

Lincolnshire Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee Report: Impacts of Storms Babet and Henk in 2023-24.

At its latest meeting on 18th February 2025 the committee started its final report on this issue thanking everyone for the response to the Storms Babet and Henk and adopted the full report with the following recommendations (summarised here). The full report can be found on the Lincolnshire County Council website

<https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s66320/05A%20Storms%20Babet%20and%20Henk%20Report.pdf>

“We would like to record our thanks to all the staff from all the flood risk organisations: Lincolnshire County Council, including Fire and Rescue, District Councils, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, and Internal Drainage Boards, who responded to Storms Babet and Henk. Whether it was working in pumping stations or co-ordinating responses, many staff from these organisations were working long hours without breaks in response to Storms Babet and Henk. People on the front line were often working in the dark, in very pressured circumstances. These people have done an extraordinary job. We also heard evidence of practical partnership working in the face of the challenges.

Similarly, we would like to thank volunteers in local communities, many of whom showed a high degree of resilience, whether they were sourcing and distributing sandbags, or caring for vulnerable residents.”

Summary of Recommendations

1. Clearer contact points and procedures for the public to contact
2. Every community including Town and Parish Councils should adopt an Emergency Plan supported by the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum and self-help should be encouraged to mitigate the effects of storms/flood events.
3. Funding for the Environment Agency is not sufficient and Government should change the cost-benefit measures to take into account loss of agricultural land put more money into flood risk and water management.
4. Environment Agency should review procurement processes to be more flexible to work with Internal Drainage Boards.
5. Tensions between duties to protect protected wildlife and duties to protect households, businesses and agricultural land need to be explored and rectified.
6. Emergency funding of £75million welcomed but should be less bureaucratic to obtain and also available to help Internal Drainage Boards.
7. DEFRA should be asked to review how Internal Drainage Board levies are applied.
8. Environment Agency should assess the condition of the Lower Bain (from Baumber) and publish the results for the public and interested parties to identify further improvements.
9. A review of the modelling used to decide the future of Black Sluice Pumping Station and Sluices should be conducted.
10. LCC should continue its work on ground water and surface water flooding solutions.
11. Use the opportunity of new devolutions to a Mayor working with LCC to develop a similar body to the ‘Somerset Rivers Authority’ which came about after their floods in 2013/14.
12. Re-affirm the spirit of the Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership and reduce corporate risk-aversion to improve outcomes.