RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Ramsey Upwood & Gt Raveley IDB
Held at the Old Nene Golf Club, Friday 29th May 2026 at 14:00

District Inspection

An inspection of the district took place prior to the Board meeting, and the following members were present along with the Clerk and J Clarke. Chair, Vice Chair, L Butler, S Bedford, M McKenna, T Bedford, J Edwards, A Butler.

Members visited the upper reaches of the Catchwater Drain to review the recent maintenance works between point 4 & 5 and asses the residual work needed at the entrance to the various culverts, as well as assess the need for continuing maintenance works along the drain. Members then visited all three pumping stations to inspect the control panel works that have been delivered and review the issues highlighted within the Consulting Engineer's report to inform decision making at the meeting. Several access issues were observed that will need to be addressed as part of pre-maintenance planning with potential support from MLC Compliance & Enforcement Officers.

PRESENT

Andrew Roberts (Chair)	Leo Butler
Richard Blackhurst (Vice Chair)	Jeffrey Clarke
Thomas Bedford	Jason Edwards
Ashley Butler	Mike McKenna

Mr Paul Burrows, the Clerk, was also in attendance and the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from S Bedford, S Cornwell, A Wagstaffe, C Wilkinson.

B.1477 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.

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Mr L Butler and Mr A Butler declared an interest in any matters relating to E. M. Butler Ltd.

Mr L Butler declared an interest in any matters relating to the District Officer.

B.1478 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2026 were reviewed and confirmed as a true record. The Chairman apologised and advised that he had yet to consider the water level issue that Mr Wilkinson highlighted (minute B.1457) and that it was still on his radar, advising he may ask MLC to undertake a survey.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9th January 2026 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1479 Constitution & Membership

Mr Burrows outlined that Huntingdonshire District Council have yet to confirm their outside bodies appointments following the recent elections, therefore currently there are no appointed members to the Board. Mr J Clarke was thanked for his service as an appointed member, and all agreed it would be valuable for him to continue to advise the Board as a non-voting member until there is an elected member vacancy.

RESOLVED

That the register of electors be approved for use in the upcoming elections.

B.1480 Clerk's Report

Mr Burrows provided an overview of his report highlighting in particular the Policy Review, Waste Exemptions and IDB1 items. He added that the Compliance & Enforcement Policy is now finalised and has been published and outlined the Standing Advice that now supports MLC and IDB regulation, one focused on system capacity and one on Byelaw strips.

Mr Burrows also provided an update on the Working Group focussed on IDB amalgamations within the Middle Level, noting a session for IDB Chairman is planned for 1st July 2026 before potentially bringing a proposal to the relevant IDBs for consideration and decision.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk's Report is noted.

That the Board delegates the approval and publication of new and/or updated policies to the Clerk.

B.1481 Environment Officer's Report

Mr Burrows highlighted a change in approach to the Environment Officer's reporting. There will now be newsletters developed and circulated to Members of all MLC administered IDBs with interesting and generic updates. An annual report for each IDB will now be specific to that Board and focussed on their Key Environmental Compliance Indicators as seen in the paper for this Board Meeting.

The Chairman reported a positive discussion with Ms S Lloyd to develop the draft Biodiversity Action Plan, adding that it was importance to embrace this topic, not just to stay the right side of the law but to also evidence that our operations have been working in favour of rare species so we can prove any doubters wrong.

Mr Burrows added that it was really important for Members to record their sighting on the iRecord app, highlighting that this really helps underpin the quality of IDB operations and if we can demonstrate thriving populations of key species then it supports the case for a more pragmatic approach to management of works and operations.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Officer's Report is noted.

The Biodiversity Action Plan is approved.

A biodiversity budget of £250 was set for a swift box for erection on the Chairman's building.

B.1482 Chairman's items

The Board supported that further maintenance works on the catchwater be authorised by the Chairman, including addressing the silt build-up at the entrance to culverts.

B.1483 Consulting Engineers' Reports

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

Enforcement and Compliance

The clerk advised that he would highlight the two Byelaw encroachment issues observed on the inspection to the Compliance & Enforcement Officers and ask them to link with the Chairman and District Officer.

M&E and capital works

The Board reviewed the paper from Mr D Bantoft the MLC Head of M&E and reflected on the inspection. The Board were grateful for the control panel works delivered by MLC on their behalf funded by grant.

In terms of Green Dyke the Chairman outlined that following the WhatsApp review by Board Members he had asked Mr D Bantoft to instruct the overhaul of the pump plus gearbox and motor. Mr Burrows added that this would be funded by reserves as outlined within the Finance paper.

Mr A Butler referenced previous conversations where the same issues are discussed in terms of a full refurbishment of the station and was uncomfortable with one quote for the overhaul. The Chairman added that he took advisement from the MLC Head of M&E who have undertaken due diligence and used these suppliers who have proved very efficient and reliable, adding that a cheap quote does not always prove the wisest decision for such a critical expenditure item.

Mr Clarke asked regarding the condition of the piles as seen on the inspection. The Chairman added that he's instructed a couple of suppliers to assess the issue and advise accordingly. Mr Burrows suggested he linked in with Mr D Fabb (Vice Chair Conington & Holme IDB) as they have recently addressed a similar issue at their station.

The Chairman asked what the Board would like to do regarding the weedscreen, either replace or refurbish. The Board were supportive of the Chairman seeking quotes and a decision to deliver be taken by the Chair and Vice Chair in conjunction with the Responsible Finance Officer later in the year, funded by reserves.

Mr A Barber highlighted the lack of ducting for the motor and therefore the health & safety risk associated with continued use of the pump given the station door is shut for security purposes. It was agreed that a demountable 30cm heigh mesh grill be fabricated to affix to the roller door.

The discharge flap issue noted within the report was discussed at length. Mr A Butler highlighted that it was unusual for a station to not have a secondary defence. The Vice Chairman pointed out that there was a secondary defence with the valve discussed at the inspection, however acknowledged that whilst use of this would stop flooding by the time it was operated the pump would have been sacrificed. It was concluded that the issue will be better understood when the pump is removed.

Referring to New Fen, the Chairman highlighted the new subsidence issue to the cabin at the station in addition to the chamber issue that was being monitored. It was agreed that the cabin base needs to be monitored for better understanding of the underlying cause.

The Board noted the corrosion on Upwood Common weedscreen however the higher priority was addressing the condition of Green Dyke.

Mr Burrows enquired about the provision of meter readings. Mr L Butler said that it was not as simple as people would expect with multiple photos needed. Mr McKenna advised taking and submitting a video as this is what he does with Sawtry IDB station readings.

RESOLVED

The Board agreed not to seek MLC service for taking meter readings and this is to be the responsibility of their District officer.

To progress the overhaul of Green Dyke PS pump, motor and gearbox.

For the Chairman to seek quotes for Green Dyke weedscreen repair or replacement with approval to commission from use of reserves with agreement of the Vice Chair and Responsible Finance Officer

For the Chairman to commission a bespoke mesh grill for Green Dyke doorway.

That the cabin at New Fen PS be monitored for subsidence, along with continued monitoring of the chamber.

B.1484 Health & Safety

Mr Burrows gave an overview of his report and the recommendations that the Board consider how it could strengthen its approach to health & safety. He added that MLC intended to develop a H&S service provision offer that would be discussed at the Chairman's meeting in December 2026 for potential roll-out from August 2027. The Board noted the paper and reaffirmed that the Chairman is the Board's H&S lead.

The Chairman added that he felt the latest inspection from AW Safety Ltd was over-the-top, citing the fire risk at the weedscreen detritus piles as an example. He added that he would welcome an MLC service provision once it is developed.

B.1485 District Officer's Report

The District Officer said he had very little to report that has not already been discussed either on the inspection or already at the meeting. He apologised for forgetting about the environmental session with the Chair and Ms S Lloyd to develop the draft Biodiversity Action Plan. The Chairman added that it was crucial he attend and contribute in future as it's important that the Board manage their environmental risks effectively.

Mr L Butler presented the flail mowing programme for 2026 and passed a copy to the clerk so notices could be issued.

B.1486 Governance

Mr Burrows asked the Board to consider the Governance report and that its content be noted.

RESOLVED

Completion of the Annual Return – 2024/2025

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

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

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

Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

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

The Board wish to continue to index link their pumping station valuations for insurance purposes.

Exercise of Public Rights

Mr 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.

Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Mr 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. It was 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.

IDB1 and Annual Governance Statement

The Board noted the IDB1 return for 2024/25 submitted on their behalf.

The Board noted and approved the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement.

B.1487 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board noted the position as laid out by their Responsible Finance Officer and were grateful for the work undertaken by MLC to secure grant and deliver works under the IDB Fund Tranche 2b. The Vice Chair proposed the accounts be approved and this was seconded by Mr McKenna and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

Accounts for 2025/26 were reviewed and approved with the Chairman authorised to sign the AGAR.

B.1488 Finance Report – Looking Forward

The Board noted the position as laid out by their Responsible Finance Officer.

Fees & Remuneration

RESOLVED

The Board approved to award up to the following fees and renumeration level for their contracted official(s) for 2027/28

Name	Role	Asset	2027/28 Max Value
Leo Butler	District Officer		£4,498

Precept

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

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

The precept for 2025 was £5,771.02

RESOLVED

That the Precept is paid in full.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2026/27.

Budget

The Board reviewed the proposed budget as recommended by their Responsible Finance Officer.

Rate Requirement for 2026/27

The Chairman reported that given the agricultural pressures at the moment he did not want to put the rate up. Mr A Butler asked regarding defaulting ratepayers and Mr Burrows highlighted that this is reported within the Board’s IDB1 return and was approximately £1.7k for 2024/25.

A rate of 31p was proposed by the Vice Chairman and seconded by Mr McKenna and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £101,619 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £51,108 and £50,512.

iv) That a rate of 31p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That Special Levies of £50,512 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.1489 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

The next full meetings of the Board are on 8th January 2027 and 28th May 2027 at the Old Nene Golf Club 14:00 start.

B. 1490 Any Other Business

The Vice Chair thanked the District Officer for his work, adding that it was hard work cleaning the weedscreen when he accompanied him for a day.

Mr P Burrows reported that the Ramsey Business Park Phase 1 consent had been issued and the Chairman asked for details of the final surface water management approach that the developers will install.

The meeting closed at 16:00

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Chair

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Date