EUXIMOOR INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Euximoor Internal Drainage Board Held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Thursday 4th June 2026.

PRESENT

Roger Gladwin (Chair)	Will Gladwin
Charles Albutt	Alex Miscandlon (FDC)
Henry Albutt	Nigel Russell

The Lead Clerk Mrs Ruth Martin representing the Clerk along with Mr Morgan Lakey representing the Consulting Engineer were in attendance.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

B.1172 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from M Mottram, P Russell and W Sutton

B.1173 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.

Mr Miscandlon declared an interest in matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners as a Middle Level Board member, and also in matters concerning planning as a Fenland District Councillor.

Mr H Albutt and Mr W Gladwin declared interests in Pump Attendant Fees and Payments.

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

B.1174 Confirmation of Minutes

Mr W Gladwin advised that he had attended the previous meeting but had been missed from the attendance list. With this amendment, the minutes were confirmed as a true record, and no Matters Arising were identified.

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 5th June 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1175 Constitution & Membership

Mrs Martin advised that there are currently two vacancies on the Board, but it has previously been agreed to hold back on recruitment pending the amalgamation with March East IDB. However, the Chair suggested that Waldersey Farms, as a significant landowner in the district, be asked to put forward a Board member. Mrs Martin advised that a meeting had been held with Waldersey Farms' Technical Director and he has earmarked individuals to specific Boards awaiting suitable vacancies. Mr C Albutt proposed asking them again to put forward a Board member, and this was seconded by Mr W Gladwin. The Board agreed that a Waldersey Farms representative be co-opted onto the Board as a member at the earliest opportunity.

Election of Chair, Vice Chair and District Officer

The Board discussed the role of District Officer, with Mr C Albutt considering the role is no longer necessary. Mr Miscandlon asked what the District Officer role entailed, and Mr C Albutt reported that the drain works role that the District Officer would usually do has been managed by the Chair in the last year, and that the Board have two pump attendants and so the District Officer does not need to manage the pumping stations. Mr Miscandlon suggested that technically the post is redundant, and Mr C Albutt agreed. Mr C Albutt then proposed that the Board withdraw the District Officer role, and this was seconded by Mr Miscandlon. There were no objections to this proposal from the Board and the proposal was agreed.

The Chair suggested that the Board try this for a year and review the situation after that. He added that in his first year as Chair there has been more to do than he expected. He added that as March East engage the services of Morgan Lakey, he has been involving Mr Lakey in the Boards maintenance works more in preparation for the amalgamation. The former District Officer had previously suggested changing the machines used in the district, and Mr Lakey has assisted with this. The Chair asked the Lead Clerk to check the District Officers agreement in case there is a need to serve notice to the District Officer, and to liaise with the Chair if any action is required. If this is not the case the Board asked that the former District Officer be written to on behalf of the Board to thank him for his years of service, and that the Board hope to continue to work with him and value his input as Vice Chair and at Board meetings.

The Board agreed that Mr R Gladwin be appointed as Chair. This was proposed by Mr C Albutt and seconded by Mr Miscandlon.

The Board agreed that Mr P Russell be appointed as Vice Chair. This was proposed by Mr W Gladwin and seconded by Mr C Albutt.

RESOLVED

That Mr R Gladwin be appointed as Chair of the Board.

That Mr P Russell be appointed as Vice Chair of the Board.

That Waldersey Farms be approached in relation to co-opting a representative into a Board vacancy.

Amalgamation

Mrs Martin reported that there had been no further progress with the ongoing amalgamation, and that the last action was in December 2024, since which time the process has sat with Defra. Board members that had been present at the March East IDB meeting earlier in the month reported that the Clerk had written to Defra escalating the issue and had asked if the Board would like him to write to the Minister with a formal complaint on their behalf dependent upon the outcome of that escalation. The Board agreed that action be taken on their behalf.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk write to the Minister should there be no response from Defra in relation to the delay in the amalgamation with March East IDB.

Election

Mrs Martin reported that the term of office of the Members of the Board will expire on 31st October 2026, and she submitted the proposed register of electors which is applicable to the 2026 election.

RESOLVED

That the register be approved.

Training

Mrs Martin reminded Board members that Board training is reported on the IDB1 form and asked to advise the Clerk of any training completed or required. The Board advised that no additional training had been undertaken and did not identify any current training needs.

B.1176 Clerk's Report

Mrs Martin asked that the Clerk’s Report be taken as read.

Policy Reviews

Mrs Martin asked the Board to consider delegating the approval of new and updated policies to the Clerk, as there are several polices that need to be developed and published. The Board agreed to this proposal.

Waste Exemptions

Mrs Martin updated the Board on the current position with Waste Exemption licences and the proposals as detailed in the Clerks report. She drew their attention to the plan to move each IDB to having their own suite of waste exemptions, and that it is likely that there will be a need for associated training for IDBs and their District Officers.

IDB1 (Annual Reporting to Defra)

Mrs Martin advised the Board that extra information is being reported on the IDB1 return and the challenges that this is causing. This includes additional information relating to drain maintenance, and Mrs Martin stressed to the Board the importance of keeping this data and providing the information when it is requested. She added that Defra have been asked to provide more information on why this level of detail is necessary.

RESOLVED

That the Clerks Report is noted.

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

Environment Officers Report

The Chair reported that he had met with Sofi Lloyd, the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager for Middle Level Commissioners, and that he was pleased to see no red boxes on the report, meaning that the Board are progressing well. He reported that Ms Lloyd would like to see the Board carry out less mowing, and that this year they had carried out around 115 hours of mowing to date. The Chair added that he had spoken with the Chair of the Upwell IDB whose services this Board contract, and who had advised that he thought that mowing costs would increase. The Chair asked the Board if they would be happy to reduce the areas mown. Mr W Gladwin thought that as many of the Boards drains are not wide, if 2 years of vegetation were allowed to build up that this would have a detrimental effect on the passage of water. Narrow drains could also incur other issues in heavy downpours. In a dry winter this could create a saving to the Board, but the Chair commented that we seem to be moving into weather patterns where we would not want to restrict water flows, and he asked for the Boards thoughts. Mr C Albutt suggested not mowing near to root crops after they have been harvested, which would have a lesser effect. He added that he was not in favour of not mowing at all. The Chair added that Ms Lloyd is happy to work with the Board and he would discuss with her the proposal regarding root crops. Mr W Gladwin suggested trialling the approach, which was agreed but the Chair added that the Board would still want the main drains down to the pumping stations cutting every year. Mr C Albutt added that keeping the drains clear also means that they are more visible. The Chair proposed drawing up a plan with Ms Lloyd taking into account the Boards comments. The Board agreed with this approach.

The Board also reviewed and approved the Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Board discussed setting the Biodiversity Budget and agreed to the proposed £250 budget towards swift boxes, provided that a suitable location could be identified and agreed. None of the Board members had suitable buildings within their landholdings.

RESOLVED

That the Biodiversity Action Plan is approved

That a £250 fund for Biodiversity to be set aside to be used for swift boxes

B.1177 Consulting Engineers' Reports

Mrs Martin referred to the Consulting Engineers' report, asking that it be taken as read.

Enforcement and Compliance

Mrs Martin advised the Board of the progress of the new Enforcement and Compliance Officers and asked the Board to authorise the Chair and Vice Chair to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board. This was proposed by Mr C Albutt, seconded by Mr H Albutt and agreed by the Board.

New FCERM Grant Funding Guidance

The Board noted the new guidance and that an asset improvement plan for future asset refurbishment and replacement works should be developed but were mindful of the pending amalgamation with March East IDB. Subsequently the Board felt that it would not be appropriate at present to develop a plan but that this would need to be considered at the earliest opportunity post amalgamation.

Capital Programme

The Board were advised that there is currently a GiA allocation to progress a system study in combination with March East district. The Board acknowledged the approach proposed by the Consulting Engineer and added that the Board would work with March East IDB in relation to any future bid.

Operations Report

The Chair updated the Board on issues encountered and resolved during the previous year. He thanked Waldersey Farms for the help Russell Fowler has given and for digging out a length of drain on their land for the Board at their own cost. Mr Lakey has provided a report on drain clearance for the Board, and the Chair presented a map showing areas where the landowners are unknown. The Chair asked the Board if any member knew who the landowner or occupiers were for these areas of land, and with no knowledge of this information the Board asked the Lead Clerk to carry out Land Registry searches to establish the landowner details. This is to enable drain works notices to be issued, and also for the Ratings Officer to issue drain rates for these parcels of land. The Board agreed to investigate further.

The Chair reviewed the previous year's drain works with the Board. He reported that for the 2026/27 plans are to cleanse reaches 19-18, 8-3, and 27-40 and he circulated a map of the proposed works. Complaints had been received the previous year about reach 9-8 due to restricted water flow, but there are environmental restrictions here due to badger setts which prevented works during the previous year, other than some minor tasks which were undertaken within guidelines. As there are setts on both sides of the channel the Chair suggested that the Board may need to pipe this reach in future.

Mechanical & Electrical

The Board considered the Mechanical & Electrical report. They considered producing a Pump Refurbishment/Replacement plan and obtaining quotes for the Reed Fen overhaul. Mr C Albutt advised that the Board had previously discussed an overhaul but thought that the enabling works would be beyond the Board's financial reach and the project was shelved. The structure in the bottom of the station is also an unknown. The Board discussed the hours run for Reed Fen Pumping Station. Mr W Gladwin thought that if there was a problem with pump 2 they should run pump 1 more. Mr C Albutt thought that there was a priority switch on the controls, and Mr W Gladwin observed that pump 1 had been used a lot in 2023/24. The Chair added that it had been a long time since the last overhaul and wondered if they should look at commissioning exploratory investigations although the Board were concerned that this would be expensive to do.

The Board agreed that it would be sensible to seek quotations for the overhaul and that they would like a plan in place in preparation for the amalgamation, provided that this is at a minimal cost to the Board.

The Board agreed to provide electricity readings and do not require this service to be provided by MLC.

RESOLVED

> That the Chair and Vice Chair are authorised to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice from MLC.
>
> To seek quotations for the overhaul of Reed Fen Pumping Station pumps.
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> That the Engineer produce a Pump Refurbishment/Replacement Plan.

B.1178 Health & Safety

Mrs Martin gave an overview of the report and the recommendations that the Board consider showing how it could strengthen its approach to health and safety. The Board were asked to take note of their Health and Safety accountabilities and reminded that they cannot delegate their responsibilities.

The Board were advised that MLC are planning to terminate their agreement with AW Safety (formerly Cope) in August 2026, but that the Boards agreement would continue until August 2027, after which time alternative service providers would be considered. It is MLCs intention to develop a service provision which they would offer to IDBs, and the Board agreed to consider such a provision dependent on cost.

The Board also noted their contentment to remain with AW Safety until the contract termination next year.

The Chair reported that he had met with a representative from AW Safety Ltd and they had reviewed both pumping stations. The Board reviewed the report and Mr C Albutt commented that the steps to the pumping station were mentioned at the last meeting. It was thought that there was funding for reshaping the access to the Pumping Station, but there is a hole in the bank that is awaiting ecological survey. Once the survey is complete the works will be planned.

The Chair advised that some other minor issues had been identified during the survey, and that Mr C Albutt and Mr H Albutt had agreed to arrange for the replacement of the first aid kits. The step ladder has already been replaced, and this is only used to read the electricity meter.

The Chair asked if the What3Words locations could be checked, although Mr W Gladwin advised that these are shown on the pumping station gates.

RESOLVED

That the report is noted.

B.1179 District Officer's Report

No report had been received from the District Officer and drain works had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

B.1180 Governance

Mrs Martin asked the Board to consider the Governance report and that its content be noted.

Completion of the Annual Return of the Board – 2024/2025

RESOLVED

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.

Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

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

RESOLVED

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

Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

The Board did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Board's 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.

Insured Values

The Insurance Valuation was reviewed, and the Board agreed that they were content with the valuation.

RESOLVED

That the valuation is acceptable

IDB1 (Annual Report to Defra)

RESOLVED

That the Board note the submission of the IDB1 to Defra.

Exercise of Public Rights

Mrs Martin 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.

Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Board for the financial year ended 31st March 2026.

B.1181 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

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

Payments for 2025

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2025/2026

The Board considered and approved the Annual accounts and Finance Papers for the year ended 31st March 2026, as required in the Audit regulations.

RESOLVED

> That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Board for the financial year ended 31st March 2026.

B.1182 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Finance officer's review and key messages

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

Fees & Remuneration

Pumping Station Duties Fees

Mr H Albutt and Mr W Gladwin declared an interest in this item as Pump Attendants.

Mr Miscandlon proposed that the fee allowance increase by 5.25%, and this was seconded by Mr N Russell, and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

> That the Board approved to award up to the following fees and renumeration level for contracted officials for 2026/27:

Name	**Role**	**Asset**	**2026/27 Max Value**
Henry Albutt	Pump Attendant	Reed Fen	£1,158
Will Gladwin	Pump Attendant	Iron Bridge	£1,158

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 £4,250.84.

RESOLVED

> That the Precept is paid in full.

Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes.

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

The Board agreed with the determination but added that it should be a priority to establish who the landowners are so that future rates can be collected.

RESOLVED

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

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2026/27.

Budget

The Board reviewed the proposed budget as recommended by their Responsible Finance Officer, and the Chair proposed that the budget be agreed. This was unanimously supported.

RESOLVED

That the budget is agreed.

Rate Requirement for 2026/27

Mrs Martin advised that the budget indicated that a rate of 30.5p in the £ would need to be set, a small increase from the rate of 30.25p set in 2025/26.

Mr Miscandlon advised that the fuel costs in the budget could be an optimistic estimate, but the Chair commented that as with all estimates, these are only a guess. The Board have some funds in reserves if the rates are insufficient to cover expenditure. The agricultural landowners pay for most of the Boards income and so the Chair did not want to see a significant increase in the rate at such a turbulent time for farming. Mr C Albutt agreed but stressed the importance of covering the budget and proposed the rate of 30.5p in the £. Mr W Gladwin seconded this proposal, and this was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £53,352 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 £49,385 and £3,967 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 30.5p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special Levy of £3,967 be made and issued to Fenland 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 v).

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

B.1183 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

The next meeting of the Board be held on Thursday 3rd June 2027 at 5pm at the Middle Level Offices.

B.1184 Any Other Business

The Chair referred the Board to a discussion at the previous meeting in relation to the replacement of a gate within the Board's maintenance strip that had been damaged by the Board some years previously during drain works. The Board had agreed with the landowner to replace the gate and a new gate and posts have been purchased. The Chair has obtained a quotation for the erection of the gate and posts, and asked for the Boards agreement to the quotation of £395 + VAT. Mr W Gladwin thought that this was a competitive price and proposed that the Board accept the quote, and Mr Miscandlon seconded this proposal, commenting that he also thought that this was reasonable. The Board agreed unanimously and asked the Chair to make the necessary arrangements.

With no further comments being made, the Chair thanked the Board for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7pm.

RESOLVED

That the quotation of £395 + VAT for the gate and post installation be accepted.

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Chair

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Date