



Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

ADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS Meeting Minutes

02 July 2024

Westminster Kingsway College – Victoria Centre, 76 Vincent Square,
London, SW1P 2PD

APPROVED

Invited					
Name	Representing	Present	Name	Representing	Present
Robert Caudwell (RC)	Chair	Y	Henry Cator (HC)	President	Apol.
Tim Farr (TF)	Vice Chair Policy & Finance Committee	Y	David Riddington (DR)	Vice President	Apol.
Charles Mills (CM)	Vice Chair Technical & Environment Committee	Y	Jean Venables (JV)	Vice President	Apol.
Peter Bateson (PB)	Company Secretary	Y Online (from 491)	Anne McIntosh (AM)	Vice President	Y (from 491)
Angie Fitch-Tillett (AFT)	Eastern Branch	Apol.	John Grogan (JD)	Vice President	Apol.
Keith Casswell (KC)	Lincolnshire Branch	Y	William Harrington (WH)	Defra (co-opted)	Y
Charles Pudge (CP)	Marches Branch	Y	VACANT	Great Ouse Branch	
Bill Symons (BSy)	Northern Branch	Y	Innes Thomson (IT)	Chief Executive	Y
Priscilla Haselhurst (PH)	South Eastern Branch	Y			
Rebecca Horsington (RH)	South Western Branch	Y (from 490)	In Attendance		
Will Staunton (WS)	Trent Branch	Y	Ed Johnson (EJ)	Deputy Chair, Policy Committee	Y
James West (JW)	Wales Branch	Y Online	Ian Moodie (IM)	Technical Manager	Y
Duncan Worth (DW)	Welland & Nene Branch	Y			
Ian Hodge (IH)	Environment Agency	Y			
Paul Ambrose (PA)	Local Authorities	Y Online			
Brian Stewart (BSt)	RFCCs	Y			

Ref	Minute	Action
486	Welcome and apologies RC welcomed everyone, introductions were made, and apologies noted.	
487	Declarations of Interest	

	<p>Directors were reminded to complete and return their annual Director declarations.</p> <p>DW declared an interest in item 496 regarding discussions on the Drainage Rating System (DRS).</p> <p>ACTION: All Directors to complete their declaration of interest form for 2024 and return this to the ADA Office.</p> <p>ACTION: All Directors to complete and return a separate declaration as part of ADA's annual insurance renewals. IT to circulate the form.</p>	
488	<p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the Board's meeting on 5 March 2024 were approved by the Board.</p>	
489	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>TF asked about energy costs (item 483). IT explained that ADA was awaiting further developments from OFGEM who ADA had briefed extensively on the problems with standing charges. Excessive costs borne during the winter of 2023/24 were being supported through the Defra Storm Recovery & Asset Improvement Grant to IDBs.</p> <p>The following matters remain outstanding:</p> <p>465. ACTION OUTSTANDING: IM to confirm de-maining paper with Phil Camamile and then share with Board and IDB clerks.</p> <p>467. ACTION OUTSTANDING: CM to contact PB to request amendment to correct incorrect address on Director information from Companies House.</p> <p>478. ACTION OUTSTANDING: ADA to seek views from readers and advertisers on printed versus digital copies in the future.</p>	<p>IM</p> <p>CM/PB</p> <p>IT</p>
490	<p>Finances</p> <p>a. Audited Accounts for 2023 IT apologised to the Board for not having been able to submit the audited accounts for 2023 in a timely manner, which were only received from the accountants in a finalised version on 1 July 2024. Whilst there had been various exchanges between the accountants (Streets) and ADA this year in respect of taxation allowances for events and contract work, as well as other adjustments, the Board was critical of the timing of submission of the accounts given that the Board meeting date has been known for over six months. IT offered some responsibility for not having pushed the auditors on their submission and agreed a clear deadline for submission should be set in future years.</p> <p>ACTION: The Board asked that representations be made back to the auditors to express their dissatisfaction.</p> <p>IT reported that he was satisfied with the accounts which were reporting a small loss of £2,616 after various adjustments and accruals.</p>	<p>IT</p>

	<p>ACTION: IT to circulate accounts to all Directors on 3 July with a deadline of 16 July for all Directors to provide comments/approval.</p> <p>When approved by all Directors, RC would then sign accounts, and letter, and then return to Streets in order for the annual accounts to be filed with Companies House before the 1 September 2024 deadline.</p> <p>b. Current financial position IT reported key financial information to the Board for the first four months of the year to 30 April 2024 including income, expenditure, balance sheet, and debtors report.</p> <p>ADA's cash balance at 31 May 2024 was £437,421 compared to £422,135 on 31 May 2023. Invoiced subscription income is just ahead of budget expectations and advertising revenues from the ADA Gazette have been slow in the first quarter but are picking up and estimated to remain in line with budget estimates made. Expenditure for the year to date is in line with budget estimates and there are no specific concerns to report on outstanding debts to ADA. At the end of May, debts had been reduced to £23,083 from £112,567 at the end of April, thanks to work by Sue Crowther.</p> <p>Financial reporting now includes a balance sheet and this would continue to be provided at each Board meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: The Board requested LAPSIP income and costs be reported separately in future updates.</p> <p>c. Budget forecasts Following advice from the Advisory Committee, draft budget forecasts were presented to the Board for 2025, 2026 and 2027 with a paper outlining the challenges of maintaining a balanced budget in future years without additional income and with an additional member of staff as directed by the Board at the last meeting.</p> <p>TF commented that we need to factor in our future thinking on amalgamation with ASA and re-examine our membership fee structure and IM emphasised the need for that, highlighting the reduction in membership fees under the current system as a result of amalgamations of IDBs. TF also advised that possible changes to staff T & Cs may also result in cost increases.</p> <p>BSy shared the LGA's business plan and highlighted that 16% of their revenue comes from membership fees, 28% from improvement grants and 36% from central government contracts. The Board concluded that ADA cannot rely on just increasing membership fees but in parallel needs to seek other funding opportunities</p> <p>ACTION: To be addressed when updating the ADA Business Plan.</p> <p>d. Membership subscription fees 2025 In light of the above discussion, IT recommended that ADA stick to plan in raising membership fees by 6.5% for 2025. The final Board decision on this can be taken at the October meeting and Directors were asked between now and then to seek opinions from their respective Branches and Committees.</p> <p>ACTION: Directors to seek members' opinions on a 6.5% membership fee rise for 2025.</p>	<p>IT</p> <p>IT / IM</p> <p>IT</p> <p>ALL</p>
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	<p>e. Credit card limits IT and IM hold ADA credit cards, each with a spending limit of £1,750 which was originally set back in 2015. IT explained that those limits were occasionally now being reached prior to payoff each month and IT requested the Board approval to uplift that spending limit on each card to £3,500.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board agreed to lift the spending limit on each ADA credit card to £3,500, subject to continuing the system of expenses scrutiny.</p>	
491	<p>Business Planning</p> <p>a. Company Secretary & Director Updates PB confirmed that returns had been filed as required before 31 March 2024 and that a signed copy of the accounts are required to be submitted before 30 September 2024.</p> <p>Directors highlighted their concern that the Great Ouse Branch Director position remains vacant.</p> <p>ACTION: IT to chase the Great Ouse Branch Chair for a decision regarding the Branch’s Director position on the ADA Board.</p> <p>b. Future working with the Association of SuDS Authorities (ASA) IT reported that both ADA and ASA remain fully committed to developing a joint plan to bring both Associations together but that the timetable for that had slipped, primarily due to pressures on ADA resources resulting from the winter floods. The majority of Directors recognise the importance of this alliance linked to generating a wider membership base and therefore additional income and capacity to engage staff. BSy reported that ADA Northern would support such a move if it was clear that Schedule 3 of the FWMA was to be enacted. IT responded by saying that notwithstanding Schedule 3 enactment, the bringing together of ASA and ADA would give a clear signal to other parties of an Association with total catchment coverage, with the increased influence that would have. Directors largely supported with that opinion.</p> <p>IT said that the preparation of ADA’s updated business plan should include for the coming together with ASA.</p> <p>It was certain that any final decision on amalgamation would now be deferred until the 2025 AGM with the necessary business case worked up between now and then.</p> <p>c. Employing a new member of ADA staff IM presented a draft advert for a new member of staff which had been reviewed by Alison Easingwood, who has been working with ADA on a temporary basis as Membership Officer since early May and would continue until 17 July.</p> <p>IM said that ADA has identified a possible candidate for the role and IM will undertake some preliminary discussions to see if the person might be interested in the role. If yes, IM and IT will conduct an interview. If not suitable, we will then go back out to open advert, reacting quickly to any responses. Job will be on the basis of flexible working arrangements and RH helpfully added the consideration of job-sharing.</p>	IT

	<p>ACTION: To follow up with contact and then interview.</p> <p>d. Updating the ADA Business Plan TF in the process of setting up a group to look at the Business Plan and was pleased to report that DW had offered to help.</p> <p>ACTION: TF to have a working draft prepared for the next ADA Advisory Committee Meeting on 25 September 2024.</p> <p>e. Reviewing Staff Terms and Conditions TF reported that it had taken more time than he would have liked to make progress on this and a meeting with all staff was now in the diary for Monday 8 July. TF also reported that he has engaged the services of Loates as independent advice on HR matters, which the Board supported.</p> <p>TF advised that, with a small group from the Advisory Committee, he will be working up a set of costed recommendations for the Board, some of which could be retrospectively enacted back to 1 April 2024.</p> <p>ACTION: TF to bring recommendations to the Board at the next Board meeting.</p>	<p>TF</p> <p>TF</p>
492	<p>Communication and events</p> <p>a. All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) IT reported a very successful meeting on 15 May, organised in collaboration with CIWEM. Subject to the wishes of the new parliament, it is ADA's intention to try and continue to maintain an APPG or something similar in conjunction with CIWEM subject to any new rules set. Andrew Percy, the current APPG Chair, is retiring from politics at the General Election and the APPG will therefore need to seek a new Chair. AM suggested that a new APPG may be quite difficult to set up and then sustain.</p> <p>b. Post-election ADA activities IT reported that ADA will seek to make contact with as many MPs as possible with seats in IDB areas to inform them about ADA and the role of IDBs. Of immediate interest will be making contact with the new Defra Ministers.</p> <p>c. EUWMA meetings IT reported that the mid-year technical meeting focused on managing water resources is taking place in Milan in mid-July, with IM and RC attending. This will be followed by the AGM taking place in Evora (Portugal) in early September. IT and RC will be attending.</p> <p>d. ADA Flood & Water Conference 2024 IT and IM reported that arrangements were being made for the ADA Flood & Water Conference on 13 November 2024 at One Great George Street, London. A draft programme was presented to the Board, with five speaking slots instead of the six in 2023, to allow for an earlier finish at 16.00. The general arrangement of the day will remain similar to last year. RH asked if more attention could be given to seating for the buffet lunch.</p> <p>Conference fees are expected to be about £150 per member delegate and 50% more for non-members. The Board agreed to the continued policy of a break-even event. ADA made a loss of ~£1,200 on the Conference in 2023. To break even requires an attendance of ~140 paying delegates.</p>	

	<p>PH suggested that we might consider discounts for group tickets, which the Board agreed with and will be considered.</p> <p>One speaker has been confirmed, Rachel Hallos, Vice President, NFU, and others will be approached during July.</p> <p>ACTION: IT to finalise speakers for ADA Flood & Water Conference 2024.</p> <p>e. AGM 2024 IT confirmed that ADA's next Annual General Meeting will be held online on 3 December 2024.</p> <p>f. Flood & Coast 2024 IT reported a very successful attendance by ADA at this year's Flood & Coast Conference in Telford in early June. The contra-deal stand space was shared with ASA and as well as ADA staff and members many of ASA's Executive team of local authority officers were on hand to help staff the stand during the event.</p> <p>g. Events in 2025 In the light of this year's event, IT has approached CIWEM with an outline idea that ADA and ASA may like to get more involved in next year's Flood & Coast event.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board supported ADA pursuing a day during Flood & Coast 2025 focused on topics/themes from ADA and ASA.</p> <p>ADA would therefore propose to hold three significant events in 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA Environment Day – February 2025 • ADA/ASA partnership day with Flood & Coast – June 2025 • ADA Flood & Water Conference - November 2025 <p>As mentioned above, ADA would also seek to reform the APPG for Sustainable Flood & Drought Management subject to any new rules and hold three meetings throughout the year.</p>	IT
493	<p>National strategic updates</p> <p>a. Defra WH gave a limited update given that the meeting was held during the pre-election period. The Defra team was preparing to brief a new ministerial team and in parallel, work is progressing in connection with planning to lay the Land Valuation Statutory Instrument before Parliament as well as a consultation process for the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Floods & Water Management Act 2010.</p> <p>b. Environment Agency IH briefed the Board on the latest news concerning the £75 million Storm Recovery & Asset Improvement Grant fund for IDBs.</p> <p>Tranche 1 (recovery funding) has recorded 151 submissions from 76 IDBs amounting to a total of £36.9 million. This tranche was originally allocated £25 million pounds and there may be some flexibility of transfer of funds between Tranche 1 and Tranche 2. The EA have already sent letters of intent covering £14.7 million and further letters should follow but are being withheld subject to further information being required.</p>	

	<p>IH reported that they have received over 160 submissions for Tranche 2 and for the 100 project applications moderated so far, the value had reached £44 million.</p> <p>IH was pleased with the response and reactions from IDBs to the calls for bids. The Environment Agency will be working as quickly as possible to determine valid bids and allocate funds. The next meeting of the Defra Investment Committee would be on 24 July and it was hoped that authority can be given then for remaining funding allocations.</p> <p>It was pointed out that whilst the financial authority has been granted by Ministers for Tranche 1 up to a limit of £25 million, approval was still necessary for the release of further funding up to the £75 million. It was thought unlikely that this would be withheld, although it was theoretically possible.</p> <p>IH mentioned that the Kring of Coastal Engineers, a network of coastal engineers from across Europe that formed after the severe floods of 1953, is due to meet in the UK in September in the Thames Valley. IH will send details to IT.</p> <p>IH also mentioned that the Environment Agency will be taking part in an international Beaver Conference in the Netherlands in early 2025 and encouraged ADA to take part.</p> <p>IM gave a brief update regarding a recent meeting of the National Beaver Management Forum in Kent, hosted by Natural England and River Stour IDB. IM was also participating in an infrastructure sub-group of that Forum looking to produce guidance for infrastructure managers.</p> <p>The Board offered its thanks to Defra, EA and ADA officers involved in working very hard to reach this point so quickly and efficiently.</p>	
494	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>a. Policy Committee Minutes for the Policy Committee meeting held on 22 May 2024 were not available and would be supplied at the next Board meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: IM to include 22 May Policy Committee meeting minutes at next Board meeting.</p> <p>b. Advisory Committee Draft minutes were tabled from the meeting that took place on 11 June 2024.</p>	IM
495	<p>ADA Policy and Technical Activities</p> <p>a. Defra Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilots (LAPSIP) IM reported that the project is largely on track and the next stage involves organising a series of progress monitoring visits to a number of the IDB projects and these are currently being scheduled into diaries. IM and RC would be attending a fact finding visit to the Netherlands regarding lowland peatlands with Defra Soils officers in mid-July.</p> <p>b. LGA Special Interest Group (SIG) for IDBs IT reported continued close involvement with the LGA SIG for IDBs in relation to their work in seeking government support for increased special levy payments. IT reported that for a second year, the Government had</p>	

	<p>agreed to contribute £3 million to a number local authorities most affected. However, this had not been announced prior to the calling of the general election. There are meetings taking place in the next couple of weeks which will refocus the issue in light of whatever new government comes into power. IT will be taking part in those meetings.</p> <p>c. ADA Good Governance Guide for IDBs IM reported that work on this had been deferred pending other urgent matters needing attention, such as funding for IDBs, LAPSIP, and the replacement to DRS. IM was awaiting an updated draft from Wilkin Chapman to undertake the final proofreading of the text, before typesetting could be undertaken by Ryan Dixon.</p> <p>d. Audit thresholds for IDBs IT reported that the SAAA was engaging with government on the matter covering both issues with the upper and lower threshold limits (£6.5 million and £25,000 respectively). SAAA, supported by ADA, is seeking changes to those thresholds with a number of options on the table for discussion. The SAAA and ADA had held initial discussions with Defra and DHLUC officers on the matter on 22 April 2024.</p> <p>e. Consultations IM reported that ADA had responded to the Defra IDB ratings valuation consultation in April 2024. ADA had not responded to any further consultations since the Boards last meeting and had not responded to a recent consultation from the Committee on Standards in Public Life. However, ADA broadly supported the views put forwards by NALC regarding standards within local government and would welcome thinking as to how this should apply to IDBs in the future.</p>	
496	<p>Drainage Rating System</p> <p>IT and IM provided the background to the current situation regarding the Drainage Rating System (DRS) used by the majority of IDBs.</p> <p>IT explained that ADA had at the start of 2024 been concerned that IDBs might have found themselves without a functional system after 31 March 2025 at the ending of support for the current DRS system. However, that concern had been abated through discussions with the Water Management Alliance (WMA). DW confirmed that the WMA were on track to have their new Microsoft Access 365 version of the DRS operational by the end of 2024, and that it will, at cost under contract, be made available along with support services to any IDB that might wish to use it.</p> <p>ADA has also made it clear to IDBs that ADA is not able to develop and administer a new ratings system on its own. This was communicated to all IDBs CEOs in a letter from ADA on 20 May 2024. BSt mentioned that some of the smaller IDBs had expressed concern at ADA being perceived to be “washing their hands” of the issue and perhaps not explaining well enough the other background support which ADA is providing to IDBs on the subject.</p> <p>IT also explained that ADA had initially taken a view to backing the development and adoption of the WMA’s DRS365 solution and recommending it to all IDB members, with oversight from a subscribers user group chaired by ADA.</p> <p>ADA had set up the ADA Ratings Group, a working group under the Policy Committee, to help scrutinise and steer the best route forwards regarding both</p>	

	<p>the DRS and land valuation statutory instrument. Through communication with that group, it became apparent that a number of IDBs wished to develop an alternative DRS system. Consequently, ADA would not be endorsing either system to avoid it being in perceived competition with members.</p> <p>Added into the mix was potential funding from Defra of up to £250,000 to ADA to support the development of a new universal DRS for IDBs move to a new ratings system. The funding would be part of the £75 million IDB Storm Recovery & Asset Improvement Fund from Government.</p> <p>IM had written a draft proposal from ADA that would have seen a proportion of that funding provided to the WMA for the development of the DRS 365 system and remaining funding used to help IDBs digitise and transfer data to that system. Members of the ADA Ratings Group indicated their opposition to funding only being used to assist development of the WMA system. Consequently, IM was planning to draft a new proposal from ADA to Defra where the available funding might be split equitably amongst all IDBs to assist them in digitising land records to an agreed standard and then moving data across to a new system of their choice, as well as ADA preparing national guidance for IDBs on ratings.</p> <p>IH pointed out that this position was moving away from what the Minister had originally agreed and any variation on that original concept of providing money for the development of a new ratings system would have to be discussed at Defra and pass through robust business case review and justification processes. It was also pointed out that money provided would need to be spent on completed projects within the timescales set (by 31 March 2025). IH confirmed that bids had been received for the development of new systems under the £75 million Funding Tranche 2 heading.</p> <p>IH also clarified that the possible funding was intended to be provided to ADA and not directly to IDBs and it was for ADA to put forward a proposal. WH said that the window for receiving ADA’s proposal was still open but that it must be received soon to enable it to go before the next Defra Investment Board on 24 July 2024.</p> <p>In the ensuing discussions, Directors recognised the potential risk in not receiving any of the possible funding if a proposal was seen to depart too far from the original principals discussed with Defra. Any proposal would have to focus on work still to be undertaken, and it was recognised that those IDBs who have already carried out this exercise would not benefit from the potential funding. The clear aim should be to bring those IDBs needing support up to a good national standard and show the benefit of doing so.</p> <p>DECISION: The following proposal made by RC, as chair, was made with the majority of directors voting in majority to support the proposal with no votes against or counter proposals made. (IH, BSy and DW abstained on the basis of declared interests and impartiality).</p> <p>- <i>PROPOSAL: ADA should apply for grant to digitalise all records to an agreed level of detail and provide national guidance to IDBs on the standards expected on governance of those records and the operation of ratings systems.</i></p> <p>ACTION: IM to draft a proposal to Defra for funding on the basis of this proposal.</p>	<p>IM</p>
497	<p>Succession Planning for ADA</p>	

	<p>IT led the discussion by highlighting that the end of Robert's final period as ADA Chair is November 2026 and that preparations for finding his successor will need to start as early as November 2024. RC said that his working with Henry Cator for a year as a Vice Chair set him up very well for the job as Chair and he would recommend the same process again.</p> <p>Board members suggested that ADA should announce the process for appointing a new Chair at the ADA Flood & Water Conference in November 2024, with the view to having a succeeding Vice Chair in place by November 2025.</p> <p>IT mentioned that it made good business sense to ensure that Chair and CEO do not change at the same time, and barring unknowns, IT assured the Board he would work to that principle.</p> <p>CM asked about a review of Vice Presidents and IT said that would be carried out after the results of the General Election were known.</p> <p>Commencing with the appointment of HC, ADA Presidents should only serve up to nine years maximum, in periods of three years, renewable by mutual agreement with the Board and supported by Members at the AGM. HC started his first period as President in November 2021, so his first three year period will end at this year's AGM in December.</p> <p>ACTION: IT to confirm with HC that he would like to continue for another three-year period from December 2024 to Nov 2027 (post meeting note – HC has confirmed that he would be delighted to serve as President for a further three year period if the members supported that.)</p> <p>Discussions took place regarding all other roles within ADA and ADA's resilience to cover those roles if staff resigned or were off work long-term. IT stated that in the current climate, there were options for short term cover of all the roles with prompt action needed to recruit into the roles on a permanent basis.</p> <p>All of the above discussions took place in the context of very clear support from the Board for all of ADA's current staff and the valuable contribution they make to the current status of ADA and its members.</p>	IT
498	<p>AOB</p> <p>BSt raised the issue of high land water (HW) contributions in the Great Ouse catchment. BSt said that, with increasing HW claims, there may be a need to set upper thresholds for payments on claims, something which the Anglian Great Ouse RFCC has to date not done. BSt said that Yorkshire RFCC were already doing that.</p> <p>IT added that ADA was keen to look at this more closely with the EA but was also aware of the wider challenges in the desire to link a review of HW with Precept charges.</p>	
	<p>CLOSE</p> <p>Date of next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 October 2024, Westminster Kingsway College, London 	