

Press release: Fish pass plans for Howsham weir

The Environment Agency is finalising plans to install a fish pass on the River Derwent at Howsham to help migrating fish, eel and lamprey access spawning grounds upstream.

The work is part of a joint programme with Natural England to improve a number of weirs and other structures that the Environment Agency owns in the lower Derwent.

The project will involve the installation of an enhanced single Larinier fish pass near the existing hydropower turbines, along with eel and lamprey tiles at two locations on the weir.

Improved passage will help fish populations by allowing them to move freely between the river and coastal waters to access breeding, nursery or feeding grounds. It will also help species to naturally re-colonise the river upstream after floods, droughts or pollution.

The design is being developed following a public consultation with the local community, environmental organisations, and people who use the river regularly, including anglers and canoeists. It aims to provide a significant improvement for fish while at the same time allowing continued use of a chute across the weir for canoe and kayak training and competitions.

Ineke Jackson, project manager at the Environment Agency, said:

The upstream reaches of the River Derwent and the Rye have very low numbers of lamprey, eels and salmon, so this is a really important project for the environment.

We have opted for a single fish pass with a special design and additional flow to make it particularly attractive to fish, while protecting canoeing and kayaking. This will be a substantial improvement for fish, and requires only a small reduction in flow through the canoe chute. We will put lamprey and eel tiles on the weir to help these species make their way across.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed during the consultation because this helped us to find a solution which balances all interests.

Construction on the scheme is expected to begin in spring or summer next year.

More information on the public consultation can be found at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/howsham-weir-fish-passage-consultation.

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Impossible Views of art and science at the BGS Open Day

The British Geological Survey and Quarrylab have collaborated to bring science and art together in the Impossible Views exhibition, which will premiere at the BGS 2017 Open Day in Keyworth on 1st July.

Press release: Scrap yard licence revoked for illegal activity

The Environment Agency took the action against Robert Wright (snr), the former Company Director of Robby's Auto Dismantling Ltd in Stanley, County Durham, following a series of breaches of licence conditions after his son took over the business.

The decision means that Robby's Auto Dismantling Ltd will no longer be authorised to accept and treat waste metals from 15 July 2017.

Environmental permits ensure the protection of the environment and local communities from the risk of pollution caused through the carrying out of waste activities.

Under the regulations, the permit must be in the name of the person who has overall control of the facility and the site must employ an industry qualified technically competent manager to provide waste management advice and guidance.

No application received

The permit for Robby's Auto Dismantling Ltd was in the name of Robert Wright

(snr), meaning he is legally responsible for ensuring the site is compliant. In 2006 he retired and his sons Ian and Robert Wright (jnr) took over. In January 2013 Ian Wright took sole control of the business.

Throughout this period, Environment Officers repeatedly advised Ian and Robert Wright (snr) of the legal requirement to transfer the permit to Ian. No application was ever received and officers were unable to take action against Ian Wright for a number of permit breaches on site because the permit was not in his name. Environment officers deemed these permit breaches to be a result of lack of technical competence.

In addition, the permit holder had failed to pay subsistence fees since 2013.



Permit revoked 'to protect the environment'

Andrew Rothery from the Environment Agency said:

The Environment Agency has revoked the environmental permit for Robby's Autos to protect the environment and ensure a level playing field for legitimate businesses. It is clear that the permit holder is not in a position to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

It is vital that waste companies comply with the law so that communities and the environment are not put at risk. We work with operators to help them meet their obligations, but where significant or repeated breaches occur, we will take appropriate action to protect the environment.

The revocation requires all waste is removed from the site and disposed of legally by 31 July 2017. Failure to do so may lead to legal action by the Environment Agency.

Anyone who experiences problems from this or any other waste site is urged to report the matter to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 807060 or CrimeStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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