

Press release: Ipswich Tidal Flood Barrier Gate a step closer

Huge hydraulic arms that will operate Ipswich's new tidal flood gate have been installed, taking the vital £70 million project 1 step closer to completion.

VIPs, including the Environment Agency chief executive Sir James Bevan, attended an open day to see the latest work on the flood defence scheme, which will significantly reduce the risk of flooding for 2,000 homes and businesses in the town.

The 200 tonne tidal gate was manufactured in the Netherlands and arrived in Suffolk in October, a significant milestone in the 4 year project. The gate is 22 metres wide and will stand 9 metres tall when in its "closed position". It is finished with 5 tonnes of special paint that will help protect it, as it spends most of its life under water.

It was lowered into place by a specially constructed 1,000 tonne crane and the operating mechanism and control building are now being installed.

The project is being undertaken by Environment Agency contractor VBA – a joint venture between VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins – and is due to be completed next year.

Sir James Bevan, chief executive at the Environment Agency, said:

Its been fantastic to visit the Ipswich tidal barrier gate and see this incredible feat of engineering. The £70 million barrier will not only help reduce the threat of flooding for 2,000 homes and businesses but also be a boost for the area's economy. Working with partners has been key to the scheme's success and I look forward to seeing the finished scheme.

Floods Minister, Thérèse Coffey, said:

Suffolk is no stranger to flooding and the devastating impacts it can have. That is why I am really pleased that we have made progress with this scheme which is a key part of the regeneration of our county town.

This new £70 million barrier is brilliant news for Ipswich and is just 1 example of our investment across Suffolk to better protect communities across the county from flooding.

The Ipswich Flood Defence Management Strategy (IFDMS) will increase the standard of protection and takes into account current climate change predictions.

The final element of the scheme involves building a tidal barrier across the New Cut River in Ipswich with associated works to tie it into the new east and west bank walls and gates.

The flood defence scheme, which will reduce the risk of flooding to 1,608 homes and 422 businesses and support key infrastructure, has been partnership funded by: the Environment Agency, Ipswich Borough Council, Department for Communities and Local Government, the Haven Gateway Partnership, and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

The barrier gate is expected to be operational in the spring of 2018.

Press release: Milestone at Shoreham flood defence project

A major flood defence scheme that will significantly reduce flood risk to over 2,300 properties in Shoreham-by-Sea and Lancing has taken a step towards completion.

Work at Reach E3 of the Shoreham Adur Tidal Walls Scheme is now complete, and the northern section of the Downs Links and Lower Beach Road re-opened on Friday 8 December. Also, as a result of updated modelling for the project, part of the initial plan has been adapted and removed the need for major road works on the A283.

The scheme is made up of 10 individual reaches, and work has now started on 8. Construction on Reach E3, which includes raised walls and embankments, started in 2016. Steel piling has been installed along the landward side of the path, and has been clad with brick. The Downs Link path was diverted while the work was completed.

Before the advanced modelling took place, the A283 in Shoreham-by-Sea would have been closed for 12 weeks during construction in spring 2018. As a result of the work that has already taken place, only a very small number of properties would benefit from the road raising work. Instead, these properties will be protected with an alternative solution to ensure they also receive a high level of protection, and the road closures will not take place.

Elsewhere in the scheme, work on the slipway at Emerald Quay and Sussex Wharf is advancing and the first panes of glass of the riverside flood defence have been installed. The majority of the new wall at Ferry Bridge is complete, and

vegetation clearance at Riverbank in preparation for construction to start in the new year is finished. Work at Emerald Quay, Shoreham Harbour Club and Shoreham Fort is progressing well. Much of the work behind the High Street in Shoreham has been completed and is open to the public.

Phil Prydderch, Shoreham Adur Tidal Walls Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

It's great news for Shoreham-by-Sea residents that we will be able to enhance their flood protection without the planned road closures. We are committed to protecting all members of the community, and will continue to work with local residents to make them more resilient against flooding.

When complete, the Shoreham scheme will reduce the tidal flood risk to thousands of homes and a significant number of commercial properties in the area, as well as protecting important local infrastructure such as the road network, railway line and Shoreham Airport. This is one part of the Environment Agency's national effort to reduce the risk of flooding for at least 300,000 homes by 2020/21.

The Shoreham scheme's dedicated project visitor centre is at Beach Green Car Park, Shoreham-by-Sea, and is open between midday and 5:00pm on weekdays. Further information on the scheme is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or by calling 03708 506506.

You can also request information by emailing shorehamwestbank@environment-agency.gov.uk or by writing to SSD Enquiries, Environment Agency, Guildbourne House, Chatsworth Road, Worthing, BN11 1LD.

Notes to editors

The visitor centre may be closed during scheduled visits from schools and interest groups.

Flood impact maps showing the detailed modelling outcomes are available upon request.

All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743. Or email southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk

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Press release: Abstraction reform: further moves made towards Green Brexit

Access to clean and safe water supplies is essential for people and the environment, however increasing demand for water is putting pressure on supplies.

Latest data shows that five per cent of surface water bodies and 15 per cent of groundwater bodies are at risk from increasing water use by current abstraction licence holders that could damage the environment.

Today's new [abstraction reform plan](#) will improve better access to water by:

- Preventing unsustainable abstraction by reviewing existing licences and introducing more controls to protect rivers, lakes and groundwater.
- Developing a strong focus on catchment areas for water bodies to encourage more partnership working between [the Environment Agency](#), abstractors and catchment groups to protect and enhance the environment and improve access to water.
- Modernising the abstraction service to allow online applications for licences and bring water resources regulations in line with other environmental permitting regulations.

Environment Minister, Thérèse Coffey said:

The abstraction licencing system is in clear need of reform and I am very pleased to set out how we will do this in our plan. I believe our approach will work for all parties and, most importantly, will protect our precious water supplies.

Our ambition is to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it and we will keep building on our successes by enhancing our environmental standards and delivering a Green Brexit.

Making sure that abstraction is sustainable and contributes to healthy water bodies that are able to provide good support to fish and other aquatic life is at the heart of these plans.

While good progress has been made in recent years, the plan emphasises the importance of the Environment Agency, the water industry and other

stakeholders working in partnership at a catchment level to improve and protect the environment and improve access to water.

From January 2018 the Environment Agency will begin to regulate around 5,000 water users that have historically been exempt from regulation. This will create a fairer system and help protect the environment.

The Environment Agency's work to address unsustainable abstraction should see around 90 per cent of surface water bodies and 77 per cent of groundwater bodies meet the required standards by 2021.

Notes to editors:

- The Environment Agency will produce updated abstraction licensing strategies that detail the solutions to environmental issues in local areas around rivers and groundwaters and set out approaches to help abstractors access the water they need.
- Since 2008 the Environment Agency has made changes to over 270 abstraction licences to prevent over 30 billion litres of water per year being removed from the environment where abstraction is unsustainable.
- In the New Year, the Environment Agency will begin piloting and testing a digital system for handling licence applications and data reporting. Modernising these services will improve the user experience as well as supporting reforms to better protect the environment and improve access to water.
- A report will be made to Parliament by May 2019 on the progress made on abstraction reform.

Press release: Don't throw plastic or other items at Matlock raft racers

With this year's annual Matlock Boxing Day Raft Race given the go-ahead once again, the Environment Agency is urging the thousands of spectators expected to turn out to watch the popular event to leave their flour-filled plastic bags and other objects at home.

In previous years, spectators have thrown eggs, flour, plastic or paper bags, and other products at the raft racers from various points along the 3.5 mile course of the race on the River Derwent, which poses a real threat to the

environment and wildlife.

Paul Reeves, Environment Officer at the Environment Agency, said:

We realise the Matlock Raft Race is an important social event for the area, which attracts a large number of local residents as well as visitors from further afield, has a positive impact on the local economy, and raises funds for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

However, we are appealing to spectators to consider the environment by not throwing flour-filled plastic bags or other objects at the raft racers and into the water this year.

If plastic or paper bags enter the watercourse, they pose a real threat to wildlife both locally and further afield. Last year there were sightings of water birds trying to eat floating flour-filled bags, and the deadly impact of plastics on river and sea life is well known and currently in the news.

Councillor Lewis Rose OBE, Leader of Derbyshire Dales District Council, said:

The Boxing Day raft race has become something of a tradition here in the Derbyshire Dales and long may it continue. However, we absolutely support the Environment Agency's plea to spectators to refrain from activities that threaten the environment and wildlife, as well as littering our waterways and streets.

Kath Stapley, Living Rivers Officer, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, added:

On behalf of the 60 partner organisations which make up the Derbyshire Derwent Catchment Partnership, we're asking people to spare a thought for the wildlife in and around the River Derwent.

We're constantly working to improve the rivers in the catchment, from Howden Moor above Ladybower Reservoir, down into Derby, but we can only make a difference with support from members of the public. If plastics and other items are thrown into the river at Matlock, they may travel out of sight, but will inevitably affect the watercourse and wildlife downstream in Belper, Duffield, Derby and even down into the River Trent.

Press release: Farmer fined for illegal waste site

A County Durham man has been convicted of operating an illegal waste site in a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency.

Stephen Anthony Suddes, 53, appeared at Newton Aycliffe Magistrate's Court on Wednesday 13 December 2017 for operating a waste facility without a permit at his Thornley Pit House farm in Bishop Auckland.

Suddes, who has two previous convictions for waste offences, admitted the charges. He was handed a fine of £1,640 and ordered to pay costs of £1,500 and a £165 victim surcharge.

Under the same prosecution, Kevin Gray, 53, of Wear Street, Tow Law, on 6 September pleaded guilty for depositing controlled waste on a site without an environmental permit. He was fined £400 and ordered to pay £1,000 costs.

Acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, solicitor Laura Taylor told the court that Suddes deliberately and flagrantly disregarded the law over several months.

Environment Agency officers visited Suddes farm several times between 24 May 2016 and 31 October 2016. Each time they observed illegal activity including large piles of waste containing metals, wood, plastics, rubble and soils, and clear signs that waste had been burnt. On two occasions they recorded a white van owned by Kevin Gray Building Services tipping construction and demolition waste on the farm.

David O'Toole of the Environment Agency said:

Suddes has repeatedly put the environment at risk by deliberately ignoring the law for financial gain. Illegal waste activity such as this has a detrimental impact on the community and environment, as well as undermining legitimate businesses. We'll continue to work hard to ensure enforcement action is taken against those who flout the law.

Anyone who suspects that waste is being disposed of on an illegal waste fire is urged to report the matter to our incident hotline on 0800 807060.