

Yarm Flood Alleviation Scheme

August 2023 Newsletter

Welcome to the third edition of the Yarm Flood Alleviation Scheme newsletter. This newsletter will form one of the ways that we'll keep you updated on our Flood Alleviation works in Yarm, as the project develops.

Construction Start Date

Whilst the project has been subject to some delays, we do now have a construction start date of January 2024. The Public gates will be replaced first, as these gates are where access is mostly on hardstanding ground, which will help to minimise any disturbance during potentially poorer weather. We had aimed to start construction of the entire scheme earlier this year; however, we have been working on ensuring that the new gates perform as well as we need them to, and this has delayed the start date within the operations programme. Our key aim is to ensure that we better protect the community in Yarm from flooding and therefore securing the optimum design for the new gates has been our priority.

We have made the decision to begin construction in January 2024, and not late November 2023, as we do not want to risk leaving a gate replacement unfinished over the Christmas period, when our contractors will not be at work. By working to a January 2024 start date, this means that we can begin speaking with the key stakeholders about specific dates for the replacement of the public gates, allowing the stakeholders time to consider and adapt to our works, minimising disruption to Yarm. This is particularly important where our works will impact public or residential car parking, such as Yarm Wharf Car Park.

Works to replace the private flood gates will begin once the replacement of the public flood gates has been completed in early Spring 2024, when weather conditions should be better for working within private gardens.

As some floodgates will now be replaced over the Winter period, various steps will be taken to safe guard the residents and properties of Yarm, ensuring the current standard of protection to Yarm is provided throughout the works. These measures will include the monitoring of the weather forecast and forecast river levels throughout the works. Each gate opening will also have a temporary flood protection design completed. These temporary measures can be erected quickly by our contractors if elevated river levels are forecast, providing the same level of protection as the existing gate. These processes and procedures will be formally documented and implemented through the Flood Risk Activity Permit, as part of the Environmental Permitting Regulations.

Pre-Construction Activities

Over the past few months, following the various site investigation works, our consultants and flood gate specialists have been confirming the individual detailed design of each of the flood gates. These have been reviewed by various parties within the Environment Agency, allowing a construction programme to be created,

The construction programme includes estimated dates for the procurement, fabrication, and on site construction works for the new flood gates. This installation programme will be discussed and agreed with all landowners affected prior to commencement of works, along with an agreement on the access arrangements to allow the new flood gates to be installed.

A pre-condition survey of the working area around each gate will be undertaken prior to the works starting, ensuring that post works, the working area is restored to its pre-condition.

The first operations which will be visible on site will be the installation of the welfare cabins within the compound area, located on land off the High Street and Bentley Wynd, highlighted on the map below in Figure 1.

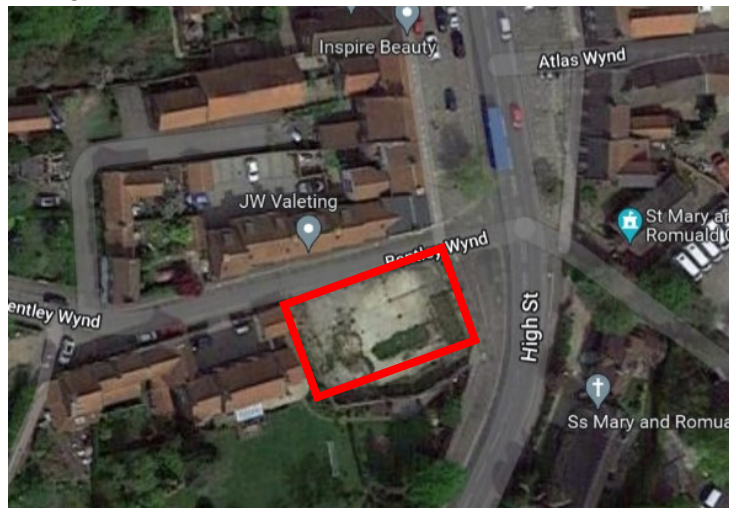


Figure 1. Site compound location

The site compound on Bentley Wynd will be setup and managed by our Contractor BAM Nuttall over a period of weeks commencing in December 2023 and will remain in place until the works are completed.

Whilst the project is ongoing, unrestricted access will be required for site vehicles to and from the compound, as such parking within the entranceway will be prohibited.

During the construction period, there will be some construction traffic around Yarm, although we will ensure this is kept to a minimum.

Environmental Enhancements

In the last issue of this newsletter, we highlighted that we'd been working with the Tees Rivers Trust to develop some small-scale environmental enhancement proposals on the banks of the river Tees along True Lovers Walk.

The Tees around Yarm has historically been modified for recreational and flood protection purposes, as well as for urbanisation. Because of this, through the Water Framework Directive (WFD) several mitigation measures have been identified to help maximise the waterbodies ecological potential.

The works by the Tees Rivers Trust to the four proposed sections of river bank are planned to commence later in the year, throughout the Autumn months. The Tees Rivers Trust will be looking for volunteers to get involved in the project, so please keep a look for their asks of support as any help would be much appreciated. This project will implement mitigation measures to create habitat, food sources, enhance existing structures, restore natural processes, and rehabilitate sections of banks, improving the resilience of the True Lovers Walk path.

You can find more information about the proposed Environmental Enhancements on our webpage - <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/north-east/yarm-floodgates>

Recent works

Additional Topographical Surveys and Site Investigation works have been carried out to gather information to allow the private gate designs to be finalised. The surveys have also been used to finalise the proposed improvements to the access walkways and steps around the flood gates in the West of Yarm, in order to make the access to and around the new gates safer for our operatives during routine maintenance and gate closure operations. We are currently reviewing these access walkway proposals in readiness for starting specific discussions with the relevant landowners over the coming weeks.

Ecological Surveys have been also carried out to inform our Environmental Action Plan. This plan will be used to ensure that during our construction activities, the risks to the environment are appropriately managed. The surveyors looked for signs of Otters, Voles, Badgers and Bats. The Ecological surveys did identify some invasive non-native species (INNS) of plant life which have now been treated along True Lovers Walk, to avoid them being spread during construction. We'd like to thank the residents for their support in accommodating the various surveys we have undertaken.



Figure 2. Image of Himalayan Balsam (INNS) at Yarm which has been pulled up and is now dying off.

Finding out more information

On Monday 11th September, we will be in Yarm Library on the High Street from 12:00 – 15:00. This is an informal drop-in session where we will be displaying the latest information about the scheme. Please call in at any time between 12:00 and 15:00 to talk to the team.

If you would like more information or have a specific question, please get in touch with us via EA-YarmFAS@environment-agency.gov.uk

You can also visit our web page to keep up to date with the latest developments via the following web address or QR code

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/north-east/yarm-floodgates>



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