NORDELPH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Nordelph Internal Drainage Board
Held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Wednesday 11th March 2026.

PRESENT

Roger Means (Chair)	Glen Boyce
David Boyce (Vice-Chair)	John Clifton
Dale Boyce	Robert Melton

The Lead Clerk Mrs Ruth Martin representing the Clerk was in attendance.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Beryl Boyce and Christopher Crofts

B.1082 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 G Boyce declared an interest in matters relating to District Officer and Pump Attendant payment.

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

B.1083 Confirmation of Minutes

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 25th June 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1084 Constitution & Membership

Mrs Martin advised that there are currently no vacancies on the Board.

Elections

The Board were advised that 2026 is an election year and that they would be advised on further details in due course.

The Chair advised the Board of his intention to stand down as Chair, but that he would like to remain on the Board. It was agreed that Mr Means would stand down at the June meeting, and Board members were asked to consider who should be the next Chair in readiness for that meeting.

Composition and Amalgamation

Mr G Boyce asked if it would be possible to reduce the quorum of the Board. Mrs Martin responded that it is possible but would involve a formal process for which there may be a charge to the Board. The Board asked if the costs could be established, and if there were no cost proceedings commence to reduce the quorum of the Board to 3 members.

Training

Board members were reminded that Board training is now reported on the IDB1 form and asked to advise the Clerk of any training completed or required.

RESOLVED

> That the current Chair will stand down at the June meeting of the Board, and a new Chair and potentially Vice Chair be voted on at that meeting.
>
> That the quorum be reduced to 3 provided that there is no cost to the Board to make this change.

B.1085 Clerk's Report

Mrs Martin asked that the Clerk's Report be taken as read and highlighted in particular the Policy Review and IDB1 items.

RESOLVED

> That the Clerks 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. 1086 Environment Officers Report

Mrs Martin 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.

Mr G Boyce reported on his meeting 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 at this meeting. The Board confirmed their contentment with the Plan and thanked Mr G Boyce for his contribution.

Mr G Boyce explained to the Board that it was suggested that a budget be set for biodiversity, adding that this could be donated to a particular benefactor, spent on items such as bat/owl/swift boxes in the district, or saved over 2 or 3 years to fund a larger project. Mr G Boyce suggested that the Board consider a figure of £100, but Mr Dale Boyce proposed £40 and this was seconded by Mr David Boyce. He commented that this would be enough to purchase two bat boxes. It was agreed that the figure be set aside and added to next year, although Mr David Boyce asked for confirmation that this would be an elective payment and no precedent set for the same amount to be set aside in future years.

RESOLVED

That the new Biodiversity Action Plan is approved.

That a £40 fund for Biodiversity to be set aside and added to next year (although no precedent set)

B.1087 Chairmans Report

The Chair observed that the District drains are in good order, and the landslip is being dealt with by the District Officer. The had been some issues with fly tipping in the District but this had been dealt with by Norfolk County Council.

The Chair had nothing further to report.

B.1088 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 agreed by the Board.

Mechanical & Electrical

The Board considered the Mechanical & Electrical report. The Board were strongly advised by the Consulting Engineer to consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. However, the Board felt they had this in place, with funds that had been put aside for the weed screen which were not needed being moved to the pumping station replacement fund.

The Board were advised that the pump control panel is now 40 years old and they should consider the replacement or refurbishment of the panel. This would cost in the region of £10k. The Board felt that as the panel was still working effectively this would not be required.

The report advised that the sump piles are in poor condition, and that they should put plans in place for the replacement of the pumping station. The Board did not consider that the station is at risk and will continue to save funds towards a potential future replacement at the same rate as before.

Mr Dale Boyce advised that the Weed screen Bars were replaced about 2½ years ago and the Key Health Indicators in the report required updating.

The Board agreed that the District Officer should continue to provide monthly electricity meter readings, and the District Officer asked if it would be possible for a reminder to be sent to him to take the readings.

RESOLVED

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

That the Board believe an investment plan is already in place.

That the KPI's be updated to reflect replacement of the weed screen bars.

B.1089 Health & Safety

Mrs Martin gave an overview of the report and the recommendations that the Board consider show 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.

Mr David Boyce advised that he has undertaken some Health and Safety training and will provide evidence of this. The Health and Safety Lead for the Board is Mr Glenn Boyce, and he has not undertaken any formal training. The Board observed that training is costly, and Mr Boyce agreed to undertake any suitable free online training and report this back to the Board at the next meeting.

It was observed that no accidents or near misses have been reported, but they will be recorded should any happen.

The Board were asked to provide feedback on H&S services. They suggested a free service from MLC would be welcomed, but also that should MLC provide services that were more cost-effective that current providers they would be considered. Mr David Boyce added that a price list of services would be useful.

Mr Glenn Boyce reported back to the Board following the recent inspection by AW Safety Management, with the inspection report having been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. The inspection recommended that a new sign be installed and that vegetation be removed. The Board considered these recommendations but decided that the current signage is sufficient. The District Officer advised that he used to mow the grass weekly, but this encouraged fishermen to use the area. Leaving the grass longer prevents this and he is happy with the level of vegetation there. He added that he had been cleaning the steps and regularly painting the step edges but has stopped doing this due to the time taken. Mr Clifton agreed with the District Officer, that making the area less attractive prevents unapproved access. The Board agreed with the approach that is being taken.

RESOLVED

> That the report is noted.
>
> That the District Officer will undertake free online training and Mr David Boyce will provide evidence of Health and Safety training.
>
> That the Board do not wish to change the signage or change the grass cutting regime at the pumping station.

B.1090 District Officer's Report

The District Officer drew the Boards attention to his written report.

He advised that a scrap value offer of £70 had been received for the old pump which is currently being stored by MLC on behalf of the Board. Some considerable discussion was had around this offer, with some Board members considering that this offer was too low, but with no other Board member prepared to take on the task of seeking other offers it was agreed to accept the £70 offer.

The District Officer advised the Board that two quotations had been received for the repair of the land slip in the Main Drain. The District Officer suggested that the quotation received from Nigel Harrison be accepted and this was agreed by the Board. The District Officer reported that the work would commence as soon as the weather conditions allowed and the ecological surveys were completed.

The District Officer in his role as Pump Attendant advised that the hours being spent at the pumping station have increased and that he did not feel that the payment suitably reflected the work that he did. The Board agreed to consider this request further on in the meeting, at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED

That the offer of £70 be accepted for the old pump.

That the quotation received from Nigel Harrison for the slip repairs be accepted.

B.1091 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/Commissioners 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/Commissioners 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 subject to confirmation that this is a reinstatement valuation, and that this was adequate for the insurers. If this is not the case it will be reviewed again at the June meeting.

RESOLVED

That the valuation be acceptable subject to confirmation that it is adequate for the insurers.

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.

Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

Mrs Martin reported that, as resolved at a previous meeting, the Board will continue with a limited assurance review and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

RESOLVED

To continue with a limited assurance review as has been carried out in previous years.

B.1092 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, noting that the expenditure for the Financial Year 2025/26 was currently likely to be less that the budget set.

Mr David Boyce advised that in another role, he had secured funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme through Salix Finance for the provision of solar panels to other public sector buildings. He asked that this be investigated further to see if the Board were eligible for funding through the scheme.

Payments for 2025

Mr G Boyce noted that a payment of £7.37 had been made for a new ID card but he had not received one. He asked that either a card be sent to him or a refund made.

(Post meeting note: the ID card was for the Chair and a card has not been ordered for Mr G Boyce as a photograph had not been provided.)

The Board noted that a fee for Court Costs had been paid and asked for details of the rate defaulters to be presented at the next meeting.

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

RESOLVED

That details of rate defaulters be presented at the next meeting.

That the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme be investigated further.

B.1093 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 & Subscriptions:

District Officer and Pump Attendant Duties

The Board considered the request of the Pump Attendant to increase the allowance made for his fee. The Chair proposed that an increase of £1000 be given and this was agreed unanimously by the Board.

Mr. Clifton proposed that the District Officers fee allowance be increased by 5.25% to £2,304. This was agreed unanimously.

Mr G Boyce declared an interest in the item as District Officer and Pump Attendant and abstained from voting.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £1,638 be allowed for the Pumping Station duties for 2026/2027.

That the Board agree that the sum of £2,304 be allowed for the District Officer duties for 2026/2027.

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 £1,885.12.

RESOLVED

That the Precept is paid in full.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2026/27.

The Board reviewed the proposed budget for 2026/2027 and were advised that this did not include the previously proposed increase in Pump Attendant fees.

Mr Melton thought that the Board should consider the replacement of the culvert in Engine Field plus the installation of a further culvert adjacent to his land. However, he did not know the cost of this work. Mr G Boyce pointed out that the Board have a 'no culverting' policy and Mr David Boyce suggested that these proposals should be investigated further before any decision is made. Mr Melton advised that one of the identified issues is holding up the flow of water and needs addressing with some urgency. Mr G Boyce proposed that the works be costed and discussed at the June meeting of the Board. Mr Melton agreed to seek quotations. Mrs Martin advised the Board that the proposed budget did not include for these works, but that there would potentially be an underspend against budget for 2025/26 and that they could consider resolving to use this outturn to fund the repairs.

The Board agreed that the costs be established and that if there is an outturn at the end of the 2025/26 financial year, repairs be carried out up to the value of the outturn. Any works would be subject to the appropriate ecological surveys and scheduled accordingly.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

That the budget is agreed.

That any outturn from the 2025/26 budget be used to fund repairs. The extent of repairs to be agreed at the next meeting.

Mr Melton will obtain quotations for the agreed works.

<u>Rate Requirement for 2026/27</u>

Mrs Martin reminded the Board that the agreed budget did not make provision for the increase in Pump Attendant fees or for any repairs as previously discussed. The budget did include the proposed bank slip repair works.

Mr G Boyce proposed to increase the rate to 38.0p as advised in the report.

This was seconded by Mr David Boyce.

The rate was agreed unanimously by the Board.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £28,160 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 £26,226 and £1,934 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 38.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special Levy of £1,934 be made and issued to the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and 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.1094 Date of next Meeting

Mrs Martin outlined that the Accounts meeting is earmarked for 23rd June 2026. The next full meeting of the Board is recommended to be set for Thursday 15th April 2027 to better align the meeting with MLC's other IDBs.

RESOLVED

A meeting to approve the accounts has provisionally been arranged for Tuesday 23rd June via Teams.

The next meeting of the Board be held on Thursday 15th April 2027 at 6pm at the Middle Level Offices.

B.1095 Any Other Business

With no other business raised the Chair closed the meeting at 7.50pm.

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Chair

……………………………
Date