
Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board Newsletter

April 2016



New Machinery

Due to the efficiency savings and reliability of Energreen machines for annual routine maintenance (mowing and weed cutting) the Board have replaced one Energreen 2000 with another after 5 years' service.

The weight has been decreased by approximately 3 tonnes which will allow easier travel on wet ground conditions together with forestry tyres.

There have been many improvements which have been incorporated into the new build at our request.

We have also replaced another tractor/flail mower unit with another side arm Spearhead SPV 2. Both machines have a maximum road speed of 40km, crab steer, 4 wheel steer and 2 wheel steer.

Also incorporated are sliding counterweights to allow stability when working on gradients at a maximum of 9.5 metres adjacent to a watercourse. Tree shears and desilting buckets can also be used when required.

The Energreen machines are now marketed by Spearhead Machinery based in Evesham so we no longer deal directly with the manufacturer in Italy.



Pump Stations

Recent changes in EU regulations which have been drafted into UK law, require all Drainage Boards to replace their pumps with eel and fish friendly models. The Board have twelve pumps that will require changing. In light of this there has been a rate increase of 0.01p to begin raising funds for these costly works. The project is still in its infancy, however as and when more information becomes available it will be shared.

Maintenance

From April 2015 to December 2015 451 km of watercourses have been maintained out of the total length of 547km of the IDBs watercourses.

From the beginning of January it has been a very different story with very wet conditions. This is the period when pioneering clearance and dredging work is carried out as programmed.

Dredging work is continuing at Eldersfield, Northwick, Pilning, Severn Beach and Stroat/Woolaston area just north of Chepstow.

Operatives have also been carrying out handwork across the Board's area during the recent wet weather including:

- Weed cutting where machine access is restricted
- Unblocking culverts and removing debris
- Monitoring & removing debris from pump stations

Avonmouth and Severnside Area



Looking south with the M49 in the foreground and the Severn to the right.



Looking east with the new distribution centre and the M49 in the foreground and the Second Severn Crossing in the distance.

Major developments continue to progress throughout the Avonmouth and Severnside area. Several large buildings have been constructed in the Cabot Park and Western Approaches areas meaning additional pressures on the local drainage network. The Lower Severn IDB has, on the back of the development secured significant improvements to local watercourses with the net effect of reducing peak flood levels across the catchment.

The construction of additional flood storage areas and enhanced drainage channels not only means improved drainage. The positive impacts on local biodiversity can be clearly seen. Species such as the water vole continue to flourish in no small part to the role of Lower Severn IDB in planning and maintaining the local watercourse network.

Looking forward there are major proposals for local infrastructure projects such as a new motorway junction on the M49 and the Environment Agency and Local Authorities are looking at a scheme to significantly improve the tidal defences in the area. The Lower Severn IDB will continue to ensure developments are constructed in a manner that delivers a range of benefits including improved land drainage and an overall reduction in flood risk to property.