

 Lincolnshire Honorary Secretary: Karen Daft Deeping House, Welland Terrace, SPALDING, Lincolnshire, PE11 2TD Telephone: 01775 725861 Email: Jane@wellandidb.org.uk Chairman: Peter Richardson Vice-Chairman: Giles Crust		 Welland & Nene Honorary Secretary: Karen Daft Deeping House, Welland Terrace, SPALDING, Lincolnshire, PE11 2TD Telephone: 01775 725861 Email: Jane@wellandidb.org.uk Chairman: Trevor Purllant Vice-Chairman: Brian Long
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MINUTES OF JOINT LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH AND WELLAND & NENE BRANCH MEETING

THURSDAY, 24TH APRIL 2025

VENUE: DODDINGTON HALL, DODDINGTON, LINCOLN, LN6 4RU

Present:

Innes Thomson	ADA
Daniel Withnall	Black Sluice IDB
Ben Thornely	Environment Agency
Morgan Wray	Environment Agency
Amy Shaw	Environment Agency – Fens 2100+
Louise Wilson	Environment Agency – Fens 2100+
Jason Halsey	Greatford Parish Council Flood Action Group
Richard McDermott	Greatford Parish Council Flood Action Group
Andrew Baptie	Lincolnshire County Council
Ryan Davies	Lincolnshire County Council
Matthew Harrison	Lincolnshire County Council
Robert Brown	Lindsey Marsh IDB
Giles Crust	Lindsey Marsh IDB
Carol Davies	Lindsey Marsh IDB
Stephen Eyre	Lindsey Marsh IDB
Ralph Needham	Lindsey Marsh IDB
Paul Sharman	North Level IDB
Michael Sly	North Level IDB
Jon Stubley	North Level IDB
Simon Bartlett	South Holland IDB
Duncan Worth	South Holland IDB
David Branton	Welland & Deepings IDB
Karen Daft	Welland & Deepings IDB
Jennie Head	Welland & Deepings IDB
Trevor Purllant	Welland & Deepings IDB
Peter Bateson	Witham 4 th IDB
Derek Braddy	Witham 4 th IDB
Ed Johnson	Witham 4 th IDB
Mark Leggott	Witham 4 th IDB
Peter Richardson	Witham 4 th IDB
Abi Gilbert	Witham & Humber IDB
Martin Shilling	Witham & Humber IDB

1. **Chairman's Announcements**

Acting Chairman, Peter Richardson, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies**

Mrs J Froggatt, Mr W Gee and Mr A McGill.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Joint Meeting**

The minutes of the last Joint Branch Meeting held on the 17th October 2024 were confirmed as a true record (copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting).

4. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Greatford Parish Council Flood Action Group**

Mr Jason Halsey and Mr Richard McDermott gave a presentation on the issues they are facing in Greatford, which is situated to the west of Market Deeping near Peterborough.

Greatford village had flooded on two recent occasions following Storm Babet and Storm Henk.

The Group has worked extensively with the Environment Agency, local landowners and authorities to reinstate old drain systems and maintain EA assets and is an ongoing project.

The Chairman thanked Mr Halsey and Mr McDermott for an informative presentation.

6. **Report from ADA National**

Innes Thomson gave members the following update:

Key Points

- **Funding support for IDBs increased to £91m**

Tranche 1 (£25m) has largely been allocated and spent. Tranche 2 (£50m) has been divided into two parts: Tranche 2A and Tranche 2B. Tranche 2A consists of £31m of work which is fully allocated and expected to be delivered by 31st March 2025. Tranche 2B consists of £19m for capital work to be delivered by 31st March 2026 and is currently open for bids from IDBs. Approvals for Tranche 2B have been given which will allow IDBs to procure and deliver the work over the next 12 months. Funding for a further portion (Tranche 2C) was announced on the 31st March, adding £16m to the £75m already committed. Projects qualifying for this additional tranche of funding will be awarded by the end of April for delivery before 31st March 2026.

- **ADA's concerns about future FCERM spending plans**

ADA will continue to make strong representations to Defra and the Flood Resilience Taskforce about the need for a rebalanced budget/spending review to focus more on routine maintenance and management of flood risk assets. This is recognised as an important issue by the Defra Secretary of State and the Floods Minister.

- Higher Land Water Contributions

ADA was informed at the last ADA Board meeting that Higher Land Water Charges (HWC) payments are being made to IDBs of £3.8m for 2024/5, which is the same level as paid in 2023/24. The HWC is subject to EA Board approval and the outcome of the Defra IDB Funding Review. It is expected to increase to £6.1m for 2025/25, an increase of £2.3m on the previous two years.

- ADA Membership Fee Review

In the coming months, ADA will be carrying out a full review of its membership fee structure. This is now needed as a result of IDB amalgamations and erosion of ADA membership fee income as a result of the way the current fee structure works. Following detailed consultations with members and agreement at the 2026 AGM, ADA will be aiming to implement a new fee structure with effect from 1st January 2027.

- Environment Act Statutory Instrument (SI) – Land ratings outside existing IDB Districts

Defra is planning to lay the Land Valuation SI in Parliament and is currently preparing detailed guidance to help inform parliamentarians as it progresses through the Upper and Lower houses. This SI could help to enable and support local decisions about the extension or creation of existing IDBs or new WLMA Boards. The current timetable suggests that the SI could be laid before Parliament in the Autumn.

- Land Drainage Act – IDBs should be recognised as Water Managers

ADA is in discussion with Defra and OFWAT/RAPID about a strengthening of the Land Drainage Act to acknowledge the role of IDBs in managing water levels, and not just drainage. Almost all IDBs now act as WLMAs and ADA is seeking formal recognition of that.

- Smaller Authority Audit Appointments

Working with SAAA, ADA has been informed that it is the Government's intention to raise the limit on the upper threshold for the limited audit regime for smaller authorities, which currently sits at £6.5m. It is expected that the new threshold will be set somewhere between £10m and £15m, yet to be determined.

- LGA Special Interest Group for IDBs

ADA continues to play an active part in supporting the work of the LGA SIG for IDBs in seeking Government's involvement in finding a solution for the issues relating to Local Authority Special Levy payments to IDBs. MHCLG Minister, Jim McMahon MP, has been engaged on the subject and ADA understands that whilst no longer term solution has yet been determined, MHCLG continue to look at how LAs can be supported in the short term.

- APPG for Sustainable Flood & Drought Management

The APPG for Sustainable Flood & Drought Management is now fully established and highly active with almost 30 members. ADA is acting as the Secretariat, working in collaboration with CIWEM. There has already been several meetings this year (January, February and March) and others are scheduled for May, June and July to cover a range of topics.

- ADA and ASA to move forward on closer working ties

ADA and ASA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work closer together at ADA's Flood & Water Conference on 13th November and both associations are now working towards a more strategic future collaboration agreement.

- ADA Deputy Chair

ADA has received five expressions of interest, three of which have been invited for interview. Candidates of interest will then be invited to attend the July ADA Board meeting to meet members of the Board. A recommendation will be finalised for the Autumn ADA Board meeting and the Deputy Chair announced at the AGM.

- Defra study on IDBs

Defra will shortly be undertaking a comprehensive study of IDBs' costs and operations to help inform future government interaction with IDBs. ADA will be taking a close interest in the study, the results of which will also be shared with other government departments, such as MHCLG. ADA supports this study and believes it will be of considerable overall benefit to IDBs.

- Consultations

ADA has already/is actively involved in submitting evidence to a range of consultations which can be read/downloaded from ADA's website at <https://www.ada.org.uk/category/consultations/>.

- Dates

- Flood & Coast Conference – 3rd to 5th June, Telford – ADA are strategic partners at this year's event and IDBs are encouraged to attend.
- ADA Flood & Water Conference – 25th November, ICE London.

7. Reports from ADA Committees

Pay & Conditions Committee

Daniel Withnall read out the Secretary's report:

- Introduction

The P & C Committee met on 11th March 2025, chaired by Joe Mitchell (Unison Regional Organiser).

- 2025/26 Pay Award

As previously reported, the recommendation for the 2025/26 Pay Award was to apply 5.1% to the 2024/25 Salary rates and Essential User rates, which was accepted and applied.

Unison ballot results: Accepted at 95% (of returned votes) with an 83% turnout.

- White Book Review

A review of the White Book took place at the meeting, with a particular focus on the following:

- Sexual harassment employer's preventive duty
- Neonatal Care (Leave & Pay) Act 2023
- Employment Rights Bill 2024

The following amendments were made to the White Book with effect from 1st April 2025:

- Added paragraph about flexible working
- The addition of reference to neonatal care leave
- The addition of pregnancy/maternity to a protected characteristics reference
- The addition of sexual harassment, and what this could include, to the examples of gross misconduct.
- Chair of the Committee

Peter Richardson, current Chair, will be standing down and therefore a new Chair will need to be appointed. Thanks were extended to Peter for his time and leadership at the meeting.
- Next P & C Committee meeting

1st October 2025.

Environment Committee

Karen Daft, Chair of the Environment Committee, reported that no further meetings had taken place.

Show Committee

Members were advised that Anglian Water will share the cost of the stand at the Lincolnshire Show with ADA, with a contribution of £500 towards costs.

8. Lead Local Flood Authority Update

No report submitted.

9. Chinese Mitten Crabs

Michael Sly advised members that the Nene Washes, an area sitting within North Level District IDB's boundary, is plagued with Chinese mitten crabs.

Mr Sly explained he had written a letter to Daniel Zeichner MP, Defra Minister of State, about the risk posed by Chinese mitten crabs to the Whittlesey Washes. Mr Zeichner's reply is appended to these minutes.

10. Report from Environment Agency

Presented by Morgan Wray and Ben Thornely:

Key points:

- Eddie Poll's term as Chair of RFCC will be coming to an end at the end of June. Recruitment for his successor is ongoing.

- Dom Freestone has been appointed permanent Operations Manager for the South Humber and East Coast Catchments.
- An EA change programme (Project Aurora) is underway to improve capital delivery and transform the way assets are managed.
- Alan Lovell (EA Chair) is to step down later this year at the end of his term. Recruitment is underway.
- EA Capital Programme has changed to a five year programme from a six year programme, to be completed by March 2026. A new funding system will be consulted upon in June for the new Capital Programme starting in April 2026.
- There will be a phased approach to the Capital Programme refresh this year. Normal approach currently underway and a follow up in the autumn to take into account the new funding arrangements.
- The allocation principles for maintenance will also be updated before April 2026.
- NAFRA2 has now been published (Online Flood Maps). These now take into account climate changes.
- Thanks were extended to those IDBs who assisted capital cashflow by deferring claims to this financial year.

11. **Fens 2100+**

A presentation was given by Amy Shaw and Louise Wilson from the Fens 2100+ team. Fens 2100+ is a £9.8m project funded by the EA through the RFCC to develop a flood resilience strategy to achieve long-term value for money for national and regional benefits. Cooperation and information from IDBs for information is required to make the project a success.

12. **Any Other Business**

A short discussion took place with regard to the attendance of the meeting which has dropped somewhat over the preceding years. The SO forum will take this further for discussion as to future events.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 23rd October 2025. Venue: TBC.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 16:00 p.m.

Chairman



**Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs**

Daniel Zeichner MP

Minister of State

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Our ref: PO2025/01468/PB

3 March 2025

Dear M H S Sly,

Thank you for your letter of 13 January to the Secretary of State about the risk posed by Chinese Mitten Crab to the Whittlesey Washes. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and apologise for the delay in doing so

We appreciate and share the concerns of the Nene Washlands Committee regarding the risk posed by Chinese Mitten Crab to our protected sites. The government has taken action to prevent the further spread and introduction of this species by putting in place legislation that lists Chinese mitten crab as a 'Species of Special Concern'. This means that under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019, this species cannot be brought into Great Britain, kept, bred, transported, sold, used or exchanged, allowed to reproduce, grown or cultivated, or released into the environment.

In addition, Defra funds the Fish Health Inspectorate to carry out work to prevent the illegal sale and spread of this species and continues to support the 'Check Clean Dry' campaign which offers aquatic biosecurity advice to minimise the risk of spreading invasive plants and animals to new areas.

Whilst we continue to take steps to prevent the further spread of Chinese Mitten Crab, Defra and the Environment Agency are not currently aware of any cost-effective or proven methods of controlling this species in areas it is currently present. We understand that this does not change the impact of their presence at the Whittlesey Washes; however, please be reassured that we continue to monitor for any new methods of control and management for populations of this species already in the wild.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact the Secretary of State about this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Zeichner'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Daniel' and the last name 'Zeichner' clearly distinguishable.

DANIEL ZEICHNER MP