

ADA Technical and Engineering Forum

Thursday 9th July 2026 – Meeting Notes

A meeting of the ADA Technical and Engineering Forum was held at Witham & Humber Drainage Boards Office, Lincoln, on Thursday 9th July 2026 at 9.30am

Present:

Karl Vines (KV) South Holland IDB
Lewis Taylor (LT) South Holland IDB
Daniel Parker (Dpa) South Holland IDB
Martin Shilling (MS) Witham and Humber IDB
Derek Braddy (DB) Witham 4th IDB
Darren Odams (DO) Witham 4th IDB
Tim Holmes (TH) Lincs County Council
Andrew Baptie (AB) Lincs County Council
Ryan Davies (RD) Lincs County Council
Martin Redding (MR) Middle Level Commissioners
Craig Shinkin (CS) Wellend and Deepings IDB
Simon Adams (IA) Ely IDB
Ellie Edwards (EE) Middle Level Commissioners
Darren Pitcher (DP) Environment Agency
Ollie Wray (OW) Witham and Humber IDB
Abi Gilbert (AG) Witham and Humber IDB
Paul Nicholson (PN) Black Sluice IDB
Tess Manning (TM) Black Sluice IDB
Lee Whelan (LW) Black Sluice IDB
Phillippa Noon (PNo)* WMA
Richard Wright (RW)* Witham 4th IDB
Natasha Gault (NG)* Lincs County Council
Sally Glover (SG)* Lincs County Council
Jonathon Stublely (JS)* North Level IDB
Iain Sturdy (IS)* Somerset IDB

Via Teams *

1. Introduction

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

2. Matters arising from notes of January 2026 meeting

- Concerning the LCC Section 21 Asset Register update, KV had circulated the previous email from RD. RD gave a brief update, stating that a working group had been formed which some RMAs had signed up to. KV asked RD to send an update email for circulation. **RD to respond to KV, potential for future talks at later forums.**
- NG gave an update on LCC's project looking into road culvert responsibility. It is progressing slowly with more information to be given in the future. Some members of the forum raised concerns over agreeing a protocol going forward, but the general consensus was to work together as much as possible on the project. **Potential for future talks at later forums.**
- Ed Johnson was not present at the meeting to discuss the actions from the previous meeting. Points included central government funding to assist in asset management work, and the National Underground Asset Register. **Points to be revisited at next meeting.**
- Regarding contact information for LCC Drainage Champions, **AB agreed to provide an update on this to IDBs.**
- Witham 4th IDB's recent purchase of an excavator with GPS Dig has not been used yet. Once it is up and running DB will provide an update. **DB to also give a presentation on the technology at a future ADA forum.**
- Following previous concerns of floating pennywort, DP reported that a new group called the Greater Lincolnshire Invasive Species Group has been created and are looking for more volunteers. They discussed pennywort at length in a recent meeting. **DP to share contact details for GLISG.**
- DP had shared Check, Clean, Dry policy for works with invasive species.
- DP has already arranged for some boards to have access to "AIMS". If a board does not have access and would like it, then please send a request to DP.
- DB shared latest update on Witham 4th's experience of the use of unilateral notices. **DB to provide an update via email regarding the process and experience to date for circulation around the forum.**
- Again, in EJ's absence there was no update on the matters previously taken to ADA Policy Committee from the last forum meeting, these being –
 1. Continue to raise awareness of rising electricity standing charges, and can anything be done to reduce the impact on IDB finances

2. 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?
3. 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.

EJ to provide update at the next meeting

3. Operational Issues

- LT asked what other boards do in regard to pump servicing, in terms of regularity, and if servicing is undertaken to a programme or in a reactive manner following an issue. Different boards mentioned a range of years that they typically wait between services. DO mentioned that they are now undertaking tests on pumps to hone in on specific pumps which may need repairs earlier than others. The consensus was that generally it is best to be proactive with pump servicing and work to a programme, but this programme should take into account the variations in pump hours, environmental conditions etc at each site, as this will affect the regularity of servicing. Concerns were raised over lack of quality in some companies used for servicing as quite often pumps that are serviced have issues quite soon after; showing the importance of using reputable and previously tested companies.
- KV mentioned hand mowing and enquired about the general use of scythes. There were mixed responses to this with some using scythes, some using powered hand tools and some using a mixture of both. One of the benefits of using a scythe rather than a powered trimmer or hedge cutter was the need for less PPE, which is beneficial in hot weather, and a reduced risk of hand arm vibration risks. Availability of scythe parts was raised as a potential issue. DP reported that the EA still use scythes and that he would send through details. **KV has asked that each RMA attending ask their operations team what equipment they use for hand mowing and if they have any preferences or experiences worth sharing across the forum.**
- KV reported that ADA have made an offer to the forum for Ely Group of Drainage Boards to present at a future forum meeting with regard to an app that they use which monitors mowing and other procedures that may be relevant to the Health and Safety work that Oliver Pantrey is researching for ADA. Some Boards are already using apps and other technology to do this to varying extents. **SA reported that he has had some experience with the software in question, and would circulate some information to the group about it. A decision can then be made at the next meeting as to whether a presentation would be beneficial.**

4. Asset Management

- No points for asset management were mentioned at this point. The topic is revisited shortly.

5. Health, Safety, and Welfare

- An IDB Good Governance guide is under development by ADA and Oliver Pantrey, Chief Executive of Upper Medway IDB. The guide plans to focus on health, safety and welfare for operatives and officers of all IDBs. Some members of the forum have already volunteered for the working group following an email circulated last month. There will be more updates in the future and further time to comment at future ADA forums.

6. Asset Management – Revisited

- EE arrived at the meeting and introductions were given. Asset management was then revisited as a topic. EE is looking to standardise asset management as much as is possible. EE would like to speak to as many IDBs as possible to see what their asset recording methods are and see how it could align in the future. KV offered the forum as a means of contact for this. **KV to send EE the list of contacts for forum members so that EE can request information on how each Board handles asset management. EE offered to do a presentation at a future forum meeting on Middle Level Commissioners Asset programme.**

7. Environment and Conservation

- KV asked other members how their BAPS are progressing. South Holland, Witham 4th and Witham and Humber IDBs confirmed that they are going through a review of their BAPS currently.
- MR highlighted a conference held in June by the REDEEM Project (Research and Development of fish and Eel Entrainment Mitigation at pumping stations) which showcased advances in technology to track the effect on eels and fish as they pass through pumps. Using the new technology, it can now track the eel's journey through a pumping station more thoroughly and provide better data. **MR will share a presentation to forum members if available.**

8. Planning and Consenting

- KV raised an issue with the national SuDS guidance on the Greenfield run-off rates and orifice sizes for flow restrictions. National guidance now gives a greenfield discharge rate of Qbar or 3.0 litres/sec/hectare whichever is the greater. As Qbar is 1.4 litres/sec/ha for most Lincs IDBs (and is the empirical design standard used previously by these Boards) the adoption of a 3.0 litres/sec/ha standard would create a considerable increase in flow into a system which was never designed for it. Most boards have confirmed they are staying at a target discharge rate of 1.4 l/s/ha where achievable, this is mostly on larger sites where the figures can be feasibly achieved. With regards to the orifice size of the flow restricting structure, most boards were simply consenting the discharge into the drainage system, not how it is achieved, so the proposed orifice size would remain the responsibility of the developer or adopting authority. **LCC will review their guidance and send their figures to KV.**
- The forum had a long discussion about the importance of keeping both applicants and the planning authority informed of Board's views and requirements during the planning process. The general consensus was that the best way to achieve this is by sending

Honorary Chairman & Secretary - Karl Vines

South Holland IDB, Marsh Reeves, Foxes Lowe Road, Holbeach, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 7PA

Telephone – 07960 710929 Email – karl.vines@wlma.org.uk

Board's correspondence to both planners *and* applicants/agents, otherwise communication can break down or be misunderstood between all the parties involved.

9. Enforcement

- DB reported a case that had recently occurred where complaints had been made against the IDB while taking enforcement action on an individual. Multiple complaints were received which ultimately ended up with the Ombudsman, who ruled in favour of the IDB. This process had been costly in terms of the time involved, however it highlighted the importance of following the board's processes, as ultimately the case was judged more on the adherence to due process than the detail of the actual contravention.
- MS raised concerns of ratepayers not paying their drainage rates to the IDB in the coming years due to their land flooding repeatedly, or being at risk of future flooding, from EA main river. If ratepayers are paying for a perceived service of drainage from the IDBs but they lose land and money through flooding, even from an external source, it will make them less likely to pay in the future. Some IDBs have already experienced this, and it may become a more widespread problem in the future.

10. FDGiA

- KV has forwarded an email from ADA regarding lowland peat water implementation grant for forum members to review and make use of if possible.
- MS mentioned submissions for new FDGiA bids are coming up in July and August and these will use the new FDGiA rules. **Potentially at the next ADA meeting Georgina Nichols could provide an update on the new rules as, by then, she will have some experience in using them.**

11. Items to be taken to ADA Policy Committee

- Ed Johnson was not available to report on the previous ADA Policy Committee meeting. From ADA's minutes their next meeting is on Thursday 10th September 2026.
- AB highlighted project groundwater and the help it was giving in providing localised guidance on dealing with groundwater issues. The plan never gained any traction but as boreholes are now becoming a much larger issue AB wanted this to be taken to the ADA Policy Committee so that they can lobby on behalf of LCC. **AB to send information to KV to pass on.**

12. Any Other Business

- MS reported that one of his boards would potentially be interested in introducing Surface Water Development Contributions, and asked for ideas on how the other boards calculate their rates. KV said that most boards currently charging SWDCs use a method introduced by the WMA, but this method had been updated so there could potentially be two types of method currently being used. **It was agreed to ask Cathryn Brady (WMA) to do a presentation at the next meeting on the latest SWDC calculation method.**

- MS expressed concerns over the FEN 2100 project. Although it is a good idea in principle, a lot of work needs to be done sooner rather than later to protect against rising flood risks. Putting the reports out in the public domain has been a good thing, however the timing is the main issue, as it is seen to be taking too long. If changes are not made on the ground soon, particularly with regard to maintenance of certain sections of EA main river, the situation may become irretrievable, and it may be too late to make meaningful change.
- MS reported that he had recently become member of the Anglian Northern RFCC. Any future issues to be taken to the RFCC, please raise with MS.

13. Date of next meeting

- The date of the next ADA Technical and Engineering Forum will take place on Thursday 14th January 2027. Venue – to be confirmed.

Following the meeting, those who wished to attend were invited to a tour of Short Ferry pumping station to look at improvements recently undertaken utilising the IDB Fund. A new fish friendly bowl pump had been installed into an existing 3rd vacant chamber within the station, thus turning it from a 2 pump to a 3 pump site. Next door, inside an old diesel pumphouse, 1 of 2 diesel engines has been converted into an electric to power the original pump. Many thanks to Witham and Humber Boards for hosting this visit.