

News story: Dry weather update – 17th July 2018

The Environment Agency continues to urge people to follow water company advice and use water wisely during these hotter summer months to help manage demand and reduce the impact on the environment. United Utilities has announced a 'temporary use ban' which is likely to come into effect in early August for its customers in the North West.

Paul Hickey, head of water resources at the Environment Agency, said:

Over two very dry months, we have seen a rapid decline in reservoir levels in the North West and we support the announcement by United Utilities to manage water supplies by introducing household restrictions.

Across the rest of England, most groundwater supplies are at healthy levels and water companies have enough water to maintain supplies if resources are managed properly.

Many rivers around the country have dropped to lower levels than normal for this time of year, which can be damaging to wildlife. We have robust plans in place to respond to these pressures and have stepped up our incident response as well as regulation of those abstracting water to ensure the environment is protected.

We are meeting with affected groups including farmers to provide practical advice about conserving water and planning for prolonged dry weather. We encourage everyone to use water wisely to conserve supplies and protect the environment.

During hot weather the Environment Agency works with water companies and other organisations to reduce the impacts of the hot weather on the environment. Steps include rescuing fish, responding to incidents, regulating water abstraction, advising businesses and farmers on water usage and monitoring for environmental impacts.

The Environment Agency also takes action to ensure water companies have made robust plans for managing water supplies, although water companies themselves would decide on proposing water restrictions.

If the public see fish gulping for air that could be because of reduced oxygen and river flows, please report it the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

More detail on the current water situation is available on the Environment Agency's Creating a Better Place blog:

[Summer has started – what does that mean for the water situation in England?](#)

Press release: £1m culvert repair work to reduce flood risk set to begin

The £1million culvert repair project is due to start on Monday 23 July and is expected to take 13 weeks to complete.

Environment Agency contractors, JBA Bentley, will be on site to carry out the work in the Lancashire town to make Victoria Clough culvert structurally sound.

Culverts are structures which carry water underground. They were often built to allow development to take place around them such as roads, homes and businesses. Many people live and work near culverts and may not even know they are there.

A new culvert will be installed beneath the disused railway embankment to replace the existing one which has collapsed. The team will also re-line or replace a number of sections along the length of the culvert at locations under Victoria Road and the A56 Skipton Road.

A new and improved trash screen will also be fixed at the inlet of the culvert, to help reduce the risk of it becoming blocked with debris and making it easier and safer to clear when water levels are high.

During the period of work there will be disruption to traffic using the A56 and Victoria Road. There will need to be road closures on Valley Road and New Road with local diversions and temporary traffic lights put in place, and some parking restrictions on Victoria Road.

Paul Swales flood risk advisor at the Environment Agency said:

Earby has suffered devastating flooding over recent years, most notably the Boxing Day 2015 flood. We're pleased to be starting this repair work which will bring significant flood risk benefits to homes and businesses.

We understand that this traffic management could cause some inconvenience so we will do all we can to minimise this disruption as much as possible. We'd like to thank residents and businesses for their patience and understanding while we carry out this essential work to reduce flood risk.

Funding for the project comes from £813k of Grant in Aid and £200k of Yorkshire Local Levy.

Since the floods of Boxing Day 2015, the Environment Agency has worked in

partnership with Pendle Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and Yorkshire Water to develop schemes to reduce flood risk in Earby.

Options explored

The Environment Agency continues to explore other options to reduce flood risk from all sources in and around Earby. Over the next 12 months, the team will investigate the options in more detail, which include flood storage areas on Earby Beck, the New Cut and Victoria Clough and installing a flood defence wall at Boot Street.

The Environment Agency is looking for volunteer flood wardens to play a key part in keeping Earby prepared and informed before, during and after a flood. Anyone interested in becoming a flood warden can email heather.cottrill@environment-agency.gov.uk to find out more.

By signing up to the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning service residents and businesses can receive flood alerts and flood warnings for Earby Beck and/or Earby New Cut directly to their phone and emails, 24/7. Find out if you're at risk and [register for free flood warnings](#).

[Press release: Environment Agency warns of illegal waste being dumped empty commercial units](#)

Empty industrial units across the country are being targeted by waste criminals to dispose of thousands of tonnes of illegal waste.

The growing trend sees criminals pose as legitimate tenants to rent properties used to store illegal waste. Once discovered, landlords, property managers and farmers are burdened with thousands of pounds in clear up costs and face possible criminal prosecution, fines and even custodial sentences for failure to operate without an environmental permit.

The waste, mainly made up of potentially hazardous materials, poses a serious pollution and fire risk and undermines legitimate business.

With hundreds of commercial properties across the country thought to be empty, the Environment Agency is calling for landlords to be extra vigilant when letting out their properties. The regulator is also calling on businesses, organisations and individuals to manage their waste responsibly to prevent it from getting into criminal hands in the first place.

During the period Dec 2016 – Nov 2017 the Environment Agency investigated the dumping of 18,244 bales of waste – each bale being approximately 1 ton. It's

estimated that at a low end price of £70 per bale this would amount to £1,277,000 for correct disposal of the waste.

The Environment Agency reveals the top four land types which are most susceptible to illegal dumping. The land type descriptions key dump sites are:

- Farms 34%
- Industrial Unit 24%
- Abandoned factory 10%
- Derelict site 7%

Nicky Lawton, Deputy Director – National Enforcement Service, said:

Unsuspecting landlords and property managers are failing foul of waste criminals and as a result are being made to pick up hefty bills to clear up the waste – often running into the hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Landlords can avoid this by carrying out checks to prospective tenants to ensure their sites will not be used as part of an illegal waste operation.

Waste crime, which costs the economy £604 million a year, is a serious problem that we're using all our available resources and powers to curb.

Landlords and property managers are urged to take the following steps to avoid being a victim of waste crime:

- Carry out rigorous checks on prospective new tenants.
- Check any empty land and property regularly and make sure it is secure.
- It is illegal to store waste on your land without the required permits. You may be committing an offence by allowing waste to be stored on your land or property without the relevant permissions and you could be liable to prosecution and the cost of removing the waste.
- Landlords should check before signing a contract that the contract complies with regulations. You can view whether a potential tenant holds the correct permit to carry out waste operations at [public register](#)
- The offer of payment to temporarily store waste is a scam, the waste will likely never be collected.

- Be vigilant and report any unusual behaviour. If you are suspicious of prospective tenants please contact us for more information and advice.
- If you are approached to store baled waste, even on a short term basis, refuse the material and call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

The Environment Agency's Prevention & Disruption teams are working hard to address waste crime, exercising new regulatory powers to lock up and block access to illegal waste sites.

Press release: Critical asset for early flood warning in York being built

The channel is being built in the river where it passes under the A59 at Skipbridge, Green Hammerton, between York and Harrogate.

Once the channel has been built an ultrasonic sensor will be attached under the bridge so accurate flow readings can be achieved.

This is important for predicting floods in York because the River Nidd is the last major watercourse flowing into the Ouse.

Project manager Oliver Wilson said:

This is one of the Environment Agency's critical assets for our flood warning service and for managing water resource available for abstraction.

Having an early warning that the Ouse could overtop in York means we can act early to prevent flooding by closing flood gates in the city.

So that the concrete lined channel can be built a cofferdam has been put in place.

One half of the river is dammed off to create a dry working area to enable construction on that side, before the other side is dammed and the new channel structure can be completed.

There was an existing concrete channel built a number of years ago but due to the design and flow dynamics it created in the river the bed got silted up,

causing incorrect flow readings and it not working as an effective gauge station.

The new channel is designed to make sure sediment passes through it and flow readings are accurate.

Mr Wilson added:

Lower river levels have enabled us to make really good progress and we expect the gauge station to be fully functioning this winter.

North Yorkshire County Council's Highways Department has carried out work on the bridge and road earlier this year and Northern Powergrid also recently installed an electricity line across the bridge.

To view river levels [click here](#)

News story: The Environment Agency Publishes Annual Report 2017-18

Today the Environment Agency has published its Annual Report and Accounts for 2017-2018 outlining what has been achieved in the last financial year.

This report lays a positive foundation for the government's 25 Year Environment Plan which has a clear ambition for our generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. The Environment Agency was closely involved in shaping the Plan, and it is now one of our main responsibilities to deliver it.

This year's report highlights considerable progress that the Agency has made towards fulfilling the goals set out in our Action Plan up to 2020.

Over the past year the Environment Agency has:

- Invested 1.3bn into protecting the environment.
- Reduced its carbon footprint by 45% against the 2006 – 2007 baseline year.
- Enhanced over 2,000km of river habitats.
- Created over 1,500 acres of new habitat for wildlife.
- Better protected over 45,000 additional homes from flooding this year.
- Informed over 1.4 million people about our free Flood Warning Service.
- Trained 6,500 staff to respond to flooding.
- Reduced the number of serious and significant pollution incidents to

their lowest levels since 2011.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

The report demonstrates the commitment of all those who work for the Environment Agency to do the right thing for the environment, to create a better place for people and wildlife, and to go the extra mile for the communities we serve.

Over the course of the past year the Environment Agency has made good progress towards the goals set out in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan, reducing pollution, enhancing habitats, protecting more homes from flooding and strengthening our incident response capabilities.

The Environment Agency is here to create a better place for people and wildlife, delivering flood protection and water security, regulating industry and supporting sustainable growth across the country.

To read the report click [here](#).