

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024**

ADA's AGM took place at 10.30 on Tuesday 03 December 2024 via an online Microsoft Teams webinar, attended by 60 connections for all or part of the meeting. Some online connections may have involved multiple people making use of a single connection from, for example, an office meeting room.

### **1. Technical Familiarisation**

Ian Moodie (Technical Manager, ADA) provided a short technical familiarisation with Microsoft Teams and Slido, as an online app used to enable attendees to ask questions during the AGM and conduct polls as required.

### **2. Welcome**

Robert Caudwell (Chairperson, ADA) welcomed members to ADA's Annual General Meeting for 2024.

### **3. Report of previous AGM**

Innes Thomson (Chief Executive, ADA) presented the report of the previous AGM, held on Wednesday 27 September 2023.

### **4. Notification of ADA Officers**

Innes Thomson presented the report on ADA's recruitment of a Membership Officer, Laura Lamb, who will focus on membership administration and data. There have not been any changes to ADA's Vice Presidents or Chair since the previous AGM. ADA is advertising for a Deputy Chair, with the intention that the successful candidate will have a mandate from ADA's Board of Directors to succeed Robert Caudwell as ADA's Chair at ADA's AGM in 2027. The appointment of the Deputy Chair will be announced at the October 2025 board meeting prior to the AGM 2025. ADA welcomes applications from a diverse variety of candidates who do not need to be an ADA board member nor involved with an existing ADA member.

### **5. Report on the election of Directors to the Board**

Innes Thomson reported that Keith Caswell has retired and is replaced by Peter Richardson, the nominated Lincolnshire Branch Director. Hazel Durrant has moved roles within Defra. Consequently, ADA has welcomed Will Harrington (Head of the Waterways & Flood Water Management Team, Defra) as Defra's co-opted appointee to the Board.

There is a vacancy for a Director from ADA's Great Ouse Branch.

Robert Caudwell thanked ADA's Board for their support and guidance throughout the year.

## **6. Report on the activities and proceedings of ADA Board, Committees, and Staff in 2023/24**

Innes Thomson reported on the key initiatives that ADA was currently working on. He explained that it had been a difficult end to 2023 and 2024 beginning with a succession of winter storms and flooding. ADA has worked throughout 2024 to secure funding support for those members whose assets and systems were affected by the storms.

Innes Thomson highlighted:

- OFGEM has recognised an anomaly in the standing charges related to 'peaky' final demand customers (including flood and water level management pumping stations). Expected OFGEM to report on their findings and implement reforms next year.
- ADA has joined the Government's Flood Resilience Task Force, chaired by Flood & Water Minister, Emma Hardy. ADA is keen for the Task Force to investigate the management and maintenance of existing flood risk asset and systems.
- Ian Moodie has led on the Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilots grant scheme that ADA has helped to administer on behalf of Defra. The 20 IDB led projects are progressing well.
- ADA had established a new committee structure, with a Policy Committee and Advisory Committee.
- activities related to the special levy charged by IDBs to local authorities and ADA's involvement in the Local Government Association's Special Interest Group on IDB Special Levies.
- progress with the IDB land valuations statutory instrument (SI) that is being developed by Defra. Defra is preparing detailed guidance to enable the SI to be put before parliament in 2025.
- work to seek a review of audit value thresholds limits for smaller public authorities such as IDBs. ADA continues to work with the SAAA on this matter.
- a new Memorandum of Understanding signed with Association of SuDS Authorities (ASA). Both associations are working towards unified working arrangements and membership.

- the formation of the Rural Flood Resilience Partnership with ADA as a founding member alongside the Environment Agency, NFU, CLA, Natural England and ACRE. A first action plan for the Partnership was published in September.
- ADA continues its involvement in several larger strategic projects, such as Fens 2100+.
- the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Sustainable Flood & Drought Management had been reconvened under the new parliament since the general election in June 2024. The APPG had a new chair, Lee Pitcher MP and officers appointed at their meeting on 9 October. The next meeting of the APPG would be held in January 2025 with representatives from the Environment Agency and Defra invited to present around maintenance and capital spending.
- ADA had played an active role in the National Beaver Management Forum and hosted a beaver licence training event for IDB environment officers.
- ADA's sponsorship of the 'Power of Water' challenge as part of the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society's Schools Challenge 2024 displayed at the Lincolnshire Agricultural Show.
- continued engagement with Natural Resources Wales and internal drainage district advisory committees in Wales, and the DfI Rivers in Northern Ireland.
- ADA was in the process of updating computer hardware and software for the ADA office.

## **7. Presentation and adoption of Approved Accounts 2023**

The company's Audited Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023 were presented, as adopted by ADA's Board of Directors on 02 July 2024. Copy available in the AGM Handbook 2024.

## **8. Appointment of internal auditor and audit arrangements for 2024**

Appointment of internal auditor and audit arrangements for 2024.

Streets Chartered Accountants were formally appointed as the company's internal auditor and external accountant for the period ending 31 December 2024 following a poll of attendees (14 votes for, 0 votes against).

## **9. Notification of subscription rates for 2025**

The AGM was notified that ADA's membership subscription fees for 2025 will increase by 6.5% from fees in 2024, as had been approved by ADA Board of Directors.

ADA's membership in 2024 was reported in the AGM Handbook as: 105 IDBs, 5 national agencies, 6 Welsh internal drainage district advisory committees, 12 RFCCs, 21 Local Authorities, and 74 Associate Members.

## **10. Motions/ Amendments to be put to the AGM**

No motions or amendments were table before the 03 November 2024 deadline, nor at the AGM.

## **11. Business Questions (AOCB)**

The AGM concluded with a discussion session on ADA as a business. Items discussed included:

- the growing beaver population in England and Defra's policy towards their release and management. Ian Moodie responded that ADA understood policy was being formulated by Defra, but had been delayed. ADA was involved through the National Beaver Management Forum convened by Natural England, and a Sub-Group focused on the impacts on infrastructure convened by the Environment Agency. ADA had recently hosted a two-day beaver license training event in Kent for environmental staff from IDBs.
- formally changing the name of IDBs to 'Water Management Authorities' and the legislation required. A journey has started for an identity change for IDBs to given them greater recognition for their water level management functions, rather than simply in land drainage. Whilst individual IDBs can reconstitute to a new name of their choosing, for IDBs to be collectively recognised by a different title and updated function would require changes to the Land Drainage Act 1991, meaning that this could be slow to progress.
- ADA's involvement in planning stages of proposed government home building programme in flood vulnerable areas. ADA continued to respond to public consultations on planning matters, flagging concerns to Defra. Government must avoid a disconnect between flood risk management and the need for more homes.
- the 6.5% rise in ADA subscriptions for 2025. The increase is calculated on ADA's operational bottom line. Innes Thomson advised that there was a three year forward plan looking at future costs and income. Innes Thomson highlighted the importance of staff to ADA's work on behalf of members, which may need to be increased in the future, due to the demands being placed on the association. implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010. Innes Thomson understood that this was continuing to be discussed by Defra's Sustainable Urban Drainage Team, but they had not given a commitment and

were scoping out the government's options. ADA and ASA were continuing to be consulted and would advise of any updates.

International engagement. IT highlighted the importance of EUWMA and the continued partnership which provides mutual platform for learning.

Association Members. Thanks were given to ADA's Associate Members for their continued support during 2024.

The AGM was closed at 11.20.

The AGM Handbook can be downloaded from: [www.ada.org.uk/events/ada-agm](http://www.ada.org.uk/events/ada-agm)