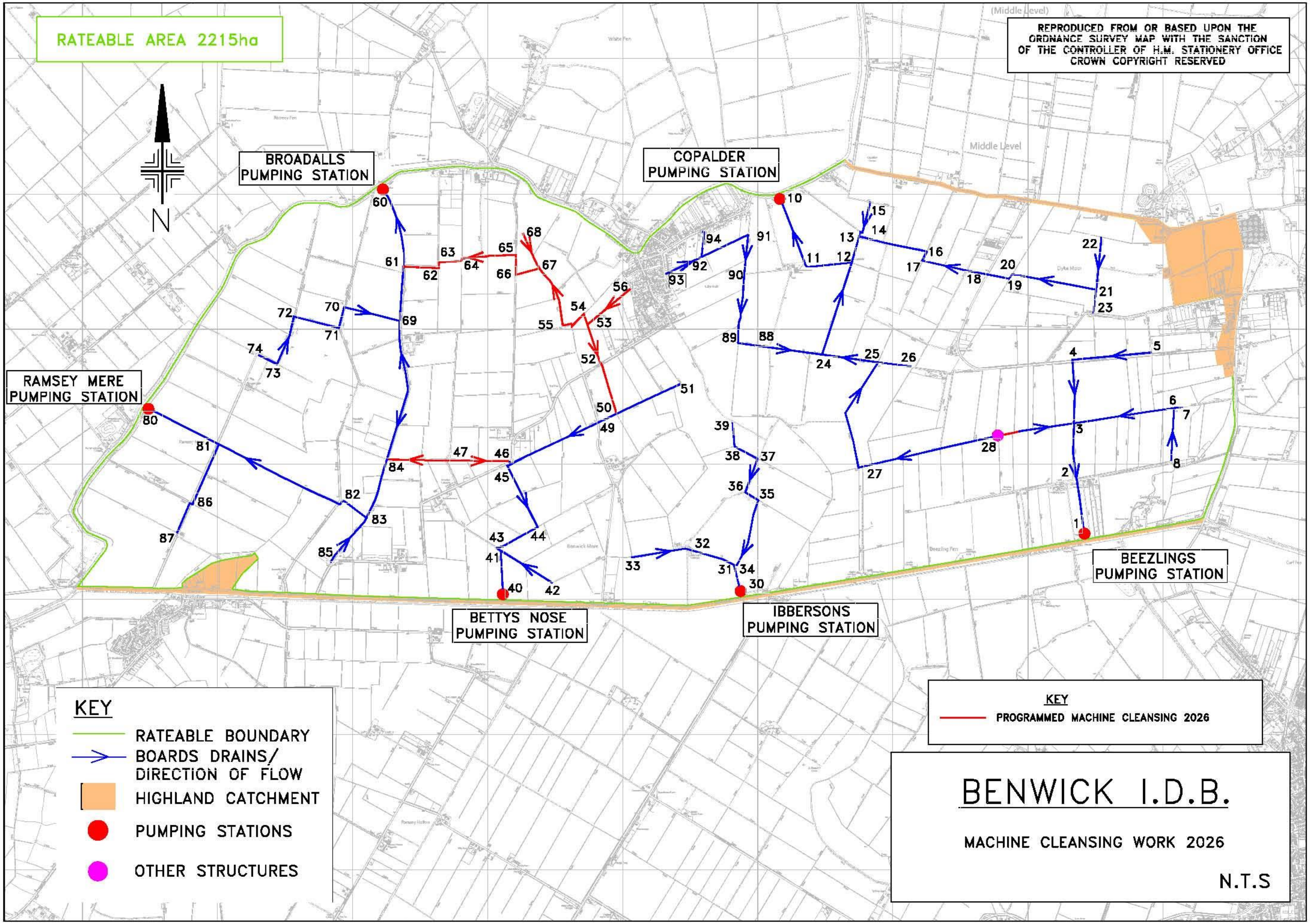
2.1 The estimated costs of this year's recommended maintenance works are as follows, see following plan for locations:

1 **Machine Cleansing (Phased Programmed Works)**					
Broadalls Area					
Reach 53-54-55-67-68	1100	m	@	1.40	1540.00
Reach 61-62-63-64-65-66-67	1250	m	@	1.40	1750.00
Betty's Nose Area					
Reach 46-47	450	m	@	1.40	630.00
Reach 50-52-53-56	1200	m	@	1.40	1680.00
Ramsey Mere Area					
Reach 47-84	450	m	@	1.30	630.00
2 Allow sum for Roundup application to control reed and emergent aquatic weed growth	Item		Sum		1500.00
3 Flail mowing in advance of machine cleansing works	Item		Sum		7000.00
4 **Provisional Sum** Allow sum for emergency Machine cleansing, culvert					

	Clearance or bank Reinstatement works	Item	Sum	2000.00
5	Fees for the inspection, Preparation & submission of report to the Board. Arrangement & supervision of herbicide applications & maintenance works	Item	Sum	2500.00
				£19,230.00

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

Author Name: Morgan Lakey
Role: Operations Manager


RATEABLE AREA 2215ha
REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED
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BROADALLS PUMPING STATION
COPALDER PUMPING STATION
RAMSEY MERE PUMPING STATION
BETTYS NOSE PUMPING STATION
IBBERSONS PUMPING STATION
BEEZLINGS PUMPING STATION
Middle Level
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
OTHER STRUCTURES
KEY
PROGRAMMED MACHINE CLEANSING 2026
BENWICK I.D.B.
MACHINE CLEANSING WORK 2026
N.T.S

Appendix 4

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**BENWICK IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**
Date:	**Wednesday 17th June 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, Ramsey Mere Pump & Motor Overhaul plus Bosker Bandit Overhaul & Panel. Copalder Bosker Weedscreen Trolley & Grab Overhaul and New Panel. Pump Control Panels at Broadalls and Bettys Nose. 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 at Ramsey Mere 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					Weedscreen			
Station	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Motor O/H	Controls	Weedscreen Bars	WSC	WSC O/H	Controls
Beezlings	1964	1964	2011	2011	1992	2019	2019	2019	2019
Benwick Mere/ Ibbersons	1954	1954	1987	1987	1988	1954	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bettys Nose	1977	2009	2009	2009	2026	2009	2009	2009	2009
Broadalls	1974	2022	2022	2022	2026	2011	2011	2011	2011
Copalder	1953	1954	2006	2023	1982	2003	2003	2026	2026
Ramsey Mere	1969	1969	2026	2026	1993	1999	1999	2026	2026

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The pumps range from 4 to 72 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 5 to 39 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump and control panel refurbishment/replacement plan for the pumps and controls that are overdue refurbishment. Having a plan in place and underway helps to secure further grant funding when it comes available, such as the recent IDB Recovery Fund.

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

1.2 <u>Weed Pile Clearance</u>

MLC are currently unable to offer weed pile clearance.
Please arrange weed pile clearance for the upcoming pumping season.

High build-up of weed causes both weed screen and pump issues. When the weed is allowed to build up too high it can fall back into drain causing frequent pump starts which heavily increases wear and electricity costs.

1.3 <u>Pumping Stations</u>

Broadalls

The pump control panel and level probes have been replaced and the lighting replaced with LED at the station.

The siphon breaker needs to be overhauled, and the siphon breaker drainpipe replaced as it is leaking within the station.

Ramsey Mere

The pump and motor have been overhauled. The pump casing and bolts were heavily corroded and close to failing. The weedscreen cleaner has had a full overhaul complete with new control panel.

Benwick Mere

The station pumping plant appears to be mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition. The screen here needs to be cleaned regularly as if not the pump will hunt causing unnecessary wear.

The pump, weed screen and control panel are all overdue replacement and should be included in future investment plan.

Bettys Nose

The pump control panel and level probes have been replaced and the lighting replaced with LED at the station.

Copalder

The weedscreen cleaner has had a full overhaul complete with new control panel.
There have been some intermittent faults with the pump control panel phase failure system, and the supply electricity meter has failed.

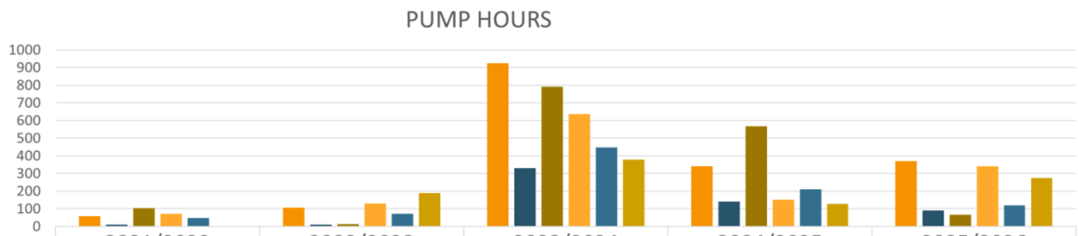
The electricity meter exchange at Copalder is booked in with energy assets for 9th June 2026 at 11am after meter fault was reported on last inspection.

Beezlings

There was a small control panel repair this period, otherwise the station pumping plant appears to be mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

The last routine inspection at Beezlings Pump Station took place 9th February 2026. Recommendations / remarks include: 1) The weed pile needs clearing. 2) PFC Capacitor has failed and blown the fuses. 3) Probes corroded require new stainless. 4) Recommend siphon strip & clean.

2. Pumping summary



	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Beezlings	58	106	925	340	370
Benwick Mere	11	10	330	141	90
Betty’s Nose	104	12	792	567	66
Broadalls	70	130	636	150	340
Copalder	47	70	447	210	120
Ramsey Mere	1	188	378	126	275

3. Inspections

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

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

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Beezlings	29-Mar-2024	29-Mar-2029
Benwick Mere/ Ibbersons	29-Mar-2024	29-Mar-2029
Bettys Nose	17-Jan-2025	17-Jan-2030
Broadalls	22-May-2024	22-May-2029
Copalder	29-Mar-2024	29-Mar-2029
Ramsey Mere	17-Jan-2025	17-Jan-2030

4. Water level Management

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

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

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	9
Meeting:	**BENWICK IDB**	**Subject:**	**HEALTH & SAFETY**
Date:	**Wednesday 17th June 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

1. Introduction

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

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

2. Clarification of H&S accountabilities

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

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

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

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

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

3. Strengthening IDB H&S governance

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

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

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

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Health & Safety Workplace Inspection

Benwick IDB

carried out on

Monday, 12 January 2026

by

AW Safety Management Ltd

Key Information	
Client:	Benwick IDB
Site:	Chapel Farm, PE15 0UZ
Site Contact:	Reg Few
Site Contact E-mail:	enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
Inspection date:	12/01/2026
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 Date**
High	Serious 'material breach' of legislation and / or serious and imminent danger to persons	**0-3 Months**
Medium	Significant control weakness exposing persons to moderate degree of risk	**3-6 Months**
Low	General guidance or areas where there are opportunities to implement better practice and reduce exposure to risk	**6-12 Months**

Executive Summary / Additional Comments

The meeting was held with Reg Few.

It was pleasing to see that new warning signage identifying the major hazards has been installed.

Please see below recommendations following AW Safety visit. If you have any queries, please contact us at support@awsafety.co.uk.

Action Plan					
High Priority			0-3 Months		
Medium Priority			3-6 Months		
Low Priority			6-12 Months		
Reference Number	**Additional Controls / Actions / Comments**	**Supporting Photographs / Pictures**	**Person(s) Responsible**	**Risk Rating**	**Action Complete When / Who**
1.	Some safety signage onsite is faded due to sun damage and the elements. Advise that a survey of all sites signage is performed and any faded signage replaced or removed if not required, so that the visual impact of any safety signage onsite is not lost. Although this action has been graded at a low risk, it is advised that this action is taken as soon as possible / 1-4 weeks.			Low	
2.	An expired certificate of Employers Liability Insurance has been observed. A display of this certificate in pumping stations is not mandatory (this can be made accessible electronically to employees), but if displayed, ensure it is in date.			Low	

General Comments	
Audit Carried out on Behalf of:	AW Safety Management Ltd / IRM Safety Ltd
Contact Information (Edwinstowe Office):	Edwinstowe House High Street Edwinstowe Mansfield NG21 9PR 01623 821516
Contact Information (Brampton Office):	Low Cross Buildings 4 Low Cross Street Brampton Cumbria CA8 1NP 01697 270020
Contact Information (Boston Office):	Boston Enterprise Centre Venture House Enterprise Way Boston Lincolnshire PE21 7TW 0330 2237470
Website:	www.awsafety.co.uk / www.integratedrisk.org.uk
Note:	It is important to note that this Audit Report highlights conditions at the time of the visit at the premises detailed on the front cover of the report. It remains the responsibility of the management and staff within the business to make known to the auditor any potentially unsafe conditions or practices which were not apparent during the Audit, or that may take place at any off-site location. It is the ongoing responsibility of management to ensure that the business and its employees operate safely at all times and that any day-to-day health and safety issues are addressed immediately. Any queries or inaccuracies with this report should be raised immediately with the auditor.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**11**
Meeting:	**BENWICK IDB**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Wednesday 17th June 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 to consider the comments of the auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2025. (Appendix 1)

1.4 The Board are reminded that Whitings LLP were appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28). The Board is asked to act on the advice of the Auditor within its decision making.

1.5 The latest report of the Internal Auditor is available on the MLC website for the consideration. This report covers the MLC and all administered IDBs.

2. Internal Controls

2.1 Within the financial operations at the Middle Level offices there are a series of controls in place to ensure the segregation of duties, so as far as practical within a small workforce, that no one person has control of a single operation from start to finish. The Internal Controls are available via the website within the 'Governance' section on the Board's page.

2.2 Note the Financial Regulations for the Board is also available on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk

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

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

2.5 If the Member also has a lead role for the Board (e.g. Chair/Vice Chair) then it is important that the Board puts in place safeguards to ensure a separation of duties, particularly being clear on who is acting as lead client for the contractor.

3. Risk Assessment and Insured Values

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

BENWICK IDB
INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2026	
BEEZLINGS PUMPING STATION	1,703,057.00	
BENWICK MERE PUMPING STATION	1,516,111.00	
BETTYS NOSE PUMPING STATION	1,742,618.00	
BROADHALLS PUMPING STATION	1,590,655.00	
COPALDER PUMPING STATION	2,243,146.00	
RAMSEY MERE PUMPING STATION	1,412,087.00	
	10,207,674.00	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 assertion the authority needs to have taken the following actions in respect of the previous annual return:

Exercise of Public Rights: The authority provided for the exercise of public rights set out in Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Part 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the RFO to have published including on the authority's website or other website:

- Sections 1 and 2 of the annual return
- A declaration that the status of the statement of accounts is 'unaudited;' and
- A statement that sets out details of how public rights can be exercised, as set out in Regulation 15(2)(b), which includes the period for the exercise of public rights.

5.3 In addition, a notice of the conclusion of the external auditor's limited assurance review of the annual return, together with relevant accompanying information, has been published in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. We also display the 'Local Authority Accounts – A Summary of Your Rights' with the notice.

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

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

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

Appendix 1

Benwick 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 Benwick 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 Benwick Internal Drainage Board

The Clerk
Benwick 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

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

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

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

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

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

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 06/06/2025 17/06/2025 20/06/2025

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: G. PEECH - WHITINGS LLP

Date: 20/06/2025

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✔		*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✔		*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✔		*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✔		*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✔		*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✔		*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✔		*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✔		*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A — *has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

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

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

18/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

B. 1337

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

Chair [signature]

Clerk [signature]

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

BENWICK 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	195,590	152,791	*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	98,056	134,459	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	4,567	73,819	*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	8,804	8,804	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	136,618	121,499	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	152,791	230,766	*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	224,787	259,971	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,710,719	3,710,719	*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	41,850	33,787	*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 05 06 2025

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

18/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

B.1338

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 **Benwick Internal Drainage Board – DB0007**

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:

BENWICK 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	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:		12
Meeting:	**BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**	
Date:	**Wednesday 17th June 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Budgeting review within Appendix 1.
B. Note the Highland Water contributions
C. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 2.
D. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/2026 within Appendix 3.

Finance Officer's review and key messages

Actual Expenditure against Budget

For 2025/2026 the estimated expenditure for the Board was £131,978 and a rate of 25.50p was set to raise this through agricultural drainage rates and special levy. Included in the estimated expenditure was £77,000 worth of Capital Works of which £50,000 was to be funded through balances.

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. Details of works completed and 100% funded are set out in Table 4 below.

Net Expenditure in 2025/26 was lower than the budget. Drain works was under the original budget. Fuel costs were also lower than budget, following a dry summer and below average year for pumping volumes. Also, works budgeted for were completed and funded through the Storm recovery Grant.

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 £213,356. The Developers fund balance as of 31st March 2026 is £10,233. The Asset Replacement Fund balance as of 31st March 2026 is £36,877. 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 2

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 £970.00.

Following the submission of claims for contributions the net sum of £180.15 (£992.68 less £812.53 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) was netted off against the 2025/2026 claim based on the Boards' actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £876.99 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. As a result of the decisions made when setting the rates for 2025/2026 works that had already been started or was to be started meet the criteria to be Grant eligible. The following work was done and was 100% Grant funded as a result:

Work Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
Betty Nose Pumping Station - Control Panel replacement *	£20,702	3.99p
Broadalls Pumping Station - Control Panel Replacement *	£20,702	3.99P
Copalder Pumping Station - Weed Screen Overhaul *	£43,829	8.45P
Ramsey Mere Pumping Station - Weed Screen Overhaul *	£28,114	5.42P
Ramsey Mere Pumping Station - Control Panel Replacement *	£32,199	6.21P
Culvert Improvements *	£333,954	64.37P
Mobile Pump Deployment - Access Improvements *	£9,168	1.77P
	£488,669	94.19p

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 3

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

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026

		Approved budget 2025/2026	Actual to 31/12/2025	Forecast to 31/03/2026
1	Rates and insurances	5,926	6,333 [A]	6,333
2	Repairs and renewals	11,500	6,917	11,500
3	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	32,724	6,954 [B]	32,724
4	Fuel	27,500	5,664 [C]	27,500
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	13,000	5,994	13,000
6	Loan Charges - Loan 1	8,804 [D]	8,804 [D]	8,804 [D]
7	Environment Agency - Precept	9,295	9,295	9,295
8	Improvement Works - Pumping stations	77,000 [E]	-	180,000 [F]
9	Improvement Works - Watercourse Repairs	-	-	310,000 [G]
10	Capital Reserve Fund	-	-	-
		185,749	49,960	599,156
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, rents etc	53,771	3,545	494,045 [H]
		131,978	46,415	105,111
	Rate requirement			20.31 p
	Rate set	25.50 p		

	Remarks	
A -	Premium higher than anticipated	
B -	Drainworks 2025/2026 includes for :-	
	Flail mowing	3,354
	Pumping Station Duties/DO Fees	3,226
	Slubbing	-
		6,580
C -	Actuals to November 2025	
D -	Loan 1:	80,000
	Date of advance, 14/12/18 - repayable over 10 years	
E -	Broadalls PS - Control Panel Replacement	12,000
	Ramsey Mere PS - Pump Overhaul	40,000
	Ramsey Mere PS - Weed Screen Overhaul	25,000
		77,000
F -	Broadalls PS - Control Panel	15,000
	Ramsey Mere PS - Pump Overhaul	50,000
	Ramsey Mere PS - Weed Screen Overhaul	50,000
	Betty's Nose PS - Control Panel	15,000
	Copalder PS - Weed Screen Overhaul	50,000
		180,000
G -	Culvert Enlargement	
H -	Includes Storm Recovery T2B Funding:	
	Pumping Stations	180,000
	Watercourse Repairs	310,000

Appendix 2

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling, health & safety contract and storm recovery - tranche 1 claim	6,784.28
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2024/2025, planning and development applications)	2,547.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Test operation of level controller and clean sensor (Broadalls pumping station)	115.04
Middle Level Commissioners - Fit level controller and test (Ramsey Mere pumping station) - (Account from Pulsar)	660.14
Middle Level Commissioners - Free off stuck pump and fault finding on pump panel (Ramsey Mere pumping station) - (Account from March Electrical)	720.75
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Environment Agency - Precept	4,647.27
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply remedial Health & Safety signage (Account from 3B Design & Print)	417.60
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2025	926.40
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Public Works Loan - Loan Repayment	4,402.04
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Taking quarterly electricity meter reads	205.39
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid storm recovery T2a scheme works	27,535.79
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid received for storm recovery T2a scheme	-25,245.81
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Middle Level Commissioners Fees - (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	206.10
IMServ - Meter operator agreement to 21st October 2026	134.14
IMServ - Annual half hourly electricity data collection to 21st October 2026	415.01
PKF Littlejohns LLP - Audit Fee (2024-2025 accounts)	756.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, storm recovery tranche 2A claim, IDB change contribution, internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2024-2025 accounts)	7,319.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Weedscreen cleaner HSB insurance check)	323.98
G Ashman - Flail mowing	3,146.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	6,635.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment (Copalder pumping station)	161.14
Environment Agency - Precept	4,647.27
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	330.00
Middle Level Commissioners Fees - (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	242.40
R Dring - Pumping station duties (Copalder pumping station)	672.00
N G Thacker - Pumping station duties (Betty's Nose pumping station)	672.00
G Ashman - Flail mowing	208.00
R G Few - District Officer's fee, pumping station duties and cleaning of weedscreen (Beezlings pumping station)	1,882.00
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2026	973.20
B J Plant Hire Ltd - Drain maintenance	13,497.60
Public Works Loan - Loan Repayment	4,402.04
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to fence (Benwick Mere pumping station)	132.91
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner and health and safety remedial works (Bettys Nose pumping station)	500.46
Middle Level Commissioners - Health and safety remedial works (Broadalls pumping station)	66.53
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner and health and safety works (Copalder pumping station)	504.42
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to pump panel, repair probe wiring, reset automatic weedscreen cleaner and health and safety remedial works (Ramsey Mere pumping station)	1,303.48
Middle Level Commissioners - Fault finding on pump panel and health and safety works (Beezlings pumping station)	706.10
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of 10 safe working signs for automatic weedscreen cleaners	67.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District drains	2,071.34
Middle Level Commissioners - Taking of electricity meter reads at all pumping stations	205.39
JP & SE White - Refund of drainage rates	320.23

J M Moulding - Pumping station duties (Broadalls and Ramsey Mere pumping stations)	1,614.00
Information Commissioner - Renewal of Data Protection registration	52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner (Bettys Nose pumping station)	484.93
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner (Beezlings pumping station)	305.51
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	355.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Bettys Nose pumping station)	1,028.24
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Beezlings pumping station)	1,028.24
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Benwick Mere pumping station)	739.04
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Broadalls pumping station)	1,458.24
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Copalder pumping station)	1,040.16
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Ramsey Mere pumping station)	1,436.06
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Bettys Nose pumping station)	6,737.78
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Beezlings pumping station)	1,928.56
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Benwick Mere pumping station)	1,529.70
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Broadalls pumping station)	1,736.30
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Copalder pumping station)	5,327.61
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (Ramsey Mere pumping station)	1,074.14
British Gas - Electricity supply (Bettys Nose pumping station)	561.82
British Gas - Electricity supply (Beezlings pumping station)	691.30
British Gas - Electricity supply (Benwick Mere pumping station)	291.50
British Gas - Electricity supply (Broadalls pumping station)	2,497.69
British Gas - Electricity supply (Copalder pumping station)	2,580.63
British Gas - Electricity supply (Ramsey Mere pumping station)	1,364.96
	114,392.72

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 3

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

2026			
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-		
	Precept		9,294.54
	Rates & Insurances	6,332.96	
	Repairs & Renewals	13,152.95	
	Fuel	13,672.28	
	Drainworks	25,766.12	
	Planning & Development Fees	753.75	
	Administration charge, Audit fee,		
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	1,481.76	61,159.82
	Public Works Loan Repayment -		
	Principal	8,213.66	
	Interest	590.42	8,804.08
	To Improvement Works:		
	Betty Nose Pumping Station - Control Panel replacement		20,702.27
	Broadalls Pumping Station - Control Panel Replacement		20,702.27
	Copalder Pumping Station - Weed Screen Overhaul		43,828.86
	Ramsey Mere Pumping Station - Weed Screen Overhaul		28,113.74
	Ramsey Mere Pumping Station - Control Panel Replacement		32,199.33
	Culvert Improvements		333,954.31
	Mobile Pump Deployment - Access Improvements		9,167.80
	Balance carried forward		213,355.87
			781,282.89

2025		
Apr-01	Balance brought forward	166,919.96
2026		
Mar-31		
	Rate income & Special levies	131,810.01
	Interest on Deposit Accounts	1,988.88
	Rents - Land	1,000.00
	Highland Water contributions -	1,057.14
	Development Charges Account - Maintenance	539.00
	Storm Recovery Grant - T2b	488,668.58
		791,983.57

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities		
Capital Provisions	3,685,145.21	
Public Works Loan Board - Loan outstanding	25,573.48	
		3,710,718.69

Assets		
Freehold Land	32,400.00	
Pumping Stations (Valuation)	3,678,318.69	
		3,710,718.69

Revenue Section

General Fund	213,355.87
Development Charges Account	10,233.07
Asset Replacement Fund	36,877.38
Commutation Fund (Doddington Road Culvert/Point 94)	16,957.29
Sundry Creditors	117,323.61
E. A. Grant-in-Aid (Creditor)	7,414.75
	4,112,880.66

Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		2,537.44
Value added Tax - Refunds due		100,933.34
Sundry debtors		608.25
Balance in hand -		
Barclays Current Account	40,000.00	
Barclays Business Premium	257,031.14	
National Savings	1,051.80	298,082.94
		4,112,880.66

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

				Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**			
	General Fund	166,919.96		
	Development charges account	10,645.23		
	Asset Replacement Fund	36,443.15		
	Commutation fund	16,757.62		
			230,765.96	**230,766**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	89,469.01		
	Special Levies	42,566.00		
	Penalty	0.00		
	Costs	-225.00		
	Write-off	0.00		
			131,810.01	**131,810**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	1,988.88		
	Development charges account	126.84		
	Asset replacement fund	434.23		
	Commutation fund	199.67		
	Rent	1,000.00		
	Highland Water	1,057.14		
	Consents	0.00		
	Storm Recovery Grant	488,668.58		
	Write Back of Provisions	2,299.32		
			495,774.66	**495,775**
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	8,213.66		
	PWLB - Interest	590.42		
			8,804.08	**8,804**
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	9,294.54		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	6,332.95		
	Repairs and renewals	13,152.95		
	Fuel	13,672.28		
	Drainworks	25,766.12		
	Administration	14,481.76		
	Improvement Work	488,668.58		
	Planning Fees	753.75		
			572,122.93	**572,123**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	213,355.87		
	Development charges account	10,233.07		
	Asset Replacement Fund	36,877.38		
	Commutation fund	16,957.29		
			277,423.61	**277,424**

Reconciliation	
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6	277,423.62

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

BENWICK 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	152,791	230,766	*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	134,459	131,810	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	73,819	495,775	*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	8,804	8,804	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	121,499	572,123	*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	230,766	277,424	*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	259,971	298,083	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,710,719	3,710,719	*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	33,787	25,573	*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

AAWoo1

Date 08/06/2026

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

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners</td><td>Item No:</td><td colspan="2">13</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting:</td><td>BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD</td><td>Subject:</td><td colspan="2">FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td>Wednesday 17th June 2026</td><td colspan="2">Officer Responsible:</td><td>Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett</td></tr>
</table>

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

For the rating estimates for 2026/2027 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known. Standard figures have been reviewed and approved by the Chairman. The engineers' estimates have been included for the drain maintenance programme.

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

After discussions with the Chairman the budget includes a provision for Future Capital works.

The budget proposal is a small decrease on the rate set for 2025/2026. 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.

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

The estimated expenditure for the year is £116729, equivalent to a rate of 22.50p, the rate for 2025/2026 being 25.50p.

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

1.1 To consider the District Officers fee 2026/2027.

The Sum of £1,210 was expensed for services of the District Officer for 2025/26.

1.2 To consider payments in respect of pumping station duties 2026/2027

The Sum of £4,033 was expensed for pumping station duties for 2025/26.

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

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

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

The precept for 2025 was £9,294.54.

3. Determination of land for rating purposes and rate arrears

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 3 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

BENWICK IDB

Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes — Jun-26

2026-2027

Location	Transfer value to Special Levy - £1260.456 per hectare	Area (Hectares)	Agricultural Land	Special Levies: Fenland	Special Levies: Hunts.	Special Levies: TOTAL	Rate W/Offs
	Opening Values (£)	2087.234	350,637	153,665	13,258	517,560	
	Opening %		67.75%	29.69%	2.56%	100.00%	
Location	Reason for change.						
						0	
Four Hundred Farm	GIS rate review	1.350	222			222	-56.61
						0	
Swan House Doddington Road Benwick	Change to caravan site	0.911	-135	1,148		1,013	69.52
						0	
						0	
						0	
						0	
						0	
						0	
						0	
						0	
						0	
	Total determinations		87	1,148	0	1,235	
	Closing Values (£)	2088.584	350,724	154,813	13,258	518,795	
	Closing %		67.60%	29.84%	2.56%	100.00%	
							12.91

Appendix 2

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET PROPOSAL 2026/2027

		Approved budget 2025/2026	Actual to 31/03/2026	Proposed Budget 2026/2027
1	Rates and insurances	5,926	6,333	6,966 A
2	Repairs and renewals	11,500	13,153	14,000 B
3	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	32,724	26,520 C	29,000 D
4	Fuel	27,500	13,672	25,000 E
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	13,000	14,482	14,750
6	Loan Charges - Loan 1	8,804	8,804	8,804
7	Environment Agency - Precept	9,295	9,295	9,480
8	Improvement Works - Pumping stations	77,000	488,669 F`	-
9	Improvement Works - Watercourse Repairs	-	-	
10	Capital Reserve Fund	-	-	12,245
		185,749	580,927	120,246
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, rents etc	53,771	495,553 G	3,520
		131,978	85,374	116,726
	Rate requirement			22.50 p
	Rate set	25.50 p		

Remarks

A - Assume Increase of 10% in premiums.

B - Includes:

Grass Cutting	3,240
Repairs and Maintenance	10,760
	14,000

C - Includes:

Pumping Station and District Officers Fees	5,243
Chemical Weed Control	1,726
Environmental Contribution	1,995
Flail Mowing	3,504
Slubbing	11,098
Engineering Fees	2,954
	26,520

D - Includes Engineering Items 19,230

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

F - Includes:

Betty Nose Pumping Station - Control Panel replacement *	20,702
Broadalls Pumping Station - Control Panel Replacement *	20,702
Copalder Pumping Station - Weed Screen Overhaul *	43,829
Ramsey Mere Pumping Station - Weed Screen Overhaul *	28,114
Ramsey Mere Pumping Station - Control Panel Replacement *	32,199
Culvert Improvements *	333,954
Mobile Pump Deployment - Access Improvements *	9,168
	488,669

G - Includes Storm Recovery T2B Funding * 488,669

Appendix 3

Benwick 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 -	67.60%
b)	Proportion to be borne by Special levies issued to Councils: -	
	Fenland District Council -	29.84%
	Huntingdonshire District Council -	2.56%
		32.40%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £3,507.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levies would raise £5,188.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2026 - £213,356.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2025/2026 is £116,726 and equivalent to: -

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 23.50p

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £34,832 and

c) a Special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £2,983

In 2025/2026 a rate of 25.50p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £39,185 on Fenland District Council and a Special levy of £3,381 on Huntingdonshire District Council.

Members should give consideration to the current level of balances, possible use of balances in the current year, to possible future expenditure and the appropriate level of balances required when setting the rate.

P BURROWS

Clerk of the Board

June 2026