

# Press release: Environment Agency issues permit to Southern Water for Bewl reservoir

The Environment Agency has issued a temporary winter drought permit to Southern Water Services Limited, to help refill Bewl Water reservoir in East Sussex.

The water company made an application on 5 January stating it needed to take more water from the River Medway to help refill Bewl Water, which was only 42% full at the start of the year.

Despite a wet December, the autumn was very dry. There was also lower-than-average rainfall across south east England during the previous winter. This prolonged dry period across the region has left many groundwater supplies and some reservoirs lower than normal for the time of year.

Bewl Water is the largest reservoir in the south east of England and can hold 31,000 million litres of water. It is an important source for Southern Water, which manages the supply of water to over 2.5 million customers across south and south east England. Southern Water already routinely takes water from the River Medway to fill the reservoir. The change to the permit will allow the company to abstract additional water until the end of March.

The change will mean Southern Water can take water when river levels are lower than the previous limit. The water company has requested the change as part of its plan to secure public water supplies for the upcoming summer.

In determining the drought permit application, the Environment Agency has taken into account the very low rainfall, the impact this has had on water supplies, as well as considering the response to the recent public consultation.

Julie Foley, Environment Agency Area Director, said:

Although it has been wet over the past few weeks, overall this winter across south east England there has been lower-than-average amounts of rain. Consequently, we now need above average rainfall for the remainder of the winter to replenish our water resources.

The Environment Agency has to balance the water needs of people, businesses and wildlife so we have carefully considered Southern Water's application. We have decided to grant this temporary change to the existing licence, helping the company to refill the reservoir at a time of year when there will be less impact on the environment. We will carefully monitor any effects and take action

if needed to ensure the environment is protected.

We encourage people to follow advice from their water company about saving water. Using water efficiently will help ensure we have enough water for people, businesses and the environment.

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

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## **[Correspondence: Committee on Climate Change response to Clean Growth Strategy: letter from Claire Perry MP to Lord Deben](#)**

Letter from Claire Perry MP to Lord Deben regarding the committee's assessment of the [Clean Growth Strategy](#).

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## [News story: Update on latent capacity fishing licence monitoring](#)

Fishermen whose licences have been monitored over the last two years following Defra's latent capacity (capping) exercise should now fish to the limits as set out in their current licence until further notice.

In 2015 Defra carried out an exercise to address latent capacity in the under 10m English fishing fleet.

A number of fishermen had their finfish licence capped at 350kgs and/or had their shellfish permit temporarily suspended. This exercise included an appeals process. Some appeals were successful but subject to a monitoring period of 2 two years.

This period for monitoring drew to an end in most cases on 31 December 2017. Defra officials will be seeking to review this policy in 2018.

The MMO previously [updated the relevant section of its website](#) with this information in early January 2018.

If you have questions about this contact the Defra Helpline on 0345 933 5577 or email [fisheriesreform@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fisheriesreform@defra.gsi.gov.uk).

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## [Press release: Contractors fined over diesel leak at Christchurch Hospital](#)

Kier Construction Limited (KIER), and their sub-contractor BKP Waste Recycling Limited (BKP), were sentenced at Bournemouth Crown Court on 12 January 2018 after earlier pleading guilty to an offence under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Kier Construction was commissioned by The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to carry out re-development work at Christchurch Hospital in February 2012. KIER appointed BKP Waste Recycling Limited to drain and remove oil from an oil supply line in the hospital grounds.

Oil escaped from a poorly-made connection in the oil supply pipework, which failed during routine testing of heating systems at the hospital in November 2014. The spillage polluted groundwater.

The case was bought by the Environment Agency at the end of a lengthy

investigation that uncovered negligence on the part of both contractors.

Ian Withers of the Environment Agency said:

This pollution incident had the potential to cause serious harm to the environment and was entirely avoidable. The 2 companies failed to understand the extent of the work required and mitigate the risks. Construction companies must adhere to environmental permitting regulations to prevent their activities from affecting the local environment.

KIER was fined £100,000 with £30,301 costs for causing groundwater activity under regulation 38 (1) (a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. BKP was fined £10,200 for the same offence with £42,851 costs.

If you are concerned about pollution to water or land, contact our 24-hour incident line on 0800 807060.