

Press release: Supporting flooded communities in Sparkhill and Selly Park

People living and working in Sparkhill and Selly Park are invited to meet the Environment Agency, Birmingham City Council and National Flood Forum teams working to support flooded communities in the West Midlands.

Following extreme rainfall across the region, communities in Sparkhill and Selly Park were badly affected by flooding.

The Environment Agency is working alongside Birmingham City Council and the National Flood Forum to support these communities, investigate the causes of flooding and identify what could be done to reduce flood risk in the area in the future.

A series of drop-in events are being hosted over the coming fortnight (6 to 12 June 2018) to give local people the opportunity to speak to the teams involved.

Emma Smailes, from the Environment Agency said:

Our thoughts are with those who have been affected by recent flooding. We're continuing to work in the communities affected and our teams are working round the clock to monitor flood risk, issue flood alerts and warnings and keep waterways clear of debris.

We want to meet local people so they can share their experiences with us, ask us questions and so that we can work together to investigate what happened and identify ways of reducing flood risk in the future.

The drop-in events are planned for the following times and locations:

For people affected in Selly Park the National Flood Forum and Environment Agency will be around to talk to members of the public on the following dates:

- Wednesday 6 June 2018, 2pm to 8pm
- Thursday 7 June 2018, 2pm to 8pm

at

Selly Park Tavern Car Park

592 Pershore Rd

B29 7HQ

For people affected in Sparkhill the National Flood Forum, Birmingham City Council and Environment Agency will be available to talk to members of the public on the following dates:

- Monday 11 June 2018, 2pm to 8pm
- Tuesday 12 June 2018, 2pm to 8pm

Percy Road Park

Sparkhill

B11 3JS

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[Press release: Foreign Secretary calls on tech sector to help endangered species](#)

Today, Monday 4 June, the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has brought together leading technology companies together with conservationists to develop new and innovative ways to combat the illegal wildlife trade.

Experts from companies including Google, Amazon Web Services, Cisco and Dimension Data, as well as umbrella body, TechUK and government technology experts from Catapult centres heard what challenges the conservation sector is facing as it combats the illegal wildlife trade, which is worth up to £17 billion a year globally, and is a highly organised, sophisticated criminal industry. The Minister for the Illegal Wildlife Trade, Mark Field, co-chaired the event.

This meeting is the first in a series that will take place throughout the summer in the run up to the [London 2018 Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference](#) in October. Further workshops will bring experts and conservationists together to deliver technological solutions to combat poaching, make it easier to identify illegal wildlife products at borders or to spot animals in danger in the field.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I've just come back from the Amazon, one of Earth's natural wonders, where both animals and people are suffering at the hands of criminals who are committing horrible wildlife crimes. What I saw has only sharpened my determination to combat the blight of the illegal wildlife trade.

I want to make sure we're using all the great talent we have available to us to fight this problem, so I'm calling on our finest technological brains to help us in the battle to save some of the world's most endangered species.

TechUK's CEO Julian David said:

Whether it is blockchain to support supply chain transparency and assurance or drones, satellites and the internet of things-enabled solutions to monitor activity in national parks and areas of high scientific interest, new tech is revolutionising conservation across the world. techUK and its members are excited to work with the FCO on a sector led approach to combating illegal wildlife crime.

Last month, the government published its Ivory Bill which, when passed, will be one of the toughest bans on ivory sales in the world.

Full list of attendees

- Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson
- Minister of State, Mark Field
- TechUK
- Google
- Amazon Web Services

- Cisco Alliance Dimension Data
- Satellite Applications Catapult
- Digital Catapult
- The Royal Foundation
- Zoological Society of London

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100

[Notice: SBRI: smart waste tracking data collection, storage and reporting services](#)

This is a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition. It is open to organisations of any type and size, from any sector. 100% funding is available to successful applicants.

Please read the [full competition scope](#) before you make your application.

Press release: New £63 million defence scheme is turning the tide against floods in Rossall

A multi-million pound coastal defence scheme to shore up Rossall's sea defences while reducing flood risk to 7,500 homes has been officially opened today (1st June 2018). It is one of the single biggest investments in a single coastal flood scheme to date.

Led by Wyre Council, in partnership with the Environment Agency and main contractor Balfour Beatty, the new scheme is made up of two kilometres of sea defences. It forms one of the three projects being delivered by the Fylde Peninsula Coastal Programme Partnership, alongside the recently completed Anchorholme Coastal Protection Scheme in Blackpool and the Fairhaven to Church Scar Coastal Protection Scheme in Lytham.

Designed for the next 100 years to hold back the Irish Sea during major storms, the Rossall flood defences will provide better protection to the town's tramway, hospital and schools whilst reducing flood risk to 7,500 homes. The scheme comprises of 1.84km of sheet piles, more than 10,000 specially manufactured precast concrete units, 211,000 tonnes of stone, 46,000m³ of insitu concrete and 327,000 tonnes of locally sourced rock from 12 quarries across the north of the UK. The scheme is one of the single biggest investments the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), has made in a coastal flood scheme to date.

The Environment Agency builds climate change projections into the design of all of its flood defences to make sure they are fit for the future. So, aside from being an impressive piece of infrastructure within its own right, the Rossall scheme is helping in the fight against climate change by taking into account changing circumstances in sea level rise and weather patterns over the next 100 years.

Construction of the scheme has also allowed for improvements to the local environment as part of the new defences. This has included the creation of a new ecology park on the landward side of the defences to enhance the area through its visual impact and environmental footprint.

Known as Larkholme Grasslands, the park has been designed by Lancashire County Council with bridges and artwork by Stephen Broadbent, a British sculptor who specialises in public art. This strip of grassland, from West Way to Fleetwood Golf Club, is already classed as a Biological Heritage Site because of the rarer species of flora and fauna that grow there.

The completion of the scheme delivers on a long-held vision to not only create a lagoon area behind the new defences – to act as an additional flood storage for spray coming over the seawall – but also to provide a home for local wildlife and a new green space for residents and tourists to enjoy.

The park will also feature specially created sculptures by Stephen Broadbent, and, in a nod to the folklore and myth surrounding the local coastline, the new seawall at Rossall continues the story of The Sea Swallow, cementing its place on the Mythic Coast.

Beginning at Cleveleys, visitors to the site can follow an artwork and poetry trail from the popular children's book until the story ends at Rossall Point Observation Tower. Characters from The Sea Swallow, including a giant stainless steel seashell and sea ogre carved from limestone, can also be spotted along the picturesque walk.

Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder at Wyre Council said:

I'd like to thank all our partners for helping us to deliver the new sea defences. The completed scheme will not only protect our residents, their homes and our businesses and infrastructure, but also has provided us with a visually stunning promenade for walkers and cyclists. Locals and visitors alike will be able to enjoy the magnificent coastline, whilst the grasslands will give a contrasting green and natural landscape.

Sir James Bevan, Environment Agency chief executive, said:

This is one of the biggest investments ever in a coastal flood scheme. It will reduce flood risk to 7,500 homes, create new green space and benefit the local economy, including by using locally sourced materials. It's a great example of partnership: by working together the Environment Agency, Wyre Council, our other partners and the local community have helped create an even better place for people and wildlife.

Defra Minister David Rutley said:

Rossall's new coastal defence scheme has been made possible thanks not only to significant government funding, but also the huge support of local government and other partners. The result is positive news for the community – regenerating the area, creating an ecology park and providing better protection for 7,500 properties from the risk of flooding.

I also welcome the fact these vital defences have been constructed using local materials and expertise, supporting industry and the economy in the North West of England.

Dean Banks, Balfour Beatty Chief Executive Officer for UK Construction Services, said:

We are delighted that the local community and visitors to the Fylde coast can now fully experience the extensive benefits of the Rossall scheme, which will protect thousands of nearby properties from the risk of flooding and offer a captivating promenade for people of all ages to enjoy.

The project's success is a testament to the skills and collaborative working relationship between the fully integrated delivery team, with Wyre Council and the Environment Agency.

Notes to editors

327,000 tonnes of rock is the total of underlayer and main rock armour that make up the scheme. This is made of 86,342T of under layer placed and 241,000T of rock armour.

The Rossall Coastal Protection Scheme has been fully funded through DEFRA grant in aid totalling £63.2m (protecting 7,500 properties).