



# Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

## TECHNICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

# Meeting Minutes

24 May 2023

Venue: Team 2100 Offices, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London  
1030 - 1300

Also online via Microsoft Teams

## APPROVED

Invited					
Name	Role and organisation	Present	Name	Role and organisation	Present
Chris Manning (CM)	Environmental Officer, WMC & Doncaster East IDB	Y	Martin Shilling (MS)	Head of Technical & Engineering Services, Witham & Humber Drainage Boards	Apol.
Iain Sturdy (IS)	Chief Executive, Somerset Consortium of IDBs	Y	Mat Jackson (MJ)	West Sussex County Council	Y
Diana Ward (DW)	Ecologist for Ely and Bedford Groups of IDBs	Y	James Addicott (JA)	Engineering & Standards - Policy Manager, Environment Agency	Y
Catherine Weighman (CW)	Natural England	Y	<b>Trevor Purlant (TP)</b>	<b>Committee Chair</b>	Y
Andy Morrill (AM)	Principle Contracts Manager, Coal Authority	Apol.	Charles Mills (CMS)	Committee Chair Elect	Y
Robert Caudwell (RC)	Chairperson, ADA	Y	Ian Moodie (IM)	Technical Manager, ADA	Y
Phil Camamile (PC)	Chief Executive, Water Management Alliance	Apol.	Tim Farr (TF)	Chairperson, ADA P&F Committee	Y.
Dan Martin (DM)	Asset Manager, Yorkshire & Humber Drainage Boards	Apol.	Innes Thomson (IT)	Chief Exec – ADA	Y.
Ed Johnson (EJ)	Deputy Committee Chair Elect	Y	Peter Bateson (PB)	Company Secretary, ADA / Chief Executive, Witham Fourth District IDB	Apol.
Gary Leatherbarrow (GL)	Sales Director, Bedford Pumps Ltd	Apol.	James Yarham (JY)	FCRM Senior Advisor, Environment Agency	Y
Oliver Pantry (OP)	Clerk, Upper Medway IDB	Apol.			

Ref	Minutes
	<b>Formalities, Regular Topics &amp; Updates</b>
1681	<b>Apologies received and welcome to new members</b> TP welcomed new the new Committee Chair elect, Charles Mills, and Deputy Chair Elect, Ed Johnson to the meeting along with new Committee members Catherine Weightman and Iain Sturdy. Apologies were noted.
1682	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> None noted.
1683	<b>Approval of Minutes</b> Minutes of the Committee's previous meeting held on 13 Sept 2022 were approved. TP

	noted that the planned meeting in February 2023 did not take place.
<b>1684</b>	<p><b>Action Log</b> Some actions pending at the last meeting have not yet been progressed, as follows;</p> <p><b>EJ:</b> Sediment monitoring note.</p> <p><b>IM:</b> Cybersecurity policy to be developed through ADA Policy &amp; Finance Committee. IM suggested that the imminent work on the update of the Good Governance Guide could and should encompass this.</p> <p><b>IM:</b> Checklist of content for IDB websites to be completed through ADA Policy &amp; Finance Committee. IM said that this will also form part of the Good Governance Guide update work.</p>
<b>1685</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b> From the action log discussions above involving the Good Governance Guide update, the committee dwelt on how ADA should plan to update the Environmental Good Governance Guide in the light of frequent changes to legislation and strategy. Comments were made as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MJ, Could we consider using some form of knowledge hub to capture edits ?</li> <li>- TF, important to install a robust change control process</li> <li>- TF, is there future value in printing a document or should we keep it completely online ? Easier to modify and update ?</li> <li>- TF, important that documents are legally correct – need professional checking. EA offer of help but aware that EA legal teams are often overwhelmed with work.</li> <li>- How often to update ? If every few years, then possible leverage for Defra financial assistance ?</li> <li>- DW, use Appendices as and when changes/updates are needed.</li> </ul>
<b>1686</b>	<p><b>Health, Safety &amp; Welfare</b> The committee focussed on mental health, connected to the recent mental health awareness week. As well as being aware of symptoms, the committee agreed that understanding the causes was also vital. Bodies such as the Lincolnshire Rural Stress Network (LRSN) would be helpful in providing information which ADA could then share with Members.</p> <p>The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) may also be a source of useful information.</p> <p>IM will look to run an article in the ADA Gazette on the subject to follow on from previous articles published.</p> <p><b>Action: IM</b></p>
<b>1687</b>	<p><b>Re-organisation of ADA Committees</b> IM presented a paper to the Committee about future plans and the rationale for a re-organisation of the P &amp; F and T &amp; E committees. The plan consisted of merging the P &amp; F and T &amp; E committees into one external-facing Policy committee and an internal facing Governance Committee, dealing with matters of ADA business interest.</p> <p>The intention is that the newly appointed chair of T &amp; E, Charles Mills, would continue in the role for a new combined P &amp; F and T &amp; E Committee and TF would pick up the role of chair of the new Governance Committee. A new role of Deputy Chair (Ed Johnson) has also been created for T &amp; E and this would role forward into the new combined committee too.</p> <p>IM reported that at yesterday's P &amp; F Committee meeting, members were generally supportive of the direction of travel with observations around adjusting the name of the</p>

	<p>Governance Committee towards Audit and Advice, the importance of maintaining Defra and EA involvement, tighter focus on work topics and outcomes and establishment of Terms of Reference for the Committees.</p> <p>Additional Input from Members of the T &amp; E Committee was as follows;</p> <p>EJ – Do we have too many people involved ?  TF – Important to keep geographic and technical coverage of IDBs  DW – invite specialist people to attend according to agenda items  EJ – do we have too much on the Committee agendas ?  MJ – values the continuation of the Environment Forum and the importance of task and finish projects which he uses to show value of ADA membership to his LA Managers.  TP – use of a shopping list and prioritisation process for tasks  CM – consider use of nominated reserves to attend meetings.</p> <p>T &amp; E Committee members were generally supportive of the proposal and further detail, terms of reference, etc, will be worked up by IM in conjunction with CMS, TF, and EJ.</p> <p><b>Action: IM</b></p>
<p><b>1688</b></p>	<p><b>Mowing Practices</b></p> <p>Linked to heightened public awareness of campaigns such as “No-Mow May”, IM reported the importance of the public understanding about why mowing has to take place on vital flood defence infrastructure and how IDBs approach the subject.</p> <p>ADA produced a blog back in July 2022 intended to assist IDBs in explaining to public enquiries about grass cutting and bank mowing and the Committee agreed that it would be useful to reproduce that again this year. IM will seek to encourage IDBs to publish the blog, or something similar locally to help public understanding of works taking place.</p> <p><b>Action: IM</b></p>
<p><b>1689</b></p>	<p><b>ELMS: Options for managing Ditches and Margins</b></p> <p>IT reported that after considerable lobbying of Defra, ADA was now included in the Future Farming and ELMS strategic group, with regular contact with Defra staff working on the subject. IT said that important practical feedback has already been provided which is allowing Defra to shape their policies and strategies towards the various ELMS offerings being developed and published.</p> <p>IT was able to confirm that Defra have taken heed of issues such as allowing for occasional maintenance tracking over environmental buffer strips by IDBs, without farmers being penalised.</p> <p>IT also reported that Defra was considering the introduction of an ELMS option for managing ditches, similar to the current option in place for managing hedgerows and that discussions would be taking place with Defra to understand how that might work.</p> <p>DW – We ought to be looking at and encouraging the strategic change to flora in ditches to help with reducing maintenance and strengthening embankments. Example quoted in Dorset where significant maintenance savings have been achieved.</p> <p><b>Action: DW to provide more detail</b></p> <p>IS – Need to reinforce the message of the importance of ditch management in water level and flood risk management.</p>
<p><b>1690</b></p>	<p><b>Eel Exemptions</b></p> <p>CM reported real concerns around the exemption process for permitting works to structures and assets that were not considered high flood risk priority. It is proving difficult and often very laborious to obtain exemptions for medium and low flood risk</p>

	<p>structures as defined by the EA.</p> <p><b>Action: CM to provide a short note to IT who will then raise nationally with EA Fisheries and Biodiversity personnel.</b></p>
1691	<p><b>IDB infrastructure to assist lowland agricultural peat</b></p> <p>IM reported that a project has been submitted to Defra for ADA to manage the delivery of up to around 20 projects, each of around £250k, to assist in improving water level management for the restoration of areas of lowland peat in Internal Drainage Districts. A decision is imminent on the approval of that project from Defra, following which a call for expressions of interest from IDBs will be issued in June.</p> <p>The project will be directed by IM and delivered with the welcome contracted assistance of David Thomas and David Hoskins,</p> <p>From those Eols, invitations will then be issued to successful submissions to draw up detailed plans in the autumn towards delivering the projects through 2024 and into early 2025.</p> <p><b>(Post Meeting Note – Defra gave their approval for the project to proceed on 26<sup>th</sup> May)</b></p>
1692	<p><b>Water Resources East</b></p> <p>David Thomas has stood down as ADA’s representative on the Board of WRE and a search for a replacement is ongoing. IT emphasised the importance of ADA’s continued involvement with WRE to ensure influence on future decisions with respect to IDB involvement and engagement. IT said that ADA had been reassured by WRE’s Chair and Managing Director of the merit in appointing a Director which continues to require financial support from IDBs influenced by the work of WRE. Subject to final checks and permissions, a worthy successor to David has been found and the Committee will be kept updated.</p>
1693	<p><b>SSSIs</b></p> <p><b>a) Role of IDBs and Water Level Management Plans</b></p> <p>CM raised the issue that IDBs are being held responsible for all the SSSI’s in their districts, despite many not being directly associated with the work of the IDBs.</p> <p>IM mentioned that ADA are involved nationally with IT having received a letter from the Secretary of State on the matter. ADA has already responded to a previous consultation and used that response to inform SoS of ADA’s assistance in guiding its members in delivering the outcomes sought. Natural England are driving the process and IT mentioned that in his letter, he had asked if it was possible to have a nominated NE officer to help with WLMPs for SSSIs in IDB districts.</p> <p><b>Action: IM to flag the issue to Natural England</b></p> <p><b>b) Environmental Outcomes Reports</b></p> <p>IM said that ADA intends to respond to the Department for Levelling Up’s consultation on a new approach to environmental assessment. The consultation deadline is 9<sup>th</sup> June and IM invited any comments or input from Committee members ahead of that date, for inclusion in ADA’s response.</p> <p><b>Action: All Committee members to consider providing comments to IM by 7<sup>th</sup> June.</b></p>
1694	<p><b>Flood Forecasting and Warning</b></p> <p>The Committee supported a proposal from the Environment Agency to hold an online workshop for IDB staff regarding flood forecasting services.</p>

1695	<p><b>Updates</b></p> <p><b>a) Environment Agency - JA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EA's new CEO Philp Duffy will start on 1<sup>st</sup> July. John Curtin is acting up as CEO at present</li> <li>- The EA's Board has now approved a new Asset Management Strategy</li> <li>- Adrian Rushworth is leading the EA's engagement on the latest NAO study into flood risk management</li> <li>- The EA is updating advice on owning a watercourse – Your Watercourse – Rights and Roles.</li> <li>- There is some ongoing industrial action which is affecting the full provision of some service. Automated processes are being used more often.</li> <li>- EA involved with Lowland Agricultural Peat Taskforce work.</li> </ul> <p><b>b) Natural England</b> CW not briefed to provide an NE update but will prepare for next meeting.</p> <p><b>c) Consultations</b> IM advised that consultation responses from ADA are all posted on the ADA website.</p>
1696	<p><b>Events</b></p> <p>a) Main message from Keeping our rivers flowing on 28<sup>th</sup> March Stoneleigh Park was from Caroline Douglass saying that maintenance projects were showing benefits of 11:1 and capital projects closer to 5:1, which has attracted Defra interest.</p> <p>b) Flood &amp; Water Live – we have passed break-even point and have enough in hand now for a wet-weather option. The Committee passed their sincere thanks to David Sisson and the rest of the ADA team for their hard work towards making a successful event, and getting to this point. Focus was now on achieving a good footfall for the event. Bookings for the evening dinner are going well and after-dinner speaker Stuart Roberts is confirmed.</p> <p>c) ADA AGM will be on 27<sup>th</sup> September, online.</p> <p>d) ADA Conference will be on 21<sup>st</sup> November at the ICE London. It will start later at 1100, with a lighter lunch offering at 1200 – 1330, and the main conference commencing at 1330 and running to 1630. Under the new format, all Associates will be offered the opportunity to attend and network with conference delegates. Three keynote speakers have been confirmed and invitations are pending for others.</p>
1697	<p><b>AOB – Handover of Committee Chair</b></p> <p>The Chair of the meeting was formally handed over from Trevor Purllant to Charles Mills and the role of Deputy Chair through Ed Johnson.</p> <p>IT sincerely thanked Trevor for not only his long role and involvement with the T &amp; E Committee, but also his much longer general support, enthusiasm and encouragement to ADA and water level management over many years. A formal thank you from ADA for Trevor's help will be given at the 18<sup>th</sup> July ADA Board meeting.</p> <p>TP closed the meeting and signed off by giving CSM and EJ a very warm welcome into their new roles.</p>
	<p><b>Close of meeting</b></p>