

Have your say about how flooding impacts the local Weardale community

Informal drop-in events will take place this month

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September is a great month to catch up with how things are going with one of the country's leading landmark flood alleviation projects that is being delivered in the North East of England on our very doorstep.

The £2.1million Weardale Natural Flood Management (NFM) Demonstrator project has long term ambitions to deliver natural features across an 100km² area of landscape that will hopefully reduce the risk of flooding for around 140 properties, encourage carbon capture, improve water quality, and create a haven for wildlife to thrive.

This month the Environment Agency will be hosting three information events across successive days at Cowhill & Lanehead Village Hall, Stanhope Community Centre and Westgate Village Hall in County Durham (the full event details are listed below).

The idea of the informal events is to capture local knowledge of how flooding affects the residents and business owners of Weardale. It will also give the team a chance to chat with residents about the Natural Flood Management project and find out how it is progressing.

The project covers Stanhope Burn, Rookhope Burn, Killhope Burn, Ireshopeburn and Middlehope Burn in rural County Durham.

The Weardale Natural Flood Management Demonstrator is part of a national Defra funded natural flood management project.

Mr John Carrick, a local landowner and agricultural contractor talks about the importance of the flood alleviation project and why the community should be getting involved in the programme. He said:

An issue like flooding is in the public interest and can affect anybody. The events are a good way for residents to find out the intentions of the Environment Agency and what this scheme will mean for the local community.

I think where Government money is being spent residents should know what's going on in their region and learn about what the project is all about.

As a landowner Mr Carrick explains why he feels it's important to play a role in the NFM Demonstrator project. He said:

The project gives the landowner a chance to do some good in the water catchment by retaining water to prevent flooding downstream in periods of heavy rain, as we live in a very high risk rainfall area.

Kirsty Hardy, Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor at the Environment Agency, said:

Our project is looking at how NFM could reduce flood risk in several locations across Weardale and to assess what this could mean to the local communities.

We are working with landowners within the area to install features that will retain and temporarily hold back water.

Just to put things into context, the water we are looking to hold back is the equivalent of one-hundred Olympic sized swimming pools, which is a great deal of potential flood water that could impact upon residents and businesses.

The reason for installing NFM features and introducing the scheme is to hopefully prevent the water entering the water course, which could in turn decrease flood risk downstream. If successful the project could show that natural flood management has the ability to reduce flood risk for local towns and villages.

The project is supported by Forestry Commission England, Natural England and North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership.

The community information drop-in events are as follows:

Tuesday 24 Sept / Cowhill & Lanehead Village Hall / County Durham, DL13 1DA
2.30pm–7pm

Wednesday 25 Sept / Stanhope Community Centre / 11 Front Street, Stanhope, County Durham, DL13 2NQ 2.30pm–7pm

Thursday 26 Sept / Westgate Village Hall / Front Street, Westgate, County Durham, DL13 1RX 2.30pm–7pm

For further details about the community information events or the Weardale NFM Demonstrator project, please contact Kirsty Hardy at the Environment

Agency, by emailing: Kirsty.Hardy@environment-agency.gov.uk

People can also learn more about the regional and national work of the Environment Agency by visiting www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Get Ready For Brexit campaign launches in Italy

The UK Government has launched a major information campaign urging UK nationals living in Italy to get ready for Brexit on 31 October. It is part of a wider communications campaign effort across Europe.

UK nationals in Italy will receive information about specific actions they need to take to keep their rights and access to services in Italy including around residency, healthcare, driving licences and passports.

The campaign will use multiple channels – from Facebook posts to billboard posters in towns and cities across Italy – urging people to take action ahead of 31 October.

The British Embassy in Italy has already been doing a lot over the past months to inform UK nationals, including town hall information meetings including question and answer sessions with the Ambassador and Consular experts.

There are more than one million UK nationals living in the EU, with more than 60% living in just four countries – Spain, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

The UK Government recently announced up to £3 million in grant funding for charities and other voluntary organisations who can inform UK nationals about the need to register or apply for residency and to support them as they complete their applications.

The Government also allocated an extra £300,000 to British Embassies and Consulates across the EU to engage with 'hard to reach' UK nationals such as disabled people, those living in remote areas or people who might need extra help to complete any paperwork in preparation for Brexit. □ This extra assistance will build on the support that British Embassies are already providing with more than 541 outreach events with UK nationals since November 2017.

The new information campaign asks UK nationals to take action to prepare for Brexit by checking the [Living in Italy guide](#) and:

- apply for residency

- register for healthcare
- exchange their UK driving licence for an Italian one
- check their passport is valid for travel

□

Transparency data: Defra: workforce management information August 2019

Reports on departmental staff numbers and costs.

Nottinghamshire pupils inspired by HS2 design a railway for the future

Specifically designed for pupils aged 7-11, the workshop-based learning programme focuses on STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) and encourages pupils to work together to plan, design and build a new railway for the future.

In a series of hands-on and interactive challenges, pupils work as a team and put their problem solving skills into practice as they are tasked with designing a railway, which meets the needs of the modern day traveller, between fictional towns and cities.

Kate Myers, HS2 Ltd's Head of Skills, Employment and Education explains:

For today's school pupils, HS2 is probably the largest engineering programme that will take place in this country in their lifetime. It's really important that we capture the significance of that in a compelling and interesting way so pupils understand not just the challenges of delivering a project of this scale, but the benefits and opportunities it will bring now and into the future.

We're introducing pupils to the wide range of diverse career opportunities that HS2 is creating, and inspiring them to think about how they might play a part in this once in a lifetime project.

With HS2 set to arrive in the East Midlands in 2033, today's school pupils could help to tackle the UK's growing engineering skills gap. The aim of the education programme is to inspire pupils to think about how the STEAM subjects they learn at school could set them on the path to becoming the apprentices, engineers and train drivers of the future.

HS2 will transform rail travel in the UK, give passengers thousands of extra seats every day, take freight off our roads and free up space for more local rail services on existing lines. It will play a crucial role in rebalancing Britain's economy and is already supporting over 9,000 jobs with 2,000 businesses already having won work on the project.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- HS2 will transform Britain's railways: HS2 takes inter-city trains off the line, opening up the ability for more localised services with over 100 cities and towns benefitting. It will deliver a travel experience as yet unseen in this country, with a fast, reliable and affordable service. It will unlock a massive amount of space on the existing railway, creating thousands of extra seats for passengers and taking freight off the roads.
- HS2 will better connect Britain: Serving over 25 towns from Scotland to the South East, HS2 links nearly half of the UK population. It is needed in order to deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail. Together these better connections will unleash the economic potential of the country. Local plans around HS2 sites show nearly 500,000 jobs and 90,000 houses are planned.
- HS2 is happening: There are now 9,000 jobs supported by the programme and 2,000 businesses (70% SMEs) that have provided work. Works on HS2 are well underway with over 250 active sites.