

Press release: Tonbridge Hildenborough residents invited to flood scheme events

The Environment Agency is inviting local residents, land owners and stakeholders to discuss plans for its scheme to better protect properties from flooding.

Press release: 388 top-rated beaches after scorching summer boosts visitors to seaside

97.9% of bathing waters passed tough standards following a programme of water quality testing at 420 bathing spots carried out by the Environment Agency (EA) from May to September.

The results coincided with a boost to tourism as visitors to the seaside enjoyed England's hottest summer on record.

The results, released today, also show that 92.4% of the beaches and inland lakes tested were given the top rating of 'Excellent' or 'Good.' Beaches at Whitby (Yorkshire), Sidmouth Jacobs Ladder (Devon) and Skegness (Lincolnshire) have all kept their Excellent rating for the fourth year in a row.

In the early 1990s just 28% of bathing waters would have met today's standards but dramatic improvements have been made to water quality over the last two decades, in part due to EA regulation reducing pollution from water companies and industry, and the work of local councils and communities.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This is great news for anyone who enjoys a trip to the seaside. We want everyone to be confident in the quality of our bathing waters and that's why the Environment Agency carry out regular tests to protect the health of visitors.

Britain's beaches are visited around 130 million times each year, generating over £7 billion for the economy. Working together we can all keep driving up standards to reduce pollution, ensuring

everyone can continue to enjoy our iconic coastline.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency said:

Seaside tourism is worth over £7 billion to the economy and good water quality is essential for people to visit and enjoy our beautiful beaches.

The Environment Agency's hard work has helped 388 beaches achieve the top Excellent or Good ratings this year and at beach cleans throughout the summer I've seen the commitment of local communities and campaigners to reduce pollution and protect our environment.

Everyone can take small steps to help us protect water quality as we continue work with water companies, councils and local communities to maintain high bathing water standards.

Throughout the bathing water season from May to September, staff from the Environment Agency take up to 20 samples at each designated bathing spot. These are tested in Environment Agency laboratories and the results are published online.

This year, more people than ever checked out the EA's bathing water website the [Bathing Water Data Explorer](#) which includes a searchable map allowing you to check the water quality at beaches and bathing waters before making a visit. The website, featuring the latest test results available was visited 109,400 times – more than double the amount from 2017.

The general public can help keep bathing waters clean by following this advice:

- Always put litter in the bin at the beach or take it away with you to dispose of at home;
- Check your drains at home aren't misconnected, sending dirty water from toilets, showers and dishwashers into the wrong pipes and into rivers and the sea. Use a ConnectRight accredited plumber;
- Wet wipes, cotton buds and sanitary items should go in the bin not be flushed.
- Don't pour fats, oils and grease down the sink, these can pollute rivers and coastal waters and can set hard in pipes which causes blockages.

[Press release: 388 top-rated beaches](#)

after scorching summer boosts visitors to seaside

Beaches around the country achieved top water quality standards this year as millions flocked to the coast to enjoy the record-breaking hot weather.

Press release: Project to help protect coastal defences and the environment

The partnership project between the Environment Agency and Essex Wildlife Trust has involved placing coir rolls in the Colne estuary to act as structures, which allow the sediment in the water to settle in the right place so that the saltmarsh can flourish.

The saltmarsh is gradually eroding due to climate change and the coastal squeeze, as it lies between the sea wall and the estuary channel. It currently acts as a buffer between the estuary and the sea defences so if it erodes, it means the defences are not as protected. It is also an important habitat for nesting birds and young fish.

Officers from the Environment Agency spent two days installing 21 structures, using 75 coir rolls, which have been held in place by wooden stakes and hessian rope.

This is the first time coir rolls have been used by the Environment Agency in East Anglia to restore saltmarsh and the results of this experiment will be assessed over the next year.

Becky Mason and Kirk Markham, priority catchment officers for the Colne, said:

We identified this site as the Colne estuary is ecologically significant and the eroding channel was right in front of the sea wall.

We are delighted with the progress of the installation phase of the project. In partnership with Essex Wildlife Trust, we are looking forward to monitoring the impact the structures have, and to what extent, in protecting and restoring the saltmarsh over the coming months and years.

The Colne has been chosen as one of four priority catchments in East Anglia, as part of a pilot project to focus on environmental outcomes across the area.

Press release: Project to help protect coastal defences and the environment

Environment Agency teams have been working to restore eroding saltmarsh in north Essex to help preserve coastal defences and enhance the ecology.