

Press release: Communities urged to log on for new flood films

From February, the 'Flood Friday' films will be released on the first Friday of every month throughout the year and will focus on what residents and businesses can do to 'Prepare, Act, Survive' in the event of flooding.

Created by the Environment Agency's Flood Resilience Team community engagement officers, the campaign is aimed at helping those who live, work and study in the region be more flood resilient.

The short films will focus on different aspects of flooding including:

- how to stay safe in a flood
- how to check if you are at risk of flooding
- what is surface water flooding?
- who to report flooding issues to

The first film focuses on how to check your flood risk and is already available on the Environment Agency's Youtube channel and will be shared through social media.

Community engagement officers Taryn Al-Mashgari (Tyne and Wear), Sarah Pearce (Cleveland) and Anna Caygill (Durham and Darlington) worked together on the project. Taryn said:

These videos will be short and informative and include links to websites and organisations we work closely with to ensure communities have reliable information to help them understand, prepare for and recover from flooding.

From our work with communities, we know how devastating it is to be flooded and the impact it has on lives and livelihoods, so we're working hard to raise awareness of how to plan for such events.

As well as being shared on the Environment Agency's Twitter and Youtube channels, they will be available on local authority websites and social media and shared with other partners including the social housing, community and voluntary sector.

To see the video visit [Youtube](#)

Communities can take three simple steps to help protect them, their homes and property from the devastating effects of flooding. [Visit the gov.uk web pages](#) to:

- check your postcode and find out if you are at risk of flooding
- sign-up for free flood warnings

- view and save the three point flood plan so you know how to Prepare.
Act. Survive in a flood
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Press release: Boaters to benefit from £4.4m Nene-regeneration scheme

The [Nenescape](#) programme, which was launched in November with a £2.6m grant from the [Heritage Lottery Fund](#), will see 16 projects carried out by 11 organisations.

The scheme will invest more than £4.4m in the Nene Valley over the next 5 years, delivering projects that will improve access to the water, restore wetland and wildlife habitat, uncover and celebrate the area's history, and develop tourism.

Renowned destination

Among the initiatives is one aimed at boosting the river's reputation as a nationally-renowned destination for boaters.

Led by the [Environment Agency](#), this part of Nenescape will improve access to and from the navigable part of the river, provide better facilities for those cruising it, and make the most of nearby transport links, communities and attractions. A total of £500,000 has been allocated to this part of the scheme.

Proposals include additional moorings, better routes and access for canoeing, improved links with nearby footpaths and cycleways, and more information for visitors about the area's sights, heritage and wildlife.

Boost for local economy

It is hoped this part of the Nenescape programme will attract more boaters and other visitors to the area, boosting the local economy.

Candy Reed, partnership officer for the Environment Agency, said:

The River Nene is one of the nation's greatest rivers – we're delighted to be playing a part in its future. Our work – and that of the wider Nenescape programme – will help everyone get the most out of this stunning location, which really is a national treasure.

Vision for the future

The Environment Agency's proposals are the result of an extensive study into

the River Nene, its surrounding communities, and its economic potential.

In consultation with people who use the river and representatives of the local area, the agency's [Waterspace Study](#) identified opportunities that would improve, protect and promote the Nene, creating a vision for the future that underpins the Nenescape programme and supported the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Amanda Johnson, Nenescape project manager, said:

It is so important to create an inviting environment for boaters to enjoy the spectacular views and heritage offered along the Nene Valley and, equally, to maintain a healthy environment for wildlife to thrive in. We are so pleased to be working with the Environment Agency to deliver these complementary projects and look forward to seeing the benefits for years to come.

At 91 miles, the Nene is the tenth longest river in the UK. It flows through Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, borders Norfolk and ends at The Wash. Around 65 miles of it is navigable.

Environmental improvements

Away from the navigable stretch, the [River Nene Regional Park](#) is taking the lead on a project to improve the ecology of backwaters, with the Environment Agency's help. This [Resilient River](#) element of Nenescape will restore natural features, boost biodiversity, improve water quality and provide safe and supportive habitats for a greater range of wildlife.

Other Nenescape partners include the [River Nene Regional Park](#), the [Wildlife Trust](#) for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, [Natural England](#), [East Northamptonshire Council](#), [Angling Trust](#), [University of Northampton](#), [Nene Park Trust](#), [Rockingham Forest Trust](#), [Destination Nene Valley](#), [University of Nottingham](#), [Screen Northants](#) and [Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust](#).

[Press release: Environment Agency announces £750,000 to tackle single use plastics](#)

The announcement follows a pledge to eliminate avoidable waste and crack down on plastics as part of the government's [25-year environment plan](#) launched yesterday.

The pioneer project will see the creation of a new Plastics and Sustainability team across Devon and Cornwall working with businesses, local councils, charities and community action groups, such as the [Bude Cleaner Seas Project](#).

The team will aim to reduce the amount of plastic pollution across land, rivers and the coastline. It will promote better environmental practices across industry, including a reduction in plastic waste from manufacturing, along with community campaigns to clean up pollution locally.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, made the announcement from Bude, Cornwall today where she met with groups and charities who strive to clean up the coastline and keep it free of pollution.

Emma Howard Boyd said:

The government's ambitious plan for the environment is a significant step forward and the Environment Agency's commitment to reduce plastic pollution shows how we are already working to put the plan into action.

Plastic pollution is a threat to our natural environment and our new team promises to tackle it head on. By working together, we can reduce the amount which enters our land, rivers and the sea and protect wildlife for future generations.

The Environment Agency's work with partners to improve [bathing waters](#) has led to a [dramatic improvement](#) in water quality in recent years which has benefited coastal communities, visitors and tourism. A similar partnership approach will be taken by the new Plastics and Sustainability team. The ambitions for the project include:

- A reduction of plastics reaching land, waterways and shorelines.
- Promotion of better environmental practices in business and a reduction in plastic waste from the start of the manufacturing process.
- Increased local engagement to change public behaviour and encourage more community action to tackle pollution.
- Monitoring and research into ways plastics enter and affect the environment, supporting leading academics in the South West.

During Emma Howard Boyd's visit to Cornwall, she also spent time at Bude Haven school speaking to children about their passion for protecting their coastline and met local business owner Tom Dawe to find out how he had made his beachside restaurant more sustainable.

Emma will return to Bude in June to mark [World Oceans Day](#) and to see the project's progress.

Press release: Waste offender prosecuted in Blackburn

A Director of a former Lancashire waste plastics recycling business has been sentenced to 8 months in prison, suspended for two years, and ordered to complete 120 hours of unpaid work after his company breached its environmental permit, failed to comply with enforcement notices and continued to deposit waste despite suspension and subsequent revocation of its permit.

David Holt, 50, of Brockhall Village, Blackburn, was sentenced on Thursday, 04 January 2018 at Preston Crown Court after admitting three environmental offences relating to the operation of the former V10 Polymers Ltd waste plastics recycling business at Rockcliffe Works, Paterson Street, Blackburn.

The Environment Agency became aware of problems at the site in 2012 after complaints from members of the public. At that time, V10 Polymers Ltd was operating a waste plastics recycling business from the Rockcliffe Works site.

Due to concerns about the way the site was being operated, the Environment Agency served a formal notice requiring the company to remove all controlled waste from the site. It also advised the company to apply for an environmental permit if it wished to continue waste operations at Rockwell Works.

The Environment Agency made clear that any permit issued would require storage of combustible waste at the site to be improved and meet minimum fire prevention standards.

David Holt made an application for a permit for the site and included detailed proposals as to how the waste would be stored in the future to meet the requirements of the permit. The Environment Agency issued an environmental permit to V10 Polymers Ltd in response to this application.

However, the first inspection of the facility following the issue of the permit in April 2014 revealed excessive quantities of plastic waste stored in a manner that presented a fire risk and in breach of the company's environmental permit.

Due to the Environment Agency's concerns about the fire risk, a number of joint inspections were undertaken with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services.

The Environment Agency sought to work with Mr Holt, who was in day to day charge of the company's operations, to bring about improvements in the storage arrangements and implement a mandatory fire prevention plan at the site. However, Mr Holt failed to adequately respond to those interventions.

This led the Environment Agency to revoke the site's environmental permit from February 2016, further requiring the company to take steps to remove all remaining waste from the site by 21 March 2016.

The Environment Agency decided to prosecute after the company continued to illegally operate, despite the revocation of its permit, and failed to tackle the fire risk posed by excessive stockpiles of waste.

Environment Agency Officer, Karl Hunter said:

The operators of waste recycling facilities have a legal duty to comply with the requirements of their environmental permit to prevent the risk of harm to people and the environment.

In this case, David Holt deliberately stored an excessive quantity of combustible waste for a number of years without taking the necessary fire prevention measures. He failed to implement a fire prevention plan and repeatedly failed to act on notices served by the Environment Agency to do so. Even when the Environment Agency revoked the company's permit, he continued to accept waste into the site, illegally.

The fire at the site on 21 August 2017, and three subsequent fires have had a significant impact on local residents and businesses and demonstrated that our concerns were well-founded. In September 2017 we used our emergency powers to create fire breaks within the waste, which significantly reduced the size and duration of subsequent fires. Had David Holt produced and complied with an adequate fire prevention plan, installing fire breaks within the waste, it would have greatly reduced the consequences of fires at the site.

We hope the court's sentencing decision demonstrates the importance of companies adhering to their environmental permits.

On hearing mitigation on David Holt's behalf, the court accepted that David Holt had not been a fly by night operator and had been working hard to try and maintain the business and those employed by it. The court also acknowledged his good character and contribution to his local community.

V10 Polymers Ltd and the previous site owner, Holt Developments Ltd, are now both in liquidation and the site has been sold to Driftdale Limited, an Isle of Man based property development company.

The new owner is responsible for ensuring that waste is removed from the site and correctly disposed of. The Environment Agency is working with Driftdale Ltd and our partner organisations to ensure this is completed as soon as possible. The new owners must also take all necessary steps to prevent fire until waste is removed from the site and the company has constant manned security to minimise the risk of further fires.

If you witness suspicious activity or a fire at the site, please call the emergency services. Environmental incidents should be reported to our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Mr Holt was also ordered to pay £10,000 towards the Environment Agency's costs.

Press release: Green light for Hull's £42m Humber flood scheme

Funding has been secured for a £42 million upgrade to the tidal flood defence scheme in the Humber Estuary – improving flood protection to 113,000 properties.

Led by the Environment Agency, the Humber Hull Frontages scheme will present an opportunity to review and improve a 19 kilometres stretch of tidal flood defences in the Humber Estuary to better protect homes and businesses that are at risk of flooding in Hull.

Floods Minister, Thérèse Coffey said:

This state of the art scheme is great news for homeowners and businesses along the Humber Estuary, especially for the city of Hull, as we both upgrade existing defences and add new defences extending protection.

It is a key part of our £430m flood defence investment programme for Yorkshire, better protecting thousands of homes and helping businesses to grow, thrive and create new opportunities – supporting the Government's work on the Northern Powerhouse.

Proposed improvements in Hull will be supported by a further 4 kilometres of new and raised tidal defences on either side of the city in the East Riding of Yorkshire, at Hessle and Paull, delivered by East Riding of Yorkshire Council in partnership with the Environment Agency.

Helen Tattersdale, project manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Hull has a long history of being flooded from the Humber Estuary. This was seen most recently in December 2013 when a tidal surge flooded more than 260 properties when the city's defences were overtopped.

By raising the existing defence walls and embankments, we are able to plan for the effects of climate change and bring them to the level needed to better protect the city from tidal flooding in future years.

Contractor BMM JV – a joint venture between BAM Nuttall and Mott MacDonald – has been appointed to develop a detailed design and build plan along Hull's 19 kilometre waterfront. This work follows the review of existing flood defences along the banks of the Humber Estuary in Hull conducted by built environment consultants at Arup.

Donald Daly, project manager for Arup said:

Coastal Flooding is one of the most serious threats facing the UK. That's why it is so important that Hull, the country's largest at-risk urban area outside of London, has received government approval for additional tidal flood defences.

Using a range of technologies to collect and make sense of vast amounts of data, we've developed plans that will improve defences to account for anticipated changing weather patterns and sea level rises over the next 100 years.

BAM Nuttall Mott MacDonald Joint Venture is looking forward to delivering the flood alleviation project as part of its Water and Environmental Management Framework. Over the next few months, BMM JV and the Environment Agency will consult with landowners, businesses and local residents on key elements of their proposed designs.

Allan Rogers, BAM Nuttall National Framework Director said:

We are delighted to be involved with another significant flood alleviation scheme for the Environment Agency. It's a scheme that will deliver outcome measures that will lessen the flood risk to business and homes. We are committed to delivering the scheme efficiently and with stakeholder issues in mind

The Humber Hull Frontages scheme is one of a number of tidal flood alleviation projects that form part of the Humber Flood Risk Management Strategy. The Environment Agency and local partners are now in the process of developing an advanced approach to managing flooding in tidal areas by the Humber for the next 100 years.

Subject to planning approval, work on the Humber Hull Frontages scheme will start next summer and will be complete by 2020.

It will be a long-term investment that will contribute to securing the viability of Hull and the wider Humber region, ensuring it retains its place as the eastern gateway to the UK economy.