

Press release: Critical asset for early flood warning in York being built

The channel is being built in the river where it passes under the A59 at Skipbridge, Green Hammerton, between York and Harrogate.

Once the channel has been built an ultrasonic sensor will be attached under the bridge so accurate flow readings can be achieved.

This is important for predicting floods in York because the River Nidd is the last major watercourse flowing into the Ouse.

Project manager Oliver Wilson said:

This is one of the Environment Agency's critical assets for our flood warning service and for managing water resource available for abstraction.

Having an early warning that the Ouse could overtop in York means we can act early to prevent flooding by closing flood gates in the city.

So that the concrete lined channel can be built a cofferdam has been put in place.

One half of the river is dammed off to create a dry working area to enable construction on that side, before the other side is dammed and the new channel structure can be completed.

There was an existing concrete channel built a number of years ago but due to the design and flow dynamics it created in the river the bed got silted up, causing incorrect flow readings and it not working as an effective gauge station.

The new channel is designed to make sure sediment passes through it and flow readings are accurate.

Mr Wilson added:

Lower river levels have enabled us to make really good progress and we expect the gauge station to be fully functioning this winter.

North Yorkshire County Council's Highways Department has carried out work on the bridge and road earlier this year and Northern Powergrid also recently installed an electricity line across the bridge.

To view river levels [click here](#)

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Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on the 4th anniversary of MH17

On the fourth anniversary of the shooting down of MH17, the Foreign Secretary remembers those who died in the attack and calls for the Russian Federation to account for its role in this crime.

Today is the 4th anniversary of the day 298 people, including 10 British nationals, tragically lost their lives when Malaysia Airlines flight 17 was shot down as it flew a commercial route between Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur. I would like to offer my deepest condolences to the families and friends of all those who died. Your loved ones, who were killed in such horrific and shocking circumstances, deserve justice.

Thanks to the painstaking work of the Joint Investigation Team over the past 4 years, we now know that MH17 was shot down by a Russian Buk-type missile, belonging to the 53rd Anti-Aircraft Military Brigade of the Russian army which was launched from an area held by Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. This is another example of the Russian Federation's disregard for human life and the rules based international system and Russia must answer for its actions.

The UK fully supports Australia and the Netherlands in their call on the Russian Federation to accept state responsibility, and to cooperate with them in their efforts to deliver justice for the victims of this tragedy. The UK will continue to fully support the work of the Joint Investigation Team and the UK calls on the Russian Federation to cooperate fully with investigation and to provide any assistance it requests in accordance with UN Security

Council resolution 2166. It is vital this investigation leads to a prosecution and that those responsible are held accountable for this appalling crime.

[Press release: Commonwealth countries unite to tackle ocean plastic pollution](#)

Four more countries have signed up to UK and Vanuatu-led efforts to tackle ocean plastic, announced Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey today as she hosted the first meeting of the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance (CCOA).

The Alliance, which was [announced by the Prime Minister](#) during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London (16-18 April), aims to unite countries around the Commonwealth so they can work together to turn the tide on plastic entering the marine environment. It sees each country pledging to take action – be this by a ban on microbeads, a commitment to cutting down on single use plastic bags, or other steps to eliminate avoidable plastic waste.

Three months on, Australia, Fiji, Kenya and St Lucia have now formally joined the Alliance and will sit alongside New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Ghana to create a nine-strong coalition in the fight against plastic pollution.

High Commissioners from over 30 Commonwealth countries, including Tanzania and Nigeria who have not formally signed up to the Alliance, met in London today to share the ambitions and expertise they have and reiterate their commitment to healthy oceans.

The meeting was chaired by Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey where she highlighted the UK's global leadership on ocean conservation and updated on action taken under our [25 Year Environment Plan](#).

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Marine plastics pollution is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world today, requiring a truly global approach to developing a solution.

By joining together the expertise and ambitions of the Commonwealth countries, we can make huge strides towards eliminating all single use plastic from our oceans. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing from other countries on how they are approaching this challenge, and

look forward to seeing what difference we can make together.

Minster Coffey also outlined the assistance available from the UK to support Commonwealth countries through the £61.4million Commonwealth Oceans Plastic Package, as [announced by the Prime Minister at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting](#) in London earlier this year.

Included in the package is a £25million Marine Plastics Research and Innovation Framework, to help researchers approach the scourge of marine plastic waste from a scientific, technical, economic and social perspective.

More details were also revealed about the Global Plastics Action Partnership, a Defra-funded £2.4million project linked to CCOA to tackle global plastic pollution in rivers, deltas and oceans. Three initial projects will be launched as part of the public-private project in hotspots around the world; in Southeast Asia, West Africa and a Small Island Developing State.

The UK Government continues to lead the way in tackling plastic, with one of the world's strongest bans on microbeads introduced last month and 9 billion fewer bags distributed thanks to the 5p plastic bag charge. Environment Secretary Michael Gove has also outlined ambitious plans to [end the sale of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds](#) and [introduce a deposit return scheme](#), subject to consultation.