

# Steeping River Community Update

June 2020



Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board  
Water Management Consortium



Lincolnshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
*Working for a better future*



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.

## Progress made one year on from the flooding

### Steeping Catchment Action Plan 2020 +

...from the Wolds to the sea



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Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, many aspects of the Catchment Action Plan (CAP) have still been continuing in the background. Partners have been working hard to help the community recover from the devastation caused by the flooding last June.

The CAP outlines the actions all the partners, and the community, can take to reduce the risk of flooding and become more resilient. It has a range of actions across 4 themes of improving flow through the system, resilient community and infrastructure, strengthening and maintaining defences and flood water storage (including natural flood risk management). The CAP is online here [www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/flood2019](http://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/flood2019) and can be read alongside this newsletter. The numbers in the newsletter - in brackets - relate to the specific action in the CAP. More detail to show location can be seen on the map.

The Environment Agency (EA) has managed to successfully secure £4m from national funding sources for works across the catchment in 2020/21 to go towards its annual maintenance programme, maintenance, repairs and refurbishment to defences and sluices. The partnership continues to seek out sources for additional funding.

This year's programme is now being finalised and includes **targeted dredging** (1.2) in the autumn funded by the partnership: Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board (LMDB), EA, Lincolnshire County Council and East Lindsey District Council.

In addition to these works, LMDB will be carrying out their extensive programme of annual weed cutting and channel maintenance in, and around, the Steeping catchment area on some 187km of watercourse. This work and the continued operation of the local pumping stations requires an annual investment of around £295k – all of which is financed from locally sourced funding.

Although all these joint works will help to reduce flood risk, it cannot be removed entirely. Consequently, people are still encouraged to sign up for free river/sea flood warnings at [www.gov.uk/flood](http://www.gov.uk/flood) or by calling 0345 988 1188.

## 1. Improving flow through the system

Working in partnership, the EA and LMDB have started annual maintenance work in the area. Weed clearance in the centre of the channel to help water move more freely has been carried out this month along the majority of the Steeping River. A weed cut will also be undertaken in the catchment later this year (1.1).



Dredging to achieve a minimum water depth of 1.5m to reduce weed growth is to take place this autumn – starting mid-September (1.2).

Surveys and planning, involving Dutch colleagues – see photo – who will deploy a suction dredger to the rivers in September, has continued throughout the recent lockdown period in line with government guidance around social distancing.

Work continues to explore the feasibility of opening Haven House and Burgh Sluices to lower river levels ahead of potential heavy rain (1.4) and refinement of the operation and effectiveness of Burgh Sluice, Wainfleet Clough Outfalls and Haven House Sluice - including door opening mechanisms (1.6).

Investigations of potential to safely reduce pumping from Thorpe Culvert Pumping Station during times of increased river flow – either by short term storage in the lowland system or by emergency discharge to Bell Water Drain have been commenced by LMDB (1.5).

## 2. A resilient community and infrastructure



Work to support communities *directly* in the Steeping to be as resilient as they can be for the future has been paused in line with government guidance around social distancing.

Residents may recall the event at Batemans Brewery to launch the CAP had to be postponed.

A joint Community Emergency Plan is being progressed by the town and parish councils (2.1).

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

- ✚ Create a **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 'personal flood plan' link: [www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding/future-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding/future-flooding)
- ✚ 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.
- ✚ Consider **Flood Products** e.g. air brick covers, flood gates. Some ideas are available here [www.bluepages.org.uk](http://www.bluepages.org.uk) Alternatives include putting soil in bags to go across doorways, and down the toilet/sink.
- ✚ Monitor **current river levels** online here: [www.flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels](http://www.flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels) or call Floodline.

More support will be available directly to the community when it is possible to do so. This will include a further community event for people to ask partners questions and seek advice about how they can reduce flood risk to their homes.

Further work to improve the timeliness and accuracy of the EA's flood warnings by updating the models used is ongoing (2.5).

### 3. Strengthening and maintaining defences

The routine visual inspection of flood defences that takes place each year to check for any defects is happening in September (3.1).



Defects already identified have been prioritised for repair by the EA in line with current government funding criteria (3.2). Please look at the map for this year's locations. This includes embankment repairs, floodwall repairs, and 'toe protection' work (to protect the bottom of the embankment near the waterline from erosion) along the Steeping River and Wainfleet Relief Channel.



Grass cutting of the embankments is ongoing currently (3.3) – see photo. This encourages good grass cover, 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. All work will be undertaken in line with government guidance around social distancing.

We have been informed that a decision following the submission of the ESIF bid for funding to increase the resilience of the embankments on the Wainfleet Relief Channel has unfortunately been delayed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local

Government due to Covid-19 (3.6). Other funding sources continue to be actively pursued for this important work as well as the work to increase the resilience of the Steeping River banks (3.7).

We are bidding for funding for work to take place 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 have been working together to look at natural flood management and working with natural processes in the upper catchment with a view to reducing peak flows in the system downstream.(4.1, 4.2).

This work is in its early stages at the moment but we look to work with land owners to identify opportunities where small changes to land management practices across the catchment could lead to slower or delayed run-off of flood waters and potentially also reduce the amount of silt coming into the system.

### Contact us

**East Lindsey District Council: 01507 601111**

[www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/flood2019](http://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/flood2019)

**Environment Agency: 03708 506 506**

[LNenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto:customer_services@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

**Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board: 01507 328095**

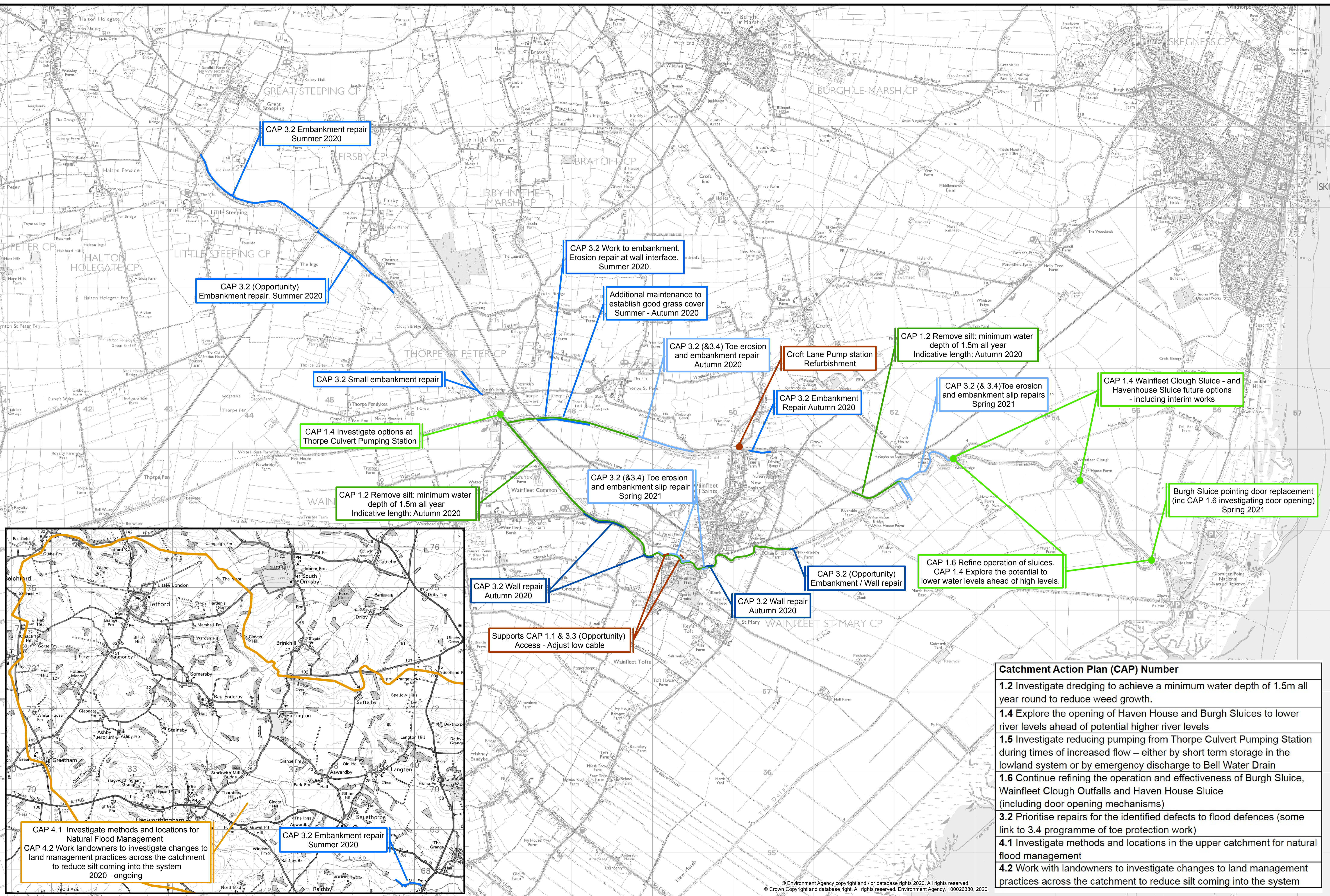
[enquiries@lmdb.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@lmdb.co.uk)

**Witham Fourth District IDB: 01205 310088**

[drainage@w4idb.co.uk](mailto: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



Catchment Action Plan (CAP) Number
1.2 Investigate dredging to achieve a minimum water depth of 1.5m all year round to reduce weed growth.
1.4 Explore the opening of Haven House and Burgh Sluices to lower river levels ahead of potential higher river levels
1.5 Investigate reducing pumping from Thorpe Culvert Pumping Station during times of increased flow – either by short term storage in the lowland system or by emergency discharge to Bell Water Drain
1.6 Continue refining the operation and effectiveness of Burgh Sluice, Wainfleet Clough Outfalls and Haven House Sluice (including door opening mechanisms)
3.2 Prioritise repairs for the identified defects to flood defences (some link to 3.4 programme of toe protection work)
4.1 Investigate methods and locations in the upper catchment for natural flood management
4.2 Work with landowners to investigate changes to land management practices across the catchment to reduce silt coming into the system