



## Harthill Reservoir FAQs

### Introduction

Canal & River Trust, the waterways and wellbeing charity that looks after Harthill Reservoir, is inviting people to have their say on proposals to upgrade the reservoir.

The Trust announced plans in December 2020 to upgrade the reservoir to bring it in line with modern standards. The team has been working hard over the last 12 months, carrying out ground investigations to inform the design of a new weir and overflow spillway.

The Trust is now sharing this design and invites any comments on the proposals as part of a public consultation being held between **Monday 10 January and Sunday 30 January**.

This document includes answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the project.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with any further questions or feedback by:

**Visiting our website:** [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/harthill](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/harthill)

**Calling (Freephone):** 0800 028 8141

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## **Harthill Reservoir**

### **Q: Where is Harthill Reservoir and why is it important?**

A: Harthill Reservoir, situated between Sheffield and Worksop, near to the village of Harthill, was constructed more than 200 years ago to supply water to the Chesterfield Canal, located approximately two miles to the north. It still retains this important function today.

The reservoir is also a popular attraction that hosts many health and wellbeing activities, from sailing and swimming clubs to angling and walking.

It is important to ensure the future of Harthill Reservoir so that it can continue to provide these functions for years to come.

### **Q: Is Harthill Reservoir safe?**

A: Yes. We have reassurance from a detailed reservoir inspection in May 2020.

The upcoming works are to upgrade the reservoir, improving its future resilience and bringing it up to date with our modern 21st century standards.

## **The Project – upgrading Harthill Reservoir**

### **Q: What works will the Trust be undertaking on Harthill Reservoir?**

A: The upgrade works involve redesigning the overflow spillway to increase the resilience of Harthill Reservoir.

The proposal is to construct a new spillway (weir) at the western end of the reservoir dam. This will be a new structure which will do the job of the both the current spillways – the concrete spillway in the middle of the dam and also the original narrow spillway near the car park. A new channel will take water from the new spillway across the field to the existing culverts under Woodall Lane. From there, the water will feed the canal in the same way as it does currently.

The proposal includes decommissioning the two existing spillways. The 1960s concrete spillway will be removed and the dam reinstated to grass. The original masonry spillway will be blocked off where the current footbridge is. This will be a concrete and brick clad structure to continue the dam so that the spillway no longer carries water from the reservoir.

New buried syphon pipes are also proposed to upgrade the operation of the reservoir replacing the existing original submerged pipes.

The footpath across the dam will be resurfaced and a new footbridge will cross the new spillway.

Please see an indicative visualisation of the new spillway on the following page.



*Indicative visualisation of new spillway infrastructure.*

**Q: How have the proposals been developed?**

During 2021, the project team have been working on feasibility, options and designs.

Surveys including ecological, arboricultural (trees), topographical and ground investigation have been undertaken. There is further ground investigation underway at the moment checking geological information near the reservoir.

The Trust has been working closely with engineering and consultancy firm Arcadis to prepare the detailed plans.

**Q: When will these works take place?**

A: Works are subject to planning permission. The main upgrade project, including the associated construction work, is expected to start in 2022 and be completed within 12 months.

**Q: Why is the Trust undertaking this project now?**

A: A detailed inspection of Harthill Reservoir identified a number of upgrades and improvements to bring the reservoir up to our 21st century modern standards. This upgrade project will secure Harthill Reservoir's long-term future and ensure people can continue to enjoy the important health and wellbeing benefits of being by water for many years to come.

## **Temporary disruption to Harthill Reservoir**

### **Q: Why has the water level been lowered, and will the reservoir be completely drained?**

A: The water has been temporarily lowered as part of the ongoing investigation works. We expect water levels to be drawn down below the normal level for the duration of the project.

We have been advised to keep reservoir water levels below full capacity and will need to account for the weather when maintaining this. We appreciate that fluctuations to the water level are not ideal for reservoir users and will continue to ensure as much water is in the reservoir as possible.

We will need to fully drain the reservoir during the construction phase to carry out the proposed work.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this is causing local people and are committed to working closely with regular users who will be most affected, for example Yorkshire Outdoor Swimmers, Rotherham Sailing Club, model boaters, and anglers.

### **Q: Can the reservoir be used for sailing, swimming, and angling while the water level is lowered?**

A: Harthill Reservoir is a great example of the opportunities to enjoy water, and we want to support the continued use of the reservoir for activities such as swimming, angling, and sailing.

However, whether this is always possible will depend upon risk assessments and suitable engineering solutions. We will be working with local clubs to understand their requirements and explore solutions where possible.

### **Q: Can the reservoir be used for sailing, swimming, and angling during the main works?**

A: Sadly not. The water levels in the reservoir and the presence of construction machinery means that it would not be safe for these leisure activities to continue during the main upgrade works later this year (2022). We will continue talking directly to groups most affected as the project progresses.

### **Q: Can the footpaths around the reservoir be used during the works?**

A: It is great to see so many people enjoying the walks around Harthill Reservoir, and we will work to minimise disruption during the works.

Safety will be our primary concern throughout the project. The footpath across the reservoir dam will need to be closed during the construction works. Other footpaths around the reservoir will remain open during the works whenever possible. However, short closures may be necessary to facilitate the works.

### **Q: What impact will the project have on wildlife living on or near the reservoir?**

A: There is some lovely countryside surrounding Harthill Reservoir and we know how much visitors enjoy spotting wildlife living in and around our waterways, with sightings of kingfishers and herons on the reservoir to deer in the surrounding woodlands. Looking after the wildlife that inhabit our waterways is important to us. With the help of our ecologists and environmental scientists we work hard to minimise the impact of our essential works programmes and even look at ways we can enhance sites for wildlife to enjoy in the future.

Ecological surveys have been carried out of the reservoir and its surroundings to assess potential impact of the proposals and opportunities for enhancements. This included surveys for protected species such as otters, badgers, amphibians, reptiles and bats.

**Q: What will happen to fish in the reservoir and canal?**

A: We will carry out a fish rescue to remove the fish as the water levels are reduced. This will be undertaken by a specialist contractor on behalf of the Trust. Subject to passing health checks, the fish will be transported and released in other suitable Trust owned reservoirs. After the construction work and refilling of the reservoir, the fishery will be restocked by the Trust.

We use SCADA (electronic sensors) to monitor water levels along Chesterfield Canal, where we are confident that fishing can continue. We would also welcome feedback and cooperation with canal users.

## **Pebbley Reservoir and Chesterfield Canal**

**Q: Will the upgrade works to Harthill Reservoir affect Pebbley Reservoir?**

A: Water levels at Pebbley Reservoir will also need to be temporarily reduced until the upgrade works are completed at Harthill Reservoir. This is because Pebbley Reservoir supplies water into Harthill Reservoir, and we need to carefully manage the flow of water to ensure no over-spilling occurs, even in a storm event.

We will minimise potential impact as far as possible but must also ensure that the work at the reservoir is undertaken safely.

**Q: Will the upgrade works to Harthill Reservoir affect Chesterfield Canal?**

A: The normal feed of water from Harthill Reservoir to Chesterfield Canal will be affected whilst the upgrade work is undertaken. As part of the investigations and planning of the upgrade works, we are analysing the potential impacts on water supply to the canal and how this can be managed during the construction stage.

We recognise the value Chesterfield Canal provides and we are making efforts to ensure boating can carry on throughout the season. Where possible, Harthill Reservoir will continue to supply water to Chesterfield Canal. Other water sources will also continue to feed the canal as part of our efforts to ensure as much water as possible is supplied. We expect the canal to remain suitable for fishing.

We will continue to engage with the Chesterfield Canal Trust and users going forwards, sharing information as the project progresses.