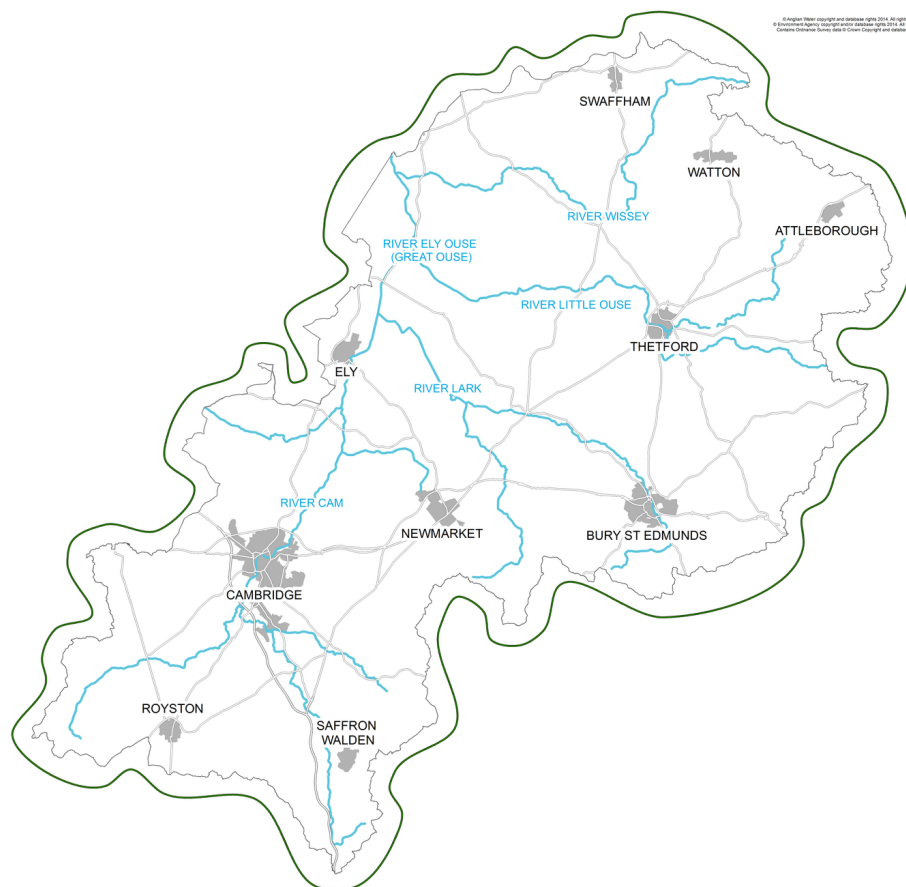


Land Management Updates

Farm Advisor updates, news & events from the Wissey, Lark, Little Ouse & Thet



Who are we?

We are a group of organisations from the Wissey, Lark and Little Ouse & Thet sub-catchment partnerships that are particularly interested in improving water quality and increasing water availability. By working collaboratively, we seek to maximise our impact.

Key issues facing these sub-catchments include:

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



Our water environment

The chalk-fed rivers Wissey, Lark, Little Ouse and Thet are found within the Cam & Ely Ouse (CamEO) Catchment. The Wissey begins as a small stream, rising at Shipdham, where it flows westerly for 31 miles before joining the Great Ouse. The Lark rises to the south of Bury St Edmunds, travelling in a north-westerly direction for 31 miles where it meets the Great Ouse near Littleport. The Little Ouse rises east of Theltham, very close to the source of the river Waveney, and flows west, with much of its length defining the boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk. The Thet rises in Breckland and joins the Little Ouse in Thetford.

1) Improving water quality on the Elveden Estate by using silt traps

Norfolk Rivers Trust has recently been working with the Rivers Trust and Asda to reduce agricultural run-off in the Lark Catchment. Funded by Asda, the mitigation work involved a range of silt traps including track interceptor drains and field bunds. These measures will capture run-off from farm fields and tracks and will reduce the possibility of this run-off reaching the river Lark.



This project was delivered as part of **Courtauld 2025**, a commitment to cut the carbon, water and waste associated with food and drink by at least one-fifth in 10 years.

Read the full case study [here](#).

2) NORMAC 2018 - An update by CSF

Thursday the 6th of September saw NORMAC 2018 take place on the edge of the Wissey Catchment. Generously hosted by Albanwise Farming Ltd., a small but enthusiastic gathering of about 400 interested folks came to see demonstrations of farm machinery, cultivation and soil management. Norfolk Rivers Trust, Anglian Water and Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) had a very popular stand, along with Philip Wright in the soil 'pit' answering all manner of questions to do with soil health.

Look out for more events in and around the Wissey Catchment this winter (see the events box to the right). If you would like to get in touch regarding upcoming events, please contact Tim on 07786 276 904 or tim.hogg@naturalengland.org.uk.



Mark Hudson was picked as the winner of the Anglian Water Spill Kit at NORMAC 2018. Mark is a spray operator on a farm west of Clenchwarton, King's Lynn, who says he will put the kit to good use on the job.



3) Improving the way we manage water - first meeting

As you may know, the Cam & Ely Ouse (CamEO) and East Suffolk catchments have been chosen as **Initial Priority Catchments** (IPCs). This means that they will be test beds for developing innovative solutions to abstraction issues.

On the 20th of November, over 100 abstractors, partners and stakeholders from across East Anglia got together to discuss water resource issues within the catchments. A wide range of ideas and approaches were suggested, and these will now be used to develop some innovative approaches for trial.

ACTIONS & INFO

1) Woodland creation for water quality and Forestry Commission Schemes

Woodlands and tree shelter belts can intercept and filter direct sources of pollution and diffuse pollution: Woodlands can reduce run-off rates, increase infiltration and soil porosity – allowing excess nutrients to be taken up by trees, stabilise the soil and prevent spray drift from entering drainage networks when placed along a riparian zone. Furthermore, woodlands can provide a barrier to airborne pollutants such as ammonia. Click on the links below for more info:

- **Capital grant application form**

Use the capital grant application form with:

- **Woodland creation grant form**
- **Woodland management plan grant**
- **Woodland tree health grant**

For further guidance, view the 'How to complete' manual [here](#).

FREE EVENTS

'Enrich your soils (advanced)'

Join our interactive workshop on improving soil health and fertility with CSF and Nuffield Scholars from Innovation for Agriculture.

17 December 10.00 - 15.30 Necton Community Centre, 13 Tun's Road, Necton, PE37 8EH.

Sign up [here](#). BASIS points available.

View other upcoming CSF events [here](#).

Farm Business Update (FBU) 2019

Keep up to date on the latest environmental, water and regulatory issues at the local FBU morning events: 5 Feb in Wortwell & 14 Feb in Dereham. Email: east@cla.org.uk or call 01638 590429 to book.

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 (CSFO for Wissey)

Tim.Hogg@naturalengland.org.uk / 07786276904

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

Environment Agency

Helen Blower (EA Wissey Catchment

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

Focus: Improving rivers in the Wissey catchment - working with water companies, landowners and the agricultural industry, holding events, river restoration projects and improving water quality.

Sam Hurst (Environment Officer)

sam.hurst@environment-agency.gov.uk / 07899008937

Focus: Covering East Anglian 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@norfolkriverstrust.org / 07788377617

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

RSPB

Amy Crossley (new RSPB Conservation Adviser for the Brecks) amy.crossley@rspb.org.uk / 07712278665

Focus: Providing advice on priority farmland wildlife in the Brecks.

4) Best practice guidance for ditches, riparian zones and land drainage

a) Ditch maintenance

Ensuring that ditches can function efficiently is an important part of land maintenance, pre-empting any potential problems that could occur. Frequent attention is required, and a little-and-often approach is more cost-effective and ecologically sound.

Here are some top tips for keeping open ditches clear, whilst protecting wildlife:

- Ditch management in late summer/early autumn avoids disturbance to wildlife whilst access is generally easier because of the drier ground conditions;
- Work only from one bank, avoiding damage to the working bank by careful operation of a machine that is appropriate to the channel size;
- Maintain the existing water level wherever possible;
- Leave parts of the ditch undisturbed each time you clear vegetation or de-silt the ditch. This will ensure that some refuge habitat is kept, enabling wildlife to re-colonise areas disturbed through management;
- Try to create bends or rough areas to reduce flow rates, avoid straight clear channels with smooth bottoms;
- Manage the ditch in an upstream direction to enable wildlife to recolonize disturbed areas more easily;
- Leave aquatic vegetation taken from the ditch on the bankside for a couple of hours to allow wildlife to escape back to the ditch; and
- Do not leave vegetation on the bankside in the long-term as it will rot and pollute the water (keep livestock away from dredgings that might contain poisonous plants).

For further info, click [here](#).



Catchment Contact - Anglian Water

Martin Bowes (CaBA Project Manager)

mBowes@anglianwater.co.uk / 07725608593

Focus: Steering the CamEO Catchment

Partnership.

Water Sensitive Farming: Phase 3 has begun (2018-2021)



Water Sensitive Farming

NRT are thrilled to announce a further 3 years of funding has been awarded to the **Water Sensitive Farming** (WSF) initiative – an endorsement of just how successful the project has been so far.

Since 2012, they have been working to improve soil and water by providing independent farm support and advice. Having delivered mitigation and improvement measures across the CamEO Catchment, the WSF initiative now aims to build and consolidate on this pioneering work by:

- Continuing to forge strong relationships with farmers and landowners
- Reaching out to new farmers in key areas

A huge thank you to the Coca-Cola Foundation, who has funded the project to date through the Coca-Cola Great Britain and WWF Partnership, along with targeted support from Tesco and Asda.

***NEW JOB* - CamEO Farm Advisor**

Norfolk Rivers Trust are currently looking for an experienced farm advisor for the Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment. See the advert [here](#).
Deadline: 5pm Monday 10th December.

Free farm tool

A useful **tool** for farmers to calculate their greenhouse gas emissions, water usage and biodiversity has been created. Farmers can complete the questions to identify where and how they can improve.

b) Field drainage management – Why is this important?

Good management of field drainage systems can save you money and protect the environment by helping to:

- Maintain optimum conditions for crop growth
- Reduce soil damage, soil erosion and nutrient losses
- Reduce the risk of watercourse pollution
- Identify pollution problems early
- Improve ecological habitats

Click [here](#) to read the Rivers Trust's 'Best Practice Information Sheet'.



c) Riparian management - Top tops

If you own land or property with a river, stream, ditch or culvert next to or within it then you are a 'riparian landowner'.

Careful planning is required by landowners to ensure that they fulfil their riparian responsibilities, whilst enhancing the environment. For example, only trim the bank when necessary and avoid cutting both sides of the bank in the same year. This approach allows wildlife to migrate to opposite sides of the watercourse each year, rather than be forced to leave the watercourse totally. For further advice, view the **Rivers Trust's pinpoint guide**.

5) Weather station at South Pickenham

An Anglian Water funded on-farm weather station has been installed at South Pickenham to measure soil moisture, soil and air temperature and rainfall levels. Providing local, near real-time environmental data, the aim is to help growers make more informed crop management decisions and assist with their day to day farming activities. The unit will also help study any relationship between soil moisture, rainfall and field losses to water courses.



Norfolk FWAG corn bunting event

Norfolk FWAG recently ran an event for the Wissey facilitation fund group focussing on corn bunting nesting habits. Corn buntings tend to nest between 24m and 30m into a cereal crop, leaving them vulnerable to predators. It appears that they select these areas for nesting as they like the density of the crop at the point where the headland overlaps slightly with the rest of the drilled field.

If you are in an area where you may have corn buntings nesting on your farm, please consider establishing some double drilled plots:

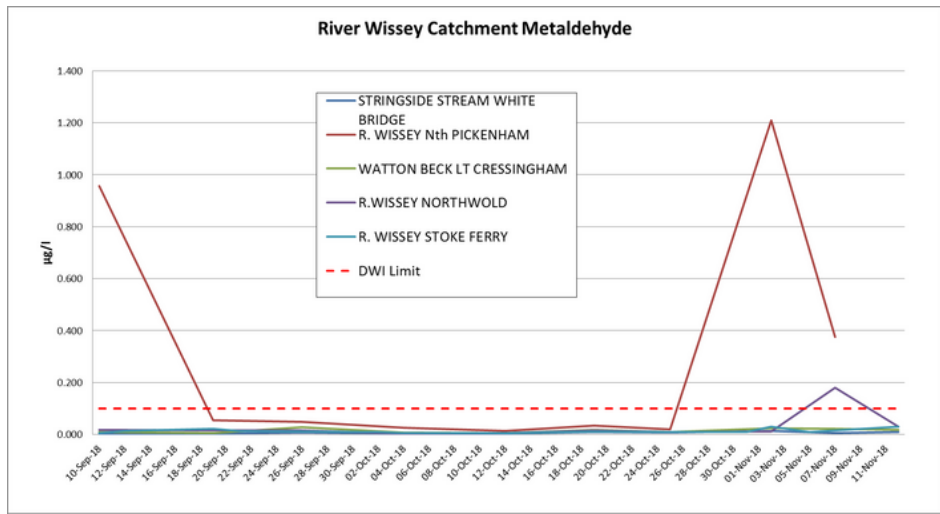
- Choose a field within 200m of insect-rich food sources such as pollen and nectar plots.
- When drilling either winter or spring cereals, lift the drill, reverse a short distance and set the drill off again to create double-drilled plots. Do this at least 50m into the field from the edge of the crop.
- Alternatively, after drilling a field of cereals, go back on to the field and drill patches in between the rows of your existing work.
- Treat the crop as you would normally, checking for nests and marking any found.
- Be sure to sight your double drilled plots away from tramlines, and at regular intervals between 50m and 200m into the crop.

6) Water quality updates - Anglian Water

Metoldehyde has been detected at very high levels in the River Wissey at the Anglian Water, North Pickenham sample point in mid September and early November (see chart below). This was then seen at the Northwold sampling point in early November.

After investigations by Rob Holland, Anglian Water's Catchment Advisor for Norfolk, no direct source could be found. However, there have been some heavy rain showers on freshly cultivated soils and this poses a soil erosion risk. Abstraction at Stoke Ferry continues with close monitoring.

Please adhere to the **Metoldehyde Stewardship Group guidance** when using metoldehyde containing products, or switch to the alternative Ferric Phosphate products.



7) Emergency phone line stickers

New emergency contact stickers have been created by Rob Holland (Anglian Water) containing EA and AW phone numbers. These can be placed in tractor cabs and on sprayers etc. and are being distributed.



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