



# Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

## ENVIRONMENT FORUM

### Meeting Note

13 April 2026

Venue: Online via Microsoft Teams

14.00 – 16.15

Invited					
Name	Role and organisation	Present	Name	Role and organisation	Present
Emily Askew (EA)	Environment Officer, Black Sluice IDB	Apologies	Sofi Lloyd (SL)	Ecology & Environmental Services Manager, Middle Level Commissioners	Y (Chair)
Erin Barber	Environmental Officer, WLMA	Y	Chris Manning (CM)	Environment Advisor, Water Management Consortium	Apologies
Phil Brewin (PB)	Ecologist for Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium	Y	Alexandra McNeive (AM)	Environmental Officer, Water Management Consortium	Y
Nick Downing (ND)	Environment & GIS Officer, Witham & Humber Drainage Boards	Y	Rob Monje (RM)	Clerk Engineer, Romney Marshes IDB	Apologies
Priscilla Hazelhurst (PH)	CEO, Lower Medway and North Kent Marshes IDBs	Apologies	Ian Moodie (IM)	Technical Manager, ADA	Y
Charlotte Hipkin	Environmental Officer, WLMA	Y	Dan Putteril	Assistant Environmental Officer, WLMA	Y
Jennifer Horner	Sustainable Water Management Officer, Lower Medway and North Kent Marshes IDBs	Y	Martin Redding	Planner, Middle Level Commissioners	Y
Mat Jackson (MJ)	Senior Flood Risk Management Officer, West Sussex County Council	Y	Iain Turner (ITr)	Environmental Officer, Water Management Consortium	Y
Caroline Laburn (CL)	Environmental Manager, Water Management Alliance	Y	Diana Ward (DW)	Ecologist for Bedford Groups of IDBs	Y

Ref	Notes
35	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>SL welcomed everyone to the meeting including Martin Redding from Middle Level Commissioners.</p>
36	<p><b>Water Level Management Plans</b></p> <p>IM updated the group on recent meetings with Defra, Environment Agency and Natural England. The actions from the meeting include reaching out to Cunliffe review team and a meeting has been scheduled within Defra. IM questioned the group as to how they would like to see WLMP discussion taken forward in a future meeting. It was discussed if no further forward ADA could write to Government about the issues.</p>

	<p>MJ gave LLFA perspective how he is looking at catchment management plans and how they are facing challenges in relation to environment legislation. He is reviewing various plans to not disrupt the flow. He said he would value closer guidance on how regulation is used?</p> <p>How will Defra coordinating this nationally deal with this issue of legislation around watercourses?</p> <p>Ordinary watercourse consenting for NFM guidance from East Sussex CC was given as an example <a href="https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/flooding/ordinary-watercourse-consent/ordinary-watercours...">https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/flooding/ordinary-watercourse-consent/ordinary-watercours...</a></p> <p>SL said we are in a position where more sites will be designated and will need WLMPs. IDBs, need it rationalised, if you are seeking a wider context on how water is being managed higher up, than you do need further guidance. On River Aran in WMLA, the EA wants to know where desilting is required but there is no plan for this site. There was discussion about how site geographically link together. There is a trend for WLMP to be collector of all objectives in one document and DW noted this is not what they were written for.</p> <p>Is there any penalties to the IDBs was discussed and how there used to be significant penalties.</p> <p><i>Action: All to read Phil Brewin's paper and Priscilla Hazelhurst's paper and bring any ideas forward to share with next WLMP meeting.</i></p>
<p><b>37</b></p>	<p><b>Beavers</b></p> <p>PB updated on 3 workshops on Beavers and his response, which was shared with the group to a survey including his concerns about beavers in lowland systems, and how protocols to manage their impact is needed. More beavers have been sighted in Somerset in areas that could be an issue. He will keep the group updated as management plan evolves includes risk assessments for licence releases.</p> <p>New GB/NL Beaver Knowledge Hub: <a href="https://www.beaverknowledgehub.com/">https://www.beaverknowledgehub.com/</a></p> <p>International Beaver Knowledge Hub   Stowa Bevers</p> <p>The Netherlands approaches were discussed about Netherlands after what the group had learnt from ADA Environment Day.</p>
<p><b>38</b></p>	<p><b>Flail mowing heights and conveyors</b></p> <p>SL has spoken to other IDBs about feasibility of achieving bank vegetation 10cm height guide relating to water vole displacement. Some of it is driven from EA ops.</p> <p>IT and CL confirmed said they could achieve this height by using the machines that they have. JH they have been approved for 10-15cm and this has been successful. The Dutch reset their sign off standards every 3 years.</p> <p><i>Action: SL can send information on herders and how the machines can be set to this height.</i></p>
<p><b>39</b></p>	<p><b>De Watering</b></p> <p>IT wanted to ask advice a De Watering Policy? It was discussed this group could bring forward a best practice list.</p> <p><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d49237c40f0b65a082072d9/Standard-Rule-2015-No-26.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d49237c40f0b65a082072d9/Standard-Rule-2015-No-26.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>40</b></p>	<p><b>Habitat Migration Fee</b></p>

	ITr explained how If someone wants to culvert outside their drain than his board claim £13/metre as a habitat migration fee. CL said it might not be legitimate but if you have a policy on your website than you can cover yourself.
	<b>The next meeting is Monday 13 July 2026 2pm-4pm</b>