



Nidd Action Group (NAG)

2024 Annual Report, February 2025

1. What has NAG been doing since our last public meeting (December 2023)?

- Communicated the 'hotspots' of pollution that NAG discovered in 2023
- Achieved designation of The Lido as a Bathing Water (requiring YW and EA to act on pollution)
- Further sample surveys of water quality at the Lido and in the Nidd Becks,
- worked with other stakeholders to ensure that the Nidd gets attention
- campaigned nationally for legislation and enforcement of regulations
- Applied for research grants to help the Nidd (two currently successful)

2. What does a Clean River look Like?

- **Bathing Water quality** is regulated from EU Bathing Water Directive, which UK has enshrined in Law (2013.) Bathing Waters are classified as Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor, on the basis of concentrations of faecal indicator bacteria, with Good being the aim and at least Sufficient being acceptable.
- **Ecological River Health** is regulated through the Water Environment Regulations (2017), Environmental Quality Standards classifications are High, Good, Moderate, Poor and Bad, with the aim being Good. Assessments are of biological elements, hydro morphological characteristics and chemical characteristics, with HIGH referring to waters largely unaffected by human activities

3. How is the Nidd at the Moment?

- Newly designated Knaresborough Lido Bathing Water (May 2024) has been assessed as **POOR**
- The Nidd Catchments are predominantly **MODERATE** in ecological health, though some becks are Poor or Bad

4. What stops the Nidd from being better?

Pressures that prevent the Nidd achieving good ecological status include

- **point sources** of pollution - Wastewater Treatment outfalls, Combined Sewer Overflows / Surface Water outfall pipes or industrial spills leading to a river or stream.
- **diffuse sources** of pollution - agricultural runoff of animal faeces, herbicides and fertilizers, pollutants from car parks, transport, car washes and contaminated surface water from roofs.
- water abstraction, and **hydrological and morphological alterations** such as weirs, and straightened, dredged rivers.

5. What are NAG's Concerns? What is Polluting the Nidd?

1. **Human Sewage** from Yorkshire Water (YW) infrastructure and from private unregulated septic tanks entering the river
2. **Discharge from farms** of fertilizer, herbicides and animal waste into the Nidd
3. **Surface and Waste Water** from the construction of houses & other buildings where flows exceed planned capacities, and untreated waste goes into the river.
4. **Urban runoff** and misconnected domestic and industrial properties into surface water drainage
5. **The presence of metals** from historic mining and other sources
6. **Pollutants not currently being removed or treated** in sewerage infrastructure, such as E. coli, Pharmaceuticals, microplastics, radioactive materials
7. **Flooding (and drought)**, that causing damage to the habitat, communities and businesses which can impact on tourism in the area. This can be made worse by **human alterations** such as weirs, dams and straightening of channels, and is influenced by **changing climate** and human activities

The impacts of the above include reducing biodiversity and declining wildlife

- Since 1970, freshwater species have seen an 83% decline globally), and invasive non-native species (smothering and feeding on native species).
- Habitats need help to regain their variety

Nationally it is considered that agricultural pollution (2) and Sewage pollution (1) are the largest causes of poor ecological status, but it varies from river to river and between different parts of the river. We need to know before we can make the Nidd Cleaner

6. NAGs Mission is to tackle these concerns and ensure the River Nidd is:

- ❖ A river that is safe for all (animals and humans)
- ❖ Free from unsafe levels of sewage pollution (including raising standards so legally discharged waste does not harm the river Nidd)
- ❖ Is a thriving habitat that is valued and celebrated by locals and visitors

7 NAG's Aims for 2025 and beyond

NAG will lead or continue to work with partners to achieve the following aims:

1 : Review and improve the **habitats and biodiversity** of the Nidd: Morph training and surveys

- reduce the occurrence and impact of invasive non-native species INNS training and surveys
- reduce the future risk and mitigate the impacts of flood, drought and climate change. NFM training and actions

2: **Reduce pollution** of the River Nidd to safe levels through Citizen Science work

- Outfall Safari and River Guardian/Steward training and action
- Water sampling surveys focusing on 'hotspots'
- Understand the YW sewerage and drainage network (outfalls, storm water overflow), relating outfalls to pollution, including misconnections.
- Support the York University NERC funded project, NAG to lead '**best practice' citizen scientists sampling and testing kit**
- Working with Nidd flyfishers to monitor the river long term

3: Monitor and impact planning processes and lobby for raised standards,

- work with, and provide feedback to North Yorkshire Council
- scrutinize and support planning proposals (NYC), Asset Management Plans (YW) and annual plans (EA)
- support Sewage Network Campaign and others to raise national standards and public awareness

4: Preserve the river as a **beautiful place** to be, **increasing engagement** with local communities and the river culturally.

- Organize and take part in local Nidd-related events
- Press for signage for bathing water at Lido, and develop an extended Hello Lampost Nidd Trail
- Raise funds for projects to protect and improve river health
- Take part in funded **Riverkin** project in May 2025
- Support **Harrogate Vision** proposal with work on Harrogate becks
- Support **Knaresborough Forest Park and Longlands** projects for their impact on riparian environment and biodiversity

5: Develop a robust NAG committee to implement an action plan and maintain a viable group of volunteers over a period of years

- NAG committee to be maintained, trained, supported
- Communication with current and potential members and volunteers

8. Help Us!

Potential volunteer activities with NAG	
Join the NAG committee	Attend face to face and virtual meetings to share information, ideas, activities
	Help with specific tasks, e.g. Mailing list, newsletters, websites, recruit new members, fundraise, campaign
Act as a NAG Advisor or representative	Share your specialist knowledge or experience with NAG
	Meet with Nidd stakeholders, representing NAG to advance our aims
Get trained by NAG and its fellow collaborating organisations	Habitat Assessment (Morph)
<i>So we can carry out citizen science activities</i>	Biodiversity assessment (INNS),
	Riverfly monitoring
	Water quality sampling
	Outfall safari
	River Guardian – ongoing care of a section of the Nidd
Donate to NAG	Details on the NAG Facebook