

Association of Drainage Authorities

Joint Lincolnshire Branch and Welland and Nene Branch Meeting

A joint meeting of the Lincolnshire and Welland and Nene ADA Branches was held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 18 February 2021, at 12noon.

In attendance:

Black Sluice IDB	Mr Keith Casswell	Chairman
	Mr David Withnall	Finance Officer
King's Lynn IDB	Mr Brian Long	Chairman
Lindsey Marsh DB	Mr Giles Crust	Chairman
	Mr Stephen Eyre	Vice Chairman
	Mr Andrew McGill	Chief Executive
	Mr Richard Crust	Elected Member
	Mr Terry Aldridge	Appointed Member
	Mr Richard Hurdman	ICT Manager
	Mrs Carol Davies	CEOs PA
North East Lindsey IDB	Mr Lionel Grooby	Vice Chairman
North Level District IDB	Mr William Gee	Vice Chairman
	Mr Paul Sharman	Chief Executive
	Mr Jon Stubley	Operations Manager
South Holland IDB	Mr Duncan Worth	Chairman
	Mr Sam Markillie	Vice Chairman
	Mr Phil Camamile	Chief Executive
	Mr Karl Vines	Catchment Engineer
Welland and Deepings IDB	Mr Trevor Purlant	Chairman
	Mr Nick Morris	Operations Engineer
Middle Level Commissioners	Mr David Thomas	Chief Executive
Witham and Humber IDBs	Mr Guy Hird	Engineering Services Officer
Witham Fourth District IDB	Mr Peter Richardson	Chairman
	Mr Peter Bedford	Appointed Member
	Mr Paul Skinner	Appointed Member
Association of Drainage Authorities	Mr Robert Caudwell	ADA Chairman
Lincolnshire County Council	Mr Innes Thomson	ADA Chief Executive
	Mr Eddy Poll	Councillor
Environment Agency	Mr David Hickman	Head of Environment
	Mr Guy Szomi	Operations Manager
	Mr Peter Reilly	Operations Manager
	Mr Alastair Windler	Team Leader
Water Management Alliance	Mrs Karen Bingham	Business Support Officer

Mr Duncan Worth in the Chair

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the following representatives:

Black Sluice IDB	Mr Ian Warsap	Chief Executive
North Lindsey IDB	Mr Philip Hoyes	Chairman
Upper Witham IDB	Mr Fred Myers	Chairman
Witham First IDB	Mr Peter Gilbert	Chairman
Witham Third IDB	Mr Ian Parker	Chairman
Witham Fourth IDB	Mr Ed Johnson	Chief Engineer
Witham & Humber DBs	Mrs Jane Froggatt	Chief Executive

	Mr Martin Shilling	Director of Operations & Engineering
North Level District IDB	Mr Michael Sly	Chairman
Middle Level Commissioners	Miss Sam Ablett	Member
Waldersea IDB	Mr Peter Lankfer	Chairman
Welland & Deepings IDB	Ms Karen Daft	Chief Executive
Environment Agency	Ms Kate Halka	Operations Manager
	Mr Ben Thornely	Area Flood Risk Manager
	Mr Morgan Wray	Flood & Coastal Risk Manager
Lincolnshire County Council	Mr Matthew Harrison	Senior Commissioning Officer Flood Risk

2. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting.

3. Minutes of the Previous Branch Meeting

The minutes of the last Joint Branch meeting held on 19 February 2020 were confirmed as a true record. It was noted that they would be signed by the Chairman shortly after the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. Lincolnshire County Council Update

David Hickman provided the following update:

- There had been a significant number of flooding instances since 2019 and Lincs County Council (LCC) was looking to strengthen its ability to respond to such events but had found that when an event was large enough to trigger a multi-agency response they had been dealt with very well.
- An application for funding had been submitted to Defra to access part of the £150m national funding allocation for ground water schemes, to better understand ground water in Lincolnshire. If successful, the project would run for six years.
- Engagement with Water Resources East (WRE) was continuing to develop at a regional level, which involved various water companies and local flood risk management authorities. WRE were also looking to create county wide partnerships to manage water resources on the East Coast and Humber in the coming years.
- There was a full LCC meeting planned for the following day when the flood risk paper would be presented and discussed on how to achieve carbon zero by 2050 or earlier.

6. Environment Agency Update

Peter Reilly, Alastair Windler and Guy Szomi gave members the following update:

- Routine maintenance had gone ahead with 84% completed by the end of the year. Currently working on the tree coppicing and bushing programme, but progress had been slow due to the inclement weather.
- The de-silting work on the River Steeping had paused. The contractor was struggling to get workers back into the country after the Christmas period.
- Erosion protection was continuing but due to the high rainfall there had been lots of issues, but thankfully only one property had flooded in Ancholme.
- The RFCC was expecting £1.1m of FDGiA to be claimed in 2020/21 so urged Boards to submit any outstanding claims well before the end of the financial year.
- The Mid Term Capital Programme had been confirmed for the 2021/22 year, so IDBs should shortly receive their allocation letters.
- Any available money from the national underspend would go into balances and would be spent on delivering projects and activities that provided a positive cost benefit.
- Guy Szomi and Trevor Purlant agreed to have a discussion outside the meeting in relation to the syphon pump installed on the River Welland at Crowland and whether it was working correctly. Anyone else who would like to be involved in these discussions was to contact Guy and/or Trevor directly.

7. Reports from ADA National

Innes Thomson gave members the following update:

- The most recent ADA Bulletin had been sent to Clerks and Chief Executives on 29 January 2021 and he requested that this be circulated to members.
- There was increasing concern at the reactive nature of how flooding instances were dealt with by the EA, so ADA were starting to push Defra and the EA to ensure that more money was available for carrying out routine maintenance work. This was discussed at an EFRA Committee meeting held on 8 February. Since then, Rebecca Pow MP had asked for a meeting with ADA to discuss the contents of the report, so it was hoped that funding would be prioritised in a different way in the longer term.
- ADA were lobbying hard on behalf of its membership to maintain the red diesel exemption that allowed IDBs and other RMAs to continue to use it.
- Ministers were looking at how the Standing Orders for IDBs could be changed to allow remote Board meetings to continue beyond 7 May 2021. Further details would follow shortly.
- Three Health, Safety and Welfare modules were now available to be used by members at Board meetings. These should take around 15-20 minutes each to deliver. Further modules were also being developed.
- The Good Environmental Governance Guide should be available for all Drainage Boards in April 2021.
- Links had been added to the ADA website for easy access to assist the public during flood and adverse weather instances.
- A case was being built for ADA to hold a demonstration event in 2022, likely to be somewhere in the Doncaster area. Scrutiny of risks and likely income received was taking place with approval being sought from the ADA Board later this year.
- The Environment Bill had been suspended but would restart shortly with Royal assent expected in September 2021.
- Carbon reduction would be of increasing importance over the coming months/years. Innes Thompson asked members to start thinking about how this could be achieved.

Sam Markillie requested that ADA pushes discussions on the reporting of near miss flooding instances. Currently, the LLFA only carried out an investigation when damage occurred to property, but if a proactive approach was taken to look at where there were near misses, costs

and the associated misery of flooding could be significantly reduced. David Hickman said that in Lincolnshire this information had started to be recorded but resource was currently limited to do much more.

Guy Hird felt that Drainage Boards had limited powers to ensure that riparian owners maintained their watercourses properly but as towns and villages get developed watercourses should be taken on by IDBs to ensure better levels of maintenance. David Hickman asked if Clerks/Chief Executives could send him examples of where enforcement had taken place in Lincolnshire to help raise the profile of this issue.

8. Reports from Branch Committees

Events Committee

Peter Richardson reported that no meetings had taken place recently but provided the following update:

- The Lincolnshire Show would be going ahead in some form this year but was not sure how this would happen at the moment.
- It was hoped that a joint summit with the County Landowners Association (CLA) regarding river conveyance could be held but this very much depended on COVID restrictions being eased.

Pay and Conditions Committee

Daniel Withnall gave members the following update:

- The pay award for 2021/22 had been agreed by the Committee and 4.1% had been recommended to Lincolnshire Boards but then the Chancellor's announcement came. However, as this announcement was only directed at centrally funded public bodies it was felt that the recommendation of 4.1% would remain.
- In September 2021 the Pay and Conditions Committee would review the formula because 2022/23 was the final year of the three-year model.

Environment Committee

No update was provided.

9. ADA Articles of Association

Innes Thomson explained that the suggested amendments to the Articles of Association had been circulated to members prior to the meeting, but the main changes he wanted to highlight were to:

Clause 10 – Membership. Removal of membership categories.

Clause 33 – Voting. To simplify the voting system and decouple voting entitlement from the amount of membership subscription paid.

Clause 47 – Branch Structures. Modifications suggested, which included the facility for branches to amalgamate and vice versa.

Clauses 77-79 – Officers. Changes to the Senior Officer roles.

With the exception of Clause 33 (Voting), all other suggested amendments within the document were agreed.

10. Water Resources East

Andrew McGill reported that Lindsay Marsh Drainage Board had decided not to make a financial contribution to WRE this year. He emphasised that they continued to support the work of WRE and were committed to their objectives but after having little or no engagement with them during the course of the last year, had decided that the investment was not beneficial for the next 12 months, but this would be reviewed again in a years' time.

Innes Thomson said that ADA had some empathy with Andrew's position and would ensure that WRE recognised that they needed to engage directly with IDBs but reminded IDBs that communication should be a two-way flow. Innes Thomson reported that ADA's financial model used in the previous year for funding WRE had been abandoned in favour of a new tiered approach and confirmed that funding requests would come directly from WRE in future, rather than via ADA. Innes Thomson also confirmed that the River Trent Broads would not be making a financial contribution to WRE this year because they did not form part of WRE's future plans.

It was felt that the work of WRE and other agencies was important but there was a need to ensure that there was no overlap or duplication of work and no mission creep. The Chairman said that at the Welland & Nene AGM meeting held earlier in the day, similar discussions had taken place and reported that South Holland IDB would continue to support WRE for the foreseeable future.

11. Membership Fees

It was confirmed that Branch Membership Fees would be frozen for the forthcoming year.

12. Any Other Business

The deaths of four former members were announced with sadness, as follows:

- The sudden death of Mr Paul Hoyes, aged 61, serving Witham Third District IDB Chairman since 2013. Paul's funeral service was on 17 December at Stixwold village, where he farmed all his working life, and the Board's Stixwold diesel engines ran that morning as a tribute. His brother David, pre-deceased him by a few months. Paul leaves four adult children and partner Jeanette Jackson. His father, Dennis Hoyes MBE, remains a member of Witham Third District IDB.
- After a short illness, Mr Paul Wright, a serving member of Upper Witham IDB for 54 years and a former Chairman of the Board. Paul farmed north of Lincoln and had family and farming links with Norfolk. The funeral was held on 5 January at Lea near Gainsborough.
- Mr Stuart Ayres, the Chairman of Hundred of Wisbech IDB. Mike Day had been appointed as the new Chairman.
- Mr Gerald Lankfer, the Chairman of Waldersea IDB. Peter Lankfer had been appointed as the new Chairman.

ADA Conference

Innes Thomson was pleased to share the news that Rebecca Pow MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, had agreed to speak at the Annual ADA Conference in November. Innes said that discussions were taking place around whether the event should go ahead as a physical event or whether another virtual conference would be necessary. A decision on this would be made as soon as possible.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Lincolnshire Branch meetings for 2021 would be held on Thursday 20 May 2021 and Thursday 21 October 2021. The next Joint Branch meeting would be held on 22 February 2022.

CHAIRMAN