

# Press release: First phase of major A1 improvement to go live

From Friday (22 September) drivers will benefit from the extra capacity and improved road information on the six mile section between Leeming and Catterick.

Once finished, the full scheme between Leeming and Barton will complete the missing link of motorway between London and Newcastle, using the M1 and A1 (M), as well as improving journey times and increasing safety.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Upgrading the A1 is a big priority for the Government and this is the latest stage in our broad ranging investment plan for better transport in the north, cutting congestion and journey times.

Highways England project manager, Tom Howard, said:

We are pleased to be able to open this section ahead of the main completion to give drivers the benefits of motorway standards as well as smoother and safer journeys.

This is an important milestone and means we are now halfway to completing this major scheme on this vitally important route.

Over the autumn period our focus will be on the remainder of the project including completing the local access road between Scotch Corner and Brompton-on-Swale and opening the new Fort Bridge which will provide a new east – west link to Catterick for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Once Fort Bridge is fully open by the middle of November, the next major milestones will be the opening of the motorway between Scotch Corner interchange and junction 56 at Barton, and between Catterick junction and Scotch Corner interchange. The scheme will be fully open by Winter 2017/18.

Complicated ground conditions have impacted on the method used to stabilise the embankment near the River Swale. This has resulted in an extension to the planned completion date. Highways England is working with contractors to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

When fully open, journey times between Leeming and Barton are expected to be reduced by approximately 20 per cent.

For more details, [visit the scheme website.](#)

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# **News story: Tony Fountain to step down from his role as Chair of Sellafield Ltd**

Tony Fountain has accepted an offer to become Chair at Essar Oil, and has therefore decided to step down from his role as Chair of Sellafield Ltd.

He will chair his last Board later this month.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) will now begin the process of finding a suitable successor to continue the momentum created under Tony's tenure.

Nigel Smith, a senior independent Non-Executive Director with Sellafield Ltd, will cover the role in the interim.

David Peattie, NDA Chief Executive Officer, said:

On behalf of the NDA, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Tony for his excellent leadership and contribution to the clean-up mission at Sellafield. We wish him every success in his new role.

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# **Press release: Explore the wonders of**

# the Witham in free Wyndham Park event

Habitat improvements at Grantham's Wyndham Park are the stage for a day of free activities helping everyone enjoy the nature on their doorstep.

Environment and conservation experts will be on hand at the award-winning location on Sunday 24 September, offering games, competitions, crafts, wildlife spotting and more.

All activities have been designed to show how easy and fun it is to get closer to nature – and play a part in protecting it.

The event marks the official unveiling of improvements to Wyndham's Park's natural habitat, and a 100m-stretch of the River Witham that flows through it.

Enhancements include an area of stepped decking enabling safe access to a shallow part of the river and new wetland habitat to attract rare species.

All were funded using fishing licence money from the Environment Agency, which is re-invested into rivers, helping to improve facilities for anglers, tackle illegal fishing and encourage more people to take up the sport.

The event will offer a chance to explore the changes to the park's habitat, and discover how they benefit both visitors and wildlife.

Matt Parr, geomorphology technical specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

Few things beat the great outdoors but that doesn't mean you have to escape into the wilderness. Natural wonders can be found right in the heart of your town.

We'll be on hand to help you spot the opportunities, using the beauty of Wyndham Park – and our improvements to the river there – to show how easy and fun it is to get closer to nature.

Organisations taking part in the event include the Environment Agency, South Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire Rivers Trust, Anglian Water and Rivercare.

It takes place from 12noon to 4.30pm on Sunday 24 September. The date coincides with World Rivers Day, a global celebration of rivers, their value to local communities and the importance of looking after them.

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# Press release: Salmon in Derbyshire river a first since Industrial Revolution

Atlantic salmon have been discovered on the River Ecclesbourne, a tributary of the River Derwent, Derbyshire for the first time since the Industrial Revolution following work carried out by the Environment Agency and its partners.

The discovery comes following the installation of fish passes on the River Derwent by the Environment Agency and Trent Rivers Trust which have helped to improve fish migration and allow the salmon to move upstream through the river.

The installation of fish passes is just one of a programme of actions carried out by the Environment Agency and its partners to remove barriers to migration and help restore salmon stocks throughout England.

Fisheries Specialist at the Environment Agency, Matt Buck, said:

Salmon is an important species and after two decades of work to improve water quality and the habitat for fish in the Trent catchment area, we now have a recovering population of salmon.

We are particularly excited to have found juvenile salmon in the Ecclesbourne for the first time in living memory, which indicates the success of salmon in this part of the river.

Poor water quality and weirs on the River Derwent constructed in the Industrial Revolution acted as a barrier to fish migration and left them stuck in unsuitable water. Weirs not only stop fish migrating, but trap fish spawning gravels and create ponded areas upstream which are not suitable for riverine fish species.

Over the past seven years, the Environment Agency has worked with partners and developers on the construction of fish passes on a number of weirs in the area. These passes have enabled adult salmon to swim freely further up the river, where they have access to more varied habitats providing suitable conditions to spawn, shelter and feed.

Matt continued:

Thanks to the work we have carried out with our partners, we are, for the first time ever, witnessing a recovering population of salmon on the River Derwent and other local rivers which is an excellent result. Last year we saw a record number of sightings of

adult salmon, including a salmon found at Belper weir for the first time in over 100 years.

We are committed to ensuring that salmon numbers continue to increase within the catchment by working with partners to enable fish passage on the remaining barriers and to improve the quality of river habitats for this fascinating species. If salmon are thriving we know the river is doing well for all fish and wildlife.

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## **Press release: Global demand for British beer boosts exports**

The British beer revolution shows no sign of slowing, Food Minister George Eustice today announced as the latest figures reveal one billion pints were shipped to beer lovers around the world last year, bringing a £600 million boost to the UK economy.

More than 500 breweries opened in the last year to meet the growing demand for a British pint – with shipments to a record 121 countries, including brewing powerhouses Australia and Germany. A further 2,000 new beer brands, including Sheffield's first craft lager and Arkell's first flavoured beer range, also launched – the highest figures of new beer on the market for over a decade.

To build on this momentum, this week the Government is connecting some of the country's best craft beers with buyers from across the US and Europe, putting the UK's national drink in the global spotlight and helping boost the bottles of British beer on shop shelves around the world.

Food Minister George Eustice said:

The UK's beer industry has a lot to celebrate – our established breweries now export to more countries than ever before, with bottles of British beer on shelves as far as Japan and New Zealand.

The craft beer boom in particular has secured our position at the forefront of the industry and made us a first choice for beer lovers the world over – with major retailers and supermarkets now stocking our smaller, unique brands over global big hitters.

Through the Food is GREAT campaign, the Government is working hard to make sure this important sector goes from strength to strength, which is why we are connecting our finest brewers with world-leading buyers, opening new markets and driving exports.

Total exports of UK beer grew by nearly £100 million in the last year, securing British brewers' spot among the UK's top five food and drink exports for the second year running – ahead of some of our most famous exports like salmon and cheese.

Taking advantage of this trend, the Government's [Food is GREAT](#) inbound trade mission will show leading buyers our renowned craft-beer industry in action. The trade mission includes tours of local breweries and a visit to the Bristol Craft Beer Festival, which showcases more than 200 UK beers to more than 2,500 visitors.

International Trade Minister Mark Garnier said:

The boost in beer exports is great news for UK breweries and beer enthusiasts across the globe.

Our beer industry now exports to more countries than ever before and, as an international economic department, we are committed to help them build on this success to make the most of rising demand.

British breweries can use our overseas network which operates in 108 countries, or look for live exporting opportunities on our digital hub [great.gov.uk](http://great.gov.uk), to build their brands abroad as part of a Global Britain.

Across the country, breweries and exporters are recognising the growing demand overseas, and with Government support have set their sights on emerging and growing markets such as China and the US. This trend isn't only being felt in the beer sector – last week Lloyds Bank announced 69% of UK food and drink companies are looking to tap into new international markets around the world.

Sovereign Beverages, based in the North West, has strong links with nearly 70 of the world's biggest beer markets and now exports more than 5 million pints of over 700 UK beer brands each year.

Managing Director of Sovereign Beverage Company David Davies said:

British Beer is thriving both at home and abroad. We support some of the largest regional breweries in the UK providing sales and operational expertise to help smooth out the complexities of exporting excise goods. That is what we do.

We've seen double digit growth over the past 12 months through opening up new markets and developing existing ones. South Africa, South America and Eastern Europe are currently importing our beers in record quantities. We get calls every week from UK breweries looking to export their beers around the world.

Last year Defra and Department for International Trade (DIT) launched the first International Action Plan for food and drink which will see Government and industry working together to boost food and drink exports over the next five years.

Led by Defra in partnership with DIT and VisitBritain, the Food is GREAT campaign plays a key role in driving exports for UK produce overseas – increasing the demand around the world and positive public perception of our food and drink. UK businesses can explore their potential exporting opportunities through DIT's digital portal, [great.gov.uk](https://great.gov.uk). The website acts as a single destination for trade and investment. There are more than 1,900 'live export opportunities' online, bringing together and connecting UK businesses, international buyers and international investors.