

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a Meeting of the
Environment Committee

At a Meeting of the Environment Committee held at the Offices of the Board on
Wednesday 19th May 2010 at 2:30pm.

Members

Chairman - * Mr J R Wray

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

* Members Present

In attendance:

- Mr C A Fretwell (Southern Works Committee)
- Mr S M Hemmings (Chief Executive)
- Mr I Watts (Technical Engineer)
- Mr J Harpley (Environmental Consultant)
- Mr M Johnson (Works Manager)
- Catherine Collop (Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership)
- Dr Dean Kirkland (Natural England)

766 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed guests to the meeting, and pointed out the Lincolnshire Environmental Award that the Lincolnshire Branch of ADA had won for their work with the Hawk and Owl Trust.

767 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Blaylock and Mr M J Scott.

768 **MINUTES OF LAST ENVIRONMENT MEETING**

The Minutes of the last Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 20th May 2009, copies of which had been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

769 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Owl Boxes – Minute No 586a

The Chief Executive read a report from Alan Ball which stated that generally 2009 had been a poor year for Barn Owls, with the occupation of the owl boxes at the pumping stations being:

Total Number of boxes	23	
Barn Owls nesting	5	(Gosberton, Bicker, Heckington, Ewerby and Kirton Marsh)
Barn Owl roosting	4	
Kestrels nesting	4	(Dyke, South Kyme, Damford Grounds and Ewerby)

The Chief Executive was also told by Mr Alan Ball that the oldest Barn Owl was found in the box at Haconby Fen Pumping Station, she was ringed as a chick in 1995, she is the oldest known Barn Owl still living in the UK, and if she is found again next year she will break the all time record for the longest living Barn Owl recorded in the UK.

The Chairman stated that he had spoken to Bob Shepperd about the vole population which probably would be down this year due to the winter weather. Mr Shepperd would let the Board have another report once he has completed his survey in June 2010.

(b) Otters – Minute No 587a

Catherine Collop commented that no otters were found in the Boards area.

(c) Mink Traps - Minute No 589d

The Chief Executive reported that after sightings of mink two traps had been placed in the North Forty Foot Drain, and one at Helpringham Fen but no mink had been caught.

(d) Azolla – Minute No 589e

Mr Harpley stated that he had monitored sites for Azolla and the weed did not seem to have reoccurred at the moment.

(e) Fens Waterways Link – Minute No 593a

The Chief Executive reported that consulting engineers had been appointed by the Environment Agency to put forward a preferred route for the Donington to Surfleet section of the Fens Waterways Link. He had recently attended a workshop, and an interim report with a preferred route was expected in June with a final report due in Spring 2011.

769 (e) Cont.....

Mr Barker asked if the Environment Agency intended to rename the South Forty Foot Drain the "Black Sluice Navigation" and the Chief Executive stated he would look into this.

770 BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN – Agenda Item 4

The Chief Executive explained that the Biodiversity Action Plan approved by the Board in February did not include sufficient details of proposed actions for the future.

The document that has been circulated for comment includes more information on the proposed action plan.

The Committee reviewed the plan and recommended that the finalised revised version should be presented to the Board for approval in July.

771 FRESHWATER FISH SPECIES ACTION PLAN – Agenda Item 5

The Chief Executive stated that this plan had recently been received from Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership. Catherine Collop explained that this plan was now in the final draft stage. She was very pleased with the feedback the partnership were receiving from the plan. She encouraged the Board to incorporate the plan into the Boards BAP.

772 REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE LAST YEAR – Agenda item 6

The Chief Executive Officer presented a report to the Committee presented a map detailing water vole surveys carried out in the Boards watercourses. This information has been sent to the Lincolnshire Record Centre.

Mr Leggott raised the point that other Boards surveys could be incorporated as a comparison could be presented at another meeting.

773 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY AND DRAIN WORKS TO BE CARRIED OUT IN 2010/11 – Agenda Item 7

(a) Eel Regulations

The Chief Executive stated that as yet is was unclear how the new Eel Regulations would affect IDB's. He stated that at some stage an assessment would be required of the eel population in the Board's drains. ADA were organising a workshop in Autumn which should provide more details on how to go forward.

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(b) Drain Maintenance

The Committee AGREED with the proposal to have detailed maintenance regimes for a number of drains which had been designated as having more environmental potential.

(c) Environmental Improvements to Risegate Eau

The Committee AGREED that the proposal to raise water levels and to form deeper ponds with widening should be carried out.

(d) Angling Positions – North Forty Foot Drain

The Committee AGREED to the proposal to form low level angling positions in the bank of the North Forty Foot Drain at Langrick Road. The Environment Agency have agreed to contribute approximately £2,500 towards the cost of the work. The Committee asked the Chief Executive to look into whether the Board should erect disclaimer notices.

774 REPORT FROM C COLLOP – LINCOLNSHIRE TRUST

Catherine Collop announced that F Hitchinson would commence as manager on the 7th June 2010. The Trust is organising a conference on the 20th October 2010 at the Lincolnshire Show Ground Epic Centre which will highlight the good work done over the last year. She thanked the Workmen of the Black Sluice for undertaking otter survey work earlier in the year.

775 REPORT FROM D KIRKLAND – NATURAL ENGLAND

Natural England recently lost the manager involved with outside reserves on the wash. There will be an announcement with regard to the integrated biodiversity on landscape scale in the fens. There is possible restoration work on fenland which my impact on the Board south Lincolnshire area.

776 ADA LINCOLNSHIRE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29th October 2009 – Agenda Item 9

The Chief Executive presented the Minutes of the ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee held on 29th October 2009 and notes of the meeting held on 15th April 2010, copies of which had been circulated.

777 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4:00pm.