

Lessingham Parish Council Response from the Environment Agency – January 2026

Following on from flood gates not being closed on the 2nd of January and the sea water ingress, impacting roads and properties in Eccles, the Environment Agency had a meeting with PC members and our County Councillor, Richard Price.

The EA suggested reducing the tide level trigger for gate closure by 20cm. We received the following notification.

"We have added an operational threshold to review gate closure. In addition to our existing trigger to close gates when the forecast tide level is 3.0m we will also close the gates when predicted levels are at or above 2.8m AOD and winds of force 7 or greater are forecast as coming from the North, North East or North West. This adjustment provides greater resilience for the types of spray incidents that have affected the community.

Based on historic data, the previous level only trigger of 3.0m AOD typically resulted in the gates being closed around six times per year, whereas the revised threshold could mean approximately 10–12 closures per year on average, depending on wind direction and speed. The important point to note is that a lower water level will trigger closure when wind strength and direction have been taken into account.

We will monitor how well this revised approach works, and if further changes prove necessary, we will make them. Feedback from the community will play a very important role in helping us understand how effective the new arrangements are and where refinements might be needed.

To help allay fears I also highlighted the availability of the real time tidal gauge (see link below), which allows residents to see the actual sea level as it rises and falls. This can provide reassurance during unsettled conditions e.g. to see whether the tide has gone past its peak. I strongly encourage everyone to register for the Environment Agency's Flood Warning Service, (see link below) which issues alerts when there is a risk of internal property flooding. Additionally, please be assured that in any major coastal event - such as the 2013 surge - widespread communication via national and local media, social media, and EA flood warnings would also support community awareness. Finally, I want to emphasise that if anything does not work as intended, or if residents experience further issues, please contact us straight away. This is very much about working together, listening to local experience, and adjusting our approach to ensure it meets the needs of Eccles residents."