

Morpeth Flood Alleviation Scheme

FAQs and further information.



Version 2: 31st July 24

1). What is the Morpeth Flood Alleviation Scheme?

The Morpeth Flood Alleviation Scheme reduces the risk of flooding to over 1000 homes and businesses in Morpeth. It is made up of a series of flood protection measures including Mitford Dam (which is upstream on the River Wansbeck), tree poles, an additional upstream dam on the Coting Burn, along with flood walls, flood gates and earth embankments within the town.

The scheme was opened in 2015 at a cost of £27M.

2). How and when does the Morpeth flood alleviation scheme operate?

The flood alleviation scheme consists of Mitford Dam (which is upstream on the River Wansbeck), an additional upstream dam on the Coting Burn, flood walls, flood gates and earth embankments within the town of Morpeth.

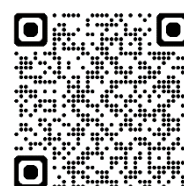
The scheme is designed to operate by maximising the capacity within the river channel through Morpeth before the dam at Mitford comes into operation. The additional capacity is held behind the floodwalls, flood gates and earth embankments that are in place through the town.

Once the river levels reach a pre-determined level, the gates on the dam will automatically activate and begin to close. This means water will start to be retained at the dam whilst maintaining a steady rate of flow through the town. This is monitored by Environment Agency (EA) staff.

In Morpeth, it is normal for the river level to spill over onto the surrounding riverside footpaths (see question 5 below) and reach high up the flood walls and flood embankments before the upstream dam operates. We operate it in this way to give the best standard of protection to homes and businesses. This is how the scheme is designed to operate.

3). Are all properties in Morpeth protected by the flood alleviation scheme?

Not all properties are protected by the flood defences or by the Mitford Dam. If you want to find out if your property is at risk of flooding please visit the following government website or scan the QR code - [Check the long term flood risk for an area in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk)



4). When does the EA shut the flood gates?

Normally, the flood gates in town will be shut by EA operations staff when we issue a Flood Alert for the area.

5). Are there areas in Morpeth that the EA and Northumberland County Council (NCC) allow to flood?

There are a number of low-lying areas of the town which will continue to flood regularly, like riverside footpaths, the entrance road to Matheson's Gardens and Oldgate Court, Matheson's Gardens car park and the Newmarket East car park.

- 6). How does the new Northumberland County Council surface water scheme at Bennetts Walk work?

The recently constructed scheme at Bennetts Walk has improved the efficiency of the surface water collection system by installing a new linear drain, reprofiling a section of carriageway and ensuring emergency pumping can be carried out effectively. The improved surface water collection system will continue to discharge to the River Wansbeck when river levels are within their normal range.

When the adjacent river rises to a level which could cause Bennetts Walk to flood, the flap valves covering the outfalls from the highway drainage will close. The flap valves prevent river water flowing back through the highway drainage and flooding Bennetts Walk, but also prevents the highway drainage from discharging to the river. In this situation, Northumberland County Council will pump any accumulating water over the flood wall to prevent flooding of Bennetts Walk.

As part of the ongoing works to address the reported issue of backflow through this gully - a new inspection chamber and non-return valve has been fitted on the existing lead from the gully on the north side of the Goose Hill / Bennetts Walk / Alexandra Road junction.

- 7). Where can local river levels be viewed online?



Flood river levels can be viewed online by scanning the QR code or visiting - [Find river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels - GOV.UK \(check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk\)](https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk)

The local river levels online provide actual river levels and not forecast levels for Morpeth. River level forecasts on the service come directly from an automated model and are therefore raw outputs, that have not been refined by a flood forecaster. The models combine real time rainfall and river level observations, along with rainfall and tidal forecasts. The models can be affected by the accuracy of these factors and could in turn cause unnecessary concern. Our message to residents is to always check for flood warnings, as these are based on the most accurate and up to date information we have at the time.

- 8). What do the Flood Warning Service levels mean, i.e Flood Alert and Flood Warning, etc?



A flood alert means flooding is possible and you should prepare now. The Environment Agency usually issues a flood alert between 2 and 12 hours before flooding. When a flood alert is in force farmland, recreational land, footpaths, car parks and minor roads can all be at risk of flooding.

A flood alert will not be issued between the hours of 9pm and 7am (unless necessary) and may therefore be issued in advance if the impact is later in the evening.



A flood warning means that flooding is expected, and you should act now. The Environment Agency usually issues a flood warning 30 minutes to 2 hours before flooding. When a flood warning is in force, homes and businesses, railways and roads, camping and caravan sites and floodplains can all be at risk of flooding.



A severe flood warning means that flooding could cause a significant risk to life and disruption to communities, and you must act now. The Environment Agency issues a severe flood warning when flooding threatens life and communities. When a severe flood warning is in force, infrastructure and buildings may be at risk of damage and evacuation of communities may occur.

9). How do I sign up to the Flood Warning Service?



You can sign up to receive free Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings and find out further information by visiting; www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings or by contacting your local EA Flood Resilience Engagement Officer by emailing - engagement_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk

10). Where do I find help with finding flood insurance?



Flood Re is a joint initiative between the Government and insurers. Its aim is to make the flood cover part of household insurance policies more affordable. Visit - www.floodre.co.uk for more information.

11). What is the best contact number to ring if people are worried about potential flooding?

If you have any concerns about potential flooding in your area please call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

For further information about the services of the Environment Agency please visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency or on social media @EnvAgencyYNE @EnvAgency