

Tinkers Lane mill gates River Brett, Hadleigh – September 2025

Introduction

Here is our next community update regarding Tinkers Lane mill gates on the River Brett in Hadleigh.

What happens next

This will be our last update. We will only be issuing a further update if there is a significant development or change to the way the gates are currently operated.

The role of the Environment Agency

The mill gates were originally constructed for water level management to enable the operation of the historic Toppesfield Mill. The gates were not built for the purpose of flood risk management.

Following the recent improvements to the winding mechanisms on the mill gates to enhance safety for our staff, we will continue to operate the gates in response to flood alerts or warnings issued for the River Brett. The gates will be opened when a flood alert or warning is issued and closed once it has been lifted. We will keep this operation under review.

We operate the mill gates using our permissive powers for the purposes of flood risk management.

We have no duty or powers to operate them for the purposes of retaining water for angling or other recreational activities.

As we do not own the gates or hold the associated mill rights, we cannot authorise others to operate or maintain the gates, this would require the permission of the mill gate owner.

Riparian responsibility

Riparian roles and responsibilities are detailed in our new guidance which can be found here: [Your watercourse: rights and roles | Engage Environment Agency](#)

Prior consent is required for any works on or near a main river, on or near a flood defence structure, in a flood plain, on or near a sea defence: [Flood risk activities: environmental permits - GOV.UK](#)

Our consent is required to ensure that activities do not cause or make existing flood risk worse, interfere with our work, and do not adversely affect the local environment, fisheries, or wildlife.

We will remove blockages where there is an immediate risk of flooding, however any other clearance and general maintenance of the watercourse will remain the responsibility of the respective riparian owner.

Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings

Parts of Hadleigh lie within the area at risk of fluvial flooding from the River Brett and is covered by our Flood Warning Service.

Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings for the River Brett are triggered by rising water levels at our hydrometric station at Cockfield, within the upper Brett catchment and some distance upstream of Hadleigh.

It is important that residents know what actions to take when they receive our Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings. To help plan what actions individuals will take there are templates for personal flood plans available here: [Prepare for flooding: Protect yourself from future flooding - GOV.UK](#)

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

There are 62 properties in Hadleigh Parish boundary that are included within the Flood Warning Area, which are also able to receive Flood Alerts.

As of January 2025, only 16 properties are fully signed up to receive Flood Warnings and opted in to receive Flood Alerts.

As of July 2025, only 21 properties are fully registered.

To fully understand your flood risk, residents and businesses should check the information here: [Check the long term flood risk for an area in England - GOV.UK](#).

Section 19 investigation - Storm Babet

Suffolk County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority has a duty under Section 19 of the Flood and Water management Act 2010 to undertake flood investigations, sometimes referred to as Section 19 investigations. Further details can be found using [Storm Babet - Suffolk County Council](#) or emailing floodinvestigations@suffolk.gov.uk.

The current flood investigations and their priority order for completion is based on the number of

known internally flooded properties in a specific location. Hadleigh is 30 out of 48 locations.

Hadleigh's Section 19 report has been published here: [s19-hadleigh-report](#). All other Section 19 reports can be found here: [Flood investigation reports - Suffolk County Council](#)

How do I report an environmental or flood incident?

To report incidents please call the Environment Agency's incident hotline 0800 80 70 60. This number can also be used to report blockages which are a potential flood risk.

We encourage people to continue to take heed of all flood alerts and flood warnings, and to call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 if they have any concerns. Visit www.gov.uk/check-flooding for current flood alerts and warnings and to check river, sea, groundwater, and rainfall levels in your area.

Contact

Email: Enquiries_EastAnglia@environment-agency.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can contact our National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506

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