CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Conington & Holme IDB
Held at Holme Village Hall, Wednesday 3rd June 2026 at 17:30

PRESENT

Peter Keates (Chair)	Raph Elmore
Timothy Alban (HDC)	Dan Fabb
George Allen (HDC)	John Racey
David Elmore	Toby Stimson

Mr Paul Burrows, the Clerk, was also in attendance and the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and said how good it was to see a full attendance.

The Chairman also welcomed Sophie Nott from the Rochester Bridge Trust (Conington Estate) and Martha Racey as observers.

Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

B.1185 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.

B.1186 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2025 were reviewed and confirmed as a true record.

In terms of Matters Arising, the Chairman outlined the inspection that took place at the head of the Board's district in Glatton (Point 72) following flooding concerns in January 2026. He, Mr D Fabb and two officers from MLC inspected the length of drain that is proving a constraint to any channel and bank maintenance. He added that the length is impossible to maintain and access, with neither landowner mindful to enable access. The Board does not have the financial ability to enforce action, and the length of drain provides little benefit to the overall efficient functioning of the Board's district.

Mr D Fabb proposed that the Board de-vest themselves (un-adopt) of this length of drain so they can focus their efforts and limited funds on the rest of the district where there are riparian owners willing to work with them and respect the Byelaws. This was seconded by J Racey and carried unanimously. Mr P Burrows added that once the district map had been updated a letter ought to be sent to the relevant riparian owners, along with a copy to the Parish Council, Cambridgeshire County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority) and Huntingdonshire District Council.

Mr P Burrows added that there was an action outstanding on Mr D Fabb in terms of providing MLC with all the paperwork associated with the refurbishment works for the Board's file and added that the routine M&E inspections by MLC will now recommence as per agreement last year.

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 4th June 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

That the Board de-vest (unadopt) a length of drain therefore moving point 72 downstream.

B.1187 Constitution & Membership

Mr P Burrows highlighted that there was no update from Defra regarding the reconstitution of the Board which has been submitted to them by the Environment Agency. Therefore, the Board still has two vacancies.

The Chairman proposed that Ms Martha Racey be co-opted to one of the vacancies. Ms S Nott confirmed that she was happy to remain a non-voting guest at future Board meetings.

RESOLVED

That Ms Martha Racey be co-opted to the Board.

B.1188 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.

The Chairman highlighted that they would need to consider waste management within the planning of maintenance works within the village that'll be discussed later in the meeting.

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.1189 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, and within these discussions it highlighted the importance of an environmental screening to inform the planning of maintenance works within the village, as this was considered high risk. He added that both he and Ms Lloyd wish to update the draft BAP after a site walkover and be comfortable with the context before the Board approve it. He invited Ms Racey to join the walkover.

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 considered as approved by the Board once the Chairman is comfortable with the document.

A biodiversity budget of £250 was set for a swift box for erection potentially on Mr J Racey's building.

B.1190 Consulting Engineers' Reports

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

Mr D Fabb referred to the inspection of the syphon at point 5 and whether there was likely eligibility for any peat related grants for works to assess and improve this structure. Mr P Burrows clarified that there is a very short window left for Defra's current peat grant bids so developing and submitting one would be impractical. He added that the best approach the Board could take is assess and cost up what they would like to achieve so there is a ready-made project for any future grant schemes.

The Board reviewed the paper from Mr D Bantoft the MLC Head of M&E. AS per the Matters Arising, Mr D Fabb committed to pass all paperwork to MLC to keep on file and the M&E routine inspections are to re-commence. Mr D Fabb added that the old telemetry is out of action and the refurb included new telemetry with associated app. MLC M&E will contact him for access.

RESOLVED

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

B.1191 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.

Referring to the H&S inspection report, the Chairman confirmed that the PTO drive had been disconnected to remove the trip hazard. Mr D Fabb added that it can be connected easily and used if needed in an emergency, as total reliance on MLC mobile pump stock was not a wise or resilient approach to take.

B.1192 District Officer's Report

The Board has no formal District Officer but effectively the Chairman has been undertaking similar functions.

The Chairman opened a discussion regarding the maintenance priorities for the year ahead. He started by recognising that there is significant maintenance work undertaken by ratepayers, particularly himself, Mr D Fabb and Mr T Simpson, on IDB drains at their expenses which is not reflected within the Board's accounts.

Reflecting on the need to tackle Conington village (Point 26), Mr R Elmore outlined how previously the Board had agreed to undertake works and this had never then been followed through with. The Chairman retorted that he can't fix what has or has not happened in the distant past but can develop and deliver a plan moving forward.

Mr T Simpson and Mr D Fabb suggested that downstream of the village (Points 22-25) needs to be tackled as priority in parallel with the environmental, waste management and H&S planning required for the village section (25-26). The Chairman added that Network Rail have already undertaken some works and may also need to address the culvert at point 22, however Mr D Elmore suggested improved flow down the brook may flush some of the silt from the culvert.

Mr R Elmore highlighted that there is hi-powered cable laid close to Points 32 and 34 where the markers are now missing and there may be an old concrete sewer infrastructure within the village section.

B.1193 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.1194 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board noted the position as laid out by their Responsible Finance Officer. Mr T Simpson proposed the accounts be approved and this was seconded by Mr J Racey 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.1195 Finance Report – Looking Forward

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

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 £2,318.17

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. The Chairman added that he had been through the draft budget in detail with Mr A Wool and there were lots to do to get the Board where it needs to be, but it is pleasing that the reserves in both Areas are in a more healthy position, alongside the improved resilience and more efficient operation of the refurbished pumping station. Mr P Burrows added that the internal loan arrangements are also coming to an end and there's still monies owed to the MLC for our 'crisis management' work a couple of years ago.

In terms of the proposed budget and associated rate for Area 2, Mr D Fabb highlighted that on such a small Board where there are few ratepayers beyond elected Board Members, it's taken as read that the rate may need to go up if the decision the Board takes is provided insufficient by future events.

Rate Requirement for 2026/27

For Area 1 Mr T Simpson proposed a rate of 17p and this was seconded by Mr D Elmore and carried unanimously. For Area 2 a rate of 55p was proposed by Mr J Racey and seconded by Mr D Fabb and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £43,143 be raised by drainage rates and special levy (Area 1: £20,884 Area 2: £27,259).

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:-

	Area 1	Area 2
Drainage rates	£11,298	£26,593
Special Levy	£ 9,586	£666

iv) That a rate of 17p (Area 1) and 55p (Area 2) in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That Special Levies of £10,252 (Area 1: £9,586 Area 2: £666) 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.1196 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

The next full meetings of the Board is on 2nd June 2027 at Holme Village hall 17:30 start.

B.1197 Any Other Business

None raised

The meeting closed at 19:15

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Chair

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Date