

News story: Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme officially opened

The £17.8 million project, led by the Environment Agency, helps to protect 378 homes and 165 businesses in the town centre from flooding from Eller Beck and Waller Hill Beck, which rise very quickly after heavy rain. The project is designed to provide the town with this new level of protection over the course of the next 100 years.

Skipton has suffered from flooding from these becks as recently as December 2015. Prior to this Skipton has experienced a significant flooding in 1908, 1979, 1982, 2000, 2004 and 2007. A life was lost as a result of the 1982 flood.

Construction of the scheme started in March 2015, where two flood storage areas have been created upstream of Skipton at Eller Beck near Skipton Golf Club, and Waller Hill Beck to slow the flow of water from the surrounding hills, reducing the risk of the becks causing floods in the town centre.

The new flood storage areas can hold a combined total of 111 million gallons of water equivalent to 168 Olympic sized swimming pools, or 5.2 million bathtubs.

Eller Beck near Skipton Golf Course is the larger of the two storage areas. A 13 metre high, 610 metre wide earthworks dam has been built which can hold 433,000 cubic metres of water or 95 million gallons. Normal flows pass unrestricted through a pipe known as a culvert within the dam, but during a flood, a barrier called a penstock will be lowered to block off the culvert inlet so that water can be held back to form a reservoir.

The dam at Waller Hill is 9 metres high, 105 metres wide, and has the capacity to hold 72,000 cubic metres of water, or nearly 16 million gallons. A concrete culvert with inlet and outlet has been constructed to allow the beck to flow during normal conditions, which allows high river flows to be held back.

The scheme also includes 300 metres of new flood defence walls including new raised walls that have been constructed in the town centre at Morrison's car park, and near private gardens and a children's play area further upstream in the town. Some of the defences have been clad in matching stone to blend in with other buildings in the conservation area.

Environmental considerations include an otter ledge running through the culvert as well as an otter hedge running around the outside of Eller Beck Dam. These new wildlife-friendly additions will help to open up access for any local otter populations. A significant number of trees have also been planted around the two sites as well as further up the catchment including alder, oak, white willow as well as holly, hazel and blackthorn hedgerows.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

Skipton is a town which knows the devastating impacts of flooding. We can never prevent all flooding, but we can reduce the risk of it happening and the damage if it does. I am delighted that this scheme will see hundreds of homes and businesses better protected for years to come.

This scheme forms part of more than half a billion pounds worth of government funding which we are investing across the whole of Yorkshire between 2015-2021 to reduce flood risk to nearly 60,000 properties.

The majority of the funding for the project has come from the Environment Agency which has contributed over £11m. Further funding also came from the Defra Growth Fund (£1.7m), North Yorkshire County Council (£750k), Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee £300k and Yorkshire Water (£250k).

The scheme will also open up land to development for businesses which will have a positive impact on job creation and economic activity in the area and therefore benefits from Government Growth Deal funding, a deal between government and local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) to transform regional economy. The awarding bodies are the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership which awarded the scheme £1.2m, and Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership, which extended a further £1.5m.

The scheme has also been made possible with support from Skipton Town Council, local businesses, the local community, and Craven District Council, who played an integral part in the successful application for significant Local Growth Funding.

[News story: Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme officially opened](#)

A multi-million pound flood defence scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to homes and businesses in Skipton has officially opened today (Thursday 11 October).

[Press release: New River Wear fish pass is complete](#)

An Environment Agency project to safeguard the flood warning service for Stanhope has also improved fish passage on the River Wear.

[Press release: Recreational angling puts £1.4bn into English economy](#)

This is according to an Environment Agency study published today, the first time since 2005 that a major study of angling activity and expenditure has taken place.

The Environment Agency study, [A Survey of Freshwater Angling in England](#) examined the spending patterns and behaviour of 10,000 surveyed fishing licence holders to build a picture of the market value of freshwater angling in England.

The study found that angling for coarse fish was the most popular activity for the nation's anglers, accounting for 19 million days of fishing with carp the most sought after species with an estimated 7 million days fishing time. Game anglers spent 1.6 million days fishing for salmon and trout.

Other findings included:

- Across all types of angling, almost 70% of all angling days were on lakes, ponds, reservoirs.
- Most coarse angling trips took place between 5 and 25 miles from the angler's home. Anglers travelled significantly further for game fishing, with most salmon anglers travelling at least 50 miles from home to fish.
- Anglers each spent an average of over £400 on tackle and around £110 on club or syndicate fees
- A clean and attractive environment with minimal disturbance was more highly valued by anglers than the size and abundance of fish.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment at the Environment Agency said:

This study highlights the money anglers put into their sport and its importance to some of England's regional economies.

All income from fishing licence sales is used to fund our work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries. This includes

improving habitats for fish, facilities for anglers and tackling illegal fishing. We also work with partners such as the Angling Trust, Get Hooked on Fishing, the Canal and River Trust and the Angling Trade Association to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive of the Angling Trust, said:

These figures confirm that angling makes a huge contribution to the economy, alongside the many benefits it brings to the health and wellbeing of millions of people each year. The Angling Trust, working with the Environment Agency, are focused on protecting and growing angling not only as an important contributor to our economy, but also to our society as a whole. Over the last three years we have worked with the Environment Agency to reinvest millions of pounds of rod licence income in improving facilities for anglers, providing information about how and where to fish, together we have helped over 77,000 people try fishing for the first time.

The study assessed legal angling activity, preferences and expenditure patterns in 2015 and compared them with activity in 2005.

Press release: Environment Agency commits to fight against modern slavery

- Over 100 EA officers trained to spot signs of exploitation
- Two thirds of victims reported to have worked in waste industry
- Anti-Slavery Day raising awareness of need to eradicate modern slavery

The Environment Agency (EA) has committed to working with police and enforcement agencies to eradicate modern day slavery from the waste and recycling industry by training officers to spot signs of exploitation during site inspections.

Latest figures from anti-slavery charity, Hope for Justice, show that two-thirds of victims are reported to have worked within the waste industry. In response, the EA has worked with the charity to train over 100 waste and regulation EA officers to recognise exploitative work practices.

Today (Thursday 18 October) is Anti-Slavery Day across England and Wales, a day introduced in 2010 to raise awareness of the need to eradicate modern day slavery in all its forms.

The training for officers precedes the government's organised waste crime review, due out later this year, which recognises an emerging criminal subset within the waste management industry. Earlier this year, the EA introduced the use of body worn cameras for waste enforcement officers following a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections.

Marie Fallon, Director of Regulated Industry at the Environment Agency said:

Modern slavery is an abhorrent crime that often goes unseen. Whilst the majority of the waste businesses we regulate are well run, there are a concerning number of operators who delve into criminal practices which harm the environment, local communities and their own work force.

Our work with Help for Justice has given our officers the skills to understand the signs of modern slavery which can add value to the work of the police, partners and local authorities who collectively are working to stamp it out.

Sara Squires, UK Training Manager at anti-slavery charity Hope for Justice, said:

It is fantastic to see such strong backing for these efforts from the Environment Agency. I know from first-hand experience that good-quality training leads to an improved response. More than half of referrals to Hope for Justice of potential victims of modern slavery come from organisations we have trained, and many of those referrals lead directly to rescues.

I have sat with rescued victims as they realise they are now safe and free, and as they begin to understand that they can finally start making their own decisions in an atmosphere of care and support, which is so important.

Better understanding among frontline agencies of the indicators of exploitation and the best ways to respond will change the landscape of anti-slavery efforts in the UK, by increasing prosecutions, deterring traffickers and supporting survivors.

EA officers have been instructed to look for common signs of exploitation including an extreme fear of authorities, signs of physical or psychological trauma including anxiety or malnourishment, and evidence suggesting workers may be living on site.

Anyone with suspicions of contemporary slavery can report it to Hope for Justice on 0300 008 8000 or email info.uk@hopeforjustice.org

To report waste crime, please contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

ENDS

Note to editors

EA announces new powers to tackle waste crime:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-powers-to-crack-down-on-waste-crime>