

# Environment Agency calls for communities along the River Witham to sign up for flood warnings

- 7000 properties protected by the Lincoln washlands on the rivers Witham and Till
- More than 2000 Olympic swimming pools of water was diverted to protect Lincoln and downstream communities
- Calls for people in Lincolnshire, particularly along the River Witham and River Ancholme, to sign up for free Flood Warnings as flood water continues to be discharged to sea

Since the beginning of September, Lincolnshire has been coping with significant and prolonged rainfall resulting in some of the highest levels ever seen in our watercourses. Levels in the River Witham in November were the highest ever recorded, exceeding the previous 2007 level. September saw two times the average rainfall, October saw two and half times the average rainfall, and the entire month's average fell in the first two weeks of November.

Throughout this time the Environment Agency has been operating the flood storage reservoirs around Lincoln, and Louth, Horncastle and Market Rasen, holding back water to protect around 8,000 homes and businesses in the county, 7000 in Lincoln.

Together, the four washlands that protect Lincoln held over 6 million cubic metres of water – more than 2000 Olympic sized swimming pools.

During this relatively dry period the Environment Agency is using the opportunity to drain the washlands, which will take up to a week and will involve channelling the stored water along the River Witham and out to sea.

The process will be carefully managed to minimise the risk to downstream communities, so we are ready to help protect them again if we receive more rain.

With catchments still saturated and the possibility for further wet weather throughout the winter, the Environment Agency is reminding everyone along the River Witham to check their risk and sign up for flood warnings to stay informed of conditions that might mean their property could be affected by flooding.

Norman Robinson, Environment Agency Area Director (Lincolnshire and

Northamptonshire) said:

Our defences and flood storage reservoirs have performed over the last few weeks – however, we want people to stay vigilant whilst we drain the washlands and also be prepared for further rainfall, particularly as the ground is so saturated.

Our priority now is to find and repair any damage to our defences we become aware of. We have teams on the ground assessing urgent repairs to damaged or over-topping defences across the Lincolnshire as well as understanding the longer term options for recovery from the flooding. We are working closely with partners including local authorities, the emergency services, drainage boards and the National Farmers Union, as well as communities, to ensure flood risk is minimised and land drainage can resume.

Local people can [check their flood risk and keep up to date with the latest situation](#), or by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or following [@EnvAgency on Twitter](#).