



Welcome to the first edition of the Embankment Road (Bembridge) Coastal Defence Scheme Newsletter

August 2023 – ISSUE #1

We aim to share all the latest news and information about the work currently proposed for the coastal defences along **Embankment Road** here and on our dedicated website that you can find here: [Isle of Wight Coastal Defence Schemes Information Page - Environment Agency - Citizen Space \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](https://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/isle-of-wight-coastal-defence-schemes).



WHY IS WORK NEEDED?

The coastal defences along Embankment Road are ageing, with some sections **reaching the end of their useful life**. If nothing is done to repair these, over time there will be an increased risk of failure in the form of a breach.

This would adversely impact the B3395 and the footpath alongside Bembridge Harbour. It would also lead to tidal flooding in the low-lying land of Brading Marshes nature reserve. The RSPB site is recognised internationally for its freshwater habitat and saline lagoons and is an important site for wintering and nesting birds in the Solent.

WHAT WORK HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

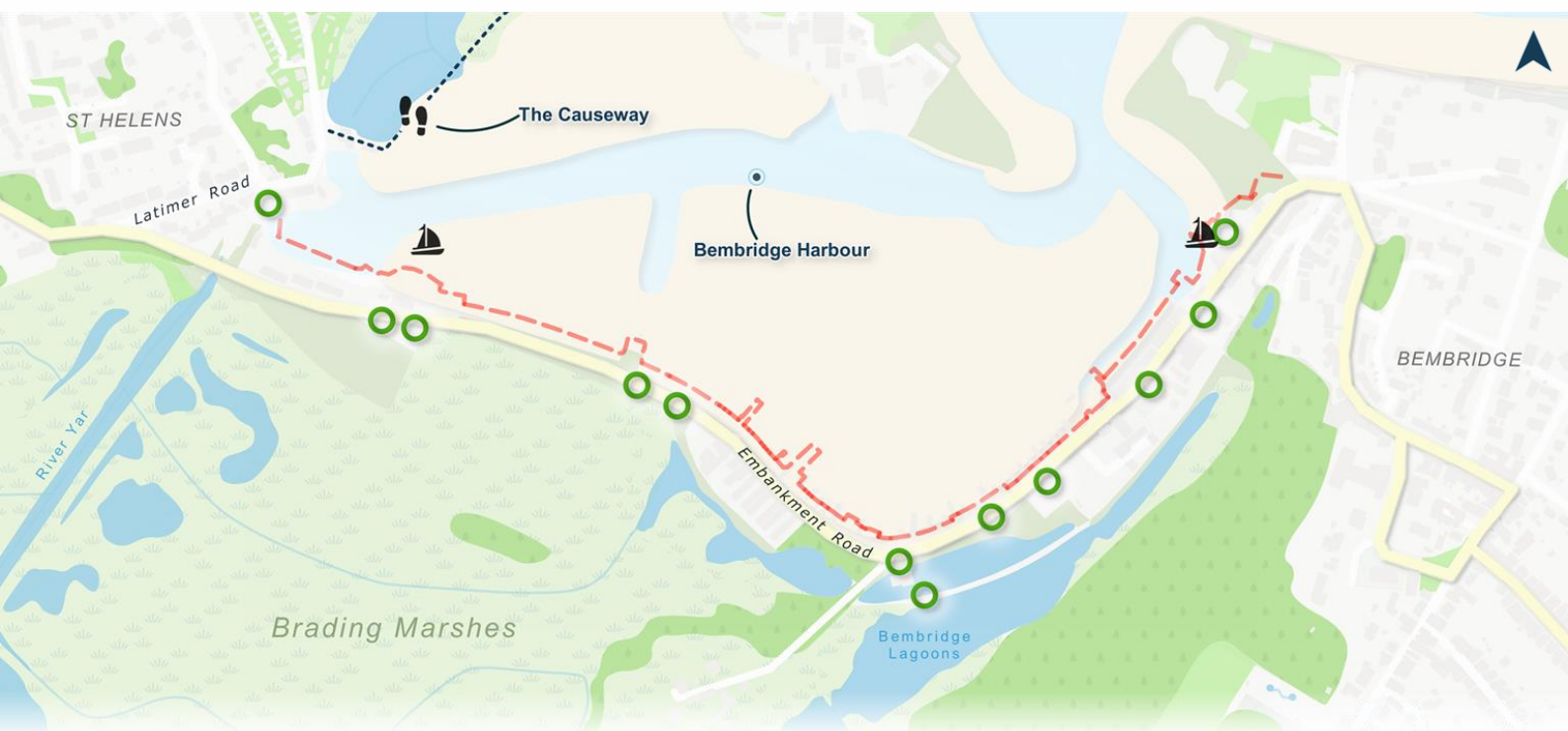
During May this year we carried out surveys to check for existing utility cables and pipes that are used for residents and businesses so we know their location and can safely **avoid and protect them from damage during future work**. We understand that any disruption to roads and footpaths can be difficult to live with, and we would like to offer our **thanks to the local community** for your cooperation during that time.

WHO IS THE ISLE OF WIGHT COASTAL DEFENCE TEAM?

We are a **partnership of organisations and specialists** who are working together to deliver improvements to several coastal defences around the island. We consist of the **Environment Agency, The Isle of Wight Council**, and specialist engineering companies **JBA Consulting** and **VolkerStevin**. The area along Embankment Road has been identified as a priority area for us to work on, and together we will be carrying out investigative works and repairs to the coastal defences.

WHAT WORK IS NEXT?

To help us assess the viable options for repairing the existing coastal defences along Embankment Road, we need to better understand; the composition and condition of the embankment, the ground conditions upon which the defences sit and monitor groundwater levels. To do this, we will need to **drill boreholes at various points along Embankment Road** using specialist equipment to retrieve a core which is sent to the laboratory for analysis. Water level monitors will be installed in some of the boreholes. **You can see the proposed areas for the boreholes below:**



Borehole / Investigation Locations

WHEN WILL THE INVESTIGATIONS TAKE PLACE?

Equipment and welfare cabins will be transported to the site compound in **late August 2023**. **Work will begin in early September 2023** and is expected to be **completed by 7th October 2023**. Working hours will be restricted to 7am-5pm Monday to Friday where possible.



WHAT EQUIPMENT WILL BE USED?



A **drilling rig** suitable for forming boreholes in soil and rock will be used. **Barriers will be erected around each exploratory location so that the work can be completed safely.** These barriers will be in place for **1 to 3 days** at a time, opening up again as we progress along Embankment Road, closing small sections one at a time.

WILL THERE BE ROAD CLOSURES?

From **21st September to 6th October** there will be **two-way temporary traffic lights on embankment road between St Helens and Bembridge**, to allow space for the drilling rigs and safe working space for the site team. We have worked with Isle of Wight Council and Island Roads to reduce the amount of road closure as much as possible, **There will also be some footpath closures.** **Diversions will be put in place.**



WHAT MEASURES ARE IN PLACE TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT DURING THE WORK?



Reducing the impact of the works on surrounding wildlife and habitats is a priority for the Coastal Defense Scheme. Brading Marshes and St. Helen's marshes form a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** and includes a range of coastal and inland habitats that we will be closely checking with our partners and specialists.



WINTERING BIRDS SURVEY

The Wintering Bird Survey 2022/23 survey found that Bembridge Harbour, Bembridge Lagoons & RSPB Brading Marshes all play a vital role to birds by offering both key feeding and roosting sites. **Bembridge Harbour** is an important foraging resource for species such as Dunlin, Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit and Greenshank which feed on the mudflats exposed at low tide and features such as jetties within the harbour supply important roost sites for species such as Ringed Plover, Dunlin and Oystercatcher. **Bembridge Lagoons** support several species of wintering duck such as Pochard and Shoveler which were recorded nowhere else within the survey area whilst **Brading Marshes** acts as an important foraging and roosting resource for species such as Dark-bellied Brent Goose, Curlew and Lapwing over the high tide period.

Going forward, the recommendations from the wintering bird surveys in 2022/23 will be used to inform our approach to works to ensure the delicate ecosystem is not negatively affected by any proposed works along the coastal defences.



FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like any further information on the work and why it is needed or have any concerns about the proposed work, please contact us:



EMAIL: IOW_FDschemes@Environment-Agency.gov.uk



PHONE: 03708 506 506

You can also sign up to our mailing list to keep up to date on the projects and receive future copies of our newsletter by emailing IOW_FDschemes@environment-agency.gov.uk

