

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

Report of the Middle Level Board on the financial year 2020/21 for submission to the General Meeting of the Commissioners to be held on Thursday 4 November 2021

MEMBERS OF THE MIDDLE LEVEL BOARD – 2020/21

(year in which first elected in brackets)

MARC HEADING	(Chairman)	(2004)
JONATHAN BROWN	(Vice-Chairman)	(2006)
PATRICK ALLPRESS		(2011)
GREGORY BLISS		(2011)
DUNCAN BOUGHTON		(1985)
ROBERT BROWN		(2013)
THE LORD DE RAMSEY		(1980)
FRED HARTLEY		(2004)
JOHN HEADING		(1991)
MATHEW LATTA		(2012)
SAM RABY		(1991)
PAUL WEST		(2012)
HUGH WHITTOME		(2002)
STEPHEN WHITTOME		(1989)

CHRIS CROFTS

(representing the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991)

Mrs DEE LAWS

(representing Fenland District Council under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1992)

ALEX MISCANDLON

(representing Fenland District Council under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991)

WILL SUTTON

(representing Fenland District Council under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991)

JEFFREY R CLARKE

(representing Huntingdonshire District Council under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991)

OFFICERS :

Chief Engineer, Clerk and Chief Executive to the Commissioners - D Thomas B.Eng, M.C.M.I.

Solicitor and Assistant Clerk – Ms L McShane

ACCOUNTS IN RESPECT OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21

The Commissioners' revenue balance on 31st March 2020 was £4,339,293.35 and during the year was increased by £79,246.55 to £4,418,539.90.

The sum of £262,375.55 was received from the Environment Agency (EA), being the standard annual calculated contribution in respect of highland water contributions for maintenance works.

The precept paid to the EA amounted to £1,947.00 compared with £1,899.10 in 2019/2020.

The Commissioners have borrowed £11 million from the Public Works Loan Board for the St Germans Pumping Station replacement scheme and the balance outstanding at 23rd March 2021 was £8,043,765.10. A loan of £1.75 million has also been taken with the Public Works Loan Board for the office/depot relocation to Whittlesey Road, March. The balance outstanding on this loan at 23rd December 2020 was £965,779.25.

Development contributions were received in respect of all development which would give rise to an increase in the rate or volume of surface water discharge to maintained watercourses within the catchment.

There are no unusual features in the Navigation (Middle Level Act 2018) and Adventurers' Accounts. Within the (2018) Navigation Accounts the sum of £40,282.18 was received during the year for Navigation Registration/Licence Fees and the retained balance at 31st March 2021 for the installation of facilities as required by the Act was £10,070.55.

MEMBERS ATTENDANCE

The attendances of most of the Members of the Board have been excellent as usual.

ETHNIC MONITORING

The Commissioners' workforce is ethnically classed as white European.

During the year one member of staff resigned and was replaced and the new post of navigation officer was filled internally.

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REPORT AS PRESENTED TO THE BOARD AT THE APRIL 2021 MEETING with removal of employee matters and amendments to requests for instructions (shown in bold)

April 2020 to March 2021

Health & Safety

Croner Consulting – used to provide the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) and associated Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) with help and advice on health and safety issues at a high level, with Cope Safety consultants providing more practical advice. However, this arrangement has been reviewed and the contract with Croner is to be cancelled as it is believed Cope can provide all the services we require. As there is a period of notice for cancellation it is likely that we will continue to be with Croner until October this year.

Accidents and near misses are recorded at the monthly Works Meeting and any actions identified to reduce the risks linked to these occurrences are taken. Good practice is also shared between IDBs as appropriate.

COVID-19 Actions

Following the instructions given by the Government on 23rd March 2020 the following list of actions have been taken (this list is not exhaustive). Note the actions have been varied from time to time based upon the most up to date advice;

- Arrangements were made to implement a skeleton staff rota to ensure that the office phones have been manned, post received and processed and letters sent out where necessary. The office has varied from being closed to the public to being open by appointment and where socially distanced meeting are necessary and possible these have, for the most part, been allowed when not in complete lock-down.
- Perspex screens have been installed in shared work spaces and the lobby area has been divided to restrict and control public access.
- The kitchen has been closed.
- Hand sanitiser points have been installed and the cleaning rota adjusted to ensure shared surfaces are disinfected daily.
- Masks are available for those that don't have them with them and the wearing of masks in communal areas such as reception and corridors has become mandatory.
- Two vans have been on hire for the majority of the period to reduce to the absolute minimum the need to share vehicles.
- We are currently investigating the possibility of offering routine lateral flow testing to all employees.

At the beginning of the event the Chief Executive also attended regular Zoom meetings with ADA staff and other IDB Clerks to discuss COVID-19 actions and responses which was extremely helpful.

Assuming the country remains on track to return to some sort of normal operations the constraints within the office and wider working environment will reduce incrementally over the spring and early summer period.

Clerk's Report

Anglian Water Issues – due to COVID-19 there have been no liaison meetings with Anglian Water (AW). These meetings cover all aspects of shared interests but whilst productive and useful are not considered absolutely essential.

Partnership Working and Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs) – this period PSCA works have mainly centred around annual maintenance in the Swavesey district area and continue to be highly beneficial to both authorities.

Budget 2020 National Capital spend increase – the new national six-year budget (set at £5.2 billion) and the lead into the final year of the previous six-year deal has led to a comprehensive grant-in-aid refresh and an associated call for schemes to come forward and be included in the forward plan. Middle Level staff have reviewed the needs of the MLC and associated IDBs and fed the resulting information into the mix. The response from the EA has been positive and the MLC has allocation for its bank raising scheme in the region of £14M

spread over the next 6 years. In the financial year 2020/21 we have £0.9M allocated and work to gain business case approval to allow the release of this money is well advanced. The technical input required to project manage this scheme and to develop designs, produce tenders and supervise the delivery of this scheme will be significant and **the Board is therefore asked to approve the employment of a small focused consultancy-based team to deliver this, the cost of which would be borne by grant-in-aid.**

On a less positive note, and as previously reported, there is no indication that the Government is revisiting the approach to annual settlements for revenue spending by the Environment Agency (EA) (routine maintenance). This is despite the concerted efforts of many to make it clear that unless assets are maintained in good order flood risk will increase and the value of investment in capital schemes is diminished.

Red Diesel – there has been an update on this and as things stand the Board will no longer be able to use red diesel from 2022 which will have significant cost implications. Agriculture is being given an extension and ADA has been arguing that IDBs should be also and they have called for defra to rethink their stance. The Chief Executive has been in email correspondence with Stephen Barclay MP in support of the call for an extension.

Water Resources East (WRE) – the Chief Executive continues to represent ADA Boards (in the East of England) as a non-Executive director on the Board of WRE. WRE has had a good degree of success over this period, adding to the previously successful £850k grant for an ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds) project in Lincolnshire from MHCLG and a £75k grant from WWF for Systematic Conservation Planning. The team have now been notified that their collaborative Inter-Reg bid for £3.7m ('Water For Tomorrow') has also been approved. This piece of work will focus on abstraction reform in the Broads, East Suffolk and the Cam & Ely Ouse, working very closely with irrigators and other abstractors, as well as partners in Northern France. Also, in the Norfolk area, WRE has been awarded a grant from Norfolk County Council (80% funded by NCC and 20% funded by AW) to develop a county-wide integrated water management strategy and plan, with a focus on the implementation of nature-based solutions for water management through the development of internationally-acclaimed 'Water Funds' with our partners, The Nature Conservancy. The total value of all of these grants is just shy of £5m which reflects well on the work of the team.

Following concerns over a lack of EA engagement with WRE the Chief Executive wrote to the local RFCC chairman, Brian Stewart, and the Flood and Risk Manager, Paul Burrows, last summer and was subsequently advised that efforts were being made to get national sign of for closer working. It is believed that commitment exists at a local level and it is recognised that there are many synergies between the aspirations of WRE and the EA.

Over the last quarter a panel has been set up to consult on the choice of the most suitable location for a new water supply reservoir in the lower Great Ouse catchment. One suggestion has been that such a reservoir could be fed from water pumped from the St Germans site, the concept being that the energy used to pump water would have a secondary benefit rather than for fresh water simply to be evacuated to sea.

Work on water trading is also well advanced as mentioned earlier in the report and again this does evidence a direct output from the work of WRE which is of potential benefit to the MLC.

Board Tour of Inspection – it is felt that this comes under the valuable but not essential category and therefore it has been put on hold until the pandemic is under control and large gatherings are no longer being discouraged.

Ambassadors to support school visits – the Chief Executive has been working with ADA on making the St Germans Pumping Station a site that can be identified for school visits. ADA

will be offering training to ensure that those keen to engage with schools are equipped and ready to deliver on this role. Although work on this is on hold, for obvious reasons, a risk assessment for the Station has been prepared and issued in readiness.

The Agriculture Bill – this bill aims to make legal, in addition to other things, support for agricultural. Specifically, it aims to make provision for the following:

- Direct payments following the United Kingdom’s departure from the European Union
- Payments in response to exceptional market conditions affecting agricultural markets
- Provide powers to modify retained direct EU legislation relating to agricultural and rural development payments and public market intervention and private storage aid
- Reports on food security
- The collection and use of information connected with food supply chains
- Confers powers to make regulations about the imposition of obligations on business purchasers of agricultural products, marketing standards, organic products and the classification of carcasses
- The recognition of associations of agricultural producers which may benefit from certain exemptions from competition law
- The use of fertilisers
- The identification and traceability of animals
- The red meat levy in Great Britain
- Matters relating to agricultural tenancies
- The passing over of power to make regulations about securing compliance with the WTO Agreement on Agriculture
- Other connected purposes

The bill received Royal Assent in November 2021.

Environment Bill 2019-21 – this Bill has had its first and second readings in the House of Commons but has yet to go before the Lords. Most recently a ‘carry over’ motion was passed allowing the Bill to move between one parliamentary year to another without falling and then having to be freshly reintroduced. The Bill is important to IDBs for a number of reasons but the main one is that it includes a section on land drainage which allows Boards to value land for rating purposes outside its district and this paves the way to allowing Boards to consider extending their boundaries or for new IDBs to be created.

The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) – the AGM took place on the 16th October 2020. A climate change meeting is due to be held shortly, but the date for this is yet to be set.

Fen Biosphere – the Chief Executive sits on the Steering Group and was appointed Vice Chair of the group in the autumn. The potential benefits of obtaining biosphere status are seen as the aim to deliver;

- A boosted economy
- More and better areas for nature
- New solutions to climate change issues
- Better promotion of a Fenland identity
- Better access to nature and its benefits
- Inspired and empowered residents

It is important whilst offering support for this initiative that we also recognise that a biosphere is not a protected area for conservation. The idea behind biospheres is the creation of strong partnership working across the area; encouraging organisations, local authorities, communities and businesses to work together making the area a better place for all. A UNESCO Biosphere is a non-statutory designation made by UNESCO and biospheres do not therefore have any planning powers attached in themselves. They can, of course, be referenced in planning policy and the planning authority may well share some of the aspirations promoted by the biosphere.

Before the bid can be submitted all local authorities (councils) affected must show support for it. Progress is being made on obtaining letters of support but at the time of reporting it appears unlikely that this will be in place in time for a submission to be made this year, particularly as we are now entering a period of purdah as council elections take place, hence 2022 looks more likely.

Cardea Site – the Board’s Solicitor and Assistant Clerk continues to push the appointed solicitors toward concluding this. During the period a call for a meeting of interested parties was asked for but has yet to take place. It was understood that Persimmon Homes had sold or passed over land which is required to provide access to one or more of the ponds and that they are in the process of trying to buy back this land.

Consultations – the MLC continue to respond to defra consultations either directly or through correspondence with ADA as and when appropriate to do so.

Reform of Water Abstraction Licensing – there has been little reported progress on this matter over the period but it remains defra’s/EA’s intention to carry through major reforms.

Middle Level Barrier Banks Works – an update on the works, being undertaken by the EA.

River Great Ouse Dredging Pilot – as was advised at the April 2020 meeting it has been proposed by the EA that the pilot be modified to be incorporated into the tactical plans to ‘hold-the-line’. This will cover the period whilst work is undertaken to define a fully costed strategy for FRM for the Cambridgeshire Fens long-term. This would embed agitation dredging for the next fifteen years, assuming it shows value in terms of reducing silt levels in the tidal river.

Eel Regulations – it is interesting to note that for one of the IDBs administered by the MLC the EA considered the need for additional works under the Eel Regulations, where the drive chain for a station was to be moved from diesel to electric. Having determined that the local environment was not currently suitable for eels a pragmatic approach was taken and no requirement for additional measures identified. This is extremely encouraging and matches the view we take that works should be targeted on the areas where clear benefit can be delivered. Possibly also of interest is that the Chief Executive sits on a British Standards Institute (BSi) panel and has been pushing for a code of practice to be developed for pumping stations and eel regulations compliance. This has been approved at committee level and a paper is being prepared to go before the BSi board for sanction to develop the code.

Future Planning for the MLC and Associated Boards – the sixth Chairs’ Meeting was held on the 26th November and is covered in the agenda.

Woodwalton Fen Potential to be reclassified as a reservoir – as part of the formal process of recording Woodwalton as a reservoir the Panel Engineer has issued his final report to the EA. In it he states that there are a number of actions the MLC must take before the end of the 2020/21 financial year. These requirements have been met, the most onerous of which was to complete a topographical survey of the banks containing the reservoir. This was completed in late February and the information passed back to him. We now await his further comments

and the issuing of a preliminary certificate. The reservoir must then remain under the supervision of a qualified engineer for a period of three years before a final certificate can be issued. It is important to note that for any reservoir a Supervising Engineer must be appointed at all times. We also await classification of the reservoir by the EA; however, the Panel Engineer has suggested it will not be considered as high risk, the burden of which would be significantly greater in terms of design and monitoring.

The New Rivers Authorities & Land Drainage Bill – whilst this bill did make it through to second reading in the Lords it fell as parliament was prorogued in autumn 2019 and it appears that it is now unlikely that it will be reintroduced.

Environmental & Land Management Scheme ELMS - it is the Commissioners' long-term intention to transfer a number of its grass sward Main Drain Bank Lots (that have been given up by tenant graziers and are 'in hand') into defra's Environmental & Land Management Scheme (ELMS). At this time details of the scheme, including potential operational restrictions and financial payments emanating from placing grass land into such a scheme, are only just emerging.

ELMs will be split into three schemes which aim to reward;

- Sustainable Farming Incentive
- Local Nature Recovery
- Landscape Recovery

It is stated that through these schemes, farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for delivering the following:

- Clean and plentiful water
- Clean air
- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Protection from environmental hazards
- Reduction of and adaptation to climate change
- Beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment

Pilots are underway that should help to assist with the development of a framework for future schemes, but in the meantime the grass sward Bank Lots will continue to be managed in-house within an environmentally friendly regime and will continue to provide a diverse habitat for species that will hopefully be suitable for future inclusion in an ELMS. It should be noted that sustainable farming incentives go live in 2022 and local nature recovery and landscape recovery follow on in 2024.

Lower Nene Water Resources Planning Group – this group has not met during the period but its previous meetings have led to a project being commissioned by WRE to investigate water trading options. The early indications are that this project shows that flexible arrangements for abstractions from the River Nene can be developed which would, in most years, allow AW to play tunes on the filling of Grafham and Rutland reservoirs such that River Nene water could be released for agricultural use during the critical six-week window irrigation period identified by the group.

Proposal to hold an Open Day – as previously reported the ADA Great Ouse branch is encouraging IDBs to consider holding open days to engage with the public. The MLC are working in conjunction with the Association of Nene River Clubs' festival on holding a joint event. This was to have been held in the MLC's office grounds in May 2020 but for obvious reasons was postponed. However, it may still go ahead in 2022.

Tactical Plans for the Fens Agreement – work on phase one of this is largely complete (baselining) and the requests for grant allocation mentioned above, for scheme money for the MLC and associated IDBs, have been built around the framework which underpin these Tactical Plans.

FCERM National Strategy – the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 placed a statutory duty on the EA to develop a National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England, this was published and laid before government in July 2020. This Strategy's long-term vision is for: a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100. It will have legal backing under the Flood and Water Management Act of 2010.

It has 3 long-term ambitions, underpinned by evidence about future risk and investment needs. They are:

- Climate resilient places: working with partners to bolster resilience to flooding and coastal change across the nation, both now and in the face of climate change
- Today's growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow's climate: making the right investment and planning decisions to secure sustainable growth and environmental improvements, as well as infrastructure resilient to flooding and coastal change
- A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change: ensuring local people understand their risk to flooding and coastal change, and know their responsibilities and how to take action.

Further details can be obtained online.

Special Circumstances Policy on tendering – because it has been difficult to obtain sufficient tenders/quotations for services, equipment or plant due to the pandemic a policy was prepared which outlined how the Commissioners can reasonably deviate from their current policy; covering what circumstances deviation can occur and what controls are in place to ensure the ratepayers' interests are protected. This policy was approved at the November 2020 meeting.

Navigation Registration/Byelaws and Navigation Advisory Committee (NAC)

Under the Act the Commissioners must appoint people to represent various areas of interest. This was completed at the April 2019 meeting. Below are changes that are proposed.

At its November meeting the Board was asked to consider and then subsequently approved the following new appointments;

Colin Ovendon of the Middle Level Waterman's Club. His appointment was supported by the NAC Chairman and was chosen to increase the level of representation on the Committee of those who own a vessel and are involved in a navigation-based organisation with direct interests in the Middle Level system.

A further appointment was recommended from Huntingdonshire District Council to cover ratepayer interests in the west of the district but at that time a suitable person had not yet been located. We have now located a suitable person, HDC Councillor Steve Corney, who is not only a council member but is also Mayor of Ramsey and as a bonus owns a boat which is moored in Bill Fen marina allowing him to also represent boaters there.

Members are asked to confirm their support for this appointment.

At the November 2020 meeting it was reported that the byelaws had been drafted, consulted upon and the responses to the consultation considered. The final draft documents had then been submitted to defra just over a year ago for approval following which the Assistant Clerk & Solicitor had responded to requests from defra for supporting information. It was hoped at that time that it would not be too long before they are signed off by the Secretary of State. Unfortunately, six months on we appear to have made little substantive progress with defra still periodically asking questions and providing dates, which due to so many missed targets, we have no confidence in. Most recently the Chief Executive has therefore written to Stephen Barclay MP asking for his intervention. Stephen became involved in navigation issues last year when he appeared to support boaters' concerns over the approach the MLC was taking to navigation licencing. This was rebutted and supporting information supplied in response. It did though highlight to us the need to improve and expand the navigation section of our website which has been done. The importance of having the byelaws in place cannot be underestimated as this will provide the MLC with the full suite of powers it needs to run and operate a modern navigation authority. Until they are in place we are having to rely on the previous byelaws, which are no longer fit for purpose and of course are not in sync with our new charging powers.

Meetings continue to be held regularly with the EA and a joint paper was delivered to the Anglian Waterway Group on the proposals for a local equivalent of the CRT gold licence, called the Anglian Pass. This is an add on to any home licence (MLC, EA or Conservators of the River Cam) which can be purchased at a cost of between £25 and £100 which allows boaters access to all three waters. This joint agreement has been well received by the boating community and shows that the MLC were prepared to follow up on the commitment they made to build up partnership arrangements with neighbouring authorities.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis the introduction of licencing originally planned for 1st April 2020 was delayed until 1st September 2020. The charges were set at half of the cost of a full year EA licence. However, only 80 boats registered and our intention to start to chase down unregistered boats could not be followed up because immediately after Christmas we went into lockdown and boat owners were not allowed to access their vessels.

To further evidence the MLC commitment to navigation we have installed rural moorings at four locations on our land. These 24 hours moorings are simple in nature and just provide a location to moor up for a short stop or overnight. They provide no facilities nor do they always provide access to other places in particular, but they are welcomed by boaters who have for years complained that there is nowhere to stop between towns and villages.

A challenge was made to the House of Commons stating that we were in breach of the undertakings given to the House of Lords. A response was issued countering the claims and following provision of backup information the claim was dismissed. We do however have to report back to the House for an update on implementation of the undertakings around June 2021 to show that we are meeting our obligations.

A number of Freedom of Information Requests have been made on Navigation and responded to.

The Assistant Clerk & Solicitor has produced a protocol for boat removal which has been approved by the NAC and published on our website.

The development of proposals for placing facilities to meet the IWA recommendations on the link route has not progressed as much as we might have hoped but, of course, as navigation income has been low the 25% we are required to set aside for implementing these works is currently a very modest sum.

We have been discussing the strategy we must produce for residential moorings in our area with Fenland District Council (FDC). A meeting was held virtually with consultants working for FDC who have been investigating the need for residential mooring as part of the local plan review. The Chief Executive has also recently given a presentation to the Fenland Developers Forum in an attempt to generate some interest in landowners thinking about providing residential moorings and new marinas and also to spell out the potential for developing new navigation led income sources through for example tourism.

In early January it was announced that FDC had been successful with a Market Towns bid. This, with other funding, will provide around £9M to invest in the town centre plans including the opening up and improvement of the water front which could look something like the image overleaf.

The Chief Executive has attended several meetings now to discuss the Ramsey Town High Lode moorings and the proposed enlargement of the winding hole (turning head). This scheme is being promoted by Councillor Steve Corney and to assist him the MLC have provided a quotation for installation of approaching 200m of linear piled moorings.

Publicity

During the reporting period the Conservation Officer has been involved in the following:

- July 2020 – BBC2 aired ‘A Wild Year: The Fens’ featuring Peter catching and releasing eels from the St Germans eel pass (this was filmed in July 2019).
- September 2020 – supervised Channel 4 filming opening sequence to an episode of ‘Grand Designs’ at St Germans Pumping Station.

Further media work is scheduled:

- October 2020 – interview on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire to discuss fenland wildlife and impact of Lockdown.
- November 2020 – discussion on Fenland Community Radio (date tbc)

The Chief Executive responded to a post made by Stephen Barclay MP in which he challenged Stephen’s assertion that the new MLC navigation licencing fees were unreasonable. This was published in the CambsTimes online.

In January 2021 the Chief Executive released a statement to the press on the work of the MLC over the winter period which was reported in the CambsTimes online.

Visits – due to the COVID-19 restrictions no visits have been arranged to St Germans Pumping Station during the reporting period.

Media – the Commissioners’ ‘Twitter’ presence now has 506 followers, up from 371 in April 2020, representing a 26% increase. Twitter is currently only used for the navigation element of the Commissioners’ activities.

Web site – www.middlelevel.gov.uk is updated regularly to deliver information to those who may be interested or who require information. During the year it has been amended to include a prominent space on the home page to display the latest news plus COVID-19 and navigation related information, in addition to the usual updates. The navigation side of the website has

been expanded substantially following external criticism that the website lacked relevant information

ICT Report

Hardware – TSG continues to provide support for the Commissioners' physical and virtual servers.

Other than the usual ongoing replacement of failed or outdated items, equipment and licences continue to be made available to assist with dealing with the COVID-19 arrangements. This includes over the period; the purchase of further laptops, a number of webcams and several headsets.

In the autumn the main telephone line and photocopier/key printers and maintenance contracts were reviewed to ensure that the Commissioners continue to have in place best value for money solutions. With regard to telephones, we have now moved to a BT VOIP cloud-based platform, this was in part in recognition that PSTN lines will be discontinued in 2025, but it provides greater flexibility by offering a point of presence approach, where a call can be answered from a fixed phone, mobile or even laptop/PC, irrespective of where you are located. Three key printers have recently been replaced and moved onto a lower cost contract, with the photocopier contract being moved to the same supplier when the current contract ends in May 2021.

Software – in addition to the usual licence purchases for office software and licence renewal a moderate spend has taken place to address the new working practices brought about by COVID-19.

Engineering Executive Commentary

This section broadly summarises the key activities of each of the three engineering departments serving the MLC and client IDBs. It is intended to provide an overview of work carried out during the above period and that planned for the future.

A brief summary of progress on the Middle Level Strategic Improvement Scheme and progress on Grant-in-Aid (GiA) applications is also included.

Technical Services Department

The work carried out by the Technical Services Department during the last twelve months can be briefly summarised as follows:

Middle Level Bank Raising Scheme – the MLC continue to employ a consultant to help with delivery of the Bank Raising Business case. This project is being project managed by an MLC Engineer, but the consultant is being retained as he has extensive knowledge of business case development of this type and his input is seen to be of high value. For this year's GiA review we have been allocated £900K of GiA spend and we are in the last stages of putting together the business case submission which if successful will lead to this money being released. In future years the spend is set to increase to £2.7M until the works have been fully implemented and for this a team will be needed to develop the scheme phases, design the works, produce the tenders and project manage the scheme phases.

In November the Board approved moving forward with the first £900K phase (subject to a successful grant bid). The Board is now asked to approve the employment of a team (probably via a contract with consultants) to deliver the future phases of the

scheme. It is intended that the costs associated will be recovered through the grant process.

On a consultancy basis:-

Holly Bank Culvert replacement – this scheme follows on from the Crooked Bank scheme and has gone out to tender and the contract awarded. The scheme was delayed due to the pandemic.

Stow Bardolph Pumping Station – this scheme is complete and operational. The formal opening of the Station could not however take place due to the pandemic.

Needham and Laddus Outfall – one of two district outfalls is believed to be in a poor condition due to its age and is ideally to be replaced along with a culvert upstream if grant can be obtained. The Technical Services department have completed the design and tender documents and have applied for GiA. If grant is approved both culverts will be replaced this summer (approximate cost £230K), if not just the outfall culvert will be replaced.

Cock Fen Electrification – a specification and tender were produced and sent out for the replacement of diesel drive motors with electric ones on this Station. Although the required number of tenderers expressed their intention to submit prices only one did so. This is believed to be linked to the current unusual circumstances; hence a new policy has been developed. At the time of report, work is being undertaken to obtain the various relevant landowners' approval to allow a power supply to be brought to the Station.

Works Department

Water Resources and Control of Water Levels

Spring/Summer 2020

The Met Office reported February 2020 as 'the wettest February ever recorded', and the subsequent spring period as the 'sunniest spring ever' with 626 hours of sunshine. The two weather patterns certainly were contrasting in nature!

Early season pressure from water abstractors in the Commissioners' system remained negligible, as farmers and growers were generally able to establish spring cropping into moist soils. Inevitably there were some exceptions to this rule, with seedbed preparations – on some lower lying areas of land (which had remained wet following the February rains) proving to be challenging.

The EA hosted the annual Summer Liaison Meeting in late March 2020. This was held by remote link due to the COVID-19 restrictions being introduced. Prospects for water availability from the EA Lower Nene were pronounced as good for the coming season, following the heavy rainfall in February.

Twice weekly (Monday and Thursday morning) telecon meetings were held throughout the summer abstraction season. The meetings provided a useful link in terms of MLC decision-making regarding water availability and levels, and similarly to give EA Officers an indication of abstractors' anticipated requirements for the week ahead. Colleagues from AW shared updates of their own water resource requirements and data, and this gave an opportunity to fine tune the timing for the 'give and take' arrangements, where AW agree to give a percentage of their daily intake for use by other Lower Nene abstractors (including those based within the Commissioners' catchment area).

In an attempt to improve internal Water Resource communication this season, a brief résumé of the twice weekly meetings, including the water requirements of the Commissioners, EA, other Lower Nene Parties and AW has been sent out electronically to members of the Commissioners' Water Resource Committee following the Monday EA telecon. It is hoped this information was of benefit to MLC Water Resource Committee members.

It is pleasing to report that despite having to confront and deal with some challenging EA communication/false messaging issues and EA operational difficulties, in late June 2020, the abstraction season passed without the requirement for a single 4-night irrigation restriction. Significant rainfall in mid-June 2020, proved critical at that time to replenishing dwindling water supplies and levels throughout the Middle Level and IDB systems. Water availability became more difficult again from early August 2020. However, this situation was short lived as rainfall again replenished supply and negated later season irrigation requirements.

The now well embedded text messaging system, which is sent out from the Commissioners' office continues to be well received. Twelve separate messages were sent to IDB and private slacker operators during the latest abstraction season. It is the generally good levels of compliance with this messaging system that contributes to the overall success of water management within the MLC system during the peak abstraction season.

Later in the season as crop requirements for irrigation subsided and harvest commenced, water levels in the MLC system were gradually reduced to a point where, at the beginning of October 2020, we were holding winter retention levels within both St Germans and Bevills Leam ponds.

An end of season de-brief meeting, hosted remotely by the EA, was held in early October 2020. It is anticipated the EA's operational and communication issues experienced in June 2020 can be discussed and addressed with steps implemented to prevent similar incidents occurring in future seasons.

Autumn/Winter 2020/21

Water levels in both Bevills Leam and St Germans ponds were maintained by automated pumping to pre-set parameters for the majority of the autumn/winter period. The exception to this being during 'significant rainfall events' experienced in December, January and February, when it was necessary to manually intervene and adjust pumping parameters in order to maximise pumping capacity at the earliest opportunity at Bevills Leam Pumping Station and to create a gradient for water conveyance throughout the Commissioners' linear system, towards St Germans Pumping Station. Pumping activities and the associated pumping hours clocked up during this period have, at both Stations, exceeded the pumping requirements for many years.

A notable significant rainfall event on 23rd December, required the operation of the Control Sluice to divert excess flows of water into the adjacent Woodwalton Fen Reserve. This is the first time since 2004, (16+ years), the structure has been called into active operation in order to gain control of rising water levels in the upstream Catchwater Drain, whilst the Station was operating at full pumping.

Three further subsequent significant rainfall events were experienced during January and February this year, requiring similar manual intervention to control rising water levels in order to gain control of rapidly rising water levels upstream of Bevills Leam Pumping Station.

Photographs were provided by Katy Smith of Natural England showing the significance of the Christmas 2020 rainfall event, and giving context to the event in relation to previous high-water levels recorded in the Reserve over the last 73 years.

The Met Office has recently reported that the last winter was the fourth wettest on record.

While water levels in St Germans pond became critically high during the afternoon of 23rd December requiring IDB pumps to be turned off, immediately following the significant rainfall event, the system showed remarkable resilience to withstand the considerable pressure placed upon it, both in terms of high-water levels and bank stability.

The 2021 Early Season Lower Nene Water Resource meeting is due to be held by remote link on 26th April. The Commissioners' ambition for the coming season will be to continue to work collaboratively and positively with other partner bodies to ensure, as far as they are able, water flows in the Lower Nene are fairly allocated and fully utilised during the summer months.

EA Water Transfer Licence

The application for a transfer licence at Stanground Lock was lodged in December 2018 and was accepted as meeting the minimum application criteria by the EA shortly after. The EA do appear to be working their way through the licences and we expect to receive confirmation that a licence has been issued soon.

Banks and Channel Maintenance Dredging and Bank Raising

Well Creek - Bank Subsidence —the affected bank from Church Bridge, Upwell to the British Legion Footbridge remains in an unsatisfactory condition. A report of more recent bank subsidence along the same reach has been received. A site inspection reveals the bank condition is in a deteriorating state. A further small length of subsidence along St Peters Road has recently been addressed by the Commissioners, before it was allowed to deteriorate further.

Councillor Rose provided some photographs of subsidence close to Prius Drove along the bank adjacent to the A1101. He believed (and may well be correct) that the MLC intervened in the 1980's to pile along this length and he **asks if the Commissioners would consider carrying out works again here to secure the bank. Note there appears to be no immediate issue with navigation or flow conveyance at this location.**

Bank Seepage – a number of bank seepage incidents were investigated last summer, with further remedial actions taken as and when required during the reporting period. A detailed report of remedial works undertaken to arrest bank seepage is provided within the relevant section. Further bank seepage was again (and perhaps not surprisingly) experienced during the more recent Christmas 2020 rainfall event, when exceptionally high-water levels occurred over a relatively short period of time. The Commissioners have met with the affected landowners at the two worst affected sites, Bevills Leam and Whittlesey Dyke. A local site survey to assess the potential feasibility of excavating soak dykes has been undertaken. The results of the survey indicate it would be feasible to proceed with soak dyke excavation, to intercept water seeping through the semi porous banks at both sites. **The Board may wish to take this opportunity to discuss how it wishes to proceed with this matter.**

There was also significant bank seepage noted adjacent to the Old Plantation pumping station where members of the Whittlesey IDB expressed extreme concern that a breach could be propagated.

Herbicide Trials – no further information has been received. Glyphosate remains the only herbicide currently licenced and approved for use in aquatic situations at this time.

Navigation - the spring and early summer navigation season was notably quiet, with few boat passages through or within the MLC system due to COVID-19 restrictions. With restrictions in place during the historically busy Easter period, the Commissioners did their utmost to provide

distancing protection to both lock-keeping operatives and boaters undertaking essential passage. These measures included signage at locks and the installation of Perspex screening and road demarcation at Stanground Lock, where the lock-keeper was seen to be at risk from close contact with members of the public traversing along the Green Wheel public right of way, whilst operating the lock's hydraulic controls.

Early season weed growth throughout the system was minimal. As warmer weather and water temperatures prevailed through the second half of June and into July, the Commissioners' weed boats were kept busy clearing the weed mass from channels on a worst-affected priority basis to keep navigation clear.

Fly-tipping – the extended period of COVID-19 lock-down, over the last 12 months, has brought with it incidents of fly-tipping throughout the Commissioners' and constituent IDBs' systems. Much of this waste has been dealt with by the Commissioners' workforce and appears to be household type waste materials. However there have also been large quantities of tyres that have been removed from watercourses in Benwick. Other fly-tipping incidents dealt with during the reporting period include extensive 'garage' waste including drums of waste oil, creosote and asbestos at Morton's Bridge and Crooked Chimney (Main Drain) and Kings Dyke adjacent to the Park Farm residential housing estate. The EA has been updated on all incidents.

Ralstonia solanacearum in watercourses - no further official updates have been received from defra/APHA during the reporting period. It now seems likely that the current restrictions on designated watercourses within the Commissioners' and one IDB system will remain in place for the foreseeable future. It is understood the APHA national survey of watercourses continued locally, albeit outside of the Commissioners' catchment area last summer.

Mechanical & Electrical Engineering Department

Along with MLC work, plant repairs and maintenance of IDB pumping plant have been completed during the period.

A brief description of the works carried out over the past twelve months, together with recommendations for future works, follows:

- St Germans and Bevills Leam are covered later in the report.
- Pump and gearbox repairs have been completed at two IDB pumping stations and replacement pumps that were ordered for three other pumping stations have been delivered and are in the process of being installed.
- Portable Appliance Testing at MLC premises has been carried out.
- Periodic electrical condition reporting/remedial works are being carried out at IDB installations as and when required.
- During the extremely wet December/January period around 14 weedscreen cleaners and 18 pumps required some degree of repair to maintain pumping.
- One new automatic weedscreen cleaner has been installed and commissioned. One other cleaner and motor control centre have been installed and commissioned.
- Electrification works have commenced at an IDB (currently diesel powered) pumping station.
- A major overhaul of a weedscreen cleaner is out to tender.

Middle Level Strategic Improvement Scheme

This is covered earlier in the report.

Water Resources and Control of Water Levels

Rainfall – mean rainfall over the area for the twelve-month reporting period was 708mm which is 123mm more than the standard average.

Below average rainfall, approximately 62% of the LTA (Long Term Average) was experienced during April last year. Notably dry conditions continued during the following month of May, and it was pronounced as the ‘driest May in East Anglia since records began in 1891’. The Commissioners’ catchment received 12mm of rainfall during the first week of May, the remaining weeks were dry, resulting in 8% of the LTA rainfall. The dry conditions provided welcome relief to those growers who had struggled earlier in the year with exceptionally wet conditions during February, and signalled the start of the summer water abstraction season. Rainfall throughout the month of June was generally welcomed by water abstractors. This combined with reasonable residual flows in the EA controlled Lower Nene at that time negated the requirement for abstraction restrictions within the MLC system, other than the voluntary closure of IDB inlet slackers as and when this became necessary. Further rainfall was received in July and, in terms of averages, July returned 105% LTA, aiding the Commissioners’ efforts to provide adequate water supplies for abstractors within the MLC system. August proved to be a considerably wetter month than average. This led to the combinable harvest season becoming a little stop-start in terms of harvest productivity and work rate. 148% LTA was experienced during August; however, a significant amount of this rain fell between the middle and end of the month.

Average rainfall was experienced during September (117% of the LTA), with October being notably wetter than average with 212% LTA. This resulted in the month being recorded as the ninth wettest October since 1891. Conversely November was much drier than average with only 65% LTA rainfall. December was similar to October in terms of rainfall (195% LTA). This exceptionally wet period was recorded as the second wettest December since 1891. The wet weather continued over the Christmas and New Year period and followed into January. Rainfall totals during this time were well above average, resulting in the LTA being recorded at 182%. The wet weather continued into the first half of February, contributing to the second wettest December to February period on record. The second half of February was colder and generally drier, with frequent snow showers blowing in to East Anglia from the continent, before unseasonably warm weather at the end of the month saw the first signs of spring-like weather. The weather pattern during March has, on the whole, been colder than average and more settled in nature. However, sporadic showers throughout the month have left arable land cold and wet. Spring cultivation and subsequent drilling/planting operations remain challenging with ‘wet holes’ evidence of the wet winter in many arable fields.

Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD) - SMD values rose rapidly during April 2020 ending the month with a value of 68mm. This trend continued throughout a dry May, which recorded an end value of 125mm. Heavy localised rainfall during mid-June had a seemingly negligible effect on the SMD value. SMD values dipped slightly during the first three weeks of June and rose again during the last week to a month end high of 134mm. Values remained within the ‘normal category’ throughout July, due mainly to ‘localised showers’. A season high value of 149mm was recorded for the week ending 11th August, this value being some 15mm greater than last season’s highest value, recorded at a similar time during August. SMD values during September gradually fell, as rainfall was more abundant during the second half of the month ending with a value of 114mm. Wet weather during October allowed the SMD value to fall over 50%, ending the month with a value of 53mm. Drier weather conditions throughout much of November resulted in the SMD value hovering in the region of 40-50mm for most of the

month. However, heavy rainfall experienced in early December saw values plummet again to single figures, indicating a saturated catchment. As wet weather prevailed through January and the first half of February, the SMD value remained very low. The lowest recorded SMD value during this period was for the weeks ending 2nd, 9th and 16th February which all recorded 3mm. With drier weather conditions prevailing by the end of February, values rose very slightly to 7mm. This rising trend continued into the first week of March; however localised showers had, by the third week of the month, returned values back down and at the time of reporting, the end of the month, the value remains in single figures.

Water Levels (Main System)

Spring/Summer 2020

Water levels within the MLC system during the early season were maintained by automated pumping to pre-set parameters in both Bevills Leam and St Germans ponds, whilst water abstraction requirements remained negligible. Water intake through Stanground Lock was gradually increased during May 2020 to meet a growing water resource demand. Text messages, advising IDBs to ensure they considered their water resource requirements, were sent out at this time. As dry weather prevailed into early June water availability pressure from the EA Lower Nene intensified to a point where the intervention of voluntary IDB intake slackers' closures were required, in order to retain water levels within both the Commissioners' ponds. No further restrictions were required at this time.

More rainfall was experienced from mid-June. Rainfall totals in the region of 40mm were recorded in MLC rain gauges throughout the system. Anecdotal reports of 60mm rainfall in localised areas were also received. Although the rainfall provided a welcome respite for water abstractors, it required reactive pumping at St Germans and Bevills Leam Pumping Stations to maintain summer retention levels. Approximately 700 mega litres, (700,000,000 litres) of water was pumped at St Germans in the three-day period post event.

Text messages were again sent to IDBs to ensure they filled their systems while water supplies remained plentiful. Further sporadic rainfall through July and mid-August helped maintain water levels in the system without further issue.

Autumn/Winter 2020/21

Water levels in both St Germans and Bevills Leam ponds were gradually lowered as water resource requirements diminished. Winter retention levels were established from early October as generally unsettled and wet weather prevailed. As the catchment reached saturation point in early December, levels were further reduced by manual adjustment of the parameters during subsequent significant rainfall events. The manual adjustment overriding automated pumping parameters was required to maximise early-stage pumping capacity at Bevills Leam and St Germans Pumping Stations to create a pronounced gradient hence improving water conveyance. Water levels were brought back up to winter retention levels as soon as the superfluous flows from the rainfall events subsided, with both Pumping Stations being controlled again within automated control parameters.

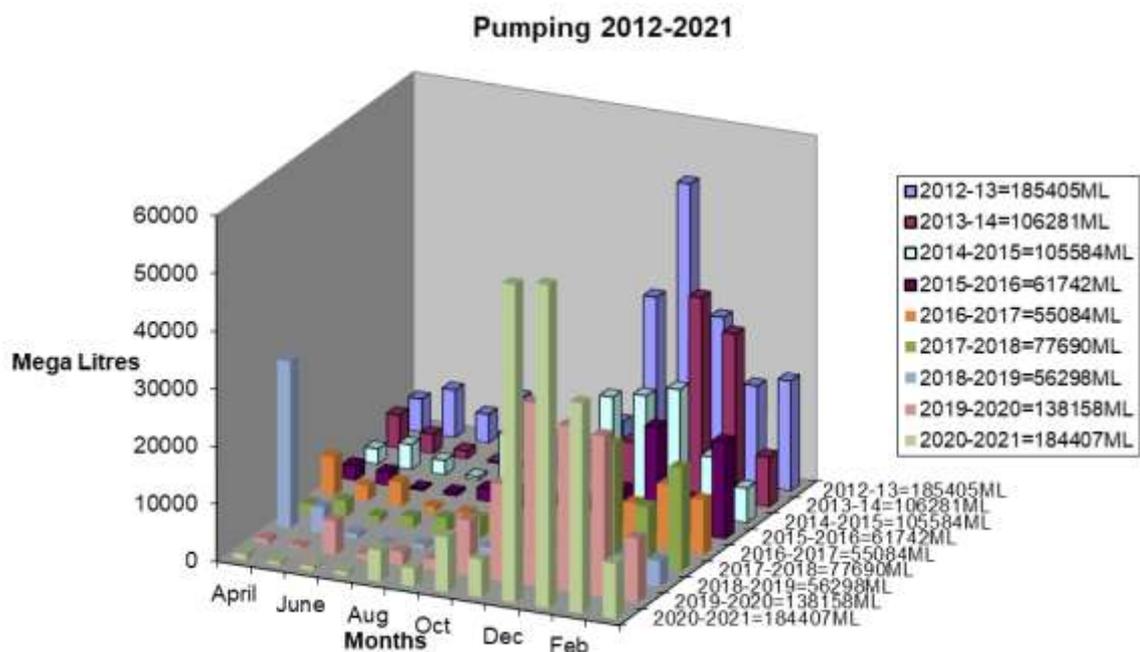
The autumn/winter period has been challenging from a water level management perspective. Although main river levels rose extremely high during the Christmas rainfall event, requiring the constituent IDB pumps to be switched off for two consecutive overnight periods to allow water levels to subside, generally the system coped well with the extreme conditions and the challenges placed upon it.

At the time of reporting, water levels are gradually being brought up towards an early spring level, as the automated pumping requirements at both of the Commissioners' Pumping Stations is gradually reducing.

Water Levels (Well Creek) – water levels were maintained in Well Creek by pumping water into it from the Main Drain at the Aqueduct to pre-set parameters. The electric pump has operated without fault during the reporting period. It was noted during the Christmas event that water levels did climb above normal levels. This was as a result of excess water spilling over the Old Bedford overspill and within a day or so normal levels had returned.

Pumping – during the twelve-month period 184408 and 43860 megalitres of water were pumped at St Germans and Bevills Leam respectively.

Whilst pumping for November 2020 was fairly average, pumping totals for December 2020 and January 2021 were unprecedented in the lifetime of the new St Germans Pumping Station being 55086ML and 55935ML respectively. The previous highest monthly total being December 2012 at 50414ML. Despite there being a number of equipment failures over the intense rainfall periods it should be noted that the Station pumped as much water as it was possible to deliver to the site whilst working within safe operating parameters. However, work will follow to identify the causes of the failures and to correct them to improve the Station’s reliability.



Maintenance Work

St Germans Pumping Station – as highlighted in the last report faults are becoming more regular as the Station ages however there are a number (detailed below) that are of significant concern.

After extensive monitoring; discussions with ABB and two visits, one in December 2020 and another in February 2021, remedial works were undertaken (at a total cost of £6.3K). Since this time inverter 5 has not faulted and it is hoped the problem is finally addressed. Pump 6 however is now tripping in the same way and as soon as the trips become more consistent ABB will be called in again to investigate.

Following the failure and replacement of the Modbus communication card in pump 5 PLC the generator could not be run with any degree of reliability. The cause was tracked down to

interference in communications between the generator and the pump PLC. Talking to the software engineer who commissioned the Station he noted that this was found to be an issue during commissioning and has probably been made worse by the new model of communication card not being as tolerant to interference as the old unit. The problem seems to relate to the leaking current to earth responsible for the corrosion of the generator heat exchangers some years ago. Minor changes have been made to the screening of the communication cables and this seems to have improved the situation. However, it has highlighted the fact that a key piece of plant (the back-up generators) is wholly dependent on a communication system generally used for reporting information rather than specifically for keeping a system running. Work is ongoing to see how this can be changed for a more robust system.

During the wet months of January pump 4 failed whilst running on generator. The cause was the generator breaker tripping. The problem has been diagnosed as a sensor fault requiring a completely new unit (sensor chain) at a cost of £2.6K, the order for which has been placed. However, each sensor chain has to be configured for each individual breaker and at the time of writing this report we do not have a date for attendance on site. Moreover, we have been advised by ABB that these breakers were discontinued in 2016 and spares will no longer be available after 2026, upgrade kits are available though.

For some years now the operating software for the Station has been unsupported and hardware faults are increasingly difficult to repair as the equipment is now obsolete. As it stands, we are unable to upgrade the software as the hardware is not compatible with the new software. **It is therefore recommended that both hardware and software are upgraded in 2021 at cost of £15K.**

The elver pass was shut down over winter and re-started on 1 March 2021.

The number of issues relating to the cctv system at St Germans has increased significantly this year and whilst they have been of a minor nature the system appears to be showing its age and it would be prudent to budget for a system upgrade in 2021/22.

In accordance with the pump manufacturer's recommendation the impeller, its wear ring and the pump stator paint condition for each pump were due to be inspected last year but due to the limitations/difficulties imposed by COVID-19 this activity remains outstanding. **It is proposed that this be carried out spring/summer 2021 and the estimated costs to install stop logs in the intakes, dewater the suction bays and enter the volutes to complete the inspection is £27K for all six pumps.** Costs are split 13K external costs eg crantage, over pumps and confined space refresher training and 14K for MLC labour.

The Board's views on this proposal are sought.

There have been no further external glass pane breakages and with experts suggesting this problem generally disappears after 8 years it has been decided to leave any potential remedial actions to a later date and trust they will not be required.

Bevills Leam Pumping Station - the Station operated satisfactorily over the period including the intense rainfall experienced over Christmas and January with only minor coolant leaks and sensor faults needing attention (requiring cleaning).

Whilst the diesel engines are in a reasonable condition, they are old and spares are unlikely to be available if a major component fails. Another concern is gearbox No 4, which after prolonged running (8hrs) saw its oil pressure drop below a satisfactory level. As soon as it is safe to do so the gearbox will be taken out of service and investigations undertaken to identify the problem.

The repairs made in the summer of 2020 to the automated weedscreen raker, held up over the rainfall events of Christmas and January and breakdowns that occurred, were due to very high winds resulting in hydraulic leaks/damaged hoses. Nevertheless, plans are being prepared for modifications to the axels and drive wheels as these have always been a weakness of the cleaner.

It is not an exaggeration to say the weedscreen cleaner has worked more hours over Christmas and January than it would normally do in a year. Moreover, if it had been unavailable for more than the 12hrs that was the case during the event then it is difficult to see how, with limited manpower resource, we would have managed. As a long-term strategy, therefore, the Board may wish to consider having a duel raker arrangement as is the case at St Germans.

Over the next few months, a maintenance regime similar to that employed at St Germans will be rolled out with key operators/engineers selected to attend on a regular basis to carry out preventative maintenance activities.

Main Drain/Station Intake and Surrounds:

Bed Level – no dredging or re-profiling has been required and none is planned for at least the next few years.

Grass Cutting - Kew Grass Care continued to provide grass mowing services at St Germans Pumping Station surrounds, within an extended return period as previously reported. The contract service level and cost benefits were appraised again at the end of the last mowing season, and the contract has been renewed for the 2021 season on favourable terms.

Tree Planting Scheme – The tree planted areas continued to proliferate last season.

Advantage was taken of an offer from the EA to provide the Commissioners with 6500 whips, associated canes and spiral protective tubes free of charge. It is understood the EA has a remit of planting new trees and hedges when mature trees and bushes have to be removed or cut from EA watercourses. The majority of the whips have been interplanted within the previous planted areas to the west of the main Station building. This latest planting scheme should help fill gaps where Ash dieback disease has unfortunately taken out many of the Ash species planted within the original programme. Also as advised, it is considered reasonable to account for the positive impact of planting these trees to mitigate against the impacts of carbon dioxide release resulting from MLC activities.

A recent joint inspection of the Main Drain at St Germans has highlighted further potential tree planting areas on land owned by the Commissioners, including Bank Lot 46N, to the east side of the redundant Hawkshaw Sluice diversion channel. The potential planting site would enhance the Commissioners' habitat and bio-diversity creation profile and hopefully further assist with carbon offset in future years.

Aqueduct Bridge – there is nothing further to report at this time.

Control Sluice – the Control Sluice was used on three occasions over the winter to force water into Woodwalton Fen. Whilst the gates operated perfectly well the telemetry and remote control failed on Boxing Day. This resulted in the requirement for significantly more frequent and longer periods of attendance on site as there was no access to remote level monitoring. This unit is now being replaced with one made by the currently favoured telemetry supplier, Xylem.

Tin Dump Culvert – to address the long-standing issues at this site it has been agreed that an automated weedscreen cleaner should be installed.

Having looked at all options for the siting of the new cleaner it has been resolved that the best option is to relocate the screen upstream. A drawing has been produced and an estimate for the works finalised as follows;

Civil Works	£50K
Weedscreen Raker	£75-80K
Fencing and other minor items	£10K
Power supply	£10K
Fill materials, land compensation etc	£10K
Purchase of land from CCC	£5-10K
Piles to be taken from old stock so not costed to the scheme	

Current estimate £160-170K

The Board confirmed that it is happy for the works to proceed at the November meeting. However, it was not possible to carry out the works during the second half of the year and hence they are now planned for this summer.

Navigation Structures & Abandoned Craft

Salter's Lode Lock – the Lock guillotine gate at over 10 years old required a detailed inspection of the condition of the seals, guides etc together with a full service of the hydraulic power unit. Works however needed to be co-ordinated with busy boating periods and, of course, have been impacted by the pandemic. The survey was finally carried out in the autumn and the results did not show major issues, but some remedials were recommended. At the time of reporting, we are still awaiting a quotation for these works.

Stanground Lock – the downstream lock gates will require refurbishment soon. Works will be planned for 2022.

Horsey Toll Sluice – in view of the proximity of the gas main to the existing gate, a decision has been taken to resight the structure further downstream, with works now planned to take place in 2022/23, subject to the budget for this work being approved next year.

Marmont Priory Lock – damage was sustained to the hydraulic paddle actuators. It was originally expected that divers would be needed to remove the damaged parts requiring an emergency closure. This was, however, not the case and the damaged parts have been removed and replacements are being sought. Remedial works to the upstream and downstream landing stages have been undertaken.

Cardea Site SuDS adoption – this is covered earlier in the report.

Weed and Grass Control on Banks & Channels

Rigid Hornwort – infestations of this weed were evident throughout the system again last season. Weedscreen cleaners at Bevills Leam and St Germans Pumping Stations have removed substantial quantities of the weed from both watercourses, whilst the Commissioners' weed lifting boats have been busy removing the weed from other channels within the MLC system.

Azolla – no significant infestations of the weed were noted during the last summer months.

Reed/Lily/Drain Bed Spraying – emergent weed treatment programmes were curtailed last season because it was not possible to facilitate a method by which the workforce members could practically undertake the operation in a socially distanced manner onboard the ‘spray-rig’. It is hoped that all being well, and with the gradual relaxation of close contact working COVID-19 restrictions, herbicide treatments can be undertaken normally again next year.

Weed-cutting (boats) – following the Board’s formal approval at the last April meeting to purchase a second ‘wide beam’ Conver boat fitted with reciprocating trailing blades, an order was placed with the manufacturer in Holland and the boat was subsequently delivered in August 2020. This acquisition followed the successful operation in the previous season of the 2019 Conver boat, which was fitted with the same weed-cutting mechanism. The methodology and ability to cut weed lower in the water column has proven that it can considerably extend the return time required for weed cutting along the worst affected channels. The purchase of the second Conver boat should improve the efficiency of the Commissioners’ weed-cutting operation throughout the peak summer period. During the autumn and winter months the weed boat fleet worked their way around the Commissioners’ system, finally completing the marginal weed and reed cutting operation at the end of January. As the annual reed spraying had previously been omitted from the programme of works during the early summer months, due to issues with close proximity working with COVID-19 restrictions following best Health & Safety guidance at that time, marginal aquatic weed and reed growth was extremely abundant throughout the entire system. Hence the marginal cutting works took longer to complete than in a normal season.

Flail Mowing – last season’s flail mowing programme has progressed more or less to plan. As previously reported, a New Holland tractor was hired from a local dealership and fitted with a Votex topmower to boost our cutting capacity whilst we waited for delivery of the new self-propelled Spearhead Energreen SPV2 machine. The new mower was delivered from Italy in early July, and was set to work mid-month undertaking the Main Cut on some of the Commissioners’ deeper grass embankments, where its 11 metre reach arm could be fully utilised. To date the machine has proven itself over the autumn months to be capable and more reliable than the SPV3 machine it replaced. The backup service from the local Spearhead Energreen dealership, B W Mack (Machinery) Ltd, has been very good and the machine operator reports he is very happy with the machine in general. It was useful to have the ability to demount the top-mower from the SPV2 front linkage and fit it with the Commissioners’ pto powered winch to assist with the removal of sunken boats and to assist with the removal of fallen trees from the Commissioners’ watercourses during the winter months. The Commissioners’ two tractor mounted Herder flail mowers have operated reasonably successfully during last season, albeit with intermittent electrical faults being experienced on both machines. The older of the two Massey/Herder mowing units (2010) has an unidentified intermittent ‘rattling’ noise emulating from the engine/back end of the Massey power unit. Despite site attendance from the MF dealership, TNS, on numerous occasions to investigate the source or cause of the problem, it has unfortunately not been possible to identify. As the combined unit has now completed its tenth full mowing season, and in line with the previously approved Plant Replacement Strategy, quotations for a replacement tractor and flail mower have been sought.

The flail mowing operation was completed in early December last year.

Trees, Bushes and Hedge planting - reactive tree works have been undertaken during the reporting period as required. A couple of large wind-blown trees, neither of which were blocking adjacent waterways or navigation, were dealt with on the Operation Department’s winter works list. A large poplar tree on the boundary of the Commissioners’ land at Rungay’s Bridge was cut down and the resultant timber processed. Although superficially the tree looked in a reasonable condition closer inspection revealed it was not in the best of health and hence it was removed as it was very close to a neighbouring residential property. A

continuation of the previously successful hedge planting programme at St Germans Pumping Station has been undertaken and completed during the winter months. An offer from the EA for 6500 whips, spiral tubes and canes free of charge was accepted. The planting material allowed for the planting of a further 350 metres of hedging to secure and demarcate the Commissioners' boundary along the original fence line, of the south-west corner of the spoil dumping area. The planting of the mixed species trees and hedging on land owned by the Commissioners in carefully considered less-sensitive areas, remains a short-term ambition. Future tree planting will reinforce the Commissioners' commitment to replanting trees and bushes that have been lost or removed in recent years from bankside locations due to operational constraints, and should help improve the Commissioners' carbon footprint and offset into the future.

Maintenance Works and Machine Cleansing - Banks and Channels

Spring/Summer 2020

Catchwater Drain – last season's phased programme of machine cleansing works commenced in late July, extending from Straight Drove Bridge downstream to Manor Farm Bridge. The works were completed using a contractor's 18 metre long reach machine.

Pig Water Drain – a contractor's long reach machine was deployed on two separate occasions during the summer last year to clear submerged weed and aquatic vegetation from the Pig Water drain between Farcet Overspill and Yaxley Overspill. The weed clearance works were required to ensure adequate water conveyance was maintained along the watercourse - the Pig Water drain being the transfer link between Stanground Lock intake and Bevills Leam pond during the summer abstraction season

Old River Nene, Greenvale Factory (Floods Ferry to Copalder Corner) – the previously reported 'free of charge' bank raising material, taken onto site in autumn 2019 and stock piled over the following winter months, was levelled into the remaining length of bank downstream of Copalder Corner during early May 2020.

As these works started, an offer of an additional 3500 tonnes of material from the same source was made and subsequently accepted, and again transported and stock piled 'free of charge'. The offer of this additional bank raising material allowed for completion of the Copalder Corner site, and gave an added benefit to the Commissioners of being able to undertake the construction of approximately 150 linear metres of pimple bank adjacent to the Greenvale site offices within the works programme, whilst plant and machinery were on-site. This latest phase of works now completes the Commissioners' phased bank raising programme between the Greenvale Factory site and Copalder Corner, Benwick.

Autumn/Winter 2020/21

Pigwater Drain - it was necessary to engage a contractor's long reach excavator to remove a late season growth of Rigid Hornwort, combined with dense infestation of filamentous algae (Cott) from the upper reaches of Pigwater Drain between Horsey Toll Sluice and Farcet Overspill.

Monks Lode – the opportunity was taken whilst a long reach machine was working close-by to remove an infestation of filamentous algae (Cott) from the upper reaches of Monks Lode, before it became problematic at Bevills Leam Pumping Station weedscreen cleaner during the autumn/winter pumping period. The reach cleansed extended from the Catchwater Terminus to Connington Fen Bridge. The resultant weed mass was placed on the adjacent grass banks and left to decompose.

Proposed Phase VII Well Creek Dredging - the Board previously advised that due to other pressing works it wished to delay the undertaking of a further reach of dredging last winter. This would have been between Walsingham Fen Bridge, Outwell and Newtons Farm Bridge, Nordelph (approximately 2950 linear metres). It is noted that completion of this reach would achieve maximum cost benefit, as the vast majority of this reach is afforded bankside disposal opportunity. The dredging of this section of Well Creek would complete all outstanding reaches where bankside disposal of spoil is possible. It is suggested that now we have started to collect charges for navigation there may be a case for progressing with these works if other planned works cannot be delivered for any reason and a budget underspend is likely to occur.

The Board agreed at its November meeting to delegate a decision on whether or not these works can be progressed to the Executive Committee and the Board is asked to continue with this arrangement into the new financial year.

Future Dredging Works, Old River Nene, (March Town Centre) – these works will cost well in excess of £100K and whilst desirable have yet to be planned or budgeted for.

Bank Slips and Seepage

Catchwater Drain, A1 Culvert to Cooks Lane - following the Board's approval to implement the first phase of revetment works along the Catchwater Drain at the April meeting, Notices of Entry were posted to affected landowners and materials ordered to undertake the first phase of the project. As the revetment works were both cropping and weather dependant, it was considered the use of a contractor to undertake provision of both plant/machinery and labour would provide the most cost-efficient option to deliver the bank repair works. Despite the inclement weather and poor ground conditions experienced on site from the first week of October the contractor made good progress with the project (given the working conditions), and completed the programmed works by mid-November.

Old River Nene, Ramsey Mereside - a report of visible bank seepage through the south east raised embankment of the channel was received during late April 2020. A site inspection revealed that bank seepage was indeed evident and required remedial works to stem the flow. A contractor's long reach machine was taken to site along with approximately 100 tonnes of puddling clay from the Commissioners' 'clay store' at Holme. A puddle trench was excavated within the bank and filled with compacted layers of clay. The Commissioners' efforts were immediately successful and the seepage flow was stemmed.

Old River Nene, Ramsey St Mary's - reports of two separate areas of suspected bank seepage from the Old River Nene in the Ramsey St Mary's area have been received during the reporting period. Both sites were inspected and although there was some evidence of 'wet areas' the amount of seepage at both sites was minimal. As water levels were reduced in the Bevills Leam pond towards winter retention level in 2020, evidence of the suspected seepage has disappeared. Both areas will continue to be monitored. No further remedial action has been taken.

New Dyke, Charterhouse Farm Bridge to Speed the Plough Junction – the Commissioners' contractor reported suspected bank seepage in close vicinity to the Great Fen Project's Corney's Farm. A site inspection revealed bank seepage was in evidence, however it was impossible to detect any signs of flow through the bank. The site has been monitored throughout the 2020 summer months and, as levels within the Bevills Leam pond were reduced to the winter retention level, evidence of the slight ponding on site disappeared.

Great Raveley Drain, MLC Control Sluice to Speed the Plough Bridge – a re-occurrence of bank seepage at this site was reported to the Commissioners. Following a site inspection, seepage was visibly evident and required the Commissioners to intervene in an attempt to

arrest the flow. Approximately 80 tonnes of puddling clay material were transported to site and placed within the existing clay puddle trench through the centre of the bank. The works seem to have been effective at this time, and no further reports of seepage have been received.

Bevills Leam, Ponders Bridge to Chapel Bridge & Whittlesey Dyke, Turning Tree Bridge to Angle Corner Bridge - bank seepage resulting from the exceptionally high river levels during the Christmas 2020 rainfall event has been experienced. Although it is difficult to determine the extent of bank seepage as opposed to field ponding, both affected sites have recent previous histories of bank seepage during the relatively short periods of time that high river levels are evident during significant rainfall events. The Bevills Leam site is well known for a shallow underlying gravel seam, running along the length of the reach, which promotes bank seepage into adjacent arable fields. The proposed cost-effective solution to this issue at both sites would be to excavate a soak dyke parallel to the affected length of bank. Initial meetings have been held with all four affected landowner/occupiers and all are in agreement this would provide a suitable solution to the seepage issue. It is suggested that the cost of constructing the dykes could be shared and that the material won be used by the MLC for bank raising.

The Commissioners' consideration on how they wish to proceed with this matter, including the proposed solution of excavating soak dykes along the affected lengths of watercourse is now required.

Telemetry

It has been decided to replace the Commissioners' Oriel system with an alternative. The cost of the first steps to deliver this will be funded from the ring-fenced money set aside for telemetry.

Lee Dickens was originally considered the most suitable but once the MLC bid for Local Levy was approved it became apparent that Xylem (Dynamic Logic) would be the safer option with the added advantage that they are on the EA supplier's framework hence all tendering matters have been addressed and we are able to take advantage of the competitive process offered. To date orders have been placed for the Wild Goose Leys rain gauge site, the Control Sluice and Bodsey Bridge level station. We are currently investigating options for Bevills Leam Pumping Station.

The new system will be cloud based and should prove substantially more reliable. It will also, of course, be significantly enlarged as IDBs take up the offer of half price telemetry installations.

Property

Offices – the offices have been redecorated over last summer to take advantage of safe lone working and the absence of staff in the offices. At ten years since first occupation this is within the expected timeframe for such things, although perhaps at the earlier end of the periodic range.

Electrical Testing – the delayed Portable Appliance Testing at the Depot, Office, St Germans, Bevills Leam and Control Sluice sites has been completed.

Plant & Vehicles

General – the SPV2 unit has been received and put into action. So far, the feedback is good and it does appear to be the machine that we had hoped the SPV3 would have been. A replacement weed boat has been delivered (see below) and the boat it replaced sold on ebay for a figure of £15,300 including VAT.

Vehicles - the Commissioners resolved to permanently address the problems at Tin Dump and once completed the case for retaining the four-wheel drive lorry and Hiab will be diminished, hence it will be sold once this happens.

A truck has been purchased for use by the Conservation Officer and his old truck retained for use by the Navigation Officer.

Weed Boats - following the successful operation of the 2019 Conver boat fitted with trailing blades, and following the Board's approval at its meeting in April 2020, a second-wide beam Conver boat fitted with the same trailing blade mechanism was ordered. The new boat was delivered from Holland in early August, ahead of schedule. The latest acquisition to the Commissioners' fleet should greatly assist with effective weed management throughout the MLC system. It is reported that the weed boats have operated generally satisfactorily during the recent winter season, with only occasional breakdowns occurring.

Asset Records

The Commissioners' planned systematic closure of historic non-operational penetrations through their maintained banks, which in some cases are in poor condition, continues; but as previously reported take up is slower paced than desirable.

Improvements & Surveys

River Works – the extent of bank raising works is described elsewhere in this report.

Bevills Leam Pumping Station – the priorities for this station remain the following:

1. Replacement of the main pump control components within the next 5 years.
2. Replacement of the Dorman engines and gearboxes for pumps 4, 5 & 6 within the next 10 years and to consider adding electric motors with dual drive gearboxes to make the station truly autonomous during a significant rainfall event.
3. To review the lack of smoke/heat detection and fire alarm equipment.
4. To permanently stop the rain ingress through the station roof.
5. To facilitate the passage of eels through or past the station.
6. Overhaul the routine inspection and testing regime to be more like St Germans.
7. Review the robustness and suitability of the weedscreen cleaner in extreme rainfall events.

Environment Agency (EA) Studies/Works/Plans

Ouse Washes Reservoir Works – this is covered elsewhere in the report.

Cranbrook Drain/Counter Drain (Welches Dam Pumping Station) Strategy Study – the EA is revisiting and updating its strategy and has liaised with the MLC to discuss the opportunities and challenges that exist. To help develop and guide the project, a project board and steering group have recently been set up. The MLC have representation on both.

Stakeholder Representation and/or Consultation - is maintained in respect of the following:

- i. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Flood Warning Planning Group – Chief Executive
- ii. Great Fen Steering Committee – Chief Executive
- iii. Wet Dredgings – Operations Engineer
- iv. British Standards Institute CB501 – Chief Executive representing ADA
- v. EA National Asset Management Technical Advisory Group (AMTAG) – Chief Executive representing ADA
- vi. CIWEM (Chartered Institute for Water and Environmental Management) – FCERM Group – Chief Executive
- vii. AINA Wet Dredgings Group – Operations Engineer
- viii. Huntingdonshire Local Plan – Planning Engineer
- ix. Fenland Local Plan SFRA & WCS – Planning Engineer
- x. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Flood & Water Management Partnership – Planning Engineer
- xi. KL&WN Local Plan – Planning Engineer
- xii. Peterborough Local Plan, SFRA & WCS – Planning Engineer
- xiii. South Cambs Local Plan & Integrated Water Management Study (IWMS) – Planning Engineer
- xiv. Fenland Developers Forum – Planning Engineer and Chief Executive
- xv. Fenland Flooding Issues & March Flood Investigation Group – Planning Engineer
- xvi. EA/IDB Eel Liaison Group – Chief Executive [Co-Chair]
- xvii. Cambs ACRE, New Life on the Old West – Conservation Officer
- xviii. Well Creek Trust – Operations Engineer
- xix. Anglian Waterways Group – Chief Executive
- xx. NFU Water for Food Group – Chief Executive and Operations Engineer
- xxi. Great Fen Hydrology Working Group – Chief Executive [Chair]
- xxii. ADA Technical & Environmental Committee – Chief Executive and Conservation Officer
- xxiii. ADA Great Ouse Branch – now administered by the MLC – Chief Executive (Secretariat)
- xxiv. Lower Nene Water Resources Planning Group WRE – Chief Executive and Operations Engineer
- xxv. WRE – Chief Executive (non-exec Director)
- xxvi. EA Lower Nene Water Abstractors Group – Operations Engineer
- xxvii. NFU – 2020 Irrigation Prospects Meeting – Operations Engineer
- xxviii. NFU – Potato Brown Rot (Ralstonia) Within MLC Watercourses – Stakeholder Meeting – Operations Engineer
- xxix. Fens Biosphere Bid Steering Group – Chief Executive [Vice Chair]
- xxx. NFU National Drought Agriculture & Environment Sub Group – Operations Engineer

- xxxi. Great Fen Access Working Group – Operations Engineer
- xxxii. FRM for the Fens TAG – Planning Engineer
- xxxiii. Cranbrook/Counter Drain FRM Strategy – Project Board – Chief Executive
- xxxiv. Cranbrook/Counter Drain FRM Strategy – Steering Group – Planning Engineer and Conservation Officer
- xxxv. Cambridgeshire Fens Flood Innovation Board – Planning Engineer

Planning

Planning Applications – monitoring of response times for enquiries and issuing of consents continues to be identified as a problem that needs addressing. It is hoped that the planned review of the Technical Services department will identify the means to reduce response times whilst maintaining the required level of checks and balances.

Riverside Enhancements Ramsey Basin – the Mayor of Ramsey Town Council has met with the Chief Executive to discuss proposals and the MLC has provided costing for the provision of approximately 200 metres of piled moorings.

Recreation

Navigation – MLC specific navigation matters are covered elsewhere in this report.

Anglian Waterways Group – the Chief Executive attended virtual meetings of this group as and when they occurred.

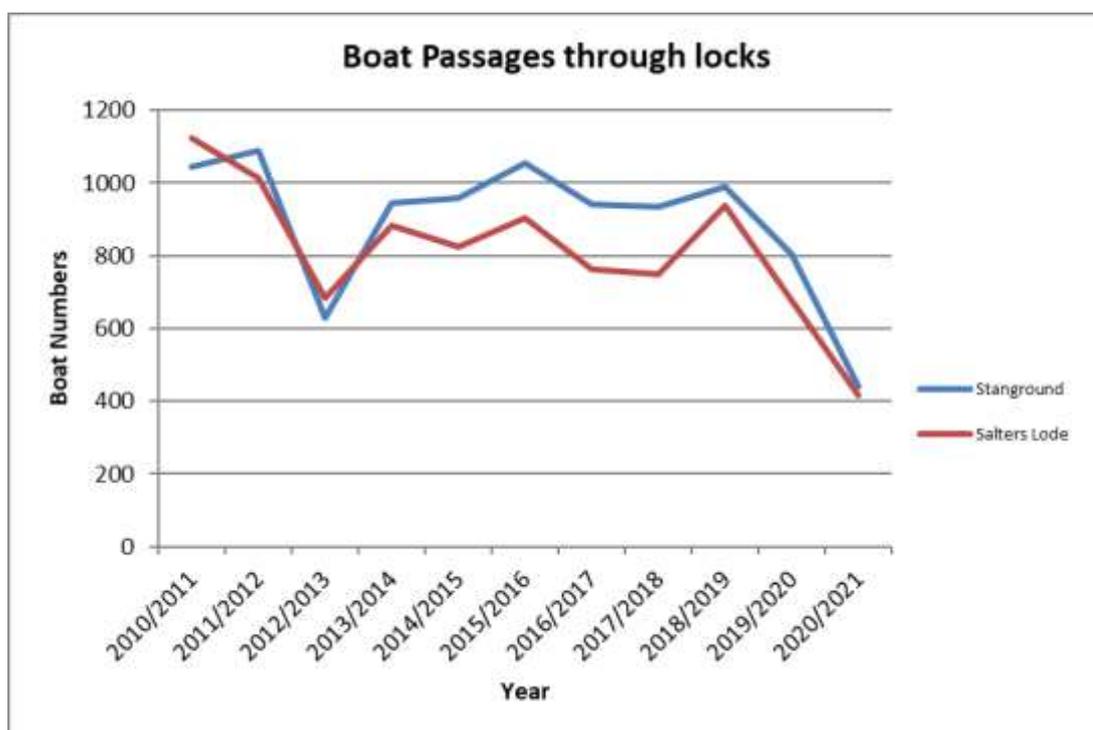
Well Creek Trust Moorings at Salter's Lode – following the Board's approval to implement the replacement and adoption of the ancillary moorings at Well Creek, the Well Creek Trust has contributed £3K towards the cost of the works. Work on these replacement moorings is planned to start very soon.

Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Volunteering - no further progress has been made with the IWA programme of volunteering during the reporting period, due to the current COVID-19 restrictions remaining in place during this time. It is the Commissioners' long-term intention and aspiration to engage and develop ties with volunteer groups as opportunities become available.

Boat Passages - boats movements through Stanground and Salter's Lode Locks were as shown overleaf (figures for the previous year are shown in brackets):

Boat Passages 2020/2021				
Month	Salter's Lode Lock		Stanground Lock	
	In	Out	In	Out
April	0 (38)	0 (21)	0 (40)	0 (45)
May	10 (42)	1 (49)	2 (54)	8 (69)
June	20 (51)	22 (61)	18 (73)	23 (62)
July	50 (74)	55 (74)	52 (72)	56 (69)
August	61 (73)	63 (69)	67 (88)	76 (95)
September	53 (47)	51 (42)	49 (57)	52 (54)
October	11 (10)	10 (10)	16 (8)	15 (6)
November	2 (5)	2 (6)	0 (3)	2 (0)
December	3 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
January	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)
February	0 (1)	0(1)	0 (1)	0 (0)
March	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (2)	0 (4)
TOTAL	210 (341)	205 (335)	205 (399)	234 (406)

As can be seen above and below, boat movements have been severely affected by the lockdown restrictions.



Angling

National Fishing Matches – the 2020 National Pike Angling Championship was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions being in place last November. It is anticipated the 2020 Pike angling final can be re-scheduled, COVID-19 restrictions allowing, for 6th November 2021, with a subsequent 2021 final staged on Middle Level watercourses during December.

Club Reports – no club or match reports have been received during the reporting period.

Middle Level Waterways Users Committee – virtual meetings are being held, the last being on 16th October 2020 and the next due on 16th April 2021.

Conservation – this is covered in detail in the Conservation Officer's Report.

The Operations Manual - a review has been completed, and changes made to the original text to better reflect current working practices and operational requirements. The main changes being to reduce the prescribed width of marginal vegetation along some of the Commissioners' critical watercourses to assist with water conveyance. The site plans contained within the document have also been updated into an editable format, and hence it should prove much simpler and less time consuming to make changes to the document in the future.

Environmental & Land Management Scheme (ELMS) Trials – registering the Commissioners' interest in the vacant Bank Lots remains in hand but has been delayed due to a backlog within the land registry office. To apply for ELS or ELMs without the land being registered would be challenging and is not considered worthwhile.

The Commissioners' and local Drainage Boards' Biodiversity Action Plans – the latest wave of guidance from ADA was issued at the end of 2020 and the Conservation Officer is working this into MLC and IDB plans.

Conservation Committee - due to COVID-19 the meetings planned for 19th March and 17th September last year were cancelled. However, a virtual meeting was held on 18th March this year.

Woodwalton Fen Alternative Storage – this long-term aspirational project has seen little progress over the period. However, a question has been raised by Natural England over whether or not the use of Woodwalton Fen for flood storage is compatible with the Habitats Directive. This is being disputed.

On the overtopping of the southern bank of the reserve, communications have been held with Natural England to agree the best solution to the sourcing of material to raise the bank. The two options under consideration, were either to raise the pimple bank using material taken from the channel bank, effectively (modestly) widening the channel, or for Natural England to arrange for the 'free of charge' delivery to site of suitable material. Once agreed the works will be programmed as per the Board's approval given at the last April meeting. A sum of £50K has been set aside within this year's budget for this. A recent site meeting with the Woodwalton Fen Reserve Warden, Chief Executive/Chief Engineer, Operations Engineer and Conservation Officer has been held. Winter bush and tree cutting works along the north side bank of South Drain have now been completed by Natural England, and the clearance now affords sufficient working area for a long reach machine to dredge the Commissioners' adjacent South Drain. It is planned the resultant material will be placed along the grass track area and left to dry sufficiently to be rehandled and placed onto the existing pimple bank, raising the bank crest to the desired level.

Great Fen General – steering committee meetings are normally held quarterly which the Chief Executive attends. The meetings have been disrupted and less frequent and are currently being held virtually.

Internal Drainage Board Works

Weed Control & Channel Maintenance

Inspections/advice/assistance – Middle Level operatives have undertaken herbicide applications, on a rechargeable contract basis, to fifteen IDB/DDCs.

Maintenance Dredging and Associated Channel Works – work has been organised and co-ordinated in thirteen Board's areas since the April 2020 meeting.

Public Sector Co-operation Agreement (PSCA) Works – following the successful completion of works to EA controlled watercourses in the Swavesey area the previous year, the EA engaged Swavesey IDB and the Commissioners, in joint partnership, to undertake similar works again this last year. At the time of reporting the majority of annual maintenance works within the programme, including channel herbicide applications, flail mowing and machine cleansing had been completed successfully to EA protocols. A recent 'Teams Meeting' has been held with colleagues from the EA. Swavesey IDB/MLC have intimated they are happy to proceed again with a similar programme of works in the 2021 season, following on as it does from the success of the previous two seasons' works. All works contracted under this PSCA are undertaken on a fully rechargeable basis to the EA.

Pumping Station Maintenance

Service Visits – the Commissioners' engineers made 303 visits to IDB pumping installations to carry out routine inspections/maintenance and/or rectify breakdowns.

Other Maintenance Works:

Broadalls Pumping Station (Benwick IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pump awaiting installation
Cock Fen Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works started, main contracts placed
Conington Pumping Station (Conington & Holme IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pump construction bolts inspected – badly corroded, replacement delayed due to COVID-19. Awaiting instruction from Chairman
Daintree Pumping Station (Ramsey Fourth IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replacement weedscreen - completed
Green Dyke Pumping Station (Ramsey Upwood & Gt Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sump dammed off and pump construction bolts inspected (badly corroded) - completed
High Causeway Pumping Station (Swavesey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weedscreen cleaner overhaul - completed
High Fen Pumping Station (Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New cleaner, weedscreen and motor control centre installed and commissioned
Middlemoor Pumping Station (Ramsey Fourth IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replacement weedscreen - completed• Replacement pumpset - currently being installed
Moat Farm Pumping Station (Sawtry IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove motor and gearbox and rectify oil leak – complete

New Fen Pumping Station (Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surge chamber subsidence being monitored. The Board's insurance company has declined to cover the subsidence. Investigations completed. Tendering underway for overhaul of pump 2
Nordelph Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metering issues with electricity supplier/UKPN – issue now re-occurred – still ongoing
Norwood Pumping Station (March 6 th DDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove motor and replace pump thrust bearing – completed
Ramsey Hollow Pumping Station (Ramsey 1 st IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof repairs – completed
Ransonmoor Pumping Station (Ransonmoor DDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storm damage repairs to roof, weedscreen cleaner and controls – completed
South Brink Pumping Station (Waldersey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement soft start – completed
Stocking Fen Pumping Station (Ramsey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weedscreen Cleaner – completed
Various IDBs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple automatic weedscreen cleaner repairs - completed • Pumping Station insurance revaluations and asset surveys carried out

Electrical Condition Reporting – re-testing of fixed equipment and remedial works at IDB pumping stations continue as and when required.

Improvement Works

IDB Projects - progress is as follows:

Catchment Improvement Works at A47 (Hundred of Wisbech IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite repeated chasing Highways England has not responded to notices that require it to undertake these works
Green Dyke Pumping Station replacement (Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case development instructed but EA has advised that scheme cannot be accelerated in GiA terms so further work is currently on hold
Holly Bank Culvert (Hundred of Wisbech IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and tender produced, contract awarded, works delayed
Inlet Structures – modifications to inlet structures and access platforms. (Hundred Foot Washes IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further phases are expected in future years
New Fen Pumping Station replacement (Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme under development to address subsidence at the Station

Stocking Fen Pumping Station Automated Weedscreen (Ramsey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machine installed and commissioned
Stow Bardolph Pumping Station (Downham & Stow Bardolph IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works complete and Station operational
Needham and Laddus culvert replacements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme designed and tendered, awaiting GiA funding approval

Work organised by the Works Department and carried out by Middle Level Labour - assistance and advice has been given with the following:

Benwick IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains • Clear fly tipped material from Board's Drains • Repair Fencing at 3 Pumping Stations • Undertake bank repair/revetment works
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's Drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains • Clear fly tipped material from Board's drain • Assist with clearing blocked culvert
Euximoor IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's Drains • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following COPE inspection
March East IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Clear fly tipped material from Board's drains • Arrange and undertake weedscreen deck clearance • Provide assistance and labour for works on water control structure • Assist with clearing block culvert • Undertake tree cutting works • Assist with de-watering Binnimoor Pumping Station
March Fifth DDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Undertake bank repair/revetment works • Arrange and undertake weedscreen desk clearance

March Sixth DDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Arrange and undertake tree cutting works
March Third DDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Remove fly tipped materials from Commissioners' drains • Undertake bank repair/revetment works • Undertake repair works to Burrowmoor Pumping Station
March West & White Fen IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Remove fly tipped materials from Board's drains • Undertake bank repair/revetment works • Assist with clearing blocked culvert • Provide assistance and labour for works to water control structure
Needham & Laddus IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing • Arrange and oversee bank revetment works at Dodds Stile • Undertake bank repair/revetment works
Nightlayers IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Undertake bank repair/revetment works
Ransonmoor IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains. • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains. • Arrange for roof replacement works at Ransonmoor Pumping Station • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Remove fly tipped materials from Board's drains
Ramsey IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with dewatering of Daintree and Middlemoor Pumping Stations
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains

Ramsey, Upwood & Great Raveley IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with dewatering Green Dyke Pumping Station • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection • Assistance with dewatering New Fen Pumping Station
Sawtry IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection Facilitate, assist and oversee drain clearance works - Wheatleys Drain • Procurement and supply of replacement culvert pipe. Arrange and oversee culvert pipe installation
Swavesey IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's Pumping Drain • Arrange and oversee PSCA works on EA watercourse in Swavesey on Board's behalf
Upwell IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake tree cutting and clearance works at Old Croft, Welney
Waldersey IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains • Undertake bank repair/revetment works

Engineering Fees

Fees – the fee outlook for this and the next financial year continues to look to be good with schemes coming forward linked to the new six year spending cycle.

ADA

Meetings - the Chief Executive continues to attend the ADA Technical and Environmental Committee meetings and the Assistant Clerk attends the Policy and Finance meetings. The Chief Executive also continues to represent ADA on the BSi panel and EA/defra – national AMTAG (Asset Management Theme Advisory Group), the NFU Water for Food Group and the board of WRE.

The Annual ADA Conference – the 84th conference will this year be on 10th November at 1 Great George Street, Westminster.

FloodEx 2021 – ADA is no longer involved with Floodex.

Great Ouse ADA Branch – the AGM was held on 2^d March 2021 (virtually), this followed a meeting of the Executive which was held on 23rd November 2020.

EA Sanctioned Project List

EA Sanctioned Projects 2021/22 - for the MLC this is currently only £900K for bank raising and £125K to support IDB telemetry installations.

Renewable Power

As the panels have now paid for themselves, they will no longer be directly reported upon. The financials from FITS income will however be included within the accounts.

As stated earlier the Board should be looking at other means to supplement this to offset carbon and improve its green credentials.



Jonathan Brown
Chairman

21 October 2021