



BAWAG Newsletter

August 26 2022

Foreword

By Steve Moncaster, Membership & Technical Advisor

Hi there – seems a long time since the Norfolk Show, and we have a couple of updates for you, as well as a request to have a look at the Environment Agency survey we sent through earlier in the summer. This asks what we would do if we had less water and, following the dry summer, this should be something that we're able to respond to. The survey will influence what others think we need & so it's important that we get a decent response in.

Regards

Steve

BAWAG Change Process: Next Steps

We're finalizing the BAWAG re-branding and will run the Committee through the proposed changes when it meets on September 27 2022. Related to this, we're also updating the website – in part to make it mobile-phone friendly – and developing our proposals for a new organizational structure. This will reflect our transition to a Company Limited by Guarantee and so the requirement for the Committee to change into a Board that operates in accordance with agreed Articles of Association. A proposal will be put to the Committee for a membership meeting before Christmas so that you have a final opportunity to comment on all of this before the changes are made.

Subscriptions

Just a quick reminder that we have a subscription call out. For anyone who hasn't already done so, and intends to retain their membership, please send us your payment.

Ant Broads & Marshes Update

Since the last Newsletter, the Environment Agency has indicated that it will issue Section 52 notices to the affected abstractors in early October, initiating the appeal/objection process. We continue to work with the abstractors, the NFU, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the local planning authorities, with the time available to develop alternative sources of supply emerging as a critical issue. The Ant Valley Masterplan is the focus for this work, with the Environment Agency requesting more detail in this about specific schemes as a part of their process for considering an extension to the legal process.

NFU News

The NFU hosted a Norfolk visit by David Hallam, the Defra Director of Floods and Water. David spent the morning in the Upper Wensum discussing issues related to water quality and then came to the Broads for a visit to Place UK and G's salad leaf operations. Over lunch he was briefed on the changes we're making at BAWAG and the issues we're dealing with in respect of the Ant Broads and Marshes. We were able to impress on David the practical issues & complexities arising from the restoring sustainable abstraction program, as well as the need to safeguard agri-food in areas such as north-east Norfolk, where the combination of climate, soils & water is critical for our highly productive agri-food businesses

UKIA News

Melvyn Kay of the UKIA is requesting information on farmers experiences of the drought this year. He has set up a page on the UKIA website and would be grateful for any narratives (positive or negative) that we're able to share. A link to the website is here: <https://www.ukia.org/drought-2022/>.

Irrigation Prospects

The UK hydrological outlook for August to October has been published by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH). Prospects are for below normal flows, which will be exceptionally low in central and southern England. Groundwater levels in southern England are also likely to be exceptionally low through to October, although there is some uncertainty about the effect of autumn recharge. A link to the CEH website is here: <https://www.hydoutuk.net/latest-outlook/>.

EA Irrigation Survey

As part of the Water for Tomorrow EU Interreg project, the EA are currently undertaking a survey to determine what impact water scarcity would have on abstractors. In relation to 20% and 50% reductions in water availability, the EA are seeking views on the impact of this on:

- Type of crop
- Crop yield
- Quality of crop
- Economics, and
- Work force

To help them with the survey, they are also seeking related information on sources of supply. The survey form is attached. If you have the time, please complete this and get it back to me – I will then collate our responses and forward them to the EA.

Membership & Committee Meetings

The following Committee (C) and Membership (M) meetings are proposed:

1. September 27 2022 (C): AF Group Offices, Honingham Thorpe, Colton, Norwich, NR9 5BZ starting at 2pm
2. December 2022 (C)(M): Target date for draft Water Resource Management Plan & Social Event – will now include an update on the proposed BAWAG changes
3. March 2023 (C)(M): Annual General Meeting