

# Northumberland flood scheme is complete

Work to better protect the town started in August 2020 and included replacing the existing flood defences on the south bank of the River Pont with one continuous sheet piled flood wall.

The wall has been built to complement the existing local environment, with a stone effect and complementary colouring, and was created with climate change at the forefront of the design with allowances in the foundations for the walls to be raised in future if needed.

Not only are homes and businesses better protected from flooding, but the town has also benefitted from environmental enhancements, with a re-profiling of the river bank to create a natural sloped terrace which has been planted with native river corridor plants, boosting local biodiversity.

More than 250 trees have been planted to not only replace those lost during construction but to enhance the local environment, including many in a meadow at Ponteland Community Primary School, as well as some adjacent to the river.

(L-R): Leila Huntington, Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Risk Manager; MP Guy Opperman; Andy Judson, BAM Nuttall (scheme construction company); Lynsey Gray, Arup (scheme designers); Kevin Bulman, BAM Nuttall; Kirsty Harwood, Environment Agency Project Manager

## **Town is 'better protected now and into the future'.**

Kirsty Harwood, Environment Agency Project Manager for the Ponteland flood scheme, said:

We understand just how devastating it is to be flooded and we consulted with the community throughout to develop a scheme which meets their needs.

We know there is a long history of flooding in Ponteland and although we can never eradicate the risk entirely, now this project is complete we hope it provides reassurance for local residents that they are better protected now and into the future.

As well as the new flood defences, which we have built in keeping with the existing local environment, we have made some environmental enhancements to the area, with a new more natural river bank, and supported the local school in their ambition to become a Forest School.

The overall increase in the diversity and number of trees will

improve habitat and boost local biodiversity in the area.

Hexham MP Guy Opperman has already visited the site recently to see first-hand the completed project. He said:

This additional investment from the Government for flood protection here in Ponteland is fantastic and I know is hugely welcomed by the many residents and businesses affected by the devastating consequences of flooding.

I recently saw first-hand the vital work that has gone into protecting our communities in Ponteland. It is brilliant the work has now been completed – the extra investment has turned into action so quickly, ensuring that confidence is given to those concerned about flooding locally.’’

## **Peace of mind for local residents**

Cllr Nick Oliver, who represents Northumberland on the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee said:

It’s wonderful to see another important flood defence scheme delivered in Northumberland. These works will bring extra flood protection and peace of mind to local residents and businesses – a great effort by everybody involved.

The contractor, BAM Nuttall, maintained a temporary flood defence throughout construction to uphold flood protection. Almost all of the people employed by BAM to work on the project were local.

A record £5.2 billion government investment to create around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences and better protect 336,000 properties across England by 2027 [was announced last year](#). The Environment Agency has also set out its vision for a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding in its [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#).

Flood Wardens play a vital role in ensuring communities are prepared for flooding – they help develop flood plans and are the Environment Agency’s eyes and ears on the ground during a flood. There is an active Flood Warden group in Ponteland.

If you’d like to volunteer as a Flood Warden, to help protect your community from the impacts of flooding, or find out more about how you can improve your community’s resilience to flooding, please contact [engagement\\_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:engagement_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk)