

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

ADA's AGM took place at 10.30 on Tuesday 02 December 2025 via an online Microsoft Teams webinar, attended by 53 connections for all or part of the meeting. Some online connections may have involved multiple people making use of a single connection from, for example, an office meeting room.

1. Technical Familiarisation

Ian Moodie (Technical Manager, ADA) provided a short technical familiarisation with Microsoft Teams and Slido, as an online app used to enable attendees to ask questions during the AGM and conduct polls as required.

2. Welcome

Robert Caudwell (Chairperson, ADA) welcomed members to ADA's Annual General Meeting for 2025.

3. Report of previous AGM

Innes Thomson (Chief Executive, ADA) presented the report of the previous AGM, held on Tuesday 03 December 2024.

4. Notification of ADA Officers

Innes Thomson presented the report on ADA's Chairperson, President, and Vice Presidents. Henry Cator was reaffirmed without objection as ADA's President. Micheal Sly had been appointed as a new Deputy Chair following advertising and interviews earlier in 2025. Tim Farr, Charles Mills, and Ed Johnson continue in their respective capacities as the chairs, and secretary of the Advisory Committee and Policy Committees. There had been changes to ADA's Vice Presidents, with Peter Glas (formerly both Delta Commissioner to the Netherlands (2019-23), and President of the Union of Water Boards [2010-15]), and Lee Pitcher (Labour Member of Parliament for Doncaster East and the Isle of Axholme) appointed. John Grogan was thanked as he stood down at the AGM having served two terms as an ADA Vice President (2004-15 & 2019-25). ADA's Vice Presidents past and present were thanked for providing their knowledge and support.

5. Report on the election of Directors to the Board

Innes Thomson reported that three new directors had been appointed in 2025: Michael Sly (Welland & Nene Branch), Doug McMurdo (Great Ouse Branch), and Michael Stanton (South West Branch). Three directors had been reappointed in 2025: Brian Stewart (RFCCs), Angie Fitch Tillet (Eastern Branch), and James West (Cymru/Wales Branch).

Robert Caudwell thanked ADA's Directors for their support and guidance through the year and presented the names of the directors of ADA.

6. Report on the activities and proceedings of ADA Board, Committees, and Staff in 2025

Innes Thomson reported on the key initiatives that ADA was currently working on. He offered his sincere thanks to ADA's staff, board, committee and branch members, and all ADA's members for their assistance, support and advice.

Innes Thomson highlighted:

- The work of ADA's committees and branches.
- **ADA Business Plan 2026-2029.** The new business plan focusses on business drivers such as ADA being present at the highest levels to influence, inform and advise on matters of water level and flood risk management.
- **All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Sustainable Flood & Drought Management.** This APPG, administrated jointly between ADA and CIWEM, has been a success this year, with MPs and peers spreading the word about flood and drought management matters within both houses.
- **Rural Flood Resilience Partnership.** ADA continues to contribute to the Partnership alongside the Environment Agency, the CLA, NFU, Natural England, and ACRE. The partners are seeking to improve collaboration, deepen understanding of rural vulnerabilities, and support agricultural businesses and rural communities in building their resilience to flooding.
- **Association of SUDs Authorities (ASA).** ADA continues to provide administrative support to ASA and is developing plans to work together in the future. Directors have called on ADA to work with ASA towards establishing a new broader and inclusive association for 'Flood & Water Authorities'. The proposals would significantly increase the influence of the association, financial viability, and coverage across whole catchments.
- **LGA Special Interest Group for IDB Levies.** ADA continues to work closely with local authority colleagues with concerns around the financial implications of special levy payments.
- **IDB Storm Recovery & Asset Improvement Fund.** ADA is pleased to have been pivotal in supporting this investment since being first announced by government in 2023, and welcomed its extension through 2025/26 and increase from £75 million to £91 million. ADA continues to discuss with Defra about the role IDBs play in supporting future FCERM investment.
- **Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Board Members 2.0.** ADA has produced a second edition of the guide with financial support from the SAAA, and professional support of Wilkin Chapman Rollits.

- **Flood Funding Reform.** ADA has worked to inform the government's work to establish a new funding policy for FCERM capital investment, by compiling members views and submitting written evidence. We have been informed the consultation for flood funding reform.
- **Lowland peat.** ADA had successfully supported the delivery by IDBs of lowland peat projects through the LAPSIP grant scheme funded by Defra. ADA was working to support further future investment in this area by Defra.
- **ADA Environment Day.** ADA once again held a successful event focused on the lowland water environment and role of flood and water authorities in 2025, and next year's event will take place on 04 February 2026.
- **IDB funding research.** ADA sits on the main advisory committee for the Defra and MHCLG commissioned work by consultants, ICF Consulting, that is running for twelve months and set to conclude in Summer 2026. This work is focussed on financial efficiency, value for money, and the broader benefits which IDBs deliver for local communities. It will include examination of whether any changes are needed to IDBs' funding model.
- **Floods Resilience Taskforce.** ADA has been represented throughout 2025 on the government's taskforce, chaired by Flood & Water Minister, Emma Hardy MP. ADA has been advocating for the Task Force to investigate the management and maintenance of existing flood risk asset and systems.
- **Flood & Coast 2025.** ADA played an active role in both this year's Conference, chairing sessions and presenting on both LAPSIP and the RFRP, as well as sharing a stand space in the exhibition once again with ASA. Innes Thomson chaired a discussion with parliamentarians on the main stage.
- **IDB audit thresholds.** ADA has worked with SAAA and Defra throughout 2025 to seek legislative changes to increase the upper threshold for smaller authorities. The changes lifting the threshold from £6.5 million to £15 million was made through The Local Audit (Amendment of Definition of Smaller Authority) Regulations 2025, approved by parliament on 16 September 2025.
- **Wales.** ADA has continued engagement with Natural Resources Wales and internal drainage district advisory committees in Wales.
- **Regional Strategies.** ADA retains an influential position on the Programme Board on both Fens2100+ and Humber2100+ on behalf of members.
- **Education.** ADA's continued its sponsorship of the Power of Water challenge within Lincolnshire Agricultural Society's Schools Challenge in 2025. Six schools undertook this challenge in 2025, and Queen Elizabeth High School, Gainsborough won overall in the secondary school section for their interactive catchment water management model. displayed at the Lincolnshire Agricultural Show. ADA will continue its sponsorship in 2026.

7. Presentation and adoption of Approved Accounts 2024

The company's Audited Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024 were presented, as adopted by ADA's Board of Directors on 01 July 2025. A copy of the accounts is available in the AGM Handbook 2025.

8. Appointment of internal auditor and audit arrangements for 2025

Streets Chartered Accountants were formally appointed as the company's internal auditor and external accountant for the period ending 31 December 2025 following a poll of attendees (23 votes for, 0 votes against).

9. Notification of subscription rates for 2026

The AGM was notified that ADA's membership subscription fees for 2026 will increase by 5% from fees in 2025, as had been approved by ADA Board of Directors.

ADA's membership in 2025 was reported in the AGM Handbook as: 107 IDBs, 5 national agencies, 6 Welsh internal drainage district advisory committees, 8 RFCCs, 19 Local Authorities, and 77 Associate Members.

10. Motions/ Amendments to be put to the AGM

No motions or amendments were tabled before the 02 November 2025 deadline, nor at the AGM.

11. Business Questions (AOCB)

The AGM concluded with a discussion session on ADA as a business. Items discussed included:

- a. Agreed levels of reserves.** Innes Thomson advised that ADA's level of reserves are agreed by ADA's Board of Directors as noted in ADA's Business Plan and is calculated as six months of basic operating costs.
- b. Review of ADA subscriptions.** IM advised that detailed work was underway to look at an alternative subscription methodology for IDBs and other member authorities. The present system of subscription bands for IDBs uses the area of land within a drainage district and annual value property contained within. The favoured new proposal would use an IDB's income from drainage rates and special levies in the preceding year as the basis for setting the ADA subscription. This was considered to be fairer on smaller IDBs and more resilient to IDB amalgamations in the future. An initial paper had been presented to Directors at ADA's October Board Meeting. Further work is exploring subscription options for other members with the intention to apply Board-approved proposals in 2027.

- c. Artificial intelligence.** Brian Stewart asked how actively ADA is assessing the potential of AI to improve business effectiveness across the wider flood family. Innes Thomson advised he had done some research into AI uses with conflicting results and that it was important not to take answers at face value without crosschecks. Ian Moodie had looked into how AI was being used by water boards in the Netherlands and to support environmental surveys, but would welcome feedback from any member authorities using AI to share their experiences.
- d. Support for revised accessibility guidelines for IDBs.** IM advised that ADA had highlighted to IDBs that guidelines are changing as required by the AGAR annual return. Innes Thomson advised that there were ongoing discussions with the SAAA to fund further governance guidance. ADA was developing a funding proposal for a 'Digital Governance Academy' and ADA would look to share further information in 2026.
- e. ADA's involvement with the Defra/MHCLG IDB funding study.** Innes Thomson advised that a confidentiality agreement had been signed. This helped ADA to be involved, but does mean findings cannot be more openly shared as the research progresses until publication. He explained at the moment the research is a data-gathering exercise by the consultants and ADA was keen to encourage IDBs to engage with this.

Close

The AGM was closed at 11.30.

The AGM Handbook can be downloaded from: www.ada.org.uk/events/ada-agm