

# The Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme

Spring/summer 2026

## Project overview

The Environment Agency is working with Kent County Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (previously the South East Local Enterprise Partnership) to reduce flood risk to over 1,800 homes and 575 non-residential properties in Tonbridge, Hildenborough, and downstream communities.

The Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme has 2 aspects: increasing the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA) and constructing a new embankment to protect homes in Hildenborough.



Above: Drone image of the Leigh construction site

## Recent progress

The team has continued to make excellent progress over the winter and spring periods. As such, we expect that this will be our penultimate newsletter as the works are almost complete!

## Leigh Flood Storage Area works

### Control structure works

Works at the Leigh control structure continue to progress well. We have now finished installing the electrical connections to all of the gates and the team are preparing for the final testing and commissioning. With completion in sight, VolkerStevin have started to remove the temporary equipment from site.



Above: North gate fully open during testing

## Eel Pass

Work on the new eel pass is going very well. The piles have been installed and the new steel eel pass section is being fabricated off-site. New wells for the eel pass pumps have also been installed and electrical connections are now underway. These will provide a flow of water to allow eels to move up the pass and over the embankment.

## North Embankment

In June and July we expect to carry out a small section of minor works on the embankment to the north of the railway line at Cattle Arch. These are the last embankment works needed to allow us to store to the new, higher water level.

The works will involve re-levelling a 30m section of the embankment to ensure levels are consistent.

We will need to fence off the site area to carry out the works safely. The public footpath will remain open, but there will be short periods of time when we'll need to close the footpath so construction traffic can safely get to the site.

Our traffic marshals be on hand to manage the flow of vehicles to reduce disruption. We have worked with the school to plan our traffic schedule around drop off and pick-up times.

## Hildenborough

At Hildenborough, we have successfully completed testing and commissioning the new pump station. The team is now focused on final works and preparing to demobilise from site.



Above: The new Hildenborough Pump Station

## Tonbridge Civic Society talk

Members of the project team were pleased to join a very well-attended event with the Tonbridge Civic Society on 21 April. Around 70 members of the society attended our talk about how the Leigh Flood Storage Area works and how the project to expand it will help to reduce flood risk to communities into the future.



Above: EA staff presenting to the Tonbridge Civic Society

## Making a positive impact in our communities

It's been a rewarding few months for VolkerStevin, with a strong focus on delivering meaningful social value and building lasting community connections. We're committed to going beyond expectations to make a genuine, positive difference. Recently we've supported local colleges through careers fairs and talks, helping to inspire the next generation and showcase the opportunities within our industry.

We've joined local primary schools to support mental health sessions and promoting wellbeing, as well as donating books to encourage learning and development.

We were also proud to provide a brand-new shed for outdoor learning, giving the school a safe and secure space to store their bushcraft equipment and continue their fantastic outdoor education programme.

Supporting the wider community remains a key priority, and we were pleased to donate a

defibrillator and cabinet to Leigh Parish Council to help provide vital life-saving equipment for the area.

Our continued support of the local community extends to grassroots sport too. Roselands FC, who we proudly sponsor, have had an outstanding season - culminating in lifting the Kent Cup, a brilliant achievement for the team and a great moment for everyone involved.



Above: Roselands FC collecting their Trophy

Through our ongoing work with schools, colleges, charities, and community groups, we're helping to create opportunities, inspire young people, and support local initiatives. We're proud of the relationships we've built and look forward to continuing this positive momentum as we deliver infrastructure in this area that makes a real difference to the communities we work in.



Above: A student attending site on work experience

## How to get in touch or learn more

To find out more about how the two elements of the scheme work, you can view our YouTube animations:

[Hildenborough embankment scheme - YouTube](#)

[How the Leigh flood Storage Area works to reduce flood risk](#)

If you have any questions or would like to join our electronic distribution list for future updates, please contact the project team at:

[LEHES@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:LEHES@environment-agency.gov.uk)

For works-related issues, you can also contact our contractor, VolkerStevin, at:

[lehesenquiries@volkerstevin.co.uk](mailto:lehesenquiries@volkerstevin.co.uk)

To provide feedback, call our freephone number: **0800 737 1423** with our site reference: **134154**