

Press Release

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STUDY OF EASTERN YAR VALLEY COMMENCES

A major study into managing flood and coastal erosion within the Eastern Yar Valley and Bembridge Harbour has started this week. The study is being funded by the government and is being led by the Environment Agency in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council's Centre for the Coastal Environment.

The £670,000 study will cover the whole river catchment, an extensive area of the eastern half of the Isle of Wight. It includes parts of Bembridge, St Helens, Brading and Sandown, as well as the villages of Newchurch, Adgestone, Alverstone and Arreton. The study will assess potentially increasing flood risks within the catchment as well as coastal erosion and risks of coastal flooding within Bembridge Harbour, looking ahead for the next 100 years. The study will be undertaken by the Environment Agency's consultants, Atkins.

The lower Eastern Yar valley and Bembridge is of international environmental importance. The area suffers from flooding and coastal erosion. These natural physical processes are complicated so this investigation will find the best long-term option for managing river and coastal flood risk.



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The Isle of Wight
Council's aim is

Raising Standards, Creating Opportunities

To deliver this we will
focus on:

- Economic development and enterprise
- Healthier communities
- Safer and stronger communities
- Children and young people
- Becoming a high performing, cost-effective council

Part of the Eastern Yar Valley is designated for its fresh water and maritime habitats and, within the catchment, there are many important towns and villages including Brading, St Helens and Bembridge. These settlements are historically, economically and socially important to the Island. The catchment supports the majority of the Island's market gardening as well as other forms of horticulture, a major employer for the Island. Sandown, at the southern end of the catchment, is one of the Island's most important tourist towns. Bembridge Harbour provides important recreational facilities and is a focus for many maritime and coastal industries.

The Environment Agency and the Isle of Wight Council are working on a plan to find the most suitable long-term and cost-effective solution to managing flood risks and coastal erosion. The study will involve data collection, mathematical modelling, environmental, economic and engineering assessments as well as extensive consultation and will take around three years to complete. The Environment Agency and the Isle of Wight Council will consider all solutions and some of these will then go through a stricter appraisal process.

Alastair Pitcher, the Environment Agency's Project Manager, said: "Previous studies have shown us how important it is to consult and liaise with local people and interest groups. This ensures that we get the best available knowledge from everyone with an interest in the Eastern Yar Valley and Bembridge Harbour. The consultation will provide us with the opportunity to discuss our objectives and the progress of our study with local people.

"We plan to hold two awareness-raising exhibitions in Bembridge and Sandown in early February. Local people will be able to come and meet us to find out more about the project and to discuss options for the future. We believe this is essential if the study is to be a success."



The first exhibition will be held at Bembridge Sailing Club, Embankment Road, Bembridge, on Thursday 2 February 10.00am-7.00pm. A second exhibition will be held at Sandown Town Council offices, Broadway, Sandown, on Friday 3 February 10.00am-7.00pm.”

Isle of Wight Councillor Ian Ward, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Planning, said: “I am delighted that this important study has commenced. We welcome the joint-working between the council’s Centre for the Coastal Environment, the Environment Agency and the local communities and look forward to hearing the results of this research.”

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This press release has been jointly released by Isle of Wight Council and the Environment Agency



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