

ADA Trent Branch 69th Annual General Meeting - 6th July 2021

Present:

Trent Valley IDB - W. Staunton (Chairman).

Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire WLMB - Cllrs R. Allcock, M. Houlbrook and J. Briggs

Doncaster East IDB - Messrs M. Brooke and P. Horne,

Environment Agency Messrs S. Cross, P. Lockhart, G. Oakes, C. Wharmby, Ms E. Mayle and Ms F. Marriott.

Mr G. Smith.

Association of Drainage Authorities - Messrs I. Moodie and I. Thompson.

Water Management Consortium - Mr A. McGill.

1. Welcome and Chairman's Announcements

Mr W. Staunton welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs R. Adam, R. Caudwell, J. Coggon, P. Cornish, C. Crowe, and Cllr Gaunt.

3. Minutes of the 68th AGM held on Wednesday 6th June 2019

The minutes of the 68th AGM held on 6th June 2019 were noted; these had been approved at the February 2020 Branch meeting.

4. Minutes of the Branch meeting held on 13th February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

5. Matters Arising

Mr A. McGill reported that recent discussions with Water Resources East (WRE) had highlighted that the Trent Branch Boards were outside the hydraulic area. As the work of WRE would be of relevance for the future, the IDBs would, therefore, continue to be supportive but would not make a monetary contribution.

Mr M. Brooke informed members of the death of Mr K. Durdy. Mr Durdy had been a long-standing member and regular attendee at Branch meetings for some 40 years and would be greatly missed. Mr Brooke would liaise with ADA on a short article for inclusion in the ADA gazette as a mark of respect for Mr Durdy.

6. Accounts for the Period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 and 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

The attached accounts were presented for approval.

The Chairman reported income in 2019/20 of £1,447.03 for AGM delegates fees and subscriptions, less expenditure for meeting expenses of £1,192.39, giving a small surplus in the year and a balance in the account of £2,363.02.

Income of £0.55 was received in 2020/21 with zero expenditure, leaving a balance in the account of £2,363.57. It was noted that subscriptions had not been invoiced last year as all meetings had been cancelled due to Covid.

The Chairman thanked Mrs N. Hind for auditing the accounts.

It was proposed by Mr M. Brooke, seconded by Mr R. Allcock and agreed that the accounts

for 2019/20 and 2020/21 be approved.

7. Subscriptions 2021/2022

It was agreed that branch subscriptions for 2021/2022 should remain at £45.

8. Confirmation of Branch Officers

Members reaffirmed the following appointments which had been made in June 2019 for a period of three years:

- Chairman - Mr W.J. Staunton
- Vice-Chairman - Mr J. Coggon
- Honorary Secretary/Treasurer - Mr A. McGill

Mr C. Benson and Mrs N. Hind were reappointed as Honorary Auditors.

Mr W.J. Staunton had been nominated as an ADA Board Director in 2018 and the three-year term of office had now expired. There were no further nominations for the position, and it was proposed by Cllr R. Allcock, seconded by Cllr J. Briggs, and agreed that Mr W.J. Staunton continue to represent the Branch as a Director on the ADA Board.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman asked members to consider reducing from three to two meetings a year; the AGM in June and the annual IDB/EA Liaison Meeting in November. Mr I. Thompson reported that many branches had adopted a similar approach, with one administrative meeting and one other to include a site visit which would fit well with the Liaison Meeting. Mr P. Lockhart supported this, stating that it would be an opportunity to view some of the work being undertaken and the success of partnership working, as well as giving an opportunity for discussion. Members agreed to reduce to two meetings a year and review at the next AGM.

It was agreed that Emily Mayle would liaise with Carol Davies regarding the itinerary for the November IDB/EA Liaison meeting, possibly a full day incorporating a visit to Keadby Pumping Station. The next AGM would be held on Wednesday, 29th June 2022.

10. EA Regional Updates including Trent RFCC Update

Mr P. Lockhart was pleased to report that the £2.6m six-year programme had been completed on time and on budget despite the Covid-19 pandemic; a good achievement both nationally and locally. A £5.2Bn funding settlement had been allocated for the next six-year programme; and the EA was working hard to develop projects in the area to take advantage of this. IDBs were encouraged to let the EA know of any suitable capital or refurbishment projects they may wish to put forward for consideration as there could be funds available. Mr Lockhart stated that he would like to get as much funding in the area collectively as possible. Included in the funding was provision for an internal review of the organisation starting with the PSO2 and Flood Resilience Teams to ensure the right resources were in place to deliver the programme. Any changes would go through the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and IDBs would be kept updated.

Mr A. McGill asked, with the forecast underspend, whether there would be a greater understanding of the entire system rather than just the bricks and mortar. Mr P. Lockhart hoped to look at the catchment base. Mr McGill emphasised the poor condition of the main rivers and expressed concern about the lack of manpower as the EA operations teams had been cut back to the bone. He stated that it was all well and good spending money on

pumping stations but this was of no use if water was held up downstream. Mr McGill would like to see greater appreciation of how important the whole system was and queried what could be done to bring this to the attention of DEFRA. Mr Lockhart replied that there was a perpetual challenge between capital and revenue and funding pertained to capital work although he had heard discussions were underway and gaining pace regarding the balance between capital and revenue works. He suggested the best way to move the balance would be by challenging or raising this through ADA with the Policy Advisory Group to push for a policy change. He stated that a national voice would be more successful than area by area. Mr I. Thompson stated that ADA was reflecting on the national position and the split between capital and revenue funding, however, the £5.2Bn would be staying firmly under the capital mantle during this funding review period. He further stated that spending this much efficiently and effectively against the amount spent in the last period was a tall order and he advised IDBs to be ready with schemes if funding became available. He also asked, what could cleverly be done within regions to argue that an element of capital works should be done to restore catchment conveyance issues and minimise revenue spending in the future. Mr W. Staunton stated that where channels were in poor condition, they needed additional work and if this could be incorporated, it would help the whole system.

Mr Thompson further suggested that if adaptation and resilience, and carbon emissions could be factored into the proposed work it would be welcomed. Cllr M. Houlbrook introduced himself and queried what emphasis was being placed on this and given that there was an underspend, whether this could be spent on environmental projects, eg sustainability, energy use etc, given that climate change and biodiversity was very high on the agenda at the moment. He was pleased that this has been identified.

Mrs E. Mayle gave a short update on the Keadby PS project (see slides).

Mr J. Briggs enquired about the Trent Bank, aware of surveys being undertaken but stressed that work must be done to keep the embankment in good repair.

Mr M. Brooke expressed concern about the flooding in Auckley last year, stating that the amount of trees and weed in the channel was severely restricting the flow.

Mr Wharmby stated that the EA was currently reviewing whether there were conveyance issues, eg lack of maintenance, siltation and asked members to let him know where there were any specific issues. He stated that targeted investment was ongoing. Mrs E. Mayle agreed to provide a map of the EA systems to Cllr M. Houlbrook.

In response to Cllr R. Allcock, Ms E. Mayle reported that 14 of the 65 pumping stations included in the Isle of Axholme Strategy belonged to IDBs or the Coal Authority. EA Officers reported that an investment strategy was in place but meetings had not been held for some time. Members were keen to see the Isle of Axholme Strategy meetings start up again soon. ADA was encouraging IDBs to work closely with the EA on carbon reduction.

Ms F. Marriott gave a presentation on the Lower Idle and West Stockworth Project (see slides). Mr A. McGill queried how many properties were protected, stating that there were a lot in Retford. He was keen to see the modelling undertaken, stating that the results on the River Steeping had confirmed that silt removal was beneficial. Natural conveyance of water was one of the most carbon effective methods. He enquired whether the EA would be including maintenance of the channel all the way through as part of the capital scheme. Mr McGill gave several examples on the Torne and the Don where the channel was not working effectively and emphasised that a whole catchment approach must be taken with any capital scheme. Mr W. Staunton emphasised that this was a pumped catchment and there was still land under water. Ms E. Mayle reported that the modelling stopped at Bawtry Bridge.

Messrs G. Oakes and C. Wharmby updated on the maintenance programme outlining items of interest to the IDBs present. Mr Oakes had taken over as Operations Manager North in November 2020 and had been working closely with IDBs. He was very keen to find ways to

achieve more work in the area.

11. ADA National Update

Mr I. Moodie gave an update from ADA National:

- ADA met with Mrs R. Pow (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in April to discuss a better split between capital and revenue works. DEFRA seemed responsive to IDBs and local authorities taking advantage of the funding available. The red diesel issue was also discussed and the impact on IDBs highlighted. Government was trying to encourage the reduction in diesel consumption and a move to alternative energy sources. ADA had requested that the FDGiA calculator be updated to incentivise the replacement of older pumps in recognition of the carbon savings that could be made.
- ADA was working with partners on carbon calculator for IDBs (simple and practical to benchmark where we are). IDBs recommended to capture data on fuel used by different plant and the kilowatt hours used at sites to use as a benchmark in the future when considering alternatives to increase fuel efficiency. Guidance should be available from ADA next year.
- Keeping rivers flowing summit with CLA had 150 attendees, a good representation from EA and DEFRA. The Press release was shared with IDBs and the slides were available on the website; a video of the session was being worked on. A future event was planned to be held in six months and NFU and CLA would be invited.
- Discussions with the EA regarding demaining and asset transfer, and getting assets into condition, had been paused by the EA but were now ramping up. ADA hoped to be in position where Area EA offices could discuss opportunities with IDBs.
- Standing Orders had been updated to allow remote meetings to continue into the future. Guidance would be released to IDBs in September on this change.
- There were now three health and safety briefings on the ADA website to share with members. Three more planned and thoughts from members on their effectiveness were welcomed.
- DEFRA was funding an extension to the Good Governance Guide to cover environmental matters. The DRAFT had already been shared with Natural England, DEFRA and EA and would be edited over the summer.
- ADA was working with DEFRA on an update to the Byelaws which would be distributed shortly to ensure these covered IDB assets and parts of systems (attenuation ponds) not directly associated with the network as well as the increase of flows from developments etc.
- Locations for a possible Demo in 2023 included Lincolnshire. The Annual Conference would be held on 10th November 2021 as a digital event.
- The removal of the exemption for IDBs or contractors to use red diesel would come into effect on April 2022. ADA continued to correspond and discuss with Ministers and the Treasury. The potential impact and disjointedness around agricultural contractors and IDB work was recognised and ADA was developing a strong argument around this area and hoped to be able to reform to the change

in legislation to allow IDBs to use it for their works; information from IDBs around this topic would be sought. Mr I. Thompson asked council representatives to advise their councils of the potential consequence on Special Levy increases that would result from this.

- Royal assent to the Environment Bill was due in autumn, running through the Lords at the moment. ADA was keeping an eye on potential amendments. DEFRA was supporting clauses that could enable IDBs to broaden zones of activity subject to secondary legislation and local agreements. Minister had expressed their support.
- The Planning Bill was also being monitored; running through Parliament in autumn and expecting a significant effect on flood risk management.
- Consultation on beavers was likely to take place in the summer. Much of the Trent Valley relied on embankments and local input was vital across the country to ensure that the Government understood the consequences of beavers being let loose in some parts of country.

12. River Smite and Devon Project

Mr G. Oakes (EA Operations Manager (North)) gave a summary of progress to date in terms of maintenance on the Devon and Smite.

Mr A. McGill had spoken to the local landowners who said they understood that the lower reaches flowed into the Trent and expected to get some seasonal flooding but the condition of the watercourses at the moment meant that the river regularly overtopped. There was concern that the economic impact on local businesses was considerable and not recognised as it would be if should properties domestic or business flood. These watercourses were artificial, they had been mechanically engineered to perform a function but had now been left to naturalise. Mr W. Staunton was keen to see a solution to this problem.

13. Egmanton Flood Relief Scheme

Messrs W. Staunton and A. McGill gave a short presentation on the Trent Valley IDB scheme; the construction of a flood storage area (FSA) to alleviate flooding in the village of Egmanton.

Mr P. Lockhart had been contacted by the Clerk to the Parish Council asking a lot of questions about the scheme as they wanted the flood map amending to reflect the installation of the FSA but this could not be done without evidence of the increased flood protection from the designer, eg 1 in 75 years, to give reassurance to the insurers. Mr A. McGill stated that he would ensure that this information was provided. Mrs E. Mayle understood that the Board's engineer had already requested information from the designers. Mr P. Lockhart also needed to know which house was not able to be protected fully by the scheme.

In response to a question from members, Mr P. Lockhart confirmed that a property with flood defences offering less than a 1 in 75 year event, was not deemed high risk.

14. Any Other Business (by leave of the Chairman)

Main River Maintenance and EA Precept - Mr A. McGill had written to the EA regarding funding and delivery of the maintenance programme. Mr P. Lockhart had responded that he would consult with area and national colleagues and provide a consolidated response.

15. Questions (time permitting)

In response to Mr M. Brooke, Mr I. Thompson stated that it was not possible for machines to have two tanks (red and white diesel) as the injectors would be stained. Both the system and the injectors would need to be fully cleansed if using both fuels.

Mr Brooke stated that he had 12 EA pumps near him and queried what had happened to the pump manager post as he had not seen anyone since the previous postholder had retired. Mr M. Wharmby reported that this role was now spread between the Owston Ferry and Gainsborough teams and was no longer undertaken by one person.

CHAIRMAN