

Environmental Policy

INTRODUCTION

Thorntree IDB has adopted this Environmental Policy to set out the basis by which the board's activities meet the obligations relating to environmental protection and management under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and other legislation to undertake watercourse and water level management in a way that is compatible with nature conservation and environmental protection. The board recognises the need to demonstrate its operations whilst managing land drainage and flood risk also safeguarding the nature conservation interests and where possible making a positive contribution to the environment. This policy statement was adopted on 17th July 2007. The Board may from time to time, choose to review and update this document.

The Drainage District

Thorntree IDB is the relevant authority charged with the provision of land drainage for the Thorntree Internal Drainage Board District that covers 975 hectares (2409 acres) of low lying land to the south of the Dutch River at Rawcliffe Bridge.

The District is protected from fluvial and tidal flooding by the raised flood defences along the Dutch River and a network of interconnecting ditches. The natural features of the area clearly demonstrate the significance of two hundred years of water control in creating the present landscape from a marshy flood plain. Works undertaken by the Board are on its adopted watercourses extending to 13km in length.

The board has 1 pumping station with an outlet to the Dutch River. Water levels are managed within the arterial drainage system to provide land drainage and flood defence to the Drainage District.

Present management practices have evolved from close co-operation between the Board and agricultural occupiers over many years.

The responsibility for non-adopted watercourses and field ditches rests with the riparian owner.

Statutory Obligations

Internal Drainage Boards are required to exercise their functions in such a way that minimises harm to the environment.

General duties are provided for under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and as amended by the Land Drainage Act 1994.

Amendments to conservation legislation in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 have strengthened the general duties.

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Sites of Environmental and Conservation Interest.

Within the boards area are parts of Rawcliffe ,Snaith and Cowick Moors within the Natural England NNR. A Water Level Management plan is being drawn up to address specific details for this area.

Environmental Strategy

Regular maintenance of the Board's watercourses is essential for land drainage and flood protection but will also take into consideration nature conservation interests, with particular regard to protected species, bank, marginal and aquatic biodiversity. Maintenance will be undertaken in a manner sympathetic with biodiversity.

The Thorntree Internal Drainage Board undertakes routine maintenance on its adopted watercourses including control of bank-side and aquatic vegetation, tree works and de-silting for the following reasons

- Provision of a clear passage for flows within a watercourse
- Provision of adequate capacity in winter months
- Stimulation of bank side vegetation to maximise bank protection from erosion
- Control of successional vegetation such as scrub
- Allow for inspection of watercourses and associated structures
- Nature conservation interests

Bank-side vegetation is controlled between July and December and includes cutting and flailing of vegetation on the banks of adopted watercourses by hand and tractor mounted flail mowers. All residues from cutting and mowing will be left in-situ on the bank-side.

Mechanical aquatic plant control includes all hand and mechanical cutting of vegetation in the watercourse channels. This operation is normally restricted to the latter part of the year. An excavator mounted weed-cutting basket is used where possible. In inaccessible areas hand cutting may be undertaken. Removed vegetation will be deposited on the bank top to rot down.

Chemical aquatic weed control involves the application of approved aquatic herbicides to control vegetation in the watercourse channel, in accordance with DEFRA approved best practice.

De-silting of a watercourse may have to be carried out depending on the accumulation of silt. The removed silt is normally deposited on the bank top. The frequency of de- silting works is significantly reduced by the annual removal of vegetation in the channel.

Trees and shrubs can create potential flood hazards and prevent access for maintenance and will be managed appropriately.

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Conservation Objectives

Thorntree Internal Drainage Board will:

- Continue to protect and enhance existing environmental resources taking into account the operational needs of the Board's wider remit
- Work with Natural England to promote the enhancement and protection of nature conservation interests, in so far as may be consistent with its operational functions
- Implement environmental best practice when undertaking works
- Endeavour to promote the targets of any local Biodiversity Action Plan

The common seal of the Thorntree Internal Drainage Board was affixed hereto in pursuance of the resolution of the Board dated 17th day of July 2007 in the presence of

David N Hinchliffe
Chairman of the Board

Michael J Townend
Clerk to the Board

- This Environmental Policy was duly reviewed by the Thorntree Internal Drainage Board at their meeting on 22nd January 2013
- This Environmental Policy was duly reviewed by the Thorntree Internal Drainage Board at their meeting on 21st November 2017