

FAULKNER AND MAYNE SUSTAINABLE  
AGRICULTURE LTD



# Managing increased regulatory risks – the role of Water Abstractor Groups

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## Pressures on agriculture

Business security	Forward planning	Impacts on crop yields and quality
Declining agricultural reservoir stocks	Frequent agricultural droughts	Uncertainty over licensing
Perceptions of water ownership	Significant costs of infrastructure	Labour availability and skills

### Policy

- Regional Water Resources Planning
  - Local Resource Options
- Water for Food
- Environmental Destination
- Licensing reform
- Local Planning system
- Tax

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**WORKING WITH WATER RESOURCES WEST**

**THE GROUP**  
Abstractors working together to ensure sustainability of water resources. Agriculture and horticulture represented by NFU, HTA and FUW.

**THE PROJECT**  
Working with the regional group and local agri sector to build capacity for agriculture to engage with water resources

**KEY ASPECTS**  
Supporting the establishment of WAGs  
Supporting LRO projects

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## Existing WAGs

- Broadlands Agricultural Water Abstractors Group (BAWAG)
- East Suffolk Water Abstractors Group (ESWAG)
- River Lark, Suffolk
- North Northumberland Agricultural Abstractors Group
- Thet Abstractors Group
- Lincoln Water Transfer Ltd
- Six groups already operate
- East of England
- Most formed in response to water shortage
- Engaged in catchment management
- Research and innovation
- Training

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## Emerging WAGs



The WRW project resulted in commitment from farmer and grower abstractors to form new Water Abstractor Groups in the following catchments:

- Idle and Torne, Nottinghamshire
- North Shropshire, Shropshire Middle Severn
- River Worfe, Worcestershire Middle Severn
- Worcestershire (county focused WAG including Worcestershire Middle Severn, southern catchments, and Warwickshire Avon catchments)
- Wye

10 March 2020

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## What is needed to build a WAG?

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Consensus that there's a need for action

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An engaged group of skilled farmers

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Utilising expertise that exists within the group

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Support from existing networks

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# What do farmers need from a WAG?

Secure farming future

Navigating the changing abstraction system

Forum for exchange of ideas and knowledge

Fostering collaboration on shared resources, trading, abstraction license applications and resilience measures

Integrated approach, linking flood and drainage management of water resources

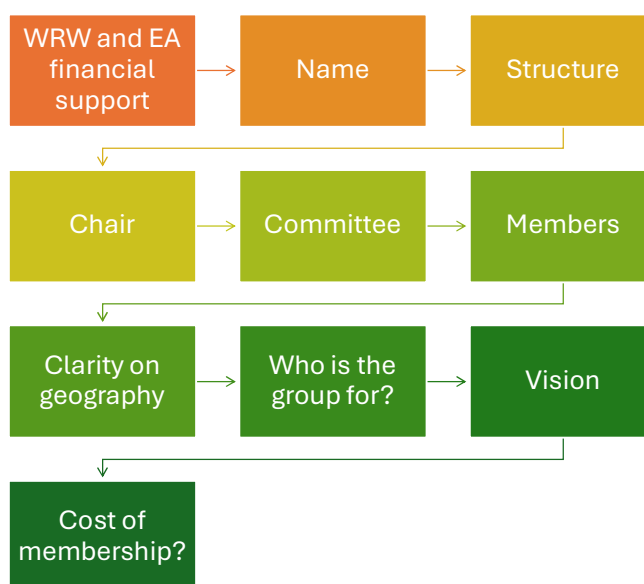
Turn practical learning into system change

Logical routes for securing water

Value from membership

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## Practical aspects



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## How are we building the new Shropshire Severn WAG?



- Initial meeting with small group of abstractors
- Well attended first meeting for the wider WAG
- Call for committee members
- Appointed a Chair
- Determined operational area and catchment leads
  - Meese & Strine
  - Roden
  - Tern
  - Perry
  - Worfe
  - Severn Corridor

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## What will we need for the future?

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Connect water and food security policy

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Build Trust

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Harness agricultural expertise

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Use of technology

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Supportive and workable policy

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Swift regulator decisions

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Funding for WAG development

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