

# Lock keepers saves life as EA makes 'dangerous cuts'



## A lock keeper saved the life of a boater as the EA makes staff cuts

On 29 April, Temple Lock near Marlow, Buckinghamshire, resident lock and weir keeper Matt Rooke rescued an injured man from the water after his boat was damaged and sank.

Mr Rooke stopped the boater from being swept over the weir, saving his life.

Yet with just 24 hours' notice and no consultation, the Environment Agency implemented plans to reduce staffing levels on a number of locks on the river Thames.

Under the scheme many sites, including Temple Lock, will be unstaffed 75 per cent of the time.



**Kevin Brandstatter, GMB National Officer said:**

"This incident clearly shows why locks on the River Thames need properly trained full-time staff on duty at all times.

"If Mr Rooke had not been on duty that day, the boater would have almost certainly died.

"The appalling weather and almost continuous rain during the past few months means weir keepers are vital to manage the passage of water and reduce flood risk.

"These staff changes have been made with no notice and without speaking to the people who know – the lock keepers.

"GMB believes the Environment Agency has failed in its legal obligations under the health and safety act to undertake proper risk assessment at each lock affected.

"We are calling for the agency to abandon these ill-thought out and dangerous cuts."

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**Press office**

07958 156846

[press.office@gmb.org.uk](mailto:press.office@gmb.org.uk)

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[info@gmb.org.uk](mailto:info@gmb.org.uk)

