

**Thirsk Group of Drainage Boards
Rate Demand for the Financial Year 2004-05**

We have prepared this brief résumé to explain the duties of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and to help to understand what you, as a ratepayer get for your money.

IDBs were established in the 1930s in Districts where there was a special need or benefit from drainage or flood protection works. Thus, the IDBs supervise all land drainage matters within their district and have powers to carry out drainage functions on adopted watercourses. The IDBs are autonomous statutory public bodies under direct control of unpaid Board Members. A proportion of each Board consists of elected landowners from within the District and the remainder, Councillors appointed by the local authority.

The three Thirsk Drainage Districts are quite small compared with those in Lincolnshire East Anglia. This is because the area of drainage districts was calculated from the contours of the drainage basin so that the largest districts are found in very flat low lying areas. Some other statistics on the Thirsk Boards are given below

	Cod Beck	Lower Swale	River Wiske
Area of District (ha)	1745	4221	4345
Length of adopted watercourse	76.81	69.27	168.95
Number of agricultural ratepayers	208	375	556
Number of Board elected Members	5	9	10
Number of Council appointed Members	1	2	5
Total Income (£ 2002/03)	13,159	25,250	48,400
Total Expenditure (£ 2002/03)	22,690	28,236	60,070

The duties of the IDBs include undertaking New Works and Watercourse Maintenance, participating in the Planning and Development Control process of the local authority, safeguarding the drainage interests of the district by administration of Byelaws and through Consents and enforcement of the 1991 Land Drainage Act. Since the IDBs are Statutory Public Bodies all duties and financial affairs need to be properly conducted within the law. Elections are held, accounts kept and Board Meetings organised several times each year. The financial affairs of the Board are subject to annual approval by the District Auditor.

IDBs raise revenue from two main sources, both of which benefit from the board's activities. These are (i) by a levy on agricultural land within the district and collected directly by the board and (ii) by a special levy on domestic and commercial property within the district and collected by the local authority as part of the Council Tax.

The IDBs are open to public scrutiny so you are free to inspect the Boards' information within the limitations of the Data Protection Act. In addition, the public can make formal complaints about the conduct of the IDB through procedures agreed with the Local Government Ombudsman. Occupiers of more than 4ha of land within the district are generally eligible for election to the IDB. Such elections are organised on a three yearly cycle, notices of which are published in the local press. The government is keen to see diverse public participation in IDB affairs and so, if you are interested in becoming a member then please contact us.

The only full time employee of the Thirsk Drainage Boards is the Works Supervisor who shares his time in the three Districts. Both Secretary and Clerk / Engineer are employees of JBA but on a part time basis to the IDBs. Normally the office is open between 8:30 and 4:30 from Tuesday to Thursday. The telephone is diverted out of hours and should be available 24 hours per day. In addition, you are welcome to contact us by post, fax or email through the web site www.thirsk-idbs.info where there are maps and other information on the Districts which may be useful.

On the reverse of the Rate Demand there is a breakdown of the planned income and expenditure for the present financial year which we hope is reasonable.

Yours sincerely,

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