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Drainage Rates and Special Levies

All land and property within a drainage district is deemed to derive benefit from the activities of an Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and owners and occupiers are, therefore, required to contribute towards its expenses, either via drainage rates or the special levy.

Under the Land Drainage Act 1991, drainage rates are issued directly to landowners in respect of agricultural land and buildings. Occupiers of "other land" (e.g. domestic houses, factories, shops, etc.) pay council tax/business rates to their local authority and IDBs charge a special levy in proportion to the annual value of that land.

Any land moving from agricultural production to be developed is transferred into the special levy.

You may be aware of the recent press articles referring to the cost of the special levy on local councils. The Government has acknowledged the impact of the levy on councils within an IDB area and (for the second year) pledged £3M of additional funding for those local authorities significantly impacted by IDB special levies. Although this has helped in the short term, IDBs and councils continue to lobby Central Government for a long term solution.

Due to a large increase in the rate last year, the Boards have managed to keep increases this year to a minimum. However, the level of reserves held by each Board needs to be sufficient to enable them to respond to and recover from a heavy rainfall event and, should these reserves be depleted, a higher rate rise will be required in the future. A significant proportion of the income received from drainage rates and special levies is spent on pumping station electricity costs.

Storms and Flooding

Ten storms between September 2023 and January 2024, resulted in widespread flooding across the country. Heavy rainfall on an already saturated catchment put pressure on the Boards' systems particularly over the Christmas period where pumping stations ran continuously.

The devastating affect of flooding on individuals and landowners is fully realised throughout the Boards.

Overtopping from poorly maintained Environment Agency (EA) main rivers and the additional burden this places on the Boards' systems has contributed greatly in certain areas to the flooding. This has also extended the recovery period as land has been unable to drain effectively.

The Boards' Officers have been working closely with the National Farmers' Union and the EA to push for additional maintenance to be undertaken on main rivers. This has been largely successful and we hope to take forward a pilot scheme this year with Lindsey Marsh undertaking work on some of the EA main rivers to the Board's standards. If successful, we will pursue this across the Consortium.

Last year, the EA and Doncaster East worked in partnership to undertake works on the River Torne upstream from the A638/Great Yorkshire Way. Initial discussions have been held and a plan is being drawn-up to undertake similar works this year near Tickhill to increase flows in the Torne and enable better discharge into it from the lowland systems.

The 2024 Spring Budget announced that the Government is providing £75M to IDBs to bolster investment in water and flood management assets which are vital to protect agricultural land from the impact of floods and storms. Although this is positive news, it is yet to be confirmed how and where this money will be allocated.

Maintenance

Winter Works

Desilting and reforming of watercourses, tree and bushing work and access improvements are undertaken each year between November and July. Our priority across the Consortium this winter has been dealing with recovery from the winter storms and this has delayed completion of the planned works programmes resulting in some work being pushed back.

Annual Summer Maintenance

Annual maintenance will commence as usual on 15th July after the bird-nesting season and will involve flailing of the drain bank and removal of weed from the channel. Until this time, strategic watercourses are being monitored and, where weedgrowth is excessive, the centre of the channel will be cleared to ensure conveyance.

Access onto Land

Our operatives and contractors will continue to liaise with landowners regarding access. Your cooperation and support to ensure they can access land to undertake maintenance is appreciated. This work is vital to ensure that water flows freely and our systems operate effectively.

To improve security we understand the need for landowners to restrict access to their fields, however, please be aware that our machines will need to get through and we need your help to facilitate this.

Our operations teams are keen to work with landowners to find ways to improve access which in turn, increases our efficiency and reduces the cost to the Boards.

Following the recent wet weather, some landowners have dug trenches to assist with the evacuation of water from their fields. If no longer required, these trenches should be filled in, otherwise, please mark their location to alert our flail drivers as they are not always easy to see in the long grass; this will ensure that our drivers and machinery are not put at unnecessary risk.

If you have any concerns regarding maintenance operations, please call the office.

Major Capital Projects

Emergency Repairs at Pumping Stations

The Boards make a budget provision each year for emergency pumping station repairs. This enables immediate repairs to be undertaken in the event of a breakdown. During the recent storms, these emergency repair budgets have been exceeded in order to maintain the Boards' standard of protection.

Electrical Installation Testing

The required NICEIC electrical test inspections have been carried out across all Consortium sites. Work will be undertaken to rectify any issues to ensure the continued maintenance of service and safety at all sites.

Lindsey Marsh Area

Last year saw the completion of the refurbishment of **Anderby Pumping Station**, its first major intervention since it was commissioned in 1992. The station was taken off-line for the duration of the work and duty flows were managed by temporary overpumping with assistance from the adjacent diesel station. Significant civils modifications were necessary to enable the installation of the three new fish friendly pumps

which have a combined discharge capacity of 5.4 cumecs. The existing automatic weedscreen cleaner was refurbished and the electrical control panel and transformer replaced. The cost of the works was £2.1M.

Work is now underway to refurbish **Trusthorpe Pumping Station**. Built in 1956, this station is 68 years old and undergoing extensive structural and civils modification work.



Trusthorpe Pumping Station

Similar to Anderby and the previously refurbished Saltfleet Pumping Station, the station has been taken off-line while the work is carried out. Temporary over-pumping is in place to sustain operation of the station to maintain levels of protection. Three new fish friendly pumps with a combined capacity of 5.4 cumecs will be installed together with a new electrical control panel. The existing transformer has been replaced and the automatic weedscreen cleaner refurbished. Extensive work is also being undertaken to the fabric of the building and new fencing will be erected around the compound. The estimated cost of the project is £3.884M and work will be completed this year.

Planning has commenced for the refurbishment of **Ingoldmells Pumping Station** which is due to commence in 2025.

Isle of Axholme Area

Kelfield Pumped Catchment Improvement Scheme is complete at a cost of £718,000. Work included the refurbishment of Kelfield Pumping Station, channel improvement works and bank raising, a syphon to connect the **Blackdyke and Southfield pumped catchments** and de-commissioning of Blackdyke Pumping Station. Provision has been made at the former Southfield and Blackdyke sites for the connection of temporary overpumping should it be required in the future.

Work will resume early in June this year on **Wray's Drain Flood Alleviation Scheme** in Crowle; a partnership project with Severn Trent Water and North



Wrays Drain, Crowle

Lincolnshire Council. Costs have risen to £1M and additional funding is being sought.

Planning has commenced for the refurbishment of both **Heckdyke and Wiseton Pumping Stations** for delivery next year.

Trent Valley Area

The pumps at **Sturton, Church Laneham, Moor Lane and Fledborough Pumping Stations** have been refurbished and replacement pumps installed at **Weir Dyke Pumping Station**. The combined cost of this work is £108K.

Designs are being developed for Thurgarton **flood storage area**. Extensive discussions have been undertaken to secure partnership funding with Nottinghamshire County Council and Thurgarton Parish Council.

Hydraulic modelling of the **Burton Round and Sturton catchments** will be undertaken this year prior to a complete refurbishment of these stations which will ensure they continue to function effectively for the next 25 years.

Doncaster East Area

Kirton Lane and Cuckoo Lane Pumping Stations have been fully refurbished and new fish friendly pumps installed. The projects were delivered with funding from the Unity Connect development at Thorne and Hatfield.

Severn Arches Pumping Station electrical control panel and kiosk will be replaced this year to meet the current electrical regulations.

Environmental

IDBs have a statutory duty with regard to the environment. The Boards' Operations and Engineering Teams work closely with our Environmental Officers to ensure that maintenance and improvement works are undertaken in compliance with environmental legislation. Wildlife recorded within our watercourses evidences that systems can be well maintained without adversely affecting the environment. Wildlife records are submitted annually to relevant local authorities and the Board has recently registered with the National Biodiversity Network Atlas which uses wildlife records as a source of evidence for informed decisions about the natural environment.

Where possible, additional environmental enhancements are built into our projects.

American Mink are voracious predators and continue to threaten the water vole population and our native wildlife. The Waterlife Recovery Trust is seeking volunteers to host a smart mink raft, further information can be found at: <https://www.waterliferecoverytrust.org.uk>

Roles and Responsibilities

IDBs are an integral part of managing flood risk and land drainage within areas of special drainage need, undertaking work to manage water levels and reduce flood risk. This work includes maintenance of a network of pumping stations and watercourses in the lowland catchment.

IDBs have permissive powers to protect against flooding and to carry out water management works, however, this is not a legal obligation. This means that they have the 'power to' carry out works but are not duty bound to do so and will not be liable for the failure to exercise those powers.

Landowners have ultimate responsibility for protecting their own property from flooding and erosion and must act within statutory planning

regulations and other applicable legislation.

Main rivers are the responsibility of the EA.

Data Protection Statement

The Boards collect and process personal data to perform their statutory functions and to be able to deal with enquiries effectively. Information is not generally shared with external parties without prior permission but may be accessible to employees of other Water Management Consortium Boards and Board Members.

As part of system improvements and to ensure operational efficiency, all staff will be able to access landowner/occupier contact information; this will enable them to arrange access or discuss issues directly with you. Staff will access this information on secure devices which are fully managed by the organisation to ensure maximum protection of this data.

Full details of how the Boards use your information can be located on the Governance/ Data Protection page of our website. If you have any queries please contact the Boards' Data Protection Officer at the Manby office.

Staff

We are fortunate to have dedicated employees who work around the clock when required during an emergency event. Their commitment and loyalty to the organisation and knowledge of the local areas is highly valued and enables us to achieve all we do with so few people.

Three employees have been recognised this year for their long service (21 and 35 years).

Sadly, we will be saying goodbye to three members of staff this year after 17, 36 and 53 years' service to Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board and the Consortium. We wish them all the very best in their retirement.

We currently have vacancies for Civil Engineers, an Accounts Assistant, and Admin Support - for further details please telephone the Manby office.

With only a small workforce in each of the Board's areas, during a heavy rainfall event, volunteers are sometimes called upon to either 'buddy up' with our operatives when we are working shift patterns, or just to feedback information on the ground. If you are interested in assisting with this and would like to know more, please call the office.

Lincolnshire Show

The Association of Drainage Authorities Lincolnshire Branch will be at the Lincolnshire Show on 19th and 20th June 2024. If you would like to learn more about what we do or have any questions, please come and visit us on the stand near the clock tower. Representatives from your local drainage board will be there together with Lincolnshire County Council and the EA to answer any questions.

Board Meetings and Members

Meetings are held at the end of January, March, June, September and November and are open to members of the public; please contact a member of the Corporate Services Team for further details if you wish to attend.

The Boards are made up of members elected by the drainage ratepayers and those appointed by the special levy paying councils.

An **election** for members to the Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board will be held this year. If you are interested in joining the Board and would like to know more about what this involves, please contact Carol Davies at the Manby office.

Chairmen

Giles Crust (Lindsey Marsh)

John Coggon (Isle of Axholme)

John Miller (Trent Valley)

Chris McGuinness (Doncaster East)

Officers

Andrew McGill (Chief Executive)

Robert Brown (Senior Engineer)

Antony Malin (Senior Operations Manager)

Operational Staff:

Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board

Steve Stones (Operations Manager)

Derrick Quickfall (Foreman)

Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board

Mat Everett (Operations Manager)

Kai Creed (Foreman)

Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board

Graham Sutton (Operations Manager)

Wayne Rowlands (Foreman)

Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board

Graham Sutton (Operations Manager)

Graeme Warman (Works Supervisor)

2024 Summer Maintenance Works

NOTICE OF ENTRY

Under Section 64 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, Notice is hereby given that the Boards' summer maintenance works will commence shortly and to carry out this work we may require access onto land owned or occupied by you. This work will involve flailing of the bank and removal of weedgrowth from the channel.

Work will commence on 15th July and is usually complete by the end of November, however, where there is excessive weedgrowth, access may be required earlier with a second cut later in the year.

The Boards will return the land to the "Cross compliance 2023" rules Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition" at the conclusion of these works. However, Countryside Stewardship options for buffer strips alongside Board maintained watercourses are likely to be affected by short term disturbance and you may wish to register a derogation with Natural England to ensure your entitlements are not jeopardised. If you require any support in making this application, please do not hesitate to contact us.

I trust you will afford the Boards' employees and contractors the required access to carry out this work which is essential to keep our systems flowing.

If you require any further information on the nature or timing of the works please telephone the Manby office 01507 328095.



Water Management Consortium

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*Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board
Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board
Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board*