

York Flood Alleviation Scheme

Update on the Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme

August 2022

Introduction

This briefing note gives an update on the Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme. As part of the York Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS), the Environment Agency is investing £21 million of government funding to improve flood defences in the Clifton and Rawcliffe area. This will provide a high standard of protection against future flooding, benefitting 135 homes and protecting local businesses as well. It will also reduce the risk of flood water spilling on to Shipton Road, keeping an important transport route into the city open.

Progress update

In spite of delays resulting from flooding in February this year, the second phase of construction started on schedule in April and our contractors have since made good progress, aided by the dry weather. They have been working on the middle section of the existing embankment, starting from the allotments end of Rawcliffe Meadows and progressing through the meadow towards the Tansy Pond. Along part of this route the old embankment has been removed and in other locations we've been able to keep the original structure and raise the height of it.

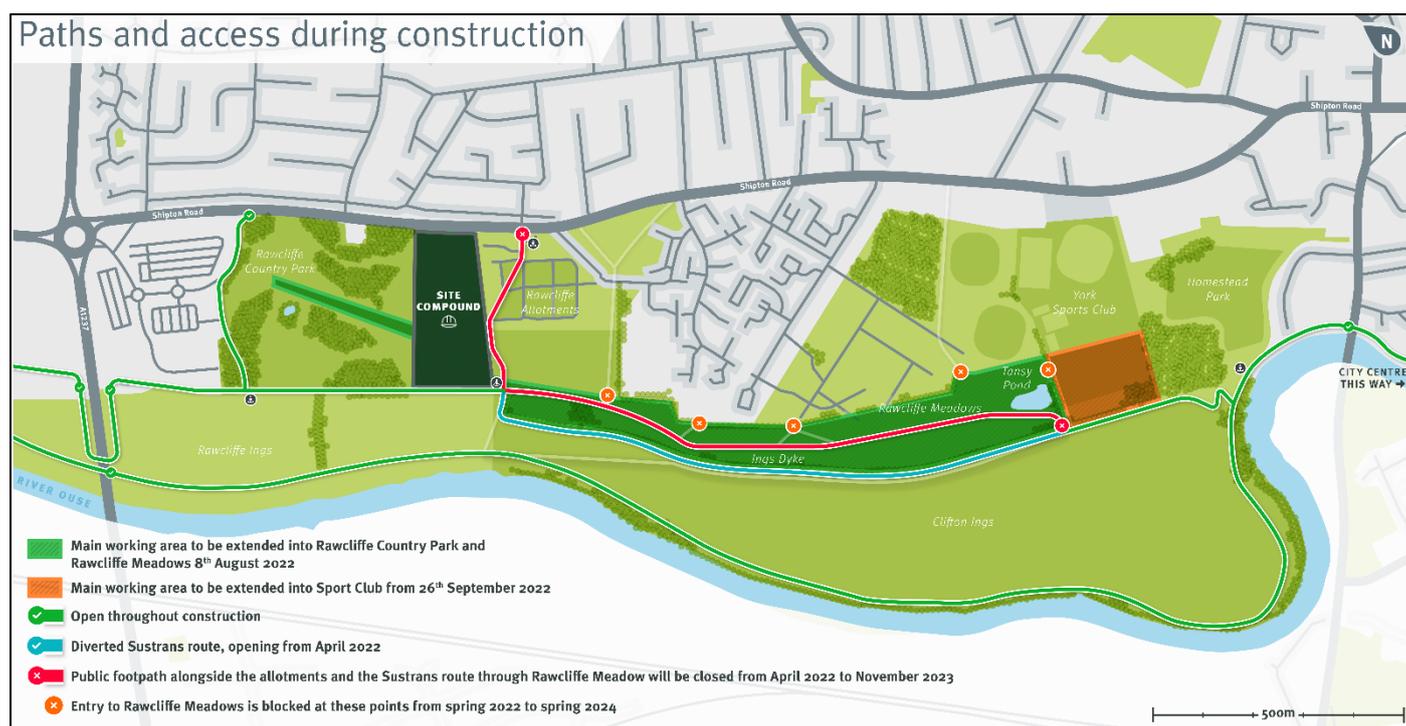


Photo: Drone footage of the construction of a section of the new embankment, looking northwards towards Rawcliffe Country Park



Path closures in Rawcliffe Country Park

From 8th August, work will begin on the extension of the embankment into Rawcliffe Country Park, as shown in the map below; the green 'arm' extending into the park from the site compound. This means we will need to fence off a large working area for approximately ten to twelve weeks whilst building the new embankment. This area will then remain closed off until summer next year to allow the newly seeded grass cover to establish over the winter. Although there are no public footpaths in this area, several of the more informal paths will need to be closed whilst heavy machinery is working there. Once the construction phase is over, we will aim to reopen one of the paths running next to the cornfield in the autumn, to provide a circular walking route for visitors using the park. In summary the park will still be open for visitors, with land on either side of our working area still accessible. However, some areas will remain inaccessible until the summer of next year.



Path closures in Rawcliffe Meadows

From the 8th August access into Rawcliffe Meadows will be closed off at the following locations:

- From Clifton Ings, at the bridge leading to the Tansy Pond and into the Meadows
- From the kissing gate behind Clifton Alliance Cricket Club.
- From the kissing gate at the southern end of York Sports Club.

These entrances, along with the other three closed in April, will remain closed for the duration of the scheme, until winter 2024, to allow a grass cover to become established on the new embankment. York Sports Club have requested that owners keep dogs on leads at all times and off all playing fields whilst walking on their land.

Collectively these changes mean that access to Clifton Ings can only be made from the two 'ends' at Rawcliffe Country Park and Water End and Rawcliffe Meadows will be inaccessible. Whilst the full length of the Sustrans route through Clifton Ings will remain open throughout construction, all entrances to the middle section of the Ings will be closed from the 8th August.



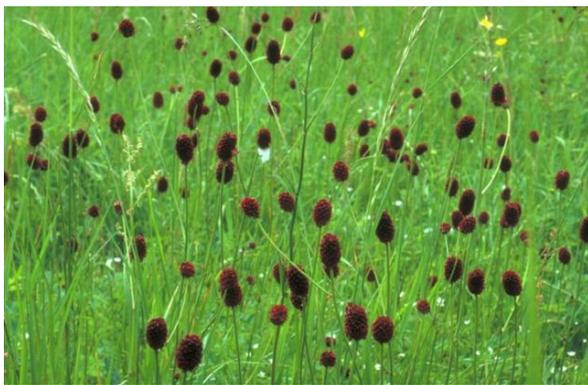
We recognise that these path and entrance closures will make it more difficult for people to gain access to the Ings over the next two years and apologise if this causes inconvenience or frustration. Some of the shorter circular routes for walking or cycling accessed from entrances onto the middle section of the Ings will no longer be usable. However, these restrictions are absolutely necessary so that we can complete essential flood defence work without putting the public at risk. As explained in the previous newsletter, all path closures are being made to keep people safe. We considered alternative construction plans to give visitors access to some areas at different times but none of these were feasible because basically the working area for this scheme is a long linear feature on the landscape which cannot be crossed safely during the construction period.

We will put signs in place at all points where access is closed on the site and, where these are possible, indicate any diversions. Some of the earlier path closures made in April this year will remain in place until the end of the scheme in 2024, particularly where time is needed for grass cover to establish. However the track from Shipton Road past the allotments will open in the spring of 2024, as soon as construction of the scheme finishes.

If you have any questions about these changes, you can contact us by email at this address: yorkfloodplan@environment-agency.gov.uk. You can also find maps showing these access changes on noticeboards at several locations on the Ings or you can access the Clifton Ings page of the York Flood Alleviation Scheme website: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/yorkshire/yorkfas/>. In addition we have produced a special **Frequently Asked Questions** document, focusing on access changes, which can also be downloaded from the website.

Green hay spreading on Clifton Ings

The new section of Sustrans track in Clifton Ings was completed in April this year and has been well used by walkers, runners and cyclists ever since. As part of our plans to mitigate some of the effects of construction, in June we spread green hay along the edges of the track. This was done to encourage germination from seed of the key floodplain meadow species which grow in the grassland on Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows. These include Greater Burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*) and Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), shown in the photos below.



Greater Burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*) © Mike Dodd



Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) © Mike Dodd

Hay was cut and taken from Rawcliffe Meadows and then spread on the same day (hence the name 'green hay') in areas where we want to encourage new growth. The ground was prepared in advance to receive the seed. The site was rolled three to five days later, depending on the



weather (to give the seed time to drop out of the hay onto the ground) to ensure good contact between the seed and the soil and help the seed to germinate. By using hay cut directly from the Ings, we are ensuring seed from a local provenance is used to germinate and grow into new plants. This promotes adaptation and resilience. We also chose donor sites for cutting green hay very carefully to provide high quality sources of seed. This gives us the best chance of restoring high-quality floodplain meadow habitat on the Ings.

Find out more

To find out more about the Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme, you can:

Contact us by email us at: yorkfloodplan@environment-agency.gov.uk

Check out our website: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/yorkshire/yorkfas/>

Phone us via the Environment Agency's National Customer Contact Centre: 03708 506 506. Remember to ask to speak to a member of the Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme team.

If you want to receive briefings about the scheme or the general York FAS newsletter by email, please contact us on the email address above to make this request.

Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme in a nutshell

Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme is divided into three construction phases:

Phase one: Autumn/Winter 2021

Initial enabling works and building an alternative Sustrans cycle track.

Phase two: Spring 2022 to Summer 2024

Raising the height of the existing embankment, extending it at the south eastern end in Homestead Park, constructing the northern extension into Rawcliffe Country Park, building a new pumping station for Blue Beck and completing Habitat Restoration works.

How we're reducing
the risk of flooding
for York



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