

Repairs underway as Environment Agency begins fixing damaged flood banks

Repairs are now underway on flood banks damaged by recent wet weather, with Environment Agency teams using specialist equipment to restore protection to homes, businesses and agricultural land in Lincolnshire.

Work started over the weekend to fix the breach at the Barlings Eau using pontoons and amphibious diggers to access the riverbank. Teams will install at least 40m of piling in the bank. How long this takes will depend on weather and ground conditions, but once it's complete, flood water will be pumped off the farmland, and soil and clay will be used to rebuild the bank around the piling.

Meanwhile, repairs are also underway at Timberland Delph, where Environment Agency teams moved 100 1-tonne sandbags and equipment into place over the weekend to help protect the bank from further damage. Pumps are shifting floodwater from the farmland and soon long-reach diggers will set to work plugging the breach with an estimated 1,000 tonnes of clay. Once the clay is in place, piles will be installed to strengthen the bank.

Temporary repairs also remain in place on the Billingham Skirth, where a number of homes have been protected while engineers plan a permanent fix.

Elsewhere around the county, inspections are being carried out and smaller repairs are underway to fix some locks, pointing doors, and banks that overtopped, eroded, or experienced seepage when they were under pressure from the high volume of water for a prolonged period of time.

Lincolnshire had more than twice its usual amount of rainfall this autumn, with 110mm falling in November alone. This was on top of twice September's average rainfall and two and a half times the usual rainfall for October.

Despite the intense weather – which set record levels on the Rivers Witham and Ancholme, caused surface water flooding and saturated the ground – flood defences across the county held up well, defending thousands of homes.

The Brant, Till, Market Rasen, Freshney, Louth and Horncastle flood reservoirs protected around 8,000 properties, while 1,000 miles of raised embankment successfully held the waters back from around 180,000 properties at risk of flooding.

Environment Agency Area Director Norm Robinson said:

Despite the extreme rainfall that pushed our rivers to their limits – and the fact that a third of Lincolnshire is below sea level – the vast majority of homes, businesses and land has remained safe from flooding. In fact, less than 1% of the county's agricultural land has been affected.

But we know how devastating flooding can be for those affected, which is why we're completing repairs as quickly as possible. This work will have to be done in stages, but throughout the process, we'll continue working closely with the IDBs and the NFU, and we are in near daily contact with the landowners affected, giving advice, guidance and updates on our progress.

Over the coming days and weeks, Environment Agency teams will continue to carry out inspections, monitor defences, and carry out any further repairs as needed.

Although minimal rain is forecast for the next week, meaning river levels will drop back to more normal levels and the ground will begin to dry out, local people are still being reminded to check their flood risk and sign up for alerts and warnings at www.gov.uk/flood or by calling 0345 988 1188.

[Monkeypox case confirmed in England](#)

Monkeypox is a rare viral infection that does not spread easily between people and the risk to the general public in England is very low. It is usually a self-limiting illness and most people recover within a few weeks. However, severe illness can occur in some individuals.

The patient is believed to have contracted the infection while visiting Nigeria.

The patient was staying in the south west England prior to transfer to the specialist high consequence infectious disease centre at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, where they are receiving appropriate care.

As a precautionary measure, PHE experts are working closely with NHS colleagues to implement rapid infection control procedures, including contacting people who might have been in close contact with the individual to provide information and health advice.

This includes contacting passengers who travelled in close proximity to the patient on the same flight to the UK. If passengers are not contacted, then there is no action they should take.

Dr Meera Chand, Consultant Microbiologist at Public Health England, said:

Monkeypox does not spread easily between people and the overall risk to the general public is very low. We are following up with those who have had close contact with the patient to offer advice and to monitor them as necessary.

PHE and the NHS have well established and robust infection control procedures for dealing with cases of imported infectious disease and these will be strictly followed to minimise the risk of transmission.

This is not the first time that the virus has been detected in the UK. PHE reported the first UK cases of monkeypox in September 2018.

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by monkeypox virus and has been reported mainly in central and west African countries. Monkeypox, in most cases, is a mild condition which will resolve on its own and have no long-term effects on a person's health. Most people recover within a few weeks.

Initial symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills and exhaustion. A rash can develop, often beginning on the face, then spreading to other parts of the body. The rash changes and goes through different stages before finally forming a scab, which later falls off.

PM opening words at North Atlantic Council: 4 December 2019

I'm delighted to welcome everybody here to the UK to celebrate the 70th anniversary of NATO.

I feel as if our alliance is coming home because Britain was a founding member and it was here that NATO opened its first headquarters – of course in Belgrave Square in London shortly before moving to Paris, as colleagues will recall.

Seventy years on, we are rock solid in our commitment to NATO and to the giant shield of solidarity that now protects 29 countries and nearly a billion people.

The fact that we live in peace today demonstrates the power of the simple proposition at the heart of this alliance: that for as long as we stand together, no-one could hope to defeat us – and therefore no-one will start a war.

This essential principle is enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty: that if any one of us is attacked, all of us will go to their defence.

If NATO has a motto, it is as Jens says, one for all, and all for one.

This doctrine of coming to one another's aid, incarnated by NATO, provides

the single most important explanation for why the British people and hundreds of millions of our friends live in peace and freedom today.

Everything our peoples hold dear – from liberty and democracy to their jobs, homes, schools and hospitals – would not be secure and could not flourish without the peace that NATO is designed to guarantee.

But history shows that peace cannot be taken for granted and even as we celebrate this anniversary, we must ensure that our deeds match our words and the atrocity in London last Friday shows why we must work together to combat terrorism and the vital importance of NATO's missions to counter this threat.

For the UK's part, we spend over 2% of GDP on defence.

We are proudly making the biggest contribution of any European ally to NATO's Readiness Initiative by offering an armoured brigade, two fighter squadrons and six warships, including the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers.

As friends and allies, we must never shy away from discussing new realities, particularly NATO's response to emerging threats like hybrid warfare and disruptive technologies including space and cyber.

At this Council, we have the opportunity to strengthen the unity of purpose that has made NATO the greatest and most successful alliance in history and to take the new steps that are profoundly necessary to ensure another 70 years of peace and security.

[PM intervention at the NATO Leaders' Meeting](#)

On this state of the NATO Alliance, which was founded in 1949, the Prime Minister is expected to say:

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[PM met President Trump at Downing](#)

Street: 3 December 2019



A Downing Street spokesman said:

The Prime Minister met President Trump this evening at Downing Street.

They looked forward to tomorrow's NATO Leaders' Meeting and reflected on the importance of the Alliance to our shared security.

The leaders welcomed the recent increases in defence spending by NATO member states and agreed on the need for the Alliance to be unified in the face of new and evolving threats.

The Prime Minister also updated the President on this afternoon's meeting between France, Germany, Turkey and the UK to discuss the situation in Syria.

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