

# Press release: Nottingham man arrested in connection with Walesby Fire

A 41-year-old man was today (Wednesday Nov 8) arrested for questioning in relation to a fire which burned for over two weeks on a farm near Walesby in north Nottinghamshire last September.

He was arrested in a joint operation involving officers from the Environment Agency and Nottinghamshire Police.

He is being questioned in connection to a fire at Oakfield Farm, in Forest Lane, Walesby, which contained dumped illegal waste.

No permit existed for waste to be stored on the farm.

The man from the Sneinton area of Nottingham was also answering questions about two other enquiries following the discovery of illegal waste at a site on Hathernware Industrial Estate in Loughborough and a farm in Leicestershire.

When officers entered the property in Sneinton they discovered around 40 suspected cannabis plants. The man is also being questioned over this matter.

Peter Haslock, Area Enforcement Team Leader for the East Midlands, said:

The arrest was made as part of a joint investigation involving enforcement officers from the Environment Agency and colleagues from Nottinghamshire Police.

We know the Walesby site did not have a permit for waste activity and we believe the waste was involved in the fire.

These are extremely serious cases and the Environment Agency is determined to bring the culprits to justice.

We are working closely with partners to share intelligence on illegal waste activity. And we're encouraging property and land owners to be vigilant.

Anyone who sees waste crime taking place is advised not to approach as these people can be dangerous.

Report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Advice to land and property owners:

- Check any empty land and property regularly and make sure it is secure.
- Carry out rigorous checks on prospective and new tenants. Land and

property owners have a responsibility to ensure anyone leasing their land/property complies with regulations. They may be committing an offence by allowing waste to be stored on land or property without the relevant permissions and could leave them liable to prosecution

- Be vigilant and report any unusual behaviour.

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## [Press release: Public asked to comment on Medway Estuary flood defence strategy](#)

Members of the public are being invited to share their views on the Environment Agency's strategy to protect areas of the north Kent coast over the next century.

The [online public consultation](#) opens today, 6 November 2017, allowing people to view the Environment Agency's plans on how best to best protect people, properties, wildlife habitats and agricultural land from flooding and coastal erosion in the Swale and Medway Estuary Area.

The Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy outlines the best technical solution for flood defence while considering the impact and benefits to local communities and the environment, as well as the cost to the taxpayer. It covers the Medway towns of Stoke, Sittingbourne, Conyer and Faversham, in addition to the Isle of Sheppey and the Medway Estuary.

Rising sea levels could result in the loss of nationally and internationally designated wildlife habitats in the area, which might be 'squeezed' against existing defences. The strategy therefore considers whether existing defences could be moved inland and the coastline returned to a more natural state, or whether habitat could be created elsewhere.

Mark Douch, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, said:

The project team has developed leading options for each section of the strategy area, based on economic, technical, and environmental appraisals.

We are keen to hear comments and feedback from the public on the proposed flood and coastal management options. We want to make sure we have captured all information before finalising the strategy.

The consultation runs until 5 February 2018.

Members of the local communities and key stakeholders are invited to review

the proposed options for the management of coastal flood and erosion risk at public exhibitions being held at:

- Eastchurch Village Hall, Isle of Sheppey, 3pm to 7pm, 30 November 2017.
- Riverside Country Park, Gillingham, 3pm to 7pm, 6 December 2017.
- Halling Community Centre, 3:30pm to 7:30pm, 12 December 2017.

## Contact

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## [Press release: Exercise Tempest tests the Environment Agency flood response ahead of winter](#)

More than 300 metres of temporary flood defence barrier, drones and new visual mapping technology are being put to the test today (7th November) as the Environment Agency continues preparation for the winter ahead.

Exercise Tempest will see frontline staff test out temporary barriers in Stratford-upon-Avon – birthplace of William Shakespeare – for the first time. The exercise will test working arrangements with the local council and partners so that barriers can be put up quickly and safely when needed to help to protect properties on the waterfront from flooding.

Staff on-site and in the Environment Agency's incident room in Lichfield will also be working together to test new visual mapping technology which will provide better intelligence about flood damage and impacts on the ground. This includes drones that teams can use to survey wider flood-hit areas, sending footage via a live feed, to the Environment Agency incident room.

Up and down the country, the Environment Agency is prepared to take action this winter wherever it is needed.

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

This test exercise is one of many across the country to make sure we are ready for winter. We have 6,500 trained staff ready to respond to flooding and we're making the most of new kit and technology.

Since the flooding of winter 2015/16, the Environment Agency has

invested £12.5 million in new equipment including an additional 20 miles of temporary barriers, 500,000 sandbags and 250 pumps. The use of drones will also allow us to have a clearer idea of flood damage on the ground.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This exercise is a brilliant example of work taking place across the country to make sure we are fully prepared for any potential flooding this winter.

The use of new hi-spec equipment such as drones and live 'visual mapping' to show flood affected areas will be a huge asset to flood prevention teams.

The investment we have made in new technology, portable barriers and other equipment forms part of the £2.5 billion we are spending across the country up until 2021 to better protect over 300,000 properties.

Temporary barriers are just one of the ways the Environment Agency aims to better protect people and properties. But it's important to remember people can never be fully protected against flooding, which is why people are being urged to [go online](#) and check their flood risk by entering their postcode, and find out what they can do to protect themselves and their property when flooding hits.

More than 1.2 million people are signed up to the Environment Agency's free flood warning service, which sends a message directly by voice message, text or email when a flood warning is issued.

From 2015 to 2021, Government is investing £2.5 billion in flood and coastal erosion risk management projects which will reduce the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea, groundwater and surface water for at least 300,000 homes.

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## **[Press release: Multi-agency exercise to test temporary barriers at Beales Corner in Bewdley](#)**

The Environment Agency's field team, along with support from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, Bewdley Town Council and other partners, will be testing out the deployment of temporary flood barriers and the local community flood plan.

The exercise, which will start at 09:00am, will provide an opportunity to test our barrier deployment plan and procedures in this training exercise. We will be testing our working arrangements with partners and the local Community Flood Group, so the barriers can be quickly and safely erected when needed during a flood, with minimum disruption to residents and businesses.

Pedestrians and traffic will be unable to use this section of road and pathway between Millside Court to where it joins with Kidderminster Road, via the Stourport Road. Access to Bewdley Bridge and the town will remain fully accessible by using the Kidderminster Road.

Mark Bowers, Flood Risk Manager said:

This is a test of our operational equipment and local community flood plan. Although we have carried out numerous barrier deployment exercises at our training depots, doing it on location will give our field team invaluable experience.

It's important to remember that we can never protect 100% against flooding, and we can't guarantee that specific communities will always have access to temporary barriers.

Local residents and businesses should be prepared by checking their flood risk, signing up to flood warnings and finding out what they can do to protect themselves and their property by visiting the Prepare for Flooding page on GOV.UK or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

Nick Farress, Bewdley Town Council Clerk added:

This will be a vital practice run to test our new community led flood plan which has been developed to support the Environment Agency in retaining the temporary barrier at Beale's Corner. The Town Council are very grateful to our band of volunteers who have put themselves forward to help with this vital work".

The temporary barrier deployment is also being supported by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service who is a key partner in the project. Wyre Forest Station Commander, Daryl Justice, said:

Our involvement with the Bewdley Flood Barrier response is new arrangement that will see our Firefighters add even more value to the Wyre Forest community.

When flooding is predicted our on-call firefighters will be given a period of notice which will minimise the impact on their primary employment and, although deployed under the direction of the Environment Agency, they will remain available for life threatening

emergencies.

This is one of the first initiatives of its type in the UK and is a great example of how fire crews can add value in other areas. It also supports Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's wider vision of 'Saving More Lives'.

Environment Agency staff and Community Flood Group members will be available during the exercise to provide the public with information about access restrictions, alternative routes and general flood advice. The exercise is likely to conclude around 13:00pm.

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## **Press release: Tidal flood barrier gate arrives in Ipswich**

A 200 tonne tidal gate has arrived in Suffolk, ready to be installed at Ipswich's new flood barrier.

The delivery of the gate from its manufacturing site in Rotterdam, Holland, is a significant step towards the completion of the Environment Agency's £70 million project.

The work was carried out by Hollandia, a sub-contractor for Environment Agency contractor VBA – a joint venture between VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins.

It took 2 years to design and build the gate and 24 hours for it to be transported across the North Sea, finally passing under the Orwell Bridge and entering Ipswich early on the morning of Friday 27 October.

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.

### **Special crane will be used to install 200 tonne gate**

The gate is currently on a barge in the Port of Ipswich, while a crane big enough to lift it into place is delivered to site and constructed.

The 1,000 tonne crane will be assembled on the construction site on the middle island of the Port of Ipswich.

Once the crane is complete, the gate will be installed into the barrier structure in the upright position, which is its "maintenance position".

The main hydraulic rams and control systems can then be installed and there

will be a testing period of a further 8 weeks.

Andrew Osborne, Project Manager, said:

This is a key milestone for the project and sees the final elements of the barrier arriving on site.

The construction of the crane will take several days, and this is a very busy period for what has been a long-running project.

It's another step closer to significantly improving the flood protection for Ipswich.

The Ipswich Flood Defence Management Strategy (IFDMS) will increase the standard of protection to 0.33% (greater than 1 in 200) and takes into account current climate change predictions. The 0.33% relates to the probability of a combined fluvial and tidal flood event happening in any one year.

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

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.