

MINUTES OF THE 64th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE HELD ON 10th June 2015

Representatives of the following Branch member Authorities were present:-

Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board
Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board
Scunthorpe and Gainsborough Water Management Board
Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board
Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
Bassetlaw District Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Environment Agency
Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Guests and Speakers:-

Innes Thomson, Chief Executive, ADA
John Dennis, Chairman, ADA Northern Branch
Eddy Allen, Secretary, ADA Northern Branch
Tim Farr, Chairman, Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (EA)
Vij Randeniya, Chairman Designate, Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (EA)
David Hoskins, FCRM Advisor and IDB/EA Liaison (EA)
Morgan Wray, Team Leader, FCRM, Partnership and Strategic Overview (EA)
Duncan Huggett, FCRM, Senior Advisor (EA)
Terry McManus, Asset Performance, Team Leader (EA)
Matt Goodall, Operations Manager (EA)
Andy Wallace, Flood Risk Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council

1. Welcome/Introductions/Announcements

The Chairman welcomed all delegates to the 64th Annual General Meeting and Conference. He had pleasure in welcoming Vij Randeniya, Chairman Designate of the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to his first meeting of the Branch and to Ray Sutherland, Chairman of Sow and Penk IDB who had travelled from Stafford to attend the meeting.

It was with great sadness that the Chairman informed delegates of the death of Norman Osborne, Chairman of the Lincolnshire Branch of ADA and long standing member of the Witham First District IDB. Members and guests observed a short period of reflection.

There were some changes to the planned presentation subsequent to the conference booklets being sent out. Sam Probert of the EA and Jim Lennon of the RSPB were unable to attend the meeting and the presentations had therefore been re-organised accordingly.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Henry Cator, Ian Moodie, Peter Bateson, Andrew McGill, Rod Chapman, Sam Probert, Jim Lennon, Richard Ward, Michael Brookes, Paul Jones and Chris McGuinness.

3. Minutes of the 63rd AGM held on the 4th June 2014

It was proposed by William Staunton and seconded by Tim Farr that the minutes of the 63rd Annual General Meeting held on the 4th June 2014 be approved as a true record.

4. Minutes of the Branch meeting held on the 24th February 2015

It was proposed by Robert Adam and seconded by William Staunton that the minutes of the Branch meeting held on the 24th February 2015 be approved as a true record.

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Accounts for the period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015

The Secretary presented the Branch accounts which had been signed and circulated with the agenda. He stated that the accounts showed a period end balance of £2143.97. It was noted that the main items of expenditure had related to costs for the AGM and that there had been a small loss of £400 in year.

It was proposed by Mrs Roni Chapman and seconded by Tim Farr that the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015 be adopted.

7. Election of Vice-Chairman

One nomination for the post of Vice Chairman of the Branch had been received prior to the AGM. This was for William Staunton the Chairman of Trent Valley IDB, proposed by John Miller, Vice-Chairman of Trent Valley IDB and seconded by David Payne, Member of Trent Valley IDB.

There were no further nominations at the meeting and it was a unanimous decision that William Staunton be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Branch for a period of three years.

8. Confirmation of Branch Officers 2015/2016

Members noted the confirmed Branch Officers;

Chairman - Malcolm Harris
Honorary Secretary - David Sisson

9. Adoption of amended Branch Constitution

The Secretary reported that any proposed amendments to the Branch constitution could only be made at the AGM. He stated that there had recently been an issue relating to another Branch whereby the committee had elected a Chairman outside of a Risk Management Authority membership. Therefore, the suggested amendments that were now being proposed for adoption ensured that it would only be possible to elect branch officers from within a full branch member.

It was proposed by Ray Sutherland and seconded by Tim Farr that the suggested amendments to the constitution be adopted.

Subsequent to this, Ian Benn referred to Section 3 of the Constitution (paragraph 3) stating that the section highlighted in red was unclear and required some re-wording. The Secretary agreed to consider this and amend accordingly.

10. Branch Bank Accounts - Signatories

It was agreed to remove the former Vice-Chairman Ken Knight as a signatory of the branch bank accounts and to add William Staunton as a third signatory in his place.

11. Branch News - ADA Gazette

A new section for Branch News in the ADA Gazette had recently been introduced. A copy of the Trent Branch news which was to appear in the Summer edition of the Gazette was handed out to delegates at the meeting.

The Secretary invited any future Branch news articles for insertion in the ADA Gazette to be forwarded to him by 7th September 2015 for the autumn edition and 13th November 2015 for the winter edition.

12. Any other business

Ian Benn asked if it was possible to have a section on the main ADA website where any branch news articles could be uploaded. Innes Thomson agreed to look into this and advise further.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.25am.

13. Introduction by Vij Randeniya Chairman Designate of Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Vij Randeniya made his introduction to the meeting and stated he will formally take over the post of Chairman to the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee on the 1st July 2015.

14. Association of Drainage Authorities - National Update - Innes Thomson

Environment Agency (EA) Water Stakeholder Meeting

Innes had recently attended the EA Water Stakeholder meeting in London where the key theme of the meeting had been around partnership working. He referred to the EA's current capital settlement made through until 2021 and that ADA is looking for a longer term maintenance settlement.

He further made reference to good partnerships which he felt depended on their independence stating it is important that local people lead what happens in their own areas.

Innes was delighted to see the wide variety of different representatives and organisations at the meeting.

ADA Head Office

ADA's head office is now set up at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire and is fully operational. Other personnel based at the office are Ian Moodie (Technical Manager), Sue Crowther (Administration and Accounts) and Heather Bailey (Communications, Events and PR).

Appointments to outside committees

As part of an Eel Liaison Group to represent IDBs at national level, ADA has nominated Alison Briggs (Shire Group of IDBs) and David Thomas (Bedford Group of IDBs).

Public Service Co-operation Agreements (PSCA)

The Technical and Environment Committee has supported the latest version of the PSCA which is now being used widely across the Country. The annexes of the agreements can be used for finer details and specifications on specific works or projects arranged between Risk Management Authorities.

Somerset

ADA is looking cautiously at the developments in the Somerset area where the common goal appears to be to raise money for the main flood risk and water level management works and additional activities. The County Council is to become the overarching controller in raising a separate precept in Somerset. There are some concerns as to where the money will be spent, this will need to be managed and maintained. DEFRA is producing an options report which will be presented shortly to the Somerset Rivers Authority.

Branch News

Innes thanked the branch for their input to the recently introduced section of Branch news into the ADA Gazette and to Ian Benn for suggesting a section for this on the ADA website.

ADA Conference

This year's annual conference will be held on the 11th November 2015 at the Institution of Civil Engineers in Great George Street, London and booking forms will be available shortly. Speakers will be announced in due course.

Floodex 2016

There will be an exhibition at the East of England Showground on the 9th and 10th March 2016. This will be held in conjunction with a professional organiser and further details will be advertised in the ADA Gazette. The exhibition will encompass exhibitors of equipment related to flood defence and water level management and will also include selective workshops. Entry to the exhibition is free.

Post meeting note - The date of Floodex 2016 has been changed to the 18th and 19th May.

The Chairman invited questions and comments.

Ron Allcock had attended a recent meeting with Andrew Percy MP where he had emphasised the need for a 6 year revenue maintenance plan.

Fred Paling advised members that the EA/ADA Northern Branch were having a stand at the Great Yorkshire Show to be held on the 14th, 15th and 16th July. The theme will be based around partnership working and will include attendance by Police, Fire and Ambulance Services and the Met Office.

William Staunton enquired about the re-branding of IDBs to Water Level Management Boards and asked Innes Thomson what the ADA Executive Board's comments are regarding this. The Executive Board are mindful of the need for re-branding and ADA suggests a plan and communications strategy will be required.

15. Isle of Axholme Strategy and Keadby Pumping Station Update - Morgan Wray

Morgan's presentation included a number of themes around communications and financing the delivery of activities:-

- 22,000 properties in the IOA area impacted by EA's and IDBs' work - he wondered how many people were aware of this. He suggested simple signage to point out the infrastructure and to think about a partnership approach to raise awareness and the profile of what work is undertaken in respect of flood risk management to the area.
- Work continues after the tidal surge in December 2013. EA are building a business case for funding around the Humber Estuary. DEFRA has tasked the EA to undertake a review of the 1 in 200 year flood protection standard.
- Agricultural land in the Isle of Axholme and the sheer amount of critical infrastructure - Raise the profile of the owners of critical infrastructure and remind them of the work being undertaken.
- Finances are stretched and there is a need to work smarter to utilise joint working.
- Synergize flood risk and drainage management schemes with environmental schemes to obtain funding.

Keadby Pumping Station

As reported at previous meetings, the EA is looking at a long term solution for Keadby Pumping Station. Matt Goodall stated that the site is operational and funding is available within the capital maintenance budget.

Currently looking at optioneering but erring towards refurbishment. Retention of site is favourite as the practicalities in re-locating the pumping station are challenging. A definitive report on direction is expected in September 2015. Interim capital refurbishments will be undertaken to keep the station operational.

Isle of Axholme Strategy

Main Objectives

The main objectives of the Strategy are to;

- provide the most cost effective approach for land drainage and flood risk management and,
- provide resilience, carbon efficiency, biodiversity gains and community support.

Preferred option

The preferred option is to;

- Provide a 1:75 year Standard of Protection
- Develop options for Flood Storage
- Review Operational Responsibilities
- Reduce Overcapacity
- Flood Warning
- Development Control
- Improve Equipment
- Improve Wetland Habitat

Benefit apportionment

The Environment Agency is looking at this and has split the Isle of Axholme areas into smaller constituent catchments. They are looking at the benefits in all of the areas and the purpose of the assets. Will start to apportion benefits and funding in the future for which a detailed discussion with partners will be required.

Surveys of 163 kilometres of main river in the Isle of Axholme have been undertaken and modelling is to be carried out next. Morgan thanked the Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board and Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board for their input. Out of this the EA is looking to produce a better flood map, flood warning and incident response, maintenance and development planning.

EA Finances

Funding allocations for 2015/2016 have recently been advised to IDBs.

Morgan referred to the 2016/2017 Programme Refresh, the aim of which is to;

- Achieve the outcomes - 300,000 households better protected, at least 15% partnership contributions and 10% efficiencies,
- Update the consented programme,
- Apply national prioritisation to new and substantially changed project proposals,
- Give areas, working within the RFCCs, the flexibility to manage their programmes within pre-defined tolerances based on budget and households better protected and,
- To encourage all Risk Management Authorities to identify new projects at any point in the year, for consideration and incorporation into the national programme.

Efficiency reporting

In June 2013, the government announced an unprecedented 6 year capital funding settlement. The increased funding and the opportunities it provides come with a number of conditions, one being a further efficiency improvement of 10% in delivery of the capital programme. A data collection tool (CERT) has been developed by the Environment Agency for use by all Risk Management Authorities to record and report the delivery of capital efficiencies.

Innes Thomson felt that all stakeholders need to think radically differently to drive efficiencies. He referred to the Wash area and a large sea defence - Local WLMA and EA are jointly looking at how they can find a solution to the problem. Simplification of the procurement route may be needed (i.e. locally driven by land owners, community and local RMAs to deliver this).

Regarding the River Idle silt survey, Robert Adam asked when the results of the modelling work would be available and the timescale for any improvement works.

Tim Farr explained that the silt survey undertaken will feed into the modelling but the achievement will be in producing a proper model for the whole of the IOA which may take more time. It has been a slow process as there are a wide range of interests i.e. RSPB, water quality etc.

The old survey will be compared to the one recently undertaken and where there is evidence of urgency, works will be carried out on this basis. This does not preclude landowners carrying out works at their own expense.

Robert Adams advised that the patience of landowners is wearing thin.

16. Eel Regulations - Duncan Huggett

Duncan extended his thanks to all for being able to participate in the meeting. He stated that the implications for works in connection with the Eel Regulations had been both challenging and costly to flood risk management in the Agency as well as all IDBs and other RMAs.

There has been a 90/95% drop in the eel population and there had been a perceived need for legislation to address this issue.

The Environment Agency may serve notice to remove, construct or alter an obstruction that prevents the passage of eels. It was further noted that by the 1st January 2015 all obstructions greater than 20m³ (per day) must be screened or exempted unless they are located in part of a catchment that is not naturally colonised by eels. This is at the cost of the responsible person (owner) of a structure.

Duncan went on to display maps showing the scale of the issue. It was noted that most of the obstructions, abstractions and pumping stations fall within IDB districts.

The final slides showed the core principles underpinning the environmental work, guidance on the best approach when best practice screening is not possible and showed what the Agency are doing to address the issue.

A general briefing paper to support Duncan's presentation entitled "European Eel Recovery" was available to all at the end of the presentation.

Tim Farr enquired as to the extent of partnership funding and asked if contributions are being sought from the EA and how the Agency is dealing with this. Normal FDGiA rules will apply to this and will be put through the funding calculator. If an insufficient score is obtained, then partnership funding will be required.

17. LLFA Update - Andy Wallace, Flood Risk Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council

Andy Wallace gave a brief update on the challenges facing Nottinghamshire County Council.

Nottinghamshire County Council is still suffering as a result of flooding in 2013 where over 600 properties in the County suffered. Currently they are involved in 7 Section 19 investigations and are engaged with 13 flood risk management schemes.

Since April 2015, Nottinghamshire County Council became a statutory consultee in the planning process and is asked to comment on surface water drainage matters for developments greater than ten houses. This has become time intensive and challenging with only a small team in place to deal with some 500 planning applications.

Eddy Allen suggested it would be an opportunity for LLFAs and IDBs to enter into a PSCA for dealing with planning. The Secretary stated that IDBs do have a lot of relevant information available to assist the LLFA.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their presentations.

18. Future dates

The following meetings and dates were noted:-

- ADA Conference - 11th November 2015 - ICE, One Great George Street, London
- EA/IDB Liaison Meeting - 18th November 2015 (venue tbc)
- Branch meeting - 11th February 2016 (venue tbc)
- Floodex - 18th and 19th May 2016 - East of England Showground, Peterborough
- Branch AGM - 7th June 2016 (venue tbc)

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Conference session at 12.45pm.

During the luncheon that followed, Robert Adam gave Grace and the Chairman thanked all guests, presenters and delegates for their support of a very successful event.

He extended his thanks and support to Tim Farr as retiring Chairman of the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and presented him with a gift from the Branch.