

Steeping River Community Update

May 2021



Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board
Water Management Consortium



Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

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This newsletter provides an update on the work of the Steeping River Catchment Steering Group and other activities that help manage flood risk in the catchment.

Catchment Action Plan Refresh - one year on

There have been a number of successes over the past year that bring the Catchment Action Plan (CAP) to life – the most visible of these being targeted dredging. This is something that partners knew the community wanted to see and only became possible thanks to contributions from Lindsey Marsh Drainage



Board (LMDB), East Lindsey District Council (ELDC), Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the Environment Agency (EA). Alongside these achievements, there remain challenges, notably around funding. Despite this, there is significant activity planned for the year ahead that will help to reduce flood risk for the community.



The CAP outlines the actions that partners, and the community, can take to reduce the risk of flooding and become more resilient. The actions cover 4 themes: improving flow through the system, resilient community and infrastructure, strengthening and maintaining defences and flood water storage (including natural flood risk management).

The **CAP Refresh May 2021** is online here www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/flood2019 and should be read alongside the CAP and this newsletter. The numbers in the newsletter - in brackets - relate to the specific action within the CAP. There is also a specific **Activity Programme 2021/22** for this financial year online.

If you would like to request a hard copy of any of the documents, please call the EA on 03708 506 506 or email LNenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Although all of this activity will help to reduce flood risk, it cannot be removed entirely. People should still check if they can sign up for free EA river/sea Flood Warnings at www.gov.uk/flood or by calling 0345 988 1188.

1. Improving flow through the system

LMDB have led the management of the dredging operation on the ground, working closely with EA colleagues (1.2).

Phase 1 of the targeted dredging started at the end of September at Thorpe Culvert. Its completion was delayed, owing to Government lockdown announcements over the Christmas period to help combat Covid 19, as the dredging crew could not travel back from Holland. It was completed in March, with no additional cost incurred.



A total of 55,000 cubic metres of silt has been removed. The dredging area was extended, as more silt was found than surveys indicated. This is not unusual in a complex silt removal operation like this.

A third lagoon will start to be constructed north of the Wainfleet Relief Channel in May/June, ahead of Phase 2 of the dredging which is due to start in September this year.

There were also two weed cuts and two weed clearances carried out during the last financial year to help water move more freely along the Steeping River and Wainfleet Relief Channel (1.1).

Investigations into the potential to safely reduce pumping from Thorpe Culvert Pumping Station during times of increased river flow are continuing (1.5). This is looking at options for storing water in the lowland system and also for emergency discharges into the Bell Water Drain. The discharge could be done using the existing culverts (tunnels) under the Steeping River. These are being checked to see if any refurbishment is needed. This would be used in an emergency only, with the agreement of Witham Fourth District Internal Drainage Board.

Opening Haven House and Burgh Sluices to lower river levels ahead of potential heavy rain (1.4) and the refinement of the operation and effectiveness of Burgh Sluice, Wainfleet Clough Outfalls and Haven House Sluice will be explored (1.6), however some aspects of these actions are dependent on Action 2.5. This year, a mechanical refurbishment of Haven House Sluice is expected to take place and new pointing doors at Burgh Sluice will be installed.

2. A resilient community and infrastructure



Wainfleet Town Council and the surrounding Parishes are working together on a joint Community Emergency Plan for the area (2.1). The current community focus on responding to Covid 19 has slowed this work. The intention is to progress this in the coming year with support from LCC, ELDC and the EA. A new weather station, linked directly to the County Emergency Centre, is planned for this year that residents can log into for live data. An Emergency Kit is being supplied that will also help the community to become more resilient. This includes 2-way rechargeable radios, a loud hailer, hi-viz jackets, a solar powered radio, emergency whistles and foil blankets.

Regular community updates continue to be shared with residents that feature related articles. A total of 7 have been produced over the past year. These are shared with the Town and Parish Councils as well as left in up to 15 key community locations e.g. shops (2.3), post office and chemist in Wainfleet, when it is possible to do so. Direct

engagement, with events and door-knocking, to ensure residents understand their flood risk and are signed up to appropriate Flood Warnings will take place when Government guidance permits.

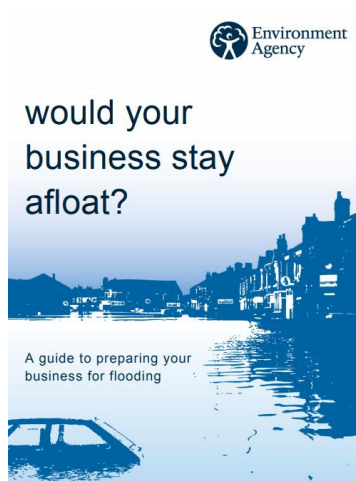
In addition to signing up for **Flood Warnings** residents (2.2) and businesses (2.3) can:

- ✚ Prepare an **Emergency Bag** of essential items. This might include spare glasses, change of clothes, waterproof coat, any medication, water, food, insurance documents and pet food. Hand sanitiser and face coverings should be considered too.

✓ Useful items for your emergency bag



- ✚ Create a **Personal** or **Business Flood Plan** with actions to take to help reduce the impact of any flooding. Call the EA's Floodline on 0345 988 1188 for a hard copy or click on the relevant links here: www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding/future-flooding.
- ✚ **Move things** - e.g. important documents, passports, photos, laptops - upstairs or onto higher shelves.
- ✚ Consider **Flood Products** for your home or business e.g. air brick covers, flood gates. Look here for ideas: www.bluepages.org.uk. You could even put soil in bags to go across doorways, and down the toilet and sink.



- ✚ View details of current **EA Flood Warnings** that have been issued here: www.flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings or call Floodline.
- ✚ Monitor **current river levels** online here: www.flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels or call Floodline.
- ✚ Read case studies from homes and businesses, who have made adaptations to help them recover more quickly after a flood, in this Property Flood Resilience E-magazine produced by Mary Dhonau www.marydhonau.co.uk Scroll down to the bottom of the home page or click to see direct here: <https://edition.pagesuite.com/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&pubid=b3dddc3f-8c89-4711-86f3-4f0f9ce9a713>
- ✚ Or see Mary Dhonau's Flood Guide for Homeowners here for ideas: https://knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk/sites/default/files/FloodGuide_ForHomeowners.pdf

Modelling work to improve the EA's Flood Warning Service continues (2.5).

3. Strengthening and maintaining defences



The annual routine visual inspection of flood defences to check for any defects took place in September (3.1).

Defects identified are prioritised for repair by the EA in line with current Government funding criteria (3.2). Highlights from the past year include embankment repairs on the Wainfleet Relief Channel near Croft Pump Station and Thorpe Railway Culvert, and also on the Steeping River near Firsby Railway Bridge.

Berm repairs and 'toe protection' work to help protect the bottom of the embankment near the waterline from erosion has taken place on the left bank of the Wainfleet Relief Channel between Thorpe Culvert Railway and Spilsby Road and the left bank of the Steeping River between Crow's Bridge and Havenside (3.4). The photos show coir reed rolls being put into place near Batemans Brewery and a completed section. Rock material is also used below the waterline.



The photo below, taken near Occupation Bridge, shows some of the preparatory work taking place.



Before some of this work could legally take place, water voles (a protected and endangered species) were displaced from the working areas into alternative safe habitat by a specialist team of ecologists under Licence from Natural England.

The photo to the right shows the final check of burrows to ensure water voles have left the repair site.

Grass cutting of the embankments took place twice in 2020 (3.3). This year bank grass cutting has started. This encourages good root growth, which helps protect and bind the surface of a bank. It also means banks can be inspected more easily to monitor the condition of the defences and it reduces vermin burrowing.



A business case is being put together to apply for Government funding to increase the resilience of the right bank of the Wainfleet Relief Channel

and left bank of the Steeping River to reduce flood risk from overtopping and climate change on the western side of Wainfleet. This will need contributions from other partners (3.6).

Confirmation is still awaited following a bid for funding to reduce the risk of flooding from Lady Wath's Beck in Great Steeping in 2022 (3.8).

4. Flood water storage



The EA, LMDB and the National Farmers' Union are looking at working with natural processes within the upper catchment including Natural Flood Management (NFM) e.g. leaky timber barriers that have the potential to slow water coming down the system by up to 5% if the right opportunities can be found.

There are many different forms of NFM, but examples include:

- Installing leaky timber barriers to slow the flow of water down into the catchment
- Creating a 'bund' in a field to temporarily store water until the high flow has passed – see photo
- Re-connecting rivers and their flood plains to allow storage during high flows



An experienced advisor has started walking the catchment and talking to landowners to identify where suitable opportunities may exist. The expertise, local knowledge and co-operation of landowners will be key to establishing what can be done over the next few years. (4.1, 4.2).

Contact us

East Lindsey District Council: 01507 601111

www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/flood2019

Environment Agency: 03708 506 506

LNenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

To report an incident please call (24-hour service) 0800 80 70 60

Floodline: 0345 988 1188

Lincolnshire County Council: 01522 552222

customer_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board: 01507 328095

enquiries@lmdb.co.uk

Witham Fourth District IDB: 01205 310088

drainage@w4idb.co.uk

National Farmers' Union:

Philip Odling and Christian Ford (Spilsby) 01790 752843, Alistair Green (Boston and Wainfleet) 01205 363051, Regional Environment Adviser Simon Fisher 01572 824250