Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

ada Eastern

Branch Chairman: Robin Buxton
Branch Vice Chairman: Sir Edward Greenwell
Branch Honorary Secretary: Olivia Follen

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ADA (Association of Drainage Authorities) Eastern Branch AGM and Meeting

Date: 17 September 2025, 10.30 – 15:00
Venue: Debenham Community Centre, Gracechurch Street, Debenham, Stowmarket, IP14 6BL
(Followed by Site Visit to a Flood Storage Project at Winston, Suffolk, IP14 6BT)

MINUTES

Branch AGM

Welcome and introductions
The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Present:

Gordon Bambridge (Norfolk Rivers IDB), Giles Bloomfield (Great Yarmouth Borough Council), Robin Buxton (Chairman), Phil Camamile (WMA), John Carrick (Chairman), Robert Caudwell (ADA), Olivia Follen (WMA), Matt Hullis (Suffolk County Council), Tom Hunter (WMA), Fiona Johnson (Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance), Andrea Kelly (Broads Authority), Mark Ogden (Norfolk County Council) and Barny Richardson (Essex Coastal ~~Partnership~~ organisation)

Apologies for absence:

Louis Baugh (Broads IDB), Hamish Carrie (Waveney, Lower Yare & Lothingland IDB), Henry Cator (ADA President), Simon Daniels (Broads IDB), Aaron Dixie (Environment Agency), Angie Fitch-Tillett (ADA Eastern Branch Director), Sir Edward Greenwell (Vice-Chairman), Daniel Johns (Water Resources East), David Kemp (Environment Agency), David Knagg (Environment Agency), John Lindsay (Environment Agency), Ian Moodie (ADA), Kari Nash (WMA), Michael Paul (East Suffolk WMB), Matthew Philpot (WMA), Richard Powell (RFCC), Karen Thomas (East Suffolk Council), Innes Thomson (ADA), Rob Wise (NFU)

Announcements:

There were no announcements made.

Election of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer:

It was proposed by Gordon Bambridge, seconded by Barny Richardson and unanimously agreed for Robin Buxton to continue as Chairman of the ADA Eastern Branch. It was unanimously agreed that Sir Edward Greenwell would remain as Vice Chairman. Olivia Follen was elected as Hon.Secretary and Sallyanne Jeffrey was elected as Hon.Treasurer.

Election of ADA Eastern Director:

It was proposed by Robin Buxton and unanimously agreed to elect Angie Fitch-Tillett to continue as ADA Eastern Director, subject to confirmation by the ADA Board.

Minutes of previous AGM:

The minutes of the previous ADA Eastern Branch AGM held 18 September 2024 were confirmed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Approval of Branch Accounts:

The ADA Eastern Branch Secretary provided an update on the ADA Eastern Branch Accounts on behalf of the WMA Finance Team. The Branch bank account was closed with a balance of pence remaining, which was given to charity. There are 4 WMA Boards within the Eastern Branch: Broads IDB, East Suffolk WMB, Norfolk Rivers IDB and Waveney, Lower Yare & Lothingland IDB, therefore the venue and refreshment costs were split evenly between the 4 Boards.

The following costs were incurred for the meeting at Debenham Community Centre:

- **Room Hire:** £160.00
- **Refreshments:** £92.00
- **Total Cost:** £252.00
- **Cost per Board:** £63.00

The AGM was closed.

Branch Meeting

1. **ADA National Update –** Update from Robert Caudwell (RC)

1.1 RC provided a verbal update from ADA. Arising therefrom:

1.2 RC advised the committee that ADA were expecting DEFRA to lay the Statutory Instruments for IDBs to expand their areas or create new IDBs.

1.3 An update was given regarding the initial £75m Storm Recovery funding received from the government. A total of £91m was overall allocated directly to IDBs for the recovery of assets following the storms encountered in 2024. A letter had been sent to the minister to query if there would be any additional funding available.

1.4 RC discussed the significance of the Local Authorities special interest groups which addressed the challenges posed by special levies on local authorities. It was suggested that a national consensus was essential to drive progress, such as removing the cap on the IDB element of council tax.

1.5 RC reported that an IDB in Somerset had received a withdrawal from maintenance notice from the Environment Agency, without prior consultation regarding the maintenance on sections of main river. The committee stressed the importance of the Environment Agency facilitating demaining of rivers, thereby allowing IDBs to assume the responsibility for their management.

1.6 Gordon Bambridge (GBa) advised RC to ensure that ADA remains proactive in engaging with the emerging unitary councils so they are fully informed about and the issues they face. It was also noted that the introduction of the new unitary councils may present an opportunity for positive change.

John Carrick joined the meeting.

2. **Environment Agency/RFCC** – No representative present

2.1 The Chairman informed the committee that as there were no representatives from the Environment Agency present, the Secretary would pass on comments and queries directly to the Environment Agency's representative in their absence. Arising therefrom:

2.2 Tom Hunter (TH) queried whether the committee had any knowledge of the Lowland Resilience Team which was reported in the Environment Agency's Update, including its purpose and function. It was noted that no members present were familiar with the team or its remit

2.3 John Carrick (JC) raised concern over the Environment Agency's approach to maintenance on main rivers. He noted that minor breaches could be addressed promptly and cost-effectively by riparian landowners but the Environment Agency had caused delayed repairs due to the lengthy process followed, resulting in increased costs and greater environmental impact. RC expressed support for the local Environment Agency teams and reminded the committee that these decisions made at a higher level, beyond the local team's control.

Member Updates:

3. **Water Management Alliance** – Update from Tom Hunter (TH)

3.1 The Water Management Alliance's Operations and Capital Works reports were considered in detail and noted. Arising therefrom:

3.2 The committee thanked the Water Management Alliance for the positive maintenance and capital work that it carried out. RESOLVED that this be noted.

4. **Suffolk County Council** – Update from Matt Hullis (MH)

4.1 Matt Hullis provided a verbal update on behalf of Suffolk Country Council. Arising therefrom:

4.2 Suffolk County Council had been working through flooding investigation reports following Storm Babet in 2023 in which over 50 locations within the region were reportedly damaged by the flooding, with a view for the process to be complete by the end of October 2025.

4.3 Suffolk County Council had been collaborating with East Suffolk Water Abstractors Group (ESWAG) to explore strategic options for water storage and where it could be diverted for beneficial use elsewhere. Discussions had focused on the opportunity to store surface water from large developments in reservoirs to be made available to local landowners; the Council were looking to develop new guidance to support this initiative.

5. **Norfolk County Council & Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance** – Update from Fiona Johnson (FJ) & Mark Ogden (MO)

5.1 Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance's report was considered in detail and noted. There were no matters arising.

6. **East Suffolk Council** – No representative present.

6.1 The report provided by East Suffolk Council was considered in detail and noted. There were no matters arising.

7. **North Norfolk District Council** – No representative present.

7.1 The report provided by North Norfolk District Council was considered in detail and noted. There were no matters arising.

8. **Great Yarmouth District Council** – Update from Giles Bloomfield (GBI)

8.1 The report provided by Great Yarmouth Borough Council was considered in detail and noted. There were no matters arising.

9. **Water Resources East** – No representative present.

9.1 The report provided by Water Resources East was considered in detail and noted. There were no matters arising.

10. **Essex Coastal Organisation** – Update from Barny Richardson (BR)

10.1 The report from Essex Coastal Organisation was considered in detail and noted. Arising therefrom:

10.2 It was noted that Andrew St Joseph had stepped down as Chairman of the Essex Coastal Organisation and his successor was Alan Ponder. RESOLVED that this be noted.

11. **National Farmers Union** – No representative present and no report received prior to the meeting.

12. **Broads Authority** – Update from Andrea Kelly (AK)

12.1 The report from the Broads Authority was considered in detail and noted. There were no matters arising.

13. **Anglian Water** – No representative present and no report received prior to the meeting.

14. Date and venue of next AGM and Branch meeting

14.1. 23 September 2026 at 10:30 am, Venue TBC

15. AOB

15.1. The Chairman informed the committee that Phil Camamile, Chief Executive of the Water Management Alliance, would be retiring at the end of the current financial year. On behalf of the committee, the Chairman expressed sincere thanks to Phil Camamile for his outstanding contribution and dedicated service to the industry over the past 35 years. It was noted that Marcus Coleman had been appointed as the new Chief Executive and would join the organisation in January 2026.

15.2. John Carrick commented that there was scope to build more local reservoirs in the area. and there were lots of opportunities for local reservoirs to be built in the area, with dry summers and wet winters presenting opportunities to store water.