

Development Control and Regulation Information for Riparian Landowners

A riparian landowner is a landowner who has responsibilities in relation to watercourses flowing through or adjacent to their property. Unless the official deeds indicate otherwise, where a watercourse forms the boundary of a property the landowner is presumed to own up to the centre line of the watercourse. The Environment Agency have produced a series of webpages which explain the rights and responsibilities of riparian owners, which can be found linked below.

[Environment Agency advice for Riparian Landowners](#)

Riparian Landownership within a WMA Board's Internal Drainage District

If you are a riparian landowner and your property is within the Internal Drainage District (IDD) of any Internal Drainage Board (IDB) then please be aware that that Board may have Byelaws. All WMA Boards have Byelaws. Detailed maps for each WMA District can be found below, alongside each Board's Byelaws.

Broads (2006) IDB – [Map](#) - [Byelaws](#)

East Suffolk IDB – [Map](#) - [Byelaws](#)

King's Lynn IDB – [Map](#) - [Byelaws](#)

Norfolk Rivers IDB – [Map](#) - [Byelaws](#)

South Holland IDB – [Map](#) - [Byelaws](#)

Pevensey & Cuckmere WLMB – [Map](#) - [Byelaws](#)

Adopted Watercourses

The maps linked above also show which watercourses are designated as Adopted Watercourses by each Board. The adoption of a watercourse is an acknowledgement by the Board that the watercourse is of arterial importance to the Internal Drainage District and as such will normally receive maintenance from the IDB. This maintenance is not necessarily carried out on an annual basis but on a recurrence deemed necessary to meet water level management requirements. Please be aware that the designations are made under permissive powers (meaning there is no obligation for IDBs to fulfil any formal maintenance requirement and there is no change in the ownership or liability associated with the watercourse).

Byelaw Advice

While we advise all riparian landowners within an Internal Drainage District to familiarise themselves with the Byelaws of the relevant Board, the Byelaws most frequently referenced by WMA Boards are listed below for ease:

- Byelaw 10 restricts works within 9 metres of drainage or flood risk infrastructure (including adopted watercourses). The principle aim of this byelaw is to ensure watercourses can be maintained by the Board now and in the future without restrictions being placed on access, and to ensure operatives are aware of third party structures when undertaking maintenance. Byelaw 10 can be relaxed in some circumstances by applying for Land Drainage Consent.
- Byelaw 3 controls the introduction of water (flow or volume) to the Internal Drainage District. If a surface water (or treated foul water) discharge is proposed to a watercourse within an IDD

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(either directly or indirectly), then the proposed development will require a land drainage consent in line with that Internal Drainage Board's byelaws (specifically byelaw 3). Any consent granted will likely be conditional, pending the payment of a surface water development contribution fee, calculated in line with the Board's charging policy.

Additionally, regardless of whether a watercourse is within an Internal Drainage District (IDD) if the proposals include works to alter a watercourse (including culverting for access) consent is required under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. If the site is within an IDD the relevant IDB is the consenting authority for these works. If outside an IDD, the County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority) is the consenting authority.

Land Drainage Consent

If you are proposing works which require prior written consent from the Board under the terms of the Byelaws or the Land Drainage Act 1991 then please fill in the Application Form available below.

If you are unsure if your proposals require consent from the Board please read the pages linked above or alternatively contact the team via planning@wlma.org.uk.

[Application Form](#)

[Application Guidance](#)

[Charges and Fees](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)