

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a meeting of the Environment Committee

held at the offices of the Board on
27th June 2018 at 2pm

Members

Chairman - * Mr P Holmes

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| Mr W Ash | * | Mr J Atkinson |
| * Mr V Barker | | Cllr C Brotherton |
| * Mr K C Casswell | * | Mr R Leggott |
| * Mr P Robinson | * | Mr R Welberry |
| * Mr J R Wray | | |

* Member Present

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)
Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)
Celia Commowick (Scarborough Nixon Associates)
Amanda Jenkins (South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership)
Mr & Mrs P Bowler (Butterfly & Wildlife Conservation Garden)

The Chairman welcomed Celia Commowick from Scarborough Nixon and Amanda Jenkins from South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership.

1306 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Cllr C Brotherton, Mr W Ash was a non attendee.

1307 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Agenda Item 2

There were no declarations of interest.

1308 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - Agenda Item 3

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 10th May 2017, copies of which had been circulated, were considered. It was agreed that they should be signed as a true record with the following amendment;

Control of Mink - Minute 1114(d)

In the third paragraph, second line it should read 'Lincolnshire Rivers Trust and the Chalk Stream Project' – amendment from 'Calk' to 'Chalk'.

1309 MATTERS ARISING - Agenda Item 4

(a) Syndicate Proposal Update - Minute 1112

The Chief Executive reported that because of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust intention to purchase the 50 hectares of land around the pond this will be reported on in another agenda item.

He has spoken to the Syndicate Members and all have agreed that at this moment in time they will withdraw their intension to lease the fishing rights because of the Nature Partnership involvement with regards to enhancement of that area. At the moment it has been agreed to suspend negotiations until such time that land is purchased and that area becomes a nature reserve. In the future the Board will probably not be involved with any fishing rights with the Syndicate regarding that pond. It will become controlled, following the Boards agreement, by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

(b) 100 metres of Reed Bed - Minute 1114(w)(i)

Amanda Jenkins asked has the new reed bed area been identified? The Chief Executive responded that this BAP target was identified as a new 100/200 metres section of reed bed to develop within a watercourse which is Board maintained. Due to the proposed nature reserve at Bourne North Fen this has not been pursued because we then want to negotiate with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust about the reed beds that they are going to plant and we could incorporate into the Boards BAP.

1310 TO REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE - Agenda Item 5

The Chairman presented the Committees terms of reference on page 13. The Chief Executive stated that this complies with all the terms, it has been brought to this Committee because it only sits once a year, it will be for the Board to resolve that this Committee retains the existing terms or change them, he clarified that he sees no reason to change these terms of reference. The Chairman asked Members for any comments and if they were happy with these, all AGREED.

1311 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORK COMPLETED IN 2017/18 AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPOSED WORKS FOR 2018/19 - Agenda Item 6

The Chief Executive presented the report on Environmental works completed in 2017/18 on pages 14 to 22 including the recommendations for 2018/19 and seeking approval for the budgetary recommendations. The Chief Executive stated that the key focus of today's meeting are the proposals at the end of this report for this year.

Completed Works 2017/18

(a) Owl Boxes

The Chief Executive presented on screen a photograph showing a typical owl box repair and/or replacement which has been carried out throughout the year.

(b) Early Flailing Works

The Chief Executive reported that these have been carried out within the Public Sector Co-operation Agreement on the main rivers.

(c) Water Vole Monitoring Surveys

The Chief Executive stated that Scarborough Nixon will give some information later in the agenda. He presented on screen a photograph of a water vole swimming which was taken by one of the machine operators.

Amanda asked if the Board send reports from the GPS devices to the Environmental Records Centre? The Chief Executive responded that all the GPS recorded data is collated in the Office. There maybe a delay this year because the Board has employed a new GIS Technician and he may not be caught up with all data entry since the last Technician left. He confirmed that we may not have sent the information off to the Lincolnshire Environmental Recording Centre (LERC) but we are recording it and have it to send.

(d) Control of Mink

The Chief Executive stated that liaison between agricultural landowners and Board Members informing them about trapping and the importance of frequent inspection and humanly despatching. Although as previously noted the Boards initial thoughts are that there are lower numbers being caught this year.

(e) Environmental surveys of larger hedge rows in our bushing programme

The Chief Executive stated that the Board does inspect ourselves and have in the past employed Scarborough Nixon to inspect some of the large bushes and hedgerows – we did carry out daily inspections on the South Forty Foot when we were in the bird nesting season prior to actively removing bushes and trees from the banks.

(f) South Forty Foot Drain Environmental Works associated with the de-silting works

The Chief Executive stated this was a complete success story and the Spined Loach scenario was catered for. He presented on screen some photographs showing a year ago and today at Sempringham silt lagoon, that shows how it has dried out, and another view which shows where a tractor has worked over an area. He added that we are now in negotiations about whether to start spreading the silt – the last course of work is to put a machine in there, no more than once. The land have been rented for 5 years so we are well on course for those to dry out within that 5 year period.

(g) RSPB Water Abstraction for Frampton Marsh

The Chief Executive reported the water abstraction from Frampton Marsh is an ongoing permission which is granted in line with the EA and the Board for water abstraction and flushing Frampton Marsh nature reserve that water then comes back into the systems in front of Wyberton Marsh pumping station.

(h) Big Boston Clean Up

The Chief Executive referred Members to the screen which showed a number of slides picturing rubbish dumped, one at the back of Joy Paine Close, this typifies some of the rubbish which is tipped into watercourses around Boston. This shows some of the problems the Board has, we use the Boston Clean up crew to help clear and remove this rubbish.

(i) Fly Swat Team

The Chief Executive stated the photograph onscreen shows Dowsby Fen where some tyres and wheels had been dumped. Thankfully a lot of this type of rubbish can be taken up by the Fly Swat Team and disposed of at no additional cost to the Board.

Mr V Barker asked if this crew just work around Boston, the Chief Executive responded he could not today answer that question but they have now spread south into the South Holland area.

(j) Invasive Species

The Chief Executive informed Committee Members that the GLNP produce some excellent documents on invasive species - which can be handed out.

The Chief Executive then referred Members to the screen photograph of 'yellow flower – bastard cabbage' this is a problem which was discussed at the last Board meeting. Whatever decisions are made by this Committee will have to go back to the Board and the next Board Meeting is 7th November 2018. Whatever is agreed or implemented today will not be implemented until the next growing season which is early spring of 2019.

He reintroduced a paper that Lindsey Marsh IDB have produced on "oil seed rape and wild brassica rapa" this is a detailed investigation and basically quite simply what funding do you have available to do additional cutting or spraying. Lindsey Marsh IDB decided they could not afford the additional £138,000 it would cost to remove the 'yellow flower weed' from 20% of their lineal watercourse maintenance regime off three cuts per bankside.

Mr P Robinson asked how does that compare with chemical spraying and how does the cost stack-up? The Chief Executive responded you can only spray with herbicides which are not going to harm the watercourse. The Chairman added that this problem has been over a couple of years now, at Floodex we looked at spraying from a boat because you cannot spray off the top of the bank or it is more difficult to spray from the top of the bank. He then asked his agronomist and he said there are no chemicals on the market that are suitable on a dyke bank adjacent to a watercourse. The Chairman added over the discussions we've had that flailing is probably the answer but if we do flail we would need to go in early enough ie March before the vegetation gets too high as it will deter any ground nesting birds from starting to nest. Therefore it would also need 3/4 cuts and detailed costings would need to be looked at which could be c£11,000 per kilometre per season to do four separate cuts, March, April, May and June and start as the cutting programme would do in July.

An estimate of what area the Board would need to cut, if the Board were to take this responsibility on which they are not of a mind to do, it would cost the Board £350,000 per year just to tackle this yellow flower weed. This will be charged out at cost without the 5% surcharge.

Mr V Barker referred to the chemicals he has heard this year that double spraying with Fox has controlled it, there used to be an aquatic roundup it must be suitable for spraying next to watercourses.

The Chairman responded he did not think there was a suitable applicator, there are situations where it is easier done by boat and there are situations where it is easier done on the bankside but there is not a 'one size fits all' application for the operation.

Mr Barker responded that you could soon find a suitable applicator, he remembers they put applicators on trains there may not be an applicator machine at the moment but chemical versus distance travelled by flail it may work out more cost effective. The Chairman responded that this would need to be done at a certain time of the year when probably crops would be in the adjacent fields therefore, there would be compensation to the farmers to consider unless the farmer wanted to waiver that compensation to get his banks sprayed.

The Chairman pointed out that the Board do not see it as their responsibility. Mr J Atkinson believes the Board is over compensating the scenario, about mowing it off, his experience is that in private dykes he has mowed it in the middle of May. You might say that nests have been destroyed but he assured the Committee that birds will not nest in this yellow flower weed. The first year it is quite an operation to mow it but the second year you get about half the amount growing and the third year it is more or less gone and grass is growing naturally in its place and birds are nesting again. He suggested they don't tackle minor ditches but the South Forty Foot is the important one and I think it would really be the Boards duty to do that to get rid of it because it is bad in the South Forty Foot. He believes there is no worries about birds nesting and the costs being quoted extraordinary.

The Chairman clarified that the costing is for four cuts and the South Forty Foot is not the Boards responsibility or the highland carriers, Mr Atkinson then added that he is talking about only doing the one cut at the right time of year. The Chairman asked if the main concern was for cross contamination with existing rape crops, by using farm machinery reaching two thirds down the side creating an 8 metre buffer in the bottom of the drain, is that a big enough buffer to stop the cross contamination. Mr J Atkinson responded that every bit helps, we are not going to wipe it out. He believes there should be a prescribed trial – he knows it is bad in his area, not sure about other areas.

Mr K C Casswell asked do we have this yellow flower weed on Board maintained drains.

Mr P Robinson mentioned that you have completed cutting around the cricket ground and that grass is growing back. The Operations Manager responded that we have to go with the environmental remit, if we want to mow banks we have to start late March early April before nesting birds think about nesting, if the Boards machines go within the environmental policy we would have to mow those banks early and frequently. We could not cut that bank in May.

Celia Commowick responded, that it might be cheaper, rather than do several cuts, to send someone out to do a quick walk through to check for nesting birds, you will flush any birds if there aren't any then you can cut – then you could do that at any time of year. That is what Scarborough Nixon would do as a standard bird check and quite often we look at wild scrub and hedgerows because its not always obvious immediately, but when you walk along, you will hear the territorial bird calling and you will know if there are birds nesting there or not, if they are there then you just leave a buffer zone around the nest and carry on with the rest of it.

Mr P Robinson added that a farmer near Holland Fen, grows seed as in turnip seed and he has liaised where we are going to put rape because of the cross contamination, because it has to be so many metres away from his crop therefore he is restricted on what fields he can grow seed on. This 'yellow flower' continues to grow and expanding its area.

Mr R Leggott confirmed that when he used to grow swede seed, he would ring his neighbours also. Mechanical mowers could do this job which might not be palatable for some people, have we looked into if there is research into competing plants species, he is not aware of any research. The Chairman expressed that Mr Atkinson in some respects has completed an experiment and by letting the light back into the bank sides encourages grass to regrow, and it offers stability to the banks. Amanda Jenkins responded that this 'yellow flower' is very vigorously growing you would have a struggle to find a native species that was as vigorous as that 'yellow flower'.

The Chairman believes we should establish who's responsibility it is. Mr P Robinson's concern would be whether the 'yellow flower', where there is no grass growing, whether or not it destabilises the bank.

Mr R Wray asked if the fact machines cannot mow in March is this a legal thing? The Operations Manager responded we do up to 70 kms when we start flailing early, so you can maintain those watercourses if we go to do them and we don't walk the banks previous to cutting them we have to start in March before the birds think about nesting in the long grass. The Chief Executive added that this is a directive from the Boards Biodiversity Action Plan we write this ourselves for the environmental benefit within the Boards catchment. Mr Wray then clarified that if you wanted to cut it in full flower in May you cannot do it, the Chief Executive responded that we can change those rules and liaise with the experts because of this introduction we should be cutting early or later.

The Chairman clarified this is why this has come to this Committee because this is an environmental problem.

Mr K C Casswell asked could we write an exception for something like this bank on the North Forty Foot and see what happens if we mow this 2/3 times as Mr J Atkinson stated because if we could reintroduce the grass we would have something to go to the Environment Agency and say that their banks are bad we need to do something about them as well. We control this ourselves which would be a good starting point, Mr Welberry agreed.

The Chairman asked about the cross contamination, he asked Mr Atkinson if May is the right time to go? Mr J Atkinson responded that you are looking at another year ahead now, its reducing it by 50% each year and by year three you might only have 10% left. Mr J Atkinson reiterated that when the yellow flower is present on the bank side he has not found any birds nesting in that weed material.

The Chairman added that this would need to be put to the Board and ask that funding be found from the Board. The Chief Executive responded that this Committee has £20,000 environmental budget to control, he has recommended budgetary spending for the next year but there is nothing to say that an element of that budget can be put towards an experimental cutting of different lengths of this problem area.

He is very conscious that once we start current sections of particular banks, that other landowners are going to ask why are we not cutting their bank sides.

Mr R Leggott asked if we are going to do this route of experimental banks this will be done over a three year period we would have to entail that part of bank with whoever to the landowner neighbours in order for them to plan their cropping accordingly to some extent. If the Board is going to do it then let's involve landowners in order for them to know and plan in advance.

The Chairman agreed that liaison with all landowners is essential and in certain situations where if we approach them they might have an appetite for mowing the bank sides themselves. Mr J Atkinson felt it should be put on the website and communicated to landowners that they can do this to encourage farmers if it was agreed to take it upon themselves to mow.

Mr P Robinson asked who paid for the cutting around the cricket ground, the Operations Manager responded the Board, it comes out of the early season flailing budget as are the public areas that we flail early around Tesco on the Hammond Beck.

Celia added that it is not just within the Board's BAP regarding cutting season around nesting birds, it's a legality that if you are going to flail and there is potential for nesting birds, then you would need to get it checked first.

The Chairman asked the Members, that it is proposed to the Board as a cost to the Board a trial area(s) and also encourage landowners to approach the Board to seek approval to take the flailing upon themselves with all the right directions pre checks.

The Chief Executive clarified that if we identify fairly immediately, what we are going to identify for any experimental lengths for next year, we approach the landowners that this maintained watercourse will be used as an experimental area and do a half kilometre how much funding do we want to allocate and do we want to allocate it out of the environmental budget or put it to the Board for them to fund from the Boards own maintenance budget these works.

The Chairman asked is there £5,000 that could be allocated from the environmental budget to do this. He understands that Mr Atkinson has already done his own experiment on it and do think we could probably do half kilometre in a May cut and we also do a March, April cut and different cuts and see which is best from an economical point of view. Mr Atkinson reiterated that once is enough. The Chairman acknowledged that if Mr Atkinson is happy that the experiments he has done over the last three years. Mr Atkinson explained that he might have got rid of it in three years instead of four if he had done it more than once a year but to save his own costs he did it once a year when the yellow flower was in full flower.

Mr P Robinson interjected that the experiment has already been completed, around the cricket ground because you have been flailing it the last three years. The Operations Manager confirmed yes. Mr J Atkinson added that about the cost you do have the machines and if you did it in May it's a time of year which is not the Boards busiest time of year, and you are paying the work force anyway, so how do you allocate a cost.

The Chief Executive explained that the funding for those works has to be found, he has allocated all the environmental budget in the proposed environmental works. How much does this Committee want to allocate to this experiment and deducting from one of the proposed environmental projects.

Mr R Leggott believes that there is a good case for this experiment to be funded from other budgets and not come out of the environmental budget because in the end it will be the results that matter and the Board will make a decision on how this should be dealt with in the future. He really thinks it is a Board matter rather than an environmental. The Chairman agreed and Members also agreed.

Celia asked if Lindsey Marsh IDB had tried any flailing scenario, is it worth asking Chris Manning. The Chief Executive responded that they have produced a detailed document but there is no indication that there is a conclusion.

Mr R Wray, pointed out that if we do not do anything and this 'yellow flower' weed takes over all the banks then surely that is an environmental catastrophe so we have to do something.

Mr K C Casswell agreed that we have to do something as it's only going to get worse.

The Chief Executive clarified that this Committee have agreed that this will go back to the Board and will implement and design an experimental brief for next spring and request a £5,000 allocation from the main drain maintenance budget. All AGREED.

Mr R Leggott added that we should also look at the important thing about competing species, any research to be found for the Board.

(k) Bat Boxes and Surveys

The Chief Executive stated that there are bat boxes on every pumping station and he showed a photograph on screen of what they look like. It can take 2 or 3 years before bats use them as nesting boxes.

(l) Environmental Scheme – Eel Passability at Boards ‘Category A’ Pumping Stations

The Chief Executive stated to go back to the agenda papers on page 23, there is an update regarding eel passage. This was only produced on the 20th June 2018.

(m) Environmental Scheme - Bird Survey

The Chief Executive stated that this may be introduced in the agenda later.

Proposed Works and Environmental Involvement in 2018/19

(n) South Lincolnshire Water Partnership (SLWP) Official Launch

The Chief Executive stated the details regarding the official launch are on pages 24 – 27.

This is the Water Resource East and SLWP have had a meeting on the 27th June 2018 it was very well received at the Lincolnshire Show and had numerous landowners visit their marquee. The future of water concept (SLWP) headed by the WRE is having their official launch at the Epic Centre, Lincolnshire Showground on the 9th July 2018, there are still invitations available if anybody wants to attend. You have to apply yourselves by reserving a place on the website <https://futureofwater.eventbrite.co.uk>

(o) Bourne North Fen Ponds

The Chief Executive stated that he has mentioned this earlier in the meeting. The SLWP and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust vision is for a c50 hectare wet fenland wildlife site.

(p) Water Vole Surveys

The Chief Executive stated that with Scarborough Nixon involvement these water vole surveys proposed estimated cost of c£3,500 contribution to continue with the monitoring for the sites we have been monitoring in the past and any possible major desilting schemes to carry out water vole environmental mitigation inspection works required.

Mr R Welberry asked if the water voles are still having issues with mink, Amanda Jenkins responded that water voles are generally having issues with mink if there are still mink in the catchment. He reported that he has sighted two mink near the Holland Fen and Hammond Beck near Kirkstead Bridge.

(q) Winter Bushing and Cleansing

The Chief Executive stated this will be continued, this is a request for c£1,000 when we complete deep water desilting and we dam up and pump down we electrode fish and relocate.

(r) Summer Cutting and Vegetation Clearance

The Chief Executive referred Members to the agenda.

(s) Owl Boxes

The Chief Executive explained that the owl boxes have reached sufficient numbers therefore this is a request of £1,500 for repair and replacing broken boxes. The boxes are now being cleaned, cleansed and redressed by the Board Pumping Station Grounds Person which has reduced the costs.

(t) Recording by Machine Drivers

The Chief Executive reported this has continued, and we will continue to send our records to the GLNP/VERC.

Mr R Leggott asked have we had any report examples of the results for the Committee, the Chief Executive responded yes, we have at previous meetings and can show an overlay GIS layer to the next Board meeting.

(u) High Profile Watercourse Assets

The Chief Executive stated that the Operations Manager has eluded to this already regarding the seasonal flailing on the important watercourses.

(v) Water Levels

The Chief Executive reported the water levels are controlled in line to assist any environmental impacts within the catchment.

(w) Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

The Chief Executive stated this is now becoming quite relevant there is the invasive species we are all aware of ie Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed etc. He reported that a new problem signal crayfish, he referred Members to pages 39 – 42 and presented on screen the difference between the native species 'v' invasive species. He asked do we, or should we be carrying out a Board investigation?

Amanda Jenkins added that they are very rarely found together because usually the invasive crayfish carries a disease which wipes out the natives, and where it does not wipe them out it competes because the invasive crayfish is so much bigger it does not kill it just out competes it. Amanda was not aware that it had reached this catchment – they only have them in the Upper Witham around Belton.

The Chief Executive responded that he is not aware, as we have never carried out any investigative work, he did not believe they were in ordinary watercourses. Amanda added that the EA have done some surveys.

The Chief Executive requested a £2,000 budget to identify do we have this type of invasive species or not.

Mr V Barker asked with the desilting works was there any sign of any of the lagoons. The Chief Executive responded that the only signs were interest from the local birds at the lagoons, there was nothing being removed from silt if there was crayfish in there he was not aware.

Mr V Barker suggested that possible for consideration of the next lagoon which is done netting it or something so that the birds cannot get to it and we can view it first.

The Chief Executive stated from the outset of the desilting works there will be an Environmental Clerk of Works which in all probability will be someone from Scarborough Nixon and we can incorporate this into their remit.

Mr R Welberry asked once the invasive species colonise an area do they stay or move around, Amanda Jenkins responded they move up and down, they can be wiped out themselves ie if a pollution event which may reduce them, but usually they wipe out only native species there would not be both there, its still a reportable species you need to report sightings to the Environment Agency.

(x) Fens for the Future

The Chief Executive referred to the agenda which is an update.

(y) Fly Swat Partner

The Chief Executive stated the Board has contributed to the Fly Swat project for 2018/19 which is £2,641. He reminded the Committee that there was a time when the Board was spending £14,000 a year removing items from the watercourses, this is a significant reduction on what the Board was paying.

(z) Big Boston Clean up

The Chief Executive stated that generally a couple of workmen and a vehicle are provided which costs c£600. The Big Boston clean up generally takes place in April of each year.

(aa) Sand Martin Nesting Site

The Chief Executive referred members to a screen photograph of a suggested design someone who has built their own artificial Sand Martin breeding site, we don't know if this is an approved or what type of nesting site we would use we would probably go to Scarborough Nixon to obtain some advice. Mr R Welberry stated there is a very successful one at Frampton Marsh, Mr Robinson added there is one at the South Forty Foot.

The Chief Executive suggested that one is built using Scarborough Nixon as the experts and use some of the material we have in Gosberton dump to build it inside the dump, we would need to look and decide as it is close to the South Forty Foot but again its really seeking the approval for c£3,000 request.

(bb) South Lincolnshire Fenland Partnership

The Chief Executive explained this is a general update.

(cc) Grass Snake Nesting Sites

The Chief Executive referred Members to a picture on screen of two dump areas. He recommended a budget of £300 per site to put a post rail fence around the sites once identified to cordon off the site to stop anyone walking around if such persons ever got in the area.

(dd) Wildflower Meadow

The Chief Executive referred Members to a picture of a site on screen which has wildflowers at Cooks Lock alongside the North Forty Foot, it might have an environmental advantage without introducing further wildflower seed. Its 100 metres long by 16/20 metres wide, it is not used and its gated off so again its really just the budget allocation and then to talk to the experts about possible development and introduction of seed.

Mr V Barker asked if Scarborough Nixon would be able to tell us when that particular site would need mowing. Celia added that if it is a wildflower to cut it once in late summer and remove the arising's. There are many invertebrates who would love that there is wildlife value in it remaining like that.

(ee) Water Framework Directive

The Chief Executive stated he has had meetings with the Water Framework Directive including Mr D Hitchinson (EA) the WFD Officers, this is is an important continuous approach to water management. He concluded we want to continue to develop this.

(ff) Bug Hotel

The Chief Executive referred Members to a picture on screen taken on the recent trip to the Netherlands, of two bug hotels requesting c£500 to build one or two of these actually near the pond at the front of the office. He believes that we could scavenge those materials in the yard to make it up.

Mr R Welberry suggested that it might be a good kids project from the local primary school.

Amanda Jenkins added that the South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership are going to suggest a pollination project because the EA are doing one at the pumping station and alongside some banks.

We suggest ADA do the same thing perhaps working with Scarborough Nixon, building pollination palaces is one of the things we would like to do in the villages and project areas, and I think this is an excellent idea, and you can get some cracking structures, there is one at Ferry Meadows.

(gg) The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership

The Chief Executive reported this was previously known as the 'the Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site (WNNC EMS)' we are a partner for c£400 per year there is a Wild Sea Week coming up on 3rd to 12th August 2018 - this information was emailed to all Board Members. He invited Members to get involved, there is a website <http://wnnmp.co.uk> further updates on page 21.

He stated that part of the budget is for a skip to be placed at Kirton Marsh as they are going to do a beach litter pick, which the Board has said they will pay for.

(hh) Heckington Show 28-29 July 2018

The Chief Executive presented a photograph of last year's stand at Lincolnshire showground when the Association of Lincolnshire Drainage Boards won the Game Keepers Trophy for the best stand in the relevant sector in the Countryside Section. He was pleased to announce that Lincolnshire ADA had retained the trophy this year. A similar type of show will be attending the Heckington Show from the Southern Boards of Lincolnshire, at this moment in time we do not know if any machinery will be there.

(ii) Gulf Wedged Clam (Rangia)

The Chief Executive presented a couple of photographs of the Gulf Wedged Clam, he referred Members to his report on page 22. He believes it has only been identified in the South Forty Foot in the entire Country – we see it as quite a serious problem there are various studies being undertaken and they are still investigating the possibility of using bio-bullets.

He added that for the Board there could be a problem if they start congregating around pumping stations and collectively building inside some of the pipe work although we have some very high pressure water moving through those pipes, when it does move through. We can see possibilities of failures in the future.

Mr R Welberry asked if they can live in fresh water or salt water or both. The Chief Executive answered yes the theory is that they have come out of ships balancing tanks and come to the South Forty Foot.

(jj) Operation Galileo

The Chief Executive stated this is an update on page 43 – 46 on the operation galileo. It is starting to be a success and there seems to be a down turn in the hare coursing but it is an operation that the Lincolnshire Police along with NFU will continue to support.

(kk) Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Target Works

The Chief Executive stated the Biodiversity Action Plan which runs alongside national plans is up for review. He stated that it is continually reviewed but its next major review is in May 2019 so that will be ongoing work this coming year.

The Chief Executive asked that this Committee agree to the proposed works above with the budgetary figures allocated. The Chairman asked Members if they had any questions, then asked Members approval for these recommended works and their associated costs.

Mr V Barker asked about the Risegate bank environment project, the Chief executive responded – he believes we have failed on that bank, we have tried different seed mixtures, we looked at holding water back and implementing different vegetation at the bottom of the watercourse. It is still open to discussion and debate, we have not given-up on it but it is something we seem to struggle with that length of bank because of the high quality of the soils and that seems to be the issue. The Chairman added that it's very difficult because of the competition and just getting wildflowers established in high fertile areas. Mr V Barker added that the Operations Manager did come down and take pictures of what does grow on high quality soil. The Chief Executive added if we have spare capacity in the budget then as a reserve proposal that we look at the new seed mixtures in theory for the Risegate bank.

Amanda Jenkins asked if there was any room in the budget to fit in some local Wildlife Site surveys as well as the water voles surveys or at the same time because you probably have loads of really good species particularly in the watercourses there are lots of fantastic species in the fens that we don't know about. She wondered if local Wildlife Surveys particularly on the de-maining sites but also building up a picture while you are having a certain type of survey carried out look including a wildlife survey as well and see what type of botanicals there are. Celia responded that they would note this as a matter of course.

The Chief Executive responded that yes if we could understand the costs involved and have this as a reserve scheme. Although we budget for all these proposals in some instances it's not always the case we can fulfil them all. If we have some reserve schemes in place we can bring them in to the budget.

Mr R Leggott added that often this is recorded by Officers and Workmen on machines have we not done this survey already. The Chairman agreed it is arguably that we are already doing ongoing surveys of wildlife. Amanda Jenkins responded that it is not by experts and its not a botanical survey and if you get to know what's in your watercourses then you can record and manage a little bit better or differently then what you have in your rivers and drains in terms of plants will then encourage insects, water voles and otters the basic is a botanical survey then everything else builds upon the structure of the drains in terms of environment.

Celia responded that it would not cost anything extra to get that data, it might cost a little bit extra if you had to write a report to present to you where we think you might qualify for local wildlife sites then you can maybe look at those biodiversity hot spots and manage those sections differently. That is an option.

The Chairman clarified that whilst you are doing the water vole and bat surveys you are also looking at others.

Celia answered yes, we generally take a botanical list of every drain we go to. It's an ongoing thing.

The Chairman asked to seek approval for all of those budgeted allocations, all AGREED.

1312 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON BARN OWL NESTING BOXES FOR 2017/18 - Agenda Item 7

The Chief Executive referred Members to pages 47 - 49 which is the annual check of Black Sluice IDB barn owl nest boxes.

This report has been prepared by the Hawk and Owl Trust – Alan Ball email:

Firstly I have not checked all the boxes there are only a few boxes have been checked. Barn Owls are not doing very well this year, possibly due to the late Spring cold weather and hence I have not yet checked all the boxes. However certainly your northern boxes seem to be bucking the trend and are fairly productive with Barn Owls and Kestrels.

I have been approached by a film company who are keen to try and get some footage of piracy by Kestrels taking food off Barn Owls and have only found one box in the county that has both kestrel and barn owl chicks at the same time - which is the box at Barry Halls. The film company have, with agreement from Barry, set up a hide here and hopefully will get the footage to be shown at a later series of Springwatch.

He presented on screen the kingfisher nesting site which was built following approval from this Committee 3/4 years ago. Unfortunately we have not had any kingfishers nesting in it yet, but we do have a couple of swans nesting on the bank side.

Mr R Welberry asked about the volume of jackdaws, the Chief Executive replied there does not seem to be any clear indication of them, every year all the jackdaws nests are removed from the owl boxes during our general maintenance routine.

1313 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL PRESENTATION BY SCARBOROUGH NIXON ASSOCIATES - Agenda Item 8

Celia Commowick from Scarborough Nixon Associates reported firstly about the otter cam survey which have been going on for sometime now but unfortunately they have not had any sightings of otters. We have had various species, ie Newts, Swan, Mallard, Moorhen, Fox, Deer, Little Grebe. The surveys will carry on it would help if anyone has any recent sightings of otters to let them know.

She stated that reports have been received of Otters sighted Kyme Eau so we are going to try putting the webcam out at Damford grounds, South Kyme.

The Chief Executive reported that the Operations Manager along with two EA Officers, whilst walking a watercourse in Pointon spotted an Otter which swam out into the watercourse, unfortunately no one took a photograph.

Mr R Welberry reported that he had seen a dead Dog Otter towards the end of Station Road, the Chief Executive responded by asking Members if you do see a dead otter please let the office know because Mr C Manning the Environmental Officer at Lindsey Marsh is the Lincolnshire Mammals Recorder.

She continued her report stating that the Water Vole surveys, the latrines have only just started to be put out, some of them will need setting using a boat. This will be in the Great Hale and Little Hale catchments once all the rafts are all set we will leave them for a couple of weeks, we will return and do bank top surveys and we should be able to see any droppings on the rafts and from the number of droppings and where they are we can extrapolate what kind of water vole populations are in those sections of drains.

The Operations Manager asked will you give locations of these rafts because the machines could damage them, Celia responded that she has a map and she will let the Board know where they are placed.

Celia reported on the bird surveys being carried out in the Boards catchment having just been completed therefore the full results have not yet been compiled. Celia confirmed sighting of a breeding pair of Marsh Harriers and can only confirm one chick at the moment. Common Tern have been seen every survey they have not been breeding there but obviously fishing there therefore one of the suggestions would be perhaps in future years, a Tern raft on the pond these can be fairly inexpensive if you build them yourselves and that would encourage them for breeding.

Celia then mentioned the bat boxes monitoring now these bat boxes have been up for two years, if there is any scope either this year or next year to do some bat box checks and confirm whether you have roosting bats then you can increase the provision for roosting bats and that can be confirmed and can then contribute towards your BAP targets. In the same instance if we are visiting all the pumping stations we can also do checks for Otter spray while we are onsite at no additional cost which will also help build up a more recent picture and try to identify where the Otters might be.

At Holland Fen pumping station where there was a potential maternity roost of Daubentons bats in 2016 we could possibly look to carry out an internal inspection of the pumping station if we can get access in order to get an idea where they are roosting which may be in the pumping station or under one of the bridges near by. We could set up an infra red camera to try and capture where they are then you could use this information to enhance the surrounding area for that species. Which will also contribute to your BAP targets.

Celia suggested perhaps some grass snakes surveys, but did not know if you have had any of these carried out, as it is in the BAP. The Chief Executive responded that he has no surveys but has frequent sightings in the southern fens. Celia added that if you are doing all this work building grass snake nesting sites in it might be a nice idea to put some tin sheets out and then have somebody check them to see if we have anything there which would give you a monitoring system in place.

1314 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL PRESENTATION BY SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE FENLANDS PARTNERSHIP AND GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE NATURE PARTNERSHIP - Agenda Item 9

Amanda Jenkins from South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership, stated that she works two days a week as a Conservation Officer for Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust covering Boston and South Holland this is a fairly new role, plus two days a week as the South Fenlands Partnership Project Officer which really just branches into the Black Sluice catchment just north of the River Glen.

She presented a map showing the Baston & Thurlby Fen Project, with South Lincolnshire Fenland Partnership which was built up in 2004. We try and work with our 22 partners and the Black Sluice is one of them the lead partner is Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. Local farmers are involved, Waterside Garden Centre is on the Steering Group, all parish councils are represented on the group.

County and District Councillors and local representatives from Natural England and the Environment Agency. Part of the project is Willow Tree Fen which was purchased in 2009 the aim of the project is to create more wetland and fenland in that area and beyond. Baston & Thurlby Fen is very small and very narrow, we have lost a lot of iconic old fashioned fenland species like bittern and crane and a lot of the old plants and butterflies things that you used to find in the fens have gone and those two areas by themselves are very small. So the idea of the partnership is to work with people to grow a bit more wetland and fenland where it's appropriate. We are working with communities to bring them on board with what we are doing and we recently held a minerals workshop where Lincolnshire County Council were working on a minerals plan.

Amanda stated that currently they are looking at the area up to the A52 in making that a nature improvement area, we had 70 members of the local community that came to the meeting and wanted to improve nature improvement areas. We provide events at Willow Tree Fen and we have things like pond building, heron nest building, mud workshops, kids and garden workshops. Any funding that can be given to help the aim of the partnership is always well received. We are working with farmers through a countryside stewardship facilitation fund and we have been invited through Defra to see if we can help to shape the environmental land management scheme which might come next and the idea of this countryside stewardship scheme is that all farmers work together to put in schemes across the landscape and they join up across an area. In addition farmers are working on owl boxes, Tree Sparrow project etc.

Amanda stated that Sarah Barker GLNP – is working on a pollinator project, these are a quick and easy way and a low cost approaches to improving pollination. This brochure has been printed and is available to Members whom would like one.

Amanda explained that Sarah was unable to come to the meeting but would be very willing to come and speak to Members on the pollination project and asked if these brochures could be sent out to some of your Members.

We are hoping to purchase a portion of land in the area called Glebelands in the minerals area and hoping to put a sculpture up at Willow Tree Fen. She again mentioned the local wildlife surveys, alongside drain sides – you survey a river and drain, you look at the plant life and species and you match them up to a list. Ten off this list of important species will designate you as an area of local wildlife site and there is up to 30 different species in some of the rivers and drains. The drainage board work by cutting the bottom of a watercourse is doing it some good.

The best watercourses regarding wildlife are the ones that are the most heavily maintained/managed. Going forward with the Black Sluice if you are thinking of changing your management lots of people think less management is a good thing for wildlife but is not always the case most certainly not in the aquatic environment. The drainage boards are producing a fantastic diverse wildlife environment.

Amanda then made reference to the Environment Agency pollinator project whereby they are working with their operatives and Steven Falk (Entomologist) and what they are doing by looking at easy ways around pumping stations and along assets ie river banks to improve the plight of pollinators. Amanda stated they will be contacting ADA and suggesting running some trials with the IDBs across the county this will be interesting to work with the Black Sluice area.

Amanda asked Members if they need any help where might there be areas they can help or any information needed please let her know.

The Chief Executive concluded that the GLNP brochure on pollinators is available, and a GLNP updated printed if anyone would like a copy. He referred to the possible interest by ADA and also on the ADA website regarding those pollinator sites, they will await to hear and believe it could be something the Board will be interested on in the future.

The Chairman thanked Amanda and asked Members if they had any questions. There were none so he moved on.

1315 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL PRESENTATION BY MR & MRS P BOWLER ON THE AMBER HILL BUTTERFLY AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREA - Agenda Item 10

The Chairman presented Mr & Mrs Bowler to the Committee.

Mrs Bowler read from her notes they live along the claydyke and they have a meadow, pond and woodland garden. She outlined the history of the garden, stating that her husband Phil has been interested in butterflies since his childhood which has developed into a passion that by understanding the butterfly lifecycles and characteristics of each specie. As a boy he dreamed of having his own butterfly wild garden and since 1985 his wish has been fulfilled. The first butterfly garden was in Derbyshire and it became an award winning garden receiving major recognition and featured on television and in the Independent newspaper. However it eventually proved too inaccessible and increasingly difficult to work with the garden being on a slope of 45 degrees. Following on we moved to Lincolnshire before moving we submitted records of sightings in the local area to the Lincolnshire Branch of Butterfly Conservation <https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/lincolnshire-branch> and they were amazed at the findings they had written off this area as being not being suitable for butterflies due to the massive expanse of arable farm land.

Mrs Bowler continued that what they had overlooked was the enormous linear habitat of dyke banks rich in wild flora and largely protected from the wind, these natural corridors allow the creation of many colonies of butterflies and other wildlife allowing them to spread into other areas. Mr & Mrs Bowler's garden impacts on this and creates a permanent nucleus and breeding ground for them this is not just the place to attract passing butterflies around to refuel with nectar it is a purposely designed mini habitat to breed and thrive in.

This garden started as a clean slate other than the already created large pond so all the other glades etc the meadow have been totally designed and created by Mr & Mrs Bowler, it is one acre in size and benefits from having the dyke running along the west side boundary and a large field adjacent which is not arable. The larva food plants are particularly important in creating the correct environment which varies from species to species some of the food plants are trees such as buckthorn, holly, oak and elm. The White Letter Hairstreak butterfly which uses elm as a larval food plant has suffered nationally from dutch-elm disease. Many of the butterflies are woodland species the planting of native trees was one of the major tasks at the beginning, and now that they have matured is proving very locative. Even the rare White Admiral very much a woodland butterfly that uses honeysuckle as its larval plant has shown up. Few colonies are found in Lincolnshire the nearest one is Woodhall Spa in this region. Most butterflies do not have the wondering capabilities of the White Admiral particularly the Green Hairstreaks which are not seen in this area but to Mr & Mrs Bowler extremely surprised to find them in the garden in 2014 it could only have been that somewhere along the drain system a mini colony exist as yet unrecorded proof that the drainage boards are doing the right thing when it comes to conservation work and habitat management.

Mr Bowler added very few actually travel far at all, if it had hatched from its chrysalis it would not move from outside that immediate area, they just don't do it only the fast flying the minority that do. When you get a Green Hairstreak arrive where could it have come from, these wonderful dyke banks are linking little mini colonies together.

Mrs Bowler continued, some species will use the dyke networks to expand their territories, but the dyke banks themselves are not suitable as a permanent breeding habitat for them as their habitat requires a higher specific. This is where the garden comes into its own with its purpose design and habitat types for all the various species, and this is the point which needs emphasising. Everything which is planted in the garden is for wildlife butterflies in particular and its now 21 years in the making and wildly recognised as a successful conservation exercise especially regarding butterfly conservation and wildlife trust. Despite setting out to create a mini habitat for butterflies we were pleasantly surprised when the project became so successful we have had a tremendous achievement in attracting 27 species of butterfly – 20 of them breeding successfully onsite. We first knew we were on the right tracks when we sighted the Speckled Wood a shade loving butterfly moved in soon followed by the Brown Argos the butterfly that can no way be classed as a garden species and currently regarded as a flagship species especially as the three worst butterfly years were 2007, 2012 and 2016 it has bounced back with a vengeance in the following years.

Mrs Bowler mentioned some other species which are in decline, Wall Browns, Small Heath, Small Copper are declining rapidly. We have been nominated to become a special wildlife site and Boston Borough Council are commissioning a year long ecological study of the garden which will take place within 2019 and will look at all wildlife.

Mr R Welberry asked about moths, Mr Bowler responded that yes there are numerous other species of moths including night flying moths, but we have not been able to net catch them due to time and record them.

The Chairman thanked Mr & Mrs Bowler, he hoped that by attending this meeting they gain an insight into what the Board does for the environment.

1316 TO REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY INITIAL PRIORITY CATCHMENT – IMPROVING THE WAY WE MANAGE WATER MAY 2018 - Agenda Item 11

The Chief Executive referred Members to pages 50 & 51 stating the Environment Agency Initial Priority Catchments (IPC) he has attended a meeting reference this part of the interaction with the South Lincolnshire Water Partnership. This could be a completely new approach and re write the abstraction plan he can only see this from an environmental impact assessment and from the Boards prospective by increasing the recognition of drainage boards in the UK. We are going to re write the abstraction policy and reform the abstraction process and the main abstraction policing is to involve drainage boards in a lot more detail including interaction. This process has only been realised in May 2018. This Board is one of only four IDBs Initial Priority Catchments running alongside the Rationalising of Main River Network which the Board is one of five. It is very interesting times, he will regularly update the Board on these matters.

1317 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE ADA LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - Agenda Item 12

The Chief Executive referred Members to pages 52 – 67 stating these are minutes from the various ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee meeting. He asked for any questions or comments. There were none.

1318 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Agenda Item 13

(a) ADA Gazette

The Chief Executive informed Members the Board visit to the Netherlands is in the ADA Gazette a full report of the tour will be produced and published on the ADA website.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 4:15pm.