

More than 250 trees planted as part of North East flood scheme

The Environment Agency joined forces with pupils and Swinburne horticultural services to plant some of the trees in a meadow at Ponteland Community Primary School.

A number of trees had to be removed so that existing flood defences on the south bank of the River Pont can be replaced with one continuous sheet piled flood wall that will better protect more than 250 homes.

Some trees will be planted adjacent to the river as the land is reinstated as part of the project, with the rest planted a short distance away in the school grounds. The new school meadow will include a mix of native oak, hazel, rowan and birch on one side and an avenue of flowering crab apple and cherry trees along the opposite side.

Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme is due for completion in early summer and will be finished with a stone effect and colour to complement the local environment.

Boost for wildlife

The Environment Agency's Kirsty Harwood, Ponteland Flood Scheme Project Manager, said:

This is a great opportunity to compensate for the trees lost to enable the better flood protection. It's been wonderful to work with the children and create a more diverse mix of native trees in a school setting.

The new meadow will also bring a boost for wildlife, with nectar and berries from the flowering trees supporting insects, bees and birds. The overall increase in diversity and the number of trees will improve habitat and local biodiversity in the area.

Ponteland Community Primary School Headteacher Caroline Pryer added:

We're really pleased to give a home to these trees as they will add to our ambition of being a Forest School, complement the original hedging from Lane Farm and extend our growing legacy for our community.

Flood defence investment

The £2.7million Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme was the first project in the country to get off the ground out of the 22 flood defence projects to benefit from a £170million government funding boost last summer.

The investment brought forward work on flood defence schemes across the country to drive economic growth and better protect thousands of homes, business and jobs from the devastating effects of flooding.

Ponteland received a £450,000 cash injection used to fill a shortfall in funding, allowing the Environment Agency to start construction immediately.

The £170million government funding boost was on top of the record £5.2 billion government investment to create around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences to better protect 336,000 properties across England by 2027.

More information about Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme can be found by visiting the Environment Agency's [Citizen Space page](#).