



# Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

## TECHNICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING

# Minutes

Remote Meeting via Zoom  
Tuesday 14 September 2021  
09.30 – 12.30

Attendees:					
Name	Representing	Present	Name	Representing	Present
Andrew Newton	Engineer - Ely Group of Drainage Boards	Yes	Ed Johnson	Chief Engineer - Witham Fourth IDB	Apol.
Chris Manning	Environmental Officer, WMC & Doncaster East IDB	Yes	Innes Thomson	Chief Exec - ADA	Yes
David Thomas	CE - Middle Level Commissioners	Yes	Martin Shilling	Witham & Humber Drainage Boards	Apol.
Diana Ward	Ecologist for Ely and Bedfordshire groups of IDB's	Yes	Mat Jackson	West Sussex CC	Yes
Mark Phillips	Natural England	Yes	Neil Longdon	Environment Agency	Yes
Peter Bateson	CE - Witham Fourth IDB	Apol.	Roger Burge	CE & Clerk - Somerset IDB's	Apol.
Robert Caudwell	ADA Chairman	Yes	<b>Trevor Purlant</b>	<b>Committee Chairman</b>	Yes
Phil Camamile	Chief Executive, Water Management Alliance	Apol.	Sofi Lloyd	Committee Secretary & Tech. Officer - ADA	Yes
Ian Moodie	Tech Manager - ADA	Yes	Tim Farr	ADA P&F Committee Chair	Yes
Andy McLachlan	Chief Executive - Yorkshire and Humber Drainage Boards	Apol.	Andrew Morritt	Coal Authority	Apol.

Ref	Minute
	<b>Formalities, Regular Topics &amp; Updates</b>
<b>1595</b>	<b>Apologies received and welcome to new members</b> TP welcomed everyone to the meeting & put forward apologies for non-attendance. Specific welcome to Mark Phillips joining the Committee from Natural England.
<b>1596</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest - TP</b> None noted.
<b>1597</b>	<b>Approval of Minutes - TP</b> Minutes of the Committee's previous meeting held on 26 May 2021 were approved.
<b>1598</b>	<b>Action Log - SL</b> Actions progressing as detailing in the log. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awaiting NE support for publication of advice note on water vole licencing.</li> <li>• CM raised concern with getting a person approved for a water vole class licence.</li> </ul>
<b>1595</b>	<b>Brief Workstream Updates</b> <b>a) Biodiversity</b> SL: Biodiversity metrics expected to be published in September 2021. Requested Committee members support their IDBs to provide some data towards the first recording year of metrics in advance of the ADA Conference 2021.

	<p><b>b) Data and Evidence</b> No discussion.</p> <p><b>c) Health safety and welfare</b> No discussion.</p> <p><b>1597 d) Climate Change (IDB adaptation and carbon reduction)</b> MJ: Emissions work seems to have stalled for Environment Agency. Regarding carbon metrics, suggested collection of basic data. SL: Regarding carbon emission data from IDBs, initially looking at the EA ERIC tool, but this isn't suitable. Looking at other climate calculators specifically those aimed at local authorities and the agricultural sector. CM: Variability amongst IDBs in terms of cutting practice to avoid tracking through crops. Some do and pay compensation, others avoid it entirely, but this increases mileage for IDBs. IT: Reported that in conversation with Mark Garratt (EA), noted staff changes in relation to Carbon Net Zero and FCERM within the organisation. Awaiting details of new contacts. Continue to fight the case regarding operations. ADA looking to put a representation into The Treasury in regards to spending review 2021 and the transformational funding needed to decarbonise IDB pumping stations. MJ: Suggested talking to water companies about the carbon data that they are gathering.</p> <p><b>1598 e) Managing Channel Sedimentation</b> TF: Suggested moving the balance towards landowners taking more steps to manage soils on their land and prevent it entering watercourses. IT: An opportunity to work with industry to find innovative solutions. Frits van den Boogaard (Royal Smals) interested in progressing discussions with authorities and regulators regarding cutter suction dredging. CM: Surface runoff considers a reducing impact, but do not have a mechanism for field drainage runoff. Should consents for such runoff be based on a condition to minimise sediment load, similarly for SuDS. Should the sector look at trials to monitor sediment loads from such systems? Should there be a surcharge on consenting to such schemes based on such data. MP: Asked about ADA's engagement with ELMS. IT: reported that ADA's requests to contribute had been turned down by Defra. MP: Offered to assist and SL/IT to provide ADA's thoughts to MP.</p>
<p><b>1599</b></p> <p><b>1600</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of recent work progressed:</b></p> <p><b>a) Summary of last ADA Board meeting</b> IT: Reported on activities of the ADA Board of Directors meeting on 7 July 2021.</p> <p><b>b) EUWMA 2021 meeting</b> IT: Reported on the most recent meeting of the European Union of Water Management Associations in Vinkeveen, Netherlands. Dutch Presidency of EUWMA will focus on climate change adaptation, resilience. Spain and Portugal reported substantial increases in electricity costs. North European countries reported on significant flood events in the Rhine catchment. EUWMA exploring broadening membership to other EU nations.</p> <p>MP: Are the Dutch further ahead in considering impact to and from key FCERM assets from climate change. Dutch had managed to constrain the majority of flood water within the 'Room for the River' approach holding water in a managed floodplain between 'summer dikes'. EUWMA also visited a project where they were looking to raise water levels to manage water resources within a sandy soiled lowland area.</p> <p>MJ: Asked about trialling these Dutch approaches in the UK.</p> <p>IT: Need to advocate approaches already being trialled in the UK.</p> <p>RC: Was most impressed with the approach to working together between agriculture and Dutch Water Boards especially on climate change adaptation and resilience.</p>

	<p>TF: Language around 'Room for the River' is more meaningful to people rather than 'Making space for water' and could give greater focus on finding and valuing landscape solutions.</p> <p>CM: Bureaucracy of abstraction licencing regime around abstraction from a river especially where this is close to a pumping station into the sea. As drawing water in such circumstances would be a better environmental use of the resource. Nonsensical to licence transfer of water from main river into IDB systems without relevant data to support this.</p> <p>MP: Dutch colleagues are often jealous of full control of the catchment in England, enabling alignment of policy. Not much sign to make better use of more marginal land when the basic payment scheme comes to an end.</p>
1601	<p><b>c) ADA Events</b></p> <p>IT: Ran through upcoming events involving ADA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Expo, 22-23 September, including ADA seminar</li> <li>• ADA IDB Officers' Seminar, 20 October, Peterborough. Covering: treasury management, insurances, biodiversity metrics.</li> <li>• ADA Conference and AGM, 10 November, Online</li> <li>• ADA Demonstration planning for an event in June/July 2023, working with a suitable event partner.</li> </ul>
1602	<p><b>d) P&amp;F update</b></p> <p>DT: Highlighted the Environment Agency consultation on water resources charge proposals from April 2022. ADA was disheartened that despite significant engagement with the Environment Agency in the run up to licencing IDB water transfers a couple of years ago, no mention of IDBs had been made in the consultation documents, nor any prior contact made with ADA. It demonstrated a continued misunderstanding of the importance and value of IDBs in managing water levels in lowland environments.</p> <p>IM: Highlighted publication of updated model IDB byelaws and also work starting to provide new guidance around remote/hybrid meetings and</p>
1603	<p><b>e) Red Diesel</b></p> <p>IM: reported that IT, RC, and IM had met with HM Treasury civil servants in July to discuss the way forwards. The situation regarding pumping stations appears to be fixed, with red diesel not being available if used to directly power pumps but still eligible if used to generate electricity to power pumps. The latter circumstances are relevant for some pumping stations (e.g. St Germans) where diesel generators are used as a back-up during heavy rainfall events. Regarding the operational use of red diesel in plant machinery, HM Treasury were interested to learn more about the potential impact upon agricultural contractors used by IDBs. ADA is pulling together a briefing to HM Treasury on this.</p>
1604	<p><b>f) Eels research and New Eels Regulations Process (NERP)</b></p> <p>SL: reported that a briefing would be included in the upcoming Autumn 2021 ADA Gazette and a workshop for IDB engineers and environment officers would take place on 7 October 2021.</p>
1605	<p><b>g) National Fly Tipping Prevention Group</b></p> <p>SL reported ADA had joined the National Fly Tipping Prevention Group.</p>
1606	<p><b>h) Pollen and Nectar Project</b></p> <p>SL: ADA is involved with South Holland IDB in the BEESPOKE project being funded by Intereg that is seeking to increase levels of pollinators and crop pollination at local and landscape scales by providing land managers and policy makers with new expertise, tools and financial knowledge to create more sustainable and resilient agroecosystems. John Holland at GWCT is the lead for the project in the UK.</p>

1607	<p><b>i) PSCA amendments</b>  SL: Draft changes to PSCA guidance provided by ADA back to the EA are currently being considered. Specifically regarding complaints procedures</p>
1608	<p><b>Work to be progressed in 2021</b></p> <p><b>a) Environment Bill review</b>  SL: ADA will keep members updated on the progress of the Bill.  IT: Urged members to flag any consequential amendments to flag these with ADA.</p> <p><b>1609 b) Good Governance Guide</b>  SL: Revisions in line with comments received to take place in 2022.</p> <p><b>1610 c) HS&amp;W survey</b>  SL: Plan to run survey again in the next few months.</p> <p><b>1611 d) Gazette</b>  SL: Asked whether committee had read article on carbon in the Gazette.  CM: Asked whether the Gazette could be published digitally as a pdf rather than on FlickrRead.</p> <p><b>Action: IM to look into the cost and process for publishing the Gazette as a pdf on ADA website.</b></p> <p><b>1612 e) All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)</b>  SL: ADA is working to set up an APPG and currently seeking a suitable sponsor in each House of Parliament.</p> <p><b>1613 f) Beaver Consultation</b>  SL: Reported that Defra was consulting on the government's approach to beaver reintroduction and management in England.  Committee raised concern about the impacts that the general release of beaver would have within lowland areas. Broad consensus that other aspects of conservation of existing species and habitats should be prioritised. Recognition that if generally released all risk management authorities would need access to a straightforward and low cost regulatory provisions controlling their presence and damaging behaviour.</p>
1614	<p><b>Agenda Items</b></p> <p><b>a) Environmental Good Governance Guide Discussion</b>  AN: See users as for officers going down to foreman, operations managers. Don't see board members ever using it.  DT: suspect the same, targeted at the delivery end.  TP: would offer it to board members, but a reference to others.  NL: Consenting guidance gaps.  SL: EGGG goes through all environmental legislation, framework.  CM: Did a good job to bring up a range of legislation. EGGG needs to link into that document. A document like that is necessary.  DT: suggested a guide related to water resource management? Asking for funding from Defra?  IT: Supported the idea. Noted that we do include a chapter on water quality and resources.</p> <p><b>1615 b) Lowland Peat Taskforce progress</b>  IM presented slides used by ADA to inform the Task Force on the water level management considerations for IDBs, looking at the challenges and opportunities in lowland systems such as the Fens. This covered technical changes (automation/telemetry, increasing storage capacity in channels and reservoirs, better pumps), delivery changes (flattening and terracing land, mapping the constraints and opportunities of WLM, changing maintenance practices, transferring water, and importance of coordinating WLM by local ratepayers/land managers with IDBs), and policy changes (legislation to enable raising water levels by IDBs for peat, regulation to avoid barriers to water transfers needed, and funding both capital and revenue, such as</p>

<p><b>1616</b></p>	<p>new IDB charges/taxation to support raising and managing higher water levels).</p> <p><b>c) Environmental Stewardship Discussion</b></p> <p>SL: Highlighted beneficial measures available for water level management around making space for water and arable reversion to grassland within the existing Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier scheme that could be utilised and promoted by risk management authorities in lowlands. Such measures could be utilised to help 'compensate' land managers for greater flood storage.</p> <p><b>Action: SL to work with NE and RPA to look at existing provisions and where there are gaps.</b></p> <p><b>Action: SL to work with NE/RPA to develop guidance to risk management authorities (specifically IDBs) around agri-environment options that support lowland water level management activities.</b></p>
<p><b>1617</b></p>	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates</b></p> <p>The Committee agreed the following dates for their meetings in 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 January</li> <li>• 24 May</li> <li>• 13 September</li> </ul> <p>A decision would be taken later on which of these meetings would be in person and which virtual.</p>
	<p><b>Close of meeting</b></p>