

# Press release: Flood defences put to the test in Northwich

A selection of temporary and permanent flood barriers, which would be deployed in emergencies, have been put to the test in Northwich.

100 metres of demountable defences were erected and 14 flood gates were closed as part of a live training exercise by the Environment Agency throughout the town centre on Thursday 20th July.

The exercise is the first time the full set of defences, which can be deployed within three hours, have been tested since the launch of the new Northwich flood alleviation scheme last month.

Over the course of the exercise, Environment Agency teams installed and took down demountable defences to practice their emergency plan for the town and ensured the rapid deployment of the additional flood barriers were in good working order.

The operation gave the agency workers valuable experience on the deployment of the equipment and significantly tested its response to future flooding.

Flood Manager at the Environment Agency, Christian Wilcox said:

The £7 million Northwich flood alleviation scheme reduces the flood risk to around 400 homes and businesses throughout the town. Therefore, it was fantastic to see the full set of demountable defences brought into effective action for the first time.

This was a major test of our operational equipment and allowed us to train up the teams who will work on deploying these defences.

Part of the flooding that Northwich has previously experienced has come directly from the River Dane and we were pleased to see that our road closure at Dane Bridge, during the test of the defences, worked extremely well and would provide a good level of signage and a viable alternative route when we need to deploy the defences in earnest.

Overall, it was great to see our practical strategies for flood protection put into action, via our joint working with the Cheshire West and Chester Council who organised the road closure. I hope such collaborative emergency response plans will give reassurance to residents in Northwich but, it is important to remember that we can never fully protect against flooding.

Residents should always prepare in advance for this by going online at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and signing up for free flood warnings. Alternatively, they can telephone the Environment Agency Floodline

on 0845 988 1188 and find out what they can do to protect themselves and their property when flooding hits.

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## [Press release: Schoolkids spruce up flood defences in Westy, Warrington](#)

Flood defences in Warrington have been brought to life thanks to a group of budding Picassos from Cardinal Newman Catholic High School in Westy.

Year 7 pupils, aged between 11 and 12, were challenged by the Environment Agency to put their brush skills to the test and design images of wildlife to decorate walls that make up part of a new flood alleviation scheme.

The designs will face the pavement and be visible to passers-by along Mersey Walk in Westy.

They form part of a £34 million flood risk management scheme throughout Warrington which aims to reduce the risk of flooding to both people and property. The new flood walls are a major aspect of the defences and will cover a total of 7.2km by the time the scheme is completed in autumn 2017.

To spruce up the solid concrete of the walls, pupils took inspiration from some of the local species that live along the River Mersey including fish, amphibians and mammals such as mallards.

The regal kingfisher has also been a key feature with the colourful bird taking pride of place in an earlier phase of the scheme along Knutsford Road.

Speaking about the colourful artwork, Chris Stone of the Environment Agency said:

These lovely features will bring a little of the Mersey wildlife to the new defences, which will provide much greater protection from the risk of flooding to about 2,000 homes and businesses in the Warrington area.

It's our priority to do everything we can to protect people from flooding. We are spending more than £2.5 billion to build flood schemes around the country, which will better protect 300,000 homes by 2021.

The River Mersey Warrington Flood Risk Management Scheme, which is now in its final phase, will enhance flood defence infrastructure, blend in with the local natural and built environment and most importantly, provide best protection to people and property in the

town of Warrington. We are grateful to all the pupils from Cardinal Newman Catholic High School who got involved. Their fantastic artwork has really helped us add another point of interest to this very important project.

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## **News story: Charitable recycling company wins Sellafield contract**

A waste recycling company will open a new facility and create local jobs in West Cumbria, having won a contract with Sellafield Ltd.

'Recycling Lives' will recycle metal from the nuclear site, offering jobs and training opportunities at a new depot in Workington.

The company will also set up a food distribution charity with centres throughout Cumbria, which will also need staff and volunteers.

This follows the success of a similar community programme they have delivered throughout Lancashire.

Martin Chown from Sellafield Ltd said:

We want to ensure our local communities benefit from the money we spend and we do this by insisting that companies that win work with us invest to support local growth.

I'm excited by the plans Recycling Lives has to create jobs and support disadvantaged people in west Cumbria.

It demonstrates the unique power of Sellafield Ltd to attract new businesses to the area

The scrap buying and processing facility in Workington, has brought an empty site back into use, and will be open to the public and other businesses from September.

William Fletcher from Recycling Lives, said:

We are pleased to have been chosen as the preferred contractor for scrap metal collection and processing from Sellafield Ltd.

We're really excited to be able to use this contract to create social value across Cumbria.

The benefits will be more than just environmental and economic, as we create social impact through job creation and food redistribution.

Their food redistribution service operates on behalf of national organisation, Fareshare. It diverts surplus food from manufacturers, suppliers and supermarkets, that would otherwise go to landfill, and distributes it to charities and community groups in deprived areas.

Find out more about [Recycling Lives](#)

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## **From Dumfries to Sub-Saharan Africa – environmental challenges faced in studying cow fertility**

SRUC PhD student, Bridgit Muasa, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has swapped Dumfries for Nairobi as she continues her studies into the fertility of dairy cows.