

James Cartlidge MP

Date: 2 January 2025

Dear James,

South Suffolk flooding

Thank you for your email of 18 December 2024 regarding flooding in your constituency.

I understand the community's concerns and the anxiety caused by the risk of flooding. It is deeply stressful to live with the fear of your home or business being affected by floodwaters, and I want to assure you that we take this matter very seriously.

Hadleigh

Having the gates open does not increase the flood risk in Hadleigh, but it also does not significantly reduce it. The Environment Agency's current flood risk modelling suggests that having the gates open or closed makes no difference to whether buildings would flood internally during a 1% (1 in 100 chance each year) flood. This is the standard we tend to work to. It is worth noting however that water levels may be slightly higher when the gates are closed and so the water would be closer to certain properties, whilst remaining outside them but we do appreciate the concern this creates within the community when they see the gates are in the shut position and the river is out of bank and on roads such as Tinkers Lane.

Our modelling shows that under extreme flood conditions, when the flood gates are closed, the river will back up slightly more quickly (than when open) and flow around the mill race and over the side weir, as well as overflowing the riverbanks and flowing over land, before returning to the river downstream of the gates.

When the gates are open and under extreme flood conditions, the river behaves in a similar manner as it does when the gates are closed. The difference lies in the water level and timing.

I hope the above better explains our position and answers your questions. Our priority is to help manage and mitigate flood risks effectively to protect our communities. Please know that we are here to support you and will continue to explore all possible measures to enhance flood resilience in your area.

Yours Sincerely,



Graham Verrier

Area Director East Anglia, East