

OUTSTRAYS TO SKEFFLING MANAGED REALIGNMENT SCHEME (OtSMRS) NEWSLETTER

July/August 2022



Photo: excavation of the new drain and flood embankment on the eastern side

Construction update

During this construction season we have been working on both the western and eastern sides of the OtSMRS site. Favourable weather conditions so far have resulted in good progress being made with this work.

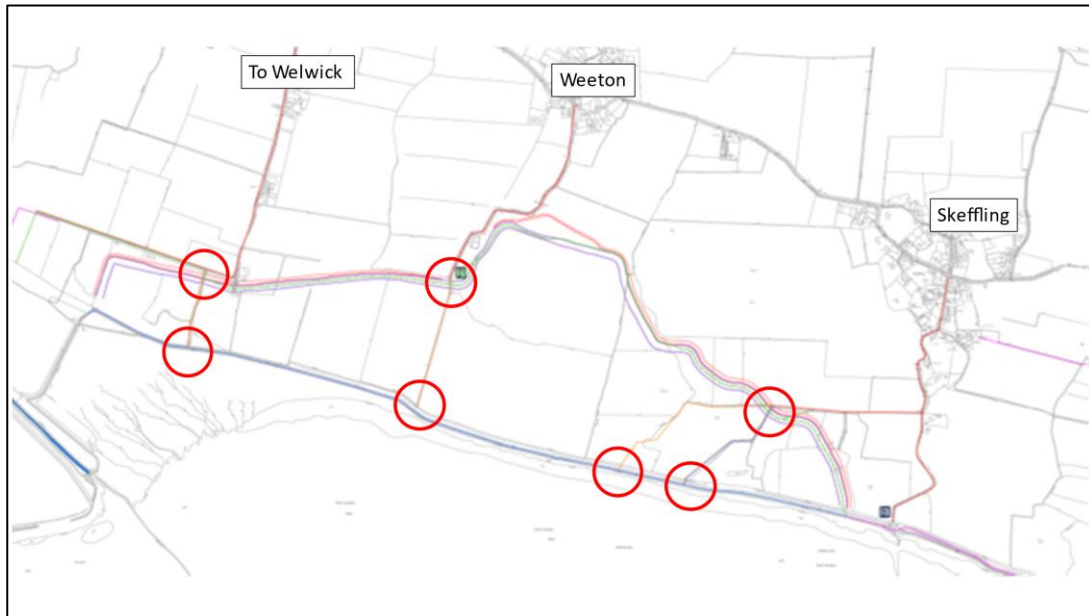
On the western site, we have continued landscaping work started last year to create wet grassland habitat. This is almost finished but has been delayed slightly as we needed to install exclusion zones on part of the site to avoid disturbing three pairs of nesting marsh harriers. Once these restrictions are lifted, earthworks will resume and we will also begin to build the new flood embankment in this area.

On the eastern site, the main compound and access road were installed in March / April, allowing JBA Bentley staff to carry out preparatory work over what is a huge area. In June we reached an important milestone in the programme when we started building the new flood embankment for the east. Although public access to the construction site is restricted for safety reasons, you can see some of the earthworks from the footpath along the existing embankment and from Sheep Trod Lane.

Whilst carrying out surveys close to the old Nissen hut, we uncovered the foundations of some more old buildings, possibly relating to Second World War activities. Unfortunately we found traces of asbestos in the soil there. So we have carried out tests and are now working on a plan to deal with it.

Footpath closures

In the March newsletter, we described several footpath closures that were about to come into operation. Fortunately, until now our contractors have found ways of working to avoid closing paths, keeping them open for as long as possible. However, we have now reached a point where we need to restrict access on the paths marked in the map below. We ask anyone walking near the site to respect signs and follow instructions for diversions. We also ask dog walkers to keep their dogs on leads when walking near our working areas, to avoid disturbing birds on the site.



Path closures shown on the map above are:

- **From Sheep Trod Lane, south of Welwick**, connecting to the embankment at Welwick Saltmarsh; we will put a diversion in place, taking walkers around the works and bank onto the embankment.
- **South of Humberside Road, Weeton**, connecting to the embankment: already closed off.
- **From Burstall Lane, Skeffling**, connecting to the embankment.

Update on plans for Winestead and Skeffling pumping stations

We are currently developing plans to replace Winestead pumping station and intend to submit these for internal review towards the end of the year. In tandem with this, we will also submit a planning application to East Riding of Yorkshire Council for the scheme. Before this happens, we will provide opportunities for local residents to give us their views on our proposals.

We intend to locate the new pumping station 750 metres inland of the existing pumping station. This position is less exposed to future storms and sea level rise. The pumping station will also incorporate an eel pass and we will make additional improvements to improve water quality and recreational facilities in and around Winestead Drain.

We have also been developing outline designs for a new pumping station for Skeffling and are still investigating possible locations for this.

Bringing archaeology into the classroom



In May, Environment Agency staff teamed up with York Archaeological Trust and JBA Bentley (our contractors) to deliver a practical and entertaining session with Year Four pupils from Patrington Primary School. Using finds revealed during recent archaeological surveys on the OtSMRS site over the last few years, we told the story of how the area had changed since pre-Roman times, with natural processes shaping the land (coastal erosion and deposition), and then humans in turn continuing that 'shaping' through settlement and farming. From the hands-on exercises in the school hall (shown in the photo), pupils got a taste of what archaeologists do and some of the skills required to work in

archaeology. It was a very lively morning which helped to bring to life the history and geography curriculum for that year group, enjoyed by everyone. The children asked some brilliant questions and loved handling some of the artefacts we brought with us.

What's happening to the land at Outstrays Farm

At present the land at Outstrays Farm (known as West One in our designs for the scheme) is not included in the managed realignment scheme. Instead it's being used to provide



Photo: Environment Agency staff assess the effectiveness of weed control measures on a field in West One

grazing for livestock that have been moved from the Welwick saltmarsh whilst construction is taking place there, to ensure we meet our obligations during construction. We are currently undertaking actions to remove some of the persistent weeds that have established cover on the land whilst it remained fallow. Subsequently, we plan to use several fields to trial different management techniques to improve the quality of the land, whilst developing longer terms plans for this site. This arrangement will continue until we finish building the scheme on the eastern side.

Ultimately the use of this land will be informed by the Humber 2100+ Strategy and the Environment Agency's operational needs.

Repairs to the flood embankment near Hawkins Point were completed earlier this year and we will continue to maintain existing flood defences along this stretch of the estuary.

Tender for a site manager

Once construction has finished, we will be employing a site manager to help look after the site for us. A draft tender has been prepared and is currently being reviewed by our procurement and legal teams. Once approved this will be issued in accordance with government procedures for procurement. We will provide further updates on progress with this.

Ecological surveys on the site

During the summer months our contractors have continued to carry out ecological surveys across the construction site to ensure that wild animals and birds are protected. This has included making regular checks for ground nesting birds. In spite of the proximity of large earth moving equipment on West Two land, lapwings, oyster catchers and avocets have been found nesting there. As soon as we discovered this, we installed buffer zones around the nests to avoid disturbing them; these will remain in place until the chicks have fledged.



Photo: Avocet chicks feeding on the West Two site

We have also been monitoring the site for other protected species to gather data on their distribution and activity levels across the site.

In June we constructed artificial homes (special earth mounds) to provide an alternative habitat for the rare but locally found sea aster mining bee whilst we carry out work at Welwick Bushes. These will be monitored over the summer.

Contact Us

Environment Agency

By email: Welwick.Skeffling@environment-agency.gov.uk

Or by phone on **03708 506506**: ask for Andrew Gee, Project Manager, or Nikky Wilson, Engagement Specialist.

JBA Bentley

For enquiries about the work on site, contact Robert Culledge, Contracts Manager on **07970 594158** or Paul Craig, the Site Manager on **07837 454048**.

For more information about the scheme, you can visit the project's webpage at <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/yorkshire/outstrays-to-skeffling-managed-realignment-scheme/>