

# The Duchess of Northumberland visits Mitford Dam

On Monday 4th November The Duchess of Northumberland, in her role as Lord-Lieutenant of Northumberland, was given a guided tour of a vital flood alleviation scheme in the heart of Morpeth.

The visit to Mitford Dam, an Environment Agency asset, was organised by the Morpeth Flood Action Group (MFAG).

The Mitford Dam is part of a £27 million pound programme that was launched back in August 2015. A scheme funded by the Environment Agency and Northumberland County Council, and initiated by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

The new defences will cope with a repeat of the events in 2008, which caused the largest flood the town has experienced.

In these times of unstable weather patterns and the effects of climate change, assets like Mitford Dam are becoming more crucial to help better protect the community. In Morpeth this flood alleviation scheme, the largest of its kind in the North East of England, reduces the risk of flooding to over 1,000 homes and businesses.

Mitford Dam is an exemplar project containing the largest flood storage reservoirs ever built by the Environment Agency.

The dam and storage area are located upstream in the village of Mitford. They store up to 1.4 million cubic metres of water – this is enough to fill 560 Olympic sized swimming pools. They combine when river levels are too high and would ordinarily cause flooding in the town.

Her Grace, The Duchess of Northumberland, said:

We are fortunate to have a flood defence like Mitford Dam in Morpeth that provides residents and people who run their own businesses with the opportunity to sleep a little easier in their beds at night, knowing they have a safeguard in place to help protect them against the effects of flooding. The community appreciates all of the hard work that everyone delivers in the town by providing services that allow us to safely go about our day, and I was happy to accept the chance to have a guided tour of the dam by the very people who made it all possible.

Environment Agency's Alan Cadas, Operations Manager in the North East, said:

The Environment Agency continues to be very proud of Mitford Dam

and what it represents. It's a ground-breaking project that has changed the lives of so many people who live and work in Morpeth. The dam gives them some additional reassurance that if bad weather does hit the town then the areas which are at higher risk of flooding are now better protected.

Like with any flood alleviation scheme anywhere in the country, we can't prevent the risk of flooding to every home or business. But we can try and use the latest technology and years of knowledge and experience, to try and create measures that will help provide crucial warning time and the necessary protection.

We couldn't have done any of the scheme without the support of our partners and the continued dedication shown by local community groups like the Morpeth Flood Action Group. Together we are looking to build on this invaluable work for years to come.

The Environment Agency also works closely with the local community by delivering a dedicated engagement programme for schools, charities, groups and associations through its flood resilience team. This programme receives welcomed support by organisations including Morpeth Town Council, Northumberland County Council and Northumberland Fire and Rescue.

Alan Bell, Chair Morpeth Flood Action Group (MFAG), said:

We welcome the opportunity, facilitated by the Environment Agency, to show The Duchess of Northumberland the alleviation scheme that means so much to the people of Morpeth. After the tour some of our members and other residents will be meeting with the Duchess to tell her of our experiences from 2008 and our hopes for the future.

The role of Morpeth Flood Action Group has evolved over the eleven years of our existence. In that time we have worked in close collaboration with the EA, who have offered help and support both to the group and the people of Morpeth.

As a group located firmly within the community, we are ideally positioned to offer information, support and, when appropriate reassurance to residents who may be at risk or fear of flooding.

The Duchess of Northumberland also visited the Morpeth Flood Alleviation Scheme in the heart of the town at High Stanners – where she was given a demonstration of one of the flood gates being closed. Her Grace then met up

with residents who were affected by the flooding back in 2008, and also members from the Morpeth Lions.

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](#)

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## **Response to BBC story about minicab driver qualifications**



We take all allegations of qualifications fraud extremely seriously. Those reported by the BBC today in relation to some BTEC awards underline the importance of our work to expose and address weaknesses in the way some awarding organisations manage and oversee centre assessments. We have contacted relevant awarding organisations in respect of these specific allegations, and we expect them to be investigated quickly and thoroughly.

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## **UK-Iceland transitional migration arrangements**



The UK and Iceland have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on transitional migration to ensure UK and Icelandic nationals will be able to continue to move to each other's countries in all Brexit scenarios.

Under this agreement, UK nationals and their close family members would be able to move to Iceland and apply to stay for at least three years as well as to work, study and access benefits and services if the deal with the EU is not ratified. Icelandic nationals and their close family members would be able to move to the UK to live, work and study as they do now and retain access to benefits and services until 31 December 2020. During this time they will be able to voluntarily apply for three years leave to remain under the European Temporary Leave to Remain Scheme.

The UK and Iceland will continue to work closely together on the operation of the memorandum and will discuss the arrangements which will apply beyond January 2021 in due course.

The details of the UK's European Temporary Leave to Remain scheme can be found [here](#).

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## **34th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on El Salvador**

Thank you, Mr President,

The United Kingdom welcomes progress made in El Salvador since their 2014 review. We commend the Government's significant efforts to tackle human trafficking as well as the prioritisation of reducing the high rates of violence and murder in the country.

We welcome steps taken by the Government to address corruption, and we look forward to receiving further details of the new International Commission

against Impunity in El Salvador.

We call on the Government of El Salvador to uphold and promote freedom of expression for all, including journalists, and allow them to work without the threat of violence or coercion. We also urge the Government to take action to prevent violence against women and girls.

We recommend that El Salvador:

- 1) Develop a national action plan to prevent and combat trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls, particularly by gangs, which includes increased institutional capacity for the identification and support of victims.
- 2) Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.
- 3) Review laws that criminalise the use of abortion and ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services for all women and girls, and ensure women are not criminally prosecuted for suffering a miscarriage.

Thank you.

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## [John Procter appointed as Chair of the Royal Armouries](#)



John Procter was a Conservative Party Member of the European Parliament from November 2016 to July 2019 and has been a Leeds City Councillor since 1990. From 2004-2010, John served as Chief Whip of the Council. He stood in Barnsley East (1992) and Pudsey (2001) General Elections. Through his varied career he has developed an unrivalled network of well-connected contacts in the UK, across Europe and internationally, which will prove invaluable in increasing awareness of Royal Armouries throughout the UK and beyond. John is the Managing Director of a national Optical business. He is married with two children and has now retired from Politics.

This role is not remunerated. This reappointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. John has declared that he has obtained office as a Conservative MEP and canvassed on behalf of the Conservative Party. He has since retired from Politics.

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