Report to Gouthwaite Board of Management

Hydrological Conditions of the Nidd Catchment – 2025 to March 2026

Rainfall

Figure 1 shows monthly rainfall at Scar House rain gauge as a percentage of the 1991-2020 long-term average (LTA). This shows the sustained very dry conditions in the spring and summer of 2025, particularly in March and April with rainfall at 34% and 9% of the LTA respectively. For the Nidd catchment as a whole, 2025 featured the third driest March to August period in a record length of over 150 years, according to the Met Office Had-UK data set. March to August 1995 was drier by 40mm.

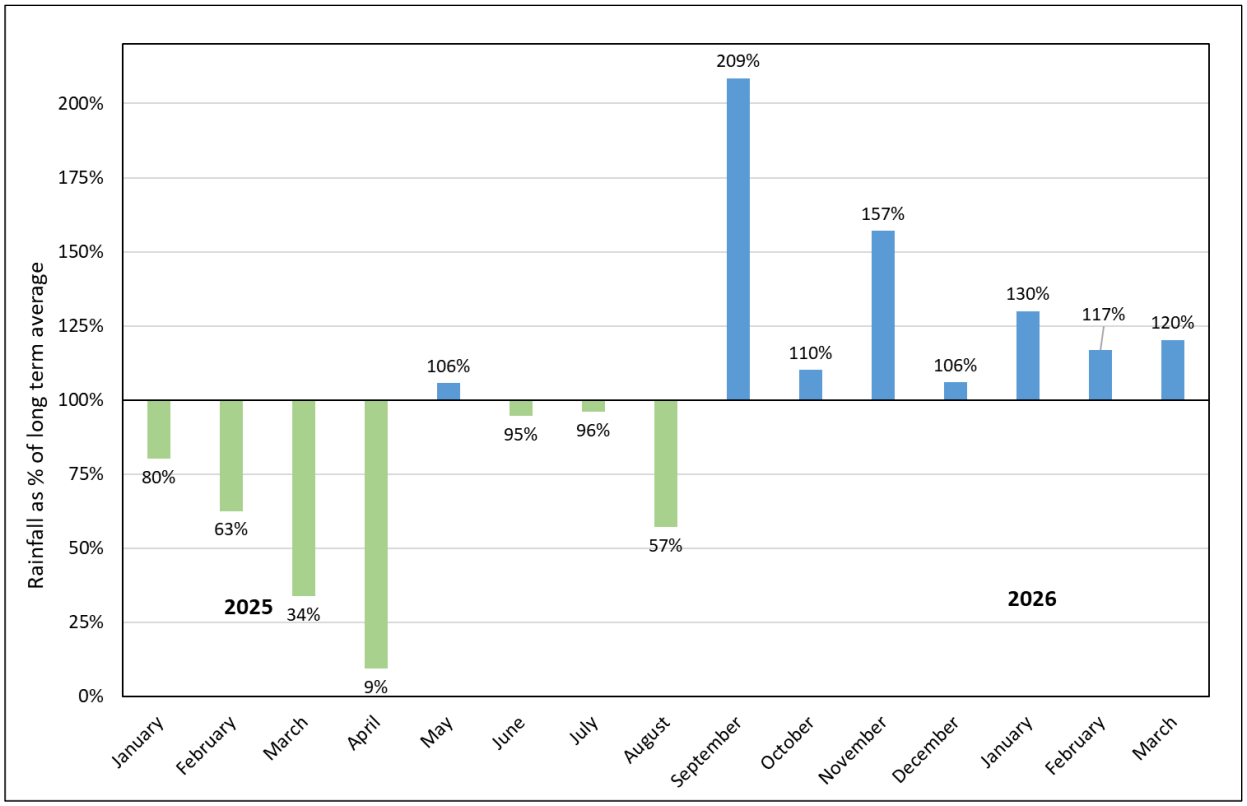

Figure 1: 2025 into 2026 monthly rainfall at Scar House Reservoir as percentage of long-term average

In contrast, rainfall in autumn and winter was above average, with September and November being particularly wet. Figure 2 plots cumulative monthly rainfall in comparison with the LTA. This shows the rainfall deficit building up during the 2025 drought from 230mm in April to 280mm by August. The situation was reversed by the wet autumn and winter, the steep increase in recorded rainfall bringing the two lines together again.

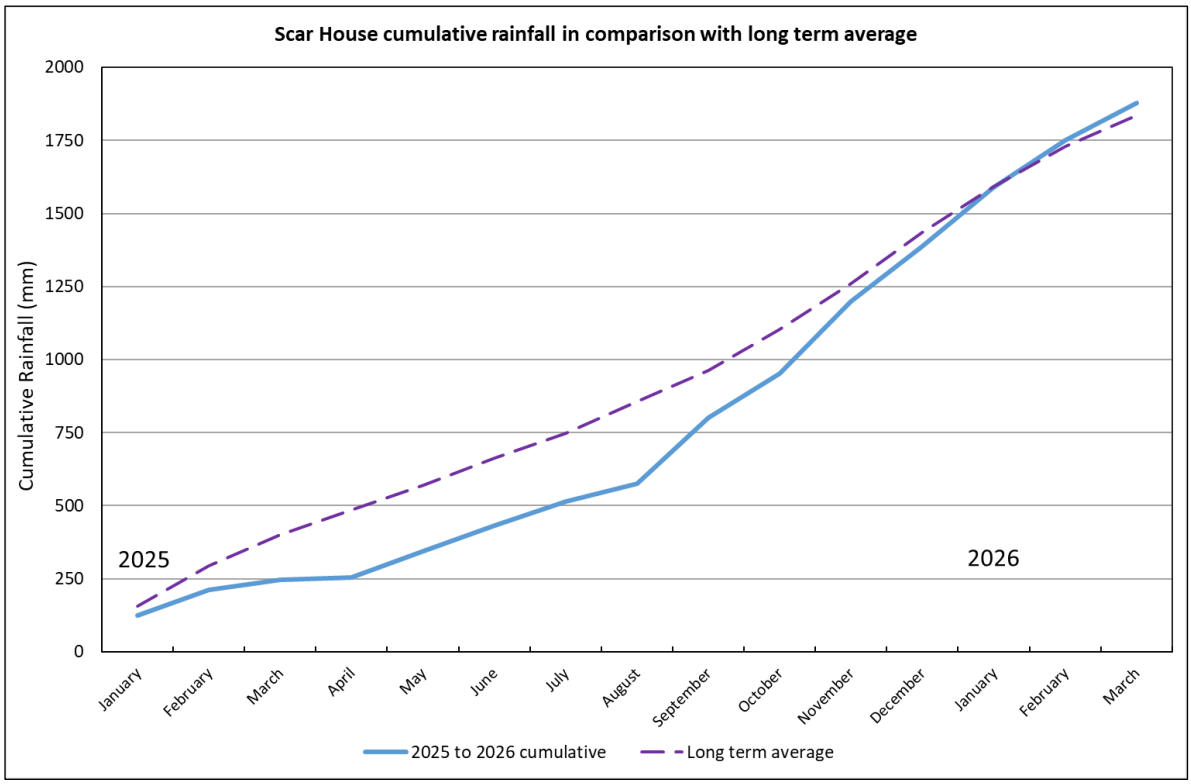

Figure 2. Scar House cumulative rainfall in comparison with the long-term average

River Flow

Figure 3 shows the monthly mean flows recorded at Birstwith gauging station on the River Nidd for 2025 and early 2026. They are compared with the LTA from the previous full record of 1975-2024.

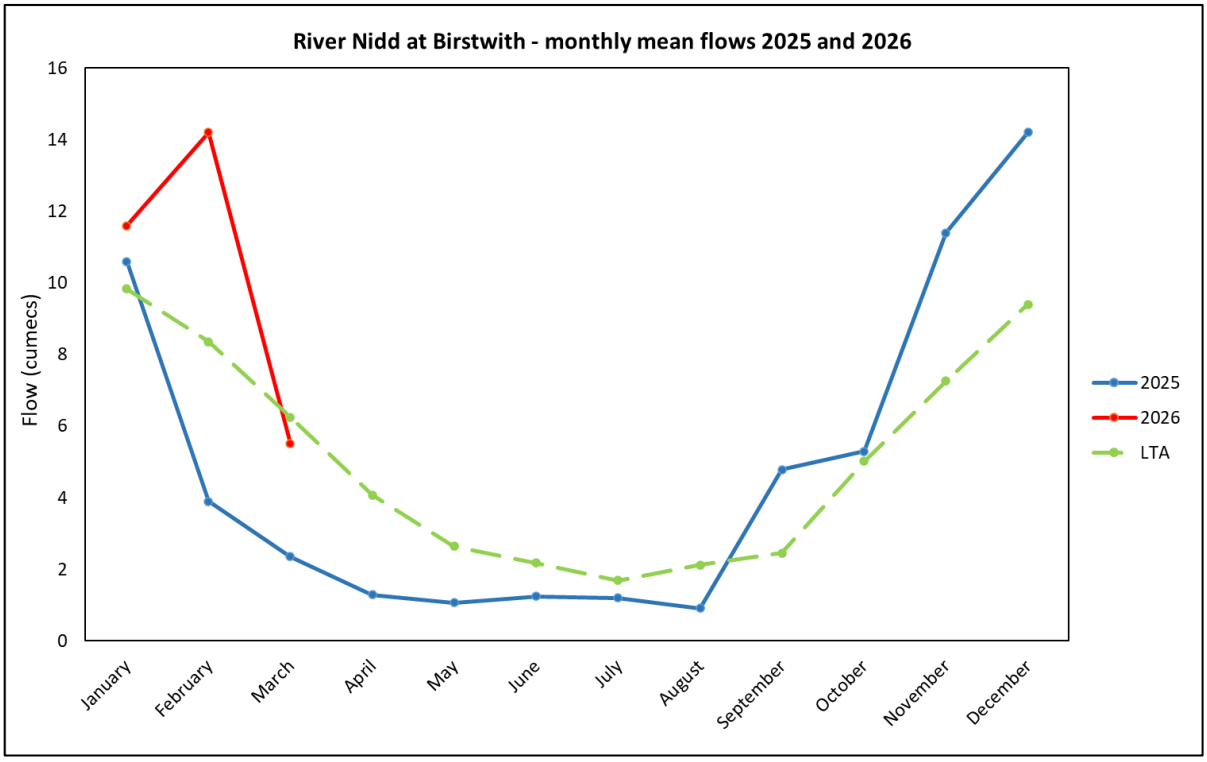

Figure 3: River Nidd monthly mean flow at Birstwith for 2025 to March 2026, compared with the LTA

Due to the dry conditions, monthly mean flows on the River Nidd were below average from February through to August 2025. In March and April they were less than 40% of the LTA. In the wet September Gouthwaite reservoir levels rose over a ten-day period to above the spill level and monthly mean river flows at Birstwith downstream have remained above the LTA throughout the autumn and winter. However, winter flows have not been especially high in comparison to notable flood years such as 2000, 2015-2016 and 2023-2024.

Figure 4 is derived from the Environment Agency's water situation report for Yorkshire for August 2025. The flow of the River Nidd at Birstwith stands out as a result of the support provided by compensation releases from Gouthwaite Reservoir. While the monthly mean flow of the upper Nidd was below normal for the time of year, most rivers across Yorkshire had fallen to notably or exceptionally low relative to their historic records. Firstly this reflects the unusual geography of the upper Nidd catchment with its large online reservoirs on the river channel. It also highlights Yorkshire Water's practice in recent years of supporting low flows with releases from Gouthwaite even a band or two above control rules if stocks permit.

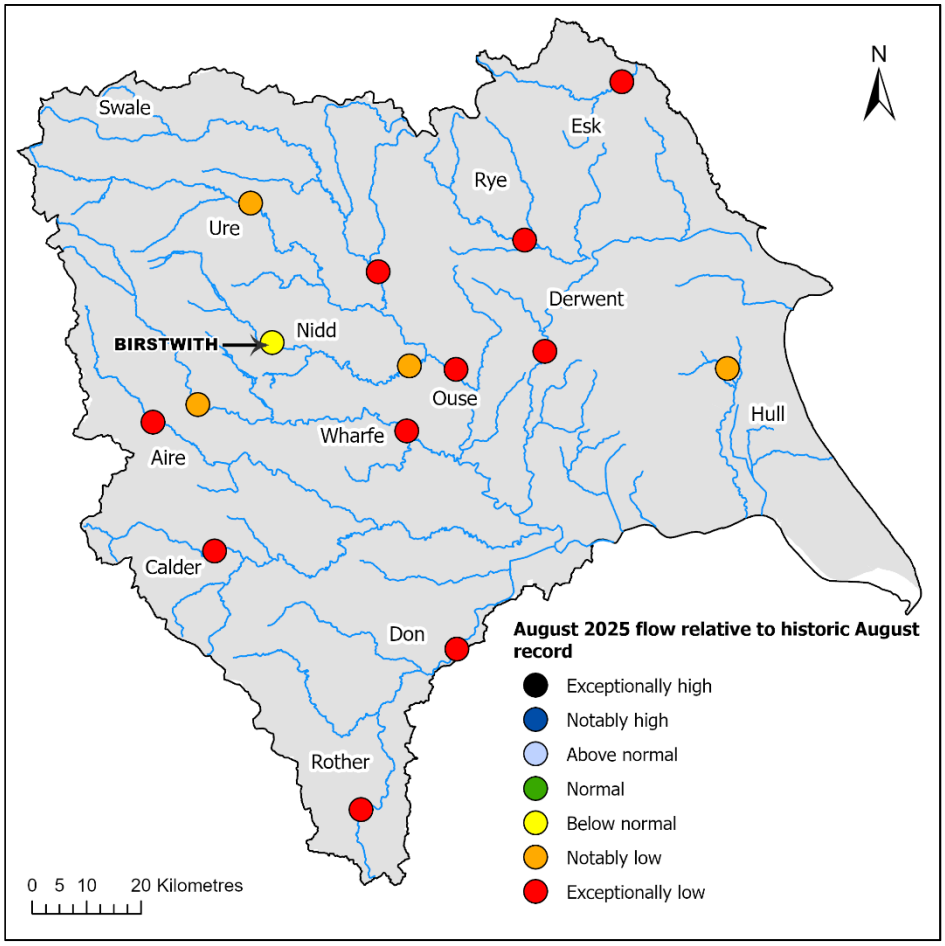

Figure 4: classification of August 2025 mean flows in Yorkshire rivers relative to their historic August records.

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Reservoir Operations

The Environment Agency has reviewed independently our reservoir level and downstream flow measurement data. In summary, reservoir levels declined from March 2025 onwards with the dry weather. Rain in late May and early June provided temporary replenishment. The minimum levels reached in early September were approximately 0.4m lower than in the 2022 drought but did not fall below the levels associated with the siphon works drawdowns in summers of 2023 and 2024. The reservoir refilled from heavy rainfall over the catchment during ten days in mid-September. Levels were above the spill level for much of late November and December and again in late January and February 2026.

In the early months of 2025 and from mid-September through to March 2026, reservoir releases tracked compensation flow requirements closely. There is evidence of release adjustments being made gradually over a few days to manage spates. During the dry spring and summer months of 2025 releases were held at either 50 Ml/d or 40 Ml/d, one band higher than indicated by current rules, to support Glasshouses fish farm. As noted in the river flows section above, this also benefitted river conditions further down the Nidd catchment during the drought. Reservoir stocks remained above 40% capacity at the September minimum before rainfall returned.

Hence, during the period of this report, Gouthwaite Reservoir releases met compensation flow requirements. The EA is satisfied that YW has operated Gouthwaite Reservoir appropriately with regard to downstream water users and to the river environment, and in particular during the most significant drought in Yorkshire since 1995.

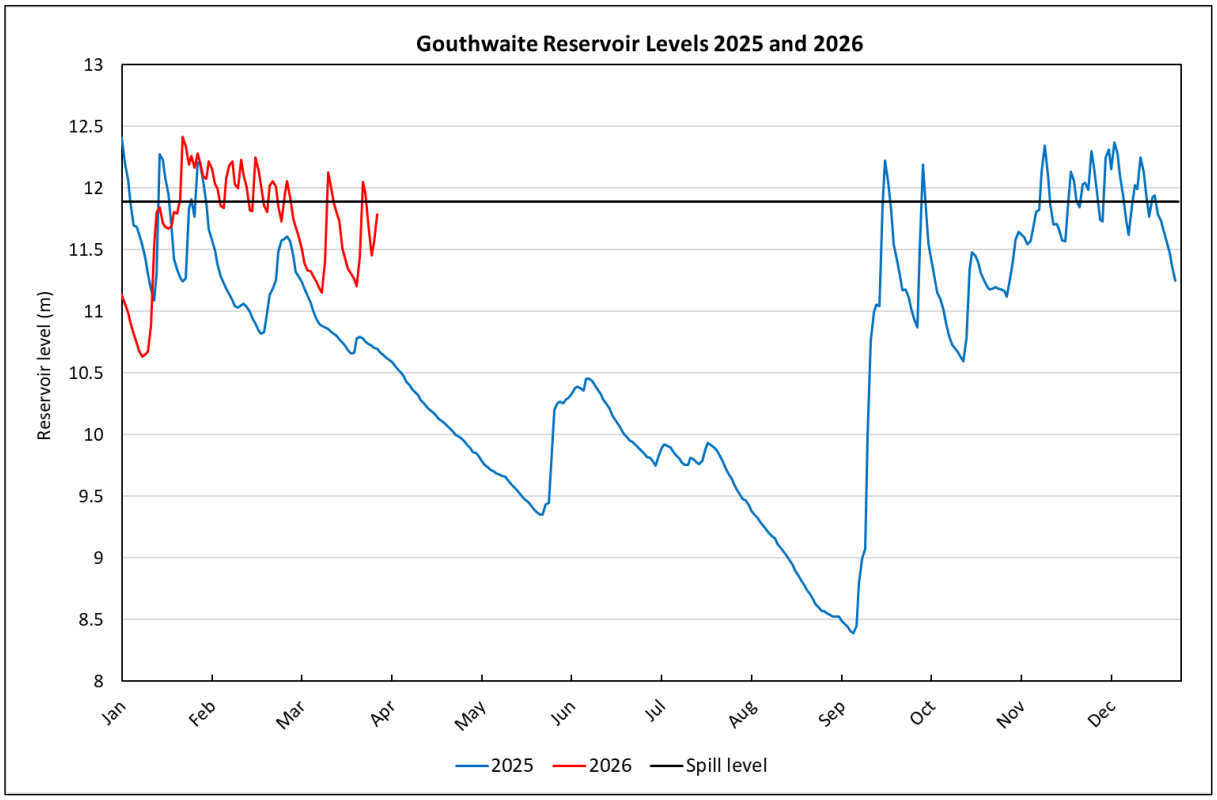

Figure 5: Gouthwaite Reservoir levels during 2025 and early 2026