

Frequently Asked Questions

What are drainage rates?

Drainage rates are levied as a charge (at a rate of Xp in the £1) on agricultural properties in an internal drainage district. The rates are levied to pay for the special local drainage or flood protection works which are carried out by the internal drainage board of that district. The value on which rates are set basically represents 1991 land rental levels.

Why have I got to pay drainage rates?

These rates are payable because you occupy agricultural property within an internal drainage district. These districts are areas where special local measures are needed to properly manage flood risk. These measures involving maintenance, improvement or new works to watercourses or structures are managed by an internal drainage board and these boards levy rates on occupiers of property to meet their expenses.

I don't get a drainage rate bill for my house

Properties which are not used for agricultural purposes (as defined in the Local Government Finance Act 1988) do not receive a direct drainage rate demand. Rates are, however, effectively charged on these properties through the Special Levy issued to the local authority.

My land is not used for agriculture

Agricultural use includes uses such as for paddocks and, to be rated, the land does not need to be used as part of an agricultural business. If, however, you still feel that your land is not used for agriculture, please contact the Rates Office who will arrange an inspection.

Why are you charging me rates? I have no watercourse on my land

Rates are payable because your property is in an internal drainage district and they meet the costs of the arterial protection provided by the board of that district. They are not charged because you do, or do not, have watercourses on your land.

Who is responsible for maintaining the watercourses running through my land?

The primary responsibility for the maintenance of any watercourse rests with the owner of that watercourse. This will USUALLY be the owner of the land adjoining that watercourse. Where a channel is marked as an internal drainage board's drain, that board's byelaws apply to it and the board will often undertake required drainage works. The Land Drainage Act 1991, under which the boards operate, however, enables them BUT DOES NOT REQUIRE THEM to carry out drainage works.

When are my drainage rates due for payment?

Actually, they are due for payment within 28 days of receipt.

What methods of payment are there?

The preferred method of payment is by BACS transfer/on-line banking. Another means of making a payment can be made by cash or cheque at any branch of any bank. Alternatively, a cheque can be sent to the office, made payable to the relevant drainage board with details of account ID written on the reverse.

I am likely to have a problem in paying my rates. By when do I need to advise you of this?

If this is the case, you must advise us as soon as possible.

What could happen if I don't pay my rates?

Annual demands are normally sent in June and reminders by August. If you have failed to pay, court costs will be added to your account and the debt will be taken to the Magistrates' Court.

I have sold/given up my land. What evidence of this will you need to alter your records?

We will need either a formal letter from a suitably qualified professional e.g. solicitor or surveyor, or evidence of the transaction itself e.g. sight of Land Certificate or Lease. Please ensure a plan is included so the land can easily be identified.