



January 17 2025

Dear BAWAG member

Last Friday, the Environment Agency (EA) emailed to confirm that they will be holding engagement sessions at the end of the month to brief abstractors on the Broads SAC Sustainable Abstraction Plan (“Broads Plan”). Two are planned:

1. Tuesday 28 January at the Brian Clarke Meeting Room, Chedgrave, and
2. Friday 31 January at the Bure Meeting Room, Acle

As you know, the Broads Plan is their plan for reducing licensed abstraction in proximity to the Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) that form the Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). These are:

Ant	Bure	Thurne	Yare	Waveney
Ant Broads & Marshes	Crostwick Marsh	Calthorpe Broad	Yare Broads & Marshes	Geldeston Meadows
Broad Fen, Dilham	Bure Broads & Marshes	Priory Meadows	Cantley Marshes	Stanley & Alder Carrs
Alderfen Broad	Upton Broads & Marshes	Upper Thurne Broads & Marshes	Ducan's Marsh, Claxton	Barnby Broad & Marshes
Smallburgh Fen	Damgate Marshes, Acle	Ludham-Potter Heigham Marshes	Poplar Farm Meadows	Spratt's Water & Marshes
	Decoy Carr, Acle	Shallam Dyke Marshes, Thurne	Limpenhoe Meadows	
	Halvergate Marshes (part)	Hall Farm Fen, Hemsby	Hardley Flood	
		Trinity Broads	Halvergate Marshes (part)	
		Burgh Common & Muckfleet Marshes		

At the moment, the EA are working on the final appeals on the Ant Broads and Marshes. They have told us that once these are complete, they will move onto the Broads Plan, and their aim is to complete licence changes in respect of the 23 other SSSIs by October 2027. We know from bitter experience, that this time will go very quickly.

As well as the Broads Plan, the EA are doing equivalent work on the Norfolk Valley Fens. These are also SACs and as such, are subject to the same protection from the Habitats Regulations. This means that all nearby licences are being reviewed and that by October 2027, some are going to be reduced or revoked.

Approximately 70% of our licenced volume lies within 5km of a Broads Plan SSSI, or one of the Norfolk Valley Fens.

One of our members has already been told his licence is in the “firing line”

The rest of our members licences are within 5km of one of the other Norfolk SSSIs, including the Nar. It is inevitable that the EA will remove or reduce some of this abstraction.

Fortunately, we knew this was coming and we’re prepared for it. In the next few weeks, we’re going to do three things:

1. **For the engagement meeting in Acle:** we’re available to go with you, if you want us to. If you want to go to the meeting on 28 January in Chedgrave, let us know and we’ll brief you beforehand. If you can’t get a slot (they’re getting booked up fast) let us know and we’ll try and get more dates from the EA.
2. **We’re holding planning workshops on the following dates in February:** to share with you our understanding of the EA work on the Broads Plan and Norfolk Valley Fens and to explain what we’re going to do in response. The workshops will be at the AF Group Offices on the following days. More detail on the workshops is given at the end of the Newsletter:
 - a. Monday 17 February & Tuesday 18 February
 - b. Thursday 20 February & Friday 21 February
 - c. Monday 24 February & Tuesday 25 February, and
3. **We will present the rest of our forward programme at the AGM:** to be held on Tuesday 11 March also at the AF Group offices. At the AGM you will need to vote on the subscriptions needed to cover the cost of the work we plan to do. Details of the AGM will also be sent out shortly.

Technically, we’ve emerged in strong position from the Ant Broads and Marshes planning inquiry. The EA now accept partial reductions in quantities and their models are being updated to include the extra water we found, which returns to the system from spray irrigation. Both of these things significantly reduce our

vulnerability, and we think that there are other things we can do that will help us further. For the issues that remain, our ability to collaborate & work in groups is key. We'll explain more when we meet at the planning workshops in February and at the AGM in March.

There are two things that we need you to do:

1. **Check your diary and register for one of the planning workshop dates.** We'll present similar material at each, so if you can't make the date that's been allocated to your Planning Group, pick one of the "open sessions". Registration details will follow, and
2. **We need to see you at the AGM**, where we will be voting on subscriptions for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28. These need to cover everything we plan to do ahead of the EAs October 2027 deadline. Just like 2023 and for the earlier work on the Ant Broads and Marshes, **we need to levy extra contributions for our technical work**, and we can only do this if we have your support.

Finally, a joint message from our Chair and our Treasurer, Anthony Seaman and Nick Deane:

Message from our Chair & Treasurer:

The committee value your support, and with the guidance of Steve we have achieved a great deal in the last 3 years.

However, there is a lot more to do as the Broads Plan, Norfolk Valley Fens and other challenges take shape, and we are much better doing this together rather than as individuals.

Any delay in the programme reduces the chances of success, so please continue to support us so that we can continue to defend your interests.

Queries or comments

If you have any queries or comments about the work we're doing or are planning to do please call Steve Moncaster, our Membership & Technical Advisor. Steve's number is (07710) 608710 and he will be pleased to chat with you.

February 2025 planning workshops

The February 2025 planning workshops will be held at the AF Group Offices at Honington Thorpe. We're planning for 12 no. 3 hour sessions, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. **We're going to send invites to the meeting we want you to attend.** If you can't make that date, please register for one of the opens sessions:

Date	Session	Planning Group*
Mon 17 February	Morning	North Norfolk
	Afternoon	North Walsham & Upper Ant
Tues 18 February	Morning	Bure
	Afternoon	Open
Thurs 20 February	Morning	Bure (Spixworth to Upton)
	Afternoon	Thurne
Fri 21 February	Morning	Wensum
	Afternoon	Waveney & Tas
Mon 24 February	Morning	NW Norfolk & Nar
	Afternoon	Wissey, Little Ouse and Thet
Tues 25 February	Morning	Ant Broads and Marshes
	Afternoon	Open

**** See map below for Planning Group boundaries**

Table 1: Planning workshop schedule

