

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

## WATER LEVELS MANAGEMENT GROUP

<b>Meeting Type:</b>	DoO Group Meeting
<b>Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
<b>Venue:</b>	MS Teams
<b>Meeting Chair:</b>	Bethany Rance (ESC)
<b>Attendees:</b>	SZC – Steve Mannings (SM), Nick Stayt (NS) – Observer, Jen Mills (JM) – Observer, Luke Stevens (LS) - Observer ESC – Bethany Rance (BR), James Meyer (JM) – Observer RSPB – Adam Rowlands (AR) Sizewell B – Tim McHardy (TM) NE – Sean Mahoney (SMa), Patrick Robinson (PR) – Observer EA – Simon Barlow (SB) East Suffolk Water Management Board – Cathryn Brady (CB), Judith Stoutt (JS) – Observer, Alastair Bloomfield (AB) - Observer
<b>Apologies:</b>	
<b>Meeting Record produced by:</b>	Caitlin Murphy (SZC)
<b>Next Meeting Date:</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2026

### Summary / Key Discussion

#### Meeting Notes:

##### Terms of Reference

- Following the approval of the ToR, the group can revisit and amend as appropriate. To be removed as a standard agenda item

##### SZC Water Levels Update

###### Key themes across quarter

- This year has experienced a trend of lower rainfall.
- This trend is evident as some lower triggers have been surpassed (P8 and P14)
- Upper triggers were also exceeded (P2 and P12) linked to surface water drainage through the ditch network.
- These observations also highlight the natural variability reflected in the 10 years of water levels data.

###### Monthly summary

- March was very dry, with only 9% of average rainfall and no upper triggers surpassed.
- April saw 39% rainfall, with upper triggers exceeded at P2 and P12.
- May recorded 43% rainfall, surpassing upper triggers at P2 and P12, and lower triggers at P8.
- The 2024 Sizewell Marshes SSSI Water Monitoring Annual Report 2024, detailing groundwater and surface water monitoring results, is to be issued by SZC on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025.

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- SZC has initiated several ditch-related activities, including a temporary diversion for the Sizewell drain, which will remain until the main drain diversion is completed.
- Changes to Minsmere Sluice management were implemented in February 2025. The SZC team will analyse surface water monitoring data from early 2024 to June 2025 to identify trends in ditch levels, with findings to be shared with this group. This will take the form of a number of graphs representing water levels over time.

### Matters for Discussion

#### Sizewell C's proposed maintenance activities:

- LS provided an update on routine ditch management, focusing on non-construction-related watercourse management, highlighting that SZC has adopted a coordinated approach to managing ditches as required.
- This winter, ditch management will occur in the northern half of the estate, specifically at Lower Abbey Farm Marsh and Retsoms Field.
- AB noted that the East Suffolk Drainage Board has planned works on the Eastbridge Drain this winter, which aligns well with the activities around Lower Abbey Farm. LS and AB will connect outside the meeting to ensure coordination.

### Action – LS and AB to review drainage plans at Eastbridge Drain and Lower Abbey Farm

- LS will outline the four sections and the work completed over the past few years. LS will circulate a plan detailing these sections and this year's work.

### Action – LS to circulate a plan detailing different sections of Leiston Drain and completed works

- LS raised the need for a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) for maintenance planned on Section C of Leiston Drain, SB noted that he would enquire on the status of the application.
- AB speculated on the possibility of obtaining a 10-20 year consent for maintenance activities, anticipating an increase in maintenance needs. LS will investigate this and compile relevant information to support any related conversations with the EA's FRAP team.

### Action – LS to investigate the possibility of seeking a long-term FRAP for ditch maintenance activities

- SB proposed suggested that this initiative would need the involvement of the EA's FRAP team, and a representative from the local 'Field Operations Delivery' team.

### Action – SZC to organise meeting with SB, FRAP team, and a representative from the local 'Field Operations Delivery' team to discuss ditch maintenance activities being undertaken in the area

- CB requested that planned drain maintenance activities be included as a standing agenda item.

### Action – Planned Drain Maintenance Activities to be included as standard agenda item in WLMG meetings moving forward

- AB suggested organising a meeting with East Suffolk Water Management Board SZC, EA, and RSPB to share their ditch plans, discuss details and sequencing for the upcoming season, and develop a collaborative plan to be shared with this group, ensuring that they do not overlap. LS will take the lead on this.

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- SB undertook to seek attendance by more appropriate EA staff - with a remit for watercourse management and maintenance activities - at future WLMG meetings.
- TM noted that Sizewell B were planning to undertake 1,500m of clearance within the drain network the their land holding, subject to access.

**Action – LS to organise meeting with ISB, SZC, EA and RSPB to share ditch plans, discuss details and sequencing for the upcoming season, and develop a collaborative plan to be shared with this group**

### AOB

- Next meeting dates:
  - 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026
  - 16<sup>th</sup> July 2026

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### Actions agreed in meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
17/07/2025	1	LS and AB to review drainage plans at Eastbridge Drain and Lower Abbey Farm, and discuss any potential adjustments	LS & AB	Next meeting
17/07/2025	2	LS to circulate a plan detailing different sections of Leiston Drain	LS	Next meeting
17/07/2025	3	LS to investigate the possibility of seeking a long-term consent for ditch maintenance activities	LS	Next meeting
17/07/2025	4	SZC to organise meeting with SB, the prep team and a local operations delivery team representative to discuss ditch maintenance activities being undertaken in the area	SZC	Next meeting
17/07/2025	5	Planned Drain Maintenance Activities to be included as standard agenda item in WLMG meetings moving forward	WLMG	Next meeting
17/07/2025	6	LS to organise meeting with ISB, SZC, EA and RSPB to share ditch plans, discuss details and sequencing for the upcoming season, and develop a collaborative plan to be shared with this group	LS	Next meeting