



INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS IN BOSTON (IDBs)

The IDBs' primary role is to manage water levels and reduce the risk from flooding within their districts. This excludes the main river and coastal defences looked after by the Environment Agency. Much of the IDBs' work involves the maintenance and improvement of watercourses and related infrastructure such as pumping stations, weirs, sluices, culverts and embankments within their drainage districts. The above two IDBs are responsible for the maintenance of over 1,450 km of watercourse located in and around Boston covering an area of 87,000 hectares (215,000 acres).

IDBs conduct their work in accordance with environmental duties and aim to promote sustainability and the ecological wellbeing within their districts. Every IDB has its own Biodiversity Action Plan and strives to maintain watercourses as sympathetically as possible. They have a specific duty to further the conservation and enhancement of all designated environmental sites within their districts.

Many farms or land-holdings fall within IDB districts growing crops for food and bio-energy. The service provided by IDBs underpins the food production of the majority in the most valuable and productive land in the UK, with the majority of Grade 1 agricultural land around Boston situated within IDB districts. Water level management by IDBs is therefore an essential component of food security to the UK.

The majority of IDB districts sit at or below sea level and require pumping to for water level management. The two main Boston IDBs have 41 pumping stations between them and during the very wet Summer and Autumn of 2019 the total amount of water pumped by our two IDBs would have nearly filled Rutland Water.

The expenses of an IDB are funded locally by the beneficiaries of the water level management work they provide. Each IDB sets a budget for its planned works and any investment needed for future capital projects. The Land Drainage Act 1991 determines that these expenses shall be met by:

- 1 Drainage rates collected from agricultural land and buildings within the IDB District;
- 2 Special Levies issued on District and Unitary Authorities within the IDB District.