

Press release: New fish pass opens up County Durham beck

A new fish pass on a County Durham beck is giving fish access to an additional 6km of habitat.

The new rock ramp fish pass at Goodwell Ford in Brancepeth Beck is the latest in a number of fish passage improvements along the beck carried out over the past three years.

It's hoped that these improvements will increase fish numbers across the whole river catchment.

Habitat upstream of this previously impassable structure used to be almost completely devoid of fish but will now act as a nursery for juveniles as adult fish reach their natural spawning grounds.

It's the latest in a series of improvements to fish passage on the beck. Wear Rivers Trust have been working in partnership with Brancepeth Castle, Brancepeth Estate and Brancepeth Castle Golf Club on a project funded by the Environment Agency to modify structures such as culverts, weirs and bridge aprons which were proving to be obstacles to the movement of fish.

The project is already reaping rewards as it was announced last year that fish had been seen moving freely up the beck for the first time in over 150 years once a 3m high weir had been modified.



The newly constructed rock ramp at Brancepeth Beck

'Great to hear about fish returning'

Steve Hudson, Wear Rivers Trust, said:

The size and density of the structures along this beck made the project particularly challenging but we have had great support from local landowners and volunteers to enable us to deliver some great improvements.

Now most of the fish passage works are complete, it is great to hear about fish returning to previously inaccessible parts of the beck and we are very much looking forward to continuing the hard work with the help of our dedicated volunteers.

Goodwell Ford is the sixth structure to be improved following support by volunteers to identify barriers on the beck. Two remaining structures will be monitored with a view to work being carried out in the future.

[Brancepeth Beck fish pass construction](#)

Positive work

Paul Frear, Fisheries Technical Officer for the Environment Agency in the north east, added:

We've worked closely with partners to enable Wear Rivers Trust to carry out lots of positive work in this area to look at structures and issues impacting on fish migration.

This new fish pass opens up another 6km of watercourse for fish and make it far easier for them to travel upstream. The whole project is already reaping rewards. We've worked really hard together with our partners over the years to make dramatic improvements to water quality.

But there is always more we can do and projects such as this at Brancepeth is an example of the sort of work taking place across the region to enhance our rivers and streams.

Consultation outcome: Waste electrical and electronic equipment: amending the 2013 UK regulations

Updated: Summary of responses document replaced to correct some formatting issues within the document.

We want to know what you think about plans to amend the UK's 2013 regulations for waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). The changes will include:

- introducing "Open Scope" requirements, which extends the regulations to all electrical and electronic equipment unless specifically exempt
- making membership to the Producer Balancing Scheme compulsory
- changing how producer fees are allocated in the UK

We also want to know what you think of the 2013 WEEE Regulations. Have they improved the environment at a proportionate cost to business? We will use these views to inform the Post Implementation Review next year.

Press release: Welsh SMEs urged to

seize new UK government backed export finance opportunity

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will call on Welsh SMEs to capitalise on new UK Government backed finance to help gain access to global growth markets when he attends the Fast Growth 50 awards this evening (20 October 2017).

Mr Cairns will deliver a keynote speech at the 19th Fast Growth 50 gala dinner in Cardiff, where the best of Welsh entrepreneurship and the fastest growing businesses in Wales will be showcased.

The Secretary of State will highlight a new £2million UK Export Finance (UKEF) partnership with five High Street banks designed to enable SMEs in Wales to access support directly from their bank in seconds, without the need to apply separately.

The fund will help businesses like those on the Fast Growth 50 list, become part of major export contracts around the world.

Since its inception in 1999, the 551 companies that have featured on the Fast Growth 50 lists have so far created over 34,000 jobs and generated an estimated £18 billion for the Welsh economy.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The Fast Growth 50 ceremony is a key date in the Welsh business calendar. It presents a welcome opportunity to reflect over the year that has passed, and to celebrate the many successes that businesses have worked tirelessly to create.

So many of the companies that have decorated the FG50 rosters over the years are now delivering services and exporting their products right around the globe.

The UK Government wants to do more to ensure Welsh businesses take advantage of every opportunity available to them to grow and expand into new markets.

The support provided by UK Export Finance is a valuable resource for businesses throughout the whole of the UK, Wales included. Unleashing the potential of companies such as those we will celebrate this evening will be key to ensuring the Welsh economy continues to prosper.

Wales is already an exporting nation. There are currently more than 3,800 businesses in Wales that export, with a combined value of £13billion in the first quarter of 2017. Wales is also an attractive place for inward

investment, with latest figures showing that 85 foreign direct investment projects were secured in Wales, creating 2,581 new jobs and safeguarding almost 9,000 more.

The Secretary of State for Wales has recently written to over 26,000 Welsh businesses identified as potential exporters including a copy to the Wales Export Guide. The Wales specific guide sets out the full range of support available to Welsh businesses from the UK Government and contains inspiring stories of companies based in Wales that are successfully exporting. You can read the guide online [here](#).

Notes to editors

- For further information on the Fast Growth 50 awards, [visit their website](#)
- Read more about the UK Export Finance fund [here](#)

[News story: Government announces fund to revolutionise airport screening](#)

Holidaymakers could be spared the hassle of removing laptops and tablets from hand-luggage when passing through airport security, as government seeks to revolutionise aviation screening.

The government is today (20 October 2017) announcing a £3 million fund to support innovative research to develop new ways of detecting explosive devices concealed in electrical items.

Companies and universities are invited to bid for money by submitting proposals for original research in the field of concealed explosives. And new methods of detecting whether electrical items have been tampered with or appear irregular are also of interest.

The proposals can focus on either screening electrical items within bags at an airport's central search area, or the use of more portable technology to screen items at other points in the passenger journey.

Once ready for commercial use, the new technologies will enhance our ability to prevent terrorist attacks on aviation while improving the experience of passengers.

Security Minister, Ben Wallace said:

Aviation security is a government priority and one with an ever changing threat landscape.

We need to embrace and encourage the talent from industry that will allow us to stay several steps ahead of those who wish us harm.

Lord Callanan, Minister for Aviation said:

The UK has always been at the forefront of research and development in the field of aviation security.

The safety and security of the travelling public will always be our top priority but we understand that this can sometimes be inconvenient for passengers – especially families with young children.

As technology improves we want to make the aviation experience quicker and easier for all holidaymakers.

The fund is being run as part of a wider multi-million pound initiative to deliver a step change in aviation security through Future Aviation Security Solutions (FASS).

FASS, a joint Department for Transport and Home Office programme, is working closely with industry partners to stimulate and fund research into a broad range of potential security innovations from initial concepts through to commercial products.

The full criteria for this open fund can be found on the [Defence and Security Accelerator \(DASA\) website](#).

This is just one of the routes to funding that FASS is offering to the research and technology community. FASS also encourages applications for research funding via [DASA's Open Call for Innovation](#). This funding mechanism is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and evaluates ideas, products and services from anywhere in the UK or abroad.

FASS has already issued £1.64 million funding to projects aimed at improving the screening of passengers, their luggage and cargo.

Promising results were demonstrated at an event in September (2017), with phase 2 of this research due to commence shortly.

Press release: The British army women's football team visits Kuwait

The British army women's football team visited Kuwait on 16-19 October as part of a regional tour

The British army women's football team visited Kuwait on 16-19 October as part of a regional tour which also includes UAE, Bahrain and Qatar. They played a match with the Kuwaiti national women's football team. They also conducted a series of community outreach events, including football and fitness coaching sessions at schools to raise awareness of the benefits of sport and promote positive opportunities for women in sports related activities.

The British Ambassador held a Great branded reception in his house for the British and Kuwaiti teams as well as senior officials from Kuwait Football Association. The visit helped in strengthening sports and cultural ties between the youth in both countries. It also reflected UK's commitment to see more women in sport. The visit also helped to kick start Kuwaiti women's football . The media coverage of the visit both on social media and mainstream media was substantive with many positive comments .