

# [Press release: Residents to learn more about ancient villages lost at sea](#)

Evidence of communities on the Humber dating back 8,000 years will be discussed at a free community drop-in event at Welwick Village Hall on Monday 4 September.

Archaeologists will be on hand between 2-7pm to talk through the early findings from a geophysical study and small scale excavation between Outstrays and Skeffling last autumn.

The study found that the area contains a long and interesting history, with evidence of storm surge deposits, ancient river channels and areas of peat from as far back as the Middle and New Stone Age (approximately 3,000 to 8,000 years ago), which suggests that landscapes occupied and exploited by prehistoric people survive beneath the current farmland.

Across the higher parts of the site evidence was also found of Roman settlement activity which evolved into the medieval period as communities settled closer to the shore as the land was drained.

The initial archaeological assessment formed part of the design for the Outstrays to Skeffling Managed Realignment Scheme, a new habitat creation project on the Humber Estuary working in partnership between the Environment Agency and Associated British Ports.

Stephen Kemp, senior archaeologist at the Environment Agency, said:

Our initial assessment begins to tell the stories of communities by the Humber that learnt to adapt to environmental changes, like rising sea levels.

When many of these ancient communities lived here the coast was much further away and the surrounding land was significantly less populated, enabling people and the ecology to thrive.

The stories of the, now lost, villages provide interesting insight into environmental changes in today's contexts and why, when providing managed realignment schemes like this, it is vital to ensure we are working with nature to make good long-term choices that will maintain our modern communities.

The Outstrays to Skeffling Managed Realignment Scheme will see a new inter-tidal environment created that offsets habitat losses from future coastal

development and 'coastal squeeze'.

Coastal squeeze occurs when fixed hard flood defence structures, built to protect people and properties along the coast, reduce the inter-tidal land between low and high tide as a result of rising sea levels. It is a legal obligation for the Environment Agency to rebalance this coastal squeeze by creating a compensatory habitat.

As part of the proposed scheme a 900 acre natural habitat site will be created for estuarine and terrestrial wildlife and an improved landscaped flood defence will surround this area to help reduce the risk of flooding to the local community. Once complete, managed realignment sites like the Outstrays to Skeffling Managed Realignment Scheme are typically colonised with invertebrates and wading birds.

Environment Agency project manager Tim Cobb said:

With higher tides and changes in weather, we cannot avoid changes to our environment as we know it. But the results from our archaeological survey show that these changes have been happening for millennia and they stress the importance of addressing coastal squeeze in key locations on Britain's coastline.

While the Outstrays to Skeffling Managed Realignment Scheme is still in public consultation stage we are keen to present our initial findings to the community. Perhaps more importantly though, we'd like to learn more about the local community's understanding of the site to ensure they help us shape and maintain the important parts of the area's history.

A planning application for the Skeffling Managed Realignment Scheme is expected to be submitted at the end of 2017. Subject to planning approval, the Environment Agency says it anticipates starting work for the western site in 2018.

Further archaeological excavations are anticipated in advance of the main scheme construction and regular updates on the findings will be communicated to the community on a regular basis.

Partners involved in the Outstrays to Skeffling Managed Realignment Scheme excavation include: the Environment Agency, Historic England and York Archaeological Trust.

For any queries relating to the Skeffling Managed Realignment Scheme or for more information, please email [Welwick.Skeffling@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Welwick.Skeffling@environment-agency.gov.uk).

---

# Press release: Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme wins large project of the year at NEC Awards

Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme has scooped the Large Project of the Year award at this year's NEC awards in London.

The awards were announced at a recent NEC Users' Group Annual Seminar.

The driving force behind the award winning scheme is a dedicated project team made up of experts from Leeds City Council, Environment Agency, BMMjv (a joint venture between BAM Nuttall and Mott MacDonald) and ARUP.

Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme is one of the largest river flood defence projects in the country. Led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, it aims to provide an increased level of protection against flooding from the River Aire and Hol Beck for 3,500 residential properties and businesses in the city centre. The scheme also includes flood risk reduction at Woodlesford.

One of the key aspects of the scheme is the replacement of Victorian weirs at Crown Point and Knostrop in the city, with innovative moveable weirs, which are being used for the first time as a flood defence in the UK. The new moveable weirs can be lowered in flood conditions to reduce river levels and the threat of flooding. The use of this technology has meant lower flood defence walls elsewhere in the city, to help preserve connectivity with the waterfront.

The floods experienced in December 2015 reinforced just how important this scheme is for the city of Leeds. Widespread flooding from some of the highest river levels ever recorded affected more than 2,000 residential properties and nearly 600 businesses.

The scheme was recognised for its 'one team' ethos with members of all partner organisations working side by side on a daily basis. This collaborative approach between client, contractor and consultant puts the project at the forefront of contract management, resulting in a project which is on programme and within budget despite being affected by some of the worst flooding Leeds has experienced.

The NEC Awards recognise excellence in project delivery and showcase examples of good practice through collaboration from across the world.

The site works for Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme started in January 2015 and are scheduled to be completed this September.

The project team is currently working on options for Phase 2 of the scheme, which will adopt a catchment-wide approach meaning the entire River Aire catchment area will be considered to help reduce flood risk in Leeds. Consultation on potential options is due to be carried out from September.

---

## **Press release: Oil and gas regulators host public drop-in event**

Agencies that regulate Third Energy's oil and gas activities are hosting a drop-in event in Kirby Misperton to explain how they are working together to protect the community and the environment.

The Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Oil and Gas Authority, Public Health England and Ryedale Borough Council are hosting the event at Kirby Misperton Village Hall on Thursday 7 September.

These agencies work together to assess the impacts of the oil and gas industry, to oversee industry operations, and to ensure that any exploration and development, including fracking, is done in a way that does not put people or the environment at risk of harm.

The drop-in session will give local people a chance to talk to agency staff on a one-to-one basis to find out about agencies' roles and to hear more about the plans that have been put in place since permissions have been granted, along with what will be done in the coming months to regulate site activities.

Everyone is welcome to attend at any time between 2pm and 7pm.

---

## **Press release: Warning for anglers after illegal cast net seized**

Anyone caught fishing with an illegal cast net in North East waters will be prosecuted, the Environment Agency has warned.

The warning follows the seizure of a cast net from an angler caught using it to catch salmon on the River Wear at Durham. The seizure was a first for the area and Environment Officers want it to stay that way.

Fisheries Enforcement Technical Specialist Kevin Summerson is leading the

investigation against the angler. He said:

Even though these nets can be purchased from a number of UK outlets it is illegal to use them in North East rivers. Anyone caught and prosecuted could face a hefty fine and even a custodial sentence.

We take illegal fishing very seriously. Whether anglers use illegal equipment or fish without a licence, it's not fair on other anglers and endangers the future of the sport.

"Our work is intelligence led and we work closely with our partners at the police and Angling Trust to target known hot spots and where illegal fishing is reported to us.

We carry out enforcement work all year round and will be continuing throughout the coming weeks, including the upcoming Bank Holiday weekends. I'd urge people to help us protect the health of our fisheries by reporting any suspected illegal activity to us.

It is illegal to use cast nets to catch freshwater fish, eels, trout, migratory trout or salmon in the North East. They are also illegal if used to catch migratory trout, salmon or freshwater eels up to six nautical miles from the coast line.

The maximum penalty for this offence if convicted before a magistrate is an unlimited fine and/or three months in custody, or an unlimited fine and/or up to two years in custody before the crown court.

The Environment Agency works 24 hours a day to protect people and wildlife from pollution incidents and we encourage people to report such incidents to our Incident Hotline on 0800 807060.

---

## **Press release: Environment Agency tests flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes**

The Environment Agency is conducting its annual test of the flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes on Friday 25 August.

Installed in 2007, the 18 sirens help warn over 25,000 households and local businesses of imminent tidal flooding. The siren on the Willows Estate in Grimsby is used to warn residents about flooding from the New Cut Drain and the River Freshney, while the others warn of flooding from the Humber.

Testing will take place on Friday 25 August between 10am and 12pm. If you hear the sirens during this time, you do not need to take any action. If flooding is expected on the day, the test will be rescheduled and flood warnings will be issued through the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning System.

Environment Agency staff will be present together with representatives from North East Lincolnshire council at Freshney Place shopping centre in Grimsby between 9am and 5pm on 25 August. They'll be able to answer questions about the sirens and provide information about your own flood risk, including what steps you can take to prepare for an emergency.

The sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes are a secondary flood warning tool to the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning Service, which provides targeted flooding warnings via phone call or text to mobile landlines or through email.

Luke Dawson, Flood Resilience team leader with the Environment Agency, said:

The flood sirens we own and operate in Grimsby and Cleethorpes help us warn over 25,000 households and local businesses. It's important that we conduct these annual tests to make sure the sirens will work during an emergency.

We'd like to remind people in the area that our free Flood Warning System provides as much notice as possible ahead of a potential flooding incident. While the sirens are a vital secondary flood warning tool, we encourage everyone to check their flood risk and sign up for flood warnings. You can sign up for our free, targeted flood warnings by calling 0345 988 1188 or by visiting [www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings).

Our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding to thousands of homes and businesses in Grimsby and Cleethorpes, but we cannot remove the risk of flooding entirely. This is why it is important that everyone plays their part to protect themselves from the risk of flooding. If you are in the area on 25 August, please do come along to Freshney Place to learn more about flood risk and how you can protect yourself and your property.

Cllr David Watson, portfolio holder for environment and energy at North East Lincolnshire Council, said:

On the flood siren testing day, North East Lincolnshire Council staff and its partner Engie will be joining the Environment Agency in Freshney Place Shopping Centre between 9am and 5pm. Officers

will be available to answer any questions on flood risk and how you can prepare.