

**TITLE: Outside Bodies Update**

Committee: Finance & Assets

Date: 28 September 2023

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Report No: Y51

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## **1.0 ISSUES**

- 1.1. To appoint representatives to the vacant positions on various Internal Drainage Boards.
- 1.2. To add the Rural Services Network to the Council's Outside Bodies list and appoint a "Nominated Member" and a "Nominated Member Backup".

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1. That the appointments of former councillor Lis Every to the Padnal and Waterden Internal Drainage Board and former councillor Alec Jones to the Middle Fen and Mere Internal Drainage Board be noted.
- 2.2. That representatives be appointed from the nominations listed in Section 4.8 to fill the vacancies on the Internal Drainage Boards.
- 2.3. That the Rural Services Network be added to the Council's Outside Bodies list and a Nominated Member and a Nominated Member Backup be appointed as detailed in Section 4.9.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS**

- 3.1. 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 level 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. The number of District Council representatives is determined by the IDBs in relation to the percentage of the Board's income that is paid by the Council.
- 3.2. The previously-agreed process for appointing ECDC representatives to Internal Drainage Boards is:
  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.
  3. 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.

- 3.3. At the Finance & Assets Committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 Council Members were appointed to the Outside Bodies within the committee's remit, including the IDBs. Several IDB vacancies remained and therefore, in accordance with the previously agreed process, Officers were instructed both to invite former District Councillors to continue in their roles and to request nominations from all affected Parish Councils. The responses are detailed in section 4.
- 3.4. Since the Outside Bodies appointments were made at the Finance & Assets Committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, the Rural Services Network has requested that a formal "Nominated Member" and a "Nominated Member Backup" be appointed. ECDC is a member of the Rural Services Network, which is a membership organisation championing rural services. It campaigns for fair funding for rural areas and aims to share best practice across the membership. In the past they had sent occasional updates to the Council Leader and Deputy Leader but they are now requesting a more formal arrangement and will invite the nominated representative to quarterly remote meetings.

#### **4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS**

##### **Uncontested IDBs**

- 4.1. There are two outstanding vacancies on Burnt Fen IDB and Derrick Beckett has asked to be reappointed to the role he has held since at least 2014. This appointment would result in one vacancy remaining. This IDB covers land in two District Wards: Ely North and Littleport.
- 4.2. Former councillor Simon Harries declined the invitation to continue as a representative on the Cawdle Fen IDB, leaving three outstanding vacancies. Two nominations have been received to date and are detailed below. Appointing both candidates would result in one vacancy remaining. This IDB covers land in one District Ward: Ely West.

Statement from Cllr Rebecca Denness (nominated by City of Ely Council):

"My principal motives for applying are curiosity about the work of IDBs and contributing by applying my experience to the role on Cawdle Fen IDB.

I am a Councillor on City of Ely Council just starting my second term of office. As a Councillor, I've learnt a great deal about the Ely and its environs, the place I adopted as home with my family in 2004. We enjoy walking and are very aware of the Fenland landscape around us and the history of human activity here.

City of Ely Councillors scrutinise planning applications relating to the City and villages beyond and I note that IDBs are also called to comment, when appropriate. Viewing plans from the perspective of an IDB would enhance my effectiveness as a Councillor in this task and vice versa.

I was a career civil servant in London working in education and information security policy development. I am quick to absorb a new brief and pursue it effectively".

Statement from Cllr Rupert Moss-Eccardt (previously represented ECDC on this IDB since 2020):

“I am currently a rep for ECDC on Cawdle Fen. I was appointed some time ago and re-appointed since. I should like to continue to be appointed. Note that I was not a councillor; the law does not require reps to be councillors – they just need to “bring a skill””.

- 4.3. Former councillor Alec Jones accepted the invitation to remain on the Middle Fen and Mere IDB and therefore all five positions on this IDB have been filled.
- 4.4. Former councillor David Ambrose Smith declined the invitation to continue on the Padnal and Waterden IDB but former councillor Lis Every accepted. Following her appointment, five vacancies remained. Clive Webber has asked to be reappointed to the role that he has held since 2021. This appointment would result in four outstanding vacancies. This IDB covers land in two District Wards: Ely North, Littleport.
- 4.5. No nominations have been received to date for the vacancy on Waterbeach Level IDB. In the absence of any nominations, David Chaplin has been contacted to see if he would like to be considered to continue in the position he has held since 2015. Any response received after publication of this paper will be reported orally at the meeting. This IDB covers land in two District Wards: Stretham, Soham South.

### **Contested IDBs**

- 4.6. Two nominations have been received to date for the single vacancy on Haddenham Level IDB and are detailed below. This IDB covers land in three District Wards: Haddenham, Stretham, Sutton.

#### **Statement from Haddenham Parish Council for Cllr Steve Cheetham:**

“Steve served as a District Councillor for ECDC from 2015 – 2019 and was nominated to the IDB then. He has served on the board ever since and has enjoyed the role immensely. Steve is Chairman of the parish council’s Planning Committee and we regularly find his knowledge from the IDB comes into play with applications located along the Haddenham ridges, for example the ongoing application for gravel extraction on Hillrow.”

#### **Statement from Cllr Mark Duckworth (nominated by Wilburton Parish Council):**

“I am a Chartered Building Engineer and since 2013 the Managing Director of Martin and Mortimer Chartered Surveyors and Valuers. I hold diplomas in agriculture (1983), Farm Management (1984) and Home Inspection (2005); from the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Seal-Hayne (Plymouth University) and Manchester open learning, respectively. I hold the CSRT qualification enabling me to undertake damp and timber surveys to a recognised standard of skill and competence. In addition to RICS and CABE accreditations, I have also undertaken training as a damp/waterproofing consultant and have the designation as a Structural Waterproofing Technician. I am also an independent consultant with the Property Care Association (PCA). This organisation periodically audit my reports and award the CSRT qualification to those who pass the relevant examinations and adhere to a clear code of professional conduct.

Other professional memberships include the Faculty of Party Wall Surveyors, Fellow of the Chartered Association of Chartered Building Engineers (FCABE) as

well as Associate membership of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. (Having completed my assessment in Residential Survey and Valuation - AssocRICS). This level of qualification is based across a range of surveying competencies plus adherence to RICS ethical standards. I have also developed a holistic approach to damp investigation, the essence of which has also been adopted by the RICS, Historic England and the PCA as a formalised approach.

I have been consistently surveying properties, including for dampness and its various effects, for almost 20 years while also undertaking Building surveys, Home Buyer Reports and valuations in a professional capacity for the last 13 years.

Between 2003 and 2010, I co-owned and managed a specialist remedial repair company, which involved diagnosis, practical problem solving, plus responsibility for implementing technical solutions concerning an array of building pathology issues, most of which were period buildings including timber frame properties.

I regularly undertake detailed (damp and timber) pathology reports, which include period and listed buildings across the UK. I have undertaken CPD lectures on the subject of damp diagnosis and am often instructed to undertake detailed reports (including damp, timber and waterproofing matters), according to the Civil Procedure Rules Pt 35, for the benefit of the Court”.

- 4.7. Three nominations have been received to date for the two vacancies on Littleport and Downham IDB and are detailed below. This IDB covers land in five District Wards: Downham Villages, Ely North, Littleport, Stretham, Sutton.

Statement from Cllr Andrew Butcher (nominated by Little Downham Parish Council):

“I wish to put myself forward as a nominee for a seat on the Littleport and Downham Internal Drainage Board. As a lifelong resident of Little Downham and a Parish Councillor I am heavily invested in the health of our drainage system and wish to do my part to support the efforts of the IDB as well as bring resident concerns and queries to the Board. This work is vital to ensure the village I have grown up in is protected from flooding so my children can grow up here too. I have a good working knowledge of the system and extensive local history on the drainage and flood risks. I hope to be a productive and valuable member of the Boards. With kind regards, Andrew Butcher”

Cllr Howard Palmer (nominated by Witchford Parish Council) was appointed by the Finance & Assets Committee in November 2022 until May 2023. The statement provided at that time was:

“I have been a Parish Councillor for over ten years including a term as Chairman and Vice Chair twice.

During this time, I have been and currently am Open Spaces Coordinator, looking after the Parish Council-maintained outside areas along with other voluntary help. These duties include environmental projects such as wildflower meadows, tree maintenance and planting of new trees, other duties include but are not limited to installing benches, litter picking, putting in new gates and trying with others to keep the village well maintained.

As parts of the Board's catchment area lies below sea level and as a 4th generation farmer, I am fully aware of the challenges that the Board needs to address in regards to flood risks & climate change. I also believe that flooding is still the biggest risk to this area and its local economy.

The role of the Drainage Boards is more important than ever. I would be excited and honoured to play a larger part in this work should you decide that I am suitable for this position."

Statement from Mark Taylor (previously served since 2020 and the IDB have stated that they are keen to retain his expertise, but no longer a Parish Councillor):

"I been a farmer all my life and generations of my family have farmed here too. I have a wealth of knowledge of drainage catch water here and Ely. After years of battling, people are listening and I have old maps where dykes and drainage were in Ely to stop them flooding which I now share with the Council and the IDB. I got a working group together now and Anna Bailey has been a great help and she also involved Planning Officers and Andrew Newton to sort these problems as Andrew does not know this level of information about where and what should be there. So we all have a monthly meeting together to get problems sorted and the IDB asked me to stay and the Council asked me to help which I am very pleased to do. I am pushing for reservoirs to be built as Ely Littleport and Little Downham water is flooding the fen with all this extra building and will flood themselves out in a bad storm so hopefully as a team we can solve the problems and have a safer future.

#### **Summary of IDB appointments**

- 4.8. The current situation and the recommended actions regarding IDB appointments are summarised in the table below. Should any District Councillors seek to be appointed to any of the vacancies, then the appointment process (section 3.2) requires them to be appointed in preference to any individuals listed in the table.

<b>Internal Drainage Board (total no. of representatives required)</b>	<b>Appointments made at 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 Finance &amp; Assets Committee meeting</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>
Burnt Fen (2)	(none)	Reappoint Derrick Beckett  (1 vacancy would remain)
Cawdle Fen (7)	Cllrs Colbert, Holtzmann, Shepherd, and C Whelan	Reappoint Rupert Moss-Eccardt and appoint Rebecca Denness  (1 vacancy would remain)
Haddenham Level (2)	Cllr Wilson	<u>Either</u> reappoint Steve Cheetham (served since 2015, nominated by Haddenham Parish Council) <u>or</u> appoint Mark Duckworth (nominated by Wilburton Parish Council)  (No vacancies would remain)
Littleport & Downham (6)	Cllrs Ambrose Smith, Dupré, Goodearl, and Miller	Appoint/reappoint <u>two</u> out of: Andrew Butcher (nominated by Little Downham Parish Council) Howard Palmer (served since 2022, nominated by Witchford Parish Council) Mark Taylor (served since 2020, no longer a parish councillor)  (No vacancies would remain.)
Middle Fen & Mere (5)	Cllrs Bovingdon, Goldsack, Horgan and Vellacott.  Former councillor Alec Jones has since accepted the Council's invitation to be re-appointed.	(None required. All vacancies filled.)
Padnal & Waterden (7)	Cllr A Whelan  Former councillor Lis Every has since accepted the Council's invitation to be re-appointed.	Reappoint Clive Webber  (4 vacancies would remain)
Swaffham (4)	Cllrs Brown, Edwards, Sharp and Trapp	(None required. All vacancies filled.)
Waterbeach Level (1)	(none)	Invite David Chaplin to be re-appointed (If accepted, no vacancies would remain.)

## **Rural Services Network**

- 4.9. Following the request from the Rural Services Network for appointments of representatives, information was sent to the Group Leaders and nominations were requested either for inclusion in the written report, or to be given orally at the meeting. To date, two nominations have been received from the Conservative Group: Cllr Keith Horgan as the Nominated Member and Cllr James Lay as the Nominated Member Backup.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS / EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT / CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.2. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required.
- 5.3. Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) not required

## **6.0 APPENDICES**

None.

### **Background Documents:**

[Finance & Assets Committee, 3 July 2023](#), Agenda Item 10, Representatives on Outside Bodies report Y19 and Minute 16

[Representatives on Outside Bodies Booklet 2023/24](#)

