

Major step forward for £21m flood scheme to better protect communities in York

The second phase of a vital Flood Alleviation Scheme for Clifton Ings in York is underway, as the Environment Agency launches the Flood Action Week (7 November – 13 November) campaign to encourage those who live in flood risk areas to prepare for flooding this winter.

Led by the Environment Agency, the £21m scheme covers the Clifton and Rawcliffe areas of York and will better protect 135 homes from flooding and reduce the risk of flood water spilling onto Shipton Road – an important transport route into the city – providing protection for local businesses.

Phase one of the scheme completed in April this year and involved initial enabling works to prepare the site for development. This included building an alternative Sustrans cycle track for walkers, runners and cyclists to use whilst construction takes place in Rawcliffe Meadow.

Phase two is currently underway and expected to complete in summer 2024. Once complete, this will see the embankment raised and extended into Rawcliffe Country Park, a new pumping station for Blue Beck built, and habitat restoration works completed – including protection for the critically endangered Tansy beetle which lives in grassland on the site.

Due to the popularity of the green space around Clifton and Rawcliffe, the Environment Agency has worked to maintain visitor access to as many different parts of the Ings as possible. Throughout the construction period, most of the site will remain open and the main access routes along its length, from the northern to southern end, are still open to pedestrians. Restrictions and path closures that have been put in place are necessary to ensure visitor safety.

This year's Flood Action Week comes as the Environment Agency has now expanded its flood warning service to reach almost 50,000 new properties at risk of flooding and hopes to exceed its target to provide new warning capability for 62,000 properties at risk of flooding by this winter. It brings the number of properties registered with the service to 1.6 million.

The Agency is urging people to take three simple steps:

Brendan Sharkey, project manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Clifton Ings is an important and much loved green space, used by many people in York, so we've designed this scheme very carefully to minimise impact on the environment, visitors and the local community.

This is a vital scheme which will help reduce flood risk for homes in Clifton and Rawcliffe and make York more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

However, despite our best efforts to increase flood resilience in the region, we cannot prevent all flooding. It's important that people know what to do in a flood and familiarise themselves with the Prepare, Act and Survive guidance. Knowing just one action to take can reduce the effects on your home and family, and even save a life.

Since work gained approval in 2019, the Environment Agency developed plans to minimise the impact of the work across the site, particularly in Clifton Ings and Rawcliffe Meadow, where rare meadow grassland species and the critically endangered Tansy beetle are found. A programme of habitat restoration, mitigation and management has been developed as well as extensive surveys of other plants and wildlife on site.

The Clifton Ings scheme forms part of the wider York Flood Alleviation Scheme, which will better protect over 2,000 properties in York and surrounding communities once complete.

To find out more about the scheme, including current path closures, visit the Clifton and Rawcliffe section on [Environment Agency's York FAS page](#).

Sign up to newsletter updates on the scheme by emailing: yorkfloodplan@environment-agency.gov.uk