

Wissey Catchment updates

Farm Advisor updates, news & events from the Wissey Water Quality Group

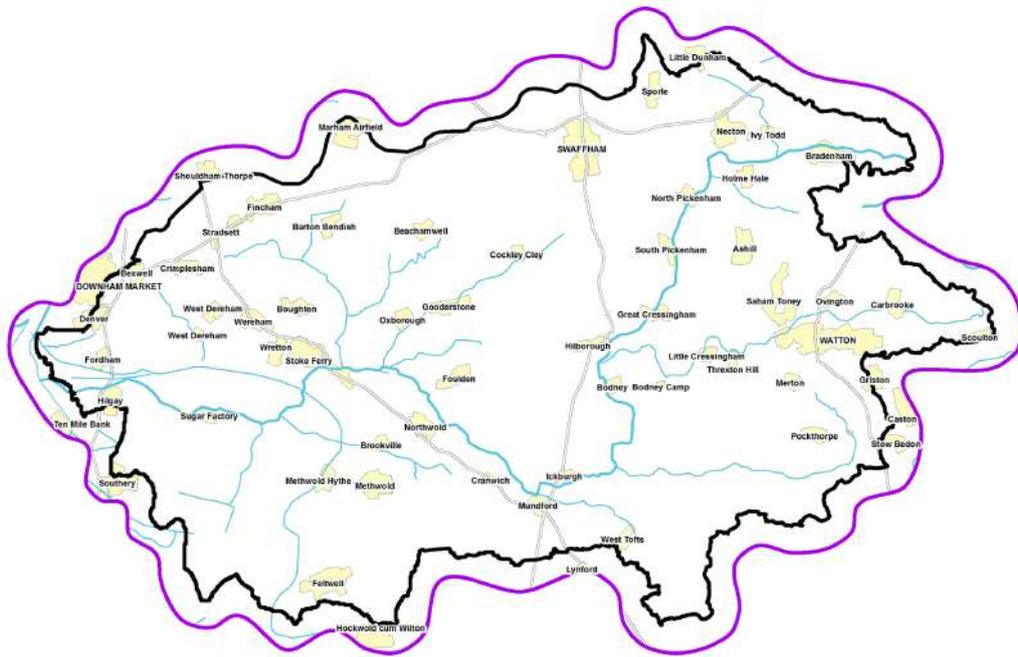


Who are the Wissey Water Quality Group?

We are a group of organisations that are particularly interested in river flows, improving water quality and increasing water availability. By working collaboratively, we seek to maximise our impact.

Key issues facing the Wissey:

- * Excess siltation – from bank erosion, cattle poaching and land run-off etc.
- * Excess phosphate loading.
- * Channel modifications and reduced connectivity.
- * Over-abstraction of water.



Updates

1) EU Topsoil Project

During the winter of 2016/17, we worked with farmers around North Pickenham and Eriswell on a project to reduce nitrate in groundwater. Land managers were given detailed information about their local groundwater source, and discussed what support might be most useful. They also explored which of the various measures could viably slot into their long-term business plans.

In the next phase (winter 2018), we hope to put into practice the "win-win" on-farm changes. The soil, and the water draining through it, will then be tested over the winter, and the results will be shared as part of a farm walk. There will also be further development of the explanatory materials and maps used, enabling us to roll out this approach across the other high nitrate boreholes from 2020. For further info, contact Fiona Wood or Ed Bramham-Jones.

This was a partnership project between Anglian Water and Norfolk Rivers Trust, and was part-funded by the EU.



The River Wissey

The River Wissey begins as a small chalk-fed stream, rising at Shipdham, to the east of Bradenham in Norfolk. The Wissey flows in a westerly direction through the villages of Necton, North Pickenham, South Pickenham, Bodney and Ickburgh, before joining the Great Ouse. The sub-catchment is predominantly rural, with the main land use being agricultural. The Wissey is also a key water source for public water supply and irrigation.



2) Soil Nitrogen Sampling (SMN)

A partnership between Norfolk Rivers Trust and Anglian Water has paid for SMN samples to be collected from 6 farms around Norfolk and Suffolk pre- and post- winter. Three of the farms were arable and use cover crops, and the other three farms were outdoor pig units. The aim was to gather some up-to-date local data, and to provide an indication of the amount of nitrate being lost from the soil in different situations. Please contact Fiona Wood for more info, or come to the outdoor pig event on 26 June (see events).

3) Outdoor Pigs Partnership

Preparations are underway to run a third meeting for outdoor pig producers and landowners. The event will showcase the environmental improvements that have been achieved across the region over the last two years including: the installation of sediment traps, closer cooperation between landlords and pig producers in the management of land pre- and post- pigs, and experiments in improving vegetation cover in pig fields (see events). The following organisations have been involved in running these events, and in supporting the work on pig units: AHDB Pork, Norfolk Rivers Trust, Anglian Water and Kings, plus the EA & CSF.



4) Discounted trees - grants available for planting

The Woodland Trust are offering grants to farmers and landowners for tree planting, worth up to 60% of the cost. Schemes include: trees for your farm, hedge rescue packs, trees for shelterbelts, and for woodfuel. Advisors are available to do free pre-visits, and tree species can be specified for within reason (for fuel or biodiversity etc). The discount includes trees, tubes and stakes/canes. All trees are sourced and grown in the UK to minimise disease introduction. Free packs are also available for communities and schools. View [here](#).



ACTIONS & INFO

1) Deadline for Mid-Tier

The deadline for submitting an application for Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier scheme is the 31st July 2018 (including all supporting evidence). For more info, click [here](#).

2) Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) Guidance

For info about silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oils regulations (SSAFO), Cross Compliance and Nitrate Vulnerable Zones or other CSF info, click [here](#).

3) New Farming Rules for Water

Farmers across England are required to follow some new rules to protect water quality. Take steps to ensure that fertiliser is used efficiently, and to prevent manure, fertiliser and soil from getting into watercourses. See the guidance [here](#).

FREE EVENTS

26th June 2018 - Site management for Outdoor Pig Producers

Some examples of proactive changes that producers have made over the last year, resulting in positive results for both the environment and water quality, will be showcased.

* George Hotel, Swaffham,
PE37 7LJ

* 15:00 - 17:30

* Book: ke.events@ahdb.org.uk /
01904771212

Advisors

Anglian Water

Rob Holland (Catchment Advisor)

rHolland2@anglianwater.co.uk / 07802856872

Focus: Working in Norfolk & Suffolk on pesticides, livestock and nutrients.

Fiona Wood (Catchment Advisor/Scientist)

fWood@anglianwater.co.uk / 07764164874

Focus: Working across the region on nutrients.

Natural England

Tim Hogg (new CSFO for Wissey)

Tim.Hogg@naturalengland.org.uk / 07786276904

Focus: Providing Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) advice in CamEO's Wissey sub-catchment.

CLA

Katy Anderson (Eastern Rural Advisor)

Katy.Anderson@cla.org.uk / 07525196838

Focus: Advising CLA East members on all things environmental, BPS and project funding opportunities.

Environment Agency

Helen Blower (EA Catchment Coordinator)

helen.blower@environment-agency.gov.uk / 02030 255223

Focus: Environmental impact of agricultural action across the region.

Norfolk FWAG

Charlie Ennals (Lower Wissey Facilitation Group Coordinator) charlie@norfolkfwag.co.uk /

07557200212

Focus: Conservation advice, facilitation coordination and countryside stewardship.

Norfolk Rivers Trust

Ed Bramham-Jones (CamEO WSF Advisor)

ed@norfolkrivertrust.org / 07788377617

Focus: Water Sensitive Farming (WSF) advice on soil erosion & cultivation, with grants available for mitigation works such as silt traps.

Catchment Contact - Anglian Water

Martin Bowes (CaBA Project Manager)

mBowes@anglianwater.co.uk / 07725608593

Focus: Steering the CamEO Catchment Partnership.

5) Seed offers

There is still some availability for the Operation Pollinator Seed mixtures. The '**Bees 'n' Seeds**' mix is a good option to enhance fallow land or unproductive areas and, due to the late spring, now is the perfect time for sowing.

This will not affect the land's fallow status for 3 crop rule or Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs). If the land is to be claimed as an EFA, it is worth remembering that it must not receive any inorganic nutrient or pesticide applications between 1st Jan - 30th June inclusive, including glyphosate. For more info, click [here](#).



6) River Wissey enhancement & sediment reduction

Between March and May 2018, Norfolk Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency have been working with four farmers and landowners to reduce siltation on the River Wissey. Measures were carefully selected following the completion of a river walkover survey, and include: installing woody debris, stabilising banks, and implementing controlled cattle crossing points and fencing.



New name for Sewage Treatment Works

Sewage Treatment Works have been renamed Water Recycling Centres (WRCs) to help people make the connection between what they release from their homes and businesses, and the wider environment into which it's discharged once treated. See the **Wissey Catchment Plan p36** for more information.

Phosphorus reduction at Water Recycling Centres

As you may know, Watton Brook and the Upper Wissey are classed as 'Poor' for their phosphorus (P) content, under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Discharges from WRCs are currently the largest source of P in these stretches.

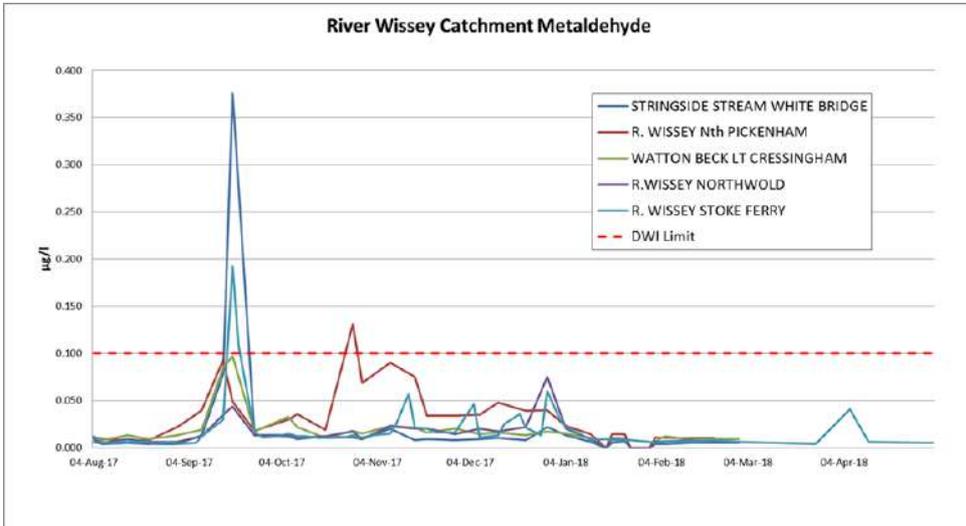
New P treatment equipment has been installed by Anglian Water at Swaffham and Necton. Additionally, an older plant at Watton formed one of several national trials to develop better technologies for P removal.

The trial at Watton was successful. Therefore, during the next funding period (2020-2025), the new technology will be run operationally, with a projected reduction in discharged P at Watton WRC to a quarter of what it is now. This should bring P levels in the stream to near 'Good' status.

Wissey Water Quality Report - Anglian Water

Metaldehyde continues to be the main pesticide issue in the River Wissey for Anglian Water, who abstract water at Stoke Ferry.

The chart (see below) shows that all sampling points along the Upper Wissey had raised metaldehyde concentrations in September 2017, following heavy rainfall, and the Stringsides Stream sub-catchment had over 3.5 times the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) limit.



The short time span of this peak suggests that this was due to surface run-off losses, rather than through field drains as can be seen during October and November at the Nth Pickenham sample point.

The other key pesticides, that can be difficult to remove from water before it is put into drinking water supply, are Clopyralid and Propyzamide. Neither of these have exceeded the 0.1 microgramme limit this year despite the wet spring. Glyphosate has been in exceedance of the DWI limit in the river. However, glyphosate is readily removed by the treatment processes that are available at Stoke Ferry. Please note, this **does not remove it from the national pesticides reduction focus**.

New Glyphosate Stewardship Guidance is available - please talk to your agronomist about this. During the autumn, water quality information such as the metaldehyde chart is circulated on a weekly basis. If you would like to receive these updates, send an email to Rob Holland.



If you would like to join the partnership, have any queries, or wish to unsubscribe from this bulletin, please email georgia@norfolkriverstrust.org