

# Gooseum Rhyne Reservoir Improvement Scheme

February 2024 - engagement report

Environment Agency



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# Executive Summary

This report summarises feedback received on the Environment Agency's plans to de-regulate the Gooseum Rhyne Reservoir. The plans were presented at a public drop-in event held on 23 February 2024 at the Old School Rooms in Congresbury, and feedback was collected. This report contains analysis of completed feedback forms received up until 06 March 2024.

The public drop-in events had approximately 57 people attend. To publicise the event, a letter was sent to 741 residents and businesses within Congresbury. We also placed promotional posters at information points within Congresbury and Yatton, and advertised the event via social media channels. An email was also sent to the project's mailing list.

Twelve completed feedback forms were received, with 70% of responders saying they'd heard about the event via a letter from the Environment Agency. Analysis of the responses showed that over 90 per cent were in support of the plans, 10 per cent were neutral, and nobody was against. The key reason given in support was that the Environment Agency had listened to people's concerns and that the Millennium Green and the trees would remain untouched.

This report lists all the themes identified across all feedback received. The themes have been sorted into areas of support, questions, concerns, and comments/suggestions and responses to each theme are provided in section 3 of the report.

# 1. Consultation

The Environment Agency has been consulting the local community on proposals to improve the Gooseum Rhyne Reservoir since January 2022. They last consulted the community on these proposals in October 2023. Throughout the consultation, it was increasingly apparent that the community was opposed to any impact on the Millennium Green and were particularly concerned about the necessity to remove trees. The Environment Agency had therefore been looking at other possibilities, and the best most viable option determined was to de-regulate the reservoir so that the area would no longer be subject to the same regulations. Once this option was deemed practicable the public was engaged in February 2024 to share these new plans with them and obtain feedback on revised proposals.

## 1.1. Project overview

The Gooseum Rhyne reservoir flood defence is partly located in Millennium Green, Congresbury. The reservoir is formed by the raised riverbanks of the Congresbury Yeo and embankments along its northern and eastern edges.

Currently, when water levels in the River Yeo rise enough to spill into the fields, the reservoir will begin to fill up. When water levels in the river drop, water will gradually flow back into the river through the culvert near the basketball court. The embankment around the edge of the Millennium Green protects properties on the northern side of the River Yeo from flooding.

It is currently classified as a reservoir under the Reservoirs Act 1975 due to the volume of flood water it can hold above natural ground. Due to this classification, the Environment Agency has a legal responsibility to ensure the continued safety of the embankments and water control structures. However, as it has now been established that the reservoir can be de-regulated, the area would no longer be subject to the same regulations. This will remove the need for the substantial works previously proposed, whilst still maintaining an acceptable level of flood protection.

## 1.2. The consultation

To present the plans for de-regulating the reservoir and to gather feedback on this new path, a public drop-in event was held at Old School Rooms in Congresbury on 23 February 2024.

## 1.3. Materials

To provide information on the proposals the following materials were produced:

- Seven display boards explaining the plans for de-regulation. These boards were shown at the drop-in event as well as being uploaded to the project webpage.
- A two-sided feedback form for people to fill out at the event, or to take away with them. There was also a digital feedback form on the scheme's webpage.

## 1.4. Methods

A combination of channels was used to present the proposals and capture feedback, including:

- Continuing engagement with stakeholders via email and face to face workshops
- A public drop-in session held at the Old School Rooms in Congresbury on the afternoon of Friday 23 February 2024.
- A project webpage.
- Responses to questions submitted via the phone and email.

## 1.5. Promotion

The consultation was promoted through:

- A letter sent to 741 residents and businesses within Congresbury, including all properties surrounding the Millennium Green.
- Email invitation to our mailing list.
- Posters located at various information points within Congresbury and Yatton.
- Social media activity.
- Our scheme webpage.

## 1.6. How the consultation went

Approximately 57 people attended the public drop-in session. Twelve completed feedback forms were received. Of those that provided feedback, over 90 per cent were in support of the plans, 10 per cent were neutral, and nobody was against. The key reason given in support was that the Environment Agency had listened to people's concerns and that the Millennium Green and the trees would remain untouched.

## 2. The feedback

### 2.1. Multiple-choice questions

Responses to the multiple-choice questions have shown us that the majority of people (70 per cent) heard about the event via a letter from the Environment Agency, Over 80 per cent fully understood the plans to de-regulate the reservoir, 90 per cent were in support of the scheme and no-one was against it, and 90 per cent also felt the information displayed at the event was clear and easy to understand.

**Table 2.1: question 1 multiple choice feedback**

<b>Q1: How did you hear about this event? (Please tick all that apply)</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
A letter from the Environment Agency	9
From another organisation*	1
Social media	0
Promotional poster	1
Other**	2
*Organisations listed in responses: C.R.A.G	
**Other ways people heard of the event: Via the Parish Council; On the morning of the event when at the venue for another meeting.	

**Table 2.2: question 2 multiple choice feedback**

<b>Q2: Following today's event, how well do you understand our plans to de-regulate the reservoir?</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Fully	9
Partly	2
Not sure	0
Don't understand	0

**Table 2.3: question 3 multiple choice feedback**

<b>Q3: What best describes your feelings towards de-regulation of the reservoir?</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Support	10
Neutral	1
Against	0

**Table 2.4: question 5 multiple choice feedback**

<b>Q5: Was the information displayed at the event clear and easy to understand?</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Yes	10
Partly	1
No	0

## 2.2. Public feedback

The table below lists all topics that were identified via the feedback received under the headings support, suggestions, and concerns. Responses have been provided to each of these topics in section 3 of this report and a response code has been provided to take you to the corresponding response. Areas of support for our proposals that don't require a specific action, have been listed as 'N/A'. These themes, along with all the feedback, have been shared with the project team.

**Table 2.5: topics from public feedback**

<b>Support</b>	<b>Response code</b>
Thank you for listening to our concerns and respecting our views.	N/A
We are pleased the work will be take a lot less time and cost less money.	N/A
We are happy that no trees will be removed.	N/A
Thank you for scaling back the work.	N/A
We are happy that the Millennium Green will be left untouched.	N/A
The de-regulation plans are much better than your original proposals.	N/A
The new proposals are much more proportionate to the flood risk.	N/A
The display information was very clear with good diagrams to help us understand.	N/A
The project team in the room were very helpful and explained the details well.	N/A
We're very happy with your updated plans	N/A
Glad for the updated proposals as Moorhens are nesting soon.	N/A
Futureproofing makes sense - as long as it works.	N/A

<b>Suggestions</b>		<b>Response code</b>
You should take care of small old bridges further upstream.		<b>3</b>
You upset most of the village with your original proposals		<b>4</b>
<b>Concerns</b>		<b>Response code</b>
Easier information and labelling needed for normal people.		<b>5</b>
Maintenance of that part of the riverbank and footpath could be an issue.		<b>1</b>
We hope that the deregulation will be taken into account in any wider proposals relating to developments on land along the riverbank.		<b>2</b>



## 3. Our response to your feedback

Table 3.1 provides responses to the feedback received.

**Table 3.1: Our responses to your questions and comments**

Response Code	Theme	Our response
1	The maintenance of the part of the riverbank where the spillway will be located, and the adjacent footpath could be an issue.	<p>When the work is complete, the area that has been disturbed will be topsoiled, reseeded and will be fenced off from trafficking until the grass is well established and able to be walked on. Until then, a temporary diversion of the public footpath will be in operation. The embankment will continue to be maintained as it is currently.</p> <p>The spillway location will only be inundated with water approximately once every 2-3 years for a few hours and this will not change the type of maintenance of the embankment.</p>
2	The de-regulation of the reservoir should be considered in any wider development proposals on land along the riverbank.	The current reservoir area will still be a functioning floodplain after the de-regulation works. Development proposals will need to take account of the floodplain.
3	You should also take care of the small older bridges that are further upstream.	This point is noted; however, the Environment Agency only have maintenance responsibility for certain structures over the river.

4	Whilst we're glad that the plans have been updated, you upset most of the village with your original proposals.	We acknowledge that the previous plans caused upset to many people, and we are pleased that a viable alternative has been found that doesn't impact the trees and the Millennium Green.
5	Easier information and labelling needed for people without any technical knowledge.	Thank you for providing feedback on the information displayed at the event, we will ensure we consider this in all future events we hold.