



Annual Report

Report on Period
April to September 2021

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ANNUAL REPORT OCTOBER 2021

April to September 2021

1. Health & Safety

- 1.1 **Move from Croner to Cope** – the MLC used to employ Croner to provide 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 has been 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 next 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. During the period there have been no significant accidents or near misses however a private boater did fall and injure himself whilst using one of the MLC rural moorings. These moorings are provided at the users' own risk but the Board should be aware that the boater has reported the incident to the HSE who have in turn made contact with us. The Chief Executive has responded providing factual information and we are currently awaiting further communication on this matter. Our insurers have been notified.

2. COVID-19 Actions

- 2.1 The offices are now open to the public. The holding area remains in place, as does the COVID form which needs to be filled in by all visitors. Other measures such as mask wearing in communal areas, hand sanitiser points and keeping fire doors open remain in place. Working arrangements have moved to include a requirement to work from the office at least 3 days per week. This flexible working arrangement is being seen as a trial and may be retained long term if it proves successful. The test will be that it does not negatively impact upon our ability to deliver services at the required standard.

3. Clerk's Report

- 3.1 **Partnership Working and Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs)** – works have again mainly centred around annual maintenance in the Swavesey district area which continues to be highly beneficial to both authorities. Sutton and Mepal IDB will be doing PSCA works in its district and the Environment Agency (EA) remains keen to explore opportunities for IDBs to undertake works on the Old Bedford once the Middle Level Barrier Bank works have been concluded.

- 3.2 **Middle Level Bank Raising Project** – it is extremely pleasing to be able to report that the grant-in-aid (GiA) bid for funding has been through the national review process and at the time of production of this report was recommended for approval with just one matter left to be addressed, which is currently in hand. This single outstanding matter relates to the consultancy services, which are planned, and to the suggestion that there is a need to obtain a comparison of cost estimates with the EA's Capital Delivery Framework. This should not impact on the approval of the scheme and grant funding application. A fuller account of progress is given in the main report but the key note is that the scheme will be fully funded by grant and the expectation would be to spend upwards of £141K in this financial year, mainly on consultancy services but perhaps also including the stockpiling of materials as well, to reduce risk linked with the volatile nature of material prices and inflation. **The Board is asked to approve the proposals within the bid to set up the consultancy team to**

develop the full business case which will be submitted for approval by the project delivery board (headed by the MLC) and for developing and managing future phases of project delivery and also the purchase and stockpiling of materials suitable for use in scheme delivery. All costs to be covered by GiA funding.

3.3 *Red Diesel* – concern remains that all Drainage Boards will lose the red diesel exemption in April 2022. Unless things change the only area where red diesel will be legal for our use after this time will be in supplying generators. The Chief Executive has written a number of times to Stephen Barclay MP and been in regular communication with ADA. ADA continue to push defra for some movement but do not appear overly hopeful. A recent letter from Steven Barclay MP to the Chief Executive is included at Appendix 5; a letter recently sent by ADA to defra is included at Appendix 4. Concerns on the loss of exemption are primarily increased costs, which will have to be met by rates, and the potential to lose access to farming contractors who will not wish to move to white diesel use in their plant. This will particularly hit smaller IDBs but may also render small agricultural contractor businesses unviable.

3.4 *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. Most recently he has been working hard to ensure that the current and future needs of water supply for agriculture are planned for. The specific points made are;

- The current licenced amounts do not necessarily represent the current need in a dry year and should not therefore be used as an initial starting point for planning future water needs
- Account needs to be taken in relation to the potential extra water needed for changes in farming practices such as wet farming
- Consideration needs to be given to the environmental targets being given to the agricultural sector and that without water it is unlikely that these can be delivered.

The Chief Executive has also pointed out several other matters that need to be accounted for. These include the fact that in protecting low flows in main rivers (and by not releasing water for adjacent sub-catchments) the environmental impact as a whole could be greater, hence a holistic approach needs to be in place. Also, that water supply for agriculture and biodiversity are inextricably linked. A by-product of moving water around for agriculture can be, and often is, a benefit to local flora and fauna.

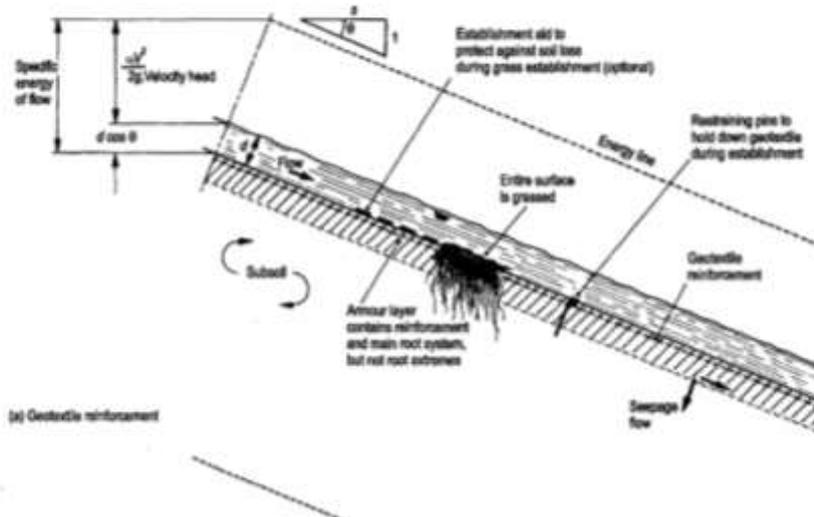
Currently regular meetings are being held to discuss development of the area plan and also to formulate final proposals for two new reservoirs, one in Lincolnshire and one in Cambridgeshire, but it is important to note that there is pressure to provide significant environmental gains, both from local pressure groups but also from government and national public bodies such as the EA and Natural England (NE).

3.5 *Board Tour of Inspection* – it is proposed that a decision on whether or not to hold a tour of inspection in 2022 is deferred until next April's meeting, due to uncertainty over what the position will be in relation to the pandemic.

3.6 *Environment Bill 2019-21* – as previously a 'carry over' motion was passed allowing this Bill to move between one parliamentary year and another without falling, hence the Bill is approaching its conclusion and may well be enacted this year. The Bill continues to encompass clauses on land drainage which will allow IDBs to value land for rating purposes outside of their districts and hence this paves the way to allowing IDBs to consider extending their boundaries, or for new IDBs to be created.

3.7 *The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA)* – the Assistant Clerk/Solicitor attended a climate change meeting during the period. The meeting covered initiatives being put in place to move to the navigation sector reducing its carbon footprint.

- 3.8 Fen Biosphere** – the project is effectively on hold pending a review of its direction and core objectives. This follows the management team being lost for various reasons and Fenland District Council (FDC) announcing its unwillingness to support the bid.
- 3.9 Cardea Site** – meetings have been held and some progress has been made. Persimmon Homes were informed that the Board needed the matter of adoption to be resolved by the end of this calendar year and would be prepared to walk away if things had not been wrapped up by then. It has since come to light that Persimmon Homes had, in error, sold land which was key to providing the Board with access to maintain the ponds. They have purchased one small (but key) parcel back and are currently pursuing a second re-purchase. Subject to this being completed and easements confirmed for all locations where access is required, then the recommendation remains to adopt.
- In respect to the fact that the ponds require work to be carried out to once again bring them up to an adoptable standard, an estimate has been produced and Persimmon Homes have suggested that this figure be added to the calculated commuted sum.
- 3.10 Consultations** – the MLC continue to respond to defra consultations either directly or through correspondence with ADA as and when appropriate to do so.
- 3.11 Reform of Water Abstraction Licensing** – the EA has been consulting on changes to the charges for abstraction licences and the Chief Executive has asked if any proposed changes might impact upon the fees charged in future for EA main river to IDB district transfer licences. The consultation ends on the 10th November 2021.
- 3.12 Middle Level Barrier Banks Works** – an update on these works, being undertaken by the EA, is included as Appendix 6.
- 3.13 River Great Ouse Dredging Pilot** – this is now within the remit of the Tactical Plans for the Fens project, but no date has yet been given on when trials might commence.
- 3.14 Eel Regulations** – an update seminar was held on the 19th August 2021 where progress on eel research both past and ongoing was presented. This proved extremely insightful and the importance of the research undertaken was made apparent in that there were a number of surprising observations on eel behaviour that will be sure to set the framework for solutions that are implemented in future, to ensure a positive effect on the movement of these complex animals.
- 3.15 Future Planning for the MLC and Associated Boards** – the next Chairs' Meeting is scheduled for 2nd November and an update will be given verbally to the Board on what was discussed and agreed.
- 3.16 Woodwalton Fen Potential to be Reclassified as a Reservoir** – during the period a virtual meeting was held with the Reservoirs Act Panel Engineer. He has advised that an overflow is required and that a small amount of survey data remains to be collected (north east corner downstream of the Control Sluice). Having looked at levels the most logical place to install the overflow is in the north west corner of the site. It is thought that this can be formed using earth reinforcement techniques rather than hard engineering - see following diagram. The works will need to be carried out within the next twelve months and so budget figures will be included within the 2022/23 estimates. NE has advised that it will need to see and review any proposals as they must be assessed under the Habitats Directive.



Example of reinforced grass spillway

3.17 Environmental & Land Management Scheme ELMS – there is little to update on this at this time save as outlined below;

- Piloting the Sustainable Farming Incentive
The scheme has begun piloting and will launch in 2022.
- Local Nature Recovery
The scheme will begin piloting in 2022, and launch in 2024.
- Landscape Recovery
The scheme will begin piloting with around 10 projects in 2022, and launch in 2024.

3.18 Proposal to hold an Open Day – the MLC were working in conjunction with the Association of Nene River Clubs’ festival on holding a joint event. This was placed on hold due to the pandemic and as yet no new firm dates have been released in regard to when it might take place.

3.19 Tactical Plans for the Fens Agreement – the most recent piece of work completed has been the Carbon Baselineing. This sets out the carbon footprint of the Flood Risk Management (FRM) activities which can then be used as a guide and measure for future scheme impacts as we move towards a carbon neutral economy. It is noted that all MLC and IDB electric pumping stations are now on green tariffs, hence significantly reducing their impact upon the environment.

4. Navigation Registration/Byelaws and Navigation Advisory Committee (NAC)

Under the Act the Commissioners must appoint people to represent various areas of interest. Below are changes that are proposed:

Retain Colin Ovendon but remove the reference to ‘Middle Level Watermen’s Club’. Also note that his role will change from representative of that organisation to youth representative tasked with engagement in this sector encouraging and supporting water-based activities such as canoeing and paddle boarding, area of representation to remain (a)

Replace Kye Jerrom with Chris Middleton on a permanent basis, area of representation to remain (d)

Seek to obtain a representative of the Middle Level Watermen's Club now that Colin has stepped down.

Members are asked to confirm their support for these appointments and delegate the appointment of a Middle Level Watermen's Club representative to the Executive Committee.

The most significant step forward in this period was the signing off of the new navigation byelaws. These came into force on the 28th May and provide the Commissioners with the powers they need to properly manage and police their waterways. This allowed a push for more vessels to become licenced and for plans to be put in place for enforcement action to be taken against vessel owners who failed to obtain licences. At the time of report 182 vessels had been issued with licences and the predicted income from this, the issuing of visitor licences and the Anglian Pass referred to below, will be around £120K. It should be remembered that 25% of this income currently has to be ring fenced to allow for investment in improved facilities which are to be provided on the link route and which must eventually meet IWA recommendations. Also, we have an extra member of staff working solely on navigation matters and we are also committing funds to generally improve the navigation to attract new boaters.

The Anglian Pass was introduced on 1st April and provides a mechanism for boaters to buy an add-on to their home licence at a cost of between £25 and £100 which extends the waters they can navigate to include EA Anglian, the Conservators of the River Cam and MLC waters. This has been generally well received and around 450 have been sold to date.

As stated earlier there has been a reported accident at one of the new rural moorings and we are waiting to see if there is any further communication from the HSE on this matter. There are currently plans to install four further rural moorings this autumn/winter and these will go ahead unless there appears to be a fundamental problem with providing such moorings which are deliberately simple, unstructured and ad hoc. One change that will take place in the design will be that the timber posts will be placed at, or very close to, the water's edge in future as a number of boaters have advised that they consider this would be a better arrangement. The signs on the rural moorings are as below which should make their purpose clear.



In respect to the challenge that 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 as previously reported following provision of backup information the claim was dismissed. As per the requirement we then reported back to the House in June providing an update on implementation of the undertakings to show that we were continuing to meet our obligations. We have heard nothing since this submission.

A number of complaints have been received but this was expected as we moved from free navigation to a fully licenced arrangement. The majority of complaints relate to either the lack of facilities or the perceived high cost of a licence.

The Assistant Clerk/Solicitor has produced a protocol for boat removal which has been published on our website as an appendix to the byelaws, as per the House of Lords undertaking.

A residential mooring strategy has been drafted and following consultation with the Residential Boat Owners Association was put before the NAC who have approved it. This strategy will need to be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains current. This was another undertaking given to the House of Lords.

FDC was successful with its Market Town bid and MLC officers await an approach from the Council to discuss the elements of the proposed scheme which are water facing. In addition, we are in discussion with the Council in regard to the failed mooring adjacent to the park. Quotations are being obtained and it is hoped that these moorings can eventually be replaced.

On the High Lode close to Ramsey discussions are at an advanced phase in relation to the possible provision of 125m of piled moorings on the east bank which will facilitate development which will in turn fund the lion's share of the cost. With the Commissioners' approval we have (subject to developer funding) been able to offer to take charge of the installation of these moorings and then once installed to adopt them.

A meeting has been held with Chatteris Town Council representatives and it is clear that they are keen to see moorings installed which will provide a route to access the town from the navigation.

5. Staff

5.1 *Vacancies/Appointments/Departures* – the Senior Engineer who had asked to move to a two - or three-day week has not indicated when he might wish to do this.

Changes to staff over the year include:

- The Conservation Officer has successfully moved to a 4-day week as approved by the Commissioners.
- The appointment of Ms Sarah Lemmon as PA to the Clerk/Chief Engineer/Chief Executive and Assistant Clerk/Solicitor with effect from the 16th August.
- The Mechanical and Electrical Engineer has given notice and will leave the MLC on 30th November. Dave Bantoft, an experienced Electrical Engineer with project management experience, has been appointed as his replacement. Dave will be starting on the 1st November to allow for a short handover.
- Mrs Sarah Bowd has been appointed as Assistant Finance Officer, she will also start on 1st November and will pick up the finance element of the role of one of the members of staff from the Clerk's department who retires at the end of the year along with some duties from the finance team by way of reallocation of workload which will hopefully reduce future claims for TOIL.

- Mrs Wendy Furness will also be joining the MLC on the 1st November in the new role of Junior Secretary/Admin Assistant/Receptionist.

5.2 TOIL (Time Off in Lieu) – the new arrangements approved by the Board have been put in place and it is hoped that the new staffing arrangements will address the problems which were being experienced.

5.3 Pensions – there is nothing new to report at this time.

5.4 Spine Point Advancements – there are no recommendations for advancement presented for members to consider at this meeting.

5.5 Electronic Timekeeping – this continues not to be utilised due to the ongoing revised working arrangements relating to COVID-19.

5.6 Sickness

Staff – of a total staff of 24, with an approximate expected maximum of 2453 working days over the six-month reporting period, one member of staff has been on long term sick leave since December 2020; one member of staff had six weeks post-operative recuperation, 23 days of which are relevant to this reporting period; and one member of staff has been ill from 13th September, with 14 days relevant to this report. Of the remaining staff three members of staff had sick leave totalling 9 days, 2 days and 1 day respectively and the remaining 18 members of staff have not recorded any sick leave for the period.

Note: Expected maximum working days are modified to reflect three members of staff working a four-day week, one member of staff working a three-day week and a new full-time member of staff starting during the reporting period.

Operatives – during the six-month reporting period the workforce of 11 men, with an approximate expected maximum of 1210 working days, shared 6 days sick leave between 3 men broken down as 3 days, 2 days and 1 day respectively. The remaining 8 men did not take any time off for sickness.

5.7 Training - the following training was carried out during the reporting period:

- Novice Tractor Driving Course, 1 member of staff and 1 member of workforce.
- Basic First Aid for all staff and workforce being carried out in September/October.

The following training, which has been delayed due to COVID-19 working restrictions, will be carried out as soon as arrangements can be made:

- Cold Water Training

5.8 Technical Services Department Review – work on this continues to be on hold due to work load and other pressures.

6. Publicity

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

- July 2021 – 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 2021 – supervised Channel 4 filming opening sequence to an episode of ‘Grand Designs’ at St Germans Pumping Station.

Further media work is scheduled:

- October 2021 – interview on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire to discuss fenland wildlife and impact of lockdown.
- November 2021 – discussion on Fenland Community Radio (date tbc)

6.1 Visits – two visits to St Germans Pumping Station have been booked since the restrictions due to COVID-19 lifted.

- Wisbech District Agricultural Valuers' Association at 2.30pm on Thursday 30th September
- Downham Market Young Farmers at 7.30pm on Wednesday 13th October

6.2 Media – the Commissioners' 'Twitter' presence now has 542 followers, up from 506 in April 2021. Twitter is currently only used for the navigation element of the Commissioners' activities. A Twitter page has been set up for other MLC activities but has yet to be fully utilised.

6.3 Web site – www.middlelevel.gov.uk is updated regularly to deliver information to those who may be interested or who require information.

7. ICT Report

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

Several workstations and other miscellaneous items have been purchased to service the new staffing arrangements. The workstations at the depot and Bevills Leam have also been replaced.

7.2 Software – additional licences have been required due to staffing changes, and upgrades to existing software.

8. 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 GiA applications is also included.

8.1 *Technical Services Department*

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

Middle Level Bank Raising Scheme – the Bank Raising Business Case was submitted to the EA, East Anglia (Gt Ouse) Area Partnership & Strategic Overview (PSO) team in May. This submission was for the EA's Local Area assurance process on the Business Case to obtain Area Flood Risk Manager support prior to a formal submission to the Large Projects Review Group. Following this Area team review several comments were received which required further work to strengthen the Business Case submission. Work was progressed on these over the summer and an updated report submitted to the PSO team in

August. Following this submission confirmation of Area PSO agreement and Area Flood Risk Manager endorsement was received in September.

The Business Case was then submitted to LPRG for their October review period on the 22nd September. Formal comments on the submission were received and responses which addressed comments provided for the review meeting on the 13th October. A presentation on the Business Case to LPRG to address comments and responses was held on the 13th October. The Business Case was well received by LPRG with limited comments, mostly covering points of clarification. LPRG highlighted the quality of the submission and Business Case. The outcome of the review was recommendation for approval of the scheme with a single outstanding clarification relating to the costs of consultancy support for progression of the next phase to develop the main scheme proposals plus cost estimates relating to the Phase 1 (Dredging) work to be undertaken by the Commissioners. The action is to obtain a comparative cost estimate for these elements through the EA Capital Delivery Framework and the project team are currently liaising with the Agency's Commercial Team to progress this action.

At the recent Future Fens FRM Technical Advisory Group meeting the EA congratulated the project team and commented on the positive feedback received by LPRG who highlighted the quality of the Business Case submission and the strategic and economic cases with how the scheme is in line with the Future Fens FRM Strategy and Tactical Plans.

The Business Case is requesting £23.88M of Flood Defence Grant Aid funding to deliver the scheme over the next 5 years as part of the current Capital Delivery Programme (2020/21-2026/27 spending review). This cost comprises the £14.9M current estimate for scheme delivery plus £8.9M of Optimism Bias allowance. Following confirmation of the LPRG assurance the scheme is fully fundable by GiA, the project team are currently progressing the scheme approval by EA Directors. Due to the approval value approval by the EA Director of Operations, approval by the Director of FCERM and Finance Director is required.

Work is now progressing on identification of suitable consultancy support for the next phase of detailed project planning and scheme design with the intention of advertising for consultancy contracts in the next few months to commence a tender exercise over the winter period following successful approval of the Business Case by the EA.

On a consultancy basis:

Holly Bank Culvert replacement – this scheme follows on from the Crooked Bank scheme and was delayed due to COVID-19.

Needham and Laddus Outfall – this scheme (in excess of £200K) is being almost entirely funded through GiA. The MLC produced the business case and secured the necessary funding in line with the target set by the Board. However, the issue which challenged scheme progression became the availability of the lowest tenderer who was fully committed and hence was unable to carry out key elements of the scheme during the summer months, when flood risk is lowest. It is now likely that half the scheme will be implemented this year and the other half next year.

Cock Fen Electrification – the target for electrification is 2022. However, at present, issues relating to proving land ownership are delaying any progress. National Grid will not take any further steps until it can be certain that easements can be legally secured allowing it to install supply cables to the station.

8.2 **Works Department**

Water Resources and Control of Water Levels

Spring/Summer 2021

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.

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 Anglian Water (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).

As with last season an internal water resource communication comprising of 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 the abstraction season passed without the requirement for a single 4-night irrigation restriction. The dry start to the season was soon rectified with steady isolated showers at a critical time in the growing season when the majority of irrigation is usually undertaken. No issues were experienced with water availability throughout the season and a respectable summer level was maintained within both MLC ponds.

The now well embedded text messaging system, which is sent out from the Commissioners' office continues to be well received. Six 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 end of October 2021, 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 2021.

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 and reports of more recent bank subsidence along the same reach have been received. A site inspection reveals the bank condition is in a deteriorating state. However a representative from Highways, who attended a recent meeting with the Parish Council and Well Creek Trust to discuss other improvements within the village, advised that he is also working on proposals for the affected site. Although there has been no final proposal to date, it may be taken as a positive move towards the recognition of the problem.

Bank Seepage – with a greatly reduced demand from abstractors this season, the Bevills Leam pond has been maintained at a constant acceptable level and no further bank seepage has been reported.

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 – navigation movements within the MLC system still appear to be affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic, however it is promising to see numbers improving on last year as restrictions continue to be relaxed.

Early season weed growth throughout the system was minimal. As warmer weather and hence 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 – continues to affect the MLC and the constituent IDBs with several cases of household waste, building materials and waste from the manufacturing of illegal drugs, being dumped in drains. Good working relations continue, with FDC removing and clearing fly tipped rubbish as soon as possible.

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.

8.3 *Mechanical & Electrical Engineering Department*

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

8.4 *Middle Level Strategic Improvement Scheme*

This is covered earlier in the report.

9. Water Resources and Control of Water Levels (see Appendices 1 and 2)

9.1 *Rainfall* – mean rainfall over the area for the six-month reporting period was 253.7mm which is 46.7mm less than the standard average.

Following an exceptionally dry April, May was wetter than normal, with an average of 80mm, 171% of the LTA (Long Term Average) across East Anglia as a whole. June followed with an average 62mm of rain, normal for this time of year and well received during the irrigation season. Moving into July, storms in the first and last weeks of the month produced an average 59mm of rainfall, typical for July weather, equating to 117% of the LTA. August had below normal rainfall with 33mm across East Anglia and any showers remained very isolated. The dry weather from August, continued into the beginning of September, however rainfall events at the end of the month resulted in an average of 48mm of rainfall, classified as normal for the time of year and 95% of the LTA.

9.2 *Soil Moisture Deficit (SMD)* – with exceptionally dry weather in April the SMD increased over the month to a notably high 56mm. This was followed by unsettled weather in May, decreasing the SMD to begin with, but ending the month back up at 55mm. The first two weeks of June were warm and dry, lifting the SMD to 90mm. This then reduced down to 76mm by the end of the month, with isolated showers and lower temperatures. The isolated

storms and showers continued into July, decreasing the SMD further in localised areas but then rapidly increasing to reach a value of 95mm by the end of the month. The SMD continued to increase throughout the month of August, albeit with a slight decrease in the second week in response to the rainfall. By the end of the month the SMD value had reached 106mm, which is classified as normal for this time of year. The SMD varied slightly across September and began to decrease towards the end in response to the isolated showers experienced across East Anglia, dropping to an average of 96mm.

9.3 Water Levels (Main System)

Spring/Summer 2020

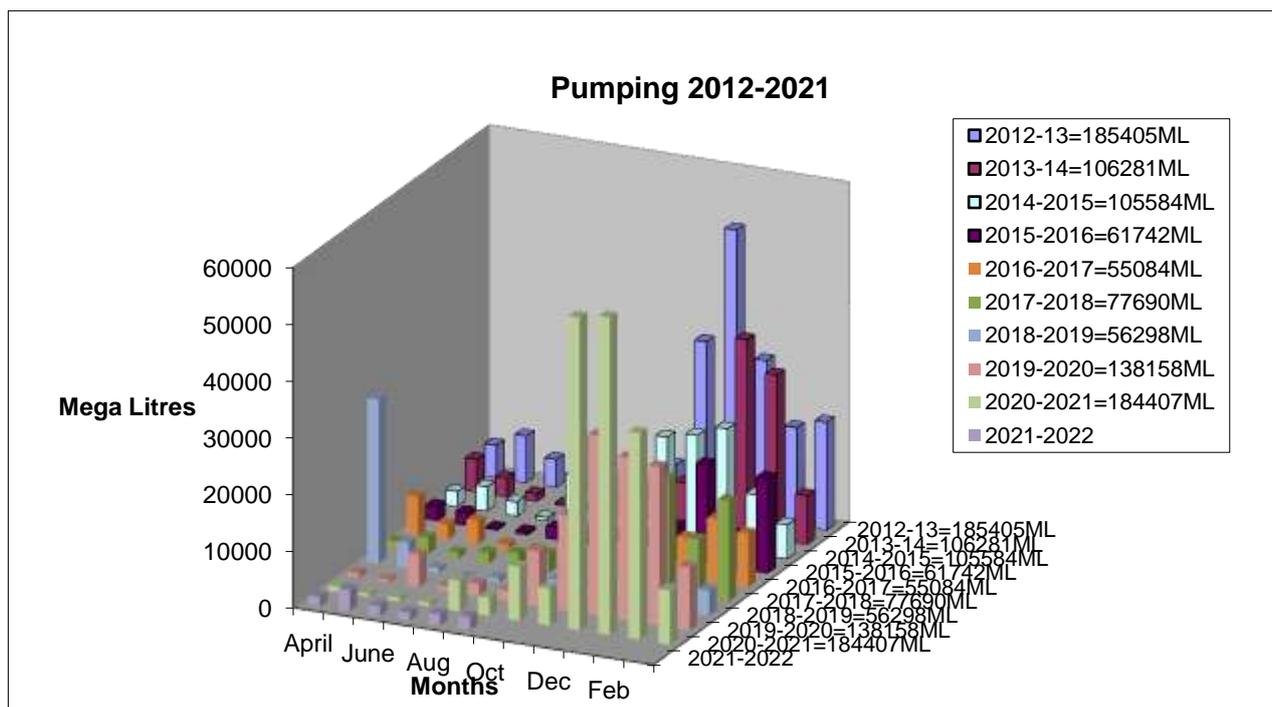
Water levels within the MLC system during the early season were maintained by automated pumping to pre-set parameters in both Bevills Leam and St Germans ponds, whilst water abstraction requirements remained negligible. Water intake through Stanground Lock was gradually increased during May 2021 to meet a steady water resource demand. Text messages, advising IDBs to ensure they considered their water resource requirements, were sent out to make use of the available water. With healthy flows within the EA lower Nene throughout the irrigation season, rationing back was not required and the EA managed to maintain a flow to tide at all times, allowing MLC to abstract as much as desired. Despite a dry start to the season the demand within the MLC catchment was insignificant due to the regular isolated showers halting the need for irrigation across the majority of the District.

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.

9.4 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.

9.5 Pumping – during the six-month period 12,880 and 3,333 megalitres of water were pumped at St Germans and Bevills Leam respectively (refer to Appendix 2).

Pumping during April to September was very even each month and considered average when compared to other years.



10. Maintenance Work

10.1 **St Germans Pumping Station** – as previously highlighted faults are becoming more regular as the Station ages. The following is an overview of the significant issues and the actions taken to resolve them during the period.

Pump 6 inverter still trips intermittently on start **up** and it is strongly believed the problem is the same as previously identified on No 5 inverter. Unlike the No 5 unit however there is no visual burning to determine which of the six interface cards is at fault and short of changing one card at a time at a cost of 2.5K each over a 12 month period there is little else to be done other than wait until the trips become more consistent.

In the last report an issue with the modbus communication between generator 5 and pump 5 PLC was highlighted. Changes to the software have now been made so that the system no longer relies on the modbus comms being healthy to run a pump on generator. The system instead uses voltage monitoring which is a more reliable method. A similar modification has been rolled out to the auxiliary generator system.

Further to the last report a new sensor chain has been fitted to generator breaker No 4 which has operated without issue since.

On the 17th & 18th August both SCADA PCs were replaced and the latest operating software installed. At the time of writing this report (6th October) the new hardware and software have operated without issue and there is no reason to suggest it will not continue to do so for at least another 10 years.

During the summer the elver pass pipework became increasingly blocked with zebra mussels and together with a pump failure it was necessary to shut the system down in August. The downtime that followed has resulted in the mussels expiring, allowing the pipework to be flushed before re-commissioning of the system in time for the main immigration of elvers in October.

The number of issues relating to the cctv system at St Germans had become increasingly significantly and in this period a new digital recorder had to be fitted after a complete failure. The system would possibly benefit from a more extensive upgrade in 2022/23.

The plans to inspect the pump impellers and wear rings had to be postponed again this summer as an initial survey showed around 600mm of silt build up in each of the intakes and over the stop log grooves, making it impossible to dewater the intakes. An assesment of the type of silt will be made to determine if it can be disturbed and fed through the pumps. If this is deemed too much of a risk specialist contractors (suction dredging pumps) will have to be sought to remove the silt to enable the stop logs to be installed.

It should be noted that over the years the vibration recorded by the pumps' bottom bearings sensors has increased significantly when pumps are operating with a low suction level (below 99.00). It is believed that this is a direct consequence of the silt build up in the intakes and not a sign of bearing wear. In order to ensure pumps do not shut down, the warning and shut down vibration levels have been raised, but further increasing of the allowable vibration levels should only be done with extreme caution.

At times of high rainfall the Station relies heavily on level information from Bodsey Bridge and increasingly over the last 6 months the communication between St Germans and Bodsey has become less reliable. This happened before, in 2018, and at that time the software on the routers at St Germans and Bodsey was updated to overcome what was believed to be issues with ever changing broadband protocols used by British Telecom. These industrial routers are now obsolete and in order to resolve the ongoing issues they will be replaced with new units before Christmas 2021.

10.2 *Bevills Leam Pumping Station* - as is the norm for summer periods, the Station did minimal pumping over the period.

Further to the last report an investigation into why gearbox 4 exhibited low pressure over Christmas was undertaken. A close examination showed the gears in an excellent condition and that the oil pump had little wear. The gearbox does not have any pressure fed bearings and relies on a spray jet to lubricate the bulk of the gearbox internals. The low pressure was, in the end, found to be a weak pressure relief valve which has now been corrected. The gearbox is now back in service with no apparent damage.

The re-engineered weed screen cleaner drive wheels were fitted in August 2021 and, so far, appear to be a big improvement. In an attempt to limit the wear on the cleaner further plans are being made to modify the weed screen cleaner programme to clean only the bays which are being used, as opposed to the current regime where the whole screen is cleaned regardless of how many pumps are running. Notwithstanding these improvements the Board may still wish to consider having a duel raker arrangement in the long-term, as is the case at St Germans.

A new maintenance and inspection regime was introduced at the Station from April 2021 and although the lack of water to test the diesel pumps is a real issue the benefits are becoming apparent. In addition to this, a thorough review of technical drawings was undertaken and a properly bound full set of current drawings now resides at the Station.

As part of the new arrangements the Station's domestic electrical system was reviewed (plug sockets etc) and this has been significantly upgraded removing the need for extension leads which were being used to power most minor pieces of equipment.

The old Oriel telemetry system was removed from the Station on the 15th September 2021. The Station became operational again on local level control on the 18th September. An attempt to commission the Station on the new Xylem telemetry was made on the 25th September however there were a number of significant issues with multiple pumps trying to start at the same time and the GSM signal continually dropping out that precluded this. Xylem has returned and made modifications which should address the issues, however, there remain a few items which need to be resolved before final sign-off.

10.3 *Control Sluice:* On the 19th April 2021 the old Oriel telemetry was removed from site and the new Xylem telemetry installed and commissioned. The new telemetry has the same functionality as the old, ie it displays and records historical trends of rainfall and water levels up and down stream of the gate as well as providing remote control of the sluice gates. So far, the Xylem installation at this site has operated without issue.

10.4 *Main Drain/Station Intake and Surrounds:*

Bed Level – no dredging or re-profiling has been required and none other than referred to in section 10.1 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 2020 mowing season, and the contract was renewed for the 2021 season on favourable terms.

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

The EA remit of planting new trees and hedges when mature trees and bushes have to be removed or cut from EA watercourses, looks set to continue this winter. MLC has put forward a bid for approximately 10,000 whips to continue with the ongoing planting

programme at St Germans Pumping Station and along several MLC bank lots that have been taken back in hand.

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

10.6 *Tin Dump Culvert* – to address the long-standing issues at this site it has been agreed that an automated weed screen cleaner should be installed. However, due to ongoing issues with Brexit, material availability and a reduced number of manufacturers of weed screen cleaners, the estimates are far exceeding the original approved budget of around £160-170K. It is proposed the land is purchased, electricity supply connection and all civil works are carried out this year, with manual cleaning of the screen until an additional budget can be approved for the automated cleaner (approximate cost £150K).

10.7 *Navigation Structures & Abandoned Craft*

Salter's Lode Lock – an order has been placed for the remedial works to the seals and guides on the guillotine door, with a navigation closure programmed for mid-January 2022 to allow for the works to be completed.

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 re-site 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 – following the repair works to the damaged hydraulic paddle actuators, several other issues were identified on the hydraulic slackers attached to the timber V doors. A navigation closure has been planned for the end of January 2022, to allow for the Lock to be dewatered and remedial works carried out to the problematic slackers on both the up and downstream gates.

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

10.9 *Weed and Grass Control on Banks & Channels*

Rigid Hornwort – infestations of this weed are evident throughout the system again this season. The Commissioners' weed lifting boats have been removing the weed from channels as part of the annual cutting programme. However, at the time of writing this report the growing season is coming to an end and the river temperatures are beginning to drop. As the Rigid Hornwort starts to die back, it detaches from the channel bed and the consequential rafts of semi-buoyant vegetation are now evident within the MLC system. The pumping operations at St Germans and Bevills Leam will start to increase as we move into autumn, drawing the weed raft to the weed screen cleaners, where they can be removed and dealt with accordingly.

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

Reed/Lily/Drain Bed Spraying – emergent weed treatment programmes resumed this year following the government's gradual relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions. Ideal growing conditions and the previous postponed herbicide application last year, have led to dense stands of reeds evident on the majority of MLC banks. The spray programme is 90% complete and should be finished by the end of October. Channels treated at the beginning of the spray season are already showing signs of a successful application with a definitive notable difference between treated and untreated sections.

Weed-cutting (boats) – following a late start to the season, due to cold water temperatures, the aquatic vegetation soon caught up keeping the cutting team busy maintaining the

navigation link route. Despite an exceptional year for weed growth the move towards the drag knife type cutters in 2019 is definitely showing benefits within the deeper channels where the density of the weed growth appears to be reduced this season. Channel cutting is due to be completed by mid-October, moving on to the marginal reed cutting, that is expected to be completed by January.

Flail Mowing – the mowing team are just over half way through the final cut and are making steady progress. The Spearhead SPV2 has worked faultlessly this season with only routine maintenance required. The 2017 Massey/Herder has suffered from minor electrical and over-heating issues throughout the season and the MLC fitters are working closely with Herder to resolve these problems. The previously reported intermittent ‘rattling’ noise on the 2010 Massey engine has deteriorated further and is now constant. With its replacement on order for an expected late November delivery, the decision was made to stand the machine down to prevent possible unreparable damage which would greatly reduce its resale value.

10.10 Trees, Bushes and Hedge planting - reactive tree works have been undertaken during the reporting period as required. A large wind-blown willow blocking navigation on the Old River Nene, west of March Town Centre was removed. A small wind-blown elder bush was also removed from Benwick village to allow navigation to continue. Following recent discussions with the EA, it is hoped that a significant number of trees and hedging plant can be secured, free of charge, for planting on land owned by the Commissioners, or within their catchment, this coming winter.

10.11 Maintenance Works and Machine Cleansing - Banks and Channels

Spring/Summer 2021

Catchwater Drain – this season’s phased programme of machine cleansing works commenced in July, extending from Manor Farm Bridge to the South Drain junction with Great Raveley, on the south east corner of the Woodwalton Nature reserve. The works were completed using a contractor’s 18 metre, long reach excavator.

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.

Autumn 2021

Pigwater Drain - it was necessary to engage a contractor’s long reach excavator for a third time, to remove a late season growth of Rigid Hornwort, combined with dense infestation of filamentous algae (Cott) between Farcet Overspill and Yaxley Overspill.

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’s instruction on this matter is requested.

Future Dredging Works, Old River Nene, (March Town Centre) – these works will cost well in excess of £200K and whilst desirable have yet to be planned or budgeted for.

10.12 **Bank Slips and Seepage**

Catchwater Drain, A1 Culvert to Cooks Lane - following the Board's approval to implement the second 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 second phase of the project. As with last year's revetment works a contractor was utilised to undertake provision of both plant/machinery and labour to provide the most cost-efficient option to deliver the bank repair works.



11. **Telemetry**

Significant progress has been made with the move from Oriel to Xylem, with four sites either operational or in hand. When issues were experienced at one site and Oriel approached for assistance the response was not considered a helpful one. It is therefore considered that the move over to Xylem of all MLC sites needs to be implemented as swiftly as possible. A screen grab of the Bevills Leam telemetry screen follows. As the system is web based all that is required to view the latest position is a computer, a username and a password. This is a vast improvement upon the previous arrangements.



12. Property

- 12.1 **Offices** – the offices continue to operate in as COVID safe a manner as possible whilst retaining operational effectiveness.
- 12.2 **Electrical Testing** – the delayed Portable Appliance Testing at the Depot, Office, St Germans, Bevills Leam and Control Sluice sites has been completed (19th/20th October).

13. Plant & Vehicles

- 13.1 **General** – the SPV2 continues to operate with little to no fault, confirming the correct decision was made to replace the SPV3 early. The replacement tractor and herder mower order has been placed, as approved by the Commissioners at their previous meeting. Delivery is expected late November and this unit will replace the 2010 Massey and Herder arm that has now been taken out of service due to mechanical issues that would not be cost-effective to repair.
- 13.2 **Vehicles** – an order has been placed for a small Peugeot van to replace the current Ford Transit Connect within the workforce. Delivery is expected between November–December this year and the old Connect van will be retained for use by the Electrical Engineer until a vehicle review has been carried out in the first quarter of 2022.
- 13.3 **Weed Boats** – continue to operate effectively and improvements are evident following the introduction of the trailing blade type Conver boats back in 2019.

14. 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 desired.

15. Improvements & Surveys

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

15.2 *Bevills Leam Pumping Station* – the priorities for this station are now:

Develop a business case to support comprehensive refurbishment of this 40-year-old pumping station

16. Environment Agency (EA) Studies/Works/Plans

16.1 *Ouse Washes Reservoir Works* – an update is included in Appendix 6.

16.2 *Cranbrook Drain/Counter Drain (Welches Dam Pumping Station) Strategy Study* – it was previously reported that to help develop and guide this project, a project board and steering group were being set up. The MLC have representation on both but are at present awaiting further instruction on when they might meet to discuss plans.

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

- xxx. Cranbrook/Counter Drain FRM Strategy – Project Board – Chief Executive
- xxxi. Cranbrook/Counter Drain FRM Strategy – Steering Group – Planning Engineer and Conservation Officer
- xxxii. Cambridgeshire Fens Flood Innovation Board – Planning Engineer

17. **Planning**

- 17.1 ***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.
- 17.2 ***The Right to Connect*** - during the passage of the Environment Act through the House of Lords an amendment was sought which aimed to minimise the impact of new housing development on levels of local flood risk and the likelihood of storm discharges of untreated sewerage effluent into rivers and coastal waters. It aimed to ensure housing developers design systems according to a hierarchy of drainage options that seek to reduce to a minimum the volume of rainwater entering combined sewerage systems removing the current “right to connect” to public sewers.

As members of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Flood and Water Management (FloW) Partnership the Middle Level Commissioners and their associated Boards/Commissioners have been asked to consider taking the opportunity to write to government and voice concerns over the right to connect for new developments and how this is expected to increase risk in the future. The County Council in its roles as the LLFA was going to prepare a letter requesting that the right to connect be stopped, or at the very least that a change be considered, but at this time nothing has yet been received for comment.

Members need to consider that there could be many currently unassessed beneficial or detrimental impacts on the Commissioners’/Boards’ systems; the viability of developments, particularly the re-development of sites within older parts of town centres, as the more sustainable discharge points (ie where the system has capacity for extra rainwater discharge) for site drainage could be more costly requiring the provision of significant infrastructure, for example, new surface water sewers, pumping station, outfall structures etc.

In order to assist further discussion, the Commissioners are asked to consider if they would support removal of the right to connect to public sewers or not?

18. **Recreation**

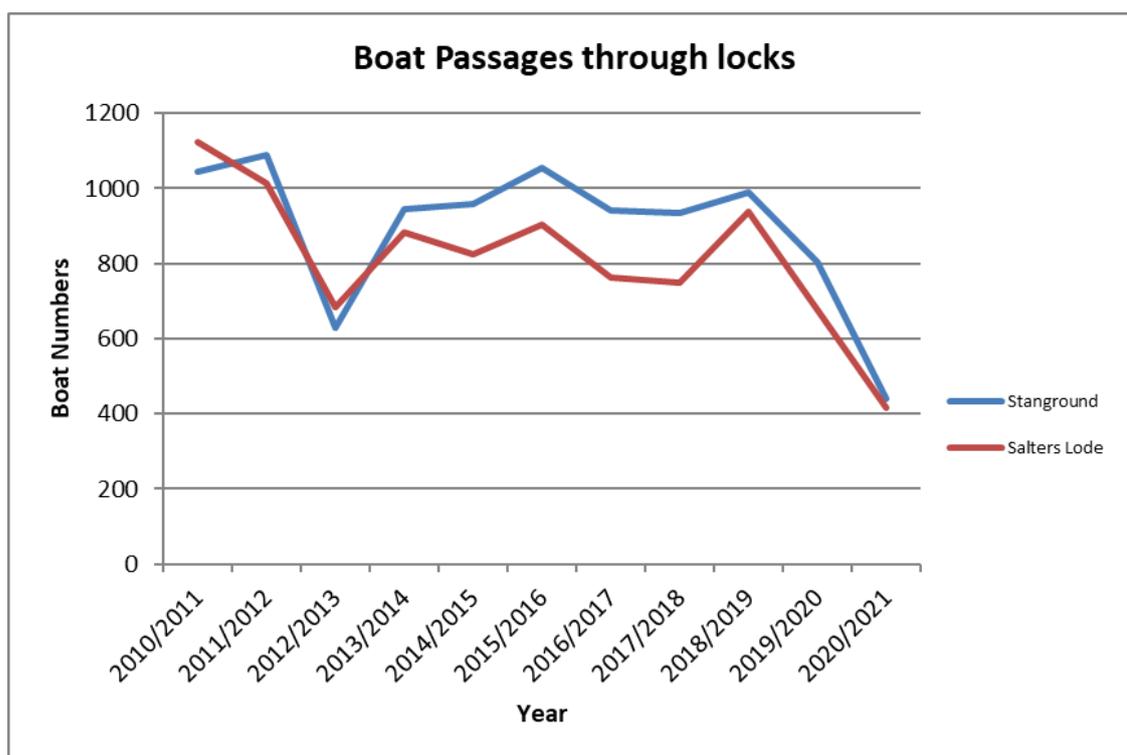
- 18.1 ***Navigation*** – MLC specific navigation matters are covered elsewhere in this report.
- 18.2 ***Anglian Waterways Group*** – the Chief Executive attended virtual meetings of this group as and when they occurred.
- 18.3 ***Well Creek Trust Moorings at Salter’s Lode*** – following the Board’s approval, the replacement moorings at Salter’s Lode, Well Creek, were installed, utilising a steel framework with a fibreglass non slip deck.

18.4 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.

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

Boat Passages 2021				
Month	Salter's Lode Lock		Stanground Lock	
	In	Out	In	Out
April	22 (0)	18 (0)	22 (0)	31 (0)
May	26 (10)	32 (1)	30 (2)	34 (8)
June	10 (20)	55 (22)	43 (18)	50 (23)
July	29 (50)	62 (55)	50 (52)	55 (56)
August	51 (61)	49 (63)	64 (67)	61 (76)
September	53 (53)	41 (51)	57 (49)	47 (52)
TOTAL	191 (194)	257 (192)	266 (188)	279 (215)

The COVID Pandemic is still having an impact on boating figures, but there is an overall improvement from last year.



18.6 Angling

National Fishing Matches – the 2021 National Pike Championships is due to take place on Saturday 6th November on Bevills Leam and the Twenty Foot drain, following last year's rescheduling due to COVID-19 restrictions.

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

- 18.7 Middle Level Waterways Users Committee** – the Committee met on 15th April 2021 and are due to meet again on 21st October 2021.
- 19. Conservation** – this is covered in detail in the Conservation Officer’s Report.
- 19.1 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.
- 19.2 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 has updated plans accordingly.
- 19.3 Conservation Committee** – the Committee met on 16th September 2021; the next meeting is due to be held on 17 March 2022.
- 19.4 Woodwalton Fen Alternative Storage** – following the winter flooding and the use of Woodwalton Fen for flood storage, Natural England are pushing for any scheme to find alternative flood storage to be accelerated. To assist with this the Chief Engineer has produced a draft letter of invitation to tender for development of a business case to help with the seeking and supporting of a GiA bid. He has also provided a list of who he considers to be the most obvious candidates to obtain quotations from. To progress this a source of funding needs to be found for the consultancy work and this has been left with NE to investigate and report back on.
- 19.5 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. The main project focus at this time is centred around additional land purchases and wet farming trials which are drawing national attention.
- 20. Internal Drainage Board Works**
- 20.1 Weed Control & Channel Maintenance**
- Inspections/advice/assistance** – Middle Level operatives have undertaken herbicide applications, on a rechargeable contract basis, to thirteen IDB/DCCs.
- 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. Approximately 60m of timber toe board revetment has been installed at two separate sites within the EA watercourse. This involved an integrated working approach with the EA ecology department, to ensure the safeguarding of the local water vole population. Water vole displacement measures were employed to ensure all works complied with the current wildlife legislation, along with the installation of pre-planted coir rolls to the front of the timber revetment works, further enhancing the area as a mitigation for the disturbance created. All works contracted under this PSCA are undertaken on a fully rechargeable basis to the EA.



Works undertaken at Swavesey under PSCA

20.2 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)

- Pump awaiting installation, works delayed by late harvest

Burrowmoor Pumping Station
(March 3rd DDC)

- Weed screen cleaner overhauled by Fenflow Ltd

Cock Fen Pumping Station
(Upwell IDB)

- Works started, main contracts placed. Awaiting land ownership to be resolved

Conington Pumping Station
(Conington & Holme IDB)

- Pump construction bolts inspected – badly corroded, replacement delayed due to COVID-19. Awaiting instruction from Chairman. Bolts due to be replaced spring 2022. No prospect of using old station to install new pumps and cost to build new station in the medium term too high for Board to fund.

Conington Pumping Station
(Conington & Holme IDB) continued

Finchams Farm
(Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB)

- Pump lifted and new bolts fitted.

Glenhouse Pumping Station
(Manea & Welney DDC)

- Weed screen cleaner overhauled by Fenflow Ltd.

Latches Fen Pumping Station (March East IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New diesel engine adaptor plate and drive shaft engineered and fitted.
Middlemoor Pumping Station (Ramsey Fourth IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New screen installed and new pump commissioned
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. Pump refurbished by Avonmore Eng Services and programmed to be put back week commencing 18th October.
Nordelph Pumping Station (Upwell IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metering issues with electricity supplier/UKPN – issue now re-occurred – still ongoing
Puddock Pumping Station (Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outfall flap valves overhauled
Sawtry Roughs Pumping Station (Sawtry IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New control panel installed and commissioned.
South Brink Pumping Station (Waldersey IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement soft starts completed for pumps 2 & 3. All 3 soft starts now replaced and issue with weed screen cleaner tripping resolved.
Washways Pumping Station (Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New gearbox drive shaft and wheels fitted to Weed screen cleaner.
White Fen Pumping Station (March West & White Fen IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications to control panel to alleviate nuisance tripping.
Various IDBs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple automatic weed screen 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.

20.3 *Improvement Works*

IDB Projects - progress is as follows:

Catchment Improvement Works at A47 (Hundred of Wisbech IDB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board has employed Iain Downey (the ex MLC Chief Executive) to see if he is able to get some movement on the replacement of a culvert under the A47.
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"> • Completed.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 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 |
| Needham and Laddus culvert replacements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme designed and tendered, GiA obtained works waiting contractor availability |

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 • Undertake bank repair/revetment works • Install replacement inlet at Pumping Station • Organise the dewatering of Broadalls pump well to facilitate cleaning |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| March Fifth DDC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains |
| March Sixth DDC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Commissioners' drains |
| March Third DDC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Commissioners' drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing and bank trimming works to Commissioners' drains • Undertake bank repair/revetment works |

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 • Undertake bank repair/revetment works • Provide assistance and labour for works to inaccessible drain at Point 106, Turves
Needham & Laddus IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing
Nightlayers IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains • Undertake bank repair/revetment works
Nordelph IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with new weed screen installation
Ransonmoor IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains. • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains. • Remove fly tipped materials from Board's drains • Install protection around AW asset in the Board's drain to prevent damage to pipe work.
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"> • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection
Sawtry IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake remedial H&S improvements following Cope inspection
Swavesey IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's Drain • Arrange and oversee PSCA works on EA watercourse in Swavesey on Board's behalf
Waldersey IDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide application to Board's drains • Arrange and oversee machine cleansing works to Board's drains • Remedial works to collapsed arco culvert

21. **Engineering Fees**

21.1 **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.

22. **ADA**

22.1 **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.

22.2 *The Annual ADA Conference* – the 84th conference will be on the 10th November and, as it was last year, will be held virtually.

22.4 *Great Ouse ADA Branch* – The AGM was held on 2^d March 2021 (virtually).

23. EA Sanctioned Project List

23.1 *A list of the EA Sanctioned Projects 2021/22 –*

For the MLC this is currently £141K for bank raising and £125K to support IDB telemetry installations.

24. Renewable Power

The MLC pumping stations are now running on green tariffs. The Conservation and Climate Committee suggest that the Board consider instigating a Carbon Footprint Audit, prior to developing proposals for measures to reduce or mitigate these impacts.

The Board is asked to approve obtaining quotations for carrying out a Carbon Audit, with the Executive Committee being delegated power for decision making on awarding of a contract, if it is likely that this can be achieved within the overall approved annual budget approved at the Commissioners' April 2021 meeting.



David Thomas
Clerk, Chief Engineer & Chief Executive

21 October 2021