

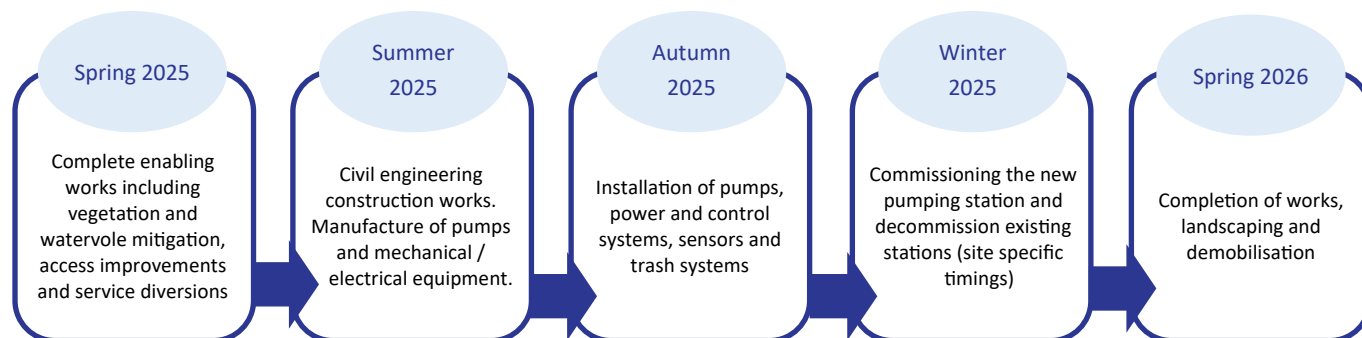
About the project

Detailed design of thirteen replacement pumping stations within the River Thurne catchment as part of the Upper Thurne Integrated Drainage Improvements Works is now complete and in Spring 2025 the Broads Internal Drainage Board (the Board) commenced construction of the first four pumping stations at Martham, Horsey, Potter Heigham and St Benets (Package 1).

Due to funding shortfalls, the Board have taken the hard decision to postpone works at Martham and Potter Heigham following completion of the enabling works phase.

The Board are working closely with the Environment Agency to secure funding to recommence these sites in Spring 2026 alongside delivery of the wider programme from 2026-2029 comprising Brograve, Stubb, Catfield, Horse Fen, Repps Staithe, Somerton South, and Thurne pumping stations.

The replacement pumping stations utilise Pentair “Fish-friendly” pumps delivering a wider range of flows, additional pump capacity and significant increases in efficiency compared to the existing pumps. The latest monitoring and control systems enable improved control of water levels within the catchments, collectively providing resilience to climate change and adapting to future land use requirements.



When will we see the changes?

Construction of Package 1 began in February 2025 with the initial enabling works phase comprising environmental mitigation and surveys, construction and improvement of access routes and the creation of the contractors site compounds adjacent to the new pumping stations.

The next phase, from Spring to early Summer sees the main pumping station civil engineering works commence, including installation of sheet piles that form the pumping station wet well and support the control building and outfall structures. Pre-fabrication of concrete elements such as pump support slabs, outfall structures and control building foundations begin in parallel to the manufacture of the pumps, automatic trash systems and Motor Control Centre (the main control equipment).

At times the works will result in some local disruption however the Board are taking all reasonable steps to reduce this where possible. Localised footpath diversions or closures will be clearly signposted on site and only in place when needed.

Construction at Horsey and St Benets pumping stations is planned to complete in Spring 2026.

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Why is this work needed?

The majority of pumping stations within the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads were built in the 1950's to replace historical wind pumps. These replacement stations were mostly steam or diesel driven pumps that were later upgraded to electrical pumps often within the same foundations / buildings.

Whilst ongoing repairs have sustained their operation for 70 years the pumping stations are now significantly beyond the end of their design lives and require replacement.

Within the Upper Thurne catchment alone the pumping stations manage water levels in over 6300 hectares of low-lying land, pumping tens of millions of cubic meters of water each year.

As the River Thurne is perched above the adjacent land, without the existing pumping stations and drainage network the catchments would be subject to permanent flooding causing the loss of important nationally and internationally designated habitat, grazing marsh, arable and woodland.

In combination with Environment Agency flood defences the pumps directly protect 708 properties, local communities and infrastructure including roads, power supplies, sewage and water supplies within the project area.



Above: Site set-up and mitigation complete at St Benets pumping station. UK Power Networks shown disconnecting the existing power supply.



Above: Watervole mitigation works completed at Horsey pumping station at the location of the new pumping station inlet



Above: Construction of the new access culvert at Potter Heigham replacing the existing failing corrugated steel culvert

Visiting? Look out for the information board at Horsey sharing details on the project background, objectives and story of this historic site.

How can you get involved or get in touch?

This information is to let you know about the vital work we are doing in your community. We are happy to come along to community groups and residential associations to explain more about the work.

Please contact us at info@wlma.org.uk, if you would like to discuss in the project in more detail or you would like to be kept up to date with any further developments.