

York Flood Alleviation Scheme

Update on the Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme

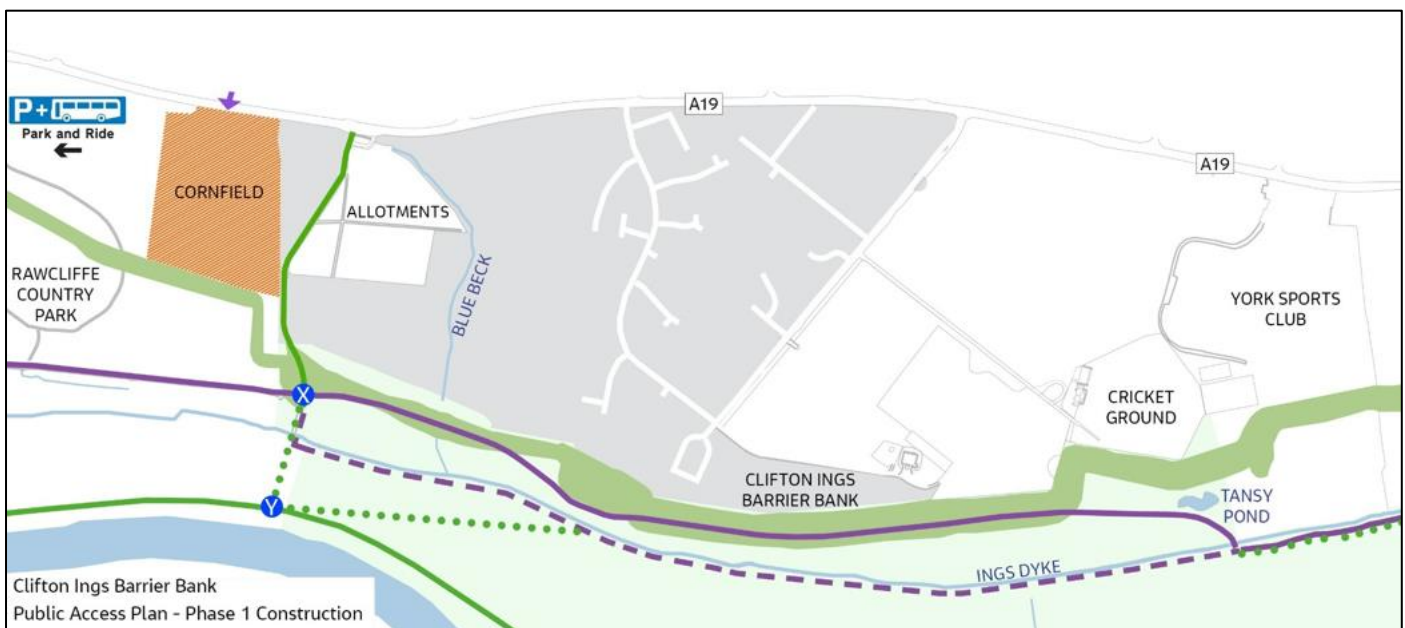
February 2022

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.

Update on Phase One (Autumn 2021 – Spring 2022)

The first phase of construction began in October 2021 with the setting up a works compound for our contractors, BAM Nutall. Work also started on building an alternative section of the Sustrans Route 65 cycle track. This involves diverting it away from Rawcliffe Meadows Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) onto Ings Dyke in Clifton Ings, indicated by the purple dotted line shown on the map below, from point X. This will ensure that visitors can access the full length of the Ings throughout the construction period.



We've made good progress with this, with over half the length of new track completed before Christmas. Assuming there is no flooding on the site over the next few months, the new track should be ready by April this year. Once it is opened, anyone using the Sustrans route will be diverted onto this track. It will be wider than the old track and offer a better surface for both cyclists and pedestrians. As this alternative route will become a permanent part of the Sustrans route, it will reduce visitor pressure on the SSSI site and so protect the rare floodplain meadow species found there. In the meantime, the control gates installed where the Sustrans route crosses the track from Clifton Allotments (at point X) will continue to operate. Please look out for warning signs as you approach this point and be prepared to stop for a few minutes if required.

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the risk of flooding
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 consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/yorkshire/yorkfas/

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Phase Two of the scheme starts in April

Over the last few months we have focused on the detailed designs for the second phase of the scheme. This involves raising the height of the existing embankment, extending it at the south eastern end in Homestead Park, and building a new pumping station for Blue Beck. We need to plan a schedule of events for our contractors to work effectively and efficiently on a site where there are many constraints, whilst also minimising the environmental impacts of construction. This is a challenging exercise which takes time to develop. We are still in the process of finalising these designs and will offer more information about them in later updates.

Changes in access to the site from April

During the next phase of construction, we will need to close off certain parts of the site and temporarily restrict access to ensure visitors stay safe whilst we build the new flood defences. Where it is possible to keep footpaths open, we will do so; we have already adapted our designs to provide access for visitors along the length of the site. However, the long, narrow shape of the site makes it difficult to provide alternative routes, particularly when we are working on the existing embankment.

Between April 2022 and November 2023:

- The Sustrans route through Rawcliffe Meadows will be closed;
- The public footpath from Shipton Road past the allotments onto Clifton Ings will also be closed;
- Entry to Rawcliffe Meadows from several informal paths on the Shipton Road side will be blocked.

We recognise that these changes will make it more difficult for people to access to the site over the next two years and apologise if this causes you inconvenience. However, they are necessary so that we can complete essential flood defence work without putting the public at risk. Please follow any instructions on site and respect any path closures as they have been put in place to keep visitors safe. We have installed several signs on the site to provide information about these access changes during construction and will add updates to these as work progresses. If it is possible (i.e. COVID 19 dependent), we will organise a public event on Rawcliffe Meadows in March or April to explain the changes in more detail and give visitors a chance to ask questions.

Tree management

Phase two of the scheme will involve expanding the 'footprint' of the embankment (as a result of raising the height of it), changing the line of it in some places and also installing new drainage outlets. We also need to create space for construction vehicles to bring materials into the site and ensure there is enough room for staff to work safely. Sadly, this means we must remove some trees within the construction area as part of the plan we are currently developing. This involves making difficult decisions. We have carried out detailed surveys of all trees potentially affected by our work and explored many different options and ways of working to minimise impacts. Where we have been able to change access routes or the line of the embankment to avoid removing mature trees, we have done so, even where this has increased the cost of construction. However, in some situations there are no alternatives and we must fell trees or remove hedgerows in order to achieve the necessary reduction in flood risk for this scheme. We will provide more details about this work in the next update.





The first round of felling must be carried out in February, before bird nesting season starts. We will employ specialist landscape contractors to do this work, to ensure they meet high standards of operation and safety. To compensate for the loss of trees, we will plant five new trees for every one felled. Where it is possible to plant in the local area, we will do so. However, in some parts of the site this would spoil the character of the flood plain meadow and so we have identified alternative sites in York where we can plant trees.

You can read more about the mitigation principles we will follow in the York Flood Alleviation Scheme's tree strategy, found on the York FAS website:

[York Flood Alleviation Scheme \(FAS\) Information page - Environment Agency - Citizen Space \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](https://environment-agency.gov.uk/yorkshirerawcliffe/yorkfas/)

Left: Photo of the old iconic oak tree next to the path in Rawcliffe Meadows. We have pruned it to allow lorries to pass by, which means it can stay on site.

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 to Autumn 2022

Raising the height of the existing embankment, extending it at the south eastern end in Homestead Park, and building a new pumping station for Blue Beck.

Phase three: Spring to Autumn 2023


Completing the raising of the existing embankment, building the northern extension of it in Rawcliffe Country Park and carrying out habitat restoration work.

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