

BLACK SLUICE

INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



Environment Committee Meeting

Wednesday 20th May 2015 at 2:00pm

Station Road, Swineshead, Lincolnshire PE20 3PW

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

I M Warsap
Chief Executive

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Our Ref: IMW/DPW/B10

Your Ref:

Date: 13th May 2015

To all Members of the Environment Committee

Notice is hereby given that a Meeting of the Environment Committee will be held at the Offices of the Board on Wednesday 20th May 2015 at 2pm at which your attendance is requested.

Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. To welcome guests and receive apologies for absence.
2. To receive and if correct sign the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 14th May 2014 (pages 1 – 9).
3. Matters arising.
4. To receive a report on Environmental Work completed in 2014/15 and recommendations for proposed works for 2015/16 (pages 10 – 20).
5. To review the Bourne North Fen Borrow Pits Study Tour (September 2014).
6. To receive a verbal report/presentation from:
 - (a) Scarborough Nixon Associates
7. To review the ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee minutes 3rd December 2014 (pages 21 – 27).
8. Any other business.

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

DRAFT - M I N U T E S

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the
Environment Committee

held at the Offices of the Board on Wednesday 14th May 2014 at 2pm

Members

Chairman - * Mr J R Wray

Mr R Leggott	* Mr R Welberry
Mr M J Scott	* Mr P Robinson
* Cllr D R Dickinson	* Mr P Holmes
* Mr J F Atkinson	* Mr V A Barker
* Mr K C Casswell	Mr C A Fretwell

(* Member Present)

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)
Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)
Louisa Hoyes (Environmental Intern Witham 3rd IDB)
Alan Ball (Wildlife Conservation Partnership)
Helen Scarborough (Scarborough Nixon Assoc)
Ian Nixon (Scarborough Nixon Assoc)
Claire Schofield (Scarborough Nixon Assoc)
Amy Bouic (Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership)
Leslie Hebdon (Risegate Environmentalist)

The Chairman introduced and welcomed the representatives above and thanked them for their attendance.

534 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr M J Scott, Mr R Leggott and Mr C Fretwell.

535 **MINUTES OF LAST ENVIRONMENT MEETING**

The Minutes of the last Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 15th May 2013, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was agreed that the Minutes should be signed as a true record.

536 **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) **Fish Refuge Shelters - Minute No 379(b)**

The Chief Executive responded to a question regarding the number of fish kills since the introduction of a phased start of the pumps at Black Hole Drove

536 (a) Cont.....

Pumping Station. The pumps are generally run at night and no fish kills have been observed or reported.

Mr Welberry informed the Committee that more than 336,000 elvers had died in an incident at the hydro electric power station in Ballyshannon over the Easter weekend it was understood that no one was checking the two traps at Cathleen's Fall due to staff holidays and over the weekend a major run of eels up the River Erne resulted in the traps becoming full and the elvers having nowhere to go and were starved of oxygen.

537 REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS COMPLETED 2013/14 - Agenda Item 4

Details of the environmental works completed were circulated with the agenda the Chief Executive highlighted the following areas;

(a) Owl Boxes

The Chief Executive reported that three pole mounted owl boxes were erected last year at Kirton Meeres and Kirton Marsh, this makes a total of thirty three boxes financed by the Board.

(b) Tom Tom Data Recording of Environmental Sightings

The Chief Executive presented a slide of the data inputting received from the Tom Toms devices in all eight of the Boards machines.

Amy Bouic thanked the Board for the data being received by Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC). A map detailing the water vole cluster in our area was circulated and a link will be supplied for the website.

(c) Risegate Eau Bank Works

The Chief Executive presented a slide picturing the hydro seed sprayed onto the banks. The Chairman reported that he had gone to the bank this morning and that the seed had germinated. The Committee discussed how this bank was to be managed, the Operations Manager stated that guidelines had been followed in preparing the area and that it should be self managed.

The arisings cut in late summer will become a seed gathering and will be put on the other bank.

With reference to the Derwent Cottage Scheme the Chief Executive stated that to complete the works some fencing and hedging is to be put back and with any budget left a hydro mixture will be put on the banks near Derwent Cottage.

(d) North Forty Foot Fishing Platforms

The Chief Executive presented a slide showing the disabled ramps to the fishing platforms. Mr Robinson enquired about the mass of rape on the opposite side bank, the Chief Executive stated that the Energreen will be cutting this down.

(e) Kingfisher Nesting Sites

The Chief Executive presented a slide of the completed site at Chain Bridge pumping station now that it has reeded up. Alan Ball commented that there have been reports of an increase in numbers of Kingfishers due to the mild winter.

(f) Grass Snake Breeding Sites

The Chief Executive presented a slide showing a large grass snake in the South Forty Foot Drain. The weed dump sites are to remain undisturbed.

(g) Boston Clean Up

The Chief Executive presented a slide of the Boards' Workmen cleaning out a dyke during the Boston Clean Up and this was featured in the Boston Daily on the 24th April 2014.

(h) Invasive Species

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that GNLP have produced detailed documents identifying a range of invasive species. The Workmen have been given laminated A5 copies, he offered copies for the members to take away.

(i) Bombus Ruderatus Bee

The Chief Executive presented a slide picturing the development of a site near Allen's Bridge. He then introduced Leslie Hebdon to the Committee who has helped to encourage the bees by planting several species of flower to promote and protect the bee's habitat.

The Board has completed a scheme there to open the area up which has released the water system. The Bombus ruderatus bee which has been identified on site is a rare bee to Lincolnshire.

(j) North Forty Foot Drain

The Chief Executive presented a slide picturing the temporary works dam erected on the North Forty Foot Drain. Large quantities of eels and fish were carefully removed prior to the water levels being reduced in order to aid the desilting works.

538 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY AND DRAIN WORKS TO BE CARRIED OUT 2014/15

(a) Water Vole Surveys

The Chief Executive proposed that the water vole surveys continue to be carried out by Scarborough Nixon prior to desilting and following the works where water voles had been identified. The Committee AGREED.

(b) Bats

The Chief Executive explained that during the Board's works it was realised that we had roosting bats noticeably around pumping stations, believed to be roosting in the gravity/suction bays. Helen Scarborough added that bats are legally protected and once surveyed you can plan ahead to do works at times of the year according to the species. She concluded there is a possibility that the bats are Daubenton's.

The Committee AGREED to recommend to the Board that a survey should be carried out on the bat population by Scarborough Nixon.

(c) Summer Cutting and Vegetation Clearance

The Chief Executive stated that the initial programme of works has been posted on the website and will be reviewed on a weekly basis. The workforce will be briefed regarding channel management in relation to balancing the benefits of flood risk, agriculture and the biodiversity values.

(d) Owl Boxes

The Chief Executive requested approval for three pole mounted barn owl boxes. The Committee discussed whether a programme for repair and replacement was needed.

Alan Ball responded that he and Bob Sheppard who check the boxes do ongoing maintenance and repair therefore there is no need to replace any. The Committee AGREED to recommend to the Board a contribution to erect three pole mounted owl boxes.

(e) Eel and Fish Passes

The Chief Executive had gone into great detail in the Agenda papers outlining the agreement and procurement of surveys for the ten pumping stations within the Black Sluice IDB on the High Priority list.

(f) Water Levels

The Chief Executive reported that water levels are continually required to remain higher in the summer months in order to assist trickle feed irrigation onto the land.

(g) The 2014 Lincolnshire Show Schools Challenge

The Chief Executive stated that during the Tour of Italy an idea was to offer a Schools Challenge which would be themed towards local education to create models and investigations in the format of a topical challenge supported by ADA. Students were invited to look into water level management. The Black Sluice has 43 schools in and around our district, the Chief Executive wrote to these schools offering assistance but unfortunately we did not get a single response.

Mr K Casswell responded that the school schedule is set out a year in advance and the approach should be made through the Head of Geography at Secondary Schools and Chairman of Governors at Primary Schools. The Committee felt this format should be encouraged and taken into next year.

(h) Fens Waterway Link

The Chief Executive stated that information relating to the sale of Horseshoe House, Bourne Road, Guthrum Gowt gave an indication to the preferred route.

(i) Fens for the Future

The Chief Executive stated that an introduction to this initiative is detailed in the agenda papers.

(j) Water Framework Directive

The Chief Executive and Operations Manager have attended a meeting with the EA Officers and outlined a number of questions to be looked into.

(k) Badgers

The Chief Executive stated that the Board only has licences to work adjacent to Badgers. The Committee discussed the damage badgers have on the ecology with them having no predator they are digging out bees, and grubs. Killing pheasants and hedgehogs, a badger will kill anything. Alan Ball added that any ground nesting bird will be falling prey to badgers. There are no surveys of numbers of badgers and nothing to control them.

(l) The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site

The Chief Executive stated that we are one of the authorities which have a statutory duty under the UK Habitats Regulations to report on progress against these management actions on an annual basis.

It was RESOLVED that the Report on Environmental Works should be received and adopted.

539 BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (BAP) - Agenda Item 5

The Chief Executive stated that due to the size of the document the BAP would be presented on screen and introduced Clare Schofield who had worked on production of this document to go through the changes.

Clare Schofield from Scarborough Nixon then highlighted the updates, some tables were made easier to read, with realistic and achievable targets.

Alan Ball commented that some of the birds were not Lincolnshire birds. The Chief Executive will email Alan to confirm and amend the section containing marsh warbler and curlew bunting.

The Committee AGREED to recommend approval by the Board at the next meeting.

540 REVIEW OF THE BOURNE NORTH FEN BORROW PITS - Agenda Item 6

The Chief Executive stated to the Committee that the Board owns three environmental sites "borrow pit sites" which have been identified as significant sites with high environmental potential. Scarborough Nixon were approached to survey these sites with the view to presenting a 5 to 10 year management plan.

Clare Schofield presented a powerpoint management plan:

Borrow Pit 1 at Wherry's Farm, Twenty

This triangular Pit measuring approximately 1.37 hectares, is close to the River Glen and a railway line that was dismantled in the 1950s. A drainage ditch runs parallel with the eastern boundary of the site.

The site is surrounded, on its other two sides, by arable land. The Pit can be divided into two distinct parts, excavated into two levels.

One level is open in character but has been planted with hazel and alder at some point in its recent history. Common reed is abundant in this area, supported by sedge and rush species associated with a wetland habitat, and suggests at least seasonal retention of water. The more enclosed area could be described as wet woodland and comprises mostly of a mixed age stand, including standing and lying dead wood, of species of willow.

Management objectives for the site are:

- Allow woodland habitat to develop naturally
- Increase roosting opportunities for bat species
- Maintain and enhance the reed bed habitat
- Review the management plan after five years

Borrow Pit 2 at Bourne North Fen, Twenty

The site comprises two standing water bodies, a large lake and a smaller pit to the north separated by a grassy tree lined bund. There are wide fringes of common reed and the banks are tree lined with a variety of species. The site supports fish and abundant waterfowl, it comprises of a mosaic of wetland, woodland and grassland habitats.

Management objectives for the site are:

- Manage the wet woodland habitat appropriately
- Maintain and enhance the reed bed habitat
- Enhance and protect the site for specially protected bird species (marsh harrier and bittern)
- Review the management plan after five years

Borrow Pit 3 at Cooke's Farm, Twenty

This rectangular Pit, measuring approximately 3.26 hectares, is close to Bourne Eau. A drainage ditch runs parallel with the southern boundary of the site. The site is surrounded, on its other three sides, by arable land.

The Pit can be divided almost equally into two distinct parts, plantation woodland and willow carr.

Management objectives for the site are:

- Allow willow carr woodland to develop naturally
- Selectively thin trees in the plantation woodland
- Improve the ground flora in the plantation woodland
- Lay the hawthorn boundary hedgerow
- Increase roosting opportunities for bat species
- Review the management plan after five years

The Committee discussed that any environment budget surplus could be used, the Chief Executive was requested to assess costings for some of the works required.

541 HECKINGTON FEN WIND PARK GRID CONNECTION - Agenda Item 7

The Chief Executive stated that the Secretary of State, Planning Inspectorate has written to the Board requesting information in an environmental statement relating to the project. The deadline for receipt of our report is 29th May 2014.

The Chief Executive proposed a request to use experts to help the Officers produce a statement to the government regarding the sites at Heckington and Bicker for sub stations and the proposed two routes. The Committee AGREED to recommend that funding be provided for Scarborough Nixon to assist.

542 REPORTS – Agenda Item 8

(a) Amy Bouic - Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP)

This is the second full reporting year and the latest Lincolnshire BAP 2013/14 is now complete. The Annual Review will be published shortly and copies will be sent to the Black Sluice IDB. The Black Sluice has contributed data from the Tom Tom to LERC which has enabled a BAP map with location, species data which has been requested by other organisations, many thanks to Black Sluice for submitting your records.

The GLNP are issuing a Position on Agriculture statement once endorsed these statements will give everyone in the Partnership a clear idea of what we stand for and why.

Amy.bouic@glnp.org.uk www.glnp.org.uk

(b) Louisa Hoyes - Lincs ADA Environment Committee Review

The draft ADA Lincs Environment Committee minutes were enclosed in the agenda for information. Louisa Hoyes highlighted a few points to the Committee;

- (i) Anglian eel and fish prioritisation – All pumping stations designated category A or B must have a solution in place for eel screening by 31st December 2014, or they will be in breach of EU Law.

(c) Alan Ball - Wildlife Conservation Partnership

Only three pairs of Barn Owls bred in the Black Sluice Board's boxes in 2013 raising broods of just 3, 1 and 2. It was also a very poor year for Kestrels but one pair raised a brood of 6, the largest successful brood recorded in 2013.

Barn Owl experts across the UK have regarded 2013 as the worst breeding year in living memory, caused mainly by high mortality of adults in the exceptionally cold March at the end of a very severe winter and a resultant lack of mice/voles as prey. However Lincolnshire seems to have fared much better than other areas in the UK, thanks to high levels of prey and a later breeding season followed by a mild 2013/14 winter. The prospects for 2014 are looking very good indeed. If pairs double brood in 2014 it is likely to be the best year on record in Lincolnshire.

Thanks to the efforts of landowners, the EA and all of the Drainage Boards in Lincolnshire (remembering that Black Sluice was the first Drainage Board in 1987 to erect owl boxes), Lincolnshire now has more Barn Owls than any other county in the UK. It is important to maintain this stronghold as Barn Owls reared in Lincolnshire can move into neighbouring areas and help maintain the British population, especially following poor years such as 2013.

542 (c) Cont.....

Three new pole boxes were installed in early 2014 bring a total of 33 boxes. The boxes have started to be checked for 2014 so far the new box at Kirton Meeres on land owned by Paul Holmes, has been taken up by Barn Owls and already have five owlets. Whilst inspecting locations for new sites Little Owls were sighted so a little owl box was installed in a nearby building. All boxes will be checked by the end of June 2014 and we are expecting much better results.

Bob Sheppard and Alan Ball on behalf of the Wildlife Conservation Partnership would like to thank the Black Sluice Board for their unwavering support and enthusiasm for maintaining the Barn Owl nest box scheme.

(d) Helen Scarborough - Scarborough Nixon Associates

Helen felt that all matters had been discussed during the meeting; she stated that if any members had any questions or queries then please let her know.

543 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Vice Chairman

The Chairman recommended to the Members of the Committee to nominate Paul Homes as Vice Chairman of this Committee. Seconded by Cllr D Dickinson and all AGREED.

(b) Environmental Committee Meetings

A question was raised regarding the number of meetings each year. The Chief Executive stated that if there were pressing issues which needed to be reviewed then an additional meeting would be called.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5pm.

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING – 20th MAY 2015

AGENDA ITEM No 4

REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS

Completed Works in 2014/15

1. **Owl Boxes**

Three pole mounted owl boxes were financed, and the Wildlife Conservation Partnership erected these with help from the Board. This makes a total of thirty six boxes erected and financed by BSIDB.

The 2014 Annual Box check completed by Alan Ball and/or Bob Sheppard is attached for your information, 2014 being assessed as a record year with twelve successful broods.

2. **Tom-Tom Data Recording of Environmental Sightings**

This information is forwarded to the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC). Tom-Tom devices are recording data from all eight of the Boards machines.

3. **High Profile Watercourse Assets**

Early season flailing of Wyberton Marsh Drain, Washdyke Lane, NFF (Cooks Lock to Punchbowl Lane) and New Hammond Beck (Chain Bridge to Tesco) was carried out.

The RSPB expressed concern with reference to the early and continuous cutting along the Wyberton Marsh Drain but unfortunately this is such a high profile watercourse taking water away from the Marsh Lane Industrial estate the banks and channel must be cut to a greater frequency.

4. **Water Vole Monitoring Surveys**

Scarborough Nixon Associates (SNA) have carried out monitoring surveys for water vole evidence on the six pre-agreed watercourses. SNA will be presenting their reports under Agenda Item 6.

5. **Control of Mink**

The Board have liaised with agricultural land owners with regards to the correct setting up and inspection of the Boards traps and the dispatching of mink throughout 2014 and into 2015. Various sightings have been reported to the Board and advice sought regarding their removal.

6. Fish/Eel Passability Studies.

The Board with other Lincolnshire Board's entered into an agreement with the EA for them to carry out our Eel Regulation Compliance for 'Pumping Station Passability', this is being funded through DERFA Grant in Aid to levels of £5,000 per pumping station.

The EA are responsible for making sure compliance with these regulations is achieved. A report by the EA in September 2012 prioritised pumping stations in the Anglian Northern region for facilities for the passage of Eels and other fish, overall 442 land drainage pumping stations were identified (391 owned by IDB's and 51 owned by the EA).

We have ten pumping stations categories within the High Priority list:-

Black Hole Drove, Chain Bridge, Cooks Lock, Donington North Ings, Gosberton, Great Hale, Holland Fen, South Kyme, Swineshead and Wyberton Marsh. All ten pumping stations needed to be assessed before 1st January 2015 and provide appraisal studies and surveys relating to Eel passes, outline designs and cost benefit analysis along with investigations into addressing the problems associated with cost effectiveness towards their delivery. These appraisal studies were successfully delivered on time.

A £73,000 Grant in Aid allocation has been secured for works to fit new eel and fish friendly flap valves to the gravity channels at Chain Bridge and Cooks Lock Pumping Station following our CCTV trials, these works are currently being undertaken.

7. Environmental surveys of larger hedge rows in our Bushing programme

Surveys were carried out by the Boards officers on any significant hedgerows that were felt could offer a form of environmental enhancement prior to any bushing works. No environmental enhancements or protected species were identified during the 2014 surveys or works.

8. Burning of Hedgerow Bushes

All bushes were either chipped (90%) on site or burnt (10%) using wooden pallets and straw bales as the core heat source.

9. RSPB water abstraction for Frampton Marsh

Permission has again been granted by the EA and the Board for the RSPB to abstract 400,000m³ of water per annum from the Wyberton Marsh pumping drain to assist with water management levels in the Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve.

A water pollution problem was identified within the Marsh Lane Industrial Estate in early 2015 and the RSPB were advised to stop transferring water until further notice.

10. Kingfisher Nesting Site

The site on the Hammond Beck fronting Chain Bridge pumping station is now established and being observed, numerous Kingfishers sightings have been recorded around Wyberton, Kirton, Kirton End and Kirton Holme. A pair of mute swans have built a nest on the ledge of the site.

11. Big Boston Clean Up

The Board's workforce were once again involved with the Big Boston Clean Up in April 2015.

12. Fly Swat Team

The Board remains a partner within the Operation Fly Swat team and contributes towards its funding, which in turn offers financial benefits to the Board in relation to the amount the Board previously spent on fly tipping clearance.

13. Grass Snake Breeding Sites

A Technical Advice Note has been produced by SNA and their recommendations have been followed on selected isolated Pumping Stations (Hacconby and Morton).

14. Invasive Species

Invasive species identification guides were produced by the GLNP for Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, New Zealand Pigmyweed and Floating Pennywort. The guides are handed out to the operational workforce at each year's pre-cutting brief.

Japanese Knotweed was recorded on several occasions in 2014 and reported to the EA.

15. Bat Surveys

Bat surveys were completed by SNA at seven of our larger pumping stations, the full results will be introduced by SNA in Agenda Item 6. An Otter spraint was recorded at Trinity College PS whilst completing the survey.

16. Schemes

(a) North Forty Foot De-Silting

Coarse fish and Eels have been continuously carefully removed from each section of works (c500m) prior to the water levels being reduced in order to aid the de-silting works.

Due to the numbers of fish recorded the EA have employed the Board to place numerous gabion baskets filled with tree branch brush and barley straw along

the North Forty Foot Drain. The brash will offer safe nursery areas for fish eggs and fry and the barley straw will help remove growing weed from the areas.

(b) Environmental Improvements to Gosberton Clough West of Allen's Bridge

The works have been successfully completed with the banks being recolonised with vegetation.

(c) Wild Flower Seeding at Risegate Eau

This spring should be the first year the majority of flowers are in boom.

Proposed Works in 2015/16

1. Water Vole Surveys

Committee approval is requested to continue to employ SNA to undertake further surveys for water vole evidence at the monitoring sites and on some sites prior to desilting and any significant capital works. In addition, post desilting surveys will be carried out following the works where water vole activity has been found to confirm whether or not our works have had any effect on these populations. Environmental mitigation works may be required should results give evidence of disturbance.

2. Bat Surveys

Committee approval is requested to further undertake surveys for bats by SNA at several of the Boards larger pumping stations.

3. Winter Bushing and Cleansing

Bushing works will commence in November along with the cleansing works, all bushes will be chipped onsite, all excavated silt will be deposited on adjacent fields, left to dry then spread and levelled across the land. Where required water levels will be lowered by damming lengths of the water course and the water over-pumped, if fish are evident they will be carefully removed whilst the water is being lowered and transferred over the dams.

4. Summer Cutting and Vegetation Clearance

The Boards summer cutting programme will commence on the 13th July, the mechanical flails will go out a few days beforehand in order to 'get in front' of the excavators. The workforce will be presented with a 'Summer Cutting Brief' which will cover channel management in relation to balancing the benefits of flood risk management, agriculture and the biodiversity values.

Where birds nests are encountered a minimum 10m length of bank will be left un-cut (5m each side of the nest)

5. Vegetation Spraying

The Boards hand spraying weed programme commenced in April and can be viewed on the Board's web site, the only lengths being sprayed in 2015 are the historical hand mowing lengths and some isolated headwalls.

6. Owl Boxes

Committee approval is requested for the Board to pay for the erection of three pole mounted Barn Owl boxes in 2015, similar to last year.

The Board paid a contribution of £1,540 for the work last year.

The Committee should be reminded that Barn Owls very rarely target Water Voles as their prey, due to the high risk of becoming wet following a strike. Barn Owl feathers are not waterproof and they cannot afford to get their flight feathers wet.

7. Recording by Machine Drivers

The eight machine drivers will continue to record sightings on the Tom-Tom units in the machines; environmental sightings such as badger or fox holes in banks, water voles, newts, eels, grass snakes, frogs and toad sightings along with other specialist environmental sighting will be recorded.

8. Eel and Fish Passes

The Board with other Lincolnshire Board's have entered into an agreement with the EA for them to carry out our Eel Regulation Compliance for 'Pumping Station Passability', this is being funded through DERFA Grant in Aid to levels of £7,000 per pumping station.

The EA are responsible for making sure compliance with these regulations is achieved. A report by the EA in September 2012 prioritised pumping stations in the Anglian Northern region for facilities for the passage of Eels and other fish.

Thirty four pumping stations within the EA Anglian Northern region have been identified on the Medium Priority list and we have seven pumping stations on this list:-

Bicker Fen, Heckington, Helpringham, Swaton, Trinity College, Billingborough and Kirton Marsh. At this time we need to assume all will require works, we will plan for further EA investigations in this financial year again being funded through DEFRA Grant in Aid.

Grant in Aid money is being allocated to every pumping station for future 'safe passage works'. Where 'major improvement/replacement works' are being planned to go ahead within the next five years the 'safe passage' works should also be included.

9. High Profile Watercourse Assets

Early season flailing of Wyberton Marsh Drain, Washdyke Lane, NFF (Cooks Lock to Punchbowl Lane) and New Hammond Beck (Chain Bridge to Tesco) will continue to be carried out.

Other notable watercourses that have enhanced maintenance are Endeavour Park (12/4&5), Kirton Drainside North (5/30), Frampton Towns Drain from London Road to weir (5/1), Gosberton Rise Gate Eau (22/14), Bicker Eau through the village (4/67), and the Drain alongside the IDEA park at Donington (2/26).

A total of c67Km of further high profile watercourse assets (generally our larger watercourses) have been identified that require additional late summer inspections to determine whether a second flail and/or cut is required.

10. Water Levels

Water levels will continue to be controlled via the Boards 34 pumping station and/or the gravity channels associated with them. The South Forty Foot Drain (SFF) summer water levels were raised by the EA in early April and will be lowered back to winter levels in November, this obviously affects the gravity flows from the catchments into the SFF. Water levels within the catchments will be held back where requested, this will help to enhance the biodiversity associated with the watercourses.

11. Fenlands Waterway Link (FWL)

As previously reported this is a long term project and the EA consultants are currently investigating the widening of the southern end of the South Forty Foot Drain near Guthram Gowt before connecting into the River Glen.

We have received no further updates from this time last year;

'Uncertainties on the FWL means there is no project budget to progress the project with. Our original proposal for this route relied on the cooperation of the occupiers of Horseshoe House. Since they have asked us not to use that route we can confirm that we have no existing plans to take forward a Fens Waterway Link Scheme which would directly affect Horseshoe House without the agreement of the property owners. We would, therefore, only reconsider this position if a future owner (the house is currently on the market) of Horseshoe House express interest in such a scheme. The EA remains prepared to speak to potential purchasers or other interested parties regarding this scheme'.

12. Fens for the Future

The Fens for the Future Vision is to see sustainable wetlands restored, re-created and reconnected across the Fens for the benefit of people, our natural and historic heritage and the rural economy. Sustainable wetlands will help reduce storm effects, make available clean water and retain peat land soils so helping mitigate the effects of climate change, while at the same time offering a haven for wildlife,

protecting our historic heritage and providing exciting areas for people to visit. Recreational access and tourism increases with more people taking exercise in the countryside. The diversity of the local economy widens and opportunities for employment in local communities are created.

The Fens for the Future Partnership Mission Statement is to make the Fens one of the main UK landscape scale wetland complexes by 2020, within a matrix of sustainable agriculture.

The Fens remain nationally important for modern productive farming. The provision for wildlife in the farmed landscape increases significantly with the uptake of environmentally friendly farming practices and sensitive ditch and drain management, thus creating a network of wildlife habitats extending throughout Fenland. The variety and abundance of farmland wildlife increases and iconic Fenland species thrive.

13. Water Framework Directive (WFD)

Meetings have taken place with the WFD EA Officers over the past year and we have the following reviews to complete:-

- What actions do we undertake within our maintenance regime that can affect the water quality within our catchments (good/bad)?
- What levels of water quality information do the EA hold and what catchments does this cover?
- What longer term plans can we start to jointly investigate to further enhance our catchments working within the WFD guidelines?
- What records do you hold on the 148km of EA main river within our catchments?
- What funding is there available to assist with future enhancements works?

14. The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site

The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site (WNNC EMS) management scheme has been running since 2002 with the aim to safeguard marine wildlife and habitats designated under EU and UK law, while encouraging sustainable use of the European marine site. The management objectives are broken down into time scaled actions which were drawn up in consultation with the various relevant authorities and stakeholders.

Being one of the relevant authorities we have a statutory duty under the UK Habitats Regulations to report on progress against these management actions on an annual basis, and the information is presented in the Action Plan.

We report on subjects such as land drainage, shoreline management (if applicable), coastal oil spills, water framework directives, chemical weed control, non-native invasive species and water abstraction.

Annual Check of Black Sluice IDB nest boxes –2014

Boxes checked by Alan Ball and/or Bob Sheppard on dates shown

**Wildlife
Conservation
Partnership**



Box	IPMR	Grid Ref	Location	Descr.	Date	Usage
1365	DYF	TF152227	Dyke Fen Pump	Pump	18/05	Kestrel – 1 egg in top failed – now Jackdaw, Jackdaw in box
1366	RSI	TF167251	West Pinchbeck (Black Hole Dr)	Pump	26/05	Jackdaws – 3 nests with eggs/small chicks
1367	RSI	TF166257	Haconby Fen Pump	Pump	26/05	Jackdaw – 2 nests of 2 and 4 chicks EY60902-08
1368	RSI	TF166266	West Pinchbeck (Starlode Drove)	Pump	26/05 22/06	Barn Owl – 6 small chicks, fem=con/GR66888, Jackdaw –tops 5 x Barn Owl chicks ringed GV01269-73
1369	RSJ	TF165271	Dunsby Fen Pump	Pump	26/05	Jackdaw – 2 nests - 7 chicks EY60812-18
1370	RSJ	TF164275	Rippingale Fen Pump	Pump	26/05	Jackdaw – 3 nests – 9 chicks EY60832-40
1371	RSJ	TF162284	Dowsby Fen Pump	Pump	06/07	Jackdaw – fledged?
1293	RSJ	TF162284	Dowsby Fen pole	Mark 7	06/07	Jackdaw – fledged?
1372	RSJ	TF167294	Gosberton Pump	Pump	26/05	Not checked but being accessed by Jackdaws
1373	RSQ	TF164318	Neslam Fen Pump	Pump	31/05	Barn Owl – 1 chick GR97731 (plus 4 unhatched eggs)
1374	RSV	TF168331	Quadring Fen Pump	Pump	31/05	Jackdaw – empty nest
1375	RSV	TF168333	Billingborough Fen Pump	Pump	31/05 15/06	Kestrel – in top 4 eggs, Jackdaw in box -2 chicks EY93086-87 2 x Kestrel chicks EY93509-10
1376	RSG	TF170346	Horbling Fen Pump	Pump	31/05	Jackdaw – 1 chick EY93093
1377	RST	TF174364	Swaton Fen Pump	Pump	26/04	Little Owl – failed on 2 eggs, now Jackdaws

1378	RST	TF176370	Donington Ing Pump	Pump	31/05	Jackdaw – 3 nests – 8 chicks EY93112-19
1379	RST	TF177375	Helpringham Fen Pump	Pump	25/05 25/06	Barn Owl – 5 small chicks, female=r/GC82935; Jackdaw top 1 chick 3 x Barn Owl chicks ringed GV01312-14
1380	RSH	TF186397	Bicker Fen Pump	Pump	31/05	Jackdaw – 2 chicks EY93108-09, top = Jackdaw 2 chicks EY93111-12
1381	RSU	TF206425	Great Hale Pump	Pump	02/06	empty
1383	HKF	TF185466	Heckington Pump (Head Dyke)	Pump	25/05 15/06	Kestrel – in top 5 eggs, Jackdaw – 2 chicks EY60739-40 5 x Kestrel chicks ringed EY93521-25
1384	SKF	TF207469	South Kyme Pump	Pump	25/05	Jackdaw – 3 nests of 3 chicks EY60730-38
1385	EWV	TF159484	Ewerby Pump	Pump	03/06	Kestrel – 2 chicks EX81884-85
2973	PAH	TF192484	South Kyme (Pattingden House)	Pole box	15/06	Kestrel – failed on eggs in top Jackdaw – fledged? Now Barn Owl roost – male = GV01032
1386	SKG	TF194507	Damford Grounds Pump	Pump	25/05 25/05	Barn Owl – 6 chicks, male=GR97682 (15/06 - 4 ringed GV01028-31) Kestrel – in top 6 eggs, (28/06 failed – eggs addled)
2971		TF199521	Chapel House (ex Bridge House)	Pole box		Not checked due to difficult access
2803	BSH	TF205529	Hart's Grounds (Andrew Means)	Pole box	02/06 29/06	Barn Owl – 5 chicks 1 egg, male = r/GR82092; Kestrel in top 2 eggs 2 x Barn Owl chicks ringed GV08522-23, Kestrel failed
2804	BSM	TF204484	Maryland (Pocklington Bros)	Pole box	02/06 02/06	Barn Owl – 3 chicks GR97792-94 Kestrel – in top 5 eggs, (3 chicks ringed 29/06 EY93612-14)
2802	BSG	TF236477	Gill Bridge (Barry Hall)	Pole box	01/06	Barn Owl – 3 chicks ringed GR97781-83 (+ 2 addled eggs)
2969	NST	TF248464	Holland Fen (Two Hundred Fm)	Pole box	01/06	Barn Owl – 3 chicks ringed GR97778-80 Kestrel – 2 eggs in doorway - failed
3170	KME	TF281388	Kirton Meeres - Pick's Barn	Pole box	01/05	Barn Owl – 6 small chicks fem=GR82475, 4 chicks GR97772-74 02/06

1387	WYB	TF359400	Wyberton Marsh Pump	Pump	01/06 01/06	Barn Owl – 4 chicks GR97762-65 Kestrel – in top - 4 eggs (failed 15/06)
3169	KSK	TF341370	Kirton Skeldyke	Pole box	01/06	Jackdaw – 3 chicks EY93175-77
3165	BFK	TF330358	Kirton Bucklegate	Pole box	01/06	Barn Owl – 5 eggs 1 chick (2 chicks ringed 28/06 GV01329-30)
1388	KIR	TF343350	Kirton Marsh Pump	Pump	01/06	Barn Owl – 3 chicks GR97750-52, Stock Dove in to – 2 eggs

Association of Drainage Authorities Lincolnshire Branch **Environment Committee**

Committee Chairman: P. Lundgren

Committee Vice Chair: N.Watts

Committee Secretary: S. Ireland

Minutes of 33rd meeting of the committee, held on 3rd December, 2014 at 47 **Norfolk Street, Boston**

Present:

Julian Bowden (JB)	Welland & Deepings IDB (<i>Engineer</i>)
Bryan Bowles (BBo)	Upper Witham IDB (<i>Board Member</i>)
Andy Carrott (AC)	Witham Fourth District IDB (<i>Engineer</i>)
Annette Faulkner (AF)	Lincs Bat Group
Colin Faulkner (CF)	Lincs Bat Group
David Hutchinson (DH)	Environment Agency (<i>Catchment Coordinator</i>)
Sam Ireland (SI)	Witham First District, Witham Third District & Upper Witham IDBs (<i>GIS & Ratings Officer</i>)
Peter Lundgren (PL)	Witham First District IDB (<i>Ratepayer</i>)
Chris Manning (CM)	Lindsey Marsh DB (<i>Environment Officer</i>)
Fiona Mckenna (FM)	Lincoln Rivers Trust (<i>Project Officer</i>)
Alice Millard (AM)	Natural England (<i>Lead advisor-Lincolnshire Coasts, Marshes & Marine</i>)
Norman Osborne (NO)	Witham First District IDB Board Member & Lincs ADA Branch Chair
Martin Redding (MR)	Witham Fourth District IDB (<i>Assistant Engineering Manager & Environment Officer</i>)
Darren Scott (DS)	North East Lindsey Drainage Board (<i>Works Supervisor</i>)
Keely Tizzard (KT)	North Level IDB (<i>Engineering Technician</i>)
Ian Warsap (IW)	Black Sluice IDB (<i>Chief Executive</i>)
Richard Wray (RW)	Black Sluice IDB (<i>Board Member</i>)

Apologies:

Bob Ballerini (BBa)	Upper Witham IDB (<i>Board Member</i>)
Amy Bouic (AB)	Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (<i>Nature Policy Officer</i>)
Alison Briggs (ABr)	Shire Group of IDBs (<i>Environment Officer</i>)
Jo Finlow (JF)	Fens for the Future (<i>Project Officer</i>)
Ian Russell (IR)	Environment Agency (<i>Partnerships Manager</i>)
Karl Vines (KV)	South Holland IDB (<i>Engineer</i>)
Nicholas Watts (NW)	Welland & Deepings IDB (<i>Board Member</i>)

	Item	Action
1.	Welcome & Chairman's Announcements - PL thanked MR and Witham Fourth IDB for hosting.	
2.	Apologies As recorded above	
3.	Minutes of last meeting of the committee held on 3rd September, 2014 Approved as a true record (with the amendment of PP spelling, NO Board Member & page number inclusion)	
4.	Matters arising None	
5.	Presentation by Annette Faulkner about Lincolnshire Bat Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annette and Colin are local bat workers in the South Holland and South Kesteven areas. - Fenland drains are an extremely important habitat for bats. - There are 18 species of bat in the UK, 12 of which are found in Lincolnshire. - Bats generally have one offspring per year, hence their vulnerability. The oldest recorded pipistrelle was 16 years old. - Away from habitation, the two main species found are common pipistrelles and Daubenton's bats. - These species do not generally compete for food as Daubenton's occupy and feed from the area directly over the water, whereas common pipistrelles tend to feed at a higher level, along the banks. - Common pipistrelles generally roost in buildings whereas Daubenton's roost in bridges, culverts and occasionally trees. - Females return to the same roost year after year. - In drains with lots of bridges, Daubenton's are likely to be present. - Different species of bats echolocate at different frequencies and using a bat detector, species can be identified. - There is little information known about Daubenton's in the fens so a study was undertaken to try to locate their roosts. - 3 fenland areas were studied-The Isle of Axholme, Hobhole and South Holland Main Drain and the times at which bats turned up at bridges helped to determine where their roosts were. Unfortunately studies were abandoned on Isle of Axholme due to a weed problem. - Bats are an excellent biodiversity indicator and their presence shows that fenland habitat and management is already perfect for their survival. - Daubenton's roost under bridges (generally in gaps or between beams & concrete decking), in collapsed culverts, and have been discovered in gravity channels in BSIDB's area. - Annette and Colin have requested that IDBs send environmental reports re. bats through to them as they are local record holders. 	All

6.	<p>GLNP update (ABO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The GLNP conference ‘Farming with Nature’ took place on 6th November. Thanks again go to Peter for giving an excellent presentation on pollinators. The feedback from delegates was very good, and the presentations are available on their website at http://www.glnp.org.uk/our-publications/governance/ - The new environmental land management scheme (previously referred to as NELMS) will now be known as Countryside Stewardship and the first information leaflet on the new scheme can be downloaded here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cap-reform-introducing-countryside-stewardship - The GLNP have agreed a process for identifying new Nature Improvement Areas. A number of landscape initiatives in Greater Lincolnshire are preparing to submit applications. More information can be found here: http://www.glnp.org.uk/whats-on/latest-news/#latest 	
7.	<p>Witham Partnership Update (FM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The last meeting was to finalise and shortlist project ideas. There are 30 project ideas in total. - Two ideas have been shortlisted for funding as they are the most feasible for completion within the next financial year: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off-channel fish refuge on the Lower Witham. 2. A fish bypass for Elnor’s weir (this is more complex and expensive, and as the exact amount of funding is unknown, it is quite likely that option 1 will be carried out). - Anglian Water is now on board and on the steering group. - Existing data is currently being used to create a catchment plan for the Witham. - Witham Partnership are going into Lincoln College to explain the dangers of misconnections. - Opportunity studies are currently being undertaken in Lincoln & Sleaford. 	
8.	<p>EA Update (DH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RBMP 6 year strategy is now out for consultation until 10th April 2015. - DH will visit each individual Board to discuss what the plan means for them. - FRMP consultation ending 31st January, 2015. - WFD’s catchment based approach has now been launched online. MR said that it’s very useful and shows sub-catchments and micro catchments. - MR has sent SI link to circulate. 	<p>DH</p> <p>SI</p>
9.	<p>Fish and eel passability studies (SI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capita have a delay in the programme-current date is 12th December. - All the RMAs and EA will have an exemption by 1st January 	

	<p>2015. There are six types of exemptions that will be issued (please note exemption 6 has been specifically included for this project):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best Practice Screening 2. Fish Friendly Pumps 3. KLAWA Bypass 4. Other – habitat suitability 5. Other – operational changes 6. Proposed solution is being prepared and will be known by March 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The exemptions will be issued as follows: High priority sites – a proposed solution will be in place by 2021. Medium priority sites – blanket exemption until 2021 to come up with a proposed solution. Low priority sites – blanket exemption until 2027. Please note that although medium and low priority sites will have exemptions, they will not be physically issued to IDBs unless specifically requested. - EA will work with partners on R&D of new technologies before they are installed wider. - IW informed the group that Jessica is about to go on maternity leave, and asked who is replacing her-SI to find out. - IW asked if gravity channels are considered as part of option 5 (operational changes)-SI to find out. - CM gave a short presentation about how they have calculated the lengths of watercourse using pump levels and LiDAR data. According to EA detailed river network length of watercourse suitable for eels came out as 65km, using the technique with LiDAR data to determine which watercourses are wet all year round the value was 29km. - Environmental survey for Boston Barrier showed that only one eel was caught over the whole 2 year monitoring period. - MR informed the group that 2 years of intensive surveys has started at Hobhole with the EA and Hull University Institute of Fisheries. Monitoring equipment has now been installed. Eels have been tagged this week and will be monitored. For the first time on a coastal pumping station, a net was attached to the outfall of the diesel pumps. No eel were found to have passed through the pumps, and all fish that had passed through were alive. The trial will be replicated at St Germans PS. As an aside, it has been found that grey seals can detect the signals from acoustic tags placed on eels and are using them to catch an easy meal! - BBo wanted to ensure that there was an element of error factored into eel studies to account for abnormalities occurring due to climate change. 	<p>SI</p> <p>SI</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Water vole class licences (CM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final outcome will be determined next week and CM will send around an update. - Class licence appears to be an easy way of going forwards, although issues to be ironed out. - AM has really good experience of class licences. 	<p>CM</p>

11.	INNS (MR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MR has been approached by Natural England to set up a workshop about INNS. He wondered if this is something we could achieve as a partnership as there is a pot of money available. - FM interested too. - Workshop would have to be carried out between now and April. - MR will coordinate. - Middle Level held a similar event which contained information on what INNS look like, control measures to contain spread and a practical at a local pond. 	MR
12.	River Trent Tidal Flap Improvements (CM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lindsey Marsh DB has said that they will require a byelaw consent from EA. They will then require them to carry out a flood risk assessment on the area. - These are flap valves from IDB system into Main River. 	
13.	Black Sluice Presentation on environmental practices and schemes (IW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PL-An environment committee improves the work of the full Board. Black Sluice IDB is one of only a few Boards with an environmental committee. PL congratulated BSIDB on their tour. - RW is the chair of the environment committee. It has 11 members and has met at least once a year for the past 5 years (occasionally with a study tour too). - BSIDB BAP was reviewed last year-IW will send copies around if requested. - They employ Scarborough Nixon Associates for environmental works. - They allocate £30,000 budget to the environment committee-this can be spent however the committee see fit and they do not have to go to the full Board to approve this spending. - Wildlife Conservation Partnership report has just come back, indicating that it was one of the best years on record-out of 33 nest boxes, 47 barn owl eggs were found on initial inspection, on second inspection, 37 barn owls were ringed. - 3 new nest boxes are installed each year, and of the 3 installed this year, 2 were almost immediately taken over by little owls. - A TomTom recording device is in each of the Board's 8 excavators. 6/12 of the reporting features on the device are to report environmental issues. These records are then sent to the record centre. It is also possible to report slips, obstructions in drains etc. - At Gosberton, a bank of wildflowers has been seeded using hydroseeding. This area is very good for bats (AF) and Deptford pink has been found there (AM). - At Chain Bridge pumping station, a vertical bank has been created to act as a kingfisher nest site. There are no records of the site being used as a nest site, but kingfishers have been seen in the locality. It is an inexpensive measure. 	IW

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BSIDB is involved with Operation Fly Swat. - In the southern fens, weed dumped at pumping stations is left for grass snakes. They also lay their eggs in the weed. - <i>Bombus ruderas</i> is a relatively rare species of bumble bee which has been found at Allen's Bridge, Gosberton Clough. - Fish are removed from channel prior to de-silting works. - Bats have been found roosting in a PS chamber behind the weed screen. This prompted studies of 6 further stations, all of which were shown to have signs of bats in their gravity channels. - Fish friendly flap valves have been implemented in some locations, allowing fish to pass through for an additional period when the flap valve is closed. 2 cameras were installed to monitor fish at these locations. There were no records of eels during this time. - BSIDB was very keen to get involved in Lincs Schools Challenge- despite writing to all of the schools within the area, no schools chose this project. - Importance of recording the location of badger sets was noted due to an excavator being thrown onto its side when a badger set collapsed underneath where it was tracking. - BSIDB is a partner of the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Site as they have 8km of front line tidal defence. Funding for this site could end in May 2015. - The study tour surrounded 3 borrow pits under the Board's control. The Environment Committee wanted plans producing for each of these three sites. Bourne Fen North borrow pit is mostly owned by the Board. The adjacent farmer has also created scrapes and ponds to encourage wildfowl. Marsh harriers are believed to nest there, and it is a wintering bittern site. The three borrow pit locations are extremely important in the context of the wider habitat, particularly with their proximity to Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve and with the River Glenn acting as a nature corridor between Nature Reserves. 	
14.	<p>Updates on remaining groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fens for the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a problem with floating pennywort and parrots feather in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. - The final report indicating the diversity of IDB drains has now been published. - Brown trout are now commonplace on the River Welland. - Op Fly Swat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Still ongoing - Municipal waste tip has closed so fly tips are now consisting of domestic rubbish. PL suggested pulling costs together for additional work caused by the closure and sending in to the council. - The group are finalising their application for the Project Excellence Awards. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ADA Technical committee - Awaiting advice on voles & ELS strips - More discussion on the release of beavers! - Any other relevant committee/organisation - EMS might have to be locally funded-AM fighting for this to be the case-was previously funded nationally but now local areas have been allocated with a budget. - BB & MR showing Sharon Bosley Jubilee Bank - PL will write a letter to express concern re. withdrawal of funding. 	PL
15.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terms of Reference approval. Terms of Reference were agreed as they currently stand with the addition of an introductory section and inclusion of a term of office. - Please note that the next meeting is on 3rd March (NOT 4TH) at Waterside House in Lincoln 	

Lincolnshire ADA Environment Committee

Want to see
how fellow
IDBs comply
with
environmental
legislation?

Keep up to
date with
partnership
working



Updates to
environmental
legislation

Want to see
examples of
good working
practice from
fellow IDBs?

How good
practice can
reduce cost?

Wednesday 17th June, 1.30pm, South Holland

Wednesday 9th September, 1.30pm, Banovallum
House, Horncastle (followed by a pub meal and
some bat detection in Boston!)

Wednesday 9th December, 1.30pm, Lincoln

Wednesday, 9th March, 1.30pm, Lindsey Marsh

To sign up to the environment committee mailing list, please
contact: envrionmentcommittee@witham-3rd-idb.gov.uk