

Work to reduce flood risk in Bishopthorpe now complete

Press release

The Environment Agency has completed work on a £3.4m project in the village of Bishopthorpe in York, better protecting 198 properties from the risk of flooding.



Completed flood defence wall in Bishopthorpe

Work on the scheme started in May 2021 to construct a 180 metre flood defence wall running along Chantry Lane and the boundary of the Bishopthorpe Palace grounds, incorporating a six metre-deep steel barrier underground; a floodgate across the bottom of Chantry Lane and water flow mechanism to prevent river water from backing up into the drainage system.

Flood gate being installed at Bishopthorpe

The scheme also protects properties on Main Street, therefore helping to protect access for residents in the village.

In addition, 50 trees have been planted locally, with plans in place for over a hundred more and hedging to compensate for the 18 trees which had to be removed to build the flood wall.

Chris Ashcroft at the Environment Agency said:

The recent flooding in Yorkshire highlights the importance of projects like this one in Bishopthorpe, which will help make York more resilient to climate change and better protect 2,000 homes and businesses from flooding. We would like to thank residents for their patience and cooperation while we have been building these vital community flood defences.

This work forms part of the £45 million York Flood Alleviation Scheme, which is made up of 18 smaller 'cells' like this one.

Last year, 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 was announced.

Over £146 million has been allocated in 2021-22 to 150 flood schemes across Yorkshire.

The construction of flood defences are just one of the tactics that can be deployed to protect people and property. Residents are urged to sign up for free flood warnings to get vital time to save themselves and their possessions from the devastating effects of flooding by visiting www.gov.uk/flood or contacting Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

They can also check their flood risk online at <https://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk>.

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UK's commitment to the rights of women and girls: National Statement to the UN Commission on the Status of Women

Madam Chair,

I want to begin my statement by addressing the situation in Ukraine.

Russia's assault on Ukraine is an unprovoked, premeditated attack against a sovereign democratic state.

The UK and our international partners stand united in condemning the Russian government's reprehensible actions, which are an egregious violation of international law and the UN Charter.

Russia's actions should concern everyone at the Commission on the Status of Women. This war of choice will set back human rights and gender equality. As UN Women have said, we know the conflict will affect women and girls differently and disproportionately. A majority of the already 1.5 million refugees are women and girls. Women and girls will be more exposed to the risk of violence, particularly sexual and gender-based violence. We acknowledge the vital work of civil society organisations on the ground in Ukraine; and I am proud that on International Women's Day, we launched new

funding for women's rights organisations and civil society actors working to support the critical needs of women and children both inside and displaced outside of Ukraine.

The UK is committed to preventing sexual violence in conflict, and we are exploring options for strengthening the international consensus on tackling this vital issue.

Madam Chair

Please, allow me to make three points on this year's priority theme.

First, the UK remains steadfast in our commitment to using our COP Presidency to advance gender equality and social inclusion in climate action and finance. This means strengthening implementation of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, in line with the Glasgow Climate Pact; and supporting the climate leadership of women, girls and marginalised people, while building their resilience to climate impacts. We were delighted that so many governments and other actors came forward – in the run-up to COP26 and at COP26 itself – with commitments to deliver gender-responsive climate policies, programmes and actions. We continue to call on others to do the same.

Second, as we recover from the pandemic, we must reflect on both the new and existing challenges that women and girls have faced.

It is the responsibility of governments, like mine, to take steps to provide the support that women need to recover – in terms of their health, their economic situation and their well-being.

We have launched a range of programmes to support women to build back better, and I am pleased that I have been able to speak about these initiatives during CSW.

My government's priorities include going further still on pay transparency, increasing our support for women entrepreneurs, and identifying ways to get more women into STEM careers.

And third, we look forward to achieving consensus on an ambitious and progressive outcome document that truly delivers for women and girls. We will approach negotiations positively and constructively, with a view to agreeing a text that clearly sets out the issues that climate change causes for women and girls, and the steps that we must all take to tackle it.

We call on all member states to do the same.

We stand ready to work with you.

[UN Human Rights Council 49: UK statement for the interactive dialogue with the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict](#)

The United Kingdom reaffirms its strong support for the work of the Special Representative, as we celebrate 25 years of the Children and Armed Conflict mandate.

The UK remains deeply concerned about the sustained and alarming number of grave violations committed against children.

In Ukraine, Russia's unprovoked and brutal assault has already resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties and deaths, including children. Continued attacks on schools, as well as other civilian infrastructure, demonstrate why we advocate for universal endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration.

We fully endorse the statement by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, demanding Russia immediately cease its aggression and military actions. This is the only way to ensure the protection of children in Ukraine.

Moreover, persistently high levels of sexual violence against children globally remains concerning, which is why in November 2021, we launched the Call to Action to ensure the rights of children born of sexual violence in conflict.

It is critical the voices of young people are heard and that they shape policy decisions. Our Minister for Africa is hosting a roundtable with young people this month to do just that.

Madam Special Representative,

Could you provide an update on the situation in Ukraine and the work your office is doing to support children and monitor alleged violations?

[RAF's first synthetic fuel drone flight](#)

Under Project Vermeer, the Royal Air Force has enhanced their ground-breaking work in using sustainable aviation fuel by successfully flying a four-meter

drone with synthetic fuel.

Synthetic kerosene is entirely fossil fuel-free, made by mixing raw materials with high sugar levels, such as food waste, with bacteria to create an oil substance that is then converted into aviation fuel using chemicals and heat.

As the process does not require large-scale infrastructure, synthetic kerosene can be made anywhere, making it an attractive option for military deployments around the world.

The breakthrough signifies the RAF's commitment to creating a more sustainable future as it can be used across all platforms from remotely piloted air systems to fighter jets, with a significantly reduced carbon footprint compared to traditional fossil-based fuels.

Defence Procurement Minister Jeremy Quin said:

"This is an exciting moment for the RAF and British industry as they continue to develop pioneering solutions to help address climate change. These new approaches will maintain our world-class fighting forces whilst reducing our carbon footprint."

Air Vice Marshal Lincoln Taylor said:

"The RAF needs to ensure that we are at the forefront of technology to safeguard our own resilience and operational capability, whilst minimising our damage to the environment. Fuel scarcity and cost will only ever increase in its impact on our operations and synthetic fuels for our aircraft are one potential solution to this situation as we look to secure the objectives of the next generation RAF of tomorrow."

Working with British company C3 Biotechnologies Ltd and the US Navy, the initial trial created 15 litres of fuel in laboratory conditions. Following successful engine testing, the fixed-wing drone completed a 20-minute test flight in Wiltshire, providing valuable data that indicates the fuel performs consistently to a high standard.

Chief of US Naval Research Rear Adm Lorin C. Selby said:

"It is exciting and game-changing to work with our allies in the UK to develop a more efficient synthetic aviation fuel.

"The U.S. Navy is committed to finding innovative solutions to operational challenges, and the ability to manufacture this fuel without large infrastructure requirements would be ground-breaking for deployed forces."

The RAF and partners are continuing with the next phase of the project, with work underway to refine the process and develop deployable manufacturing facilities.

This is the second big win for the RAF as they secured a Guinness World Record four months ago with a [successful flight on synthetic fuel](#).

Project Vermeer began in summer 2021 and demonstrates the RAF's commitment to investing in emerging technology, as highlighted in the Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper.

Retirement calculator

News story

GAD has developed a retirement calculator designed to help public sector pension scheme members understand benefits options information in their pensions more clearly.



GAD's member-based innovation

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) has developed an online tool that provides benefits options information to public sector pension scheme members. The retirement calculator is designed to help people understand their pensions more clearly.

We developed the retirement calculator to help people understand their pension implications following the McCloud legal ruling. The judgment means some pension scheme members have a choice between 2 different types of benefits. The choice is between legacy schemes (typically final salary schemes) and reformed schemes (typically career average revalued earnings schemes.)

Working it out

The retirement calculator uses projections to illustrate what people will get at their chosen retirement age for both options.

Once people add in basic details, this new calculator takes pay rises and working patterns into account. The resulting information then helps scheme members to understand the different benefits they may be eligible for during

the remedy period.

Understanding benefits

The idea was developed by GAD actuary John Bayliss. He said: “This is really about helping members understand their benefits and putting this into context. We expect this will sit along with other member information on pension portals. Once people answer some quick questions, the system will determine if they will be affected. It then refers pension scheme members to the retirement calculator.

“This is new for GAD and over the course of the last year we’ve had to learn some elements of how to do this from scratch. We intend to apply this learning in different areas such as live interactive reporting which we’ve not been able to do before.”

Member-focused

GAD used web programming and software to make the retirement calculator more responsive and interactive. This is so that it leads to a better experience for clients and pension scheme members.

The first retirement calculator is set to go live in March and will be rolled out to several clients across the public sector throughout the UK in the coming financial year.

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