



Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

ADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes

04 March 2025

Westminster Kingsway College – Victoria Centre, 76 Vincent Square,
London, SW1P 2PD

FINAL

Invited					
Name	Representing	Present	Name	Representing	Present
Robert Caudwell (RC)	Chair	Y	Brian Stewart (BST)	RFCCs	Y (Online)
Tim Farr (TF)	Vice Chair Policy & Finance Committee	Y	Henry Cator (HC)	President	Y (Online)
Charles Mills (CM)	Vice Chair Technical & Environment Committee	Y	David Riddington (DR)	Vice President	Apologies
Peter Bateson (PB)	Company Secretary	Y (Online)	Jean Venables (JV)	Vice President	Apologies
Angie Fitch-Tillett (AFT)	Eastern Branch	Y (Online)	Anne McIntosh (AM)	Vice President	Apologies
Peter Richardson (PR)	Lincolnshire Branch	Y	John Grogan (JD)	Vice President	Apologies
Charles Pudge (CP)	Marches Branch	Y	William Harrington (WH)	Defra (co-opted)	Apologies
Bill Symons (BSY)	Northern Branch	Y	VACANT	Great Ouse Branch	
Priscilla Haselhurst (PH)	South Eastern Branch	Y	Innes Thomson (IT)	Chief Executive	Y
Rebecca Horsington (RH)	South Western Branch	Y (Online)			
Will Staunton (WS)	Trent Branch	Y	In Attendance		
James West (JW)	Wales Branch	Y	Ian Moodie (IM)	Technical Manager	Y (Online)
Duncan Worth (DW)	Welland & Nene Branch	Y	Laura Lamb (LL)	Membership Officer	Y
Ian Hodge (IH)	Environment Agency	Y			
Paul Ambrose (PA)	Local Authorities	Y (Online)			

Ref	Minute	Action
516	Welcome and apologies RC welcomed everyone, introductions were made, and apologies noted as above.	
517	Declarations of Interest	

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	Item 522b. was noted as a Declaration of Interest for TF.	
518	Approval of Minutes The minutes of the ADA Board Meetings held on 15 October 2024 and 03 December 2024 were approved by the Board.	
519	Matters Arising The actions outstanding from the previous meeting and not covered in this meeting are as follows: 465. De-maining paper OUTSTANDING 491a. Great Ouse Branch Director OUTSTANDING 491d. ADA Business Plan – Work pending OUTSTANDING	
520	ADA Advisory Committee Report Minutes from the most recent Committee meeting on 11 February 2025 were circulated. TF said that staff appraisal details were not noted in minutes and would be dealt with under Item 8b of this meeting. Following a challenge by DW, there was discussion on how many subscribers the ADA Gazette online has and how it could be promoted to a wider audience online. TF explained that Ryan Dixon is considering how to do that and options will be explored. Advertising revenues may be more vulnerable if ADA opted for a digital-only version. IT reported that £43,000 of advertising revenue was raised last financial year. Decision: Revised Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee as tabled were agreed.	
521	Finances a. Finance Report IT reported on ADA's financial situation as at 31 December 2024. b. Bank Account Balance IT reported that as at 31 December 2024 ADA had cash reserves of £267,000, the highest level at this point since 2018. c. Income & Expenditure The Board noted it looked healthy this year. The positive impact on the balance of LAPSIP was noted. d. Debtors The Board were informed that ADA's debt was under good control, thanks to the vigilance of Sue Crowther. e. Transfer into savings IT proposed putting money into savings and suggested two options of account and asked for board confirmation. DW suggested that this was not a	

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	<p>matter for the Board and the matter should be a delegated matter for the CEO.</p> <p>Decision: The Board agreed that this should be a delegated matter for the CEO subject to following written policy on the matter.</p> <p>Action: To write a Financial Savings Policy.</p>	IT
522	<p>Business Planning</p> <p>a. Director updates There is still no representative for Great Ouse Branch despite attempts to gain one. Issues developing in that area so its viewed as essential to get a branch up and running there.</p> <p>Action: DW to speak to Mark Heading as current Chair of the ADA Great Ouse Branch. (<i>Post-meeting note: an AGM has been provisionally organised for 26 March 2025</i>)</p> <p>b. Deputy Chair recruitment <i>TF left the room for this item.</i></p> <p>Five applications were received by the deadline of 28 February 2025. RC proposed a group be formed of CM, HC, IT, RC and JV to shortlist candidates, interview those candidates, and make a recommendation to the Board.</p> <p>RC explained that it was the Board’s decision to appoint a Deputy Chair and that members’ input was not required.</p> <p>Decision: RC’s proposal was agreed by the Board with the added request that shortlisted candidates would be asked to attend the July Board meeting.</p> <p>Action: To agree (or otherwise) on a candidate to appoint at the October Board meeting and announce at Conference and AGM.</p> <p>c. Inviting new Vice Presidents</p> <p>IT referred to a conversation with JG and that, in his current position, he is ready stand down at the next AGM. With JG standing down, his position is available to back fill along with potentially one or two additional Vice Presidents. JG has specifically recommended that he be replaced with an active Labour politician from either house. RH went on to suggest Ashley Fox, Conservative MP for Bridgwater in Somerset, and IT is keen to get cross-party representation.</p> <p>Action: Board members asked to recommend potential new Vice Presidents.</p> <p>Action: To write to JG confirming that he is to stand down at the next AGM.</p> <p>d. Company Secretary Update PB updated the Board that accounts for the previous year had been filed with Companies House. PB will be working with SC later this month to prepare the 2024 accounts submission for Board approval at the July meeting.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL IT</p>

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	<p>e. ADA Business Plan</p> <p>IT discussed the key drivers of the next ADA business plan and if anything else needs to be featured. RH suggested the governance of drainage boards and future process of amalgamations should be included. DW brought up the point about risk of poorly managed IDB's affecting the IDB fraternity as a whole.</p> <p>Action: to include an additional key driver as mentioned</p>	IT
523	<p>ADA Employees Pay and Conditions</p> <p>a. ADA Employees' Pay & Conditions Progression Policy</p> <p>ADA is moving towards the implementation of a staff appraisal procedure and the Board was presented with a draft policy setting out the framework for deciding upon pay and conditions progression.</p> <p>TF discussed whether it would make sense to move the timeline of the appraisals. IM explained the logic of the appraisal schedule suggested keeping decision making within the same financial year. TF said that the most important factor is that staff should understand and be comfortable with the process. DW said it was important to reward performance as soon as possible after their appraisal, as appropriate. The group discussed the "umpire" procedure and whether it should instead feature under an ADA grievance policy? For the time being, employees can escalate issues to TF and senior staff to HC.</p> <p><i>IM, IT, LL, RC left the room for the remainder of this item and all of item 523b.</i></p> <p>Adoption of Employees' Pay & Conditions Progression Policy was deferred to a future meeting.</p> <p>b. Settlement 2025/26</p> <p>The Board discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> retrospective progression awards for 2023/24 (agreed) progression awards for 2024/25, to be linked to appraisal (decision deferred) pension contributions (decision deferred) car allowance (decision deferred) health insurance (decision deferred) <p>Action: TF to provide ADA Board with an updated paper.</p>	<p>TF</p> <p>TF</p>
524	<p>ADA Policy Committee Report</p> <p>Minutes of the most recent meeting held on 22 January 2025 were circulated to the Board. The group commented on how task and finish streams should be a focus and that minutes need to be circulated quicker. CM reported that he was pleased with how the Committee was developing.</p> <p>Decision: The Board agreed the Terms of Reference for the Engineering Forum.</p>	
525	<p>National Strategic Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defra 	

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	<p data-bbox="339 147 866 174">No update for Defra due to WH apologies.</p> <ul data-bbox="339 219 663 246" style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency <p data-bbox="339 291 1283 358">IH discussed the Government Spending Review and recent FCERM funding announcements:</p> <ul data-bbox="339 365 1315 2047" style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Investment programme ends 31 March 2026, one year earlier than planned. • Total government investment in FCERM across 2024/25 and 2025/26 is £2.65 billion. The schemes will better protect 52,000 properties from coastal erosion. • Details on allocations for specific projects will be finalised in April 2025, after consultations and approval by RFCCs. • Out of the total figure, £72 million is to be reprioritised from capital to revenue budgets to add to existing allocations to help repair and maintain Environment Agency flood defences in 2025/26. • The decline in FCERM asset condition across England has been measured to be 0.84% annually. • Levels of revenue maintenance investment are still subject to approval, now passing through the RFCC process. • 34 IDB projects have been allocated a total of £48.6 million of Capital Grant-in-Aid in 2025/6. • Regarding the separate funding of the IDB Storm Recovery & Asset Improvement Fund. There was a summary of IDB projects being delivered under Tranches 1, and 2a funding. This included 142 grant funding agreements in 2024/25 under Tranche 1 (£27.3 million total), 75 projects over Tranche 2a (£28.6 million), and Tranche 2b had 30 successful projects sharing £19 million during 2025/26 with 20 further projects in reserve. 52 projects were not awarded funding at all in Tranche 2b. • Higher Land Water Charges (HWC) payments are being made to IDBs of £3.8 million for 2024/5, which is the same level as paid in 2023/24. The HWC is subject to Environment Agency Board approval, and the outcome of the Defra IDB Funding Review. It is expected to increase to £6.1 million for 2025/26, an increase of £2.3 million on the previous two years. • There were 32 Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs) currently live with a further 8 agreed in principle. The Board raised the issue of PSCAs and their renewals. Discussion led to several Board members reflecting on renewal process difficulties. WS raised a private matter with his drainage board encountering potential regulatory action related to works undertaken under a PSCA. <p data-bbox="387 1597 1299 1910">WS was concerned about the damage that the handling of this incident had done to cooperation and partnership working between IDB and EA relations in the region. Thought should be given by the EA, IDB, and ADA (once the immediate incident is resolved), as to how the relationship between IDBs and the EA can be rebuilt. Due to the legal position of the particular issue, IH was unable to qualify or rebut the comment at this point in time. IH recognised the high value he holds in IDBs undertaking work on behalf of the Environment Agency under PSCA, providing value for money and a means of improving collaboration.</p> <ul data-bbox="339 1917 1294 2047" style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros and cons of beaver and mink control in England were discussed. • New NaFRA and NCERM reports were presented. • There were 4 vacancies for RFCCs chairs (Yorkshire, Trent, Wessex, and Anglian Northern), which ADA have advertised online. 	

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526	<p>ADA Policy and Technical Services</p> <p>a. FCERM Funding</p> <p>The Board discussed a range of matters related to the funding of flood risk management in England, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending Review 2025 and how ADA gave representation for the industry into the review. • Update on Flood Resilience Task Force and that Floods Minister Emma Hardy is looking to rebalance investment to assist in bringing assets back up to standard. • IDB/LLFA FDGiA Capital Project Pipeline discussed. IH confirmed that the shortening of the current spending period means that all projects already committed will roll over into the new spending period. IT commented that there are concerns that new projects for pipeline consideration are not being worked up due to lack of funding for design. This is an issue across all authorities and IH said that this will manifest itself about half way through the next Spending Review period, and that the Environment Agency were aware and planning forward for this. • Environmental Statutory Allowance. Issues around lack of available funding for IDBs to maintain statutory environmental sites at the necessary standard were brought to the Board's attention and how some may be in contravention of environmental law if they do not take action. ADA has written to Defra outlining these concerns. <p>b. IDB Finances</p> <p>Higher Land Water Contributions were covered by IH in item 525b above. ADA is an active part of the LGA IDB Levy Special Interest Group and IT reported that local authorities have financial issues with Special Levy payments because of the two legislative acts that are in conflict with each other – The Communities Act and the Land Drainage Act 1991. A review is needed to remove that conflict and resolve the issues faced by local authorities. Inflation and energy cost increases means that Special Levy increases are generally higher than can be recovered by councils through rates, which are subject to a cap. There is now a funding gap that councils are becoming increasingly unable to meet using dwindling reserves. IT pleased that the LGA are including ADA as a standing guest. IM reported that the estimated mean average rise in Special Levies for 2025/26 is 4.7%, just below the 4.99% maximum council taxrise permitted by local authorities in 2025/26.</p> <p>c. Defra/ADA Lowland Agricultural Peat Project</p> <p>IM presented an update on recent progress with LAPSIP projects being undertaken by IDBs and overseen for Defra by ADA. Most are progressing well and a final report is expected to be sent to Defra by the end of March. There may be additional funding for research and there may also be other schemes going forward with which ADA could get involved, albeit on a smaller scale.</p> <p>d. Consultations</p> <p>IM presented a summary of the many recent consultations that ADA either had, or would be, responding to. All responses had been published on the ADA website, with the exception of ADA's response to the Environmental Audit Committee, which would be published on parliament.uk first in</p>	

Ref	Minute	Action
	<p>accordance with parliamentary rules. All others are or will be published on ADA website.</p> <p><i>(Post-meeting note: ADA response to the Environmental Audit Committee was published on 09 March 2025)</i></p> <p>On the subject of local audit reform, ADA is supporting the SAAA about the upper threshold for small audits moving up to £15 million.</p>	
527	<p>Member Contact Data</p> <p>IM described how ADA currently receives contact details from individuals who are associated with ADA members in order to distribute ADA communications (ADA Gazette and ADA News Stream). This process was not currently satisfactory as it was resulting in a number of staff and board members for IDBs not receiving ADA communications relevant to their roles, and contact data becoming outdated owing to staff turnover and changes of address. For instance of the 110 attendees at the ADA Environment Day 2025, ADA only had prior contact details for 70 of them.</p> <p>It was one of LL's objectives as ADA's Membership Officer to review ADA's Privacy Notice and under legitimate interests find a route to receiving and compiling communications contact data from ADA members. LL had provided a detailed update to the ADA Advisory Committee and a solicitor specialising in GDPR from Wilkin Chapman LLP was reviewing the draft documents and once it is edited will be shared by email for the Board to approve. ADA's Board was satisfied with the approach taken so far.</p> <p>ACTION: LL to circulate final updated Privacy Notice and associated documents to Board members for approval via correspondence for decision by email.</p>	LL
528	<p>Events</p> <p>IT gave a brief report on the following completed and upcoming events for ADA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ADA Environment Day (05 February 2025, Park Farm, Thorney) b. Flood & Coast (03-05 June 2025, Telford) c. ADA Flood & Water Conference (25 November 2025, One Great George Street, London) d. EUWMA Mid-Term Meeting (10-12 June 2025, Santarém) and Annual Assembly (14-16 September 2025, Hamburg) <p>Future Board Meetings: 1 July and 14 October</p>	
529	<p>Any other business</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
	CLOSE	