

## PRE - CONSTRUCTION INFORMATION

This document provides pre-construction information for the Contractor and designers to ensure that any constraints are suitably considered and managed as part of the design process (including preparation of a health and safety file), and contractors are able to develop a suitable method of work that delivers the project safely and effectively (demonstrated through provision of a suitable construction phase plan – provided in advance of works commencing). This document also seeks to ensure that the client is compliant with the Construction and Design Management Regulations 2015.



Figure 1. Gathurst Weir on the Lower River Douglas (RHB looking upstream)

### INTRODUCTION PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Ribble Rivers Trust (RRT) is working in partnership with the Douglas Catchment Partnership (DCP) to deliver environmental improvements as part of the 'Opening Up the River Douglas' (OUR Douglas) project. After a barrier prioritisation and feasibility study, the partnership is addressing connectivity issues through the creation of fish easements at 8 priority locations, such as Gathurst Weir (SD 52990 07902; Fig. 1).

Gathurst Weir is the first barrier on the River Douglas above the tidal limit and is found on the 'The Lower River Douglas' waterbody (WBI: GB11207064820). Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), this water body was achieving 'Moderate' ecological and a 'Good' chemical classification in the 2016's WFD assessment. But failing is Chemical classification in 2019 due to Priority substances

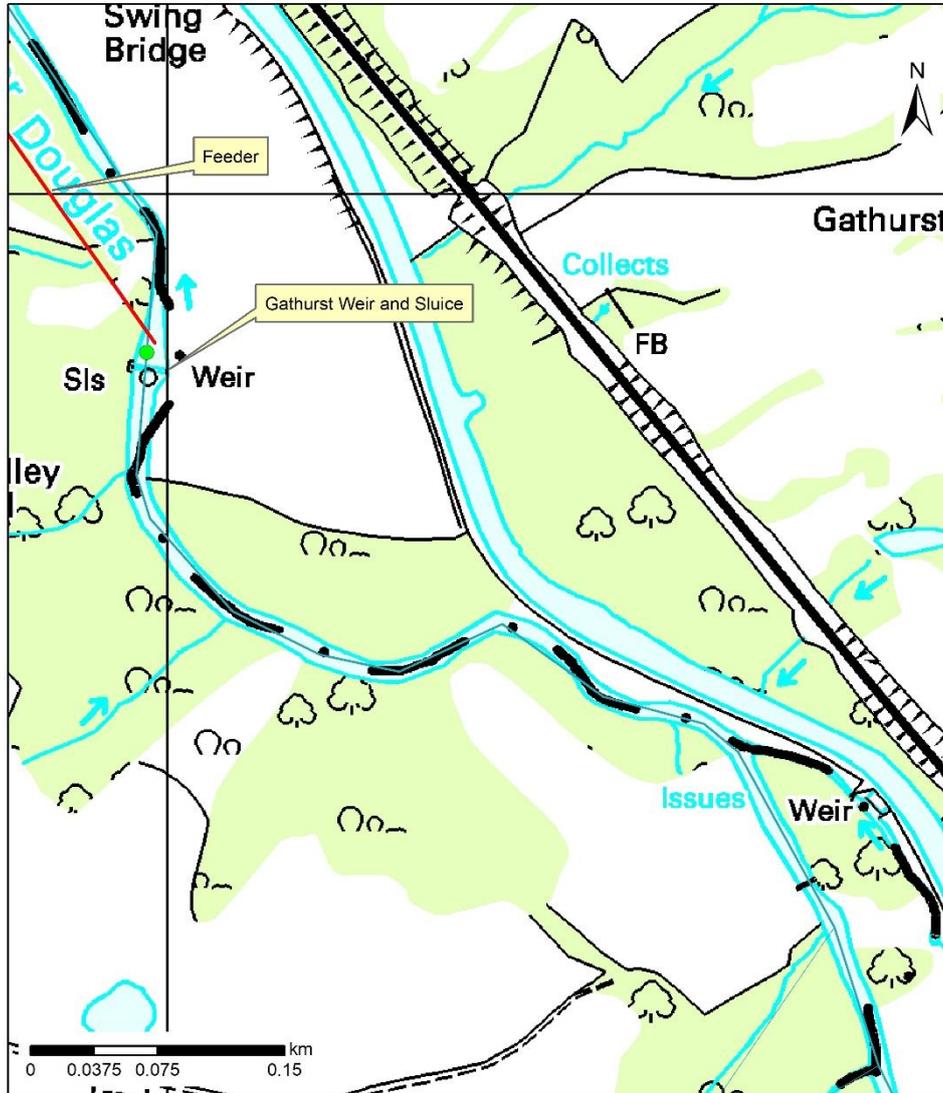
and Priority hazardous substances. Point and diffuse pollution from industry, agriculture and domestic are reasons for not achieving good status. This waterbody is also considered to be artificially or heavily modified by human activity (HMWB).

The structure on the lower Douglas is a former gauging station where a large weir spans the channel. At its crest a platform extends  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the width of the channel with 4 footings which previously housed 2 sluice-gates. On the right-hand bank (RHB) is a stilling well and housing for Environment Agency telemetry equipment. The weir is a significant barrier to migration on the Douglas system in which entering diadromous fish would have to navigate to move upstream from this location. As the gateway to the rest of the catchment and improvements to connectivity and fluvial processes will be beneficial to both local and migrating fish species.

The construction date of the weir is unknown, historic maps of the area do not show this structure on maps dated and proceeding 1948. Gathurst weir is a stone compound weir with both flat and stepped faced sections. From the crest of the weir the left and right banks are reinforced with blocks, concrete and cobbles for 20m. Erosion holes have formed downstream of this on both banks and the RHB has been filled with blocks and rubble. Blocks and top stones have been washed from both banks. Directly upstream of the weir the RHB has been reprofiled up to the woodland to reduce erosion, from this point both banks are wooded for approximately 250m. On the downstream of the weir the LHB is replanted ancient woodland, with some trees being at risk from erosion, but most of the bank is stable. The downstream RHB is agricultural land with reprofiled banks and earth cliff erosion holes on the outside of the meander. Slumping is evident on the RHB and land-drainage outlets are accelerating this in areas. The RHB field is heavily drained and its south and east borders have cut ditches and land drainage pipes.

LOCATION:

### Opening Up the River Douglas - Gathurst Weir



Gathurst Weir - Feeder Weir, River Douglas - C&RT Object ID 515	Author: ALW
Gathurst Feeder Sluice - C&RT Object ID 10859	Project: OUR Douglas
Gathurst Feeder - No C&RT Object ID	Date: 16/01/2020
	Coordinate System: British National Grid
	Scale: 1:2,996

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Figure 2. Map location of Gathurst Weir and structures associated with the Leeds Liverpool Canal

Document Reference: OURD-GAT10

Project: OUR-Douglas



**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund



**THIRD PARTIES:**

West Lancashire District Council – Planning Authority

Environment Agency – Regulatory body under the Environment Permit regulations 2016

**Landowners/Tenants:**

Environment Agency – lease owner

John Paul Wilkinson and Lisa Colette Wilkinson – Landowner RHB

Jth Farms Limited – Landowner LHB

Wigan and District Angling Association – Angling Club

**DETAILS ON OWNERSHIP, BOUNDARIES AND ACCESS:**

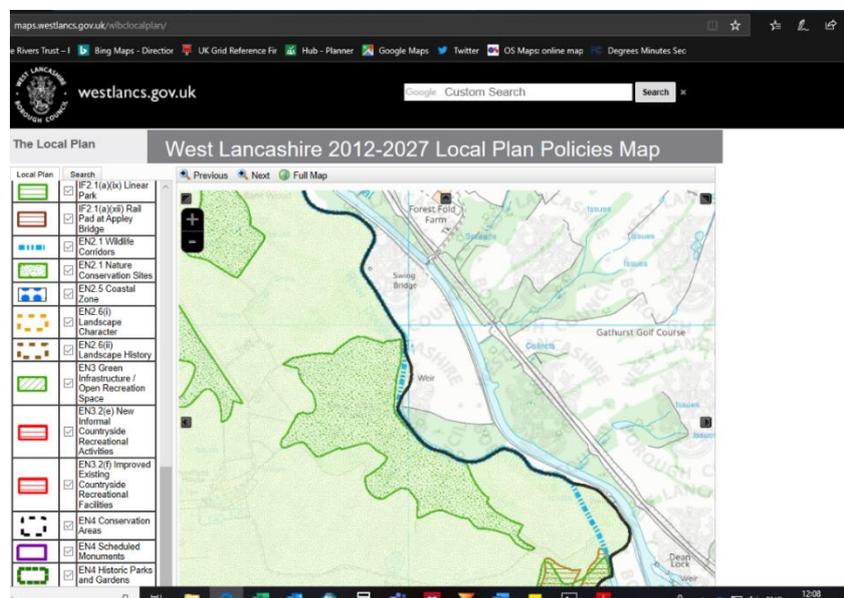
Gathurst Weir is within the boundary of West Lancashire District Council who will be the Planning Authority for this project (Figure 3).

The land on the LHB is owned by Jth Farms Limited of Aspinall House Farm, Appley Lane South, Roby Mill, Skelmersdale WN8 0SX. Adjacent to the weir is Green Alley Wood, this is an ancient replanted woodland that is listed in the National Forest Inventory and is associated with a Tree Preservation Order (WLDC 5 2006). The woodland extends both upstream and down stream by 500m.

The RHB is owned by John Paul Wilkinson and Lisa Colette Wilkinson of Forest Fold Farm, Miles Lane, Shevington, Wigan, Lancs WN6 8EU. The land adjacent to the weir is used for agricultural grazing and grass crop. There is public access along the canal path east of the weir, however there is no public access to the structure.

Access for the Angling Club is permitted along both banks downstream of the B5206 road bridge (SD 54032 07349) to below Gathurst Weir (Downstream limit SD 52693 08438). Anglers are likely to continue to access their banks and suitable controls shall be required to ensure the health and safety of the riverbank users. This will extend beyond the Works area, to the access track.

Gathurst Weir and other structures in the area are detailed on the Canal and River Trust (C&RT) open data portal. C&RT were asked to confirm ownership of the assets listed and C&RT estates have stated that the sluice and weir are not under C&RT ownership and C&RT don't own the surrounding land. C&R have provided detail that the structure was owned by the River Douglas Catchment Board (1933) and stated in email that the ownership and maintenance of the weir, and the feeder pipe line to the canal rests with the EA. RRT sought clarification to weather the weir holds any function or purpose for the Canal and Rivers Trust and if the feeder was an active



line for the canal. No comment has been made at the time of writing; however, the EA have stated that any designs are not to affect the function of the feeder, giving reason to believe that the feeder is an active line.

Figure 3. Local planning map for West Lancashire District Council 2012 – 2027

According to EA records the Environment Agency has no telemetry equipment at the weir and the lease associated with the structure is due to expire in the next couple of years. The weir is considered as unregistered and as such ownership may reside with the landowner in lieu of any other document.

Access to the structure shall be via agricultural access from Forest Fold Farm, under the railway bridge and over the Leeds Liverpool Canal swing bridge (Figure 4). Access over the swing bridge will be limited by weight of plant and materials. It is at the contractors risk to assess the structure for access, make any necessary repairs and plan plant machinery which is appropriate. Both landowners will continue to be involved in the project for access agreements and legal agreements associated with the works.

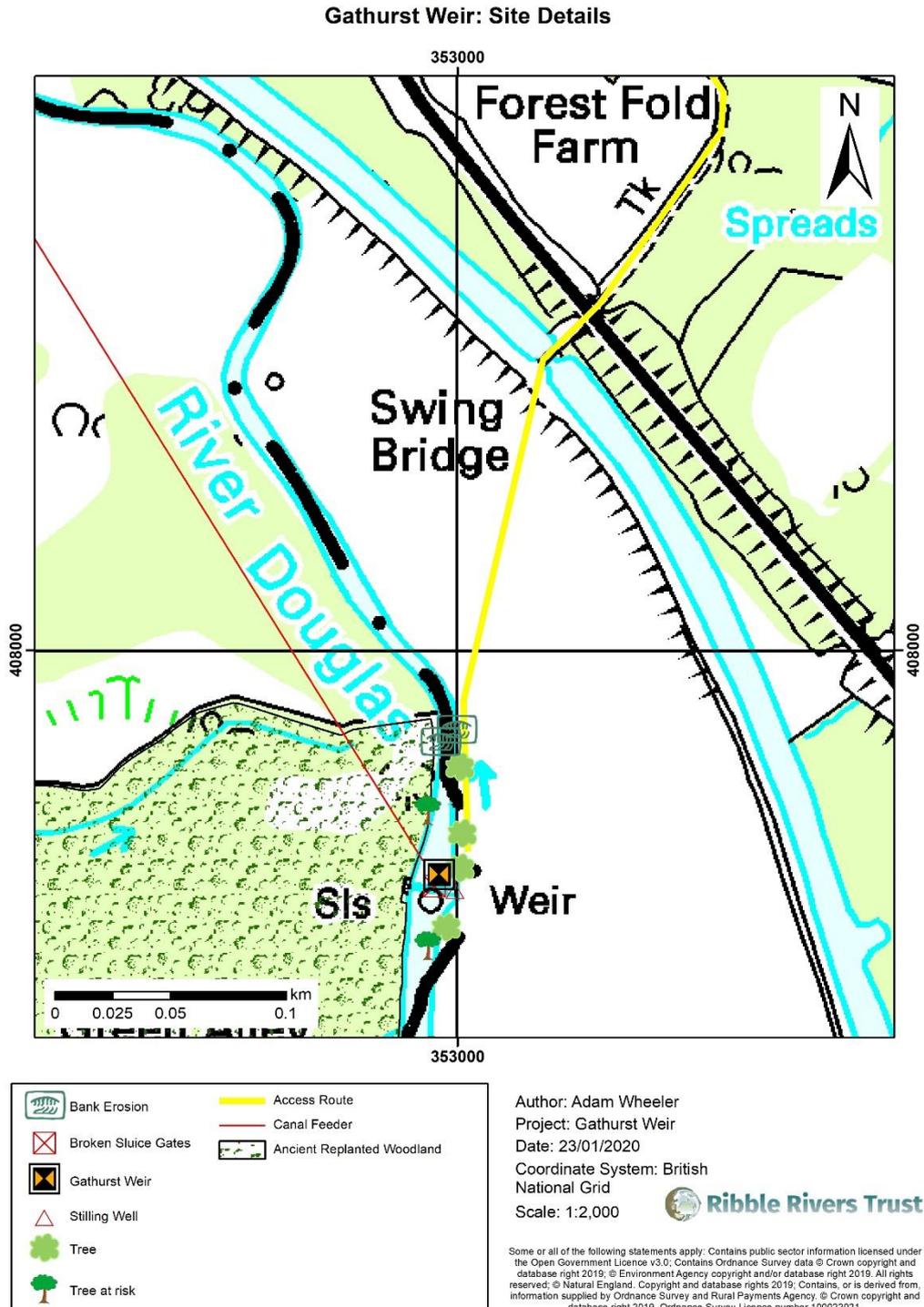


Figure 4. Local detail map of Gathurst Weir on the River Douglas.

## EXISTING SITE

The Left-Hand Bank of the weir is replanted ancient woodland, in addition there is recreational use of the riverbank by anglers.

The Right-Hand Bank of the weir is crop grassland with no public access, however there is access to the riverbank by the angling club.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

There are no known hazardous materials on site. However, only a visual inspection of the site has been undertaken for identification of hazardous materials.

## EXISTING GROUND CONDITIONS

No ground or site investigation has been undertaken. However visual inspection shows that the access is relatively flat and is made up of agricultural soils that are heavily drained. Areas of standing water can be seen after heavy rain or flood. The riverbanks themselves are steep sloping in nature, with areas of vertical earth cliff and slumping. The areas of earth cliff and slumping are the result of river erosion, which is still active. Downstream of the weirs bank protection there are erosion holes, these are vegetated and on the RHB there are trees at risk. These are key consideration for design and construction processes.

## EXISTING BUILDINGS ON OR ADJACENT TO THE SITE

There are no buildings adjacent to the site. The only structures associated with the weir are is a platform that extends  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the width of the channel with 4 footings. The footings previously housed 2 sluice-gates. On the right-hand bank (RHB) is a stilling well and housing for Environment Agency telemetry equipment. Access to the structure will be through the farmyard. Minimising disturbance to the landowner is a key objective and output of this project.

## UTILITIES

Service checks have been conducted for the works area, and for some services along the access road and track. There are no services within the works area, however it is advised that service check is repeated by the contractor prior to construction.

There are services along the access road and crossing the access track (near to the road). Their presence should be noted, and suitable controls included in the construction phase plan.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

The project requires in channel working by the contractor. The river at this point is classed as EA main stem and can have a significant flow. The river is very responsive to rainfall upstream, and this should be taken into consideration at all points of the project. A method of work has been developed as part of the design process to minimise risk as far as reasonably practicable to the contractor and workers for in river works.

Rivers can convey pathogens and substances that are hazardous in nature, such as leptospirosis or polluting chemicals. The construction phase plan is expected to set out how the contractor will put in place controls to ensure that workers/users/visitors are protected from these risks.

Site inspections have identified a hazardous plant - Giant Hogweed (an invasive non-native species) as being present. The sap of Giant Hogweed is phototoxic (contact with human skin results in the contact area becoming hyper-sensitive to sun light resulting in burns). The period for which the skin remains hyper-sensitive cannot be defined, it may be short in nature or much longer. This is a key consideration for contractors working on site.

Contractors must also consider how they will work to ensure that there is no risk to the people of the environment from pollution relating to construction activities. Pollutants that enter rivers have the potential to affect parties a significant distance downstream. Compliance with Environment Agency pollution prevention guidance is a requirement, and the construction phase plan must demonstrate how this will be achieved.

#### CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS 2015

It is anticipated that the works will not be notifiable under the CDM Regs 2015. However, the following roles have been identified:

**Client**

Ribble Rivers Trust

**Principle Designer**

Ribble Rivers Trust

**Designers**

To be confirmed

**Principal Contractor**

To be confirmed

**Contractor**

To be confirmed