

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS



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Clerk, Chief Engineer & Chief Executive
David C Thomas B.Eng, M.C.M.I.

20 April 2022

Mr Chairman, My Lord, Lady and Gentlemen

Meetings of 28th April 2022

I enclose the papers for the undermentioned Meetings to be hosted at this Office on Thursday the 28th April 2022.

Board Meeting - 9.30 am
Commissioners' Meeting - 12.45 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS AGENDA INCLUDES CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS. APART FROM THE COPY RETAINED WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES THEY WILL BE DESTROYED FOLLOWING THE MEETING AND MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY MUST NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN A BOARD MEMBER.

AFTER THE MEETING PLEASE DESTROY YOUR COPY OF THE PAPERS OR RETURN THEM TO THE OFFICE TO BE DESTROYED.

A Buffet Lunch will be provided at the conclusion of the Meeting.

To avoid paying for food that is not required please confirm in advance that you WILL BE STAYING for the buffet lunch.

Yours truly

D C THOMAS

Chief Executive to the Commissioners

To the Chairman and Members of the Middle Level Board

Board Meeting Agenda – 2-10

Commissioners' Meeting Agenda – 11

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

Board Meeting to be held at the Middle Level Offices, March on
Thursday the 28th April 2022 at 9.30am

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 4th November 2021.

(Copy pages 12-23)

4. Deaths of Mr L W Allpress and Cllr R Groom

The Chief Executive will refer to the deaths of Mr Lenton Allpress on Thursday the 18th November 2021 and Cllr R Groom on Monday 24th January 2022.

5. Resignation of Mr C F Hartley

The Chief Executive will refer to a letter dated the 15th November 2021 from Mr Hartley.

(Copy page 24)

6. Vacancy in Membership

To consider the vacancy on the Board resulting from the retirement of Mr Hartley and seeking suitable candidates for consideration at the November 2022 Commissioners' meeting.

7. Payments by the Commissioners

To consider payments amounting to £2,152,036.93 during the period from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022.

(Copy pages 25-33)

Please note that the Board have resolved that since all payments are now seen and approved by a member of the Board prior to the meeting any queries regarding such payments must be raised with the Chief Executive prior to the meeting otherwise the payments will be taken as approved.

8. Miscellaneous receipts

To consider receipts amounting to £292,297.35 during the period from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022.

(Copy pages 34-38)

9. Determinations of annual values for rating purposes

The Chief Executive will submit the recommendations for the determinations of annual values for rating purposes.

(See Confidential Papers – Page 2)

10. Rate arrears

To consider a recommendation to the Commissioners to write off rate arrears.

(See Confidential Papers – Page 2)

11. Contributions from Developers

With reference to minutes B.3677 & B.3713 the Chief Executive will report that contributions towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent have been received.

(See Confidential Papers – Page 3)

12. Staff

a) Salary Increases 2022/2023

Further to minute B.3678(a), the Chief Executive will report that, in accordance with the decision of the Executive Committee on the 21st March 2019, a formula consisting of 50% RPI and 50% AWE, each index being calculated as the average of their published monthly values from January to December in the previous year, with a lower limit of 1% and a maximum limit of 3%, would be used to determine pay awards for years 2020/2021 to 2022/2023, a salary award involving an increase of 3% in respect of the Commissioners' employees took effect from the 1st April 2022.

Given the unpredictable nature of inflation the Employment Committee agreed to extend the current agreement/formula for another year with the caveat that should it be necessary to revisit the increase due to prevailing circumstances then this would be done at the time the Committee meets.

b) Travelling expenses

Further to minute B.3678(b), the Chief Executive will report that the travelling allowances payable to Middle Level employees from the 1st April 2022 will remain unchanged for 2022/2023.

c) Applications for re-grading

To consider the recommendations of the Executive Committee.

d) Proposals for changes in staffing structure

The Clerk will report on the proposal to employ a part time Planning Engineer and a full time Senior Engineer.

13. Health and Safety Matters

a) Recorded Accidents/Near Misses

Further to minute B.3715(ii), the Chief Executive to report on any incidents requiring investigation/action.

b) IDB Service Provision

Further to minute B.3715(iii), the Chief Executive to report on proposals to offer associated Boards annual lump sum contracts for planning and consenting services.

14. Pension Schemes

a) Local Government Pension Revaluation and future Employer Contributions

Further to minute B.3680(a), the Chief Executive will report that the contributions made by the Commissioners in respect of employees in the financial year 2021/2022 will be £203,071.84 and that the contribution rate for the year was 21.5%. For the financial year 2022/2023, the contribution rate will be 21.5%, with contributions to be made by the Commissioners in respect of employees to be in the region of £190,000.

b) Auto enrolment pension scheme (NEST)

i) Further to minute B.3680(b)(i), the Chief Executive will report that the enrolment in the NEST scheme commenced October 2015 and that the contributions made by the Commissioners in respect of employees in the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 will be £17,496.31 and that the minimum contribution rate was 4%. For the financial year 2022/2023, at the minimum contribution rate of 4%, the contributions to be made by the Commissioners in respect of employees will be in the region of £20,500.00.

ii) To give consideration to the future contribution rate payable by the Commissioners in respect of employees in the auto enrolment pension scheme. As from 1st April 2022 the minimum employer contribution rate will be 4%.

15. Property

a) Cardea site

Further to minute B.3716(a) the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk to report that the expected commuted sum and reinstatement of facilities payments have been transferred to the MLC but the final agreement continues to wait on resolution of a land ownership issue.

b) 33 Sluice Road – tenant issues

Further to minute B.3716(b) the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk to report.

c) Woodwalton Reservoir Update.

Further to minute B.3716(d) the Chief Executive to report.

16. Chief Executive's Annual Report

To consider the Chief Executive's Annual Report.

(Copy enclosed)

17. Executive Committee

To consider the minutes of the Meetings of the Executive Committee held on the 7th March 2022.

(Copy pages 39-44)

18. Public Sector Co-Operation Agreements (PSCAs)

Further to minute B.3720, the Chief Executive will report that the PSCAs had worked well again over the year and seem to suit both the EA and IDBs needs.

19. Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

Further to minute B.3653, the Chief Executive advises that Chair's Meetings were held virtually on the 26th November 2020 and face to face on 12th April 2022. The Chief Executive will provide an update on what proposals were supported by members present.

20. Estimates of revenue expenditure and rate and special levy requirements for the financial year 2022/2023

To consider the Report of the Treasurer, the likely year end out-turn forecast for 2021/2022 and the estimates of revenue expenditure and rate and special levy requirements for the financial year 2022/2023.

(Copy enclosed)

21. Navigation Matters

Further to minute B.3723, the Chief Executive to report that this item is largely covered in the Annual Report but an update will be given on any matters arising since report production.

22. Inspection of Works 2022

Further to minute B.3656, the Chief Executive will ask for the Board's instructions in regard to the possibility of an Inspection being arranged for 2022.

23. Applications for byelaw consent

The Chief Executive will report that the following applications for consent to undertake works in and around watercourses have been approved and granted since the last general meeting of the Board:-

<u>Name of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Works</u>	<u>Date consent granted</u>
Richard Bouchier	Extending an existing landing stage – Old River Nene, March	27/04/21
Keith Wade	Construction of 4 metre long x 1.2m wide landing stage – Well Creek, Upwell	18/5/21
London Tower Cranes Hire and Sales Limited	Erecting steel palisade security fencing – improving area of car park – Kings Dyke	16/6/21
David & Susan Venn	Construction of a 4 metre long x 2.5 metre width landing stage including erosion protection under landing stage – Well Creek, Nordelph	01/09/2021
Gary Rolfe	Construction of a 6 metre long and 1 metre width landing stage, including erosion protection under the landing stage and steps – Well Creek, Upwell	10/09/2021
Mr & Mrs Brooks	Construction of 6 metre long and 1.2 metre width landing stage, including erosion protection under the landing stage and steps – Well Creek, Upwell	22/9/2021
Miss Latonya Ball	Widen an existing landing stage by 0.6 metres to provide seating area. Double brick wall to be built to provide support to bank. Additional area will be decked using wood to match existing. Work to be undertaken by professional builder – Old River Nene, March	22/9/2021

Mrs Hazel Harman	Widen an existing landing stage by 0.6m to provide seating area. Double brick wall to be built to provide support to bank. Additional area will be decked using wood to match existing. Work to be undertaken by professional builder – Old River Nene, March	22/9/2021
Mr G Ranganathan	Construction of wooden lodge with study. Work to be undertaken by professional builder – Old River Nene, Benwick	18/02/2022
Accent Housing Limited	Erection of housing and other associated structures and landscaping within 20m – High Lode, Ramsey	18/11/2021
Fenland District Council	Crown lift and deadwood a group of mixed trees along from Broad Street Bridge both sides of river – Old River Nene, March	27/10/2021
Steve & Karren Beesly	Construction of 2 retaining walls, decking platform and steps on the riverbank – Old River Nene, March	10/11/2021
Mr M Brooks	Construction of a new dwelling, including associated drainage works and services within 20m of the river – Well Creek	15/12/2021
Manor Packaging	Erection of an extension to rear of existing factory with associated works with 20m of river - Whittlesey Dyke	26/11/2021
Mr S Biswas	Replacement of Bridge Farm Cottages (2 dwellings) at 1 Bridge Cottages Road, Nordelph -	15/12/2021
Mr P Mather	Construction of landing stage with steps and erosion protection – Well Creek	19/01/2022
W G Beaumont and Son Ltd	Consent to undertake maintenance painting works at a gas pipe crossing - Forty Foot River	20/01/2022
Mr G Diffey	Construction of landing stage, including erosion protection under the landing stage and steps – Well Creek	6/4/2022

24. Water Resources Committee

Further to minute B.3725, Mr H Whittome to report.

25. WRE/Lower Nene Water Resources Group

Further to minute B.3726, this matter is covered in the Annual Report.

26. Move to district wide telemetry/Local Levy bid

Further to minute B.3727, the Chief Executive will report that a bid for £125K as a 50% contribution towards installing telemetry at IDB pumping stations was successful and all administered IDBs have been approached to offer them telemetry on this discounted cost basis. He will further report that orders for 48 outstations in addition to the MLC 6 has been placed.

27. Conservation Committee

To consider the minutes of the Meeting of the Conservation Committee held on 17th March 2022.

(Copy pages 45-55)

28. Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

The Chief Executive to refer to the Conservation Officer's newsletter, dated December 2021, previously circulated to Members, and to consider the Commissioners' most recent BAP Report.

(Copy pages 56-58)

29. Banking Arrangements
Changes to the signatories

The Chief Executive to report.

30. Association of Drainage Authorities

The Chief Executive will advise:-

a) Annual Conference

That the 84th Annual Conference of the Association was held on Wednesday the 10th November 2021.

The Conference was once again held virtually and was split into two parts; the Conference in the morning and AGM in the afternoon. It is expected that, whilst in future years it is hoped to return to a face-to-face format, the clear separation between conference and AGM is likely to be retained.

Speakers this year included Rebecca Row MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State – Defra), Dieter Helm (economist) and Lord De Ramsey (then President of ADA).

Topics covered included the challenges of climate change and the need to step up to the plate in delivering on the aim to achieve a net zero target as soon as possible, the importance of partnership working and the importance of agriculture in feeding the nation. The latter included the need to better educate the population, who clearly desire to move forward on delivering climate change and ecological objectives, but do not fully appreciate the role of agriculture, its real impacts or even properly understood where and how food is sourced. One example given that challenged a common assumption that agriculture was bad for the environment was that recent monitoring of CO² release had

shown that a well irrigated peat field of onions released less CO² than adjacent dry grassland.

In his speech Lord De Ramsey announced that he was stepping down as President and that his place would be taken by Henry Cator. He was warmly thanked by ADA for his many years of service and was presented with a painting by an artist which it is known he admires. Henry spoke about how pleased he had been to be invited to take over the role and that he looked forward to working with ADA to meet the future challenges of the industry.

The AGM that followed gave an update on the work of ADA, noting the likelihood that, despite vigorous lobbying, the expectation was that from 1st April 2022 IDBs would no longer be able to use red diesel for anything other than heating or to run generators. This will impact on costs and will provide challenges to the continued use of agricultural contractors. The passing of the Environment Bill was touched upon which will release barriers to the formation of new IDBs and will also provide opportunities for IDBs to explore extending their boundaries if it was clearly beneficial to do so. Innes Thomason spoke on the work of ADA and the consultations ADA had responded to, including proposals to extend beaver introduction and a water abstraction licencing charging review amongst other things. Finally, it was reported that the ADA Board had agreed to a 1% rise in subscriptions for the 2022/23 year and noted that with inflationary pressures a higher increase should be expected next year.

b) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held on Wednesday the 9th November 2022, venue yet to be announced.

c) Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association was held on Tuesday the 1st March 2022.

This was the first face to face meeting held since the COVID-19 outbreak but the format was restricted to the AGM only. It is planned however to reintroduce the popular and useful morning workshops for 2023.

Marc Heading was reappointed as chair with Councillor Doug McMurdo as vice chair. Topics covered included unsurprisingly red diesel, and water resources/the work of WRE.

Sofi Lloyd announced that Brian Stewart and Ian Hodge from the EA had recently joined the ADA Board and that DEFRA had asked ADA to liaise with them on the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act. She was also pleased to be able to report that ADA had been instrumental in initiating an all-party parliamentary group with a remit to discuss and consider Sustainable Flood and Drainage Management.

Phil Hulme and Amanda Macloughlan spoke on behalf of the EA covering the challenging associated with significant staff changes at the EA and noted that with the capital program for this six year cycle being double that of the previous one this would be generating considerable additional work load.

It was advised that this coming years revenue (maintenance) budget was £5.3M which was more than the previous year but what could be delivered within this budget could be impacted by inflation.

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 7th March 2023.

d) Subscriptions

The Chief Executive will report that ADA has increased subscriptions by 1% for 2022, from £565 to £571.

31. Fens Biosphere

Further to minute B.3728, the Chief Executive will report that this project is on hold and will remain so unless and until Fenland District Council is prepared to engage with a redefined brief and vision for it.

32. Environment Agency – Precept

The Chief Executive will report that at the Environment Agency Flood Defence Committee meeting the Committee voted to adopt an indicative 2% increase in the precepts on Internal Drainage Boards for the next 6 years commencing from 2022/23, with the ability to revisit annually should exceptional circumstances indicate this is required. The Committee voted for a 0% increase (for exceptional circumstances) above the indicative 2% increase for the year ending 31st March 2023 – total of a 2% increase on the level of precept on Internal Drainage Boards for the year ending 31st March 2023.

The precept for 2021/2022 was £1,947.

33. MLC Corporate Procurement Strategy

To consider the Middle Level Commissioners' Corporate Procurement Strategy.

(Copy pages 59-64)

34. Land Registry

The Chief Executive will report that the land ownership records of the MLC have been comprehensively digitised and that we are currently in the process of passing this information on to Land Registry with a view to getting all land we wish to claim (and have proof of ownership) registered.

35. Date of next Meetings

The Chief Executive will remind Members that the next meetings of the Commissioners and the Middle Level Board will be held on Thursday the 3rd November 2022.

36. Any Other Business

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS

To be hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March at
12.45pm on Thursday the 28th April 2022

A G E N D A

1. The Chief Executive to refer to the notice convening this meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

3. Declarations of Interest

The Commissioners to declare any interests relating to the agenda.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the General Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 4th November 2021.

(Copy pages 65-68)

5. Vacancy in Membership

None at present.

6. Drainage rates and special levies for the financial year 2022/2023

To consider the recommendations of the Middle Level Board.

7. Rate Arrears

To consider a recommendation by the Board to write off rate arrears.

8. Penalties

The Chief Executive will report that 115 were raised during the financial year 2021/2022.

(NB - 112 penalties were raised in 2020/2021)

9. Any other matters, which, with the Chairman's permission any Commissioner may wish to bring forward.

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Middle Level Board held at the Middle Level Offices,
March on Thursday 4th November 2021

PRESENT

J L Brown Esq (Chairman), H W Whittome Esq (Vice Chairman), G P Bliss Esq, C D Boughton Esq, R C Brown Esq, Cllr J R Clarke, Cllr C J Crofts, The Lord De Ramsey, C F Hartley Esq, J E Heading Esq, M E Heading Esq, M R R Latta Esq, S T Raby Esq, P W West Esq, S W Whittome Esq.

The Chief Executive/Chief Engineer, the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk and the Treasurer were in attendance.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from P Allpress Esq and Cllr W Sutton. Cllr D Laws attempted to attend remotely but was unable to connect due to a wifi failure.

B.3705 Declaration of Interests

The Chief Executive reminded the Board of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any of them.

No interests were declared.

B.3706 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on the 29th April 2021 and 29th June 2021 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

D Boughton Esq referred to a mis-spelling of his name in the minutes.

B.3707 Death of Mr J D Bliss

The Chief Executive referred to the death of Mr J Bliss on Saturday 10th July 2021. Condolences had been sent to his family. The Board observed a one minute's silence in Mr Bliss' honour.

B.3708 Annual Report for the year 2020/2021

The Board considered the Annual Report for the financial year ended on the 31st March 2021 for submission to the Commissioners.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report be approved for submission to the Commissioners.

B.3709 Payments by the Commissioners

The Board examined and approved payments amounting to £2,146,763.77 during the period from 1st April 2021 to 31st September 2021.

B.3710 Miscellaneous Receipts

The Board examined and approved particulars of receipts amounting to £51,937.20 during the period 1st April 2021 to 30th September 2021.

B.3711 Determinations of Annual Values for Rating Purposes

The Board considered the recommendations for determination of annual values for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman's recommendation be adopted by the Commissioners
- ii) That the Chief Executive be empowered to serve notices and take such other action as may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements.
- iii) That the Chairman and Chief Executive be empowered to authorise appropriate action on behalf of the Commissioners in connection with any appeals against determinations.

B.3712 Rate Arrears

Consideration was given to right off rate arrears amounting to £624.23.

RESOLVED

That Commissioners be recommended to right off rate arrears amounting to £395.98.

B.3713 Contributions from Developers

The Chief Executive reported that development contributions had been received by the Commissioners in the period from 1st April 2021 to 30th September 2021 towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent.

B.3714 Staff

Staff Changes Update

The Chief Executive reported that Debra Watts and Katie Hunt were to retire on 21st December and that Sarah Lemmon had commenced employment with the Middle Level Commissioners in a PA/Secretarial role.

David Bancroft had been appointed as a replacement for Richard Lloyd as Mechanical and Electrical Engineer.

Richard Lloyd will remain with the Commissioners until mid-December.

Sarah Bowd had been appointed as Accounts Assistant and would commence employment on 2nd November 2021.

The post of Junior Secretary was yet to be filled after no suitable candidates had been found, and it was proposed to re-advertise in the new year.

The Chief Executive reported that Malcolm Downes had indicated his intention to retire and that he would not be returning to work.

It was reported that Chris Convine had put on hold his request to move to a 3-day working week.

The Commissioners requested whether it would be possible to publish a staff structure with pictures attached along with a note of main duties, this would be very helpful in view of the recent staff changes.

B.3715 Health and Safety

i) Covid-19

The Chief Executive reported that following government guidance the office had been opened to the public and staff had moved to a mandatory three days in the office. However, this had been recently reduced to two days to reflect the recent higher rates of Covid-19 transmission. It was understood this temporary arrangement would continue until the roll out of the booster vaccine had been completed.

ii) Recorded Accidents/Near Misses

The Chief Executive reported that there were no recorded incidents or near misses that needed to be drawn to the Board's attention.

iii) IDB Service Provision

The Chief Executive reported that the arrangement with Cope Safety Management Limited appeared to be working well for Internal Drainage Boards. The Chief Executive reported that it was intended to cancel the Croner contract and use them for supporting the MLC as well, however, in view of our being tied into a three-year contract, with a further two years to run, it was intended to use Croner services for a week at a time to do a full Health and Safety audit.

B.3716 Property

a) Cardea Site

The Assistant Clerk/Solicitor reported on the recent development made with the transfer of land and the adoption of the balancing ponds. The Chief Executive had attended a site visit with the Director of Persimmon. Whilst access for maintenance could be obtained to some of the balancing ponds, it was necessary for Persimmon to reacquire part of the land which gave access to one part of the site. Concern was expressed about the delay that would occur to the transaction while this piece of land was being purchased. If the Board were to complete this transaction without this access being re-purchased, consideration should be given to a bond of £200,000 being required to cover the additional maintenance costs until the access land is transferred to the Commissioners.

The Chief Executive advised that maintenance costs of £50,000 were required to be paid by Persimmon to put the land into an adoptable standard and the sum of £50,000 was to be in addition to the £770,000 Persimmon had already agreed as a commuted sum on transfer.

b) 33 Sluice Road – Tenant Issues

The Assistant Clerk/Solicitor reported that the rent on the property was currently up to date and that following the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions the Commissioners should now be able to access the property to carry out an inspection and had instructed contractors to carry out the landlord's repairs.

c) 31 Sluice Road

The Chief Executive reported that it was a recommendation from the Executive Committee that the property be retained and not sold following a request from the current occupier to purchase the property.

d) Woodwalton Reservoir Update

The Chief Executive reported that the Reservoir Panel Engineer had completed his Survey Report. Works to the overspill were required and needed to be completed for Autumn 2022. These works would be budgeted for in 2022/2023.

The Chief Executive reported that these works were not optional and needed to be carried out in order to comply with the Reservoirs Act and in accordance with the Panel Engineer's Report. Accordingly, the design of the overspill would need to be undertaken in the Spring.

e) Swimming at Chain Bridge bathing sheds – Twenty Foot River

The Chief Executive referred to a letter received from Sean Sullivan requesting permission to use the former Chain Bridge Bathing Sheds on the Twenty Foot River and to the recommendations of the Executive Committee which was to lease or licence the use of the former bathing sheds on the Twenty Foot River to any charitable organisation that was set up to facilitate open water swimming at this area. This was on the condition that there was no liability attaching to Middle Level Commissioners and that the organisation would indemnify the Commissioners. It was a recommendation from the Commissioners that swimmers should be required to use swimming buoys when swimming navigable lengths.

B.3717 Maintenance Work – Tin Dump Culvert and Replacement of Iveco Lorry

The Chief Executive reported that the Executive Committee had granted approval for the scheme to be split into two phases. The first being all planned works (excluding installation of the automated weedscreen) to be delivered in this financial year, together with the purchase of the land.

The second phase would be the purchase of an automatic weedscreen and the associated electrical installation and piling, which would follow when funding allowed.

B.3718 Chief Executive's Annual Report

The Board considered the Annual Report of the Chief Executive and noted the following points for actioning;

i) The Middle Level Bank Raising Project

The Board approved the proposals for the setting up of a consultancy team to develop the full business case which will be submitted for approval by the Project Delivery Board and for developing and managing future phases of project delivery and also for purchase and stock-piling materials suitable for use in the scheme delivery. The Chief Executive confirmed that all costs would be covered by grant aid funding and that a full business case will be presented to the Board giving an overview of what is involved in future phases of the Bank Raising Project.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the grant aid approved was £23,000,000. The Chief Executive advised it was necessary to appoint an engineer to manage the project and that a significant proportion of the salary of the Engineer could be included in the grant aid approval.

RESOLVED

That the Project Board for the bank raising works should include the Chief Executive, MLC Engineer, Peter Beckenham (Conservation Officer), the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Board.

ii) Red Diesel

The Chief Executive reported that there was concern that all drainage boards will lose the red diesel exemption in April 2022 and unless there are any changes, the only area where red diesel would be legal would be in supplying generators and heaters. The Chief Executive reported that he had written a number of times to Stephen Barclay MP and had been in regular communication with ADA. ADA had continued to push Defra for some movement on this matter. The concern about the loss of the exemption is primarily based upon the increased costs which will have to be met by rate increases or reductions in works undertaken and the potential loss of access to farming contractors who will not wish to move to white diesel use in their plant as for agricultural work they will still be able to use red diesel.

iii) Woodwalton Fen potential to be re-classified as a reservoir

As reported earlier, the Chief Executive advised that a meeting had been held with the Reservoirs Act Panel Engineer who had advised that an overspill was required. Having looked at the levels it was proposed that the most logical place to install the overspill was in the north west corner of the site. Works will need to be carried out within the next 12 months and a budget for this would be included in the 2022/23 estimates. Natural England has advised that they wish to see and review any proposals as they must be assessed under the Habitats Directive.

iv) Navigation Registration / Byelaws

The Navigation Advisory Committee resolved to retain Colin Overton as a member of the Navigation Advisory Committee but remove reference to the Middle Level Watermans Club because his role has changed from a representative of that organisation to Youth Representative tasked with engagement in this sector, encouraging and supporting sport and water-based activities such as canoeing and paddle boarding.

RESOLVED

- a) To replace Kye Jerrom with Chris Middleton on a permanent basis.
- b) That filling the vacancy created by Colin Overton stepping down as the Watermans Club representative should be delegated to the Executive to appoint.

v) Bevills Leam Pumping Station

The Chief Executive reported that a sum of approximately £4,000 was needed to carry out roof repairs to the Pumping Station.

RESOLVED

To approve this sum be allocated for the necessary repairs to the Pumping Station roof.

vi) Proposed Phase VII Well Creek Dredging

The Chief Executive reminded the Board that they had wished to delay the undertaking of a further reach of dredging last winter. It was 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.

RESOLVED

To approve these works if there is a budget underspend.

vii) Future Dredging Works, Old Rover Nene (March Town Centre)

The Chief Executive reported that whilst it was beneficial to have these works carried out, they would cost in the region of £200,000. So, whilst desirable, these works have yet to be planned or budgeted for. It was agreed by the Board that if there was an opportunity to carry out some dredging as part of town centre regeneration works (as these works will allow access to the water), then this should be exploited.

viii) The Right to Connect

The Chief Executive reported that 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 developments on levels of local flood risk and the likelihood of storm discharges of untreated sewerage effluent into rivers and coastal waters. The amendment was aimed to ensure housing developers design systems 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, Middle Level Commissioners have been asked to consider taking the opportunity to write to the government and voice concerns over the right to connect for new developments and how this is expected to increase risk in the future. The recommendation to the Board from the Executive was that no firm recommendation was given.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners would not support the removal of the “right to connect” to public sewers.

ix) Accident on Forty Foot River Moorings

The Chief Executive reported that, following the construction of the four rural moorings on the navigation system, a boater had made a complaint following an alleged injury he had sustained using the mooring on the Forty Foot River adjacent to the George Public House. He had also complained to the Health and Safety Executive.

The Chief Executive had responded to the Health and Safety Executive and to date no further response had been received.

x) Water Resources East (WRE)

The Chief Executive reported that he continues to represent Internal Drainage Boards in the East of England as non-executive Director on the board of WRE. WRE are currently developing plans for water supply and are including looking at the water needs of agriculture and the environment. Regular meetings are being held to discuss development of the area plan and also to formulate the final proposals for two reservoirs, one in Lincolnshire and one in Cambridgeshire. There were 16 sites currently under consideration in Cambridgeshire.

B.3719 Executive Committee

Members considered the Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee held on 8th September 2021

RESOLVED

That the Executive Committee’s minutes and recommendations be approved.

B.3720 Public Sector Co-operation Agreements (PSCA's)

The Chief Executive reported that work carried out under the PSCA's had worked well again this year, particularly at Swavesey and he had nothing further to add to this item.

B.3721 Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

The Chief Executive reported that a meeting was held on Tuesday 2nd November 2021. Items discussed included climate change, red diesel and the administration of meetings.

B.3722 Financial Update

The Treasurer reported on the Management accounts and Annual Return for the financial year ended 31st March 2021 and confirmed that the internal auditors had completed their works and issued their report but the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn, were unable to complete their audit as an objection to the accounts had been received which they had considered and confirmed that they would investigate further.

He reported that the objection to the accounts was concerning the inclusion within the accounts of engineering consultancy fees for pre- and post- application advice. The objector had raised previous challenges to these charges claiming that they were not legal under the Land Drainage Act.

However, this was not considered correct as the Commissioners had previously approved these charges for engineering consultancy and they were separate from the consenting process, being contracted services requested by the developer/agent, entering into an agreement in place before any services were provided. He confirmed that an agreement for the services had been signed for in this instance.

In reviewing the Assertions for the Annual Governance Statement, the Commissioners are required to take reasonable steps to assure themselves that they comply with laws, regulations and proper practices. Concerning the specifics of the objection, these charges are not made under the Land Drainage Act but following a request and the applicant providing a signed agreement for the provision of services. The Commissioners consider that the provision of these services falls within the guidance provided by ADA and supported by Defra, therefore they consider these are reasonable steps for assurance and there are therefore no non-compliance issue to address. Further, during the year to which the objection relates fees from such charges represented 8.8% of the total raised for engineering consultancy and 0.29% of the total income for the year. The Commissioners are therefore satisfied that these specific charges would not have an effect on their ability to manage their finances.

As PKF Littlejohn were unable to complete the audit, they had issued an interim report. The Treasurer confirmed that this matter and the interim report had been discussed by the Executive Committee and as there had been no recommendations/matters to address they had approved to monitor the situation until further information and the final report had been received.

Members considered their Internal Controls, Risk Management, Insured Value of properties and Audit reports. They were satisfied that, with regards to the implications concerning the objection to the accounts the Board considered their actions to be lawful and that no changes were therefore required concerning their policies and Governance matters.

- a) Members considered the report of the Treasurer on the projected financial position at the year end.
- b) The Board considered the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2021.
- c) The Board considered the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on 31st March 2021
- d) The Board approved the current insured values for properties.
- e) The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of Internal Controls.
- f) The Treasurer referred to the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021 which had been approved by the Board and the now completed Annual Return and the comments of the auditors.
- g) The Treasurer detailed the out-turn for the period 30th September 2021 and the assessment of likely expenditure for the period 1st October 2020 to 31st March 2021.
- h) The Board reviewed and approved the forecast.

RESOLVED

- i) That the report of the Treasurer be approved.
 - ii) That the actions of the Executive Committee in dealing with the objection to the accounts be approved.
 - iii) Approved for Final Audit Report to be sent to all Board members when received and the Executive Committee be authorised to take any further actions as considered necessary on receipt of the report.
 - iv) That the auditors reports and comments be approved
 - v) That the present policies concerning internal controls, risk management, budget monitoring and insured value of properties be continued.
- b) The Chief Executive referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2020/2021 which the Board noted and approved.

B.3723 Navigation, Licensing and Byelaws and the recommendations of the Navigation Advisory Committee

The Chief Executive and Solicitor/Assistant Clerk reported that 183 boats were now licenced and this has resulted in the forecasted income from licencing from boat registration being exceeded.

An enforcement procedure was now in place and the Navigation Officer was delivering letters to all unlicenced boats on the system.

The Chief Executive reported that at High Lode, Ramsey there had been an opportunity to work in partnership with the developer of a housing development to provide 120m of moorings which the Middle Level Commissioners will adopt once they are completed.

B.3724 Byelaws

The Chief Executive reported that he had received advice from ADA that there had been an error in the model byelaws relating to the penalty note referring to section 37 Criminal Justice Act 1982, which was actually repealed on 1st December 2020 by the Sentencing Act 2020. Defra had therefore amended the penalty note attached to the byelaws. This penalty notice is not part of the byelaws. There was no requirement to either re-advertise or seek Defra approval for the amendment.

B.3725 Water Resources Committee

Mr H Whittome reported on water resources in the system. As there had been reasonable rainfall throughout the season, there had been no need to introduce restrictions.

B.3726 Water Resources East (WRE)

This matter is covered in the Chief Executive's Annual Report.

B.3727 Move to District-Wide Telemetry / Local Levy Bid

The Chief Executive reported on the progress that had been made on the move from Oriel to Xylem. The local levy bid was expected to be successful and it would contribute half of the cost of installing telemetry at pumping station sites. This will allow early warnings of pump or weed screen failure and remote monitoring.

Surveys were currently being carried out on behalf of the IDBs ahead of a hoped phased installation programme next year.

B.3728 Fens Biosphere

The Chief Executive advised that the Fens Biosphere UNESCO bid had been stalled due to two members of staff leaving the Cambridgeshire Acre team and Fenland District Council having decided not to support the Biosphere bid.

B.3729 Conservation and Climate Committee

The Board considered and approved the minutes of the Meeting of the Conservation and Climate Committee held on 16th September 2021.

B.3730 Environment Agency Precept

The Chief Executive referred to discussions about the potential of precept rises and confirmed that the Environment Agency had identified the costs which were covered in the precept which include their administrative costs and potentially there may be a rise in the precept costs.

B.3731 Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities would be held virtually on Wednesday 10th November 2022.

b) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

This would be held in Prickwillow, Ely on Tuesday 1st March 2022.

c) National Drainage Show & Floodex 2022

The Chief Executive that these would be held at ExCel, London on 10th and 11th November 2022.

B.3732 Applications for Byelaw Consent

The Chief Executive reported that the following applications for consent to undertake works in and around watercourses had been approved and granted since the last meeting of the Board;

<u>Name of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Works</u>	<u>Date consent granted</u>
Richard Bouchier	Extending an existing landing stage by 3m in length - Old River Nene, March	27 April 2021
Keith Wade	Construction of 4m long x 1.2m wide landing stage including erosion protection under landing state and steps - Well Creek, Upwell	18 May 2021
London Tower Cranes Hire & Sales Ltd	Erecting steel palisade security fencing - improving area of car park including bunding river edge of car park with surplus soil - Kings Dyke	16 June 2021
David & Susan Venn	Construction of 4m long x 2.5m wide landing stage including erosion protection under the landing stage – Well Creek, Nordelph	1 September 2021
Gary Rolfe	Construction of 6m long x 1m wide landing stage, including erosion protection under the landing stage and steps – Well Creek, Upwell	10 September 2021
Mr & Mrs Brooks	Construction of 6m long x 1.2m wide landing stage, including erosion – protection under the landing stage and steps – Well Creek, Upwell	22 September 2021
Miss Latonya Ball	Widen an existing landing stage by 0.6m to provide seating area. Double brick wall to be built to provide support to bank. Additional area will be decked using wood to match existing – Old River Nene, March	22 September 2021

<u>Name of Applicant</u>	<u>Description of Works</u>	<u>Date consent granted</u>
Mrs Hazel Harman	Widen an existing landing stage by 0.6m to provide seating area. Double brick wall to be built to provide support to bank. Additional area will be decked using wood to match existing – Old River Nene, March	22 September 2021

B.3733 Rental of Arable Banks

The Board considered whether to review the rentals on the Commissioners’ arable banks.

RESOLVED

That there be no change in the current rental rates for the Commissioners’ arable banks.

B.3734 Rental of Grass Banks

The Board considered arrangements for the hiring of the Commissioners’ grass banks in 2022. Members were reminded that the grass banks are let on a short-term grazing licence only.

RESOLVED

That no change be made in the rents for the hiring of the grass banks in 2022 and that the present hirers be offered a licence in 2022.

B.3735 Dates of the Next Meetings

RESOLVED

That the next meetings of the Commissioners and the Middle Level Board be held as follows in 2022;

- i) Thursday 28th April 2022
- ii) Thursday 4th November 2022

B.3736 Any Other Business

Lowland Peatland Taskforce

The Board requested that they be made more aware of this project, and any further information to be reported to them.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date

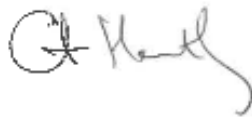
Bexwell Hall
Bexwell
Norfolk
PE38 9LZ
15/11/2021

Dear David,

Just a note to confirm my intention not to stand for reelection to the Middle Level or The Conservation & Climate Committee. I am sorry to have sprung that upon you at the meeting but over the recent years as I explained I found it increasingly difficult to hear clearly enough to contribute to the meetings adequately and I even struggled with the zoom meetings with the volume tuned to maximum.

I very much enjoyed serving on the board since 2004 and am proud to have been involved in the construction of the new St Germans pumping station. I wish the board all the best in the future and of course I am available if there are any local issues that may arise in the future that may require my historical recollection

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Hantley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping tail.

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

Payments October 2021 to March 2022

Allertons Auto Electrical and Diesel	129.09
Archant	226.68
L Bennett & Son Ltd	74.02
L R Boon & Sons Ltd	22.38
Blue Compass	5,550.72
CTS Security	756.00
Carlton Controls	11,988.00
Tony Cooper	140.00
Cope Safety Management	976.16
D & J Transport Ltd	79.19
Disco Drives (Kings Lynn) Ltd	1,337.82
EE	137.77
GAP Ltd	1,101.52
Grafton Projects Ltd	93.58
KAL Fixings UK Ltd	218.33
Kew Grasscare	572.40
Lawn Boy Farm Services	1,432.13
Lyreco UK Limited	329.40
MGF (Trench Construction Systems) Ltd	10,800.00
March Electrical Supplies Limited	75.10
Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd	755.62
Office Flow	234.00
Outwell Timber	7.99
PHS Group	92.70
PKF Littlejohn LLP	3,840.00
Pulsar Process Measurement	552.96
RS Components	3,947.87
Ridgeons	45.98
TMC Lifting & Engineering Supplies	361.76
Technology Services Group	323.28
Taymor Plumbing Supplies Ltd	2.27
P J Thory Ltd	1,650.00
Towergate	14.24
Veolia	6.84
Vodafone	185.40
Watson Fuels	1,347.34
Wrights Tools & Supplies	742.87
Barclaycard	563.98
BT	1,041.06
HMRC (PAYE/NI)	35,130.03
CCC Pensions Income	24,107.71
Fenland District Council	4,173.00
Mr P Grice (refund)	222.30
Pitney Bowes	321.00
Andrews & Arnold	9.97

S Wilson	50.00
Eastern Frames	644.00
Prudential	2,050.00
Unison	60.05
Barclaycard	91.56
Nest	3,644.57
Allstar Business Solutions	1,796.15
Wages Month 7	24,213.96
Salaries Month 7	52,717.36
H M Land Registry	12.00
Bottomline	78.52
C J Mottram & Sons (Refund)	1,324.93
Sherwood Trucks Sentinel	452.40
Anglia Farmers	12,516.28
Watson Fuels	171.36
Davies Contracting Ltd	2,720.64
Clarian Training	560.00
Turner Contracting Ltd	3,258.00
EOC Services Ltd	476.40
Wayne Parker	7.56
Allstar Business Solutions	1,787.52
TML	234.36
Allertons Auto Electrical & Diesel	12.98
Archant	350.78
Antifriction Components	5.66
Beebys Limited	1,082.63
L Bennett & Son Ltd	350.27
Blue Compass	4,841.94
L R Boon & Sons Ltd	9.00
Chubb Fire & Security Ltd	682.97
Clarian Health & Safety Training	1,330.00
Cope Safety Management	1,576.16
Croner Group Ltd	4,238.48
CTS Security	117.60
CW Group	269.90
D & J Transport Ltd	52.80
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd	986.77
Fenland Fire Appliance LLP	120.00
Grafton Projects Ltd	345.98
Guest Motors Ltd	30.50
JPIMedia Publishing Ltd	516.00
Kew Grasscare	572.40
Lyreco UK Limited	81.36
B.W Mack (Machinery Ltd)	309.62
March Electrical Supplies Ltd	246.91
Mill Stainless	175.08
Ogden Motor Engineers Ltd	244.26
Office Flow	312.02
Peterborough Parts Plus	206.78
Pro-Purus ltd	30.84

RS Components Ltd	218.58
David J Richards Ltd	111.89
Huws Gray Ridgeons	46.94
SCCS Survey Equipment	1,560.00
Technology Services Group	332.54
Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd	2,025.53
Turner Contracting Ltd	762.00
Veolia	7.07
Vodafone	185.40
Watson Fuels	24,342.17
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd	434.16
Wrights Tools & Supplies	168.86
Xylem	32,766.05
BT	1,040.06
Barclaycard	894.30
Hotstart Birmingham	247.68
CCC Pensions Income	24,935.65
Unison	60.05
Fenland DC	4,173.00
Pitney Bowes	413.00
Andrews & Arnold	9.18
HMRC - (PAYE/NI)	35,524.22
BJ Plant Hire - Supply of Piles, High Lode near Ramsey	123,422.40
Staff Reimbursement	21.00
Anglian Water	43.28
Cobra - survey	10,920.00
Prudential	2,050.00
Barclays Merchant	167.84
WB Power Services Ltd	217.20
Royal Mail	80.00
AllStar Business Solutions	1,600.16
Wages Month 8	22,411.38
Salaries Month 8	58,864.29
Ramsey St Marys Village Trust	131.04
JP Home & Garden Services Ltd	130.00
Kett Autoparts (Anglia) Ltd	43.98
Towergate Insurance Brokers	84.00
NEST	3,507.24
Bottomline	127.48
Pitney Bowes	1,073.22
H M Land Registry	6.00
EE	137.76
HMRC	38,290.50
BT	148.26
Anglia farmers	3,826.23
AllStar Business Solutions	1,242.37
TML	234.37
BT	73.20
ALS life Sciences Ltd	227.08
Allertons	191.71

Antifriction	106.68
Barclay & Mathieson	321.54
Beebys Ltd	979.75
L Bennett & Son Ltd	308.43
B J Plant Hire Ltd - Drain Works Sbarrier,EA Swavesey, Ramsey	55,674.00
Blue Compass Ltd	2983.98
L R Boon & Sons Ltd	67.08
B.W. Mack (Machinery Ltd)	293.11
Carlton Controls Ltd	171.98
Cope Safety Management	976.16
D & J Transport Ltd	5,607.60
Elite Document Solutions Ltd	1,790.92
Fleet Timber Supplies	1,782.00
Gap Ltd	79.82
Grafton Projects Ltd	231.87
Handling Truck Services	445.68
A F Howland Associates	540.00
Lawn Boy	6.52
Lawtronic Ltd	367.20
Lyreco Uk Ltd	245.35
March Electrical Supplies Ltd	18.60
Mastenbroek Enviromental Ltd	712.46
Mill Stainless	321.60
N L Hydraulics	595.97
Office Flow	266.76
Ogden Motor Engineers Ltd	360.00
Preheat Engineering Ltd	293.47
Pro-Purus Ltd	50.14
R S Components Ltd	876.34
Huws Gray Ridgeons	394.90
Riverside Automation Ltd	6,234.60
Trade Uk - Screwfix	201.33
T.M.C. lifting & Engineering Supplies	72.00
Technology Services Group	706.80
P.J. Thory Ltd	3,600.00
Veolia	281.40
V & J Knitwear Ltd	10.80
Vodafone	185.40
Watson Fuels	9,907.54
Witham Oil & Paint (Soham) Ltd	197.86
Wrights Tools & Supplies	592.97
Anglian Water	218.47
Sulzer Pumps Wastewater Uk - Replacement Pump - Middlemoor PS	53,451.66
Staff Reimbursement	152.84
Barclaycard	904.42
BT	1,038.15
Pitney Bowes	413.00
HMRC (Tax/NI)	37,766.41
CCC Pensions Income	24,852.03
Unison	60.05

Land Registry	6.00
Sentinel Fleet Management	7,128.00
HR Wallingford	180.00
Fenland District Council	4,173.00
Andrews & Arnold	8.44
Barclays Merchant	125.93
Allstar Business Solutions	1,733.68
Prudential AVC	1,551.00
I A Downey	1,356.24
NEST	4,258.15
Land Registry	6.00
Royal Mail	80.00
Wages Mth 9	21,889.11
Salaries Mth 9	61,378.30
PWLB - Loan Repayment	64,873.50
Salary Lock Keeper	470.00
Bottomline	79.87
Anglian Water	60.33
Anglian Water	137.91
EE	137.76
March Hire Centre Ltd	84.00
Maxey Grounds	900.00
WH Shoebridge & Sons Ltd	1,214.34
TSG	327.84
Salary Adj	81.41
Deep sea Electronics	76.80
Allstar Business Solutions	1,997.04
AF Group	27,219.72
TML	234.34
British Telecom	1,036.66
Allertons	23.21
3B Design & Print	161.40
Antifriction	31.68
B J Plant Hire Ltd	5,568.00
Beebys	1,082.63
L Bennetts & Son Ltd	160.06
Blue Compass Ltd	4,115.94
L R Boon & Sons Ltd	373.50
Tony Cooper	346.88
Cope Safety Management Ltd	976.16
Fleet Timber Supplies	2,640.00
G Fowler	100.00
Gap Ltd	60.88
Grafton Projects Ltd	7.17
Guest Motors Ltd	1,141.38
Lyreco	285.84
March Electrical Supplies Ltd	50.89
Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd - Purchase New Holland Tractor	85,800.00
Officeflow Ltd	270.30
PKF Littlejohn Ltd	4,047.00

Phs Group	449.59
Pro-Puras Ltd	30.84
Huws Gray Ridgeons	272.40
Rutterford Construction Ltd	405.00
Trade Uk - Screwfix	466.96
Shelley Signs Ltd	510.00
Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd	192.95
WH Shoebridge & sons Ltd	1,033.79
Technolgy Services Group Ltd	327.84
P J Thory Ltd	1,320.00
Veolia	7.07
Vodafone	185.40
Welding Centre Ltd	236.48
Whitings LLP	19,500.00
Wrights Tools & Supplies	405.18
Xylem Water Solutions Uk Ltd	5,855.43
Pitney Bowes	413.00
Barclaycard	953.16
Unison	60.05
CCC Pensions Income	24,352.67
HMRC	38,150.14
Wrights Tools & Supplies	23.93
Staff reimbursement	33.49
Barclays Merchant	93.12
Fenland District Council	4,173.00
Andrewa & Arnold	7.40
Nest	4,232.49
Allstar	1,821.83
Prudential AVC	1,501.00
Wages Mth 10	21,404.24
Salaries Mth 10	51,828.98
Mr R M Ames	48.82
Andrewa Sykes	254.40
Bottomline	78.52
Staff reimbursement	215.50
Towergate	173.60
HMRC VAT	8335.51
Anglian Water	34.92
EE	139.49
Marshall Motor Group Ltd	17,651.44
BOC	507.27
AF Group	21,408.79
Allstar	1,337.96
TMG	234.20
BT	1,329.75
Allertons	600.58
Aquatic Control Engineering Ltd	1,050.49
Archant	212.78
Antifriction Components	50.14
Beebys	1,082.63

L Bennett & Son Ltd	89.86
Blue Compass Ltd	5,219.22
L R Boon & Sons Ltd	384.18
C Brewer & Sons Ltd	118.54
Chubb Fire & Security Ltd	171.00
Cope Safety Management Ltd	976.16
D & J Transport Ltd	1,707.40
Fleet Timber Supplies Ltd	810.00
Grafton Projects Ltd	102.44
Idverde Ltd	979.20
Latta Hire Ltd	110.40
Arthur Ibbett Ltd	292.79
Information Commissioners Office	40.00
Lyreco Uk Ltd	1,215.36
March Electrical Supplies Ltd	410.27
Mastenbrek Environmental Ltd	311.52
Merchford Plumbing & Heating Ltd	86.00
Officeflow Ltd	251.93
Pro-Purus Ltd	30.84
RS Components Ltd	525.79
Trade Uk - Screwfix	17.59
WH Shoebridge & Sons Ltd	1,057.78
Andrews Sykes Hire Ltd	1,441.50
TMC Lifting & Engineering Supplies	215.22
Vodafone	185.40
Walting JCB Ltd	329.60
Water Resources East	840.00
Wrights Tools & Supplies	1,871.42
Barclaycard	189.01
Land Registry	6.00
CCC Pensions Income	21,011.86
Unison	60.05
OVIVO UK Ltd	1,637.75
HMRC (PAYE/NI)	34,339.10
Andrews & Arnold	4.55
Prudential AVC	1,501.00
Barclays Merchant	99.95
Towergate	238.42
Anglian Water	98.80
Staff reimbursement	15.00
Allstar	1,884.92
Nest	3,284.96
Pitney Bowes	1,073.22
The Electric Cable Co GB Ltd	1,344.60
ADA Great Ouse	1,833.60
Bottomline	72.38
Land Registry	3.00
Max Communications Ltd	8,088.00
Technology Services Group Ltd	327.84
Salaries Month 11	53,606.48

Wages Month 11	21,289.33
Marine Tech	154.00
D Haird & Co	526.50
EE Ltd	138.34
BOC LTD	298.68
Allstar	1,814.05
BT	140.31
TMG	234.91
AF Group	4,174.93
Aquatic Control engineering Ltd	18,216.00
Allertons	124.54
Archant	276.79
ADA Great Ouse Branch	6.00
Beebys Ltd	2,165.26
L Bennett & Son Ltd	110.88
Blue Compass Ltd	5,051.94
L R Boon & Sons Ltd	365.27
C Brewer & Sons Ltd	825.10
Cole & Day	942.00
Cope Safety Management Ltd	976.16
D & J Transport Ltd	278.95
Davies Contracting Ltd	8,248.32
dun-bri Group	235.70
Fleet Timber Supplies	6,686.40
Focus Security (East Anglia) Ltd	93.60
Gap Ltd	144.00
Grafton Projects Ltd	274.62
T C Harrison Ford	1,320.05
J D Signs Ltd	462.00
Landmark Trading (Stamford) Ltd	1,086.33
Lyreco Uk Ltd	67.68
Mastenbroek Environmental Ltd	107.30
Office Flow Ltd	317.50
Ogden Motor Engineers Ltd	950.60
Outwell Timber & Building Supplies Ltd	41.50
Huws Gray Ridgeons	1,712.93
Royal Mail	80.00
Screw Fix - Trade UK	59.99
Andrews Sykes	1,673.76
Technology Services Group Ltd	327.84
Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd	35.70
Turner Contracting Ltd	1,652.40
Veolia	455.28
Vodafone	185.40
Wrights Tools Ltd	2,257.77
Barrett Steel Ltd	612.16
Prickwillow Village Hall	50.00
V Richardson	25.00
Barclaycard	1,073.12
BT	73.20

BT	1,035.02
CCC Pensions Income	21,023.50
Unison	60.05
Pure-Pat Electrical Testing Ltd	598.92
Staff reimbursement	17.30
Staff reimbursement	37.99
Staff reimbursement	17.79
Pitney Bowes	413.00
HMRC (PAYE/NI)	34,174.60
Andrews & Arnold	5.78
Association Drainage Authority	685.20
Barclaycard	106.06
Ex Staff Reimbursement	225.00
Bacs Month 12	55,343.31
Salaries month 12	20,812.11
Salary Lock Keeper	470.00
Nest	3,284.96
Allstar	2,162.52
Prudential AVC	1,501.00
Searle's Forestry Ltd	5,371.20
PWLB - Loan Repayment	344,120.77
Bottomline	65.47
HM Land Registry	6.00
Deublin Ltd	310.80
Staff reimbursement	12.17
Huws Gray Ridgeons	1,008.42
Anglian Water	74.89
Anglian Water	51.06
Explore 4x4	588.00
March Electrical Supplies	257.99
Veolia	24.19
Witham oil & Paint (Soham) ltd	2,913.06
Medlock Electrical Distributors	477.53
EE	137.76
Allstar	1,066.70
AF Group Ltd	4,599.26
British Telecom	1,037.96
TML Mgt	234.45
Staff reimbursement	178.58
Barclaycard	2,326.25
Towergate	170.08
Priory Castor & Eng.Co. LTD	120.00
	<u>2,152,036.93</u>

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

Miscellaneous Receipts (1st October 2021 - 31st March 2022)

Benwick IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Bettys Nose pumping station	216.06
Benwick IDB	Inspection visit with UK Power for supply fault	237.17
Cambridgeshire County Council	Replace consumer unit - Stitches pumping station	195.00
Churchfield & Plawfield IDB	Land registry search charges	24.00
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Bensons pumping station	1,204.40
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Stonea Fen pumping station	414.75
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Wimblington Common pumping station	74.27
Euximoor IDB	Repair grease pump - Reed Fen pumping station	369.34
Haddenham Level DC	Supply gas oil	1,425.99
Haddenham Level DC	Fit new time clock - Haddenham pumping station	4,577.56
M Wilkinson	Flail mowing	130.00
Hobbs Lot Private District	Repair pump guide rails - Hobbs Lot pumping station	358.55
March East IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Bedlam pumping station	159.19
March Third DDC	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Burrowmoor pumping station	129.47
March West & White Fen IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Beggars Bridge pumping station	1,165.34
Benwick IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Copalder pumping station	326.87
March East IDB	Fit new drive plate and align gearbox, clutch and drive shaft - Latches Fen pumping station	1,742.56
March West & White Fen IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - White Fen pumping station	1,017.45
Nightlayers IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Nightlayers pumping station	369.91
Ramsey IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Stocking Fen pumping station	551.34
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Ramsey Hollow pumping station	2,194.09
Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) IDB	Install new fuse holder in pump panel - Middlemoor p/s	301.05
Sawtry IDB	Install and commission new pump starter panel - Sawtry Roughs pumping station	6,415.87
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Supply parts for repair to Conver weed boat	145.64
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Vehicle road tax - YN61 FYV and waste carrier licence	275.00
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Mepal pumping station	213.80
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Repairs to Ruston diesel engine (E Rand & Co) - Mepal p/s	3,211.98
Upwell IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Cock Fen pumping station	548.34
Waldersey IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Rings End pumping station	211.66
Waldersey IDB	Renewal of intruder alarm contract - South Brink p/s	95.00
Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB	Vehicle road tax - AU09 FEW	165.00

Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Westmoor pumping station	333.94
Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Pidley pumping station	278.39
Whittlesley & District IDB	Repair syphon breakers - Ironsides pumping station	324.51
Whittlesley & District IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Wype pumping station	979.99
Benwick IDB	Remedial Health & Safety works - Benwick Mere p/s	117.88
Nordelph IDB	Fit new weed-screen - Aqueduct pumping station	9,886.26
Mr P Lankfer	Hire of tractor and flail mower	1,380.00
Hundred Foot Washes IDB	Supply mink rafts	515.95
Hundred of Wisbech IDB	Land registry search charges	12.00
March Fifth DDC	Land registry search charges	24.00
March West & White Fen IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Duncombes pumping station	337.59
Nightlayers IDB	Land registry search charges	6.00
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB	Supply chemical for weed control	37.90
Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) IDB	Supply replacement pump (Sulzer pumps) - Middlemoor pumping station	44,543.05
Waldersey IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Rings End pumping station	180.62
Whittlesley & District IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Wype pumping station	225.12
Environment Agency	Groundwater monitoring installation at Block Fen - Cranbrook Counter Drain FRM Strategy	37,257.50
Environment Agency	Drone survey of Block Fen, Langwood Fen and the Counter Drain between Mepal p/s and Welches Dam p/s	11,750.00
Environment Agency	Natural England assent and ecological survey for drone survey	1,000.00
Benwick IDB	Culvert pull through - Point 25-26 and piling and grass seeding - Reach 69-70	1,602.63
Benwick IDB	Chemical weed control of District Drains	1,119.06
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Health & Safety improvement works and lift pump for inspection - Finchams Farm pumping station	3,360.91
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Chemical weed control of District Drains	1,010.42
East of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Polver pumping station	541.84
March East IDB	Chemical weed control of District Drains	1,173.03
March East IDB	Remove rubbish from drains - Point 76 and Reach 47-55	160.71
March East IDB	Supply padlock - Latches Fen pumping station	17.22
March Third DDC	Chemical weed control of District Drains	446.66
March Fifth DDC	Chemical weed control of District Drains	162.22
March Fifth DDC	Bush cutting - Foxglove Way and applying topsoil and grass seed following machine cleansing works	979.42
March Sixth DDC	Chemical weed control of District Drains	603.14
March West & White Fen IDB	Chemical weed control of District Drains	1,243.64
March West & White Fen IDB	Manual drain clearance, Point 106 and piling, Reach 22-23,88-81	9,532.21
March West & White Fen IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - West Fen pumping station	184.04
March West & White Fen IDB	Repair door and manhole cover - Beggars bridge p/s	265.55
Nightlayers IDB	Chemical weed control of District Drains	1,099.81
Nightlayers IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Nightlayers pumping station	593.62
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB	Chemical weed control of District Drains	806.76

Ramsey Upwood & Gt Raveley IDB	Remedial Health & Safety works - Upwood Common p/s	1,279.03
Ransonmoor DDC	Chemical weed control of District Drains	865.67
Ransonmoor DDC	Piling - Reach 26-27	1,419.19
Sawtry IDB	Culvert replacement- Point 70 and drain maintenance Reach 20-21	10,136.65
Sawtry IDB	Improvement works to access ramp and repairs to gearbox - Castle Hill pumping station	3,839.44
Skeggins Fen (Private) DD	Replace pump guide rails - Skeggins Fen pumping station	637.68
Swavesey IDB	Chemical weed control of District Drains	1,161.52
Waldersey IDB	Chemical weed control of District Drains	909.54
Waldersey IDB	Health & Safety improvement works to division dam, Point 75	1,373.35
B J Plant Ltd	Supply gas oil	40.43
Environment Agency	PSCA works (Swavesey IDB)	21,735.07
A & K Fink Ltd	Channel improvement works - Land east of Berryfields, March	742.44
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Stonea Fen pumping station	629.60
East of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Nar Valley pumping station	17.07
March Third DDC	Piling works - Gaul Road, Reach 22-23	869.10
Nightlayers IDB	Tree clearance - Old pumping station site	1,285.27
Nightlayers IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Nightlayers pumping station	589.23
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Supply gas oil	2,268.80
Upwell IDB	Land registry search charges	6.00
Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Pidley pumping station	286.70
Whittlesey & District IDB	Test operation of pumps and gate valves - Whittlesey Mere p/s	98.71
Hundred of Wisbech IDB	Room hire for Board meeting (Crown Lodge Hotel)	248.00
Cambridgeshire Acre	Installation guide and management & maintenance plan relating to coir roll drain enhancements	900.00
Churchfield & Plawfield IDB	Site inspection by conservation officer - proposed works at Townley Close, Upwell	135.00
Fenland District Council	Flailing and strimming March river banks 2021/22	481.84
Conrad Energy (Development) Ltd	Legal fees - option agreement for easement	1,652.40
V & J Services	Sale of Massey Fergusson tractor and Herder flail mower	20,916.67
I Smith	Land registry search charges	3.00
Benwick IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Bettys Nose pumping station	217.39
Bluntisham IDB	Lift pump, remove blockage, re-fit and test - Barley Croft p/s	1,077.54
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Reset time clock and test pumps - Stonea Fen p/s	105.34
Downham & Stow Bardolph IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Stow Fen pumping station	1,871.00
East of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB	Repairs to syphon no.2 - Puny Drain pumping station	220.14
Haddenham Level DC	Supply and deliver road plannings	438.75
Manea & Welney DDC	Road tax - AU15 XHB	275.00
March East IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Latches Fen pumping station	362.31
March West & White Fen IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - West Fen pumping station	297.03
Needham & Laddus IDB	Land registry search charges	6.00
Nightlayers IDB	Supply padlock	18.08
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB	Supply rodent boxes and bait	52.19
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB	Secure gates and building following break in - Ramsey Hollow pumping station	348.85
Ransonmoor DDC	Remove rubbish from drains, bushcutting and chipping and	

	piling and grass seeding	4,703.27
Ransonmoor DDC	Service diesel engine and re-set levels following drainworks	420.07
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Mepal pumping station	442.34
Waldersey IDB	Repair collapsed culvert at Point 66	1,115.78
Waldersey IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - South Brink pumping station	1,550.46
Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB	Supply padlocks for pumping stations and service and repair brakes on vehicle AU17 WMW	896.45
Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Washways pumping station	216.21
Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB	Test level controller for fault - High Fen pumping station	107.27
Whittlesley & District IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Conquest Lode pumping station	673.18
Whittlesley & District IDB	Check pump gearbox for damage - Drysides pumping station	310.31
Benwick IDB	Installation of new inlet and de-water and clean out pump sump Broadalls pumping station	7,961.87
Benwick IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Broadalls pumping station	64.70
Benwick IDB	Fit new fan heater to dry out pump - Coplader pumping station	180.53
March East IDB	Removal of rubbish from drain - Reach 11-55	412.23
March Sixth DDC	Tree cutting adjacent to Norwood pumping station	144.29
March Third DDC	Grass seeding following maintenance works - reach 27-28	105.28
Nightlayers IDB	Call out to repair alarm at pumping station	78.00
Ramsey IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Stocking Fen pumping station	378.06
Ramsey Upwood & Gt Raveley IDB	Remedial Health & Safety works - Upwood Common p/s	1,102.36
Swavesey IDB	Telemetry charges (Annual)	91.68
Whittlesley & District IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Ironsides pumping station	858.62
Upwell IDB	Telemetry charges (Annual)	34.49
Environment Agency	Supply and fit gate at Swavesey Drain	491.01
Mr D R Betts	Cut bankside at Whittlesey Road, March	32.50
Benwick IDB	Check inlet and measure for new door - Benwick Mere p/s	94.51
March Sixth DDC	Tree cutting adjacent to Norwood pumping station	120.00
March Sixth DDC	Read electricity meter for new supplier - Norwood p/s	44.93
Ransonmoor DDC	Reset levels following drain works	42.23
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Supply toeboard	95.78
Upwell IDB	Read electricity meter for new supplier - Cock Fen and Padgetts pumping stations	128.50
Waldersey IDB	Tree cutting and rubbish removal	3,012.87
East of Ouse Polver & Nar IDB	Smart Level Telemetry installation - 50% costs for GIA scheme	14,875.98
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment, temporary repair to flap door, clear and level around pump house and repair guttering - Wimblington Common pumping station	3,304.89
Hundred Foot Washes IDB	Check operation and repair slackers	682.83
Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB	Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment - Ramsey Hollow pumping station	402.71
Haddenham Level DC	Court fees - rate summons 2022	0.50
March West & White Fen IDB	Court fees - rate summons 2022	0.50
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Court fees - rate summons 2022	0.50
Upwell IDB	Court fees - rate summons 2022	1.00
Ramsey Upwood & Gt Raveley IDB	Court fees - rate summons 2022	4.00
Upwell IDB	Diesel (Arval fuel card)	846.00

Various	Fees for soakaway. Surface water and effluent discharges acceptability	2,450.00
Various	Drawings	80.00
Various	Staff purchases	537.00
Various	Staff utility recharges	268.56
Various	Supply of lock handles and keys	535.84
Various	Parking permits - Land at Three Holes	20.00
		<u>292,297.35</u>

MEETING OF MIDDLE LEVEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Monday 7th March 2022

MINUTES

PRESENT

J L Brown Esq (Chairman)
P Allpress Esq
M E Heading Esq
W Sutton Esq
H W Whittome Esq (via Teams)

D C Thomas Esq
Miss L McShane
Robert Hill (*for part of the meeting)

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received for the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interest, other than declared on Members' Interest Forms.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th September 2021 were approved.

4. Staff, Workforce and H&S Matters

a)

i) COVID-19 measures

DT reported that with the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions all staff were working in the office for at least 3 days each week. The balance of home/office working would be monitored over the next 3 months. It was hoped that some flexibility of working arrangements could be maintained for staff.

The wearing of masks in shared spaces was still in place.

ii) Health & Safety

There were no accidents or near misses to report.

Cope Safety Management are continuing to work successfully with the provision of advice and assistance on Health and Safety matters

b) Staff Changes

DT reported that Malcolm Downes had now given notice that he will be retiring and will not return to the office. Due to holiday that has accrued he will however officially remain employed until June 2022.

Richard Lloyd had terminated his employment at the end of December 2022. This had allowed some overlap with David Bantoft, the new Mechanical & Electrical Engineer, who was settling into his new role very well.

The two other recent recruits Sarah Bowd (Assistant Finance Officer) and Claire Collings (Receptionist/Admin Assistant) were settling in well to their new posts.

Sarah Lemmon has resigned from the post of PA to the Chief Executive/Clerk and Assistant Clerk/Solicitor and adverts for a replacement member of staff had been placed and it was hoped that the new person could be in post very soon.

The post Sarah Lemmon vacates may need re-appraisal as the workload was high and the reliance on one single person for a large number of tasks led to a lack of resilience. Katie Hunt has indicated her willingness to provide some part-time assistance in the short-term and will invoice for her time.

The Employment Committee met on 7 March 2022.

5. Property and Offices and Other Assets

a) Cardea Site

Persimmon have now been invoiced for the commuted sum of £770,080 and additional maintenance costs of £50,000 to bring the balancing ponds up to acceptable standards. The draft Transfer Agreement is largely completed and agreed. Persimmon have agreed with the purchaser of No 7 Nero to re-purchase a strip of land which will give the Commissioners additional access to the balancing ponds. The re-sale back to Persimmon was also dependent on the lender's consent and this has delayed the conveyancing process.

b) 33 Sluice Road – tenant issues

There are currently no major issues with this tenancy and the Commissioners' contractor has carried out works to the property which were the landlord's responsibility.

c) Registration of Land

Iain Smith has completed the documentation for the application to the Land Registry for reinstatement of the Commissioners' unregistered land. He has asked that Land Charges Searches be made against the tenants of the Bank Lots and this is currently being dealt with.

d) Woodwalton Reservoir update

DT advised that he had received a quote from Stantec to design the Overspill at the Reservoir of £15,000 with further Project Management fees amounting to £6,000. With the Chairman's agreement an order has been placed.

Natural England has been notified about these works.

DT reported that works to the Overspill need to be completed by autumn 2022 and that this is a legal requirement.

Natural England is concerned about high silt and nutrients following the winter flooding and have raised the issue of the Habitats Directive.

6. Engineer's General Report on Revenue and Capital Works

a) DT reported on the following matters:

- i) Further work on the phased dredging of Well Creek had commenced.
- ii) Work on the construction of the moorings at High Lode, Ramsey had commenced.

The Commissioners' contractors for this work are B J Plant Hire.

iii) Marmont Priory Lock

The Lock had been drained and cleared and repairs to the gate undertaken.

It has been identified that the downstream gates will need work in the future.

Salter's Lode Lock

The seals on the guillotine gate had been replaced. The cost of this will however exceed the budgeted figure as divers were required for longer than initially anticipated.

- iv) All other Engineering Works were being carried out in accordance with the Works Programme.

b) River Improvement Scheme (Bank Raising)

The first Project Board Meeting has taken place. Contractors need to be employed for the dredging and a consultancy team appointed to manage the future works and the tendering process. A Senior Engineer also needs to be appointed to oversee the delivery of the whole project. A grant claim for £650,000 has been submitted to cover consultancy costs to date and piles for stock.

It was proposed to buy the materials for piling and keep them in stock, due to increases in costs of construction material and to assist the EA who are underspent on grant this year.

The Project Board currently consists of Gary Roberts, David Thomas, Tom Pollendine, Phillipa Hume, Hugh Whittome and Jonathan Brown. It was proposed to erect project offices on the green at the Middle Level Offices.

A quarterly newsletter would be prepared to provide an update on the scheme. This would be available on the website and reported on at Board Meetings.

DT reported that he was currently investigating the acquisition of a remote-control survey boat. The Executive supported the purchase which would be covered by Grant-in-Aid.

7. Telemetry

DT reported that following the successful bid, the roll out of the Telemetry Scheme was taking place with in excess of 50 stations expected to be on the new system.

8. EA/DEFRA/ADA/WRE Matters

a) WRE

DT provided an update on the work being carried out by WRE.

b) Red Diesel

DT reported on the latest position regarding red diesel and the latest letter from ADA dated 2nd March 2022 which set out the result of further discussion with HM Treasury, who have stated that “any activity for the purpose and benefit of agriculture” can continue to use red diesel.

Red Diesel can be used for Water Level and Flood Risk Management activities where they are recognised as benefitting an agricultural purpose on agricultural land and around and near to agricultural land and this would apply to works being undertaken directly by IDBs or their contractors.

9. Conservation and Climate Committee

DT reported on developing plans for working towards a carbon neutral position and advised that a carbon audit is currently being carried out.

10. Financial Update

a) The Treasurer reported on the current position, there were no changes to note since the December figures and the figures to the end of February were being prepared.

The Treasurer advised that he had heard nothing further regarding the Ramsey Internal Drainage Board audit.

It was proposed for Whiting Partners to do the Internal Audit Work for a further year and then carry out a tendering exercise.

With regard to the 2022/23 Rate, members of the Board should be aware that electricity costs were likely to increase by 50% and that contractor costs and construction materials were all increasing.

b) The Treasurer reported on the challenge to the audited accounts and that remaining invoice which is outstanding and not collected because of the challenge will now be pursued.

11. Navigation Licencing and Byelaws

LMcS reported on the current position with regard to licencing and enforcement. Current action has been focussed on Bill Fen Marina, who had a large number of unlicensed boats in the Marina. These boats needed to be served with Notices and letters before any further action can be taken. Entry has been refused to the Navigation Officer, but a letter was being sent to the

Marina Owner and the Office Manager advising that the Enforcement Officer would attend the Marina on the 17th March for the purpose of serving Notices.

DT reported that he had no further information to report about the March Town Bid.

Councillor Sutton reported that he understood the Toilet Block was to be relocated as part of the scheme and the Council had received representations about the pedestrianisation of the town centre.

a) Ramsey Moorings

Work had now commenced on the construction of the 120 metres of moorings at High Lode.

b) Moorings at The George on the Forty Foot River

Ramsey Town Council would like to work with the Commissioners on the provision of moorings at this location. It was hoped that the Town Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and the Commissioners could collaborate on joint funding for the provision of these moorings which would then be adopted and maintained by the Commissioners. The Board would need to approve this funding as the location was outside of the link route for navigation.

c) Chatteris Town Council

DT reported that he was still in discussions with Chatteris Town Council about the provision of moorings.

d) Rural Moorings

DT reported that it was proposed to install four more rural moorings for short stay mooring.

12. Fens Biosphere Bid

This Bid was not progressing. It needed eleven Local Authorities to commit to the scheme and currently only two had signed up. It was accepted that the project needed to reappraise its objectives.

13. Dates of next meetings

Pre-Board Executive – Wednesday 20th April 2022 – 09.00am

Board Meeting – Thursday 28th April 2022 – 09.30am [with lunch and refreshments]

14. Any Other Business

a) Staff Structure & Photographs

A reminder to be sent to staff to produce photographs to be included in the Staff Structure, with details of roles and responsibilities.

b) Swimming on the Twenty Foot River

The Chairman reported that he had visited the former swimming huts on the Twenty Foot River and there were swimmers present using swimming floats.

LMcS advised she had written to the swimming group informing them that the Board had approved in principle their use of the swimming huts and that when they formed themselves into a formal group/charity she would prepare a lease/licence to formalise the arrangement. She had also passed on advice about safety and water quality.

c) Three Holes Car Park

DT reported that the land is surplus land no longer needed for operational purposes. It was formally laid out as a car park and for site huts used by the County Council in connection with the improvement works to the bridge.

It has potential for residential development and DT suggested that an application for Outline Planning Permission be made to Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council prior to marketing the land for sale. The Executive agreed to this action.

.....
Chairman

MIDDLE LEVEL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17th MARCH 2022 AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICES

Present

D C Thomas	-	Middle Level Commissioners
Lord De Ramsey	-	" " "
J E Heading	-	" " "
S T Raby	-	" " "
P West	-	" " "
Ms R Hawksley	-	The Wildlife Trusts
G Martin	-	Fenland District Council

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from P Beckenham (PB), G Bliss, J Fenn (JF) and C Middleton. Reports were provided to the meeting from PB and JF.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 16 September 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2021 were noted and accepted as a true record of what was said and agreed at that meeting

3. Matters Arising

It was agreed that any matters arising would be picked up under the relevant headings of the agenda.

4. Climate initiatives including Carbon Audit and public engagement

A far-ranging discussion followed on the subject of managing Carbon Dioxide. It was reported that a Carbon Audit had been started the results of which would be conveyed to the next meeting. It would then be the plan to see how Carbon use could be reduced and any residual Carbon balance left mitigated for. It was felt important that we looked at all serious options and costed them to ensure value for ratepayers whilst delivering upon Carbon reduction.

It was suggested that a good place to start to understand how we should seek to recognise and address our Carbon problems would be Bill Gate's book on the subject.

In terms of what the MLC have done to date this includes the following;

- Added solar cells to office roof
- Installed an electric car charging point
- Moved to green tariffs for all electricity supplies for both MLC and the IDBs it administers
- Planted approximately 8,000 trees in the last two years.

Discussions moved to alternatives to diesel, including biofuels, electricity and hydrogen. It was generally accepted that at the moment none of these were really an option for our operations or were prohibitively costly, but it is important that these options remain under continual review. It was noted that 30% of red diesel is already made up of biofuel.

A question was raised over the installation of solar cells or small wind turbines and pumping stations to mitigate the Carbon used. This needs further exploration. It was noted that the Council’s moratorium on wind turbines would be unlikely to extend to small ones at remote sites.

It was noted that in India there is a successful national scheme where individuals can plant trees and provide ongoing evidence of them growing which releases payments into the applicant’s bank account. This is encouraging action which also ensures there is an audit process attached. In some places tree planting would be objected to on conservation grounds and this needed to be recognised when promoting such schemes.

In terms of public engagement, this is currently limited to information supplied on the MLC website – see [Climate Change – Middle Level](#).

5. Conservation Officer’s Report

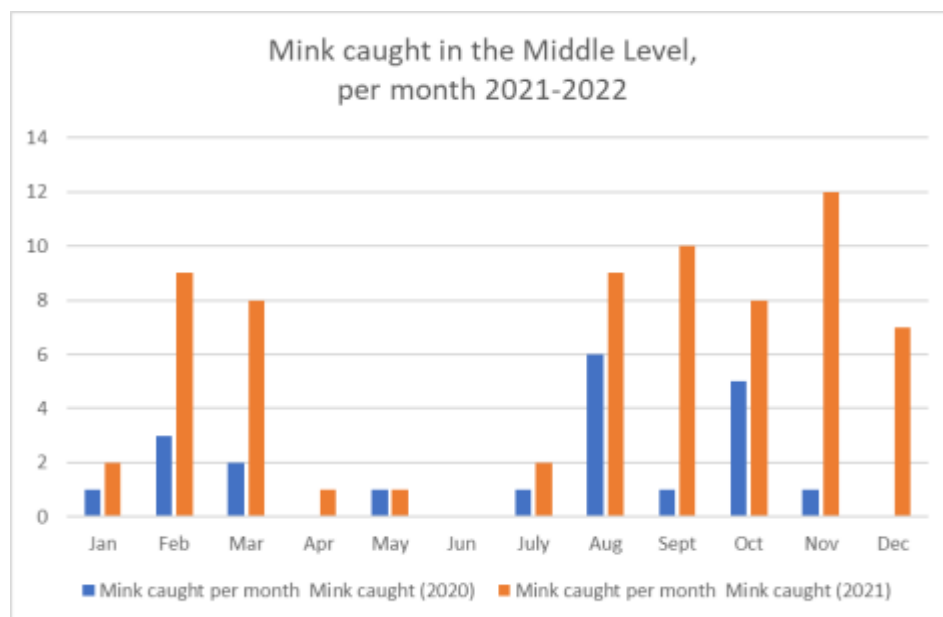
PB’s report was provided to members present which was well received, viz:

Conservation Officer’s Report – October 2021 to March 2022

Invasive Non-Native Species/Environmental Summary

Mink

The autumn and winter mink trapping period in the Middle Level was the busiest one yet; October, November and December totals were 8, 12, and 7 respectively. This resulted in a final 2021 Middle Level tally of 69. Given how few mink were being reported prior to the project starting this figure



must have had a significant impact on the population of mink in the fens. At the time of writing in March 2022 this is seemingly corroborated by the lower number of mink being caught compared to the same time last year: 16 in 2021 to 7 in 2022. The focus remains in 2022 on maintaining the current network and expanding where

possible. As mink become scarcer, we will respond to sightings by moving rafts from areas where no mink have been recorded.

Following discussions with Waterlife Recovery East and mink-trapping partners in Norfolk, Middle Level mink rafts are now being fitted with 'water vole excluders' - an additional 'chamber' that allows the ever-inquisitive mink in but with walls high enough to deter (most) water voles and other animals. As mink are removed from the drains this will be important – as the photo on the right shows! Remoti's mean we can respond to alarms quickly minimising the stress on animals such as water voles.



Floating Pennywort

The last few months have seen the Floating Pennywort project, run in partnership with Cambridgeshire Acre, nearing completion. As previously reported a variety of engagement tools have been produced (flyers, coasters, fridge magnets) and these are in the process of being distributed to a range of pubs, marinas, village halls etc across the fens. A key part of the project was the creation of an awareness raising video for use on social media outlining the varying threats the invasive aquatic plant poses in the fens. This is now being shared on social media, ADA are planning to run a feature on it too.

The final part of the project are two training days being held on the 22nd and 26th March - one for IDBs and one for the wider community. Guest speakers have been lined up - Mike Foley from the Cam Valley Forum will speak about his role tackling pennywort on the Cam and Cliff Carson will be talking about his role as the fen's number one mink trapper!

Pollution

The Conservation Officer has been liaising with Wisbech and Waldersey IDBs and the Environment Agency over ongoing pollution issues in the Wisbech area which are causing considerable concern to the Boards and some residents. The problem/origin of the pollution is said to be complex; several steps are being planned to help monitor and manage it.

Other

Coir Roll report

The coir roll 'Installation, management and maintenance' report commissioned by the New Life on the Old West project has been completed following a site visit by the Conservation Officer and Assistant Operations Engineer in November. The report has been well-received and shared widely through social media and other channels.

ADA Biometrics

A significant development in the last six months has been the publishing of ADA's IDB Biodiversity Metrics – a set of detailed data highlighting the work IDBs do towards conservation. This comes from objectives laid out in the Environment Act as well as requests made by the Defra Policy Advisory Group (PAG) on IDBs. Overall, this is a very useful tool which will shape how the Conservation Officer approaches data recording for the IDBs as well as identifying potential areas of work. The areas of interest are Ecological Surveys, Annual Habitat Maintenance, Artificial Habitat Creation, IDB-led Habitat Creation, Fish and Eel passage, Invasive Non-native Species, Biodiversity Training, Partnership Working, IDB-partnered Habitat Creation.

BAP species selected summary

Eels

Despite an extended period in summer when works on the pump and pipework were taking place, eel monitoring showed passage at St Germans in 2021 to be modest- over 20kg of eels were recorded.

To avoid the issue of invasive freshwater mussels building up over winter, the pump has been run continuously to keep water flowing. This is a change to the usual closure in December. Checks revealed a notable number of eels arriving during the warm spell at New Year. However, since then numbers have been low (as expected) with the exception of young invasive mitten crabs - hundreds have been removed in the last 3 months.



young mitten crabs recovered from the eel pass, March 2022

A new project in development in 2022 is one focusing on educating fenland school children about the lives of eels. Initially this will be through supporting a similar Cambridgeshire Acre project at schools in Over and Little Thetford which, if successful, will then take place in the Middle Level in 2023. Elvers from the St Germans pass will be taken to schools to allow children to observe them over a period of weeks before releasing them back in the Middle Level catchment. School visits to St Germans are being planned as part of this.

Water Voles

The planned survey of Ransonmoor and Curf & Wimblington IDBs with the Wildlife Trust is being further delayed and will not happen in 2022.

Meetings, Training, Talks and Publicity

No training opportunities were possible in 2021 due to Covid-19 guidelines. New sessions are planned in 2022 covering two important areas of our work; it is hoped that IDBs will be able to use the opportunities to refresh their knowledge on the subjects and/or enhance the skills of contractors/staff who may not have received such training before. The first, as mentioned above, follows on from the Floating Pennywort project with a look at invasive species; the second focuses on water voles and their legislation. This will be led by Julia Massey CEnv MCIEEM a Principal Ecologist with many years of experience working with water voles in the fens. It will cover the key elements of the species' ecology and how it relates to the work of IDBs.

Tuesday 22nd March 2022: Non-native species workshop. Venue: Oliver Cromwell Hotel, March. 10-1pm.

May/June date TBC: Water voles - ecology, legislation and mitigation: a guide for IDBs. Venue: Middle Level Offices, March (followed by visit to local drain)

Peter Beckenham, Conservation Officer, Middle Level Commissioners

Peter.beckenham@middlelevel.gov.uk

07765597775 / 01354653232



Coltsfoot blazing on a bank in early spring sun

DT took members through the details of the report.

6. Operations Engineer's Report on Middle Level Works

ML presented the report on behalf of the Operations Department and took questions, viz:

Works Progress Report September 2021 – March 2022

Bank Seepage

Following an initial positive early response to the Commissioners' offer to cover 50% of the expenditure to excavate or re-excavate soak dykes along problematic reaches of Bevills Leam and Whittlesey Dyke, where bank seepage was apparent during the December 2020 rainfall event, it's unfortunate that none of the affected landowner/occupiers took the financial offer up. As previously reported, one owner/occupier opted to excavate a soak dyke along the frontage of his land using his own machine at his own cost. At the time of reporting no work on site has been undertaken.

Bank seepage along the east side bank of Great Raveley Drain required the Commissioners' attention to stem water flows through the raised embankment. Approximately 100 tonnes of puddling clay were transported to site and placed in a central slit trench along the affected length of bank to arrest the seepage. This particular site is particularly prone to bank seepage issues and has required similar efforts to arrest bank seepage in previous years

Bank Repair Works/Revetment



Bank reprofiling works are currently being undertaken along the north east bank of Main Drain, between the confluence of the disused Hawkshaws Cut and Peters Drove Bridge. Approximately 650 metres of bank will be 'trimmed' back to the original bank profile and re-seeded. Excess material arising from the works will be levelled into the existing grass maintenance strip adjacent to the water course, providing a level working area for the Commissioners' future maintenance operations.

Bank repair works adjacent to the bridge abutments at Rungays Bridge, Main Drain are due to be undertaken in the near future. Works have been delayed due to Kingfishers nesting in the exposed banksides under the bridge structure.

Maintenance Dredging/Aquatic weed Removal

Old Popham's Eau

Cott cleansing work was undertaken along Old Popham's Eau. A contractors 18-metre-long reach excavator fitted with a 'cott' bucket was used to remove weed mass from the watercourse and place it along the adjacent grass access strip.

Forty Foot River – Horseway Arm

Weed and channel cleansing works are due for completion imminently, along the Horseway Arm of the Forty Foot River, from Horseway Bridge to Horseway Lock. The reach forms part of the Commissioners' statutory navigation, and requires regular mechanical weed cleansing to keep a reasonable navigable depth of water free from submerged aquatic weed and 'cott'. The reach is historically renowned for being an over winter fish shoaling spot, and is regularly fished during the winter months. For this reason, the weed clearance works are delayed until the course fishing season closes in mid-March.

Well Creek – Mullicourt Aqueduct- Nordelph Village

Following the Commissioners' November Board meeting, a decision was made to undertake the seventh phase of the Well Creek dredging works from Mullicourt Aqueduct to Nordelph Village.

Most of the reach currently being dredged is adjacent to agricultural fields where bankside spoil disposal is available. Where this is not possible, the arisings will be transported to the nearby spoil receiving site at Salter's Lode, where the material will be allowed to dry and stockpiled until it can be used as bank raising material in other locations throughout the MLC system.

Flail mowing

The 2022 season flail mowing works were completed in early December despite one of the three flail mowing units being stood down due to an on-going issue with the tractor engine.

The problematic unit being the oldest in the Commissioners' flail mowing fleet has been replaced with a new tractor mounted flail unit. The old unit has been sold through an on-line auction site

Water Level Management

Water levels have been managed by reactive pumping to pre-set parameters for the majority of the winter pumping season. Predominantly dry conditions during January allowed for levels in both St Germans and Bevills Leam ponds to be raised slightly reducing pumping requirements. Notable storm events Dudley, Eunice and Franklin required short term manual intervention of level control and pumping operations within the MLC system. Storm Eunice in particular created challenges for navigation in the MLC system as the force of the wind associated with the storm created an unusually large water level differential within our linear system. Fortunately, levels returned to near normal within a few hours as the storm passed.

Bush & Tree Cutting/Trimming

Reactive bush and tree work have been undertaken as and when required during the reporting window. The February storms brought down a couple of trees and these were subsequently cleared by the Commissioners' workforce.

Navigation

The Commissioners' winter works this season have focused largely on lock refurbishment and remedial repair works at Ashline and Marmont Priory Locks.

The timber downstream doors at Ashine have been covered with marine plywood to help extend their life, and the upstream actuators and associated penstocks have also been overhauled and refurbished.



Similarly, the upstream and downstream wooden lock doors at Marmont Priory Lock have also been boarded over with Marine ply to help extend their lives, and the upstream penstock actuator that had been problematic for some time has been refurbished.

The downstream doors at Priory Lock have been boarded over, but their condition remains poor. Quotations are currently being sought for replacement doors which will be required within the next 12 months.



Further works to 'open up' the overgrown tree canopy at Priory Lock have been undertaken, along with the removal of a diseased Poplar tree adjacent to the downstream mooring at the lock structure.

EA – Swavesey IDB/MLC - Public sector Co-operation Agreement (PSCA) Works

The supplementary bank revetment/coir installation and drain cleansing works to Turn Bridge Drain, were completed as requested by the EA. More recently the EA commissioned a new access gate for erection at Swavesey Drain. The installation has recently been completed.

Following an autumn inspection of the EA controlled watercourses, it was jointly agreed the programmed weed raking and machine cleansing works could not be justified last year and would be omitted from last year's programme, as the earlier aquatic herbicide application had been exceptionally effective in its control of aquatic vegetation within the watercourses.

The EA has asked Swavesey IDB/MLC to continue with the PSCA works again in the 2022 season, on the same basis to previous seasons, to which Swavesey IDB and the Commissioners have jointly agreed.



Jonathan Fenn
Operations Engineer

8th March 2022

ML was asked if we had found any Floating Pennywort. He confirmed that we had caught a boat with a strand on it but this had been addressed and repeated visits to the location had shown none had seeded.

RH stated that this invasive weed had to be hit hard and repeatedly to have any chance of removing it once it was present.

It was once again noted that the only aquatic chemical we can use is Roundup and that in France and Germany this is banned, hence it may follow that pressure increases to ban its use here too.

RH stated that she is keen to see the periodic water vole survey re-established now we are out of the worst of COVID. This repeat survey has been a very useful indicator of the strength of numbers in IDB watercourses.

ML advised that the dredging in Well Creek was going well and was now around two thirds complete. He also noted that the first conservation/health and safety cut would be commencing next week.

7. Fisheries

As there was no EA representative present nothing was reported or discussed under this item.

8. Water Resources – including Proposed Legislative Changes

Pollution matters were covered and there was concern over the lack of action in many instances by the EA as the regulatory body. It was suggested that they appear reluctant to take action to avoid incidents and will generally only step in when a major pollution event has taken place. It was also noted that it is sometimes difficult to exactly pinpoint the source of pollution which is required if prosecutions are to be undertaken. Examples of pollution matters were sited in Wisbech industrial estate and in the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley district (where barrels were dumped in the water course which were believed to contain acid).

GM noted that a water cycle study was to be undertaken to support the growth plans. It was hoped by members that this would take proper account of the lack of capacity of some Anglian Water foul water treatment plants as it was noted that all too often storm water overflows were being utilised due to the under capacity of existing plants.

9. Navigation

DT advised of the current position in terms of licencing and the initiatives being pursued. He updated members on progress with the High Lode (Ramsey) moorings that are currently being installed and the chance of further mooring outside The George Public House on the Forty Foot Drain. Also, on discussions with Chatteris Town Council regarding the potential to install moorings at Carters Bridge, again on the Forty Foot Drain. He enquired if there was any news on progressing the March Town scheme where riverside improvements were identified. GM will check the latest position and report back.

10 Projects - Great Fen / New Life on the Old West / Biosphere Bid /Wet Farming

DT reported that work on the Great Fen continued and that the latest step forward was the Peatland Progress £8M funding award that would allow the final link to be put in place, providing a connecting corridor between Woodwalton SSSI and Holme Wood SSSI. It was also noted that the Great Fen was leading with wet farming trials. DT noted that water was the key to providing sustained environmental success and that this was a point he had regularly put to WRE siting the links between water, agriculture and ecology.

It was reported that the MLC had produced a guide for installing and maintaining pre-planted coir rolls on water edge margins for the New Life on the Old West project

DT reported that the Fens Biosphere bid had been paused following FDC's stated position as opposed to the initiative. Work was currently underway to see if it was possible to redefine the project such that it was seen to be more attractive to HDC.

11. Any Other Business

GM advised that it was HDC's intention to issue its Local Plan for public consultation in July this year.

11. Date for Next Meeting

DT advised the Committee that the next meeting would be 15th September 2022.

Middle Level Commissioners

Biodiversity Action Plan Report 2021-22

Environment Act (2021) and note on 2021-22 BAP report



The new Environment Act recognises the key roles IDBs play in nature conservation (Photo: PB)

The Environment Act (2021) passed into UK law in November 2021 with the aim of protecting and enhancing our environment for future generations. The Act includes bold aims to 'halt the decline in species by 2030', improve air quality, natural habitats and how look at how resources may be better used. For Internal Drainage Boards ADA describes the Act as bringing 'impacts and opportunities' which recognise the important role IDBs have to play in some of these targets. Areas of particular interest to IDBs are:

- Biodiversity Assessment and Reporting
- Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Sites Strategies
- An Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to uphold environmental law

Following the note in the 2020-21 report, work is underway to update IDB Biodiversity Action Plans in line with the newly available ADA guidelines. As part of this process voluntary submissions for an IDB 'Biometrics survey' were issued by ADA in autumn 2021 and were submitted on behalf of the Board by the Conservation Officer. This survey aims to gather data relevant to key targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan with a view to putting IDBs 'on the front foot' with regards future Biodiversity reporting and assessment, like that laid out in the Environment Act above.

The Conservation Officer is happy to field any questions on the subject and will continue to work with Boards on existing and future plans.

For ease of use the BAP table has been omitted from this report but is available upon request. Maps available separately too.

Middle Level Commissioners Report Summary

Invasive Species

Azolla was fairly abundant in the system during autumn/winter 2021, no doubt due to warm temperatures and relatively little rainfall. It does not tend to cause issue on the main drains but the standard biosecurity measures should be maintained when moving machinery/boats etc.

The floating pennywort project concluded in March 2022 with production of an informative video – see Middle Level Commissioners website. No pennywort was found during 2021 however a small fragment was recovered in the Salters Lode lock.

Several reports of signal crayfish and mitten crabs were received - both species known to be widespread. Already in 2022 over 1000 of the latter have been removed from the eel pass at St Germans. CO maintaining records and has raised the issue with the Environment Agency.

Four mink were trapped in the reporting period from the Board's 8 rafts – those 4 being in a relatively defined area in the vicinity of the Twenty Foot river near March. Across the wider Level over 70 mink were caught in total in 2021 which shows the project to be having a significant impact on the mink populations in the fens. *The initial 2-year contract period for these rafts has now expired meaning they will move to a rolling monthly contract of about £2 per month which will be invoiced to the Board in due course.*

The CO gave a toolbox talk on invasive species to the Works department in January 2022. Two training mornings were held for IDBs and community groups in March 2022.

Eels

2021 was the worst year for elvers reaching the Middle Level since 2014; it is hard to pinpoint a definitive reason for this, aside from reported declines internationally, but catches are known to fluctuate with this species. The pump was serviced in summer 2021 and new fittings installed to the pipe work in the main chamber, it has run consistently well since.

Plans are underway to hold 2 school visits to St Germans in May/June 2022 in partnership with Cambridgeshire Acre, for school children to learn about eels and the role of the Middle Level Commissioners. If successful this will hopefully be made available to more schools in 2023.

Water Voles

As always, Boards are reminded to contact the Conservation Officer *before* any bank reprofiling or other works that may impact water voles take place. If unsure, please contact the Conservation Officer regardless.

Other species

Condition assessments are being made on the extensive network of Board-provisioned kingfisher nest sites through winter and spring 2022. Many have fared well but some require maintenance which will be undertaken asap.

Three sites received badger exclusion works under licence in 2021. Setts were subsequently closed at 2 of the locations.

Tree Planting

Per Jon Fenn, Operations Engineer, the Commissioners undertook more planting of hedgewhips over winter 2021, funded by the EA. Many more opportunities in future to gap up and flesh out existing hedges on main drains.

Other

Several incidences of illegal fishing and hare coursing reported by CO to relevant authorities during the period.

Training

No training opportunities possible in 2021 due to Covid-19 guidelines. New sessions are planned in 2022 covering two important areas of our work; it is hoped that IDBs will be able to use the opportunities to refresh their knowledge on the subjects and/or enhance the skills of contractors/staff who may not have received such training before.

~~Tuesday 22nd March 2022: Non-native species workshop. Venue: Oliver Cromwell Hotel, March. 10-1pm.~~

The culmination of our Floating Pennywort awareness project, this training morning will provide an up-to-date summary of invasive species, both flora and fauna, to look out for in the Middle Level. Guest speakers: Cliff Carson and Mike Foley. *This event has passed but the CO is happy to discuss or share presentations from it with the Board upon request.*

May/June date TBC: Water voles - ecology, legislation and mitigation: a guide for IDBs. Venue: Middle Level Offices, March (followed by visit to local drain)

This training will be led by Julia Massey CEnv MCIEEM a Principal Ecologist with many years of experience working with water voles in the fens. It will cover the key elements of the species' ecology and how it relates to the work of IDBs. Joining instructions to be sent shortly.

Peter Beckenham, Conservation Officer for Middle Level Commissioners

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MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

**CORPORATE
PROCUREMENT
STRATEGY**

APRIL 2022

REVISION DATE

April 2027 – The Corporate Procurement Policy shall be reviewed at least every five years by the Board.

POLICY INTRODUCTION

Procurement of goods, works and services is fundamental in fulfilling the requirements of best value, to enable the Commissioners to deliver value for money quality services that satisfy the current and future needs of ratepayers and those for whom we provide a service, as well as achieving the Commissioners' corporate themes and objectives and promote sustainability.

POLICY AIM

This policy is aimed at promoting effective procurement by the Commissioners by determining the strategic role of procurement within the business framework, and will form part of the leadership arrangements that will be implemented to secure best value. This policy will promote effective procurement in terms of best value and continuous improvement.

The aims of this policy are to:

- make sure that procurement planning reflects the Commissioners' corporate themes and objectives
- provide a common framework for the full range of procurement activities carried out
- make sure there is a consistent, robust, open and accountable approach to service delivery and continuous improvement
- secure commitment to effective procurement from members and employees
- encourage working with others in the public, private or voluntary sector to widen the scope for innovative service delivery
- make sure that best value and best practice are being consistently applied in procurement and contract management
- provide a corporate focus for procurement and facilitate the co-ordination of procurement activities
- encourage strategic procurement planning when preparing annual business plans and budgets
- promote equality and fair treatment in the procurement of goods, works and services

POLICY STATEMENT

Strategic Procurement

The impetus for a strategic approach to procurement is best value, which recognises that good procurement practice is essential to obtain real improvements to service cost and quality. This approach is confirmed by the Byatt report which states that ‘better procurement should be an integral part of best value within every authority, as the achievement of best value depends on good procurement’. The strategic approach to Procurement has been further developed in the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2014.

The principles of best value will form the basis for making all strategic procurement decisions, in order to achieve the optimum combination of whole-life cost and quality to meet requirements, with other factors being considered when they are relevant to the contract and obtaining value for money. The principles of ethical procurement will also be observed to make sure that the Commissioners and its suppliers are trusted and respected by those with whom it deals and does business to make sure the highest standards of propriety and regularity are observed. In addition the Commissioners will take into account climate change impacts when assessing the merits of options available, which shall be reflected as appropriate in the wording of invitations to tender.

The procurement framework will provide the leadership, system and culture to provide commitment to continuous improvement.

This policy and the strategies which follow will provide us with the ability to manage and apply resources where they are needed most and work closely with partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve more for those to whom we provide a service.

The strategic management of procurement requires the development of suitable corporate systems to measure performance covering cost, quality, effectiveness and efficiency to make sure best value and continuous improvement are achieved.

Best Value

Best value can be defined as “continuously improving the services provided having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”.

The strategic management of procurement will make sure that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively to secure value for money. The Commissioners will make sure that all services are periodically exposed to genuine competitive pressure, either through indirect competition (that is benchmarking) or direct competition (that is alternative means of procurement). Where services are delivered in-house and provide a value for money quality service, there will be no requirement to subject the service to further competition.

The procurement framework will encourage a competitive supply market for the provision of goods, works and services, at the same time as supporting social, economic and environmental considerations where this is in line with best value.

Implementation Process

This policy aims to fully integrate effective procurement into the business framework, to help the Commissioners make informed decisions about how to deliver their corporate and operational objectives most effectively, by selecting the most appropriate model of service delivery for each instance. A corporate approach to procurement will deliver focus, direction, standardisation, accessible and relevant management information and improved service delivery, as well as promote competition, innovation and good practice in the procurement of goods, works and services.

The policy will look to build upon the Board's existing capacity, to enhance procurement skills and develop best practice guidance.

IMPLEMENTATION

The key to the success of a fully integrated procurement policy is ownership and commitment of members and senior managers. Respective roles and responsibilities need to be clearly stated, understood and accepted.

CONTRACTS

1. The Board shall determine the procedures to be employed in connection with the procurement of goods and services save that, if no procedures be specified, three (or more) written quotations shall be invited unless the obtaining of tenders is prescribed by the rules applicable to the particular procurement.

The procedure for procuring goods and services is set out in Section D of the Middle Level Commissioners Financial Code.

2. Tendering may be selective or open, although, whenever possible, selective tendering shall be used and tenders invited to ensure that the required number of tenders are actually received.
3. Tenders shall be opened, not earlier than the closing date prescribed in the tender documents, in the presence of such person(s) as may be authorised by the Board. A declaration shall be signed to such effect by the persons present at the opening of the tender(s) and a report on tenders received shall be made to the Board.
4. Where a tender is accepted other than the lowest, the approval of the Executive Committee or of the Board itself shall be obtained.
5. In the case of a tender for rents or similar sums where these are to be paid to the Commissioners, where a tender is accepted other than the highest, the approval of the Executive Committee, or of the Board itself shall be obtained.

PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES

1. Any goods and services for which provision is made in the Estimates may be purchased by an authorised person.
2. The purchase of any goods or services may be effected by an authorised person where they are of a type the authority to purchase which has been delegated to that authorised person by the Board.
3. The purchase of any goods or services not referred to in paragraphs 1 or 2 of this Section may be authorised by the Chief Executive and Clerk where they are of a routine or recurring nature or form part of the Board's maintenance expenditure.
4. For all goods and services other than as provided for in this Section, the Executive Committee's approval shall be obtained prior to the purchase being effected.
5. The requirements under this Section may be dispensed with if the goods or services are required urgently such that it would not be feasible or practical to obtain the necessary approval. In such cases, the Chief Executive and Clerk shall be authorised to effect the purchase. Any purchase made under this paragraph shall be reported to the Executive Committee.
6. An official order shall be placed for all goods and services.
7. All invoices for payment shall be examined, coded and approved by the person responsible for the order and certified by the appropriate person.
8. See Section D of the Financial Code and Section B of the Financial Regulations for further Financial Regulations in connection with the purchase of goods and services.
9. All invoices shall be authorised by a member of the Board either prior to or as soon as possible after payment.

MONITORING

The policy will be monitored by the Executive Committee.

The Corporate Procurement Policy has been designed to provide employees responsible for procurement with a good understanding of how the procurement process will assist the Commissioners in achieving its corporate objectives and demonstrate best value. The policy sets out a set of principles that underpin effective procurement to enable us to deliver value for money quality services.

Procurement involves the full range of activities that lead to the effective procurement of goods, works and services, spanning the entire ‘procurement lifecycle’ from initial concept and definition of business need through to the end of the useful life of an asset or the end of a service contract. Although the steps involved in procuring different types of goods and services vary, they share certain characteristics; crucially procurement must always be competitive, fair and transparent.

It is recognised that much of our procurement activity falls outside the scope of the former EC Procurement Rules, now contained in the Public Controls Regulations 2015, therefore a Corporate Procurement Policy and Strategy with supporting best practice guidance will be developed and implemented, which will underpin our ability to deliver the Commissioners’ corporate themes and objectives through effective procurement by:

- confirming the importance of procurement as a key activity to all employees and members
- making sure that all future procurement activity is economic, efficient and effective
- identifying achievable savings on budget through more efficient and effective procurement
- making sure all procurement activities operate within the Commissioners’, Financial Regulations and EC/UK legislation in a timely and consistent manner.

The Corporate Procurement Policy and framework requires the full support and commitment of Members, the Chief Executive and senior staff. Senior Staff will be accountable to Members for effective procurement of services and will make sure that appropriate procedures, resources and skills are in place to achieve this. Members will take a strategic role in making sure that the Commissioners’ objectives on procurement are satisfied through the democratic process.

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

At the Annual Meeting of the Middle Level Commissioners held at the Middle Level Offices March in the County of Cambridgeshire on Thursday 4th November 2021 at 12.45pm, pursuant to notice thereof duly given by advertisement in the newspapers of general circulation in the Level

PRESENT

J L Brown Esq (Chairman), H W Whittome Esq (Vice Chairman), G P Bliss Esq, C D Boughton Esq, R C Brown Esq, Cllr J R Clarke, Cllr C J Crofts, The Lord De Ramsey, C F Hartley Esq, J E Heading Esq, M E Heading Esq, M R R Latta Esq, S T Raby Esq, P W West Esq, S W Whittome Esq.

The Chief Executive/Chief Engineer, the Solicitor/Assistant Clerk and the Treasurer were in attendance.

Notice Convening Meeting

The Chief Executive referred to the publication of the statutory Notice convening the Meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from P Allpress Esq, D Fountain Esq and Cllr W Sutton. Cllr D Laws attempted to attend remotely but was unable to connect due to a wifi failure.

C.865 Declarations of Interest

The Chief Executive reminded the Commissioners of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any of them.

There were no declarations.

C.866 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 29th April 2021 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.867 Death of Mr J Bliss

The Chief Executive reported on the death of Mr Bliss on Saturday 10th July 2021.

C.868 Annual Accounts of the Board for the financial year 2020/2021

The Chief Executive reported that in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, Internal Drainage Boards' accounts are required to be approved by resolution on or before 30th June, following the relevant year of account, and that, in accordance, with the above Regulations, approval of the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021 was given by the Board on 29th June 2021.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Statement of Accounts for the year ended on the 31st March 2021 be approved, adopted and passed by the Commissioners.

(NB) The present members of the Committee are J L Brown (Chairman), H W Whittome (Vice Chairman) M E Heading, M R R Latta and Cllr W Sutton.

MR R Latta had advised that he was standing down from the Committee and proposed that P Wallpress be approached to fill this vacancy.

C.869 Annual Report of the Board for the year 2020/2021

The Commissioners considered the Annual Report of the Board for the year 2020/2021.

RESOLVED

That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.

C.870 Election of Chairman of the Commissioners

The Chairman having vacated the Chair, it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that J Brown Esq be elected Chairman of the Commissioners during the ensuing year.

C.871 Election of Commissioners

RESOLVED

That the undermentioned fourteen Commissioners be elected to constitute together with the Chairman, Mr J R Clarke (appointed by Huntingdonshire District Council), Mrs D Laws, Messrs A Miscandlon and W Sutton (appointed by Fenland District Council) and Mr C J Crofts (appointed by the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk) the Middle Level Board for the ensuing year;

P W Allpress Esq
G P Bliss Esq
C D Boughton Esq
R C Brown Esq
The Lord De Ramsey
J E Heading Esq
M E Heading Esq
M R R Latta Esq
A Lensen Esq

S T Raby Esq
P W West Esq
H W Whittome Esq
S W Whittome Esq

C.872 Vacancy in Membership

Further to minutes C.852 and C.861, the Chief Executive reported that A Lensen Esq of AgReserves confirmed that he is willing to fill the vacancy in the Membership of the Board.

C.873 Election of Vice Chairman of the Commissioners

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY)

That H W Whittome Esq be elected Vice Chairman of the Commissioners during the ensuing year (2021/2022).

C.874 Appointment of Executive Committee

Mr S Whittome announced that he would be standing down from the Committee.

The Chairman thanked Mr Whittome for all the work he had done during his time on the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Executive Committee for 2021/2022 be constituted as follows;

J L Brown Esq (Chairman)
H W Whittome Esq (Vice Chairman)
P W Allpress
M E Heading Esq
W Sutton Esq

C.875 Appointment of Employers Side Representatives for the Employment Committee

RESOLVED

That the Employers Side Representatives of the Employment Committee for 2021/2022 be constituted as follows;

W Sutton Esq (Committee Chairman)
P W Allpress Esq
J L Brown Esq
M E Heading Esq
P W West Esq
H W Whittome Esq

C.876 Appointment of Members' Representatives for the Conservation & Climate Committee

RESOLVED

That Lord De Ramsey, J E Heading Esq and S T Raby Esq be appointed to the Conservation Committee for 2021/2022.

C F Hartley indicated that he would be standing down from the Committee and his replacement would be P W West and one other Member.

C.877 Appointment of Water Resources Committee

M R R Latta had advised the Board and the Commissioners that he was standing down and in turn would be replaced by R Brown.

RESOLVED

That J L Brown Esq, M E Heading Esq, R Brown Esq and H W Whittome Esq be appointed to the Water Resources Committee for 2021/2022.

C.878 Rate Arrears

The Commissioners considered a recommendation of the Board that rate arrears amounting to £624.23 should be written off.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Board be adopted.

C.879 Any Other Business

The Chief Executive apologised that due to Covid-19 and Health and Safety restrictions that he had been unable to provide any food or refreshments for the meeting.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date