

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



Outside Body Information Form

2011/12

Name of appointee:	Councillor M.J. Mason
Name of outside body:	Old West, Waterbeach Level & Swaffham Internal Drainage Boards (3 Internal Drainage Boards)
Date of last meeting:	7 th February 2012 (3 Board meetings)
Frequency of meetings:	3 times yearly plus ADA conferences National and local
Venue(s) of meeting:	Drainage Office Ely Group of IDBs Prickwillow nr. Ely
Meetings attended (dates):	09/11/2011 (3) 09/05,17/05 and 19/05/2011 (3)
Lead officer:	Jean Heading, Clerk and finance officer Ely Group of IDBs.
Brief description of the activities of the outside body and how these relate to the Council's vision and values (these are listed overleaf):	<p>Internal Drainage Boards are ancient and very essential authorities which predate Local authorities by at least 100 years. They were established to provide water level control mostly in low lying districts to prevent flooding and allow efficient cultivation and farming. The modern boards function both to prevent flooding and to control ground water levels (and soil moisture deficit) by means of gravity drainage, fixed pumping installations and sluices. They maintain many miles of drainage channels by using excavating machinery, mechanical flails, weed boats. The operating costs and labour charges are shared in proportion between individual boards within the group. The boards have a small number of properties used by their staff. The Group has a small admin staff at Ely and shares the technical service of an Engineer. Most pumping stations are now monitored and controlled remotely via telemetry links to Prickwillow which is the location of the offices and main workshop for the 10 Boards in the Ely Group. Thus manual starting and stopping is largely eliminated at most locations. Pumping equipment is now mainly electric but some diesel plant remains. Weed removal at most pumping station basin intake screens is by means of manual raking and removal, but installation of electric automatic weed removal machinery is currently being undertaken using grants from DEFRA. The Boards work in close co-operation with Environment Agency, DEFRA and District and County Councils. They are statutory consultees for planning applications. The activities of the Boards are financed by collection of drainage for each agricultural property lying within the defined catchment maps. These can be viewed on the Ely group Web Site. Agricultural property owners paying drainage rates elect members of the board at 4 yearly elections. Local authorities such as South Cambs. DC. Have nomination rights in proportion to area of the catchment lying within the district. In respect of other properties within the catchment the Boards levy charges annually on the District Councils. For further details please read the regular reports to council under Reports from Members Appointed to Outside Bodies and go to the Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards Web Site which gives details of Board Policies, Bye Laws etc. A copy of my last report is attached and further information was given in my recent talk to members and organised by democratic services. Please see notes of slides at that presentation.</p>

	<p>It is essential that interested members receive some training before being nominated to serve on IDBs. At last years ADA conference there was much criticism of local authorities whose members rarely bothered to attend Board meetings. Special Levies on District Councils will inevitably increase and elected members will need to be active in the decision making process at Board level. The recent controversy over Cambourne drainage at Planning Committee emphasises this point. The current Northstowe planning Application will have great significance for Old West Internal Drainage Board</p>
<p>Events of note during the past year of particular relevance to the residents of South Cambridgeshire:</p>	<p>Please see my last report to members. I have attended the last three conferences of the Association of Drainage Authorities as the representative of Swaffham IDB. Last years conference was held in London at the Institution of Civil Engineers. There will be an ADA Local Authority conference on 29th March at Peterborough which I hope also to attend. Note that South Cambridgeshire District Council is a member of ADA and the Officer nominee is Pat Matthews, Land Drainage Manager. I usually place a copy of the ADA Magazine in the members lounge for information. Note that in addition to the Ely Group SCDC nominate members to the Swavesey and Willingham and Over IDBs. We do not nominate to the Bedford and Ivel Board. Since I will no longer be an elected member after May, this will be my last year as an IDB member.</p>

Please return this form to Claire Dillon by Tuesday 8 May 2012.

This form has been sent following a request made by Councillor Sue Ellington, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Chairman of the Member Development Task & Finish Group, to identify support you may require and/or training needs you may have. This material will be made available to Councillors that may be considering requesting an appointment and will help us to better equip new members. This form will feature on the Council agenda for the meeting on 24 May 2012 and your responses will help inform a guidance document for members to improve understanding of what the various appointments involve, and what support is available from within the organisation.

OUR VISION

- We will make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation.
- We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.

OUR VALUES

We will demonstrate our corporate values in all our actions. These are:

- Trust
- Mutual respect
- A commitment to improving services
- Customer service