

Copies of correspondence received from the EA about river maintenance and the tilt gate

30th October 2025

I can confirm that the River Waring in Horncastle is programmed for the following regular maintenance:

Upstream of Low Toynton Road is classified a low consequence system. There are no formal defences in this area and we do not carry out routine maintenance activities here.

The River Waring downstream of Low Toynton Road and through town to Baths Sluice, is classed as a high consequence system. We will be continuing maintenance activities on this stretch as follows:-

- 6 x annual debris / obstruction removal of anything that is causing an obstruction to the flow of water
- 1 x annual operational check of outfalls.
- 1 x maintenance check of concrete flume.

In addition to the above, these assets are inspected by a trained inspector annually to ensure they are performing their desired function. We also respond to any calls reporting obstructions and would prioritise attending site to investigate the issue.

No asset improvement or reconstruction schemes are currently planned along the River Waring.

Thornton Lock Tilting Gate/Horncastle Lock Tilting Gate. This is the structure upstream of the Thornton Road bridge. We are aware this is locally known by some as Thornton Lock Tilting Gate but its designated name is Horncastle Lock Tilting Gate. This structure receives a monthly operational check by our field teams as well as yearly maintenance by our mechanical and electrical team. The nature of the works completed will depend on the needs of the structure at the time. We are considering replacing this tilting gate with a fixed structure, probably a rock ramp, which will not only reduce our maintenance costs but also remove a barrier to fish migration. At present there is no timescale for this work, which will need careful study to ensure we do not increase flood risk.

In regard to your question as to the purpose of the tilting gate and the Swimming Bath Sluice and if they held any water back. These structures are in place to hold some water in times of low flow so the channel through the town does not dry out during times of drought, but are set at a low level so will have not held up any flows during high rainfall events.

Detailed modelling was carried as part of our investigation which produced a good simulation of the observed water levels and flooding. It did so with all structures, apart from the sluice gate at the reservoir and swimming baths sluice, working as designed. It would not have been possible to achieve a good simulation of the flooding if structures actually operated differently to how they were represented in the model. This includes the Horncastle Lock tilting gate. A number of studies carried out recent years have all shown the benefit of the Swimming Bath Sluice is restricted to the immediate area, with only a small impact on flood levels upstream of Jubilee Way.

The rapid change in the water level on the River Waring was simply the normal hydrological response of the catchment. This was observed in June 2019 and in other flood events. It was not due to the influence of any structure.

If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Witham Maintenance Asset Performance Team
Environment Agency

11th March 2025

After speaking to colleagues, no further progress has been made with the replacement of the tilt gate. This is due to varying priorities for our teams, including necessary responses to the January flooding event.

Many thanks,

AP Witham

14th April 2025

There are currently no plans or a finalised decision on the suggestions to remove the tilting gate referred to above. Historically there may have been exploratory initial discussions to understand and determine the merits of such a decision with alternative solutions being surveyed, it is unlikely that these will resume or progress at this time.

Our budget for maintenance & improvements is limited. This means we must prioritise our resources to ensure we maintain the highest risk assets first, and to ensure we reduce the risk of flooding to the maximum possible number of people and properties we can with the resources available.

Kind regards,

Customers & Engagement Officer, Customers & Engagement Team
Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area