

**Association of Drainage Authorities
Lincolnshire Branch**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 1.30 p.m. on Thursday, 21st April 2022 at the Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa, and via MS Teams.

Present:

ADA	Mr R. Caudwell	Chairman
Ancholme	Mr C. Benson *V	Clerk
Black Sluice	Mr K.C. Casswell *V	Chairman
	Mr I. Warsap *V	Chief Executive
	Mr D. Withnall	Finance Officer
East Lindsey District Council	Mr T. Ashton *V	
Environment Agency	Mr M. Wray	Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager
	Mr P. Reilly	Operations Manager
Lincolnshire County Council	Dr D. Hickman	Head of Environment
Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board	Mr G.C. Crust	Chairman
	Mr P.W. Pridgeon	Member
	Mr A. McGill	Chief Executive
North Level DIDB	Mr P. Sharman *V	Chief Executive
	Mr J. Stubbley *V	Operations Engineer
Welland and Deepings	Mr T. Purllant	Chairman
	Mr D. Branton	Vice-Chairman
	Mrs K. Daft	Chief Executive
Witham and Humber	Mr F. Myers *V	UW Chairman
	Mr L. Grooby *V	NEL Vice-Chairman
	Mr P. Carrot *V	W1 Vice-Chairman
	Mrs J. Froggatt *V	Chief Executive
Witham Fourth DIDB	Mr P. Richardson	Chairman
	Mr C. Crunkhorn *V	Vice-Chairman
	Mr P. Bedford	Member
	Mr P. Bateson	Chief Executive

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The three-year term of office for the position of Chairman had ended. It was proposed by Mr G.C. Crust, seconded by Mr P. Bedford and agreed by those present that Mr P. Richardson be elected as Chairman of the Branch for a further three-year term.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs L. Edlin, W. Gee, P. Gilbert, I. Moodie, I. Parker, L. Pennell, N. Robinson, M. Sly, D. Thomas, I. Thomson, K. Vines, D. Worth, and Ms K. Edlin.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Mr P. Bedford, seconded by Mr T. Purllant and agreed by those present that Mr G. Crust be elected Vice-Chairman of the Branch; the term of office to run for the next three years.

4. ELECTION OF HONORARY TREASURER

It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by the Vice-Chairman that Mr A. McGill be elected Honorary Secretary for a further three-year term.

5. ELECTION OF BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ADA EXECUTIVE BOARD

The appointment of Mr K. Casswell as the Branch representative on the ADA Executive Board was confirmed.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman confirmed that next year's Branch AGM would include a site visit. He also reminded members of Flood and Water Live 2023; a working demonstration which would be held on 5th and 6th July next year in Boston.

7. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 20TH MAY 2021

The minutes of the AGM held on 20th May 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

8. MINUTES OF JOINT BRANCH MEETING - 23RD FEBRUARY 2022

Mr C. Benson referred to minute 11 and asked for an additional paragraph to be added to reflect the comment made by Mrs C. Marshall that IDB special levy accounted for 50% of the council tax budget (one quarter of the gross budget) and that the councils were supporting IDBs in the lobbying of Government.

Mr P. Bateson stated that Witham Fourth DIDB was working closely with the Council and he understood that the Government would be reviewing this next year. Mr G. Crust pointed out that information sent out with council tax bills had stated that 44p in the £1 was given to IDBs.

The minutes of the Joint Branch meeting held on 23rd February 2022 were confirmed subject to the addition of paragraph 1 above.

9. MATTERS ARISING

None

10. REPORT FROM ADA NATIONAL

Mr R. Caudwell gave the following update from ADA National:

- ADA lobbying on red diesel had returned a positive outcome for IDBs and FCERM in general, thanks to IDBs for the assistance and data provided to build the evidence which led to the decision taken.
- Dr D. Hickman was to resign shortly from the ADA Board to take up his new post with the Water Management Consortium. ADA thanked him for all his support and engagement in his role with Lincolnshire County Council.
- ADA was an active member of the Advisory Group for Implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act for Sustainable Drainage and was seeking IDB's general views, if they were to have an option, on whether they would be interested in becoming a Statutory Approval Body (SAB) for SuDS. Members were asked to feedback to ADA.
- Registration for the "Keeping our Rivers Flowing" Summit on 12th May 2022 at Stoneleigh Park in conjunction with the Country Landowners' Association, the National Farmers' Union and the Environment Agency was open (cost £25). There was a top line up of speakers and plenty of time built in for debate and discussion. DEFRA's Farming and Land Management teams would be present alongside the usual DEFRA Flood and Water colleagues. This was an ideal opportunity to lobby DEFRA and the EA and for networking.

- Other events planned for 2022 included:
 - AGM 28th September (online).
 - Conference 9th November (face-to-face - venue likely to be in Peterborough).
 - A series of monthly Friday technical seminars following on from the success of those held last year.
 - Flood and Coast 7th - 9th June in Telford, Shropshire.
 - A further APPG meeting was planned for before the summer Parliamentary recess (attendance by invitation only). ADA thanked Mr A. McGill for his contribution at the last meeting which had generated a lot of interest from the House of Lords and MPs.
- The Environmental Good Governance Guide had been sent to DEFRA for views and was shortly due for publication.
- A carbon reduction policy template was being prepared for IDBs as the EA template did not fit. The Carbon Accounting Guide for IDBs was due to be published in the next few weeks.
- ADA members had been working with DEFRA to provide information for the enacting of secondary legislation for the Environment Act to enable the expansion of internal drainage districts or the creation of new ones. The Parliamentary process for this was expected to commence in spring 2023.
- ADA was involved in a DEFRA workstream looking at the streamlining of flood risk management planning.
- Education resources recently published with LEAF Education for key stages 4 and 5 were available on the ADA website. The Branch had supported this with the donation of £1,000. An online training event was due to be held on 28th April 2022 and IDB staff were encouraged to sign up.
- ADA had responded to a number of consultations including Biodiversity Net Gain and River Basin Management Plans.

11. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Executive Board activity was covered in item 10 above and there had been no meetings of the Policy and Finance Committee or the Technical and Environment Committee since the last Branch meeting.

(a) Events Committee

The Chairman reported details of the Flood and Water Live 2023 were awaiting sign off by the ADA Executive Board. Lincolnshire Clerks were due to discuss the details but it was hoped that the Branch would have a stand at the event.

The Branch would have a stand at the 2022 Lincolnshire Show in June, the theme this year would be the impact of fly tipping and the importance of keeping watercourses clear. Displays would also include IDB schemes and projects and recruitment opportunities, and a video showing work being undertaken. Members were asked to forward information for inclusion.

(b) Pay and Conditions Committee

Following the withdrawal of Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board and Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board from the Committee, there were now seven boards remaining. The Committee had agreed to continue but it had recently come to light that South Holland Internal Drainage Board did not follow the terms and conditions set out in the 'White Book' and, as such, it was uncertain whether they could continue to participate in the negotiations. A review of the terms and conditions of those internal drainage boards remaining was being undertaken to ascertain the differences.

12. ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD UP TO 31ST JANUARY 2022

The Treasurer, Mr P. Bateson, presented the accounts for the period 1st February 2021 to 31st January 2022 which showed income of £450 and expenditure of £2,858, resulting in a deficit of £2,408 and a balance of £19,108 at the year end. The accounts had been audited by Mr D. Withnall (Honorary Auditor).

The attached accounts for the period up to 31st January 2022 were approved.

13. BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions had been suspended last year due to the lack of face-to-face meetings. Mr P.W. Pridgeon suggested that subscriptions be suspended for a further year and this was supported by Mrs J. Froggatt who stated that it would be a helpful gesture for this year if the cost of the Lincolnshire Show was met by the Branch. The Treasurer confirmed that approximately £4,000 was raised from subscriptions each year.

It was agreed that Branch subscriptions would be suspended for a further year.

14. LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY UPDATE

Dr D. Hickman updated on changes within the Lincolnshire County Council Flood Risk Team which included his imminent departure, the promotion of Mr M. Harrison to Flood and Water Manager, and the appointment of a Support Officer to liaise across the partnership on the Common Works Programme and to push through the planned capital projects.

He further reported that the Greater Lincolnshire Groundwater Project had been approved by Scrutiny Committee and would now be submitted to DEFRA. This £7.5M project for Scopwick, Barton, Barrow-upon-Humber and Grimsby, would run until March 2027. He thanked IDBs for their help in preparing the Business Case and hoped that the Project would come up with some practical solutions. Work on the ground was due to start a few months after submission. Advertising for a Project Co-ordinator who would be dedicated to delivery of the project would take place over the next few months.

15. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

Mr M. Wray thanked all risk management authorities for reporting and stated that a year-end review of the capital programme had confirmed expenditure of just over £65M or a £64.9M budget. He confirmed that £46M had been allocated this year plus £12k for other risk management authorities.

Regarding incident management, Mr Wray reported that in September 2022 a multi-area flood exercise (Operation FloodEx 2022) would take place with different organisations, government departments and possibly COBRA. The Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (the multi-agency flood cell) will come into place before then and would include breach planning scenarios. Emergency alert broadcasting utilising a new system to call all mobile phones within a certain geographical area; this system was set up for use in instances where there was a major threat to life and required Government approval before it was used.

[Post meeting note – due to the funeral of Her Majesty the Queen on 19th September this exercise was postponed to a later date to be confirmed].

Mr M. Wray stated that recruitment continued to be an issue within the Agency and the Lincolnshire Flood and Water Strategy Group had been tasked with assessing the skills gap, identifying any immediate and upcoming shortages, growing in-house skills, apprenticeships, secondments, and job shadowing across flood risk management authorities. They would also liaise with Lincoln University to discuss any entry-level schemes with a possible LEP link. Dr D. Hickman stated that this was an important area for the LEP, with opportunities to access skills-gap funding streams in combination with the University.

Mr P. Reilly gave an overview of the 2021/22 EA programme, a spend of £14.8M (£10.3M FDGiA and £2M IDB precept). This included £8.5M of routine maintenance and 167 projects, 93% of which were complete by the year end, the remaining 7% due for completion in the next 4-6 weeks. Of this total, 13% comprised bank repairs, 17% bushing, 16% dredging/desilting and 22% structural maintenance. For 2022/23, £12.5M FDGiA had been allocated for the Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire region, part of £121M allocated nationally in this period. The EA continued to work with the Government for more money, highlighting that assets continued to deteriorate if they were not repaired and would then require a major capital injection.

The Grimsby flood sirens had been removed and replaced with a new system which would be cheaper to maintain. Tree and bushing work had been undertaken at Mablethorpe and Ancholme together with maintenance works on the Great Gowt, Lincoln, Bain, and Witham between Bardney and Kirkstead, where maintenance had deteriorated. There was a five-year programme to move this forward. A new version of the 'Living on the Edge' document was being supplied by external partners to support delivery of the riparian owners project and would be available in various formats. An extensive programme to eradicate Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed through removal and spraying was underway.

EA PR initiatives included: the Dynamic Dunescapes Project set up by environmental partners to restore sand dunes across the country for the benefit of wildlife and communities which explained how sand dunes were constructed and why, why desilting and dredging was done and where, the reasons for maintenance and what it achieves, asset inspection periods, e.g. every six months to five years with main rivers in populated areas every 12 months, permissive powers, No Mow May and Let it Bloom in June while ensuring public were aware of the need to cut the banks.

Mr G. Crust stated that many IDB watercourses were restricted by poor maintenance on the main rivers, emphasising that it was about more than keeping the banks cut. Mr P. Reilly responded that there had been EA intervention in Wainfleet every year prior to the breach and stated that vegetation management and maintenance was important and where it made a difference dredging would be considered (16% of last year's spend had been on dredging). He further reported that the EA would undertake whatever work was most cost beneficial and intervene routinely year in, year out. He stated that there was always more that could be done if more money was available, but the cost benefit needed to be taken into account.

Mr D. Withnall stated that it was positive to see the EA identifying where work was needed and queried what percentage of the revenue grant had been delivered under the Public Sector Cooperation Agreement. Mr P. Reilly would report back on this.

Mr P.W. Pridgeon highlighted that it had taken years for the EA to accept that desilting of the Steeping was necessary. He did not think 16% of the revenue budget was a lot to spend on desilting and asked how much of the 17% spent on bank repairs had been due to damage caused by badgers. Mr P. Reilly agreed that the impact of the badgers was pretty high, with over 200 holes in defences but a programme of work was ongoing to deal with this and 12, 24 and 36 month inspections were undertaken to ensure any damage was captured and

included in the programme. The EA had a blanket licence which enabled them to exclude badgers from the bank and move them to artificial sets. In response to Mr P.W. Pridgeon, Mr Reilly agreed to report back on the amount spent on badger control. Mr Pridgeon stated that ADA and the EA needed to make the Government aware of the cost, Mr Reilly agreeing that the cost was substantial, e.g. inspections, exclusion, rehoming, repairing and protecting the banks.

Messrs R. Caudwell and A. McGill had attended a meeting of the Water Group on Tuesday. There had been frustration from farmers who were willing to undertake work themselves to improve the drainage in their area. They saw very little benefit from the drainage charge. PSCA work had been very successful and allowed a lot of work to be done. Farmers asked him to take this forward. If the area outside an IDB district was maintained properly, it helped the catchment too.

Mr M. Wray stated that the EA did not discourage landowners from doing work but they must talk to them first. Mr R. Caudwell replied that the landowners could not get through to their local contact. It appeared there was no local contact numbers and all calls went through to a national switchboard and there was also reams of paperwork to complete before work could be undertaken. Mr Caudwell stated that there must be a change to ensure a simple procedure for those wishing to undertake work.

Mr P. Bateson reported that Kate Halka had given a figure of £5M for PSCA work undertaken last year.

Mr A. McGill queried how much was required to undertake all the necessary work. Mr P. Reilly emphasised that the EA did not have the staff to deliver any more work but reported that it would cost in the region of £20M to achieve the necessary work. Mr R. Caudwell stated that it was far more cost-effective to spend £1 on regular maintenance than £10 on repairs. One of the reasons for representation on the APPG was to raise awareness and push for an increased revenue budget and six-year programme. He stated that the Treasury needed to understand maintenance/revenue spend.

Mr P. Bateson queried progress of the precept review. Mr M. Wray confirmed that guidance had been reviewed but nothing further had progressed.

16. MEETING DATES

The following meeting dates were noted:

20th October 2022 - Joint Branch meeting (in person) hosted by Lincolnshire Branch.

23rd February 2022 - Joint Branch Meeting.

20th April 2023 - Lincolnshire Branch AGM.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

IDBs were asked to feedback their thoughts to ADA regarding the creation of a SUDS Approval Body (this would be an organisation within county councils and unitary authorities specifically established to deal with the design, approval and adoption of SUDS within any new development consisting of two or more properties). Mr D. Hickman stated that this would be quite a role to take on.

CHAIRMAN