CHURCHFIELD & PLAWFIELD INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Churchfield & Plawfield IDB
Held at The Crown Lodge, Outwell, Monday 2nd March 2026 at 7PM.

PRESENT

Steven Calton (Chair)
Dale Boyce (Vice-Chair)
Paul Allen
Glenn Boyce
Peter Cutting
Keith Harrison (KLWN)
David Lunn
John Lunn
Colin Rose (KLWN)

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

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Christopher Crofts and Michael Fairey.

No apologies had been received from Julian Kirk.

B.1254 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.

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

B.1255 Confirmation of Minutes

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

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 26th June 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1256 Constitution & Membership

Mr Burrows highlighted the valued and successful tenure of the existing Chairman and Vice Chairman, however given the length of that tenure suggested that in-line with Cabinet Office Public Appointment principles, that it was important that the Board consider succession arrangements.

The Chairman added that he would value a successor to come forward and ideally be identified at the 2027 meeting of the Board.

Mr Burrows referred to the training and professional development expectations now sought by Defra within the Board's annual report. The Chairman suggested that Board Members consider attending the Biodiversity Day being planned by Sofi Lloyd and Mr Rose said that the ADA governance videos are still valid. Health & Safety as a training need was mentioned and it was suggested this be left until the item later on in the agenda.

B.1257 Clerk's Report

Mr Burrows provided an overview of his report highlighting in particular the Policy Review, Waste Exemptions and IDB1 items.

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.

That the District Officer will keep records to enable completion of length of drain maintenance questions within the IDB1 Annual Report to Defra.

B.1258 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 on an enjoyable, enlightening and fruitful few hours that he and Mr D Boyce spent with Sofi Lloyd and Abigail Leach recently to develop and discuss the draft Biodiversity Action Plan which has been made available to Board members to review ahead of an approval decision today.

He added that environmental risk management measures were practical and achievable, including categorisation of channels and two areas of limited drainage function that are suitable for reed and biodiversity focus and then monitoring. He added that one of these is by the unused inlet slacker from Well Creek and the newly adopted section of drain elsewhere in the district. Mr J Lunn added that management of these would be important to avoid brambles colonising and attracting badgers.

Mr Burrows added that he had also recently read the draft BAP and there were some minor adjustments he'd asked to be made ahead of adoption for all IDBs. Mr Allen flagged that the Board already had bird and bat boxes positioned on 3rd party buildings as did the Parish council. Mr G Boyce suggested a £100 budget as a starting point for biodiversity based on his discussions with Sofi Lloyd. The Chairman added that his wife authors the nature pages of the parish magazine, so this is also a way to engage locally. Mr Harrison commented that the draft BAP did not include anything on improvements seen and the Chairman clarified that this be considered as 'Year 0' for the BAP and a baseline for improvement during the period to 2031.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Officer's Report is noted.

The Biodiversity Action Plan is approved.

B.1259 Consulting Engineers' Reports

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

Mr D Boyce mentioned that Morgan Lakey, MLC Operations Manager had recently been out to view the issues being caused by a burst Anglian Water main, adding that the issue it was creating is getting worse. Mr Burrows said he'd check-in with Morgan on this issue and the quotation referred to in the report for the Stonehouse Road culvert.

Mr Allen enquired about the consented culvert on Back Drove as he has observed that the condition may be deteriorating and may at some point cause a drainage issue to the Board. Mr Burrows committed to report the issue to the Compliance & Enforcement Officers.

Enforcement and Compliance

Mr Burrows reported that the new Enforcement and Compliance Officers have had success and are building the caseload. He added that Board members are important eyes and ears on the ground and asked that they report any questionable activity that is relevant to IDB and MLC operations and interests. The Board were asked to authorise the Chair and Vice Chair to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board, having taken advice from MLC officers. They will engage with other Board Members as they see appropriate and determine whether a Special Meeting of the Board is needed on a risk and complexity basis.

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.1260 Health & Safety
Viz:

Site Safety Inspection

Churchfield & Plawfield Site

carried out on

Thursday, 26 February 2026

by

AW Safety Management

Site Safety Inspection

AW SAFETY

Key Information	
Client:	Churchfield & Plawfield
Site:	Crown Lodge Hotel Outwell
Site Contact:	Dale Boyce
Site Contact E-mail:	enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
Inspection date:	26/02/2026
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.

Site Safety Inspection **AW SAFETY**

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

Purpose of Inspection / Executive Summary

The opening meeting was held with Steve Calton and Dale Boyce.

No assets were visited due to accessibility.

The mechanism of the drains was explained, and it was understood that no pumping stations are present and that the flow is dependent on gravity and water levels.

It was understood that manual handling is kept to a minimal with majors or scheduled works completed by subcontractors like Kings Lynne Consortium of Internal drainage.

It was understood that access for routine maintenance works may occasionally be restricted, as entry is required through agricultural fields and standing crops can prevent access. However, following discussions with the local farmers involved, a rotation schedule is always agreed to ensure that all required maintenance activities are completed in a timely manner.

The new drain sector 36 – 51 – 52 has been discussed, it was understood that this area will become increasingly important in the future due to a possible new house development being built. This section has now been added to the site map for awareness and reference.

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

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

Mr Burrows gave an overview of his report and the recommendations that the Board consider show it could strengthen its approach to health & safety.

The Chairman outlined that he had been the health & safety representative and would continue however that he is out of touch with legislation and requirements. He reflected on the recent visit by AW Safety Management Ltd where the specialist was surprised by the limited assets and operations of the Board. He added that the report from the inspection had been recently received as is available for Board members to review.

The Chairman outlined how he considered the Board's activities low risk given that drain works were undertaken by King's Lynn IDB a competent authority; the District Officer's inspection activities could mainly be undertaken without leaving his vehicle and there are a limited number of accessible structures that the Board owns. Mr Burrows suggested that this type of assessment written down, logged and then monitored would be a valuable use of the Board's scope for any continued expertise paid for via AW Safety Management Ltd.

Mr J Lunn asked whether Mr D Boyce would be willing and able to undertake formal health & safety training to which he would. Mr Burrows suggested the funding of this be considered later in the meeting when setting the budget and rate.

B. 1261 District Officer's Report

Mr D Boyce said that his report could be taken as read as most topics had already cropped up in the discussions so far. He focussed on the issue at point 14 with the Board's water control structure. Whilst it is a redundant asset there is an issue with the handrail, and the structure is accessible from a Public Right of Way. It was agreed that the Board need to address this issue as the full removal of the structure would be impractical and costly. Mr Burrows suggested that the MLC workforce may be able to rectify the issue and would ask his Operations team to get in touch.

Mr Burrows asked about how the services of King's Lynn IDB were procured. Mr D Boyce confirmed it was a verbal arrangement and there had been no tendering undertaken for some time. The Chairman added that because it was now a sizeable portion of the Board's expenditure, improved controls would be appropriate. Mr Burrows suggested a Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA) between the two Board's would be a suitable approach. This was agreed with a view to assessing value for money and their services against other suppliers over the next couple of years.

B.1262 Governance

Mr Burrows asked the Board to consider the Governance report and that its content be noted. He added that the deadline for submission of the Boards' Annual Report (IDB1) to Defra for the year 2024/25 was later this month and is in hand.

RESOLVED

Completion of the Annual Return of the Commissioners – 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 the Commissioners' Risk Management Strategy (published in 2024 and on the website), noted the system of financial Internal Controls (as published on website) and no additional controls were highlighted as required.

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. She confirmed that there were no such matters that have been raised through the office of the clerk. Members gave consideration to the position.

RESOLVED

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

B.1263 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

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

Payments for 2025

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

B.1264 Finance Report – Looking Forward

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

Fees & Remuneration

RESOLVED

That the District Officer's fee be increased by 5.25% from £3,841 to £4,043

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 £3,132.87.

RESOLVED

That the Precept is paid in full.

Determination of Annual Values and Rate Arrears

RESOLVED

The Board approved the determination as laid out in Appendix 1.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2026/27.

Budget

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

RESOLVED

That an additional £100 budget for biodiversity be raised

That an additional £400 budget for health & safety training be raised

The budget was approved

Rate Requirement for 2026/27

In order to raise the additional items approved within the budget, Mr Burrows highlighted that the rate would need to be set at 10.6p rather than the 10.5p within the estimates.

Mr D Boyce proposed a rate of 10.6p and this was seconded by Mr Allen and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £52,732 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 £9,059 and £43,673.

iv) That a rate of 10.6p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That Special Levies of £43,673 be made and issued to The Borough Council for Kings Lynn & West Norfolk 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 v).

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

B.1265 Date of next Meeting

Mr Burrows outlined that the Accounts meeting is earmarked for 23rd June 2026. The next full meeting of the Board is recommended to be set for 19th April 2027 to better align the meeting with MLC's other IDBs.

Mr D Boyce mentioned the previous discussions regarding a more affordable location for the meeting and the Chairman suggested that the Committee Room at Upwell Public Hall be used. Mr Burrows asked if the time of the meeting could also be brought forward slightly to be more efficient in terms of the meeting clerk's working day.

RESOLVED

The next full meeting of the Board is on 19th April 2027 in the Committee Room of Upwell Public Hall, 6:30pm start.

B.1266 Any Other Business

None raised

The meeting closed at 8:30pm.

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Chair

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Date