RAMSEY FOURTH (MIDDLEMOOR) INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) IDB
Held at the Old Nene Golf Club, Thursday 4th June 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 the District Officer. The Chairman, Vice Chair, Mr R Bowd, Mr L Croft, Mr M Swales and Mr C Roberts.

Members first inspected Middlemoor Pumping Station to discuss the issues highlighted within the agenda pack and to consider options for the old station's basin area. The Chairman highlighted that along with the intermittent issues on pump 1 that the site has been deemed unsuitable for a generator should power be lost, however given the connected nature of the district, Daintree Pumping Station would pump to its max and help reduce the impact.

At Daintree Pumping Station, members appreciated the road access issues along the drove and the Chairman ran through both the H&S inspection issues highlighted and the need for an overhaul of pump 2.

Members inspected the private drain culvert issue along Herne Road at the confluence with the Board's drain at point 65.

PRESENT

Andrew Roberts (Chair)
Matthew Smith (Vice-Chair)
Tom Berry
Robert Bowd
Jeffrey Clarke
Lynden Croft
Christopher Roberts
Mark Swales
Jason Edwards

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

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from T Corney, A Swales and S Whittome.

B.1010 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.

The Chairman declared an interest in payments made to D C Roberts & Son.

The Chairman and Mr Swales both declared an interest in all matters concerning the Slamp

Matthew Smith declared an interest in becoming a member of the Middle Level Board.

B.1011 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2025 were reviewed and confirmed as a true record.

RESOLVED

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

B.1012 Constitution & Membership

Noting attendance, the Chairman suggested there may be one or two vacancies arise following the elections later this year.

RESOLVED

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

B.1013 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. The Board reiterated the importance of local knowledge and ownership.

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.1014 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 District Officer added that he had a good session with Ms S Lloyd to help draft the Biodiversity Action Plan and also attended ADA's Environmental Day earlier in the year.

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. The Chairman reaffirmed this citing English Partridge as a species considered rare but are abundant locally.

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 within the district.

B.1015 Consulting Engineers' Reports

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

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 Chairman outlined that the advice is that pump 2 and its motor at Daintree needs overhauling given the motor insulation has dropped, and the pump is close to 20-years since it's last overhaul. He added that whilst pump 1 also needs an overhaul, its motor has been addressed relatively recently therefore the priority ought to be pump 1. He added that Middlemoor has its own issues with pump 1 but if it went out of action there are three other pumps to manage water.

Mr C Roberts agreed that the Board need to address matters in affordable steps and it's not a prudent strategy to wait for things to fail. The Board agree to commit to the pump and motor overhaul of pump 2 at Daintree and would consider how this is funded later in the meeting.

Mr P Burrows added that this commitment now meant that Mr D Bantoft could plan and programme the works efficiently with MLC and other Board's requirements, adding that it may be next year that the overhaul takes place.

The Chairman mentioned the drove to Daintree Pumping Station as experienced on the inspection. He added that whilst the tenant had made some levelling improvements, there was work to still do, especially considering the plant that may be required for the overhaul. He added that his principle is that those that cause the greatest damage need to take the lead in addressing the drove's condition and that the Board are a relatively minor user for routine operations. Mr P Burrows suggested that the MLC M&E team advise on whether the condition of the drove is an issue for the overhaul, and this would inform the Chairman's discussions with the tenant farmer regarding works and any Board contribution of funds or materials. It was agreed that the Chairman should approach for a conversation and then followed up in writing.

Mr J Clarke asked about standardisation of new pumping stations. Mr P Burrows said that this is where he sees the greatest long-term efficiency and major benefit of amalgamations, but when there are over 70 pumping stations it is difficult to know how and where to start. He added that IDBs in the Broads and Lincolnshire are on this path.

In terms of the basin at Middlemoor, the Chairman reported that he is still awaiting a quote from Lattenbury who have suggested piling work may be needed as well as infill of suitable material. He added that as discussed at the inspection, there may be other options and the opportunity to win suitable material from local developments with the right waste management approach. Mr P Burrows suggested Mr M Lakey at MLC may be able to advise and provide a second opinion on how to address the issue.

RESOLVED

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

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

Approved to overhaul the pump and motor (Pump 2) at Daintree Pumping Station.

B.1016 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. He added that he would welcome an MLC service provision once it is developed. The District Officer will be addressing the trip hazard (pipe) at Daintree in due course.

B.1017 District Officer's Report

The District Officer provided a verbal report thanking Board Members for their support over the last year where they have once-again experienced alternating weather patterns. A settled autumn and early Winter assisted the maintenance programme with low levels being easily held enabling the lower main drain and basin area to be cleared. January and February then saw the Board received over 50% of the annual total of 510mm of rain. The Board's drains and pumps performed well. He then circulated a proposed 2026 maintenance programme covering the following reaches Points 5-13, 7-15, 7-60, 54-57, 53-55, 52-60.

The Board thanked the District Officer for his diligent work and discussed the merits of longer reach machinery given the variable size of drains within the district. The Chairman adding that Lattenbury's their current contractor is hiring in a machine ahead of a potential purchase. Mr M Swales suggested it may be prudent soon to re-tender for works to ensure value for money.

Mr R Bowd asked whether when slubbing out the contractor can clear the private drain ends of the access culverts as these culverts benefit the Board. The Chairman said this has been done in past and ought to be part of the scope, even if it adds a little cost. Mr T Berry advised caution as he has suffered damage to culverts by such works and that it may need individual farmer agreement and oversight. It was suggested that the flail mowing contractor improve the vision to reduce the likelihood of such damage.

Mr M Swales asked regarding the current flail mowing contractor's availability given downsizing on other Boards. His rates are good so it may be that any future contractor may add additional cost to maintenance works. The District Officer will double-check.

B.1018 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.

RESOLVED

That their land be formally registered with Land Registry with the MLC including it within a package of registrations that is being developed.

That the tenancy agreements be reviewed.

B.1019 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 C Roberts highlighted that it was good that the Public Works Loan repayment was coming to an end.

RESOLVED

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

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

B.1020 Finance Report – Looking Forward

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

Fees & Remuneration

In discussing the District Officer's maximum fee, it was agreed that a much clearer definition of the role and expectations would be prudent and that this ought to include 'Plan B' arrangements so other also know how to operate the pumps and system, whilst also considering the need for future succession.

RESOLVED

The Board approved to award up to the following fees and renumeration level for their contracted official(s) for 2026/27

Name	Role	Asset	2026/27 Max Value
Jason Edwards	District Officer		£8,621

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 £6,497.05

RESOLVED

That the Precept is paid in full.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2026/27.

The Board reviewed the proposed budget as recommended by their Responsible Finance Officer and considered how to fund the pump and motor overhaul that was agreed earlier. Mr C Roberts noted that the value of the loan repayment was now being added to the amount being rated into their Asset Improvement Fund (soon to be renamed Asset Management Fund) reserves.

The Chairman also noted the General Fund balance having more than a year in hand and asked whether this was accessible. Mr Burrows said it was accessible but is there to meet cashflow requirements and cater for wetter than average years. He added that it would be prudent to get to Q4 once we know how wet the winter will be and what energy prices are like given the Middle East conflict, as at this point it may be that some funds from the General Fund can be moved into their Asset Management Fund. He added that 22p had been held for a couple of years and that the Board may need to put the rate up over a few years. Mr M Swales added small increases are better to avoid a future +10p shock.

Mr J Clarke proposed the rate ought to go up a fraction as it is prudent not to stand still. He proposed 24p. This was seconded by the Vice Chair.

Mr C Roberts proposed a rate of 25p such that this would add approximately and additional £10k to the Asset Improvement Fund which will hopefully mean the Board can fund the overhaul without eroding the reserves carried over from last year. This was seconded by Mr M Swales.

Mr J Clarke and Mr M Smith retracted their 24p proposal to support the 25p proposal and this was carried unanimously.

Mr P Burrows recommended that the additional 3p be added to the Asset Improvement Fund within the proposed budget. This was agreed.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £90,480 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 £52,600 and £37,880.

iv) That a rate of 25p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That Special Levies of £37,880 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.1021 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

The next full meeting of the Board will be on 10th June 2027 at the Old Nene Golf Club 14:00 start with lunch beforehand.

B.1022 Any Other Business

Mr J Clarke enquired about the riparian drain issue along Hern Road. The Chairman advised that this was looked at and discussed on the inspection. The Board agreed that whilst they are sensitive to the problem that the developer has and that the responsibilities of the riparian owners have, it is not a problem for the Board to resolve. The Board's drains are functioning to receive water from the private/riparian ditch network.

The meeting closed at 15:45

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Chair

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Date