

## Wensum Working Group Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### Attendees

Graham Gamble, Andy Beckett, Colin Howlett, Kevin Grout, Tim Venes,, Kelvin Allen & Dennis Willis  
Apologies Roger Gibbons, Jessie Leach, David Harper

### Previous Actions & Initiatives

Kevin Grout agreed to investigate current EA records held on Wensum and potential bottlenecks with respect to habitats and the current status of the previous planned works at Kingfisher Lakes stream. Completed Kevin shared the previous project plans.

The historic fishery records do seem to exist but not in electronic form. Graham Gamble has copies of these going back into the 80's and agreed to source these for the group to understand further.

**Ongoing** investigation into gaps in information. We have since now obtained all the respective base data from 1983 through to 2013 and will be looking at how best to present this.

Discussion on the merits of managed stocking followed from Kelvin seeing EA stocking activities across the region on various rivers and drains. Andy Beckett agreed to investigate this further and how to redress this in terms of the Wensum.

Completed. It is very clear that Natural England and the EA will not allow stocking within the Wensum. Indeed the whole policy on SSSI's and SAC is under review with NE.

Discussion on the merits of obtaining anglers catch returns on the Wensum was agreed. Andy Beckett agreed to lead on this via social media and collate the information.

Completed, Andy investigated this at length and found that anglers weren't willing to share their catches with any form of reliance, making the results not worthy of effort needed to collect.

Discussion on Salmonids stocking and its history, will be collated by Kevin Grout.

Discussion followed on the understanding of cyprinoid life cycles and food sources per each life stage. It was agreed that Chub and Roach would be a good area to explore via the Chub Study Group and Tim Jecklin, Chris Turnbull agreed to investigate.

Chris looked at this with the chub study group and it seems little is documented on this subject. It was felt that Alan Henshaw from Calerton would be a expert on such matters and could potentially provide some answers. Action KA

Discussion on whether analysis of these potential food sources could become part of the riverfly package study. David Harper agreed to investigate. **Ongoing**

### Update on Wensum Partnership

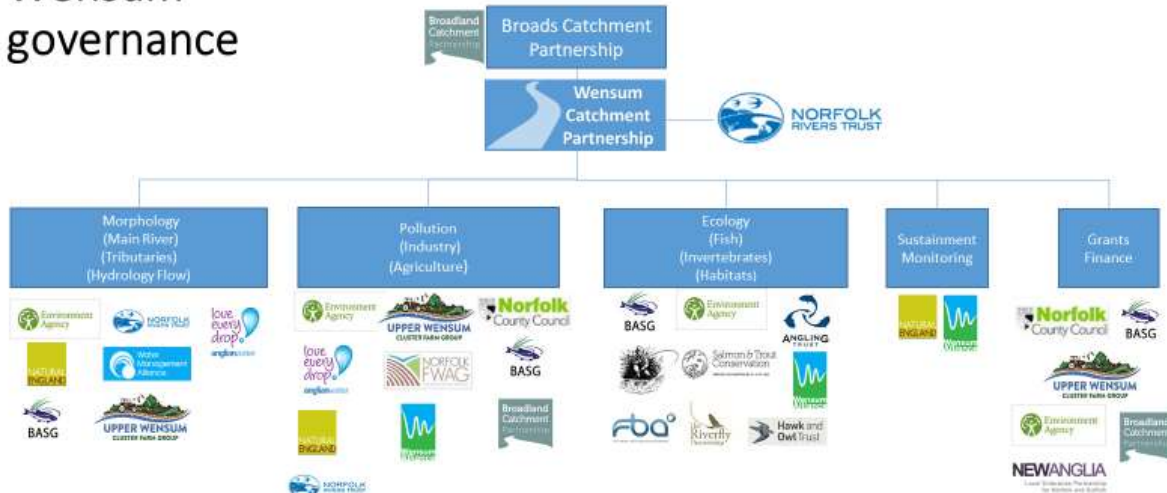
Kelvin gave an update on the progress of the wider Wensum partnership and it's work on pollution and obtaining funding.

The Wensum Catchment Partnership (WCP) wrote to all of the interested Wensum stakeholders with an update on Catchment Partnership actions last month.

The Steer Group has now held two meetings, with representation from Norfolk Rivers Trust, Environment Agency, BASG, Natural England, Anglian Water, Upper Wensum Cluster Farm Group, Broadland Catchment Partnership, and the Water Management Alliance.

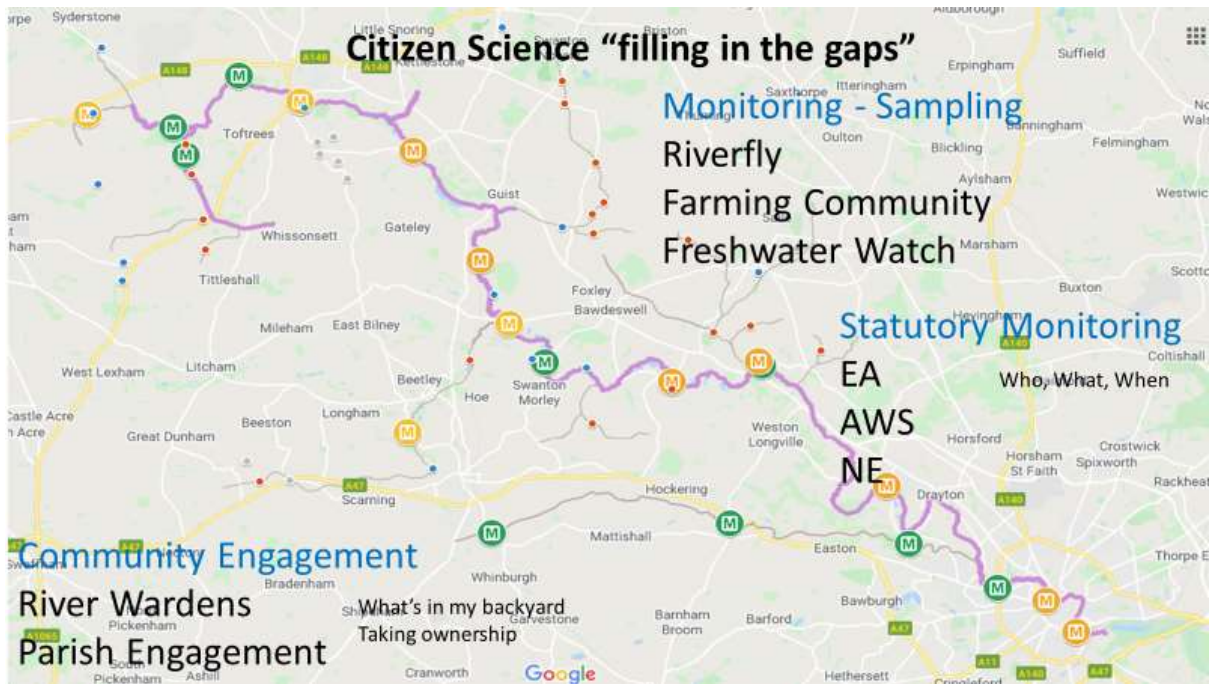
We have appointed our new Catchment Partnership Officer, Jessie Leach, and Chairman of the Steer Group, John Flowerdew.

# Wensum governance

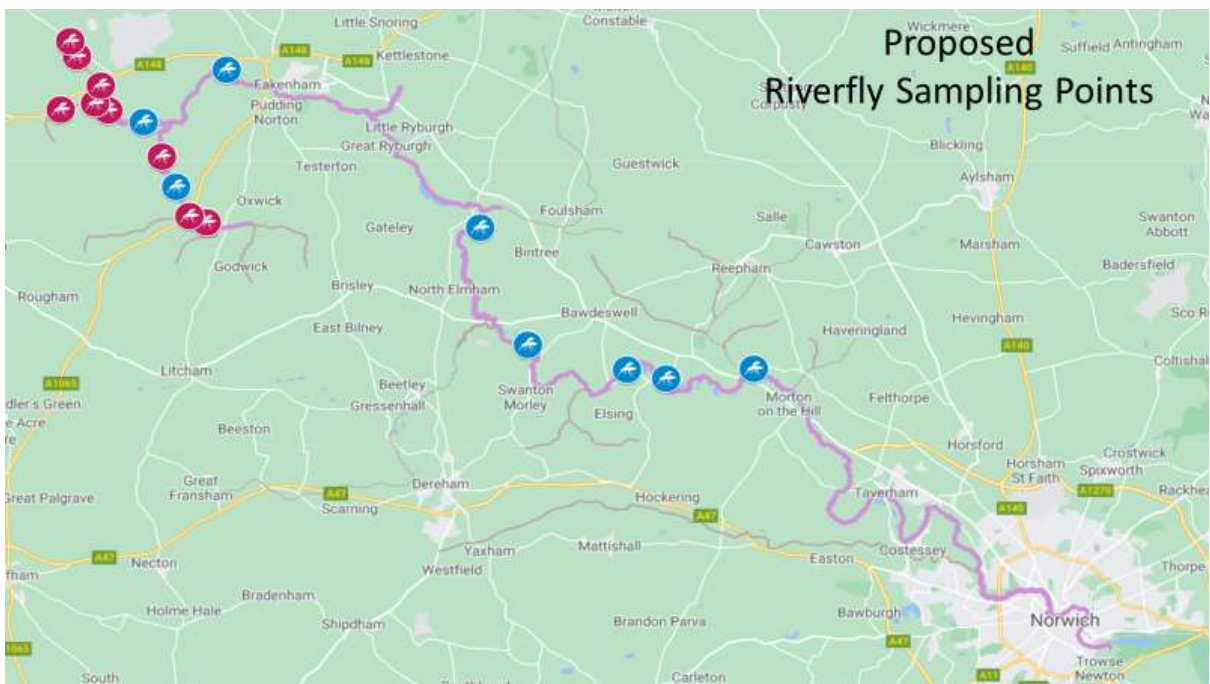


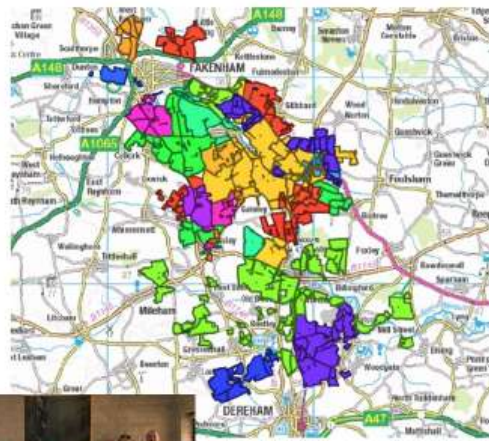
Future Planned Meetings: Pollution Focus on STW loading and investment planning  
 Pollution Headwater Monitoring Requirements  
 Morphology to focus on Abstraction, Flow and Structures





The locations in blue are existing sampling points, the ones in red are target locations in the headwaters for improved study by David Harper in the spring of 2021.





## Wensum Farmers

- Established 2015
- 27 farmers (and getting bigger!)
- 10,000ha
- Tenants and landowners
- Arable, livestock, vegetables and some organic



- Steering group
- £1/ha/yr
- Advisor full time
- 10-12 group events per year
- Each farmer chooses own priorities
- Tailored 1:1 advice

The Wensum Farming Cluster Group are undertaking water quality sampling at a number of locations across their land holdings. These are shown in blue on the map below.



Initial findings from the monitoring is been verified by the UEA, but is showing some interesting results to date, but a more longer term data set is really needed to assess the results.

Why focus on water quality? Next Steps?

- The River Wensum is what binds us as a group
- Catchment management on a large scale
- Felt the SAGIS modelling was outdated
- Making a difference what can we control (January 2020)
- UEA partnership
- Lovibond testing equipment

Monitor needs to cover two summer and winter periods  
To establish sound science and evidence.

Steering Group focus on Anglian Water Assets  
Creation of a catchment scale model on Phosphate

NITRATE mg/l	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21
Sample Location							
IDB drain Sculthorpe	x	x	x	15.7	4.53	14.7	12.8
Main River Sculthorpe (MR)	4.69	8.9	x	12.3	3.64	13	11.6
Langor Beck Tributary	3.24	6.87	4.9	5.75	1.95	9	7.3
Great Ryburgh bridge (MR)	4.63	9.22	7.8	10.6	2.98	12.5	7.4
Big field drain	x	x	x	13.4	x	15.4	7.4
Great Ryburgh drain	x	x	16.1	14	4.48	13.8	7.4
Westwood drain	x	x	11.9	12.6	3.5	9.5	5.3
CP Gateley drain	x	x	16.3	11.56	4.74	13.5	5.6
Winters farm Gateley drain	1.06	1.62	9.31	6.99	2.75	8.7	5
Tywford drain	x	7.21	6.7	4.76	1.51	7	5.7
Blackwater by railway	2.51	4.37	8.8	6.17	2.6	8.4	6.1
Swanton Morley (MR)	3.58	7.06	8.02	9.22	2.65	9.9	8.9
Wendling Beck headwaters	8.94	11.63	13.5	12.1	4.89	15.8	9.09
Penny Spot Beck	x	x	x	x	x	9.2	6.7
Water quality status	<5	<10	11 to 22	>22			
	Excellent	Good	Moderate	Poor			

PHOSPHATE PO4 mg/l	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21
Sample Location							
IDB drain Sculthorpe	x	x	x	0.05	0.07	0.07	0.13
Main River Sculthorpe (MR)	0.05	0.03	x	0.05	0.03	0.06	0.05
Langor Beck Tributary	0.1	0.1	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.06
Great Ryburgh bridge (MR)	0.07	0.07	0.02	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.08
Big field drain	x	x	0.01	0.13	0.01	0.16	0.07
Great Ryburgh drain	x	x	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.06
Westwood drain	x	x	0.04	0.04	0.01	0.13	0.05
CP Gateley drain	x	x	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.06
Winters farm Gateley drain	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.03
Tywford drain	x	0.11	0.01	0.15	0.12	0.04	0.12
Blackwater by railway	0.07	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.06	0.05
Swanton Morley (MR)	0.08	0.09	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.06	0.09
Wendling Beck headwaters	0.08	0.11	0.02	0.05	0.11	0.17	0.11
Penny Spot Beck	x	x	x	x	x	0.07	0.09
WFD status	0.036	0.069	0.036	0.173	0.069	0.094	0.13
	Excellent	Good	Moderate	Poor	Bad		

Engagement Projects Himalayan Balsam

**Engagement Projects**

**Himalayan Balsam**  
Baseline Surveys & Mapping

Georgia Waye-Barker  
Norfolk Rivers Trust  
georgia@norfolkriverstrust.org

4 year program on the management of the plant.  
Can we offer any support to this?

Recording a Himalayan balsam sighting

Recording where balsam control work

A further national program is looking for volunteers to help identify and control this plant.  
Action on all Wensum clubs and members to consider taking part in this scheme.

## Engagement Projects Waterlife Recovery East



Water recovery east is looking for volunteers to help manage American Mink. Action on all Wensum clubs and members to consider taking part in this scheme.

### Riverfly & WQ monitoring

Once we understand the outcome of the grant application to Anglian Water to support this, we will call a separate meeting to focus on delivering this next month.

### Tributaries Fish Stock and enhancement

Having now understood the position within Natural England on fish stocking into the Wensum, we need to identify how we can enhance the existing stock within the wider Wensum catchment. Many people have stated that the connected IDB drains appear “full of fish” and whilst they might not be in the main river they do form part of its natural ecology.

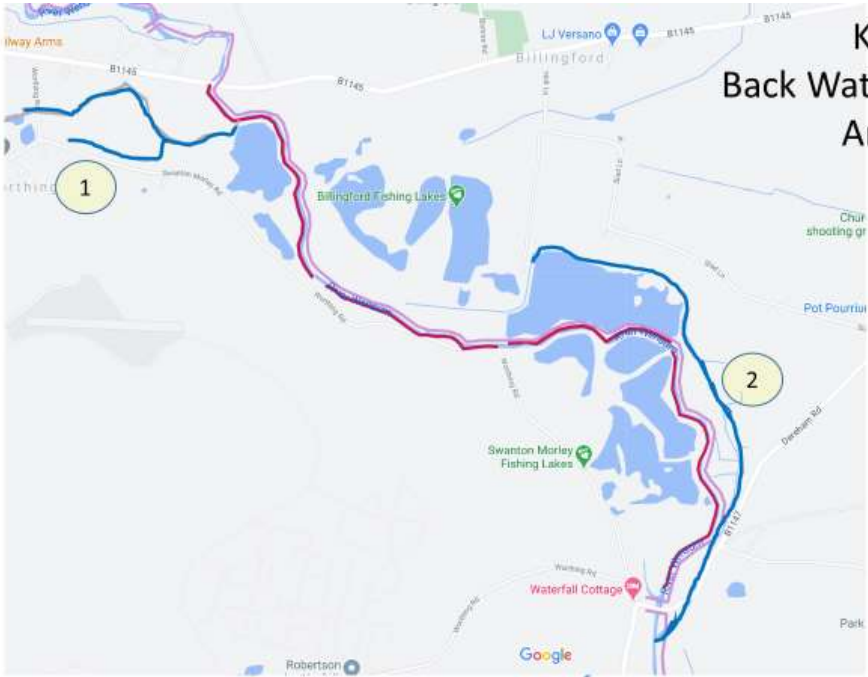
Some discussion on whether the past two decades on reduced summer flow has impacted on the fish’s ability to freely move within these connected channels and has impacted on the stock of all species within the main river.

It was agreed that some defined inspection of these tributaries would be beneficial leading to a set of shelf ready projects to improve both the connectivity and habitats of these off channel locations.

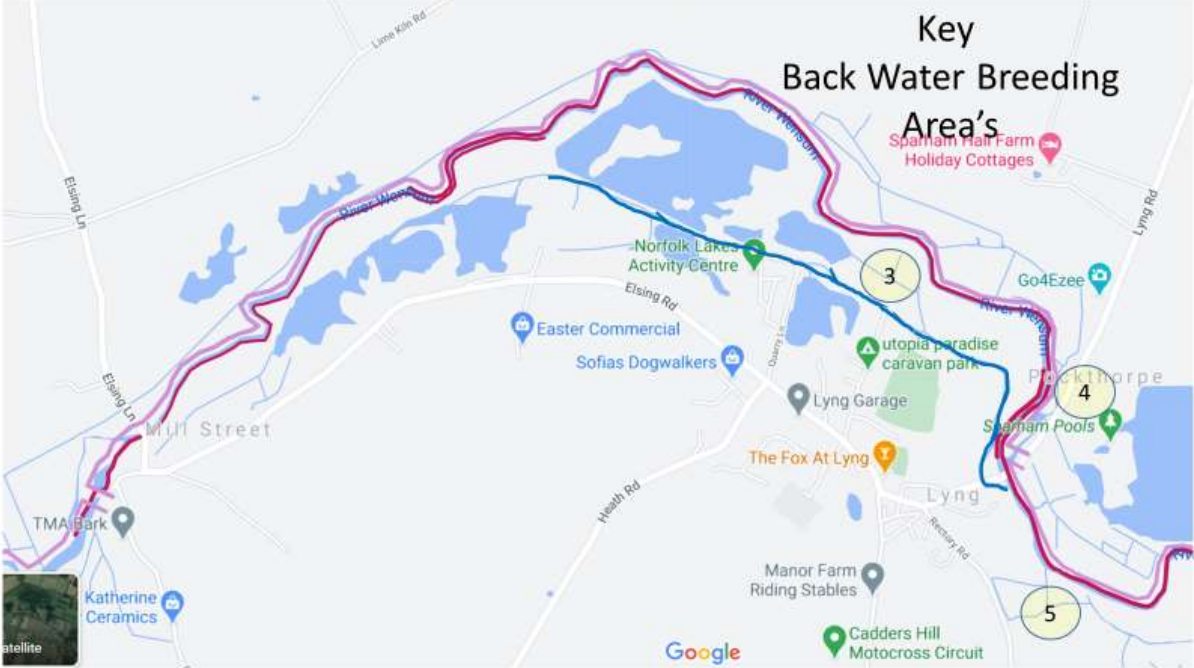
Andy Beckett agreed to lead on undertaking walk overs at these locations with the associated local members and to bring more evidence on the possible options to move this forward as a set of proposals and projects in the coming weeks. The objective is to create a number of shelf ready relatively small projects that can be called upon when funding becomes available. These activities would need to have all agreements in place with both landowners IDB and statutory authorities, so they are really shelf ready.

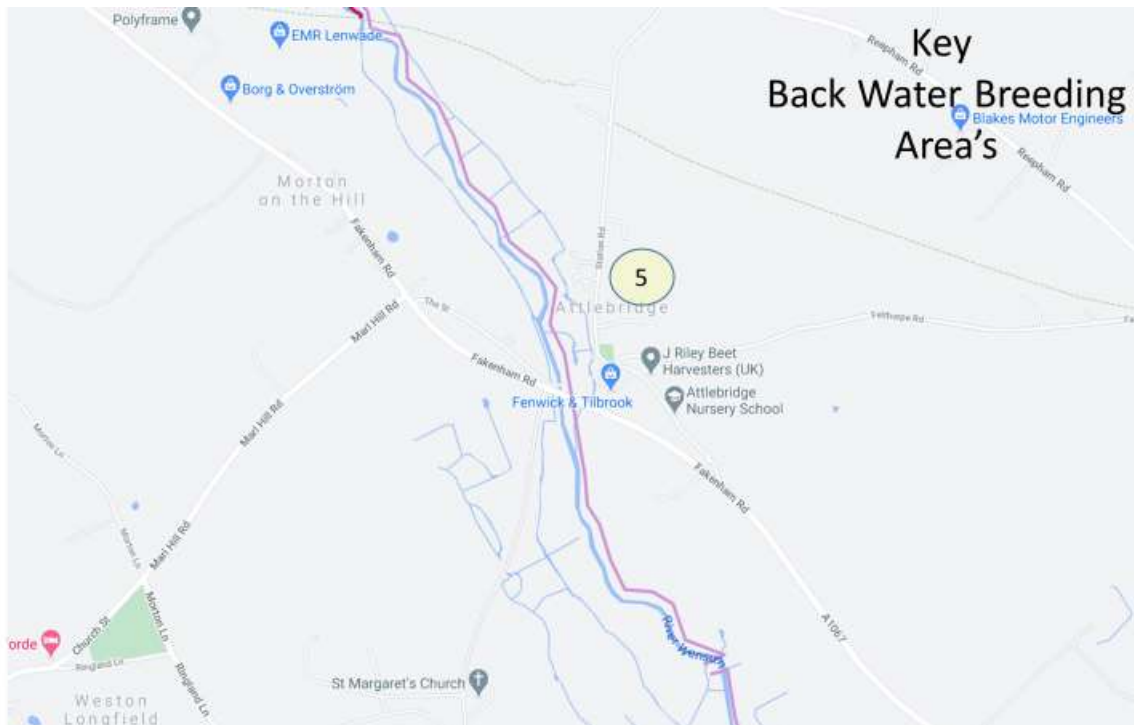
The following maps show the key areas.

# Key Back Water Breeding Area's



# Key Back Water Breeding Area's





### **Potential Wensum Community Base**

Kelvin gave an overview on the potential of using the existing under utilised asset of the Agency at the Costessey Fish Farm to become a Community Hub on the Wensum. This is only a concept currently but would fit into the wider Wensum Corridor Strategy with the provision of multiple activities including Angling, Canoeing and Sailing on the River. Whilst using of building as a base for the community activity and citizen science going forward.

It was stated this has previously being found to be an excellent area for holding large chub and barbel in the hay days on the Wensum.

Kelvin to continue discussions through the partnership and council on it's feasibility.

Kelvin Allen  
Chair BASG  
21<sup>th</sup> April 2021