

# OUTSTRAYS TO SKEFFLING MANAGED REALIGNMENT

## Newsletter, April 2020

This newsletter explains how we are responding to the Coronavirus pandemic and what work we are progressing in the Skeffling area.

### Coronavirus: the Environment Agency's response

The Coronavirus pandemic has been causing extreme disruption across the country. The day to day work of the Environment Agency has been significantly affected by this virus. Like many other organisations, we have had to change our working practices and follow the advice of the UK government to reduce the risk of infection, responding flexibly as the situation develops.

Our key priorities are to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, the public, businesses and our partners whilst preventing serious harm to the environment. We have therefore made arrangements to ensure that we can continue to respond in the event of a major flood, pollution or other incident. In line with government guidance, we are also continuing critical work to operate, maintain, repair and construct flood defences. For the Outstrays to Skeffling managed realignment scheme, this means that our contractors will be carrying out essential work in the area over the coming weeks – you might see them on site around Outstrays. We want to assure you that they will adhere to the latest advice and guidance from Public Health England and that a full risk assessment has been done, with changes in working practices put in place to follow social distancing requirements. Work will only go ahead where it is safe to do so.

### Work going ahead: Repairs to the embankment at Outstrays and further survey work



Over the winter a section of the embankment at Sunk Island Sands was damaged by storms and started to erode. We have made arrangements with our contractor, JBA Bentley, to carry out repairs at the end of April. This will take two to three weeks with staff on site to install new rock armour and reinstate the embankment. The contractors will also be carrying out ecological surveys along Winestead Drain at the same time, along with further ground investigations around Haverfield Quarry.

### Delays to the scheme likely

In such unprecedented times, the Environment Agency has closed many of its offices and staff are working from home, where possible. Whilst we aim to provide the best possible service that we can, it is likely that there will be delays in implementing work planned for this year. We can't yet predict exactly what this will mean for the Outstrays to Skeffling scheme but most probably we won't be able to start building the new embankments this year, as planned. Once we have more information about this, we will let you know.

### Badger surveys

If you have visited the area recently, you may have noticed some piles of peanuts and molasses mixed with curious coloured plastic pellets on the ground. This is NOT poison; we are using this mixture, obtained from a reputable wildlife supplies company, to track badger movements and identify territories in the area. Territories can be mapped by relocating the different coloured pellets within the latrines used by sett members. This will provide our ecologists with information on their movements so we can ensure the design for our scheme is sympathetic to the local wildlife. The pellets are inert and cause no harm to badgers or other wildlife. We apologise for not making people aware of this activity in advance.



Badger tracking pellets mixed with peanuts and molasses

### Contacting us

Although most of our offices have closed, our Customer Contact Centre is still open and taking calls on 03708 506506, as is our Incident Communications Service (0800 807060). Please continue to report any environmental incidents to this hotline number. Floodline is also open on 03459 881188.

**If you have any questions about the Outstrays to Skeffling scheme or want more information, please contact us by email at:**

**[Welwick.Skeffling@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Welwick.Skeffling@environment-agency.gov.uk)**

**We are checking emails regularly but may not be able to respond as quickly as normal.**

### **Please share this emailed version of the newsletter if you can!**

Due to the closure of non-essential functions in our Yorkshire offices, we are unable to send postal copies of this newsletter, as we would normally do. So we would be grateful if you can share it with others electronically, post it on a local Facebook page, e.g. for a parish council or display it on a local noticeboard if you happen to pass by one on an essential journey. Any help in sharing this information at this very challenging time is very much appreciated.