

Press release: New and revised permits for Horse Hill oil and gas site

The company already held a permit to drill the exploratory borehole and manage wastes arising from that process. This variation allows them to drill a new borehole, drill a side track from the original borehole and carry out flow testing to understand the long term economic viability of the oil and gas reserves. No hydraulic fracturing will take place as part of this activity.

The company has also been issued with an environmental permit to allow them to store oil on site following production.

The company will need to adhere strictly to the conditions set out in these permits, which will ensure the local community and environment are protected.

The Environment Agency considered the opinions raised by local people during the 4 week consultation with communities, interested groups and other professional organisations before reaching this decision.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

We would like to thank all those people who responded to the consultation. Since the consultation period closed, Horse Hill Developments Limited has provided additional information to clarify some of the aspects of their application for flow testing.

After considering all of the information available and completing our assessment we are confident that the environment and people will be protected. Environment Agency officers will now ensure compliance with these operating conditions during the next phase of works.

For all media enquiries please contact 0800 141 2743 or email Southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Press release: Powick weir public drop-in event

The drop-in session will be held on Monday 18 September 2017, 2pm to 6:30pm at:

Callow End Village Hall

Upton Road

Callow End

Worcester

WR2 4TA

The Environment Agency is a partner in a major project – Unlocking the Severn – which aims to significantly increase populations of fish on the rivers Severn and Teme by removing barriers and enabling fish to migrate upstream to their historic breeding grounds. Through work at a number of key sites on both rivers, including Powick weir, the project will reopen 250km of river habitat for all fish species and secure the UK breeding population of the rare twaite shad.

As owners of Powick weir, the Environment Agency investigated options which would maintain and improve fish stocks in the River Teme. When assessing options to improve fish passage, each weir is considered carefully from environmental, navigational, operational and flood risk perspectives. The Environment Agency has fully considered the options available for fish passage and is confident that partial weir removal is the best solution for this location as it will achieve the best long term environmental benefit for the River Teme.

David Clarke, Project Executive from the Environment Agency said:

Weirs are physical barriers to fish migration and great progress has been made in enabling fish to access the upper reaches of rivers again in recent years.

Over the last year we have carried out detailed assessments, habitat and aerial surveys, and modelling work to plan the best solution for the Powick weir site – for improved fish passage and to assist the natural recovery of the river. The upcoming drop-in event is an opportunity to provide an update to interested parties on our plans, ahead of work starting in June 2018.

There will be information displays and representatives from the Environment Agency available at the session to answer questions and to discuss the scheme in greater detail.

Press release: Poultry farm permit application drop in session

The Environment Agency is holding a public drop in session on Friday 15 September, 2pm to 7pm at:

Upton Snodsbury Village Hall

Worcestershire

The aim of the drop in is to speak to local residents and answer any questions about the environmental permit application which has been submitted to the Environment Agency by A&C Poultry to operate a free range poultry farm in Upton Snodsbury, Worcestershire.

The environmental permit application is separate from the planning application process and focuses on the technology used, how the site is to be operated, the emissions from the operation and any direct impact the site has on human health and the environment. The Environment Agency are not able to consider the suitability of the location (other than the impacts of emissions on local receptors), visual impact, the need for the facility, where the waste comes from and any infrastructure impacts such as transport, power lines and utilities, as these are part of the planning process.

Dane Broomfield, Environment Management Team Leader, said:

It is important that we obtain and consider the views of the public before we make any decision regarding the application. We would like to invite communities close to the site to forward any comments on the application as part of our consultation process. The consultation period started on 14 August 2017 and will end on 29 September 2017.

Copies of the [permit application and supporting documents](#) are available online.

Or you can view the documents on the public register free of charge at the following location:

Environment Agency

Riversmeet House

Newtown Industrial Estate

Northway Lane
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
GL20 8JG

Any comments should be made in writing by 29 September 2017 to:

The Environment Agency
Permitting Support Centre
Environmental Permitting Team
Quadrant 2
99 Parkway Avenue
Parkway Business Park,
Sheffield
S9 4WF

Or by emailing pscpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk, quoting reference EA/EPR/HP3433YU/A001 in any correspondence.

Dane explained:

The Environment Agency will consider any issues raised, and will produce a draft decision on whether we are 'minded to' issue to the environmental permit. We will announce our draft decision and there will be another period of public consultation at this stage.

[Press release: Courts issue £177,720 in penalties to anglers](#)

The Environment Agency revealed it prosecuted 691 people for angling offences throughout April, May and June 2017. In total, courts imposed penalties of £177,720, with the highest being £974. Some 314 offenders received penalties

of over £300, ten times the price of a year's legal fishing.

The most common offence was fishing without a valid licence, which could see offenders landing fines of up to £2,500 and a criminal conviction. Other offences included removing coarse fish contrary to national byelaws put in place to protect fish stocks. During the restricted period the Environment Agency carried out 17,589 fishing licence checks and issued 963 offence reports.

Kevin Austin, our new Deputy Director for Fisheries at the Environment Agency said:

The Environment Agency and its partners take unlicensed angling very seriously. While only a minority of anglers seek to evade the law and do not buy a licence if only 5% of anglers didn't buy a £30 annual licence this would represent a loss of around £1.5m to the sport and to the environment.

Anyone fishing without a licence can expect to be prosecuted, fined and face having a criminal conviction. Obtaining a fishing licence is easier than ever and costs from just £30 for the year and remember that the junior licence is now free – there is no excuse.

Anyone who suspects illegal fishing to be taking place should report the matter to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Press release: Helping north east communities be flood resilient

The Environment Agency has appointed a new team of engagement officers to help communities be more resilient to flooding in the North East.

The £280,000 a year project includes four new engagement officers spread across four areas – Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and Darlington, and Cleveland.

Funded by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) for the next four years, the officers are working alongside partner organisations to help support communities.

It includes helping businesses and residents to understand their risk of flooding and ensuring those in flood risk areas are signed up to receive free flood warnings.

They're also helping communities prepare themselves for flooding, such as

supporting them to develop community flood plans and recruit volunteer Flood Wardens in at risk communities.

The Community Engagement Officers are working on behalf of the Environment Agency and local authority partners.

As well as supporting residents and businesses, working alongside schools will play a key role in helping future generations understand their risk.

Direct support for communities

Phil Taylor, from the Environment Agency's Flood Resilience Team in the North East, said:

We've seen over the last few years alone just how devastating flooding can be for communities, so it's positive news that Northumbria RFCC has agreed to fund these dedicated officers to provide direct support to communities.

In areas where the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning Service is available the officers will be working to increase sign up to the service.

They'll also be helping develop community flood plans that will detail the action each community or business can take to reduce the impact of flooding, and help them return to normal life as soon as possible should a flood happen.

And working with schools and youth groups means children can be educated about what it means to be flood resilient and ensure the messages delivered through the project have long-term impact in flood risk areas for years to come.

To find out more about your local flood risk and sign up to the Flood Warning Service Visit [the gov.uk web pages](#)

Local Information

Durham & Darlington



Anna Caygill is the new Durham & Darlington Community Engagement Officer. Anna is working on behalf of the Environment Agency and the Durham & Darlington Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to increase flood resilience in areas at risk of flooding.

There are over 4,000 properties at risk from fluvial flooding across Durham & Darlington's constituencies, however fewer than 54% of properties are signed up to receive alerts and warnings in areas where the free Flood Warning Service is available.

There are also approximately 10,000 properties at risk from surface water flooding which can occur rapidly without warning. Anna said:

I'd like to hear about all of the local flooding issues in Durham & Darlington and work with the local community to see if they can put actions in place to make themselves more resilient.

Previous work has already led to Community Flood Plans being established in areas like Lanchester, Chester-le-Street, Hurworth, and Neasham and I'm hoping to help other communities put similar measures in place while continuing to support the existing volunteers.

You can contact Anna at anna.caygill@environment-agency.gov.uk or 07867

372639.

Cleveland



Sarah Pearce is the new Community Engagement Officer for Cleveland. Sarah is working on behalf of the Environment Agency and the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU) to increase flood resilience in areas at risk of flooding. Due to its location, areas of Cleveland are affected by flooding from a number of sources including coastal, river (fluvial) and surface water.

In Hartlepool 900 properties are considered to be at risk of surface water flooding, and in Middlesbrough 2,300 are considered to be at risk.

Across the four Cleveland local authority areas, there are over 6,000 properties at risk from fluvial flooding, however sign up to receive alerts and warnings in areas where the free Flood Warning Service is available is low, for example 11% in Redcar, 13% in Stockton, and just 3% on Hartlepool Headland. One of Sarah's aims is to increase take up of the Flood Warning service. Sarah said:

Previous work across Cleveland has led to Community Flood Warden groups being set up in communities such as Skinningrove, where a flood plan has been developed to support the community in responding to flood events.

I want to help other areas set up new groups and community plans in response to flooding, as well as supporting existing groups. I'd also like to look at the potential to appoint Flood Champions in at risk communities.

You can contact Sarah at sarah.pearce@environment-agency.gov.uk or 07867 441 697.

Northumberland



Emma Craig is the new Community Engagement Officer in Northumberland. Emma is working on behalf of the Environment Agency and Northumberland County Council to increase flood resilience in areas at risk of flooding.

Over 300 properties were flooded in Storm Desmond in 2015 but there are over 3,000 properties at risk of fluvial flooding in the county. Sign up to receive alerts and warnings in areas where the free Flood Warning Service is available is around 60%.

There are also around 17,000 properties at risk from surface water flooding. Emma said:

Many communities in Northumberland have created plans and taken action to make themselves more resilient after experiencing significant flooding during Storm Desmond.

I'll be continuing to work in the communities which were affected as well as other areas in Northumberland that remain at risk of flooding.

You can contact Emma at emma.craig@environment-agency.gov.uk or 0208 474 9845.

Tyne & Wear



Taryn Al-mashgari is the new Community Engagement Officer in Tyne & Wear. Taryn is working on behalf of the Environment Agency, Newcastle City Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council, North Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council in communities at risk of flooding from all sources. Taryn will help communities, businesses, and schools to develop plans which will reduce the impact of a flood.

Over five years ago many communities in the Tyne & Wear region experienced serious flooding during 'Thunder Thursday'. Surface water flooding such as this can happen with very little warning so Taryn will be aiming to get communities to take action and prepare for flooding now.

As an example, there are more than 2,800 properties at risk from surface water flooding in Sunderland and 4,100 in South Tyneside, and 1,800 in Gateshead, as well as 1,500 in Newcastle.

There are around 600 properties at risk of fluvial flooding in Tyne & Wear.

Sign up to receive alerts and warnings in areas where the free Flood Warning Service is available in Tyne & Wear is around 14%. Taryn said:

Previous work in Tyne and Wear has developed some good practice. For example a network of flood volunteers in North Tyneside provide local information to the council during periods of bad weather which helps the council direct their emergency response resources. In Gateshead a Community Flood Plan has been developed for an area prone to flooding.

I'll be hoping to replicate this sort of community activity across other areas while continuing to support existing volunteers.

You can contact Taryn at taryn.al-mashgari@environment-agency.gov.uk or 0208 474 9842.