



Wellington House, Manby Park,
Manby, LOUTH,
Lincolnshire, LN11 8UU.

Tel: 01507 328095
Email:enquiries@lmdb.co.uk
Website: www.wmc-idbs.org.uk

Newsletter

April 2023

Financial Pressures

As with all householders and businesses, the Boards have been impacted greatly by the increase in electricity costs and were faced with bills totalling an additional £846,373 last year as well as spiralling costs for materials and equipment. With no means to raise additional funds during the year an approach was made to local MPs, councils, and the Association of Drainage Authorities for help to lobby central Government for support.

Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) operate in low-lying areas (around 10% of the UK) providing protection for local communities, businesses, and critical infrastructure as well as land that is vitally important for the Nation's food production.

The effect of any additional cost impacts the IDBs and those councils within an IDB area (as you will see from the table below, a large proportion of IDBs' income comes from special levies paid by councils in respect of houses and business within the area). Representatives from the IDBs met with DEFRA in November last year to discuss several options and asked them to consider some flexibility in the short-term to use money allocated for capital works to assist with the increased electricity costs. Although DEFRA listened and understood our concerns, unfortunately they were unable to secure additional funding or release capital funds despite the exceptional circumstances.

Our estimated electricity costs for 2023/24 have been based on an average year's rainfall, however, in a wet year these costs can double. A period of excessive rainfall increases pumping costs and also labour costs if our operatives are required to work around the clock to monitor water levels and provide emergency response. It is therefore essential that we maintain sufficient reserves; the level of reserves recommended by the Auditor being 30% of net operating costs. The Boards fully understand that everyone is impacted by increased costs and took this into account when considering rate increases for this year. Wherever possible cost saving measures have been implemented and we continue to seek efficiencies. Borrowing and the level of reserves were also reviewed and schemes delayed where safe to do so. After careful consideration the Boards agreed that there should be no loss of service or reduction in the standard of protection and they felt that the increase in the rate to maintain the level of service would be significantly less than the cost of a flood event if their systems failed.

Electricity standing charges alone for 2023/24 are now more than the total cost of our electricity bill in 2020/21.

If regular maintenance is not undertaken this will result in higher future capital costs, increased breakdowns at pumping stations and could increase the risk of flooding.

	2022/23	2023/24			Income			Estimated Gross Expenditure	Reserves as % of Net Operating Costs
	Expected Electricity Overspend	Estimated Electricity (Average rainfall)	Rate Increase	Drainage Rates	Council Special Levies	Other Income/ Funding			
Lindsey Marsh	£405,148	£688,688	27.60%	£1,310,880	£4,104,093	£6,175,764	£11,195,277	30.60%	
Isle of Axholme	£206,316	£473,807	20.00%	£620,492	£1,090,596	£1,216,978	£3,267,320	26.42%	
Trent Valley	£113,410	£324,963	35.00%	£642,552	£2,217,184	£2,341,031	£4,908,074	29.24%	
Doncaster East	£121,499	£286,864	17.00%	£118,271	£1,075,752	£816,354	£2,074,629	26.68%	

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

Maintenance

The winter works programmes are well underway with the desilting and reforming of watercourses, tree and bushing work and access improvements.

Annual summer maintenance will commence as usual on 15th July and servicing of plant and machinery will be undertaken prior to this to ensure it is operating efficiently and effectively and to minimise breakdowns and downtime. Our operatives and contractors will continue to liaise with landowners regarding access and we appreciate your cooperation and support to ensure they can access land to undertake maintenance which is vital to ensure that water flows freely and our systems remain operational.



Major Capital Projects

Some 88 major projects across the four Boards' areas are ongoing or planned to be completed by 2027. In order to apply for flood defence grant-in-aid funding an outline business case (OBC) must be prepared for each project with large OBCs taking up to 250 hours to complete. To make this process more efficient, the Boards have agreed to package future projects together which will allow us to submit one OBC for the Lindsey Marsh area (13 projects) and one for the Lower Trent area which covers the Isle of Axholme, Trent Valley and Doncaster East areas (19 projects). The first outline business case will be submitted for the Lindsey Marsh area this year and we are already engaging with contractors on these projects.

To ensure continuous service at each site usually only one pump is lifted at a time, where this is not possible, temporary pumping is put in place and monitored.

Lindsey Marsh Area

Coastal Pumping Stations: The three new pumps installed at Saltfleet Pumping Station will be ready for testing and commissioning in May this year and work on the water transfer structure to take flows from the Environment Agency's Greyfleet main river through the Board's system is nearing completion. Work to install a third piped connection from Gents Canal to the Mardyke to cater for the additional flows is well underway and this element of the work is being undertaken by the Board's workforce, resulting in



significant cost savings. The overall costs for the project are far in excess of the initial estimate due to inflationary pressures giving a revised budget of £4,822,593, the Board's contribution £893,160. Due to the delays at Saltfleet, it was decided to put back the start date for the refurbishment of Trusthorpe and Ingoldmells Pumping Stations and these will now be completed in 2024/25. Work to replace the three pumps at Anderby Pumping Station will commence in June 2023 and be completed before this winter. The old diesel engines are being refurbished and will provide back up support throughout the construction phase of the project, with temporary overpumping by two electric submersible pumps handling daily flows. The estimated revised cost of work at the four coastal stations is £13M.

Works nearing completion include the refurbishment of Chapel Basin Pumping Station with a single new pump being fitted inhouse, and the refurbishment of the two pumps at Wyche Pumping Station.

Isle of Axholme Area

The refurbishment of Kelfield, Southfield and South Street Pumping Stations will be completed this year (estimated combined cost £1.958M).

Wrays Drain Flood Relief Scheme, Crowle (partnership scheme) will commence this year. The cost of this scheme originally estimated at £451,000 has risen to £625,000; these additional costs will be met by Severn Trent Water and local levy funding.

Unplanned work on the Misterton culvert to guard and repair the culvert following a condition survey undertaken in January this year will commence shortly and an application for local levy funding to cover the cost of the work will be made.

Trent Valley Area

Refurbishment of pumps at Sturton, Church Laneham, Fledborough, Bole Ings and Moor Lane Pumping Stations will be completed this year (estimated combined cost £175,000). Weir Dyke pumping station was due to be refurbished, however, investigations proved that it would be more cost-effective to replace the pumps and this work is well underway.

Flood storage areas have been identified for Thurgarton and Sutton-on-Trent and design is in progress. Once the design has been finalised, consultation will commence with local landowners and parish councils and planning applications will be submitted. We hope to start work on site this financial year.

Doncaster East Area

A complete refurbishment of Newington Pumping Station is to commence shortly and will include replacement of the two pumps, weedrake and panel. Equipment is located in a small kiosk which

will be replaced and work will include the raising of electrical components to protect them from flooding and improvements to the downstream watercourse to the River Idle. Estimated cost £220,000 funded by the Coal Authority.

Refurbishment of one of the pumps at Idle Stop Pumping Station is also due to be completed this year together with the repair of two pumps at Low Ellers Pumping Station (estimated combined cost £50,000).

Safety platforms and raking grids have been installed in the Potteric Carr catchment to assist with the management of debris and improve health and safety for operatives.

Environmental

We continue to work with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership in an effort to control the American Mink, a non-native predator whose prey includes ground-nesting birds and our native water vole which is now under threat; a single mink being capable of clearing an entire colony of water voles within months. Three Mink control projects are underway across the Consortium and some 25 Mink have been captured over the last year with efforts increasing as more money is secured by the partnership. The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership is working with Waterlife Recovery Trust, a registered charity that is planning to eradicate mink from the UK. Please contact the Board's Environmental Officer if you are undertaking or interested in undertaking mink control.



Water Vole

It should be noted that all our work is undertaken in compliance with environmental legislation and the wildlife recorded within Board maintained watercourses evidences that systems can be well maintained without adversely affecting the environment; having a dedicated Environmental Officer inhouse helps us to achieve this. We also work closely with the various environmental bodies including the Wildlife Trusts, Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership and Catchment partnerships.

Data Protection Statement

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

As part of system improvements and to ensure operational efficiency, all staff will be able to access landowner/occupier contact information; this will enable them to arrange access or discuss

issues with you. Staff will access this information on secure devices which are fully managed by the organisation to ensure maximum protection of this data.

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

Lincolnshire Show

The Association of Drainage Authorities Lincolnshire Branch have a stand (located near the Clock Tower) at the Lincolnshire Show on 21st and 22nd June 2023. If you would like to learn more about what we do or have any questions, please come and visit us. Representatives from your local drainage board will be there together with Lincolnshire County Council and the Environment Agency to answer any questions. We will also be joined by staff from the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project.

Board Meetings and Members

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

The Boards are made up of members elected by the drainage ratepayers and those appointed by the special levy paying councils. We currently have vacancies on the Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board and would welcome applications from anyone interested. If you would like to know more about what this involves, please contact Carol Davies at the Manby office.

Chairmen

Giles Crust (Lindsey Marsh)

John Coggon (Isle of Axholme)

John Miller (Trent Valley)

Chris McGuinness (Doncaster East)

Officers

Andrew McGill (Chief Executive)

Robert Brown (Senior Engineer)

Antony Malin (Senior Operations Manager)

Telephone: 01507 328095.

Email: enquiries@lmdb.co.uk

2023 Summer Maintenance Works

NOTICE OF ENTRY

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

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

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

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

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

Operational Staff:

Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board

Steve Stones (Operations Manager)
Derrick Quickfall (Foreman)

Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board

Mat Everett (Operations Manager)
Kai Creed (Foreman)

Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board

Graham Sutton (Foreman)

Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board

Graeme Warman (Works Supervisor)



Water Management Consortium

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