



July 9 2021

From the chairman.

Good morning fellow abstractor,

I would firstly like to tell you, that, after a significant amount of time of no newsletter we are now about to start again.

Over the last 10 months or so very little has been happening and the EA have been very quiet whilst they have been deliberating on the RSA programme on the Ant catchment. Because they have not been engaging with us there has really been little to report.

I expect by now everybody is aware of the recent events in this catchment and resulting from this, your committee has decided to temporarily engage the help of Steve Moncaster as Membership and Technical advisor. This really is an introduction for him to the membership, and also the beginning of what should be a new chapter in bringing everybody up to speed on a regular basis and preparing us for the what will be a very challenging time for water abstractors as a whole, with Natural England and the Environment Agency implementing the governments vision for the countryside.

Please be under no illusion that because this is happening in east Norfolk it won't happen anywhere else.

But by sticking together, lobbying, sharing best practice and collaboration, we can achieve our goal which is sustainable abstraction for all of us.

Best wishes Benny



BAWAG Newsletter

By Steve Moncaster, Membership and Technical Advisor

Welcome to the July 2021 BAWAG newsletter. It's the first of many that we'll be issuing as we go through a process of refreshing BAWAG, making sure that we can better help abstractors in Norfolk deal with the many water-related challenges that lie ahead.

In this newsletter, we've set out some of the changes we want to make and our proposal for making sure that you have a say about future direction, and the kind of things we should do to add value to your business. We've also included details of upcoming water resource & abstraction events, details about a new project to identify emerging risks and an update on the Ant Valley restoring sustainable abstraction process. Contents include:

- BAWAG refresh
- 2021/22 Committee & Membership Meetings
- Water resource & abstraction related events
- Heatmap project
- Ants Broads and Marshes update

Since this is my first newsletter, I also wanted to take the opportunity to thank the Committee for my appointment and to say that I am looking forward & with great excitement to working with BAWAG and its members.

Regards

Steve

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BAWAG Refresh

Since the last newsletter much has changed in respect of the future of abstraction in Norfolk, and elsewhere.

COP26 and the third Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) come with water & environment objectives that will affect us all, as does the new National Framework for Water Resources, the new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and proposed new regulations for abstraction management. As farming and the licencing system change, it has never been harder to secure reliable and affordable water supplies for irrigation & food processing.

This issue is recognised by the Committee, which has decided that BAWAG needs to change so that it can better help abstractors in Norfolk deal with climate change, drought, flood, policy change & regulation. Using methods and best practice from the water industry, the plan is to identify where abstractors are at risk and may need help. BAWAG will then work with these businesses and others to identify solutions. Appointing a temporary Membership and Technical Advisor is part of this process.

To make sure we prioritise the right things and change in the right way, we will be “on the road” in October and November for meetings with Members and other stakeholders. Details will be given at the July 20 2021 meeting at Back to the Garden, Holt (see below). This session will include an opportunity to ask questions and a discussion that we will use to help shape the engagement & change process.

Committee & Membership meetings 2021/22

New virtual meeting technology means that many of us can now stay in touch more easily, particularly if meetings are short and focussed.

Taking advantage of this, Committee meetings will now take place at 4 to 6 week intervals and we will have quarterly Members meetings or updates.

The first meeting is a joint Committee-Members meeting on July 20 2021. Details are given below:

Members meeting to discuss the BAWAG “refresh” with the Committee & new Membership & Technical Advisor. Meeting to be held at **Back to the Garden, Holt, July 20 2021 at 4pm**. A dial-in facility will be provided.

Water resource & abstraction related events

We are aware of two notable abstraction related events coming up in the next few weeks:

Water Resources East regional water resource planning conference. This will be held on August 11 2021 at the Moller Center, Cambridge with a reserve date of August 20 2021 to deal with any “carry-over” issues. BAWAG will be represented and will work with NFU, CLA and ADA to make sure that Norfolk abstraction and other sector-wide interests are covered. Long-term environmental goals and the future of public water supplies in Norfolk are likely to be regional planning issues with the potential to affect BAWAG members, and

Defra Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) consultation. The Environment Agency is working towards an implementation date for the new EPR in April 2023. In preparation, a public consultation will be launched in September 2021 and it is vital that BAWAG contribute to this. A pre-consultation meeting with Defra has been arranged for early August and this will be used to help us shape our response.

Please let the Committee or the Advisor know if there are any other events that should be notified.

Heatmap project

As part of the refresh process, Sustainable Water Solutions has been commissioned to identify where we may have future water availability issues. This work will be based on the successful “heat-map” they produced for the East Suffolk Water Abstractors Group (ESWAG). As well as identifying areas where we need to focus, this work will also support our contribution to several Norfolk water & farming projects. These include:

Water for Tomorrow EU-Interreg project with WRE, Environment Agency and the Rivers Trust

Norfolk Sustainable Water Plan with WRE, The Nature Conservancy, Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council and Anglian water

Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance with Norfolk County Council & District Councils, Anglian Water, Environment Agency, Water Management Alliance, WRE, Norfolk Resilience Forum, Broads Authority

Ants Broads and Marshes update

Over recent months we have been working with the NFU to support abstractors at risk of significant change to their licences as part of the Ant Valley restoring sustainable abstraction process. Our aim has been to work with the Environment Agency, Natural England and other interested parties to agree a practical and long-lasting solution to the difficult issues which have arisen there.

Despite high-level intervention from the NFU & the Environment Agency, the process has been challenging and in the last few days, affected abstractors have been notified of changes which are proposed to their licences or applications. If these were to take effect, the Environment Agency has said that they would have to be implemented by April 2024.

BAWAG & NFU continue to meet with the Environment Agency and are now seeking clarification about the process which has led to the recently announced decisions. As part of this, advice is being sought about a possible future legal challenge. We are also exploring alternative non-legal approaches that may allow us to meet environmental needs in a way which minimise the risk to jobs and businesses.