

BLACK SLUICE

INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



Environment Committee Meeting

Wednesday 4th May 2016 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: 27th April 2016

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 4th May 2016 at 2pm at which your attendance is requested.



Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. To welcome guests and receive apologies for absence.
2. To receive a presentation from Ian Cappitt and Chris Reeds on behalf of an environmentally focused low key fishing syndicate reference leasing the fishing rights for Borrow Pit 2 at Bourne North Fen, Twenty.
3. To receive and if correct sign the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 20th May 2015 (pages 1 - 10).
4. Matters arising.
5. To receive a report on Environmental Work completed in 2015/16 and recommendations for proposed works for 2016/17 (pages 11 - 16).
6. To receive a verbal report/presentation from Scarborough Nixon Associates.
7. To review the ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee minutes 9th December 2015 (pages 17 - 23).
8. Any other business.

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the
Environment Committee

held at the Offices of the Board on Wednesday 20th May 2015 at 2pm

Members

Chairman - * Mr J R Wray

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

(* Member Present)

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)
Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)
Ian Nixon (Scarborough Nixon Assoc)
Celia Commowick (Scarborough Nixon Assoc)

The Chairman introduced and welcomed the representatives above and thanked them for their attendance. He also stated Cllr David Dickinson has not stood for Council re-election and therefore resigned from the Committee and he expressed sadness for the passing away of Mr C Fretwell who was a valued member of the Environment Committee.

743 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr M J Scott and Mr R Welberry.

744 MINUTES OF LAST ENVIRONMENT MEETING

The Minutes of the last Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 14th May 2014, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was agreed that the Minutes should be signed as a true record.

745 MATTERS ARISING

(a) North Forty Foot Fishing Platforms - Minute No 375(d)

Mr R Leggott stated he has witnessed disabled anglers using these platforms.

745 Cont.....

(b) Lincolnshire Show Schools Challenge - Minute No 538 (g)

The significance of agricultural land drainage is involved in this year's schools challenge albeit with a lower emphasis on land drainage than last year, those members attending this year's show were requested to take a look and report back.

746 REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS COMPLETED 2014/15 - Agenda Item 4

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

(a) Barn Owl Boxes

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

The 2014 annual box survey completed by the Wildlife Conservation Partnership is attached for information, 2014 being assessed as a record year with twelve successful broods.

(b) Tom Tom Data Recording of Environmental Sightings

The Chief Executive stated all information recorded is passed onto the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC), Mr R Leggott requested if it was possible to introduce this at a future meeting.

(c) Water Vole Monitoring Surveys

Scarborough Nixon Associates (SNA) have carried out monitoring surveys on six pre-agreed established sites, SNA will report on these under Agenda Item 6.

(d) Fish/Eel Passability Studies

The ten high priority pumping stations have been assessed with the appraisal studies being delivered to the Environment Agency (EA) before the 1st January 2015 deadline.

(e) Kingfisher Nesting Sites

The site is now so well established a pair of Mute Swans are nesting on the site, therefore the reed cutting has been left until a time they hatch and leave.

(f) RSPB water abstraction for Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve

The RSPB were advised to stop their water abstraction earlier in the year following signs of pollution on the surface of the water.

746 (f) Cont.....

The Committee asked if the polluter had been identified, the Operations Manager stated the EA had been investigating but to date no one had been identified, the situation continues to be monitored.

(g) Bat Surveys

SNA will be reporting under Agenda Item 6, it should be noted that during the survey at Trinity College Pumping Station there was evidence of an Otter spraint.

(h) North Forty Foot Drain

Following the recent de-silting works and fish removal prior to our works the EA have requested due to the large number of fish recorded that a length of drain is categorised as a fish nursery area. The EA have paid the Board to position gabion baskets filled with brash for nursery protection and barley straw to help reduce weed growth in these areas all to assist in encouraging continuous high numbers of coarse fish along this drain. The EA will study this area and any findings will be reported back to the Committee.

Some concern was expressed by Committee members regarding reductions in flows along this area. The Chief Executive informed the Committee he had agreed with the EA that if this was the case the gabion baskets would be removed by the Board.

(i) Wildflower Seeding on Risegate Eau bank.

The results have been disappointing; the Operations Manager is to speak with the Hydro Seed contractors to identify a more adaptable seed mixture.

747 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY AND DRAIN WORKS TO BE CARRIED OUT 2015/16

(a) Water Vole Surveys

The Chief Executive requested Committee approval to continue to employ SNA to undertake further surveys for water vole evidence at the six established monitoring sites and on any significant sites prior to desilting or 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. The Committee AGREED to recommend approval to the Board.

Mr P Holmes stated that a member of the public from Drain Side on Kirton Woodside stated that this site due to historic commercial activities had been in a poor state for over ten years but thankfully they have recently seen water voles in this area following the Boards continuous maintenance works which they believe had enhanced this area.

(b) Bats

The Chief Executive explained that various species of bat had been recorded at our pumping stations during SNA surveys and a full report will be received in Agenda Item 6.

The Committee AGREED to recommend to the Board that further surveys 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.

The Board's summer cutting programme will commence on the 13th July with the mechanical flails going out a few days before. Where bird nests are encountered a minimum 10m length of bank will be left un-cut, Ian Nixon agreed with this distance.

(d) Bird Nesting Boxes

The Committee discussed the long standing relationship the Board has with erecting Barn Owl boxes/pole boxes and agreed it may be the right time to focus on other endangered bird species, with the knowledge we could always return to focus on the Barn Owl.

The Committee AGREED to recommend to the Board to complete a maintenance regime to the Boards existing boxes, agree with SNA which new endangered bird species we should erect nesting boxes for and liaise with the Wildlife Conservation Partnership about modern Barn Owl box design and replacement of older existing boxes.

(e) Eel and Fish Passes

The Chief Executive stated 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 DEFRA 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.

747 (e) Cont.....

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 funds are 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.

The works were being planned to go ahead until an unclassified project update was received from the EA which states; 'at this stage we intend to only undertake further eel investigations on the medium priority sites once the EA has addressed the challenges to ensure any work undertaken is fully aligned. We will provide an update as soon as we are able.'

Due to the above we do not intend to proceed any further with these works until a time we are further notified from the EA to proceed.

(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) High Profile Watercourse Assets

The Operations Manager informed the Committee that 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 being 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 Risegate 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.

747 (g) Cont.....

The Committee agreed that Officers should monitor these watercourses in relationship to early season cutting (one or both banks) and late season cutting. To also attempt to cut back as much rape/mustard seed that is growing on the banks as this is having a detrimental effect on the grasses growing below these plants, early season cutting being the recommended action.

(h) Fens Waterway Link

The Chief Executive stated 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”.

(i) 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 Fen land. The variety and abundance of farmland wildlife increases and iconic Fenland species thrive.

(j) Water Framework Directive

Meetings will take place with the WFD EA Officers over the forthcoming 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?

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

The Chief Executive stated 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.

(l) Works in order to meet our BAP targets and other incidental works

The Chief Executive explained that various works are required to be completed this year in order to meet our BAP targets, these works were introduced to the Committee and discussed at length with estimated budgets being allocated to all works, the budgets fall in line with the total Environmental budget for 2015/16.

BAP Target works agreed:-

- To create 100m of new reed bed.
- Survey and map (GIS layer) all hedgerows by 2016.
- Improve a habitat/plant and establish the Greater Water Parsnip.
- Construct an Otter holt.

747 (l) Cont.....

- Complete a farmland bird study (agreed to study Wyberton Marsh and assess against the study completed in 2010).
- Carry out a Grass Snake survey.
- Erect bat boxes at pumping stations.

Incidental environmental works agreed:-

- Purchase additional Mink control equipment.
- Purchase emergency response pollution control equipment
- Invertebrate surveys

The Committee AGREED to submit the above works to the Board for approval subject to liaison and agreement with SNA.

748 REVIEW OF THE BOURNE NORTH FEN BORROW PITS STUDY TOUR - Agenda Item 5

The Chief Executive stated to the Committee how all involved had commented on the success of the Study Tour in September 2014.

The Chairman agreed with this statement and emphasised the environmental importance of the three borrow pits.

The Chief Executive then introduced the following works for this year:-

Borrow Pit 1 at Wherry's Farm, Twenty

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

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

748 Cont.....

Borrow Pit 3 at Cooke's Farm, Twenty

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 management plans are in place and the Committee AGREED to recommend to the Board to continue with the plans.

749 SNA REPORTS - Agenda Item 6

(a) Bat Surveys

Ian Nixon stated the Bat surveys had confirmed our thoughts that Bats are roosting/living in and around the pumping stations which include the suction bays and gravity channels. A Bat Survey report dated December 2014 has been produced and reports that Common Pipistrelle, Daubenton's, Myotis sp., Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule and Nathusius Pipistrelle were all present at various pumping stations.

The presence of Nathusius Pipistrelle, recorded at Cooks Lock pumping station is significant as this species is considered rare in the UK.

Swallows were also noted nesting below the pumping stations.

(b) Water Vole Surveys

Ian Nixon stated the six sites indentified for the surveys each have a healthy population of Water Voles, data is now being collated and will gradually build up a log of the success of each family unit for each site.

Ian felt that all matters had been discussed accordingly during the meeting; he stated that if any members had any questions or queries then please contact him or Helen at SNA.

750 TO REVIEW THE ADA LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES 3rd December 2014 - Agenda Item 7

The Chairman noted that the Chief Executive had presented BSIDB's environmental practices and the role of the Environment Committee to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee which received a positive response.

751 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) New Members

The Chairman requested any thoughts on new members.

(b) Chairman

Mr R Wray stood down as Chairman following his term of office, he recommended Mr P Holmes the current Vice Chairman as his successor, all members AGREED to recommend his appointment to the Board for approval.

The Committee thanked Mr Wray for his environmental input and guidance over the years and suggested he continued as a valued Environment Committee member.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.40pm.

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING – 4th MAY 2016

AGENDA ITEM No 4

REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS

Completed Works in 2015/16

1. Owl Boxes

Repairs were completed to some boxes and all boxes fixed to pumping station buildings were cleared, cleaned out and suitably 're-dressed'. The Trinity College pumping station box was re-erected onto the building.

2. Tom-Tom Data Recording of Environmental Sightings

New devices were ordered and are being fitted to our existing and new machines, all relevant environmental information will again be recorded throughout this years summer cutting with any relevant sighting being passed onto the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC) via the GLNP.

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 higher 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 5.

5. Control of Mink

The Board have continued to liaise with agricultural land owners with regards to the correct setting up and inspection frequencies of the Boards traps and the dispatching of mink throughout the year.

6. 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 2015/16 surveys or works.

7. Burning of Hedgerow Bushes

All bushes were either chipped (100%) on site or burnt (0%) using wooden pallets and straw bales as the core heat source.

8. RSPB water abstraction for Frampton Marsh

Permission has again been granted by the EA and the Board for the RSPB to abstract 500,000m³ of water per annum (this is a 100,000m³ increase from previous years) from the Wyberton Marsh pump drain to assist with water management levels in the Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve.

9. 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 nested on the ledge of the site in 2015.

10. Big Boston Clean Up

The Board's workforce were once again involved with the Big Boston Clean Up in April 2016.

11. 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.

12. 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).

13. 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 2015 and reported to the EA.

The Gulf Wedge Clam has been located in the SFFD near Hubberts Bridge, this is the first recording in UK waters. BSIDB have contributed £300 towards further studies of this invasive species within the SFFD.

14. Bat Boxes and Surveys

Bat boxes have been erected and surveys were completed by SNA at our pumping stations, the full results will be introduced by SNA in Agenda Item 5.

15. Environmental Schemes

(a) South Forty Foot Drain Otter Holt

An Otter holt has been constructed within the bank of the South Forty Foot Drain, this is being monitored for occupancy.

(b) Fish Friendly Flap Values

The two EA funded flap valves were fitted to the gravity channels at Cooks Loch and Chain Bridge Pumping Stations.

(c) Eel Passability at the Boards 'Category A' pumping stations.

The eleven pumping stations in the initial EA Category A classification (Chain Bridge, Black Hole Drove, Cooks Lock, Donington Wykes, Donington North Ings, Gosberton, Great Hale, Holland Fen, South Kyme, Swineshead and Wyberton Marsh) have all been assessed by the EA consultants resulting in detailed Eel passage mitigation and proposals being produced. These have all been evaluated with costs ranging from Donington Wykes £300k to Black Hole Drove £3.4m. No further actions are being instructed.

Proposed Works in 2016/17

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. 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 adjacent 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.

3. Summer Cutting and Vegetation Clearance

The Boards summer cutting programme will commence on the 11th 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).

Following recommendations from this Committee officers will monitor the increasing levels of rape/mustard seed growing on banks with a view to early season cutting or spraying before seed development.

4. 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 2016 are the historical hand mowing lengths and some isolated headwalls.

5. Owl Boxes

Approval is sought to spend c£1,000 on repairing/replacing existing boxes during 2016/17.

6. Recording by Machine Drivers

The eight machine drivers will continue to record sightings on the new 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.

7. 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 Risegate 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. South Lincolnshire Fen Partnership.

Associated with Fens for the Future, the Partnership covers part of our catchment north of the Bourne Eau and River Glen. Recent developments held at meetings with the Black Sluice Catchment Steering Group and the Water Resources East Anglia (WREA) could develop additional areas of fen wetland associated with water storage reservoirs.

11. Water Framework Directive (WFD)

Discussions take place with the WFD Officers to regularly review the following:-

- What actions do we undertake within our maintenance regime that can affect the water quality within our catchments?

- What levels of water quality information do the EA hold?
- What longer term plans can we start to jointly investigate to further enhance our catchments working within the WFD guidelines?
- What records do the WFD hold on the EA main rivers?
- What funding is there available to assist with future enhancements works?

12. 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.

13. BAP Target Works.

Works identified for 2016/17 are:-

- To create 100m of new reed bed (site to be agreed)
- Survey and map (GIS layer) all historically established hedgerows (by officers)
- Improve a habitat/plant and establish the Greater Water Parsnip (site to be agreed)
- Complete a farmland bird study (agreed to study Wyberton Marsh and assess against the 2010 study) and a Southern Fen study, Dunsby Fen/Hacconby Fen
- Invertebrate survey at Tongue End pond

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

Committee Chairman: P. Lundgren

Committee Vice Chair: N.Watts

Committee Secretary: S. Ireland

Minutes of 37th meeting of the committee, held on 9th December 2015 at **Witham Fourth IDB Offices, Boston, 1.30pm**

Present:

Darren Scott (DS)	North East Lindsey Drainage Board (<i>Works Supervisor</i>)
Ian Warsap (IW)	Black Sluice IDB (<i>Chief Executive</i>)
Jane Froggatt (JF)	Witham First District, Witham Third District & Upper Witham IDBs (<i>Chief Executive</i>)
Karl Vines (KV)	South Holland IDB (<i>Engineer</i>)
Lionel Grooby (LG)	North East Lindsey IDB (<i>Vice Chairman</i>)
Marie Taylor (MT)	Lincolnshire Rivers Trust & Witham Partnership (<i>Project Officer</i>)
Martin Redding (MR)	Witham Fourth District IDB (<i>Assistant Engineering Manager & Environment Officer</i>)
Martin Shilling (MS)	Witham First District, Witham Third District & Upper Witham IDBs (<i>Director of Operations</i>)
Nicholas Watts (NW)	Welland & Deepings IDB (<i>Board Member</i>)
Paul Hoyes (PH)	Witham Third District IDB (<i>Chairman</i>)
Peter Gilbert (PG)	Witham First District IDB (<i>Vice Chairman</i>)
Peter Lundgren (PL)	Witham First District IDB (<i>Ratepayer</i>)
Sam Ireland (SI)	Witham First District, Witham Third District & Upper Witham IDBs (<i>GIS & Environment Officer</i>)

Apologies:

Amy Bouic (ABo)	Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (<i>Nature Policy Officer</i>)
Anna Millard (AM)	Natural England (<i>Lead advisor-Lincolnshire Coasts, Marshes & Marine</i>)
Chris Manning (CM)	Lindsey Marsh DB (<i>Environmental Officer</i>)
David Hutchinson (DH)	Environment Agency (<i>Catchment Co-ordinator (Witham and Ancholme)</i>)
Keely Tizzard (KT)	North Level IDB (<i>Engineering Technician</i>)
Paul Holmes (PHo)	Black Sluice IDB (<i>Board Member & Chair of BSIDB Environment Committee</i>)
Richard Chadd (RC)	Environment Agency (<i>Senior Environmental Monitoring Officer</i>)

	Item	Action
1.	<p>Welcome & Chairman's Announcements</p> <p>Members were informed of the sudden death of Clive Mason. Clive was a Witham Third DIDB nominated member from West Lindsey District Council and a member of the RFCC. Some of you may know Clive better for the many years he worked as a regional manager for the NRA followed by a number of years working in consultancy. Clive was extremely active in the community and did a lot of work in the twinning of the village of Nettleham with Mul Sanne. In his younger days, Clive was a professional footballer and played for Burton Albion's first team. He was also on the books of West Bromwich Albion. He also took an active role in coaching the local football team.</p> <p>A welcome was given to Marie Taylor who has taken over from Fiona McKenna at the Lincolnshire Rivers Trust and as Witham Partnership Lead. Members were introduced to new attendees including Jane Froggatt (Witham First, Witham Third and Upper Witham), Paul Hoyes (Witham Third), Peter Gilbert (Witham First) and Lionel Grooby (North East Lindsey).</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>As recorded above.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of last meeting of the committee held on 9th September, 2015</p> <p>Proposed-MS Seconded-PL</p>	
4.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>None</p>	
5.	<p>GLNP update (PL)</p> <p>The GLNP held their annual conference on 12th November, 2015. The conference entitled 'The Value of Nature Tourism' was a resounding success. There were presentations from Chris Baron (GLLEP & Butlins), Fran Smith (GLNP), Simon Woodward (Leeds Beckett University), Jeanette & Rob Folwell (Greetham Retreat Holidays) and Kate Dent (Nottingham Enterprise Partnership). The conference attracted a high level of media interest.</p> <p>The value of nature tourism in Lincolnshire was quoted as being £58 million.</p> <p>The GLNP steering group has two new members. Christopher Heneage, the new member for agriculture and Lydia Rusling, the first occupant of the tourism seat.</p>	

	<p>MR- Witham Fourth IDB was interviewed as a part Simon Woodward's study into the value of nature tourism. Martin explained that a large number of their drains are navigable and therefore the Board are extremely proactive in promoting nature tourism.</p> <p>PL-The planning framework looks to be more relaxed for applications regarding nature tourism.</p>	
6.	<p>Witham Partnership Update (MT)</p> <p>Marie started her post last week. She will be working part time until April while she finishes her PhD with Hull Institute of Fisheries.</p> <p>The current projects being undertaken include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The River Slea River rehab project. The contractors are due in next week to carry out 'dig and dump' works to increase in-channel flow diversity, however the project has come across a stumbling block re. potential seepage into an aquifer. They are currently getting technical advice to determine how to proceed. They are looking for volunteers to install brushwood bundles downstream of Sleaford as a community based project. • LRT are working with Natural England on Witham Water Quality Pollution Prevention. • LRT are looking to expand their yellow fish project. This involves painting yellow fish on drainage outfalls to remind people that the contents of drains ultimately end up in rivers. • LRT have been working on a rehab project on Dunston Beck. They are hoping to roll this out across other watercourses. This work has been carried out using the Tesco Plastic Bag Fund. • Marie is organising a meeting with the RiverFly Monitoring Team. • It has been confirmed that LRT will be attending the ADA Lincs Branch stand at the Lincolnshire Show. 	All
7.	<p>EA Update (all)</p> <p>A workshop was held with the Environment Agency and Lincolnshire IDBs to discuss the 'withdrawal of permissive powers to undertake maintenance of unfunded watercourses'.</p> <p>JF gave a summary of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for 6 year capital programme has been ring-fenced • Deborah Campbell confirmed that the budget for year 1 of the maintenance programme (16/17) will be the same as this year (15/16) • All Lincolnshire Boards were approached informally re. potential 'de-maining'. Black Sluice collated all of the information and produced an overview map. • The stretches of watercourse that are proposed for 'de-maining' tend to be the ones which wouldn't attract further GIA funding. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key outcome of the meeting was Deborah Cambell putting in a proposal to get a project officer funded for a year. • ADA Lincs Branch Environment Committee could look at the environmental impact of the proposals. 	All
8.	<p>Update from meeting with Jez Brown re. maintenance (PL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environmental option is not necessarily the ‘do nothing’ option. • Jake Reeds and Paul Woods’ previous Lincs ADA Environment Committee presentations meeting common ground in terms of regular maintenance having environmental benefits. • Jez was upfront in talking about the lack of funding for de-silting works. • Jez was keen for partnership working, particularly as IDB costs are lower than EA costs. <p>MT- Would Anglian water have funding to help?</p> <p>IW- Anglian water have come to the table with the Black Sluice Catchment Strategy. Their vision is to move water from the Trent to the East Anglian area. Their plan is to construct 4 additional reservoirs equivalent to Rutland Waters.</p> <p>MR- Anglian Water fund River Care in the Anglian Region.</p>	SI to contact AW
9.	<p>IFM Conference: ‘Overcoming the barriers; practical solutions for implementing eel regulations passage and screening’</p> <p>The 3 day conference was held in Peterborough from 10th-12th November. The third day of the workshop included site visits to Witham Fourth’s Hobhole and Lade Bank Pumping Stations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has been going on at Hobhole and Lade Bank Pumping Stations to determine if the pumps are ‘fish and eel friendly’. The project is funded by the Environment Agency, and work undertaken jointly by the EA and Hull Institute of Fisheries (HIFi). • 300 eel were caught by licenced eel fisherman in Witham Fourth’s catchment and eel of an appropriate size and health were tagged. • 15 acoustic receivers were installed along Hobhole Drain, along with two ARIS units just in front of the weedcreens at the diesel and electric stations. • Bespoke frames were made for outfalls at Hobhole and Lade Bank, to which a 60m long fyke net was attached. • Control eel were used to determine net damage (if any) and crush damage from debris. • Eel found in the net were immediately sent to the lab for pathology. • Initially about 15-20 eel were put through the pumps at a time, 	

	<p>more indicative of a cold start.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was then decided to put eel through one at a time-this had almost a 100% success rate and included tagged and other eel that had naturally 'gone with the flow' to migrate. • On a similar trial at Lade Bank pumping station there was an almost 90% mortality rate at the electric station while the diesel station also recorded a near 100% success rate despite running three times the rpm rate to Hobhole! A considerable number of course fish also passed through both diesel stations unscathed. • Further research at these sites will continue throughout 2016 and support two PhDs and two MSCs and many other interrelated research initiatives. 	
<p>10.</p>	<p>North East Lindsey Environmental Works</p> <p>NELDB now have their own wetland nature reserve, 'Rosper Road Pools', near Immingham. Large scale improvements to the site are planned with the support of their partners Associated British Ports PLC.</p> <p>NELDB have had a 20 year partnership with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust involving important habitat improvement projects in northern Lincolnshire.</p> <p>These have included:</p> <p><u>The Great Scrapes Project</u> In October 2012 at the LWT Far Ings National Nature Reserve, Barton Upon Humber.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project involved re-profiling existing scrapes to hold water. • One metre of clay was bulldozed from the scrapes into the adjacent Target Lake, creating two islands. One island was covered in gravel, the other was left as bare mud. • Trees and hedges were removed to allow a fly-way for waterfowl. • A bird hide was installed overlooking the site. • The total cost was £30,000 with NELDB contributing £2,400 and expertise. • The site now attracts many bird species including avocet, bittern, little ringed plover and common tern. <p><u>Other large joint projects:</u></p> <p><u>Read's Island</u> (Named after a Mr Read who once lived and farmed on this island in the Humber Estuary).</p> <p>LWT, NELDB, RSPB and the Environment Agency were all involved in this project in 1997 which cost £15,000. The NELDB contractors were employed to repair banks on the island to retain brackish water on areas after high tides. Breeding islands were then created in the lagoons. It was very successful, 30 pairs of avocet bred on the island the next spring.</p>	

Barton Clay Pits and Far Ings NNR

NELDB have constantly been involved with LWT's management of these wetland sites and party to the successful return of breeding marsh harrier, bittern and many other species to these reserves.

NELDB have been involved with the water level management, clay extraction, new pit creation and reedbed management over many years, supplying practical help and expertise.

Thorne & Crowle Moors NNR

In the 1990s the NELDB contractors were employed to put in extensive dams at the LWT Crowle Moors reserve to re-wet the peatland areas, controlling birch encroachment and allowing for sphagnum and cotton grasses to thrive.

Killingholme Haven SSSI

This is a reserve owned by port developers ABLE UK and managed by LWT with much input from NELDB who manage the sluice into the Humber which regulates the water level in the saline lagoons. It is a nationally important site for roosting black-tailed godwit (4000+ in autumn).

Environmental Groups

- Lionel is NELDB's representative on a number of wildlife groups.
- NELDB sometimes assume the role of mediator with regard to contentious issues between the various actors in its area. For example, between farmers and the Environment Agency over plans for major plans for managed re-alignment projects along the Humber Bank.
- NELDB Works Supervisor Darren Scott sits on the ADA Branch Environment Committee.
- Darren also manages the NELDB Barn Owl box project. Currently, the 21 boxes which have been installed in the district have a 2/3rds success rate.

Maintenance & District

NELDB undertake 'sensitive' drain maintenance:

- Only one bank of a drain is cut each year.
- Water levels are kept constant.
- Marginal vegetation at the toe of banks is left uncut.

These practices still allow for good drainage, provide environmental benefits and save money.

NELDB has large industrial areas within their district including the Ports of Killingholme, Immingham and Grimsby and major petroleum refineries and chemical plants. There are also many urban areas within their drainage district including: Barton, Immingham, Grimsby and Cleethorpes.

	<p><u>Other issues:</u> Spurn point at the mouth of the Humber Estuary was significantly affected by the tidal surge of December 2013. If it continues to erode then this could present a danger of significant siltation which could affect the shipping lanes and drain outfalls.</p>	
11.	<p>Updates on remaining groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fens for the Future MR- The partnership has expanded. In terms of IDB involvement, Paul Sharman is back on the steering group. The next meeting will be held on 13th January at Flag Fen in Peterborough. - Operation Fly Swat IW- There will be an increase in the contribution towards the scheme. There have been problems with supervision of the prisoners and the scheme will be looking to employ someone. This raises questions as to whether the scheme will continue to be cost effective. - ADA Technical committee IW- WFD to attract funding from LEP. Environmental initiatives could be key for the possible attraction of funds for taking on EA structures. Biodiversity 2020, the water vole class licence and eels were also discussed. 	
12.	<p>AOB</p> <p><u>Gulf wedge clam</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The gulf wedge clam (<i>Rangia cuneata</i>) is an invasive American clam which has been found in the South Forty Foot Drain. - There are major concerns about it out-competing the Witham Orb Mussel and other native fauna and clogging pipes in the same manner as the zebra mussel. The clam can live in fresh and brackish water so it could potentially invade extensively across Lincolnshire's waterways. - A survey on the Lower Witham, North Forty Foot Drain, Hobhole Drain, Maud Foster Drain and the confluence of the Old Hammond Beck and the New Hammond Back was completed by the Environment Agency in the first week of December. There were no specimens found within those waterbodies at the locations surveyed. - The only known location of the gulf wedge clam is the South Forty Foot Drain. 	