

# York Flood Alleviation Scheme

## Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme

August 2022

### What is 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.

### A) During Construction

### Why have some access routes to Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadows been closed in April and August this year?

The second phase of construction (April 2022 to November 2023) has started, focusing on the middle section of the embankment in Rawcliffe Meadows. This means we need to close several paths and block all entrances leading into the meadows to ensure visitors stay safe whilst we are building the new flood defences. Some of these entrances were closed in April but we kept the path into Rawcliffe Meadows from the Tansy Pond entrance (off the Sustrans route) and the entrance from York Sports Club open for as long as possible. However, we must now close these entrance points, along with the one close to Clifton Alliance Cricket Club. From the 8<sup>th</sup> August, Rawcliffe Meadows will remain closed to visitors until the scheme is finished and grass cover on the new embankment is established, most likely in the spring of 2024.

As work in the middle section of the scheme progresses, there will be significant numbers of extremely large, heavy vehicles moving on and off the site, bringing clay to raise the height of the embankment. So a safe working area around the embankment needs to be fenced off, to keep vehicles separate from people and animals. As they will need to cross the allotment footpath, this means the meadow has to be closed, for obvious safety reasons. It also means we must close off all the informal access points into Rawcliffe Meadows between the allotment track and Homestead Park.

We have planned this phase of the scheme very carefully so that we are only restricting access in locations where work is taking place and where it's necessary. We also made sure the new section of the Sustrans track was built and opened, before closing the allotment track, so that visitors could still walk, run or cycle along the length of the site.

We recognise that closing off these paths will make it more difficult for people to gain access to the site over the next eighteen months and apologise if this causes you inconvenience. However, these changes are necessary so that we can complete our essential flood defence work without putting the public at risk. Please follow any instructions on site and respect these path closures as they have been put in place to keep visitors safe.

### What about Rawcliffe Country Park; is access affected there?


From 8th August 2022, work will begin on the extension of the embankment into Rawcliffe Country Park. This is shown in the map below as the green 'arm' extending into the park from the site

How we're reducing  
the risk of flooding  
for York



 [yorkfloodplan@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:yorkfloodplan@environment-agency.gov.uk)

 [consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/yorkshire/yorkfas/](https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/yorkshire/yorkfas/)

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compound. This means visitors can still access the country park but a large working area in the centre of the park will be fenced off for approximately ten to twelve weeks whilst building the new embankment. This area will then remain inaccessible until summer next year to allow grass cover to establish on the new embankment over the winter. Although there are no public footpaths in this area, several 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.

## Which paths and entrances are affected in Rawcliffe Meadows?

From April 2022:

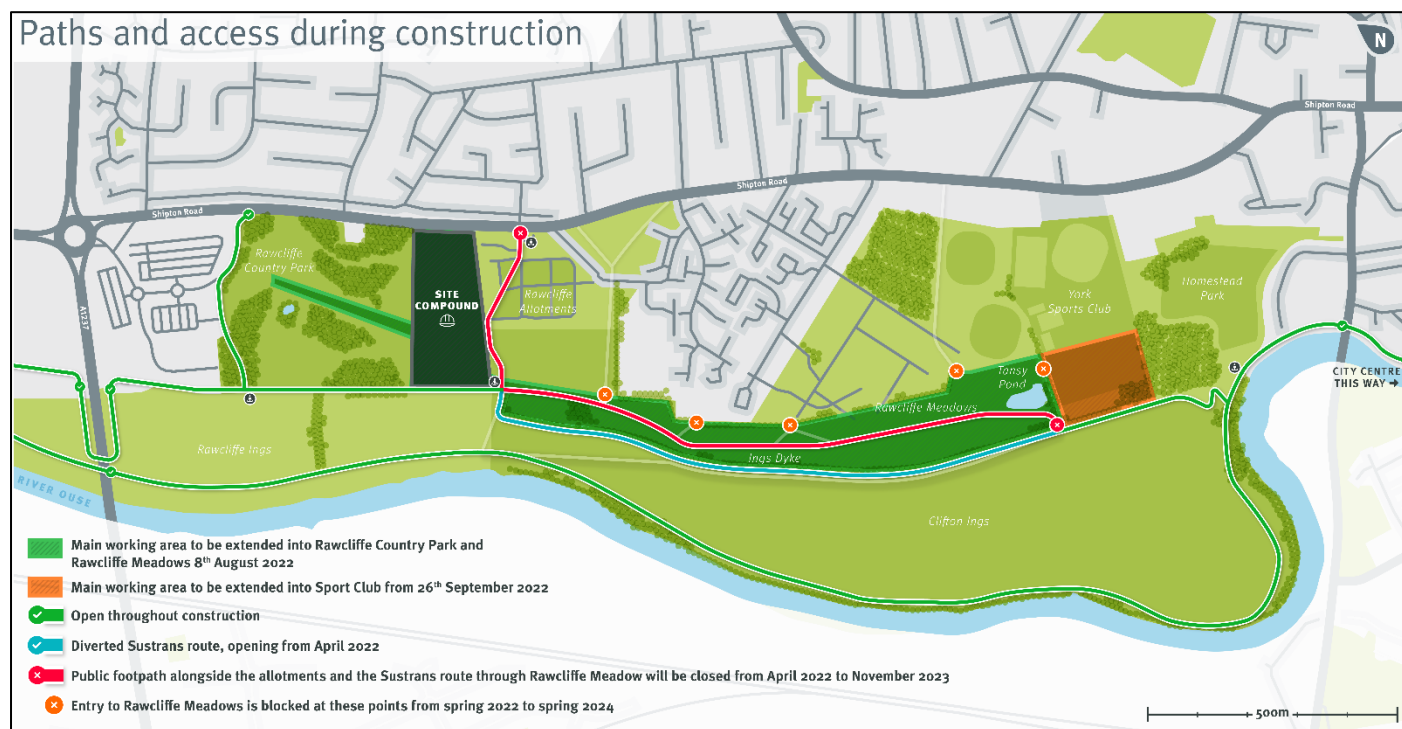
- The full length of the public footpath from Shipton Road past the allotments onto Clifton Ings will be closed;
- All points of entry to Rawcliffe Meadows from several informal paths on the Shipton Road side will be blocked (but the paths leading to them will remain open).

From August 2022 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 will remain closed for the duration of the scheme, until winter 2024, to allow a grass cover to become established on the new embankment.

All these changes are shown on the map below. They can also be found on several noticeboards on site and on the York FAS website <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/yorkshire/yorkfas/>



## How long will paths be closed for?

All the paths described above will be closed until November 2023 or possibly spring 2024, depending on how well the grass cover establishes.

## How can I get access to the Ings during this time?

Until November 2023, access to the Ings will be either from Rawcliffe Country Park or from the entrance at Water End. All other entry points have been closed.

## Can I use York Sports Club to access the Ings?

No, from early August 2022, the entrance from York Sports Club to Rawcliffe Meadows will be closed and will remain so until the scheme is completed. The management team at the club have informed us that access to their grounds is restricted to people using York Sports Club facilities.

## Will I still be able to walk/cycle/run along the length of the Ings?

Yes, you can do this, using the new Sustrans track we have built. From the Rawcliffe Country Park end of the route, you will swing onto the new track alongside Ings Dyke at the junction with the allotment footpath and then reconnect with the original route just past the junction into Rawcliffe Meadows, near the Tansy Pond.

From the southern entrance at Water End, you just do this in reverse; keep going straight along the new Sustrans track rather than turning right into Rawcliffe Meadows and then it will connect back with the original track, near the junction with the allotment path.

## Can I still find a circular walk on site whilst the paths are closed?

For a longer walk, you can do a circular route from either the Rawcliffe Country Park end or from Water End, linking up with the Ouse foreshore path.

Unfortunately, many of the shorter circular routes around or through Rawcliffe Meadows are now inaccessible. From Rawcliffe Country Park you will still be able to connect to the Sustrans route and follow it to the point where it is diverted, then head across Clifton Ings to the path along the Ouse foreshore, following this upstream to go back to the Country Park.

## Will there be a diversion for cyclists?

Cyclists entering Clifton Ings from Rawcliffe Country Park or Water End can use the new Sustrans route to travel along the length of the site.

Cyclists wanting to access the Ings from the footpath beside the allotments, off Shipton Road will not be able to do so as this was closed in April. Instead there is a signposted diversion for cyclists who use this route. From the allotment track entrance, the diversion route will be along the "old" Shipton Road (which runs parallel to the A19) and into Rawcliffe Park & Ride. At this point the diverted route will rejoin the Sustrans cycle path.

## Why are you closing all the informal access points to Clifton Ings?

The reason we need to close so many access points at once is because our contractors will be working along the length of the embankment, near to all the entrances into Rawcliffe Meadows. So, on health and safety grounds, we can't keep any of them open.

These entrances will be blocked by the fenced-off working area needed by our contractors. Unfortunately, given the nature of this working area – a long narrow strip of land - it is not possible to put diversions in place or cut across it; the only crossing points are at either end, outside the working area. So we have no alternative, except to close these entrances from informal paths.

### **What other options for access did you consider?**

Whilst developing plans for this phase, we considered many different options for access in the middle section of the embankment. We considered closing access points at different times, rather than closing them all in one single operation. However, the linear nature of the working area which must be fenced – a long narrow strip of land - makes it impossible to put in place any diversions which avoid crossing the embankment itself. So all paths and access points to the existing embankment in this area must be closed. We also considered putting in place temporary restrictions along the allotment track, such as closing it during working hours every day or opening it at weekends. However, none of these were feasible; they would have resulted in an extension of the construction period and other access restrictions and the costs would have been prohibitive.

In addition, given the large number of vehicle movements needed during construction of the embankment, the only safe and viable option has been to close access for the full construction period.

### **Was there any consultation about these path closures?**

When we submitted our planning application for this scheme in 2019, City of York Council carried out a formal consultation exercise and made available material about the design of the scheme. This included details around access and construction working areas.

## **B) After the scheme is built**

### **Will I still be able to walk through Rawcliffe Meadows?**

After the scheme has been completed, including allowing time for recovery of the grassland areas, Rawcliffe Meadow will be open again for public access.

### **Why are you making the new Sustrans route permanent?**

Once we finish working on the site, the new Sustrans route on Clifton Ings will replace the one through Rawcliffe Meadows; we will not be reinstating the old path, although visitors can still walk in this area. The new track will be wider than the old one, so it will offer more space for cyclists and pedestrians. Relocating this track also means that pressure from visitors on the rare floodplain meadow species in Rawcliffe Meadow will be reduced.

### **Will the new Sustrans route be more prone to flooding than the old one?**

As the new section of the Sustrans track is slightly lower than the old route, this may result in it being inundated for more time than the old one. However, the surface has been designed to





withstand flooding. Both the old section of the Sustrans track in Rawcliffe Meadow and the new section in Clifton Ings are located in an operational flood storage area.

## 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](mailto: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.**  
Please ask to speak to a member of the Clifton Ings Flood Alleviation Scheme team.

How we're reducing  
the risk of flooding  
for York



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