

Press release: Selly Park North flood alleviation scheme ready and operational

Work on a multi-million pound scheme to reduce the flood risk to over 150 homes and businesses in Selly Park North is ready to protect people from flooding.

The scheme, funded by an innovative public-private partnership with a £2 million financial contribution from Calthorpe Estates, protects 150 homes and helps to protect key highway routes and infrastructure during times of flood, maintaining vital transport and emergency routes in an area that was affected by flooding in 2008, 2016 and more recently in May 2018.

The work involved deepening and widening an existing flood water storage area near the Bourn Brook Walkway on Harborne Lane. This has increased the capacity of the storage area and offers wildlife habitat.

The major part of the works is a 2.4 metre diameter 227 metre long bypass culvert running underneath the Pershore Road. This tunnel will take water away from homes to safely flow into the river downstream.

This scheme is part of the Environment Agency's programme to invest £2.6 billion by 2021 protecting over 300,000 homes and businesses from the risk of flooding.

Jon Saner, from the Environment Agency, said:

We've worked closely with the local community and partners to help deliver this scheme, which will help protect homes and businesses from future flooding.

This community has experienced the terrible effects of flooding and the measures we've built here reduce future risk. We would like to thank local people for their patience and support throughout the building of this scheme.

This scheme was delivered by contractors commissioned by the Environment Agency, and compliments the scheme completed in January 2018 for Selly Park South. Together these schemes work to protect over 350 homes and business in the heart of Birmingham.

The area of Selly Park has a history of flooding from the River Rea, the Bourn Brook and surface water. The Environment Agency has been working in partnership with Birmingham City Council, Calthorpe Estates and other organisations to develop schemes to help reduce the risk of flooding for properties in the Selly Park area.

Along with flood defences, knowing your flood risk is also important when protecting your family and property from flooding. People can [check their risk](#) and [register to receive free flood warnings](#) online or call the Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

[Press release: Selly Park North flood alleviation scheme ready and operational](#)

This scheme is part of the Environment Agency's programme to invest £2.6 billion by 2021 protecting over 300,000 homes and businesses from the risk of flooding.

[News story: Can you help trace the family of a missing World War 2 soldier?](#)

A British soldier was killed in action in October 1944 and for just over 70 years he lay where he fell until his remains were uncovered in 2015. Several years' worth of research has produced a short list of potential candidates that may help uncover the identity of this brave man.

The MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) is searching for male family members of 2 of the potential candidates who were from Manchester. DNA samples have been taken from the remains and JCCC want to try and confirm the identity by comparing this sample with a member of each of the families of the 2 potential candidates.

Both soldiers served with the 2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers and were killed during the Allied Gothic Line Offensive in Italy on 23 October 1944, during the battle to capture Monte Spaduro.

The 2nd Bn Lancashire Fusiliers in Italy during 1944, Crown copyright, All rights reserved

Fusilier Joseph Frank Faulkner

Joseph Frank Faulkner was the son of Joseph Faulkner and Mary Isabel Plant.

He was born in October 1921 in Dartington, Cheshire. His last known address was Worthington Avenue, Partington in Trafford. Joseph had 5 brothers: Kenneth, George, Cyril, Harry and Jack and 1 sister, Mary. JCCC's initial family research suggests that some of the descendants from these siblings could still be living in the Manchester area.

Fusilier Walter Vickers

Walter Vickers was the son of Walter Vickers and Maggie Straker. He was born in April 1921 in Rusholme, Manchester. His last known address was listed as Boynton Road, Rusholme. We believe from our initial research that Walter had 3 brothers and 3 sisters: Bernard, James, Geoffrey, Nita, Lorna and Elva. Once again, the JCCC believe that the descendants of these siblings could still be living in the Manchester area.

Artefacts found with the remains, Crown copyright, All rights reserved

Now an appeal has been launched by the MOD's JCCC to track down either of these men's surviving male relatives so that they can be invited to undertake a DNA test to prove whether the remains are theirs. If positive identifications can be made, they will be given a full military burial in Italy with a named headstone.

Artefacts found with the remains, Crown copyright, All rights reserved

Nicola Nash from the JCCC said:

I am really hoping that family members of these 2 brave men will see this appeal and agree to help us. If anyone thinks they may have some information, then please get in contact so that we can try and identify this soldier that has been found.

If you can help, please call Nicola on 01452 712612 ext. 6063 (office hours) / 07773 187075 or email her via ,Nicola.nash101@mod.gov.uk.

Press release: Statement by PM Theresa May and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar: 26 April 2019

In coming together with other political leaders in St Anne's Cathedral to pay tribute to Lyra McKee, we gave expression to the clear will and determination of all of the people of these islands to reject violence and to support peace and a better future for everyone in Northern Ireland.

We also heard the unmistakable message to all political leaders that people across Northern Ireland want to see a new momentum for political progress. We agree that what is now needed is actions and not just words from all of us who are in positions of leadership.

We have agreed to establish a new process of political talks, involving all the main political parties in Northern Ireland, together with the UK and Irish Governments, in accordance with the three stranded process. The aim of these talks is quickly to re-establish to full operation the democratic institutions of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement – the NI Executive, Assembly and North-South Ministerial Council – so that they can effectively serve all of the people for the future.

We have asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Tánaiste to meet later today in Belfast to set out our proposed approach and to commence the talks process as soon as possible after the local elections in Northern Ireland.

In addition, we have agreed that there should be a meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference during the same period. The Conference will consider East/West relations, security cooperation, and political stability in Northern Ireland.

We understand the complexity of the underlying concerns of all parties, and the need for renewed trust, mutual respect, generosity and new thinking to resolve the issues.

As Prime Minister and Taoiseach, we are determined to work together to ensure this process comes to a successful conclusion.

We will review progress at the end of May.

Press release: Statement by PM Theresa May and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar: 26 April 2019

Statement by Prime Minister Theresa May and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar of the Republic of Ireland.