

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.

Press release: Major flood defence exercise in Stratford

The Environment Agency's field team will deploy a temporary flood barrier along the street. The exercise, starting at 0700, will provide an opportunity to test barrier deployment plan and procedures, train staff and test working arrangements with partners, so the barriers can be quickly and safely erected when needed during a flood with minimum disruption.

Waterside will be closed to traffic for most of the day. Pedestrians will be unable to walk along the areas immediately in front of and behind the barrier, between the Encore Pub and the junction of Waterside and Chapel Lane, for health and safety reasons. Businesses on Waterside will be accessible.

The Environment Agency is supporting communities across England that remain at risk of flooding with 40km of temporary barriers which can be deployed at suitable sites during a flood. Stratford has been identified as one of those suitable locations.

Environment Agency Operations Manager Emma Smailes said:

This is a major test of our operational equipment. Although we have carried out numerous barrier deployment exercises at our training depots, doing it on location will give our field team invaluable experience.

Cllr Daren Pemberton, Planning and Administrative Services Portfolio at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said:

This exercise will allow Environment Agency staff and partners, including the district council, to work together and test this new barrier deployment in Stratford-upon-Avon, thereby gaining valuable training experience.

In the past Stratford-upon-Avon, and Waterside in particular, has flooded and remains at risk of flooding, so the temporary barrier will now help to protect vulnerable properties in this location during future flooding events.

Testing the assembly of the barrier is important to ensure that it all works smoothly in a live emergency situation.

Cllr Howard Roberts, portfolio holder for Community Safety with Warwickshire County Council, said:

Flooding is one of the major hazards potentially affecting Warwickshire residents and it is vital that we are prepared to respond.

Exercises like this are key to making sure that partners are well practised at working together in response to a flood emergency.

Emma added:

It's important to remember that we can never protect 100% against flooding, and we can't guarantee that specific communities will always have access to temporary barriers.

Local residents and businesses should be prepared by checking their flood risk, signing up to flood warnings and finding out what they can do to protect themselves and their property by visiting the Prepare for Flooding page on GOV.UK or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

Environment Agency staff will be available during the exercise to provide members of the public with information about access restrictions, alternative routes and general flood advice. The exercise is likely to conclude around 1300.

[Press release: Environment Agency](#)

warns of flood risk in Devon and Cornwall

The Environment Agency is urging people to remain vigilant to potential flooding as a low pressure coastal storm is forecast to hit the south coasts of Cornwall and Devon on Saturday.

Current forecasts show a low pressure storm on Saturday 21 October which, combined with close-to-spring tides, means flood warnings are likely to be issued along the south coasts of Cornwall and Devon and will require the routine closure of flood gates.

On Thursday 19 October the Environment Agency will be deploying temporary flood barriers in Fowey. The temporary barriers are designed to give Fowey better protection from potential coastal flooding. This type of flood defence has been used to prevent flooding from rivers for a number of years but this is the first time they have been used on the Cornish coast.

Environment Agency teams have been mobilised across the area to check on flood defences, clear any river blockages and closely monitor river levels. These teams have been working around the clock to reduce the risk of flooding, and will be out in force over the weekend.

Kevin Ward of the Environment Agency said:

We urge residents to take care on the coast this weekend. Strong winds pose a risk of waves overtopping defences and we advise not to stop and admire the waves or take 'storm selfies'.

Also, avoid exposed coastal areas and do not walk or drive through flood water, which can be dirty and contain hidden debris. Just 30cm of flowing water can move a car and driving through water can also create waves.

The Environment Agency continue to monitor the situation across Devon and Cornwall and will review their plans as the forecasts are updated.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to sign up to [flood warnings on the Environment Agency website](#). People can also call Floodline on 0345 988 1188. Once registered, if a flood warning is issued, they will receive an automatic message by telephone, SMS text message, email and/or fax.

Find out [how to prepare for flooding and if your home is at risk](#).

Press release: Have your say on Alney Island flood defence scheme

The event, which will be held at Riverside Sports Club, St Oswald's Road, Gloucester, GL1 2TF on Monday 30 October from 2pm until 7pm. Attendees can meet the Environment Agency's project team who will be on hand to provide information about the scheme, which will benefit more than 70 properties in the area with an increased level of protection.

Due to the location of Alney Island, the area is at risk from both fluvial and tidal flooding from the River Severn and the Environment Agency has been working closely with consultants, partners and the community on a range of technical options, including raising the existing defence or constructing a new defence. The proposed plans have been created using the latest two-dimensional modelling technique capture more accurate detail of the area.

At the drop in event, members of the local community and other interested parties, will be able to view and discuss the current options.

The area was severely flooded in 2007 following record breaking rainfall across the area, leading the Environment Agency to investigate whether further protection measures could be possible.

Craig Barker, Project Manager at the Environment Agency said:

We have worked closely with our consultants and partners to develop potential options. We are looking forward to hearing what residents and businesses have to say about the proposals at the event on 30 October.

For further information about how to prepare for flooding, sign up for flood warnings and to find out if your home is at risk please visit <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood>

Press release: Flood warning service improvements go live for winter

People who live near the River Foss in York will now be able to benefit from an improved flood warning service from Wednesday, October 18.

After the Boxing Day 2015 floods, one of the recommendations of the York Flood Inquiry report was for the Environment Agency to conduct a review of

the flood warnings on the River Ouse and Foss.

The Environment Agency commissioned consultants to review all flood warnings in the city.

Along the River Ouse catchment, the review found the existing service meets the needs of the community.

However, the River Foss flood warnings underwent a thorough review and changes have been made.

A new rain monitoring station is being installed upstream on the Foss in the village of Yearsley, 20 miles north of York, as well as a river level monitoring station near Strensall.

These two monitoring stations will automatically feed information into the Environment Agency's systems and forecasts for the River Foss, supporting a better understanding of the amount of water flowing down the river towards York.

This will help the Environment Agency's flood duty officers to issue flood warnings with more confidence and more accurate information included within the warning messages.

The River Foss catchment area within the City of York boundary previously had six flood warnings, covering the Foss, Tang Hall Beck and Osbaldwick Beck.

As part of the improvements this will increase to ten and include warnings for South Beck and Westfield Beck.

Zoë Pattinson, Environment Agency flood risk officer, said:

Along the River Foss corridor, there is one long warning that is for the properties most at risk from river flooding, and a wider warning that covers the properties at lower risk of flooding.

The Environment Agency also worked with members the River Foss Society in redesigning the flood warning boundaries and trigger levels.

The Foss Society and local residents have provided valuable input into the review of the flood warning service for the River Foss community.

She continued:

Local community input is important because it gives us an insight from those who have seen how the river and catchment behaves in heavy rainfall. It also helps raise awareness of our flood warning service.

John Millett, chairman of the River Foss Society, said:

The River Foss Society supports and fully endorses the work the Environment Agency is doing to improve the flood warnings that are being introduced to protect the City of York and neighbouring areas and their residents and businesses along both the River Ouse and the River Foss corridors.

People who are already signed up the flood warning service will automatically be transferred to the new relevant flood warning area that covers their property. If you want to register to receive free Environment Agency flood warnings then you can either at [flood warnings](#) or call on Floodline 0345 988 1188.