

**TITLE: INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS APPOINTMENTS**

Committee: Finance & Assets Committee

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Author: Democratic Services Officer (Committees)

[W71]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 Representation on the Padnal & Waterden Internal Drainage Board and the Middle Fen & Mere Internal Drainage Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Littleport Parish Councillor Clive Webber be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Padnal & Waterden Internal Drainage Board.

2.2 i) That a Member be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Middle Fen & Mere Internal Drainage Board.

Or

ii) That the Democratic Services Officer (Committees) be authorised to seek nominations for a representative on the Middle Fen & Mere Internal Drainage Board from the relevant Parish Councils.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 The annual reports from Council representatives on Outside Bodies were presented to the Finance & Assets Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Several vacancies on two Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) were highlighted in that report: one on the Padnal & Waterden IDB and three on the Cawdle Fen IDB. No nominations were received from District Councillors and therefore, in accordance with the previously-agreed process, City of Ely Council was invited to submit nominations for all vacancies and nominations for the Padnal & Waterden vacancy were requested from Littleport Parish Council. City of Ely Council nominee Ian Lindsay was subsequently appointed to fill one of the Cawdle Fen IDB vacancies at the Finance & Assets Committee meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021.

3.2 City of Ely Council does not have any further nominations at this time. Littleport Parish Council has nominated Cllr Clive Webber to fill the vacancy on Padnal & Waterden IDB. Cllr Webber supplied the following statement to demonstrate his suitability:

“I am currently Chair of Littleport Parish Council, have been for the last 6yrs, also Chair of the Littleport Independent Food Band and Trustee of the Town Lands Charity (land owner within the area). Run my own construction company and I am Chartered Construction Manager (CIOB). Have served for a short period on the board before the last election.”

3.3 In addition to the afore-mentioned vacancies, a new vacancy has arisen on the Middle Fen & Mere IDB following the resignation of former Cllr Victoria Charlesworth. Group Leaders have been consulted regarding the vacancy and, mindful of the Soham North by-election taking place after finalising this report but before the Committee meeting, have been invited to submit nominations orally at the meeting.

3.4 In the event that there are no nominations from within the Council for the Middle Fen & Mere IDB, the previously-agreed process (see Appendix 1) requires that nominations are sought from all Parish Councils with land covered by the IDB. For Middle Fen & Mere this would be City of Ely Council, Fordham Parish Council, Isleham Parish Council, Soham Town Council and Wicken Parish Council. Any nominations would then be brought to a future meeting of the Finance & Assets Committee for consideration.

#### 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required.

4.3 Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) not required

#### 5.0 APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix 1: Relevant pages from the Outside Bodies Booklet 2021-22

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<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
Agenda Item 10, Finance & Assets Committee, 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	Room 214 The Grange, Ely	Caroline Evans Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (01353) 616457 E-mail: caroline.evans@eastcambs.gov.uk

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Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) are public bodies that manage water levels in areas where there is a special need for drainage. They reduce flood risk to people and property and they manage water levels for agricultural and environmental needs. IDBs are funded by a combination of drainage rates levied on the owners of farmland, and special levies on District and Unitary Councils. District Councils appoint representatives to IDBs, the number of representatives being determined by the IDBs by consideration of the percentage of the Board's income being paid by each Council.

Haddenham Level IDB is part of the Middle Level Commissioners, all other IDBs on which ECDC is represented are part of the Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards.

Appointment of ECDC representatives to Internal Drainage Boards has been discussed at various Council and Committee meetings<sup>2</sup> and the following process has been agreed:

1. Nominations should be invited from the Members of Council.
2. If vacancies cannot all be filled from within the District Council then;
  - a. former District Councillors who are willing to continue in their IDB role could be nominated as a layperson, and;
  - b. the relevant Parish Council(s) should be invited to submit nominations.

If there are more nominations than vacancies then consideration should be given to the candidates' prior knowledge and experience of both the geographical area and the issues relevant to IDBs. In all cases, the final decision on each appointment rests with the Finance & Assets Committee.

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<sup>2</sup> Resources & Finance Committee: 29 March 2018 (Agenda Item 11, Minute 94); 26 July 2018 (Agenda Item 12, Minute 35).  
 Council: 19 April 2018 (Agenda Item 10, Minute 89).  
 Finance & Assets Committee: 20 June 2019 (Agenda Item 13, Minute 17); 26 September 2019 (Agenda Item 18, Minute 56).

## **MIDDLE FEN & MERE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

<b>District Wards covered</b>	<b>Town/Parish Councils covered</b>
Ely East Ely North Fordham & Isleham Soham North Soham South	City of Ely Council Fordham Parish Council Isleham Parish Council Soham Town Council Wicken Parish Council

<b>Representation</b>	<b>Meetings per year</b>	<b>Status of Member</b>
Five Members	3	Board Member

<b>Expenses paid by Organisation</b>	<b>Insurance Provision</b>
No, paid by the Council	Yes

<b>Category of Officer Support</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>	<b>Representative(s) for 2020/21</b>
3	Finance Manager, Ian Smith	Cllr Ian Bovingdon Cllr Victoria Charlesworth Cllr Alec Jones Cllr Dan Schumann Derrick Beckett (lay member)

### 2020/21 Report from Cllr Ian Bovingdon

*(Attended 1 of 2 meetings.)*

This board does important work, by protecting agriculture and enforcing correct drainage rules and procedures. Flood defences are maintained and close scrutiny is undertaken of new residential and commercial developments to ensure that they can be delivered without negative impact on flooding locally. This work fits with ECDC's commitment that the District continues to be an area where people want to live, businesses want to grow and people to visit. The main focus is on water management.

Several issues are discussed, including Flood Warden schemes, all of which have an impact on agriculture, ecology and new developments. An important issue in the present and future of the fens, discussing the need for possible pumping stations. Discussions re Covid-19 issues were also discussed as this affects the effectiveness of their workforce. Much of the IDB's work will have an effect on ECDC's plans for future housing development.

Continued representation is worthwhile because this is a very important body protecting the local area from the risk of flooding together with managing irrigation for agriculture. The IDB has a real understanding of the complex issues surrounding development and infrastructure impact on flooding and need to be supported in light of increasing threats from flooding affected by climate changes.

They are producing a conservation document.

There are requirements for more members on the board.

Plans are underway looking forward 50+ years.

They are in constant contact with the E.A. re issues particularly with pumping station issues. December 2020 was one of the wettest in a while which is why pumping stations were pushed to their limits.

2020/21 Report from Cllr Victoria Charlesworth

*(Not received.)*

2020/21 Report from Cllr Alec Jones

*(Attended three of three meetings.)*

This organisation fits in with ECDC's Corporate Plan by ensuring the continued management of the water supply to the farming industry in the District, supplying the many farms and related industries in our area.

Water requirements have increased and large scale alterations to depth of main drainage are being considered. Such large infrastructure improvements need to be managed carefully and work in partnership with Local Government to reduce the impact to businesses.

While there is little direct relevance in the day to day dealings, its relevance to local agricultural business is immense and maintain the links between business and Local Authorities makes this a worthwhile commitment.

2020/21 Report from Cllr Dan Schumann

*(Attended no meetings.)*

The work of the IDB provides essential flood protection for the District and is fundamental to our local agriculture.

This is a key organisation that ECDC need to work with in terms of infrastructure.

2020/21 Report from Derrick Beckett (lay member)

*(Not received.)*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Representative(s) for 2021/22</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cllr Ian Bovingdon Cllr Alec Jones Cllr Dan Schumann Derrick Beckett (lay member) <b>Vacancy</b> (created 10/8/21 by a resignation)</p>
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## PADNAL & WATERDEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

<b>District Wards covered</b>	<b>Town/Parish Councils covered</b>
Ely North Littleport	City of Ely Council Littleport Parish Council

<b>Representation</b>	<b>Meetings per year</b>	<b>Status of Member</b>
Seven Members	3	Board Member

<b>Expenses paid by Organisation</b>	<b>Insurance Provision</b>
No, paid by the Council	Yes

<b>Category of Officer Support</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>	<b>Representative(s) for 2020/21</b>
3	Finance Manager, Ian Smith	Cllr David Ambrose Smith Cllr Lis Every Cllr Alison Whelan Paul Cox (lay member) Parish Cllr Edward Carlsson Browne Debra Jordan Sue Kerridge

### 2020/21 Report from Cllr David Ambrose Smith

*(Attended most meetings.)*

IDB's are extremely important partners. ECDC planners work closely with the IDB's and value one another's contribution to the planning process. IDB's praiseworthy concerns regarding increasing their charges perhaps constrains them from carrying out more medium to long term planning.

Continued representation is worthwhile because it gives an understanding of the importance of Internal Drainage Boards within our District and the necessity of keeping drainage infrastructure in good order.

The record amount of rainfall in December highlighted system maintenance issues across the drainage boards, I joined a IDB led working party to help identify ways to overcome these problems for the future.

I believe that all our local IDB's should be amalgamated into a single board which would bring efficiencies at all levels from governance to the water courses. ECDC councillors/representation of one possibly two councillors on this single board would then give ECDC a better joined up understanding of the whole area.

2020/21 Report from Cllr Lis Every

*(Attended three of four meetings.)*

The internal drainage board (IDB) is the operating authority which is established in areas of special drainage need in England and Wales, eg the Fens, with permissive powers to undertake work to secure clean water drainage and water level management within drainage districts. It also has the authority to add a levy to the Council Tax. Internal Draining Boards are a statutory consultee for all Planning Applications. In this area, which seeks growth, the work of the IDB is a very important organisation which has representatives from local farmers and councillor representatives from ECDC.

As seen above, the work undertaken by the IDB is vital for the area, ensuring that there is no flood activity, that the relevant maintenance is undertaken, the right levels of water for irrigation are maintained and the protection of species, ie eels, is undertaken. It is a statutory consultee for all planning applications.

Continued representation is absolutely vital, ie as consultee for planning applications and an influence on the Ultimate Council Tax Levy.

2020/21 Report from Cllr Alison Whelan

*(Attended two of three meetings.)*

The IDB is presently upgrading the Padnal No 1 pumping station as it is near the end of its useful life.

The IDB contracted for the clearing of the Clayway Drain, however, this caused significant destruction of wildlife areas during the spring breeding season. The IDB has learnt from this and will avoid this in future years.

Continued representation is worthwhile because the nature of the land that surrounds Ely is such that water management is crucial to avoid flooding.

Meetings have been held virtually due to the pandemic, however, the IDB acknowledged their failure to meet equality and inclusion standards due to the location of physical meetings and this will be addressed when physical meetings restart.

2020/21 Report from Paul Cox (lay member)

*(Not received.)*

2020/21 Report from Parish Cllr Edward Carlsson Browne

*(Not received.)*

2020/21 Report from Debra Jordan

*(Not received.)*

2020/21 Report from Sue Kerridge

*(Not received.)*

**Representative(s) for 2021/22**

Cllr David Ambrose Smith

Cllr Lis Every

Cllr Alison Whelan

Paul Cox (lay member)

Debra Jordan

Sue Kerridge

**Vacancy**