

# ADA Technical and Engineering Forum

## Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – Meeting Notes

A meeting of the ADA Technical and Engineering Forum was held at Witham Fourth IDB Office, Boston, on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 9.30am

### Present:

**A Gilbert (AG)**, Witham and Humber IDB  
**M Kettley (MK)**, Witham and Humber IDB  
**J Neill (JN)**, Witham and Humber IDB  
**A Civello (AC)**, Witham and Humber IDB\*  
**C Brady (CB)**, WMA  
**K Vines (KV)**, South Holland IDB  
**L Taylor (LT)**, South Holland IDB  
**D Parker (DPa)**, South Holland IDB  
**P Nicholson (PNi)**, Black Sluice IDB  
**L Whelan (LW)**, Black Sluice IDB  
**A Boden (ABo)**, WMC  
**E Johnson (EJ)**, Witham 4th IDB  
**D Braddy (DB)**, Witham 4<sup>th</sup> IDB  
**R Wright (RW)**, Witham 4<sup>th</sup> IDB  
**M Redding (MR)**, Middle Level Commissioners  
**R Towse (RT)**, Yorkshire and Humber IDB  
**D Pitcher (DP)**, Environment Agency  
**A Baptie (ABa)**, Lincs County Council\*  
**T Holmes (TH)**, Lincs County Council\*  
**M Shilling (MS)**, Witham and Humber IDB\*  
**J Thomas (JT)**, Lower Severn IDB\*  
**D Odams (DO)**, Witham 4<sup>th</sup> IDB  
**N Morris (NM)**, Welland & Deepings IDB

Via Teams \*

### 1. Introduction

The Chairman welcomed attendees, including those who were attending via Teams.

### 2. Matters arising from notes of July 2025 meeting

- LCC Section 21 Asset Register - RD (LCC), shared an information request with RMAs in 2025 but received little feedback. KV informed the group that RD had been in contact the evening prior to the meeting with further information – **KV to circulate RD email**. DB raised concerns over duplication of information sharing, due to different authorities

requesting the same information from IDBs, with this leading to a drain of resource. DB confirmed he had raised this concern to Matt Harrison (LCC). ABa affirmed to the group that the information requested is to support a larger project of asset ownership detail, to reduce public queries and confusion, in relation to assets.

- No update to the LCC's project looking into the responsibility for road culverts was provided as NW was not in attendance. ABa reported that he believed work on this was still ongoing. **LCC to provide update as soon as possible.**
- With regard to the potential for central government funding to assist in asset management work to scope the extent, and determine responsibility for assets, EJ raised to the group in the January 2025 meeting that he was prepared to put together a scope for this, which would be needed if funding were to be sought. **EJ to reconsider and decide whether to progress. Anyone with further input into this to contact EJ directly.**
- EJ shared with the group in the January 2025 meeting that a webinar to demonstrate the new National Underground Asset Register (NUAR) will be communicated to IDBs in the near future. EJ to also liaise and include LCC. **EJ currently awaiting a response.**
- ABa provided an update on LCC Drainage Champions in KN's absence. LCC Drainage Champions are in place, with 1 to 2 roles per division. **ABa to ask KN to provide contact details of persons in Champion roles across the area.**
- All other matters arising from the previous meetings minutes were agreed without additional comments.

### 3. Operational Issues

- EJ informed the group, of W4IDB's recent purchase of a new excavator with GPS-Dig software included. No other IDBs have used GPS-Dig. EJ explained that with the use of drones and LiDAR supporting GPS-Dig software, the requirement of traditional 'setting out' for drain improvements would be removed. **EJ to feedback to the group with how successful the new software has been.**
- KV raised concerns to the group over the ever increasing electricity standing charges, further potential increases to the transmission element of these charges in the coming financial year, and how these costs are impacting IDBs financially. EJ confirmed that this issue is a key topic within ADA currently. ADA are seeking support and communication with OFGEM and Central Government.
- DP highlighted concerns regarding floating pennywort, a non-native invasive species of water plant. DP shared that the Environment Agency had ongoing issues on the River Witham with the invasive species and its fast growth rate of around 27m per day. The EA have allocated funds to control and reduce floating pennywort. RT expressed concerns of potential spread of the invasive species through overtopping from already contaminated watercourses. CB informed the group that this was also an issue for other IDBs within the WMA. **CB to arrange communication between DP and Caroline Laburn**

**(WMA Environmental Manager) to ensure the removal approach is consistent across IDBs and EA. DP to share a report with the group**

- Further invasive species issues were raised, including the persistence of Japanese Knotweed. IDBs are spraying with glyphosate chemical but the plant continues to grow back. DB and W4IDB are looking into the option of having Japanese Knotweed excavated and removed. **DP to share Check, Clean, Dry policy for works with Invasive Species.**
- RT expressed concerns over the removal of the chemical glyphosate for use in water for vegetation management. Other chemicals on the market are not as effective as glyphosate. EJ informed the group that this issue is part of wider discussions at the ADA Environmental Committee. **EJ to bring this matter up with ADA Policy Committee.**
- DO queried to the group, what information was being shared with Natural England for works around badgers, as an 'advisory' notice had been received by DO in relation to information submitted. IDBs confirmed a consistent approach to information submission, including badger returns and notification of works.

#### **4. Asset Management**

- DB discussed the ownership and responsibilities of gravity outfalls within IDB watercourses. The group discussed the issues with failing outfalls and that ownership is not consistent, with a mixture of responsible parties. W4IDB requested asset information from the EA with no response. The EA system 'AIMS' was raised as a potential solution but this system only represents the EA's version of asset ownership which may not necessarily align with the views of the IDB. **DP to arrange IDB access to 'AIMS'.**
- The asset management system, 'BIMS' was raised and discussed, with no IDB present currently using the system. Some IDBs are looking into the use of a management system but concerns were raised of how to start due to the high amount of pre-existing historic data.
- CB highlighted potential issues with landowners not being aware of IDB assets on their property, particularly where new owners are involved. A situation in the KLIDB area, led to a new residential owner purchasing a property, unaware of the IDB pipeline below their driveway, and they were refused permission to extend the current dwelling. The issue starts with solicitors and searches not identifying IDB assets or acknowledging IDB byelaws. A further discussion around Unilateral notices was held, where W4IDB informed the group they have a current notice in progress with the Boards solicitors, the first such notice attempted. Unilateral notices are subject to a sliding scale of cost dependant on the land value. LCC have also seen similar issues but have received legal advice that when purchasing property it is the buyers responsibility to check for such things. **CB to put Philippa Noon (Enforcement Manager – WMA) in contact with DB, to share Unilateral notice information and procedure.**
- PN informed the group of a recent increase in issues in the BSIDB area, of small extensions, particularly conservatories being built inside of the 9m byelaw zone, leading to operational issues. Due to small developments such as this being classed as

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“permitted development”, the IDB had not been consulted at the planning stage, and so enforcement action is now required under the Board’s Byelaws. MS advised the group to raise such planning issues at Board Meetings, in the presence of local councillors, to feedback to Council planning teams.

## 5. Health, Safety, and Welfare

- A short discussion around lone working and pre-start up checks was held with costs and effectiveness of apps shared.
- There were no other Health and Safety points to report.

## 6. Environment and Conservation

- CB reported the discovery of two beavers in the wild in Norfolk. This directly links to a point at the previous ADA forum where KV raised concerns of beavers being introduced to local habitats. The 2 known beavers are supposedly escapees from local enclosures and it is envisaged that attempts will be made to catch them and return them to captivity. The WMA are currently establishing a robust line of communication with Natural England to make sure that if, in the future, there are plans to legitimately release beavers into any Board areas, that they are at the forefront of the talks and are always being consulted with on the matter. **Further discussion needed at future meetings.**
- KV requested any updates on eel exemptions from the group. DB stated that a clear exemption request was sent in 2024 however there was no response. An enquiry was made and there is supposedly a large backlog. The Forum discussed the potential for a longer period of exemption (up to 10 years). MS mentioned he had recently received letters from the EA with their planned exemptions. Everything was as expected and some stations have a longer renewal period on them, up until the date of the next planned refurbishment.

## 7. Planning and Consenting

- The forum discussed the multiple National infrastructure projects that are ongoing. Many members of the forum are having difficulty using National Grid’s payment systems. Problems continue over repetitive information requests and it was generally acknowledged that this was going to be a potential drain on IDB resource for a considerable period as it could take years to get all of these projects through the planning stage, and IDB consenting stage.
- KV addressed the National SUDS update mentioned at the previous meeting, which is potentially looking at implementing a higher minimum discharge rate than IDBs will be comfortable with. It was generally felt that the IDB’s stance is to keep at 1.4 litres/second/hectare for the greenfield run-off rate. LCC are currently reviewing the figures. **ABa and TH to provide update to KV over the next 6 months.**

## 8. Enforcement

- EJ raises the issue of the general public disregarding byelaws, finding many cases of people applying for consent but then doing works regardless of the outcomes either way. Multiple IDBs agreed that it is taking up IDB resources and time. Some ideas were mentioned to combat some of these cases. For example, could district councils send newsletters with Council Tax bills to inform about IDBs and what we do. Potential for community pages on Facebook and other social media to talk about issues – although this could cause some backlash from members of the public posting. Parishes can help spread the word as well on a local level. **As the disregarding of byelaws is likely to be an ongoing issue, keep this item open for discussion at future meetings.**

## 9. FDGiA

- KV asked how forum members are dealing with the change in grant funding rules which will apply from April 2026. Many members are struggling as the deadline is close, but no detailed guidance has been issued on how the new rules will be implemented. MS gave insight into having projects that he is still trying to have approved under current procedures. Under the new procedures these same projects will cost the board an additional £400,000 which will be unaffordable for smaller boards.
- KV brought attention to the Flood Recovery Fund Tranche 2 deadlines at the end of March 2026, and the challenges of meeting this deadline with lots of work still to be achieved. KV reported that between them, SHIDB, W4IDB, Black Sluice IDB, Witham and Humber IDB have been funded for 64 projects, and had received £28 million of the £91 million national fund.

## 10. Items to be taken to ADA Policy Committee

- EJ reported that the last meeting was held on 10 September 2025. The next meeting is on Thursday 22 January 2026. The previous meeting minutes are available online.
- It was decided that the following points should be taken to the ADA Policy Committee for further discussion:
  - Continue to raise awareness of rising electricity standing charges, and can anything be done to reduce the impact on IDB finances.
  - Investigate the potential removal of glyphosate for use in the water environment and the impact this would have on IDB maintenance. What can be done to stop this happening?.
  - KV drew attention to section 10 from the previous forum meeting notes – reductions in EA revenue funding and how this is resulting in the withdrawal of EA maintenance from some medium and low consequence main river systems, which in turn is affecting some IDB operations and increasing costs for certain IDBs who in some cases are now having to do this work at their own cost. It was

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decided that this should be raised again, as the situation was not currently sustainable financially for those IDBs affected. MS also raised the point that the Anglian EA maintenance budgets are being funded by £1.5 million of RFCC local levy money. This is a large amount of local money to be taken away from other projects to fund, what should essentially be, nationally funded maintenance work.

## **11. Any Other Business**

- KV kindly asked members to ensure they reply to meeting invites in the future to aid planning for the venue and catering.
- KV pointed out that he has been Honorary Chair of this, and the predecessor forum, for many years, and extended the offer to anyone wishing to take over the position. As no one wished to take the position KV agreed to continue as Honorary Chair of the forum.
- EJ asked members to actively bring more topics to the forum for discussion, and raise these issues for inclusion in the agenda so that other attendees can have time to think about the issue prior to the meeting.
- ABa mentioned project Groundwater, an ambitious project taking place over the next 6 - 12 months to help alert different contacts and parishes of emergency events, including flooding, and providing early warnings. For more information ABa has extended contact to Brett Rycroft-Jones and Vicky Jones, who are working on this LCC project. There is also more information available on the LCC website.

## **12. Date of next meeting**

- The date of the next ADA Technical and Engineering Forum will take place on Thursday 9 July 2026 at 9.30am. Venue – Witham and Humber IDB, Witham House, Meadow Lane, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 9GJ. [W3w:///mirror.pixel.include](http://www.wlma.org.uk/mirror.pixel/include). MS has kindly offered to give attendees a tour of a recently refurbished pumping station following the meeting.

Following the meeting, those who wished to attend were invited to a presentation by Margaret Lennard, Assistant Public Rights of Way Officer, Lincs County Council. The presentation was around road/footpath closures and good practice for working around the Public Right of Way Network. **KV to circulate powerpoint presentation to forum members.**