

# Press release: Official opening of Hexham flood defence

A new £65,000 flood embankment which protects homes in Hexham from flooding has been officially opened.

Storm Desmond saw flooding to 15 properties at Tyne Green, Hexham, on 5 December 2015.

Properties flooded as a result of water from the River Tyne flowing through an underpass beneath the Newcastle-Carlisle railway line near to Tyne Green Golf Course.

The Environment Agency prioritises delivery of new and improved flood defences using government funding over a rolling six year programme, to schemes which provide the greatest benefits to protect properties from flooding.

Due to the small number of properties that would benefit, against the cost of delivering a flood scheme at Tyne Green, the Environment Agency had been unable to deliver new flood defences in the area.

The new flood bank has been uniquely funded by residents who pooled individual government grants made available to them following flooding over the winter period of 2015/16.

The Environment Agency and Northumberland County Council worked closely with Tyne Green residents, Northumbrian Water and Network Rail to provide a creative solution.

The new bank was officially opened by local resident Joan McDonald – who contributed to the scheme – and Hexham MP Guy Opperman at an event on Tuesday 28 August.



L-R Tyne Green resident Keith Hutton, Coun. Nick Oliver from Northumberland County Council, Hexham MP Guy Opperman and Environment Agency Area Director Oliver Harmar.

## **Real success for residents**

MP Guy Opperman said:

This is great news! I am delighted that a pragmatic team effort has produced a real success for the Tyne Green residents. I want this collaborative working to be the prototype for future flood defence projects in Tynedale.

Tyne Green resident Keith Hutton added:

I am pleased to have been involved in this project alongside so many others, and on behalf of everyone, I would like to extend a huge thank you to Guy Opperman, our MP, for his steadfast support in getting all the agencies together, something we could not have done single-handedly.

Special credit should also go to Chris Hood, from the Environment Agency and Aaron McNeil from Northumberland County Council. They recognised the opportunity and worked hard alongside our community to deliver this scheme.

Finally, Network Rail and Northumbrian Water have been a huge support to this lengthy project and I think we all recognise that going forward, this flood defence, which has been funded in such a unique way, gives our community a real peace of mind.

The flood embankment, built by Breheny Civil Engineering, has been designed to protect against a flood event similar to that experienced by Tyne Green residents during Storm Desmond.

## **Thanks to residents**

Chris Hood, Project Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

I'm delighted we've been able to build this flood defence which is great news for the residents of Tyne Green. I'd like to thank them for their continued support and patience while we worked with our partners to find the best and most cost-effective solution.

Councillor Glen Sanderson, Cabinet member for Environment and Local Services with Northumberland County Council, added:

This is another fine example of agencies working with local communities to find innovative solutions to improve their areas and prevent flooding events damaging their homes in the future. Storm Desmond had a massive impact on communities in Tynedale and this work should help provide peace of mind for the future.

The Environment Agency is urging people to 'Prepare, Act, Survive' by [visiting the Floods Destroy website](#) and do three things to prepare for flooding.

- check your postcode and find out if you are at risk of flooding
- sign-up for free flood warnings if you are at risk
- view and save the 3-point flood plan so you know how to 'Prepare, Act, Survive' in a flood

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## **[News story: Apply to the Attorney General's London C Panel of junior counsel](#)**

*Updated:* Added more detail to the title.

The Attorney General is seeking to appoint new members to one of his panels of junior counsel, the London C panel, to undertake civil and EU work for government departments.

## **London C Panel**

The next London C Panel competition will open on Tuesday 25 September 2018. Membership of the London panels is open to both barristers and solicitors with the appropriate qualifications.

Members of the London C Panel will be expected to have at least two years' experience in actual practice by 31 October 2018 (starting from end of 2nd six months' pupillage for barristers, date of commencement of advocacy for solicitors). Appointments will be for five years.

There is a wide variety of expertise required, not just in public law, to meet the needs of Government across the civil courts and tribunals.

## **Seminar for Potential Candidates**

A seminar will be held on Wednesday 12 September for anyone considering applying this autumn. Event details for this seminar are:

Date and time: Wednesday 12 September 2018, 5:30pm

Location: Government Legal Department, Room 6JK, One Kemble Street, London WC2B 4TS. (Just off Kingsway)

This is an event aimed at those thinking about applying to join the Attorney General's London C Panel of Civil Counsel. The competition to make appointments to the London C Panel will open on Tuesday 25 September 2018 and will close at midday on Wednesday 31 October 2018.

The Law Officers maintain three London panels of Junior Counsel (A, B and C) to undertake civil and EU work for all government departments. There is a wide variety of expertise required, not just in Public Law, to meet the needs of Government across the civil courts and tribunals. These can range from employment or personal injury to procurement or intellectual property.

Information will be provided about the work of all the panels, and the appointments and application process.

Speakers include: a representative from the Bar Council; and senior Government Lawyers will speak in depth about the application process.

An existing member of London C Panel Counsel will speak about their own experiences of panel work, in particular the types of cases they have undertaken during their time on the Panel and their experience of the application process.

The aim of this event is to demystify the application process and to encourage as many of those who have the qualifications to apply to do so.

To reserve a place, please email [PanelCounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:PanelCounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk) by Friday 7 September 2018.

Refreshments follow the meeting with an opportunity to ask questions of the speakers and senior Government Lawyers.

[Information about seminar for potential candidates](#)

(PDF, 202KB, 1 page)

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## [News story: First world war shipwreck bell is returned to South Africa](#)

The SS Mendi sank off the Isle of Wight in 1917 while carrying more than 800 men of the South African native labour corps to support the war effort on the Western Front.

It was the worst maritime disaster in South Africa's history, and the Mendi bell – which has become a symbol of the country's First World War remembrance – was found and restored last year after being originally salvaged from the shipwreck in the 1980s.

The Mendi bell was given to BBC reporter Steve Humphrey in 2017 in a plastic bag at Swanage Pier, Dorset, after an anonymous phone call.

He in turn gave it to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency's receiver of wreck, Alison Kentuck, who then had to determine legal ownership of the bell and make the decision about a permanent home for the bell. For a year it has been on display in the Sea City museum in Southampton while ownership research was undertaken and a permanent home was found.

Alison said: 'In these cases I have to consider the merits of each application to have the bell. But in the end, because this bell is such a poignant part of South Africa's history, it seemed only right to return it.

'607 black troops from the South African native labour corps who set sail from Cape Town just over a century ago, like so many others, never returned home to their families.

'It's good to know that the Mendi bell is back in South Africa where it will be able to provide a focal point of remembrance for the people of South Africa and in particular the families of those who died.'

The SS Mendi sank on 21 February 1917 and 646 men drowned.

On 28 August the bell was presented to the President of South Africa by the Prime Minister Theresa May at a ceremony in Cape Town.

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## [News story: PM announces ambition for UK to be largest G7 investor in Africa by 2022](#)

The government has set a new ambition for the UK to be the largest G7 investor in Africa by 2022, the Prime Minister has announced as part of a visit to promote economic ties with the continent.

The ambition was announced alongside a range of measures to boost trade between the UK and Africa and encourage UK investment in the region, including the creation of a new Africa Investors Board.

The Prime Minister will use her visit to South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria to set the stage for an Africa Investment Summit to be held in the UK in 2019. The major summit will bring together UK and African governments, alongside major international investors to grow awareness of opportunities on the continent and ensure progress toward the 2022 ambition.

The visit also saw the government commit to working more closely with African nations and to increase its presence across the continent – bringing in trade experts, investment specialists, health and family planning policymakers and cutting-edge climate researchers so we can work together to deliver on our shared interests and find solutions to the world's biggest challenges.

Leading a business delegation as part of the Prime Minister's visit, Trade Minister George Hollingbery said:

The British business delegation here in Africa is telling me first-hand that there is a massive appetite from our companies to invest in Africa.

The opportunities for the UK in Africa, with its young and dynamic population – set to make up a quarter of the world's consumers by 2050 – are clear.

The UK wants to deepen and strengthen our partnerships with countries across Africa to ensure that our mutually-beneficial relations continue to go from strength to strength.

British investors are already amongst Africa's most prolific. They are known

and respected for the quality of their investments, the innovation they bring and their strong commitment to their local workforces. This week's visit will ensure trade between the UK and African nations, which already worth more than £31 billion, continues to grow.

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## [News story: UK Military Train 500 Somalians](#)

British personnel have been delivering training to the Somalian National Army (SNA) since January 2017, focussing on medical training, leadership development, intelligence, equipment care, logistics and human rights.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

The training we have provided will help build a more stable and prosperous Somalia.

The Somalian National Army have been motivated, keen to learn and professional and we remain committed to their country's development.

The long-term aim of the programme is for Commanding Officers in the SNA to take what they have learned and become self-sufficient in training their own troops.

This training forms just part of the UK's work in the country, the UK is also the third-largest donor to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

In 2017, it was announced that Somalia would be the beneficiary of £21million in additional backing from the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund.

The UK is also supporting the development of a joint funding mechanism for policing, which we have developed jointly with the EU.