

Press release: New Year, new lick of paint for local charity

With Christmas around the corner and it being the season of goodwill the group, who between them work in a variety of roles at Highways England in Guildford, wanted to help a local organisation which supports people with mental health issues.

The group of volunteers approached Oakleaf Enterprise, which is located nearby to their workplace, with an offer of help. With 1 in 4 people in the UK suffering from a mental illness every single year, Oakleaf's services have never been more vital.

The December timing was perfect as over Christmas one in ten people feel unable to cope, rising to a third of people with a mental health problem. And over a quarter of people feel the pressure to have the 'perfect Christmas', increasing to half of those with a mental health problem (48%).

Highways England Mental Health First Aiders at Oakleaf

Tom Briggs, from Highways England, said:

We wanted to do something practical and had originally thought about offering to do some gardening – recognising the positive link between physical exercise and well-being. But we found that the art room at Oakleaf was a tad uninspiring and clearly in need of a re-vamp.

It has been a real learning curve for those of us with no DIY skills and a great opportunity for us to build links with Oakleaf, a hidden gem whose staff and volunteers do such a fantastic job. We hope to continue to support them.

In the weeks leading up to D-Day (day of decorating) the team met regularly to organise a rota, delegate tasks and buy supplies. They also gained the support of the local B&Q at Ladymeade Retail Centre who kindly donated some paint and brushes.

Highways England staff painting the art room

Tom said:

Many of the individuals Oakleaf support don't have loved ones to celebrate with at this time of year and the charity needs donations to give as presents to their clients at their Christmas party. So we also collected donations from our colleagues for Oakleaf to give to their clients at their Christmas party.

Our volunteering is mutually beneficial as we are able to raise the profile of volunteer Mental Health First Aiders both within our organisation and the wider community. In the same way first aiders are called to help people with physical injuries we are here to offer initial support and guidance to those going through a difficult time or may be experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression, especially at times like Christmas when there is social pressure to be seen as having a good time.

Eli Beckett at Oakleaf Enterprise said:

We are thrilled to have the support of Highways England. Bringing our charity and businesses together is a fantastic way of connecting corporate organisations with the local community whilst raising awareness of mental health and reducing the stigma that is connected to this invisible illness.

We strive to work with businesses who take a genuine interest in the mental well-being of their staff – Highways England are a fantastic example of a company doing just that, with a wonderful, proactive team of MHFA trained employees based in the Guildford office.

Both the staff and clients here at Oakleaf are so grateful to Highways England for all their fundraising efforts so far and for coming down to help redecorate our slightly tired looking room! We look forward to growing this partnership with Highways England as we continue to support some of the most vulnerable adults in our local community live well with a mental illness.

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.

[News story: Matt Hancock: shake-up of](#)

GP IT will remove outdated systems

The GP IT Futures framework will create an open, competitive market to encourage the best technology companies to invest in the NHS. All systems will be required to meet minimum standards to ensure they can talk to each other across boundaries.

The current market is dominated by 2 main providers, which slows down innovation and traps GP practices in long-term contracts with systems that are not suited to the digital age.

The framework will look at how patient data will be moved to modern cloud services to allow clinicians and patients to securely access crucial, life-saving information in real time.

By 2023 to 2024 we want every patient in England to be able to access GP services digitally, with practices able to offer online or video consultations.

The changes will free up staff time and reduce delays by allowing seamless, digitised flows of information between GP practices, hospitals and social care settings. It builds on Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock's [tech vision for the NHS](#).

The new standards, developed by NHS Digital, will introduce minimum technical requirements so systems can talk to each other securely and are continuously upgradable.

Any system that does not meet these standards will not be used by the NHS and the government will look to end contracts with providers that do not understand these principles for the health and care sector.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Too often the IT used by GPs in the NHS – like other NHS technology – is out of date. It frustrates staff and patients alike, and doesn't work well with other NHS systems. This must change.

I love the NHS and want to build it to be the most advanced health and care system in the world – so we have to develop a culture of enterprise in the health service to allow the best technology to flourish.

I want to empower the country's best minds to develop new solutions to make things better for patients, make things better for staff, and make our NHS the very best it can be.

Sarah Wilkinson, Chief Executive at NHS Digital, said:

The next generation of IT services for primary care must give more patients easy access to all key aspects of their medical record and provide the highest quality technology for use by GPs. They must also comply with our technology standards to ensure that we can integrate patient records across primary care, secondary care and social care.

In addition, we intend to strengthen quality controls and service standards, and dramatically improve the ease with which GPs can migrate from one supplier to another.

We are committed to working with existing and new suppliers to deliver these extended capabilities for the benefit of GPs and patients. We're very excited about the huge opportunities that will arise from improving the sophistication and quality of these services.

Press release: Busy 40th year for Kielder Salmon Centre

Around 360,000 salmon and 20,000 sea trout have been released into tributaries of the River Tyne this year as the Environment Agency's Kielder Salmon Centre celebrated its 40th anniversary.

The centre was built in 1978 to compensate for the building of Kielder Reservoir – the biggest man-made lake in Northern Europe – which cut off around 7% of the River Tyne catchment including some of the best spawning streams for salmon.

This year has also seen it create a new £100,000 visitor centre which opened to the public in September as the centre focuses on becoming an education and conservation centre of excellence. This received the Royal seal of approval during a visit by the Prince of Wales the same month.

Helping hand for Tyne fish

Richard Bond, who has been the centre's hatchery manager since 2005 said:

Over the 40 years we have released millions of salmon and sea trout into the River Tyne's tributaries to compensate for the fact they cannot reach their natural spawning grounds.

We just give them a helping hand, and it helps to contribute to the now thriving River Tyne. The river has gone from being heavily

industrialised to one which is now one of the best salmon rivers in the country.

It is a real success story and one which has happened for a number of reasons, predominantly due to improvements in water quality as well as work by ourselves and our partners to make improvements to fish passage and habitat.

In fact, work to build a fish pass on the River Derwent at Shotley Grove – a final piece of a jigsaw which will see more of the river opened up for fish access – is due to be complete in the coming weeks and is an example of partnership projects which have helped bring the River Tyne and its tributaries to life.

The recovery of River Tyne salmon stocks started in the late 1960s and was coincident with improvements to estuarine water quality and was aided by changes to environmental legislation, changing attitudes to conservation and a decrease in industrial pollution.

Through the centre, the Environment Agency now works on academic research projects, including innovative work to hand rear one of the UK's most endangered species, the freshwater pearl mussel. Richard added:

The new visitor centre has created a more interactive experience for visitors and allows them to get up close with species we aim to protect – including the iconic salmon and the critically endangered freshwater pearl mussel. It gives people the chance to understand the fascinating world that lies below the surface of the river.

Role of Kielder Reservoir

Kielder Reservoir plays an important role in preserving drinking water for the North East as well as supporting other abstractions along the River Tyne. It also has the capability to support flows in the rivers Wear and Tees if required and plays a role in reducing the risk of flooding on the North Tyne.

This summer, during particularly hot and dry weather, it played a vital role in reducing the risk of fish deaths in the upper reaches of the Tyne estuary. Additional releases made by Northumbrian Water at the Environment Agency's request between 22 June and 10 August amounted to 35 billion litres of water – a whopping 14 billion Olympic-size swimming pools.

During summers such as in 2018 a lack of freshwater flow coupled with high water temperatures in the Tyne estuary can lead to a lack of oxygen in the water. These conditions make it difficult for adult salmon returning to the River Tyne from the sea to survive. This is an occasional seasonal issue affecting migrating fish which has occurred in the past during prolonged dry and hot weather.

Phil Rippon, Fisheries Technical Specialist for the Environment Agency in the

North East said:

We continuously monitor the oxygen levels in the estuary during conditions such as we saw this summer and do what we can to help migrating fish reach their spawning grounds.

This includes additional releases of water from Kielder reservoir to increase freshwater flows when oxygen levels in the estuary become critical. Previous research from similar summer conditions has shown that releases from Kielder sometimes triggers upstream movement of salmon and sea trout, helping them during hot and dry conditions. These additional releases have undoubtedly saved many salmon in 2018.

The Environment Agency will continue to work with Northumbrian Water to monitor the conditions in the Tyne estuary.

[News story: Proposed bass measures for 2019](#)



The new TAC regulations are expected to be published in January 2019. In the meantime [current regulations](#) still apply.

This means that in January 2019 for:

- commercial fisheries the limits stay as outlined in the bass authorisation letter
- recreational fisheries it is catch and release only

The 2018 bass guidance can be [viewed here](#).

Following the December Council of Fisheries Minister of the European Union we expect:

- For recreational fisheries, including from shore, in ICES divisions 4b, 4c, 6a, 7a to 7k: a bag limit of one fish per day from 1 April to 31 October 2019
- For any commercial fisheries in ICES divisions 4b, 4c, 7d, 7e, 7f and 7h and in waters within 12 nautical miles from baselines under the sovereignty of the United Kingdom in ICES divisions 7a and 7g:

Only fishing vessels with a bass authorisation issued by the MMO based on a track record of bass landings in the reference period 1 July 2015 to 30 September 2016 or a bass authorisation obtained via transfer onto a replacement vessel with no increase in tonnage or engine power will be able to land bass

Bass will continue not to be subject to the landings obligation. Any bass caught above the quantity a vessel is authorised to land must be discarded.

A total closure period for months of February and March 2019 will apply to all methods of fishing.

There will be changes to the limits that can be landed by authorised vessels:

- Change for trawl by-catch with an increased by-catch cap (though the 1% per day remains in place). The cap (increased from the 100kg per month this year) is for 400kg over 2 months
- Change for seines – increase in the monthly cap from 180kg to 210 kg, and the 1% per day limit still applies
- Increase for hook and line from 5 tonnes to 5.5 tonnes per annum
- Fixed gillnetting – increase from 1.2 tonnes to 1.4 tonnes in 2019

For further information please contact: bass@marinemanagement.org.uk

Published 28 December 2018

Last updated 15 January 2019 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 15 January 2019 Bass guidance updated
2. 28 December 2018 First published.

[News story: Scarborough to be affiliated with HMS Duncan](#)

HMS Duncan is a cutting-edge Type 45 destroyer that was brought into Royal Navy service in 2010. She recently featured in hit documentary Warship: Life at Sea, which followed the personnel on board as they were buzzed by 17 Russian fighter jets in the Black Sea and supported Syrian air strikes.

The ship is armed with the Astor air defence missile system and has a radar capable of tracking thousands of targets while simultaneously coordinating multiple missiles in the air at once. She is also equipped with the state-of-the-art Harpoon Anti-Ship missile.

The ship's affiliation with the town will build on the Scarborough's strong sea cadet links and historic support of the Armed Forces, and will also see the ship's company make regular visits to the area.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, who was born in Scarborough, made the announcement during a visit to the town's Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) station to meet sea cadets.

He said:

HMS Duncan has already proved her might on the world stage, from her deployment to the Black Sea leading a NATO task force to her crucial work patrolling home waters.

The ship's new affiliation will not just honour this great town right across the world, but also pay tribute to thousands of Yorkshiremen and women who have served in Armed Forces.

With more than 14,000 members of the Armed Forces and Reserves hailing from Yorkshire, the region already has a strong affiliation to the military.

Scarborough also has a thriving sea cadet unit, which celebrates its centenary next year, and provides outstanding support to veterans through the Heroes' Welcome scheme.

Leader of Scarborough Borough Council, Cllr Derek Bastiman, said:

We are extremely honoured and delighted to have HMS Duncan affiliated with the Borough of Scarborough. It couldn't be a more fitting match as the son of one of our Cabinet members, Seaman Phillips, who is a serving member of the Royal Navy, has joined the ship's crew. The direct connection to our council and borough communities gives us immense pride.

Armed Forces personnel carry out their duties in a most professional way to ensure our safety and that of others at all times and for that we are truly grateful. We wish the crew of HMS Duncan every success in their active service and we hope that we will get the opportunity to welcome the ship on a visit to the Yorkshire coast at some point in the future.

The son of Cllr Heather Phillips, Leading Seaman Tim Phillips, joined HMS Duncan in August this year.

And the town's military ties will continue to strengthen as it prepares to host more than 200,000 people for Armed Forces Day in 2020.

The national event will see thousands of serving sailors, soldiers, airmen and women, alongside cadets, veterans and charities, descend on the town to celebrate the important work done by British forces across the world.