

[A long-buried Kent stream is brought back into the daylight](#)

One hundred metres of the Bourne Stream south of Borough Green is set to flow freely once more after being released from its underground pipe, thanks to the Environment Agency and construction firm A B Canham and Son.

The newly open stretch of the watercourse, also known as the Basted Stream, will now be able to support more plant and animal life as well as reducing the risk of flooding to the nearby area. A footpath has also been created to run alongside it, giving greater access to the natural environment, so that people will be able to enjoy the stream while walking to or from Basted.

The work to release the stream, termed 'daylighting', was carried out as part of the Milbourne Place housing development.

Freeing up this stretch of a previously covered-up stream demonstrates how the Environment Agency is helping the drive to build back better and greener. The project also is a step towards reaching targets in the EA2025: creating a better place plan including improving more than 4,000 kilometres of river and creating nearly 1,200 hectares of habitat.

Environment Agency spokesperson Richard Charman, Geomorphology Technical Specialist, said:

In achieving this, there was a concerted effort across several of our teams to make AB Canham and Son aware of what might be possible in opening up the stream. Working together we were able to help improve the environment by uncovering over half of this buried stretch of watercourse.

Opening the stream will help improve the area for wildlife as plants will now grow and provide food and shelter for fish and other animals.

Although it's dry at the moment, the stream will start to flow as groundwater levels rise following rainfall over the winter months. It will then start to fill with flora and fauna and help make the Bourne catchment healthier and more resilient.

Background information

The initial reason for replacing the culvert with a larger one and opening up part of the channel was to reduce flood risk so that the site could be developed for housing.

The flood risk modelling in support of the planning application demonstrated a reduction in flood risk to the site itself and the immediate vicinity

around the medical centre and access roads.

Groundwater levels recharge over winter

As more rain falls during the winter, groundwater levels start to rise. Generally, rivers with 'bourne' in the name will start to flow in the spring. For example, Winterbourne, Lambourne, Nailbourne. In some years exceptional rainfall can lead to groundwater flooding.

[Groundwater levels](#) are recharging now and there is a delay of months as the rain filters down into the aquifers.

The Environment Agency monitors groundwater levels and publishes regular reports online. More information can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

Flooding from groundwater can happen when the level of water within the rock or soil that makes up the land surface (known as the water table) rises.

Lead local flood authorities (the unitary or county council) are responsible for managing the risk of flooding from groundwater.

The Environment Agency has a strategic overview for all sources of flooding including groundwater. They supply information in the form of monitored groundwater levels. In some areas that have historically experienced groundwater flooding, the Environment Agency provide a groundwater alert or warning service.

[CSPL Submission to the ICGS 18 Month Review](#)

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[Regulator concludes regulatory case into governance at the RSPCA](#)

The regulator's involvement with the charity began in 2014, after serious concerns were identified about the charity's governance and leadership. Among

the Commission's key concerns were frequent changes in leadership and a sustained reliance on trustees acting as interim Chief Executives. This unusual practice, which began as an interim arrangement, went on for too long, risking public confidence in an important national institution.

In August 2018, the Commission issued the charity with an Official Warning, in relation to concerns about a settlement offer to the charity's former acting chief executive.

Despite regular meetings with staff and trustees, including a three-day visit by the regulator to the charity's headquarters in October 2018, the Commission remained concerned about the charity's progress in reforming its governance. Its concerns revolved around the set-up and role of the charity's trustee body (the council), specifically:

- its large size – at this point the council consisted of 25 members
- the long terms of office of council members
- the extent to which the trustees had the necessary knowledge, skills and experience given the size and complexity of the charity
- excessive involvement of council members in day to day issues usually the responsibility of the executive and staff

Trustees were required to take immediate steps to rectify the situation and bring the charity's governance, notably the operations of its council, in line with expectations for a charity of this size and complexity. Thereafter, the charity announced changes to "truly transform the Society", including an overhaul of the charity's governance.

Following a wide consultation on these proposals, led by a new Chair and Chief Executive, constitutional changes, which addressed but went beyond the Commission's concerns, were adopted at the Society's AGM in June 2019. This included reducing the size of the trustee body from 25 to 12.

The Commission subsequently monitored the implementation of these changes and is now satisfied that the charity has acted on its regulatory advice and used this as an opportunity to make significant changes to its leadership and governance.

The regulatory case concluded earlier this year, and the RSPCA's relationship with the Commission has now moved to a regular footing. This means the charity's structures are considered improved and able to deal with new issues should they arise. The charity made further refinements to its governance at its AGM yesterday.

Helen Earner, Director of Regulatory Services at the Charity Commission, said:

The RSPCA is a much-loved national institution, which performs a crucial role in animal protection. We have had to have extensive engagement with the charity over a number of years to ensure things were placed on a better footing, but are satisfied that the RSPCA's current governance reflects our expectations of large and complex

charities.

Charities that put their purpose at the core of all they do, and underpin this with robust governance and the highest standards of conduct, will serve their beneficiaries better, and help meet their full charitable potential.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

[RAF surveillance fleet to be based in Moray](#)

RAF Lossiemouth will be the new home of the UK's fleet of E-7 Wedgetail surveillance aircraft, bolstering Scotland's key role in UK and NATO defence and security, Defence Minister Baroness Goldie announced today.

Delivering a step change in capability from the current E-3D Sentry, the E-7 Wedgetail is capable of simultaneously tracking multiple airborne and maritime targets, using the information it gathers to improve situational awareness and direct assets such as fighter jets and warships. The Wedgetail has previously been used by the Australian Air Force Royal on operations against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

The Wedgetail will be co-located with the new Poseidon fleet, with the first four submarine-hunting aircraft already providing essential operational support in the area.

Operating both fleets of Boeing 737 type aircraft from the same location will further harness RAF Lossiemouth's strategic location and take advantage of the new £100m state-of-the-art facility and the recent £75m runway upgrade. The decision is also expected to support hundreds of jobs and provide a boost to the local economy.

Minister of State for Defence, Baroness Goldie said:

Scotland's proximity to the waters and skies of the North Atlantic is of crucial importance to the UK's and NATO's security – this is why important military bases such as HMNB Clyde and RAF Lossiemouth

are located here.

Defence's latest decision to base the E-7 Wedgetail at RAF Lossiemouth demonstrates our commitment to investing in Scotland, and will complement and expand upon the success of Typhoon fast jet and submarine hunting Poseidon operations.

The arrival of the Wedgetail in 2023 will also mark a return to RAF Lossiemouth for 8 Squadron, after an absence of 30 years.

RAF Lossiemouth is already home to half of the UK's operational Typhoon fast jet fleet, which conduct Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) to protect the UK's airspace, and complete NATO air policing duties on behalf of our allies.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack added:

The UK Government has invested £470m in RAF Lossiemouth over the past two years, including a new £100m strategic facility, housing the UK's new fleet of nine submarine-hunting Poseidon P-8A maritime patrol aircraft, which has been built by Elgin-based Robertson. Indeed this firm is also building the new shipbuilding hall for the Type 31 Frigate programme at Rosyth in Fife demonstrating just one of the many ways that UK Defence benefits Scottish business.

The arrival of the Wedgetail capability in Scotland will provide clear additional security and economic benefits to Scotland. The Poseidon programme brought £470m UK Government investment in the coastal RAF base, creating and sustaining jobs and boosting the local economy. It is anticipated that basing the Wedgetail fleet will bring further investment and civilian and military jobs to Moray.

Essex man hinders probe into illegal waste in Kent

A building contractor has been convicted after failing to provide assistance to a criminal investigation.

Raymond Burling came to the attention of the Environment Agency looking into the illegal dumping of bales of mixed waste in a warehouse in Kent.

Information obtained by investigating officers led them to believe Burling was likely to hold documents that would assist the wider enquiry.

The Environment Agency wrote to the-then 70-year-old in August last year, asking him to supply the papers.

Peterborough magistrates were told Burling, of Hemnall Street, Epping, had 2 weeks to respond to the letter, but didn't make any contact with officers.

When the deadline to reply passed, officers sent a second letter, repeating their request for Burling to provide original papers or copies that could help the investigation. However, despite the letter clearly stating failure to respond was obstruction and could result in prosecution, officers heard nothing back.

Investigators left a contact card at Burling's address at the end in September, almost 2 months after first trying to make contact with him. Burling ignored this request as well.

A further visit was made in October, when officers were finally able to speak to Burling. He was given a copy of the original letter and told the seriousness of the matter, and the importance of responding to the officers' request.

Burling still failed to make any contact with the agency or provide the requested information.

Phil Henderson, enforcement team leader for the Environment Agency for East Anglia, said:

The effect of Burling's refusal to assist hampered a major investigation into waste crime.

Burling's conviction for frustrating Environment Agency staff shows we don't only put waste criminals before the courts, but also those who block our attempts to do so.

Anyone who suspects waste crime can contact our 24-hour incident hotline, on 0800 807060, or Crimestoppers, confidentially, on 0800 555 111.

On 9 December 2020, Peterborough magistrates' court fined Burling £660 for 'failing to provide facilities or assistance or any information or to permit any inspection' in relation to a criminal investigation. He was also ordered to pay the Environment Agency's full legal and investigation costs of £2,793.93 and a victim surcharge of £66.

The original investigation into illegal baled waste continues.