

Ponteland flood defence to be improved

These works form part of the Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme which runs along the southern side of the River Pont, adjacent to Callerton Lane.

The proposed future works will ensure the better protection of more than 250 residential properties in the Ponteland area.

The works will largely take place on private land at the rear of Lane Nurseries and the Auberne property, between Callerton Lane and the foot bridge at the Memorial Hall. A small amount of work is also proposed on land owned by Ponteland Town Council, adjacent to the Memorial Hall.

In order to allow the future improvements to the flood defences, 40 trees are required to be felled as part of the programme. The trees are in the path of the proposed flood defence and cannot be saved, every effort has been taken to minimise the number of trees that need to be felled.

Although the removal of any trees is regrettable, the Environment Agency plans on planting a further 200 trees to compensate for the loss of those removed. The requirement to fell the trees was identified in two previous public consultations, and the removal has been arranged with all landowners.

As part of the project, suggestions are being welcomed from the local community about where in Ponteland they would like to see the trees being planted. People can send their ideas to the following address enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk using the title: 'Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme – TREES'.

The tree removal will increase light to the river channel and will allow for the creation of a diverse range of habitats along the river corridor.

The flood defence works will be beneficial to the local community in a variety of ways.

- The flood defence will help to protect over 250 properties from the risk of flooding from the River Pont
- The tree removal provides the opportunity to improve Ponteland River habitats and biodiversity including plant and animal life

Leila Huntington, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Manager for the North East, said: "Over the past few weeks we've seen the impacts of Storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge across the country. With climate change, the risk of flooding will increase and flood defences play an important part in reducing flood risk and helping communities to be more resilient.

"The essential replacement of flood defences in Ponteland will ensure they continue to protect 250 homes from flooding."

Leila comments about the felling of 40 trees. She said: "We have a policy for replanting five trees for every one tree that is removed. This means that in Ponteland we will be replanting over 200 trees and we're keen for local people to suggest where they would like the saplings to go. This could be in school grounds or on the site of a popular public green space."

Former IT consultant, Andy Anderson, has been a resident in the town for nearly 40-years, and for two of those years he's been an active flood warden. Talking about what it's like being a flood warden, he said: "It's a very useful way of keeping in touch with people in and around Ponteland."

Andy is currently one of eight flood wardens in the town.

Andy talks about Ponteland's Flood Alleviation Scheme. He said: "Keeping the flood defences up-to-date is essential especially with the change in our current climate conditions, which is why the Flood Alleviation Scheme is vital for the local community – helping to protect us and provide peace of mind."

Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme is just one of many schemes across the North East which better protect properties and businesses. In the North East, £127million is being invested between 2015 and 2021 to create or improve new flood and coastal defences. This investment will better protect over 7,000 homes from the risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

People can learn further details about the Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme by visiting

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/north-east/ponteland-flood-alleviation-scheme-information>

Also, to find out if you are living in a flood risk area and for information on how to sign up for flood alerts please visit the Environment Agency website <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings>