

Press release: Join Anglian flood and coastal committee

The Environment Agency is looking for members to join the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) which covers the River Great Ouse catchment, including large parts of the Fens, part of the Wash and North West Norfolk coast. Roles will start in July 2017 and January 2018.

RFCCs play an important role in deciding local priorities for flood and coastal work. They have a critical role supporting the Environment Agency and local authorities to work with communities and other partners to help bring in more funding.

More people are needed to help develop plans. They should have effective communication skills, be able to think strategically and bring enthusiasm, expertise and new ideas, using their particular skills and experience to advise and provide opinions during committee meetings.

A specific vacancy exists for a member with coastal expertise and focus. Someone able to network nationally and help develop innovative ideas with partners and communities. The RFCC has a varied and vulnerable coastline that extends from the west of King's Lynn through to Hunstanton cliffs.

There are also 3 vacancies for general members and, in particular, applications will be welcome from people with knowledge and experience of incident management, community resilience, agri-business and industry, land drainage, water management or strategic/spatial planning.

New members will have a contact within the Environment Agency who they can work closely with to ensure they have a good understanding of the issues and discussions taking place at meetings and who will be happy to answer any queries.

RFCC members are all appointed as impartial individuals in their own right and not as representatives of any particular organisation. It is important that the committees represent the communities they serve. All public appointments are made on merit, following a fair, open and transparent process.

Members would be expected to attend 4 committee meetings per year and are able to claim expenses.

Anyone interested in helping to make a difference in their local area should get in touch to discuss further with Paul Burrows (Environment Agency Flood & Coastal Risk Manager) on paul.burrows@environment-agency.gov.uk or on 07824431597.

For an application pack please [visit](#) or contact Stephanie North on 02030 251938 or email AnglianRFCCs@environment-agency.gov.uk

Closing date for applications is 13 April 2017. Interviews taking place the week commencing 19 June 2017 at Environment Agency offices, Bromholme Lane, Bampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4NE.

Press release: Environment Agency shortlisted for UK River Prize 2017

The Environment Agency has been praised for an ambitious restoration project on Hampshire's famous River Avon.

The agency's 'whole river approach' to restoration and natural flood management impressed judges who voted it the best entry in the 'catchment category' of the 2017 UK River Prize, a national competition that celebrates the most innovative and successful river projects across England, Scotland and Wales.

As category winner, the Hampshire Avon project automatically qualifies as a finalist. The Environment Agency is up against three other finalists – each winners of separate categories – vying for the top UK River Prize. The overall winner will be announced at a special ceremony in Brighton next month and presented with a trophy and cash prize.

Russell Spencer for the Environment Agency:

This is well earned recognition for the efforts of many people and organisations working together to help realise the vision for the Avon catchment – and a great springboard for the next phase of the programme, where we would like many more to be involved.

The River Avon Restoration Project was set up to restore the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to a natural river system supporting chalk stream habitats and wildlife to meet the government's obligations under the EU Water Framework and Habitats Directive.

The aim of the project was to restore reaches of the river most damaged in the past by man-made physical changes including the straightening or dredging of the river channel and construction of weirs and sluices. Various methods have been used to improve habitats and restore natural flows and functions including the removal, modification and bypassing of structures and re-alignment of the river to more natural positions in the floodplain.

Led by the Environment Agency, the project is supported by a number of organisations including Natural England, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Wessex Chalk Streams and Rivers Trust, Wessex Water, Wiltshire Fishery Association,

National Farmers Union and Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The restoration started in 2012 and will culminate in the completion of Phase 1 of the project later this year. Further work is needed to restore the remaining 185km of river and enable the catchment to respond and adapt to climate change.

Notes to Editor:

The UK River Prize celebrates the achievements of individuals and organisations who improve the health of our rivers and catchments and recognise the importance of healthy rivers and the benefits they bring to society. It is run by the The River Restoration Centre who will announce the overall winner of the UK River Prize at its annual dinner and conference in Brighton on April 4.

In 2009, the need for a strategic approach to catchment river restoration was identified by the European LIFE funded Strategic Restoration and Management (STREAM) partnership. This led to the creation of the River Avon Restoration Programme (RARP).

News story: No fishing for coarse fish in rivers from 15 March to 15 June

Every year, the close season prevents fishing for coarse fish, like barbel and chub, for 3 months to give the fish a chance to breed.

Judy Proctor, Head of Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

Our job is to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries. This includes rescuing fish in distress, improving habitat and restocking rivers with 450,000 fish a year. However, one of the best things we can do is simply to leave the fish alone during the spring allowing them the opportunity to breed so that we have healthy stocks in the future.

During the close season, the Environment Agency's specialist enforcement teams rigorously police illegal fishing. In the first few weeks of last year's close season, officers carried out more than 380 targeted patrols and found more than 70 people fishing on waters off-limits.

In addition to Environment Agency enforcement teams, the Angling Trust's Voluntary Bailiff Service, which is funded by fishing licence money, will be taking part in Operation Clampdown. The volunteers will be looking out for illegal fishing on local rivers and reporting any suspicious activity to the

Environment Agency and police.

Judy Proctor:

The majority of anglers, who fish legally, rightly demand that we take action to catch offenders. Our enforcement officers, supported by Angling Trust voluntary bailiffs, will be targeting illegal fishing again this year and anyone caught can expect to face prosecution and receive a significant fine. We urge anyone to report illegal fishing as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Coarse fishing is still allowed on most still waters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement, though a valid fishing licence is still required. You can check which still waters and canals still have a close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-fishing-byelaws>

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are available online at www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence.

Press release: Project launched to protect the Ouseburn River

Groundwork North East & Cumbria is working with partners from across the region to protect and preserve the upper part of the Ouseburn River.

The charity has secured £200,000 from the Environment Agency to fund the Ouseburn River Restoration Project.

Working with partners including landowners, communities, schools and local businesses, Groundwork will carry out a number of enhancements to the river and the surrounding environment to improve water quality through a number of environmental improvements.

The project will implement several physical measures to slow the flow of the river, including widening it at strategic points, sculpting areas of the river bank, altering meanders and installing silt traps.

In addition to the physical work, the Ouseburn River Restoration Project will also work with farmers and landowners about how to manage fertiliser and sediment run off, which causes high levels of phosphorus in the river, this diminishes invertebrate life and affects all aspects of river life.

Lesley Silvera, Senior Project Officer at Groundwork North East & Cumbria, said:

It's fantastic that the Ouseburn River Restoration Project is now off the ground. Over the next two years, we will be working closely with third parties to improve the water quality and ecology of the river.

We'll also be looking to survey and eradicate invasive species, remove litter, monitor wildlife and plant trees, which will keep the river cool, create riverbank habitats and help prevent bank erosion.

We will be working in partnership with Newcastle University, the Environment Agency and Tyne Rivers Trust to observe and measure water quality to gauge the success of the scheme, which will also inform future work on the river.

Lucy Mo, the Environment Agency's Project Manager responsible for funding this work added:

The health of our rivers is better than it's ever been with drastic improvements to water quality over the past 20 years. However, there is still more to do and by working with partners on projects such as the Ouseburn River Restoration Project we can play to different organisations' strengths and deliver more.

We're pleased to be part of this exciting project, which will improve in-river and bankside habitats, and will also give us more water monitoring data and analysis.

The work is funded primarily through the Environment Agency. Additional funding is from Groundwork NE & Cumbria, Northumbrian Water Ltd, Newcastle University. Partners include Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water Ltd, Natural England, Tyne Rivers Trust, Newcastle City Council and Newcastle University.

Press release: Work completed at Tetney Haven to reduce flood risk and benefit the environment

The Environment Agency has de-silted a section of the Tetney Haven, helping

reduce flood risk and boosting the area's ecology.

The work, part of the EA's regular maintenance programme, saw excess silt removed from approximately a kilometre of the Louth Canal and from around the sluice gates at Tetney Lock.

Silt builds up naturally at the sluice as it settles when the flowing water in the channel loses momentum at the sluice gates. Removing it means water can continue to flow easily from the canal into the Haven.

Along with other routine maintenance on the channel, removing the silt helped reduce flood risk to approximately 500 local homes and businesses.

The nutrient-rich silt was then spread on the salt marsh adjoining the banks of the channel, and work was also done to improve drainage on the salt marsh. These improvements help the natural wetting and draining cycles of the soil that encourage vegetation to grow.

The plants help prevent erosion and stabilise land which serves as a front line of flood defence by absorbing much of the force of tidal waves.

This work has also helped improve, preserve and extend the salt marsh's ecology, made up of salt-tolerant plants and up to 300 species of invertebrates, half of which are unique to this environment. These conditions, in turn, provide valuable habitat for migrating birds, some of which are endangered.

Andy Charlesworth, Asset Performance Advisor with the Environment Agency, said:

This is a perfect example of how we aim for the most benefit for people and the environment from everything we do.

We have a regular programme of inspection and maintenance on our flood defences, and we're always looking for ways to achieve extra benefits at the same time. In this case, while we had our equipment on-site, we were able to use it in another way to give a boost to ecological conditions in the surrounding area at no extra cost.

De-silting Tetney Haven took just over seven weeks and cost £127k. It was last de-silted 10 years ago, and the Environment Agency's modelling shows it is unlikely to be needed again for another decade.

De-silting is not always the best solution for reducing flood risk; we carefully consider each situation on a case-by-case basis to determine whether de-silting is cost-effective and will have the desired result of reducing risk.

In the next financial year, the Environment Agency will spend approximately £12m on flood defence maintenance to reduce risk to local communities.

Although the Environment Agency continually invests in maintaining and improving flood defences, no defence can ever completely remove the risk of flooding; therefore we'd encourage people to sign up for our free flood warnings by calling 0345 988 1188 or visiting www.gov.uk/flood.

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Notes to editors:

- The Environment Agency is required to prioritise funding for asset maintenance and repair where it will have the most benefit in reducing flood risk.
- Saltmarsh provides vital habitat including food and roosting opportunities for over-wintering birds such as seed-eating twites, which are on the [Birds of Conservation Concern 'red list'](#), and waders such as redshank. Saltmarshes support around half of the UK's breeding redshank population.