

Keeping boaters afloat

A £5.2million capital maintenance programme for Environment Agency navigation infrastructure has been announced.

The Environment Agency is releasing its annual schedule of improvements for many of its structures along the Thames, between St John's Lock in Lechlade, Gloucester, and Teddington Lock in southwest London. This will help to ensure safe navigation along this iconic river for boating communities and many other river users.

The majority of work will begin in November this year, carrying through to March 2021. The Environment Agency gives several weeks' notice, so that river users can plan any winter trips. Major work will be carried out at 10 of the Environment Agency's 45 lock sites, some of which will require a formal closure.

Peter Collins, a capital investment programme manager for the Environment Agency, said:

Locks, weirs and other navigation infrastructure make recreational and commercial boating on the Thames possible.

This multi million pound investment programme, by the Environment Agency, allows our team of engineers, craftsmen and contractors to ensure that everything remains in safe working order.

Our in house carpenters are making new timber lock gates from sustainable sources for Day's Lock, Dorchester in Oxfordshire. The new gates at Molesey Lock in Surrey will be made from steel, but in keeping with the tradition of a Thames lock.

Four locks that will require a formal closure between 2 November 2020 and 19 March 2021 are:

- Days Lock, near Dorchester, Oxfordshire: replacing lock gates and refurbishing parts of the lock chamber and lock surround.
- Cookham Lock, Berkshire: refurbishing tail gate cill, lock side and head landings.
- Abingdon Lock, Oxfordshire: upgrading the existing tail landing to make it more resilient to winter flooding and easier for canoes to get in and out of the water.
- Molesey Lock, Surrey: replacing lock gates, improving pedestrian access and refurbishing parts of the lock chamber.

The Environment Agency's [River Thames winter investment programme](#) is subject to change. Boaters can subscribe to e-mail updates on River Thames closures and restrictions by contacting riverthames@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Boaters' registration fees contribute towards the cost of maintenance, but do not cover major refurbishments or replacement works. The Environment Agency receives government funding, which it invests very carefully, to ensure maximum value for money for the taxpayer.

All boats on the River Thames must be registered with the Environment Agency. Visit www.gov.uk/environment/boats-waterways for more information.

Notes to editors

Filming opportunities can be arranged around the most visually striking elements of the work; for example:

- Installing a coffer dam, a temporarily walled-off area within the river that water is pumped out of, to enable working in dry conditions when a lock chamber is renovated.
- Using a large mobile crane to safely lift lock gates in or out of position; timber lock gates are repaired, refurbished or recycled at our depot.