



After a successful past three years, Stonbury was again selected by the Environment Agency to complete essential maintenance works to 35 kilometres of flood embankments along the River Severn. The main scope of the 20-week programme was to reduce vegetation to prevent vermin damaging the earth embankments and prevent the flooding of commercial and domestic properties.

The first task of the season was to collect and safely dispose of all wrack material that had washed up on to the banks during winter high tides. This can include trees, branches, pallets and other plastic and metal waste. The task was divided between two teams of three working on either side of the river, using All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). Woody organic material was piled and burned on-site, and plastics and metals were taken for recycling.

After the wrack was successfully removed, grass cutting commenced along the flood embankments and tributaries. For this, Stonbury engaged contractors with specialist equipment. Reform tractors were employed to navigate steep embankments, and remote-controlled Robocutters were used adjacent to the watercourse. Drip trays were used under all machinery to protect the environment from potential fuel leakage.

Two cuts were completed, the first in the mid-summer and the second in the early autumn. An in-house strimming team followed to tidy up areas, particularly those in more urban sections where the machines could not reach. The cutting teams reported that they did not come across any wrack; a testament to the earlier teams' careful work.

Along with the works, Stonbury was asked to carry out a condition survey, identifying and reporting any observed features of the embankments that may cause them to become detrimental to their performance as flood defence assets. During the contract, Stonbury was tasked with managing landowner engagement. Both landowners and the public expressed delight at the conduct and results of the works.