Commissioners Meeting

Thursday 12th November 2026, 12.45pm

Middle Level Offices, March

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chairman
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chairman
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 2-4	Chairman
4	Constitution & Membership • To elect the Chairman of the Commissioners for the ensuing year • To elect Commissioners to form the Board for the ensuing year • To elect the Vice Chairman of the Commissioners • Appointment of the Executive Committee • Appointment of the employers' side representatives for the Employment Committee • Appointment to the Navigation Advisory Committee • Appointment to the Environment Committee • Appointment to the Water Resources Committee R • Review Commissioners declarations	Pages 5-8	Chairman
5	Scheme of Delegation	Pages 9-12	
6	MLC & IDBs Working Smarter	Pages 13-14	
7	Finance and Governance – Head of Finance report inc review: • Annual Accounts of the Commissioners for the financial year 2025/2026 • Approve any Public Works Loan applications • Debt management principles	Enc 1	Head of Finance
8	Vesting the Pig Water old channel	Pages 15-17	
9	Society of Agriculture – Supporting ML Board and employee professional development	Pages 18-19	
10	Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 29th April 2027 Accounts & Inspection – Tuesday 29th June 2027	Verbal	Chairman
11	Any other business	Verbal	Chairman

Middle Level Commissioners Meeting

At a meeting of the Middle Level Commissioners held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Thursday 23rd April 2026.

PRESENT

Hugh Whittome (Chair)
Jonathan Brown (Vice Chair)
Patrick Allpress
Mark Hall
Derek Langslow
Matthew Latta
Alison Morris
Matthew Smith
Stephen Whittome

Paul Burrows - Chief Executive, Nicola Oldfield - Chief Engineer, Andrew Wool – Head of Finance, and Ruth Martin – Lead Clerk (minutes) were also in attendance.

Alex Miscandlon was also present as an observer

C.951 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mr M Heading, Mr R Brown & Mr A Lenson

C.952 Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded the Commissioners of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in the agenda that involved or was likely to affect any of them.

C.953 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

RESOLVED

The minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 6th November 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.954 Constitution and membership

The Chair reminded the Commissioners that there were still 3 vacancies on the Board and invited Commissioners to reflect on nominations for the November meeting.

The Commissioners were also advised that due to the Commissioners land holding within the Nordelph IDB District, the Commissioners are eligible to be an elected member of Nordelph IDB. With elections taking place later this year, the Commissioners were asked if they would like to nominate an individual for election. The Chair added that it would be valuable to have a Commissioner on this Board. The Commissioners agreed that they would like to nominate, and Mr Hall agreed to take on this role.

The Commissioners were asked to identify any training needs, or any areas that they would like further information on. Mr J Brown invited all Commissioners to view the Fens 2100+ video that had been shown at the earlier Board meeting.

RESOLVED

That Mr Hall be put forward for membership of Nordelph IDB as the Commissioners representative.

C.955 Annual Report: Items escalated by the Board

The Chief Executive referred the Commissioners to his report and reported that no items had been escalated by the Board.

C.956 Finance and Governance – Treasurers report

The Chairman advised the Commissioners of the following.

Drainage rates and special levies for the financial year 2025/2026

In the present financial year, the Commissioners' estimated net Revenue expenditure after deduction of grants and contributions will be £2,900,911. It is estimated that £81,487 will be met from miscellaneous income leaving £2,819,423 to be funded. Further, to finance the St Germans Pumping Station Replacement Scheme Annuity loans have been drawn down from the Public Works Loan Board, annual repayments being £688,242 Giving a total of £3,507,665 to be funded.

A rate of 34.00p in the £ on agricultural land and buildings together with Special Levies totalling £ 1,238,624 would be required to meet this sum under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

After very careful consideration of the probable actual expenditure in 2025/2026, taking the likely cash flow requirements for 2026/2027 and the Commissioners' balances fully into account the recommendation of the Board is that for 2026/2027 a rate of 34.00p in the £ should be levied on agricultural land and buildings and Special Levies totalling £ 1,238,624 should be issued to District Councils in the area.

The Chair proposed from the chair that a of 34.0p be set, and the levies as detailed be set. This was proposed by Mr J Brown and seconded by Ms Morris and agreed unanimously by the Commissioners.

RESOLVED

i) a rate of 34.0 p in the £ on agricultural land and buildings

ii) a Special Levy on Fenland District Council of £ 685,931.

iii) a Special Levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £ 277,816.

iv) a Special Levy on the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk of £ 274,853, and

v) a Special Levy on Peterborough City Council of £ 24.

C.957 Date of Next Meeting

The Chair advised that an inspection will be held on 24th June 2026 which Commissioners are welcome to join.

The next meeting of the Commissioners will be held on Thursday 12th November 2026.

C.958 Any other Business

With no other items raised by Commissioners, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 1.10pm.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 12th November 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Gemma Ashby**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the position regarding elections and consider the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments within its appointment of officials.
B. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
C. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
D. Outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training.

1. Current status

1.1 The table below outline the current composition of the Board and the quorum as detailed in the standing orders.

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	15	N/A		5
Actual	12	2 FDC, 1 KLWN, 1HDC	16	
Vacancies	3			

1.2 The table below details the current elected members of the Board

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	Patrick Allpress	Landowner/Ratepayer	
2	Jonathan Brown	Landowner/Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
3	Robert Brown	Landowner/Ratepayer	
4	Mark Hall	Deputy of Waldersey Farms Ltd	
5	Marc Heading	Landowner/Ratepayer	
6	Dr Derek Langslow	Deputy of Wildlife Trust	
7	Mathew Latta	Landowner/ratepayer	
8	Andrew Lenson	Deputy of A G Reserves	
9	Alison Morris	Landowner/ratepayer	
10	Matthew Smith	Landowner/ratepayer	
11	Hugh Whittome	Landowner/ratepayer	Chair
12	Stephen Whittome	Landowner/ratepayer	
13			
14			
15			

1.3 The table below details the current appointed members of the Board.

1.4 Special levy paying District Councils appoint members to Boards and their role is to be part of the Board representing all the non-agricultural interests within the Board's district. The Council must consider appointing members who have relevant knowledge or experience that is relevant to the Board and its district.

1.5 Appointed members do not need to be councillors or employees of the Council, therefore can represent wider relevant interests within the district, e.g. major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	Chris Crofts	BCKLWN	Councillor
2	Andrew Wood	HDC	Councillor
3	Dee Laws	FDC	Councillor
4	Alex Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor

1.6 All Members are reminded that have equal status to each-other around the Board table and are here to serve the interests of the Board.

2. Attendance

2.1 The table below outlines the attendance record for the last four meetings of the Board.

Elected Members

No	Name	24/06/2026	23/4/2026	06/11/2025	24/6/2025
1	Patrick Allpress	Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies
2	Jonathan Brown	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	Robert Brown	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
4	Mark Hall	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Present
5	Marc Heading	Present	Present	Present	Present
6	Dr Derek Langslow	-	Present	Present	Apologies
7	Matthew Latta	-	Present	Apologies	Apologies
8	Andrew Lenson	-	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
9	Alison Morris	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
10	Matthew Smith	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Hugh Whittome	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
12	Stephen Whittome	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Apologies
13					
14					
15					

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	24/06/2026	23/4/2026	06/11/2025	24/6/2025
1	Christopher Crofts BCKLWN	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
2	Dee Laws FDC	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
3	Alex Miscandlon FDC	Present	Present	Present	Present
	Sally Howell HDC	N/A	Apologies	-	Present
4	Andrew Wood HDC	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 In appointing the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Board is expected to follow the principles within the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve in any one post for more than ten years. The tenure of the current Chairman is 1 year, and the tenure of the current Vice Chairman is 1 year.

3.2 Current Commissioner Declarations of Eligibility:

Ref No	Surname	First Name	Business Name	Date of Claim	Year for Claim Review
MLCR10001	Allpress	Patrick	Allpress Farms Ltd	23/04/2025	2028
MLCR10002	Boughton	Duncan	Ransonmoor Farm Ltd	06/11/2025	2028
MLCR10003	Brown	Jonathan	E C Brown & Sons	04/04/2025	2028
MLCR10004	Brown	Robert	E C Brown & Sons	02/04/2025	2028
MLCR10005	De Ramsey	Lord	Abbots Ripton Estates	27/01/2025	2028
MLCR10006	Fountain	David	C J Fountain & Son Ltd	03/02/2025	2028
MLCR10008	Heading	John	A & EG Heading Ltd	01/04/2025	2028
MLCR10009	Heading	Marc	A & EG Heading Ltd	07/04/2025	2028
MLCR10010	Latta	Mathew	A & EG Heading Ltd	30/04/2025	2028
MLCR10012	Morris	Alison	E H Morris (Stonea) Ltd	13/05/2025	2028
MLCR10014	Raby	Sam	H Raby & Sons	23/04/2025	2028
MLCR10016	Whittome	Hugh	Whittome Farms	27/01/2025	2028
MLCR10017	Whittome	Stephen	Whittome Farms	30/01/2025	2028
MLCR10018	Bragg	Alex	Royal London Asset Management/Waldersey Farms Lt	11/02/2025	2028
MLCR10019	Hall	Mark	Royal London Asset Management/Waldersey Farms Lt	11/02/2025	2028
MLCR10020	Smith	Jack	Royal London Asset Management/Waldersey Farms Lt	11/02/2025	2028
MLCR10021	Mottram	Michael	Veris Ltd	16/04/2025	2028
MLCR10022	Smith	Matthew	F Smith & Sons	06/10/2025	2028

Public/Charitable Land:

Ref No	Land Ownership: Organisation Name	Organisation Type	Surname	First Name	Organisation of Appointee	Date of Appointment	Year for Appointment Review
MLCR20001	Wildlife Trust	Charity (UK Based)	Langslow	Derek	Wildlife Trust	13/04/2023	2026
MLCR20002	AgReserves Ltd	Charity (Not UK Base	Lensen	Andrew	Ag Reserves Ltd	01/09/2025	2028

4. Composition and amalgamations

4.1 The Board is encouraged to continually monitor and review its membership, financial and climate resilience, along with assessing its influence locally, regionally and nationally. These are all factors that may lead the Board to consider changing its composition and/or amalgamation with (an)other Board(s). See 'The IDB governance future within the Middle Level of the Fen' within the Clerk's Report.

4.2 Amalgamations and composition changes are not swift processes and can take a number of years. They require planning and additional/specialist resourcing by the MLC as your clerk, Environment Agency and Defra. Therefore, the Board is encouraged to think ahead five to ten years in its decision making, thinking about the next generation.

5. Training

5.1 IDBs are expected by Defra to support relevant externally accredited training and/or professional development of its Board Members, officers and employees (if appropriate). It is therefore recommended that the Board identifies and budgets for any such requirements.

5.2 In addition, IDBs are expected by Defra to provide in-house training and/or professional development opportunities for its Board Members, officers and employees (if appropriate).

5.3 Topics that Defra suggest are i) Governance ii) Ethics iii) Finance iv) Environment v) Health, safety & welfare and vi) Communications & engagement.

5.4 The Board are asked to outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training. Members are asked to identify any topics areas they would value further training on as well as any site inspections that would help them undertake their role on the Board more effectively.

5.5 Member training is reported to Defra as part of the annual IDB1 return.

6. Governance

6.1 Given their bank lot land holdings, the Middle level Commissioners are eligible for election to Nordelph IDB who have elections later in 2026. The Board and Commissioners are asked to confirm whether they wish to nominate an individual to represent the Commissioners to put forward for membership of Nordelph IDB.

Author Name: Gemma Ashby
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	SCHEME OF DELEGATION
Date:	12th November 2026	Officer Responsible:	Paul Burrows

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioners are asked to:

A. Note the change in review timescales for their Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegation
B. Delegate the approval and publication of a 'Mobile Plant Deployment' Policy to the Chief Executive.
C. Review and approve the delegations for Mobile Plant deployment and agree that there can be used in advance of policy publication.
D. Review and approve the delegations in the absence of the Chief Executive, Chief Engineer and/or Head of Finance so it can be used internally, take effect from today and eventually published as a supporting appendix to an updated Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegation.

1 Introduction

1.1 At their meeting on 6th November 2025, the Commissioners approved that their Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegation be reviewed by the Chief Executive (working with the Executive Committee). The Commissioners also delegated approval of any updated Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegation to the Middle Level Board.

1.2 The intent was to undertake this review in Summer 2026 with approval by the Middle Level Board at their meeting on 12th November 2026.

1.3 Due to the Chief Executive's unplanned absence this Summer, the review has not taken place and therefore the revised intention is now to recommend an updated Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegation for Middle Level Board approval at either their April or November 2027 meetings.

1.4 In the interim there are three important gaps within and associated with the Scheme of Delegation that require Commissioners consideration and approvals. Two of these gaps are covered within this paper, ie Mobile Plant Deployment and delegations for absence.

1.5 The third gap is internal delegations in terms of spending authorisations and contracts for services. The aim if for this to be developed and considered for approval at the same time as the updated Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegation and form an appendix to that policy document.

2 Mobile Plant Deployment Decision Making

2.1 The Holme Fen fire was our first deployment from our mobile pump stock and occurred before we have a deployment policy in place. The deployment was approved by the Chief Executive.

2.2 We are developing a 'Mobile Plant Deployment' Policy and the aim is to have it in place in the New Year. The Commissioners are asked to delegate the approval of this policy to the Chief Executive.

2.3 The draft policy includes the following hierarchy for deployment with six categories:

1. Protection of MLC fixed pump assets, control structures and other critical water management infrastructure.
2. Replacement or support of failed MLC fixed pumping works delivery or other critical assets.
3. Recovery of MLC assets, structures or operational systems following an incident.
4. Support to Internal Drainage Boards within the Middle Level.
5. Support to other flood Risk Management Authorities through agreed mutual aid, where MLC resources permit and where the deployment does not compromise MLC flood defence capability or create unacceptable risk.
6. Support within Civil Contingency response, where requested through Local Resilience Fora Command & Control arrangements, i.e. Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG – also referred to as Gold Command) and where the deployment does not compromise MLC flood defence capability or create unacceptable risk.

2.4 The table below outlines the recommended authority for decision making. The Commissioners are asked to consider and approve these delegations. They will then be added to the policy and used for any deployment decision making that may be needed in the interim.

Category	**Deployment Authority** *(including recall decision making and any cost recovery terms for 3-6)*	**Delegated Authority** *(in the absence of Chief Executive and Chief Engineer)*
1	Chief Executive, Chief Engineer, Head of M&E, Head of Operations, Head of Water Level Management	
2	Chief Executive, Chief Engineer, Head of M&E, Head of Operations, Head of Water Level Management	
3	Chief Executive, Chief Engineer, Head of M&E, Head of Operations, Head of Water Level Management	
4	Chief Executive, Chief Engineer, Head of M&E, Head of Operations, Head of Water Level Management	
5	Chief Executive, Chief Engineer	Head of M&E, Head of Operations, Head of Water Level Management
6	Chief Executive, Chief Engineer	Head of M&E, Head of Operations, Head of Water Level Management

3 Internal Delegations in the absence of the Chief Executive, Chief Engineer and/or Head of Finance

3.1 Appended to this paper is a recommendation that formalises delegations of authority in the event of planned or unplanned absence of the Chief Executive, Chief Engineer and Head of Finance.

3.2 The Commissioners are asked to review and approve this so it can be used internally, take effect from today and eventually published as a supporting appendix to an updated Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegation.

3.3 Additions to this document will likely be needed once the spending authorisations document referred to in 1.5 has been finalised.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Chief Executive

middle level commissioners

Internal Scheme of Delegation:
Chief Executive, Chief Engineer and/or Head of Finance Absence

The Middle Level Commissioners have a formal Scheme of Delegation and resolutions made within meetings which includes delegations of authority from the Commissioners to the MLC Chief Executive (Clerk), Chief Engineer and Head of Finance (Treasurer).

Our administered IDBs delegate authority to the Middle Level Commissioners as their Clerk, therefore this document also applies to MLC activity on behalf of IDBs.

The delegations to the Chief Executive include the authority to delegate tasks as appropriate.

This document confirms automatic delegations for both planned leave and unplanned absence of the Chief Executive, Chief Engineer and/or Head of Finance. It is recognised that in these circumstances, given the size of the organisation, that there may be compromise to the normal standard of Internal Controls.

This document is unlikely to specify every likely delegated decision category, so as such for decisions not catered for within this document, judgement should be applied using this document as a framework and if necessary, discuss with the MLC /IDB Chair or Vice Chair.

Guiding Principle
The guiding principle to apply is that low risk activity should be handled by delegates during absence to keep the business running and reduce the bottle neck and backlog of admin upon their return to work.

However, high value, contentious or high-risk activity should wait until their return, even if that means extending statutory deadlines or response standards. The customer must be informed.

For high value, contentious or high-risk activity that cannot reasonably wait until their return, the delegate should seek counsel from other senior members of the team as appropriate to the issue and discuss and agree an approach with the MLC Chairman or Vice Chairman (for MLC issues) or the relevant IDB Chairman/Vice Chairman (for specific IDB issues).

Signing Consents

- In the absence of the Chief Engineer and the Chief Executive, the Head of Technical Services and Head of Operations have delegated authority.

Enforcement action (planning, consenting, navigation)

- In the absence of the Chief Engineer and the Chief Executive, the Head of Technical Services and Head of Operations have delegated authority in conjunction with the Lead Clerk.

Enforcement action (rates)

- The Head of Finance is responsible for all the activity of the team and if they and the Chief Executive are absent then the Chief Engineer in conjunction with the Lead Clerk can support the Finance team's decision making.

Finance

- In the absence of the Head of Finance, the Senior Finance Officer has delegated authority to act as Head of Finance. Many day-to-day tasks can be delegated and performed in absence but there will be some restrictions due to IT system access and security.
- There are important governance tasks, such as signing the AGAR that cannot be delegated. In the absence of the Chief Executive and Head of Finance for such critical actions, advise should be sought via the Internal Auditors.

Payments

- In the absence of the Chief Executive and the Chief Engineer payments can be reviewed and approved by any Head of Department (but not self-approving their own).

Expenses

- In the Chief Executive's absence, the Head of Finance is authorised to approve or reject the Chief Engineer's expenses.

Insurance Claims & Matters

- The arrangement with our broker includes named individuals who can log claims and seek advice. This includes all Heads of Departments, the Lead Clerk, Senior Finance Officer (primary lead on insurance matters) and an Officer within Finance.

Customer Complaints (Those escalated to the Chief Exec/Chief Engineer)

- There is no option but to delay until their return. The customer must be informed.

Suspension of Navigation

- In the absence of the Chief Executive and Chief Engineer, the Lead Clerk, Head of Water Level Management, Head of Operations and Navigation Officer have delegated authority to enact a planned or emergency suspension of navigation.

Tenancies and simple Agreements (eg Bank Lots, Fishing Rights, access agreements etc)

- In the absence of the Chief Executive and Chief Engineer, the Business Support Manager and Head of Operations are authorised to sign on behalf of MLC, under advisement from each-other and the Lead Clerk. For IDB matters that the Chief Executive would ordinarily sign along with Chairman, the Lead Clerk and Head of Finance have delegated authority.

Mobile Plant Deployment

- Refer to Mobile Plant Deployment and Operation Policy

Grant Applications and Grant Funding Agreements

- These normally require execution by two 'Director' level positions, and if the Chief Engineer is the scheme sponsor/project executive, then this will be the Chief Executive and Head of Finance.
- If two are not available, agreements can be executed by one 'Director' in the presence of a witness. The Lead Clerk, Business Support Manager and Senior Finance Officer are authorised to be a witness in these circumstances.
- There MLC/IDB Chair and Vice Chair must execute in the absence of all three positions.

Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**MLC & IDBS WORKING SMARTER**
Date:	**12th November 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioners are asked to:

A. Support that the Head of Finance and his team reduce the 'internal accounting' that is in their gift to change.
B. Agree to provide administrative, professional or technical services under S11(5) of the Land Drainage Act, 1991 to the IDBs listed in 8.1 and any new IDB(s) formed from amalgamations of these IDBs.

1.1 Our Service Provision model in outdated. It was created at the time when IDBs first approached MLC regarding administration and services and hasn't changed much since.

1.2 There is significant time spent 'internal accounting' by finance raising invoices to recharge costs and time out of MLC to the 20+ IDBs. Then to process the invoices again within the books of the IDBs and subsequently making payments and recording these payments and subsequent receipts in both sets of books respectively. This model has evolved into a mini-industry, is inefficient and adds stress at the busiest times of the year.

1.3 There are elements of this that are within our gift to change, and we will look to do so engaging IDB Chairs where appropriate, for example:

- Moving from four separate retrospective invoices per year to all pumped IDBs for M&E inspections to one invoice upfront.
- Receiving one invoice for MLC and IDBs ADA branch fee (nominal value) and paying once (and including within the clerking fees) rather than receiving and processing 20+ separate invoices and payments.

1.4 Given the dual rated status of the majority of the Middle Level, there are changes that could be made that would make a more significant difference. These would involve a shift in costs from IDB budgets and their rate and levy payer, to the MLC budget and our rate and levy payer. This is something that will be developed and tested further before any recommendation is put to the Commissioners or Middle Level Board for their consideration.

1.5 The Floods & Water Management Act (2010) (FWMA) introduced a clause into the Land Drainage Act (1991) designed to enable IDBs to work more closely together on a legislative footing and to complement the provision within the FWMA for Risk Management Authorities (RMA) to delegate their functions to another RMA. The FWMA provision provides the legislative foundation for Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs).

1.6 Land Drainage Act, 1991 S11(5):
Two internal drainage boards may agree that one is to provide administrative, professional or technical services for the other.

1.7 This clause provides the legislative foundation for formal consortium arrangements between IDBs.

1.8 It is recommended that the Commissioners agree to adopt and use this clause as the foundation for the relationship with both administered IDBs and those in addition that we provide services for, namely:

1. Benwick IDB
2. Churchfield & Plawfield IDB
3. Conington & Holme IDB
4. Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB
5. Manea & Welney DDC
6. March & Euximoor WMB
7. March 5th DDC
8. March 6th DDC
9. March 3rd DDC
10. March West & White Fen IDB
11. Needham & Laddus IDB
12. Nightlayers IDB
13. Nordelph IDB
14. Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB
15. Ramsey IDB
16. Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) IDB
17. Ramsey, Upwood & Great Raveley IDB
18. Ransonmoor DDC
19. Sawtry IDB
20. Sutton & Mepal IDB
21. Upwell IDB
22. Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB
23. Holmewood & District IDB
24. Whittlesey & District IDB
25. Woodwalton IDB

1.9 This enables us to move from a contractual relationship between MLC and the IDBs to a legislative one where MLC can choose whether to recover costs. This better reflects the reality of the current relationship and ways of working.

2.0 If the Commissioners resolve to use this clause to offer services to named IDBs, then those IDBs will be similarly asked at their Spring 2027 meetings to agree to receive those services under S11(5).

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Chief Executive

Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**PIG WATER – OLD CHANNEL**
Date:	**12th November 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioners are asked to:

A. Approve that the old channel of Pig Water be vested in the Commissioners and added to its watercourse network.

1.1 Pig Water is one of three Catchwater Drains that the Commissioners have responsibilities for and are included within the 190km of watercourses within our district that are vested in the Commissioners (sometimes called adopted and/or MLC watercourses).

1.2 Catchwaters are man-made flood defence channels designed to intercept and receive surface water from highland areas reducing the risk of flooding within the lowland fen.

1.3 Pig Water also provided a historic navigation route from Horsey Toll to an inland marina area in Yaxley (along Main Street) and is now a crucial watercourse for our water resources role in the transfer of 'imported' water from the River Nene into our Bevill's pond to serve the needs of abstractors and to help enable different water level management choices for lowland peat.

1.4 Over the last few decades significant housing and industrial growth has placed an increasing and cumulative pressure on Pig Water in terms of water quality, quantity and flow, with associated ecological and maintenance impacts.

1.5 We have published Standing Advice for planners and developers specifically covering our Catchwater Drains.



1.6 The existing course of Pig Water (from Great Drove to its confluence with Yaxley Lode) is a relatively new cut and the previous course of the watercourse ran along Great Drove and Main Street, then headed Southeast to the confluence with Yards End Dyke and Yaxley Lode.

1.7 Whilst there is little left today in terms of the old channels along Great Drove and Main Street, the channel that heads Southeast is still in situ and overgrown. The channel and its banks were within the package of first registrations submitted to Land Registry several years ago that are being processed. The registration of the land in question has recently been concluded, and we are now formally registered as landowner.

1.8 For a variety of reasons, we have also objected to a Planning Application that has recently been submitted for the parcel of agricultural land that is located between Main Street and Pig Water. If this site were to be developed, the discharge of attenuated surface water would ideally need to be into the old course of Pig Water that would need to be reinstated and then maintained at the developer's cost.

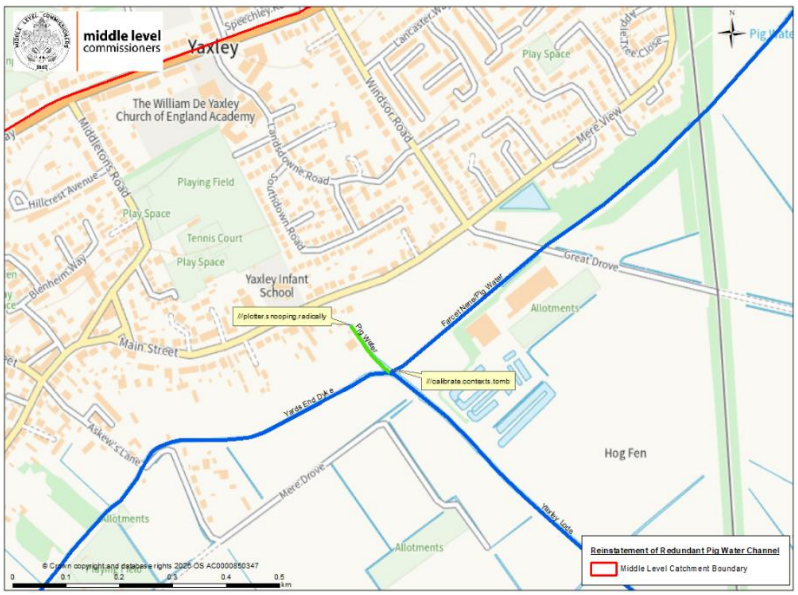
1.9 In order to strengthen our ability to regulate future development, to enable continued efficient operations of our drainage system and to support our Biodiversity Action Plan, it is recommended that this section of watercourse becomes vested in the Commissioners (sometimes called adopted) and therefore it becomes an MLC watercourse.

2.0 Alongside our riparian responsibilities as landowner, this enables us to enact our permissive powers and provides the protections of our Byelaws to this stretch of watercourse. This would also better enable choices regarding future options for relocating the head of navigation which is currently at the overspill weir on Yaxley Lode.

2.1 If and when the channel is reinstated, we would need to discuss with the Environment Agency whether this section of watercourse is considered a Catchwater Drain and therefore included as such within Highland Water Claims.

2.2

Upstream point:	///plotter.snooping.radically
Downstream point:	///calibrate.contexts.tomb
Length:	112m



New total length of MLC watercourses: 193km

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Chief Executive

Photos:









Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	9
Meeting:	**MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURE**
Date:	**12th November 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commissioners are asked to:

A. Consider supporting its elected Board Members with the offer of payment of the application fee, 50% of the annual membership fee and 50% towards the costs of any training undertaken via the Society of Agriculture that is deemed relevant to a member's role.
B. To offer pay for the application and annual membership fees associated with employee membership of the Society as an additional professional body benefit to employment (alongside suitable events and training at the discretion of the Chief Officers).

1.1 The Society of Agriculture is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), formed to raise standards, strengthen professionalism, and support leadership across the agricultural sector.

1.2 The Society offers a range of membership – Student – Member – Practitioner – Advisor and provide a pathway to Chartered Environmentalist via the Society for the Environment. They have the ambition to secure a royal charter to enable them to grant Chartership status like the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and the Chartered Institution of Water & Environmental Management (CIWEM).

1.3 The application fees are low cost and the annual membership fee ranges from £85 to £220 which is incredibly reasonable. Within other benefits, membership provides for accreditation and access to a variety of subsidised training and events.

1.4 Within the Annual Report (IDB1) to Defra, IDBs are expected to report on whether or not they have supported professional development for their members. The Society of Agriculture provides the recognised route for professional development within the agricultural sector.

1.5 Recognising that membership also supports an individual's agricultural 'day job', it is recommended that the Middle Level Commissioners consider supporting its elected Board Members with the offer of payment of the application fee, 50% of the annual membership fee and 50% towards the costs of any training undertaken via the Society that is deemed relevant to a member's role.

1.6 In terms of our employees, we already offer an employment benefit by covering an individual's membership of one professional body (where relevant to one's role) per annum and associated application costs. This is standard practice for employers.

1.7 Only approximately 10% of staff take up this benefit which is low. Individual and collective professional accreditation is important to our standing, credibility and within our management of corporate risks.

1.8 Being a member of an Internal Drainage Board or a Commissioner is a key extension of agricultural businesses within lowland England. Our employees therefore effectively act as advisors to the local agricultural sector and are therefore eligible to become a Practitioner of the Society of Agriculture.

1.9 It is important that our employees are therefore exposed to, learn and better understand relevant agricultural issues and have access to a peer network. This is not provided by other professional bodies.

1.10 There is also the opportunity to work with the Society to ensure that the role and responsibilities that come with IDB Board membership and being a Commissioner are integrated into their training and events, through closer working with the Association of Drainage Authorities. Their leadership development programme could provide a suitable platform to help us with Chair and Vice Chair succession and support the younger generation of Board Members.

1.11 With the above in mind, it is recommended that the Commissioners offer to pay for the application fee and annual membership fees associated with employee membership of the Society (alongside suitable events and training at the discretion of the Chief Officers). This is as an additional membership to that outlined in 1.6.

1.12 It is suggested that the Commissioners advocate that the administered IDBs offer similar for their Board Members and employees where appropriate.

1.13 Realistically given likely uptake, it is unlikely that the additional cost of providing this benefit for Board Members and employees will exceed £3,000 per annum.

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