

OUTSTRAYS TO SKEFFLING MANAGED REALIGNMENT SCHEME (OtSMRS) NEWSLETTER

August 2021

Update on current activities

Over the summer months our contractors have continued work on site, in preparation for the main phase of construction starting next spring. Ground investigations and archaeological surveys are almost finished on the eastern side, in the expanse of land between Welwick and Skeffling. Any remaining crops on the rest of the site will be harvested and the fields cleared in preparation for next year's work.

Work in the wet grassland area (West 2), next to Winestead Drain, has been progressing well. The site was cleared of vegetation and work has started to create the special habitat areas and future access routes. Material taken from these areas is also being stockpiled and stored over winter for construction of the new flood banks next year.

We are hoping to extend the construction season in this area into October, depending on the weather and environmental restrictions. Due to the importance of the Humber Estuary for overwintering and migrating birds, the timing of work on this scheme is restricted to a relatively narrow period, from late spring to early autumn. Continuing work during October would allow us to make best use of staff and resources currently on site whilst working in areas identified as the least ecologically sensitive, where bird populations are low. This will minimise impacts on local wildlife, such as the marsh harriers, by progressing work outside the breeding season.



A pit being dug for geotechnical surveys on site

Look out for the temporary traffic lights on the B1445

Temporary traffic lights will be installed on a short section of the B1445 between Weeton and Skeffling for two weeks, starting just after the August bank holiday. These are needed to enable JBA Bentley to start building the main site compound and associated access roads in fields below the main road. The traffic lights will only operate during working hours on week days and will be turned off each night and over weekends. We will continue to use the site compound at Outstrays until the end of the construction season. The compound at Welwick will be removed over the next few weeks.



Excavations being carried out near Welwick

Archaeological investigations reveal some interesting finds

From June to August, York Archaeological Trust carried out archaeological surveys for the scheme. The team used a combination of hand augers, boreholes and excavation, producing some interesting finds.

At the far eastern end of the site, pottery fragments suggest that the ditches and other features found there are of medieval origins. These may be linked to buildings associated with Birstall Abbey or Birstall Garth (no longer in existence and thought to be lost to the sea), possibly having been located along a road to the abbey or the garth. Further analysis of samples and finds recovered from the site are continuing and will hopefully provide more detailed information.

Excavations in the centre of the site unearthed fragments of Roman pottery, pieces of building material and lots of oyster shells. These suggest it was possibly a small settlement or enclosure dating back to Roman times. It was surrounded by large boundary ditches with some internal features which are not yet understood. The sheer quantity of oyster shells found here was surprising. It may have been that some form of oyster processing was happening on this site; in the Roman period oysters were a common food and extremely popular across the empire. We hope that further analysis of the oyster shells and a possible 'pond' feature will give us a fuller picture of how this site was occupied over fifteen hundred years ago.

We hope to organise a public event in the autumn to show some of the finds from this year's dig. We'll include more information about this in the next newsletter, once details are confirmed.

Contact Us

Environment Agency

For enquiries, you can contact us by email: Welwick.Skeffling@environment-agency.gov.uk
Or by phone on **03708 506506** and ask for Andrew Gee, Project Manager, or Nikky Wilson, Engagement Specialist.

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

JBA Bentley

For enquiries about the work on site, contact Paul Craig, the site manager on **07837 454048**.
You can also contact the JBA Bentley Team on their site mobile number: **07800 508558**.