

## What are we telling you about?

We will be undertaking a trial at New Mills Pumping Station to see what effect a staged lowering of the water level at the mill sluices has on the upstream reaches of the river.

## Where is this happening?

The sluices at New Mills will be opened slowly over a two day period, allowing us to monitor water depth and velocity at a number of locations upstream towards Hellesdon.



**New Mills Pumping Station (Upstream)**

## When are we doing the work?

The trial will take place during the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> February (subject to suitable river conditions). After the trial is completed the river will be returned to its original level.

## What will we be doing?

The reduction in water levels will be staged in order to minimise the potential impacts on fish, eels, water voles and other wildlife. Visual inspections will be carried out at key locations so that we can further monitor the impacts on the river and adjust the trial if needed.

The works will not impact landowners or footpath users. We will also be measuring flow velocity across the channel, from a boat, at a number of locations along the river, as well as using gauge boards to record water levels at different points.

It is important that the trial is carried out during a period of relatively low flows, as it is only then that conditions are suitable for collecting the data that we require. We anticipate the river levels to be at their lowest during the afternoon of Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February and Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> in the morning. Levels should return to normal after this.

## Why are we doing the work?

The trial will inform us all of what the river may look like if the water level upstream is reduced. At present we maintain the sluices to keep a relatively high level but this has no flood risk benefit to Norwich. It is possible that reducing the level will have major ecological benefits and make the river function in a more natural state. It is important, however, that we understand all the implications and view-points of such an action so we can understand how best to manage the sluices in the future. The trial is the first stage of trying to understand the benefits and risks of making any changes to historic management.

## How will this work benefit you?

Once we have analysed the data and have a fuller understanding of the implications of reducing the water level, and have undertaken further consultation, we may ultimately decide to permanently reduce the water level and/or complete another trial next summer 2020.

This would contribute to the Water Framework Directive objective set for the River Wensum which is to achieve Good Ecological Potential by 2027.

A permanent drop in water level will reduce the impounded lengths of river, leading to an increase in free flowing water and improvements in habitats typical of a Norfolk chalk river.

## What should you do and how can you get involved?

This information is to let you know about work going on in your community. We are happy to provide more information about the proposed work. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this in more detail. We will keep you up-to-date with any further developments.

## Contact

For more details about this work please contact [Enquiries\\_EastAnglia@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries_EastAnglia@environment-agency.gov.uk) Tel: 0203 0255472