

Association of Drainage Authorities

Joint Lincolnshire Branch and Welland and Nene Branch Meeting

Minutes of a Meeting of the above Branches held at The Inn, The Broadway, Woodhall Spa, on Thursday, 17th October 2019, at 2.00 p.m.

In attendance:

Black Sluice IDB	Mr K. Casswell	Chairman
	Mr D. Withnall	Finance Officer
Lindsey Marsh DB	Mr G. Crust	Chairman
	Mr P Pridgeon	Member
	Mr D.J. Sisson	Strategic Partnership Director
North East Lindsey DB	Mr L. Grooby	Vice-Chairman
North Level IDB	Mr P. Sharman	Chief Executive
	Mr J. Stublely	Operations Engineer
Welland and Deepings IDB	Mrs K. Daft	Chief Executive
Witham and Humber IDBs	Mr B. Fletcher (W1)	Member
	Mr P. Gilbert (W1)	Chairman
	Mrs J. Froggatt	Chief Executive
	Mr M. Shilling	Operations Manager
Witham Fourth IDB	Mr C. Hardy	Member
	Mr P. Richardson	Chairman
	Mr P. Bedford	Member
	Mr P. Bateson	Chief Executive
Association of Drainage Authorities	Mr R. Caudwell	ADA Chairman
Lincolnshire County Council	Ms N. McGarry	Grant Applications Manager
	Mr M. Harrison	Senior Commissioning Officer
		Flood Risk
Environment Agency	Mr M. Wray	Team Leader - Partnerships and Strategic Overview, (Midlands)

It was agreed that Mr K. Casswell would chair the meeting for the first two agenda items.

1. Apologies

The following apologies for absence were received from Branch Members:

Black Sluice IDB	Mr K. Casswell	Chairman
	Mr I. Warsap	Chief Executive
Lindsey Marsh DB	Mr S.W. Eyre	Vice-Chairman
	Mr R. Needham	Member
Middle Level Commissioners	Mr S. Ablett	
	Mr S. Ayres	Chair, Hundred of Wisbech IDB
	Mr D. Thomas	Chief Executive
	Mr G.W. Lankfer	Chairman, Waldersey IDB
North Level IDB	Mr W. Gee	Vice-Chairman
	Mr M. Sly	Chairman
South Holland IDB	Mr P. Camamile	Chief Executive
Welland and Deepings IDB	Mr D. Branton	Member
	Mr J. Boden	Assistant Engineer
Witham Fourth IDB	Mr C. Crunkhorn	Vice-Chairman
	Mr J. Grant	Member
Association of Drainage Authorities National	Mr I. Thompson	Chief Executive

Lincolnshire County Council
Environment Agency

Mr D. Hickman
Mr A. Clack
Mr P. Riley

Environment Commissioner
Revenue Programme Manager
Operations Manager

2. Election of Lincolnshire Branch Chairman

It was proposed by Mr P. Gilbert, seconded by Mrs K. Daft and agreed unanimously that Mr P. Richardson be elected Chairman of the Lincolnshire Branch.

Mr Richardson took the chair.

3. Chairman's Announcements

None

4. Minutes of the Previous Joint Branch Meeting

The minutes of the Joint Branch meeting held on 21st February 2019 were confirmed as accurate and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

None

6. Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership

Mr M. Harrison reported on the revised Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy which had been circulated prior to the meeting. This updated the 2012 document building on successful delivery of the key objectives taking a wider view, not only covering partners' collaborative strategic and operational approach to flood risk management, but also strategic management of water as a resource to support economic growth and help secure long-term resilience of water supply within a new national framework.

The revised Strategy had gone out for public consultation and IDBs had been actively involved. The document would be considered by the Environment and Economy Committee on 26th November before formal adoption by the Executive Committee in early December. Mr Harrison stated that although this was an LCC document, it was very much a partnership approach and he welcomed comments from members.


It was unanimously agreed to endorse the Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050.

7. Environment Agency Update

Mr M. Wray introduced himself stating he was currently seconded from EA Midlands Region to support Steeping Catchment Recovery works. He then gave an overview of the four groups set up following the Steeping River Breach last year. These consisted of an overarching Steering Group made up of representatives from the EA, LCC, ELDC, NFU, LMDB and W4IDB, and was chaired by Mr R. Caudwell of ADA. Three workstreams had also been set up; the Resilience Group to look at ways to improve the way flood risk was managed in the catchment; the Funding and Benefits Group to identify funding sources; and the Communications and Engagement Group to ensure that the community was involved and kept informed of progress. Mr Wray reported that the Resilience Group had reviewed the results of the silt survey and was now investigating a long-term sustainable, holistic approach for the catchment, looking at the infrastructure, defences, flow, maintenance operations, water storage and climate change. An outline bid had been submitted to the European Regional Development Fund and it was hoped to have a decision within one month.

Mr M. Wray thanked the IDBs for their assistance both during and after the flooding event. Mr D.J. Sisson reported that the staff at LMDB were very grateful for the support from their neighbouring IDBs during the event.

Mrs J. Froggatt highlighted that other parts of the county had been affected by flooding in June and also more recently when another main river bank had breached for the second time in two weeks, resulting in a significant area of land under water. She stated that there had been a number of breaches in the county, e.g. River Slea - more so than in the last eight years. Mrs Froggatt stated that a tactical plan was required for the whole of Lincolnshire and main river maintenance issues must be addressed.

Mrs K. Daft further reported that the Welland and Deepings area had also been badly affected and also criticised the lack of river maintenance by the EA, ~~stating that the Carr Dyke had overtopped again yesterday.~~ Mrs Daft stated that this appeared to be a reoccurring theme and the ratepayers were getting fed up. 

Mr M. Wray agreed to take these concerns back to the EA and feedback through the chair.

Mr L. Grooby and Mr P.W. Pridgeon were both concerned that the EA had been aware that maintenance was required on the Steeping prior to the breach and expressed concern that works planned in 2016 had been cancelled as they did not meet the benefit analysis. Mr Grooby emphasised that the cost of the recovery had been way in excess of the cost of any maintenance. Mr M. Wray reported that only limited funds were available and work had to be prioritised. He confirmed that all options for the Steeping were being considered and included the Lindsey Marsh and Witham Fourth systems.

Mr P.W. Pridgeon stated that the rivers must be maintained to their original design; he was concerned that the EA constantly denied there was a silt problem and suggested a maintenance plan needed to be put in place to get them fully functional, and then investigations could be undertaken to see what could be done to improve the situation for the future. Mr Pridgeon emphasised that a survey was not necessary to see there was a silt problem in the Steeping. Mr L. Grooby stated that a silt survey had been undertaken in 2014. He stated that the National Rivers Authority used to undertake regular annual maintenance but nothing had been done on the Steeping for 25 years; water was cascading over the bank in 2007 on the Steeping Relief Channel.

Mr M. Wray confirmed that the survey had been reviewed and silt levels were being taken into account. He stated that any work needed to be evidenced based to drive forward the future programme of works.

Mr R. Caudwell reported that work done on the Steeping may be used as a basis for other works. The Partnership would be highlighting that the grant allocation needed to be changed as there was very little available for lowland areas making it impossible to do the necessary work. He stated that the cost to the country as well as individuals must be taken into account, e.g. military resources, and we needed to find a way to make the lowland catchments work better with improved resilience to cater for these heavy rainfall events that were becoming more common. Mr Caudwell stated that an innovative approach was required across the whole catchment to ensure any work had a positive effect.

It was noted that the Section 19 report would not be out until January 2020.

Mr M. Shilling queried whether the flooding at Dorrington and Digby Fen would receive similar attention, stating that feelings in these areas were running high. He stated that the water in the Digby Fen system was not going down and was concerned that the sluice was not working at full capacity. Mr M. Wray was not familiar with these incidents but would feed this back to the EA.

8. Reports from ADA National

The following updates were presented:

General Update

- DRAFT Health and Safety report - This was submitted to the ADA Board yesterday, to be launched at conference following some amendments. This would build on the Good Governance Guide with workshops being held for members and officers.
- Finance - A small deficit was expected but ADA was working hard to keep costs to a minimum and income from Floodex should help close the gap. Subscriptions would be increased by 2% next year (2020).
- Governance - There was to be a change in audit procedures which was more in line with what the IDBs already do, this would be discussed at Conference and members were encouraged to attend.
- The Environment Bill – ADA is pushing for the inclusion of new rating procedures in the Bill to facilitate the extension of areas where local support was in favour. Government had agreed to put this change into the next suitable mainstream Bill.
- Flood Ex - An alternative venue to Peterborough was being sought. ADA considered this event important for the industry and was looking at holding a demonstration in two years, possibly working with a partner rather than asking an individual board to fund. Feed-back was welcomed. These events had to be self-funding.
- EUWMA York - ADA taken on presidency for next year. This was a very successful event and ADA was being encouraged to be more proactive. Similar issues were being faced across Europe where areas were reliant on land drainage to protect against inland flooding and they were keen to learn how funding issues were being addressed in the UK.
- Water Resources East - This was being supported by ADA and representatives had attended a Steering Group meeting last week.

In response to Mr D. Withnall, Mr Caudwell confirmed that ADA had sufficient resources to deal with the additional work involved in Flood Ex and WRE and stated that members would not see a drop in the technical work being undertaken.

Technical and Environmental

- Watervole/mink control - A gazette article would be coming out shortly and the seminars and workshops mentioned earlier would cover environmental as well as safety.
- Biodiversity - Guidance would develop towards national key indicators for the industry; although IDBs had a very good record, they needed to be able to demonstrate this. Data and evidence statistics were used to underpin lobbying work and biodiversity would feed into this. A questionnaire would be issued shortly but figures were to be taken from the IDB1 forms.
- PSCA - New agreement produced with more in responsibilities under CDM Regulations. ADA working to resolve these issues with the EA.
- Badgers/Class Licence etc.
- Workstreams for this year and next - Included Waste Regulations (beneficial use of silt), climate change and resilience, and responsibilities of riparian owners.

Policy and Finance

- ADA budget.

- Health safety and welfare survey - 75% return rate on last years questionnaire. Key message included health and safety as a standing agenda item, evidence, reporting of accidents and near misses.
- Educational resources - Work ongoing to raise awareness in schools and increase public awareness.
- Developer contributions - Guidance paper being prepared to give advice to IDBs in seeking contributions from Developers for increased surface water flows and on charging for preapplication advice, adoption of flood risk assets, etc.
- Byelaws and consents - ADA discussing changes to model Byelaws with DEFRA.

It was suggested that sharing accident/near miss reporting across the industry could be beneficial in identifying trends and raising awareness of potential issues.

The new Grant Applicants Manager, Ms N. McGarry, was introduced. She had been in post since January 2019 and felt that the role was working well with positive relationships with IDB's. Ms McGarry was currently working on six projects for five IDBs one of which had already been submitted to EA, pumping station refurbishments x 3, sluice outer doors and replacement of flaps, under capacity culvert replacement, replacement UVA lining. Additionally, Ms McGarry confirmed that she was also overseeing four projects for two IDBs which were consultancy led, however, had now taken the lead on the process. It was confirmed that the total grant-in-aid sought to date since being in post was £1.2million, 147 properties and 5,000 hectares of agricultural land better protected.

9. Reports from Branch Committees

Show Committee

There was no stand at the Lincolnshire Show this year as resources were diverted to deal with the flooding. The Showground had offered a 50% reduction for next year. Following discussion, it was agreed not to invoice boards for 2019.

Pay and Conditions Committee

Mr D. Withnall reported that a meeting had been held in October to negotiate the 20²⁰21 pay award. The majority of members agreed to offer a 3.7% pay increase for 2020 (100% of the Public Sector average weekly earnings three-month index July, published in September - KAC9 of EARN01, National Statistics Office).

It had further been suggested that the formula be used to determine pay settlements for the next three years, and thereafter continuing unless 12 months' notice was given by either party, subject to no national legislation being introduced. This would make it easier for boards to plan for estimates. There was a general agreement that the previous caps on pay rises had caused IDBs to fall below the construction industry and an acknowledgement that more needed to be done to help with staff recruitment and to encourage new employees/staff retention. It was agreed that the formula be implemented for the next three years.

There was some concern about the interpretation of Section 4, Paragraph 9 of the White Book - day workers on emergency night work. This had been amended to comply with the law and a common-sense approach should be taken when applying the rules.

It was noted that a new Chairman of the Pay and Conditions Committee would be required and boards were asked to put names forward before the next meeting.

Environment Committee

- Pollinators one of the key targets.
- Next meeting to be held in November.

10. Water Resources East (WRE) Update

ADA had been invited by WRE to take a seat on the Board of Directors, representing IDBs in the East of England and had suggested that the Branch would be best suited to filling this role. The cost of a seat on the WRE Board of Directors was £15,000 for the first year with a review after that time. ADA recommended that the Branch should support this for a three-year term and that contributions from members of the branch be based on annual values. Should the Branch agree, ADA would manage calculation of the money and pay this to WRE, meeting any shortfall. Mr D Thomas would be the representative of the five branches and would feedback on what involvement was required.

There was general support from the Black Sluice and Welland and Deepings representatives. Mrs J. Froggatt reported that the Witham and Humber boards had agreed to support this for one year only but stated that they were not comfortable buying a seat on a corporate body.

Mr M. Harrison reported that LCC had agreed to a place on the board because of the potential of what could happen in the country with water transfers. He stated that they would rather be able to monitor and influence any decisions to get the best for Lincolnshire.

Mr D.J. Sisson stated that the Lindsey Marsh board did not think it appropriate to buy a seat on the board. He stated that funds collected were to benefit the Board's area and it was difficult to justify the contribution as this did not in any way benefit the LM drainage district hydrologically. He did however understand that other boards were affected and would need to be fully involved.

Mr L. Grooby queried how the £15,000 had been arrived at and why it was not for the reimbursement of actual expenses. Mr R. Caudwell stated that this was a very small contribution to the costs which are largely paid for by the water champions.

11. Any Other Business

None

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next joint Branch meeting would be held in February 2020 in the south of the area.

CHAIRMAN