

Lendal Arch reopens following flood defence works

Work to install improved flood gates under the arch of Lendal Bridge, which started five months ago, is now complete, reducing the risk of flooding to 39 homes and businesses between Scarborough Bridge and Ouse Bridge.

Wellington Row (part of the Trans Pennine Trail and National Cycle Network) reopened to pedestrians and cyclists on Friday 19 November.

The £2.5 million works are part of the York Flood Alleviation Scheme, where £45 million is being invested in the city to better protect 2,000 homes from flooding.

As part of the works, the Environment Agency has:

The final stage of the scheme has involved installing taller and stronger flood gates under Lendal Bridge. The team has flood tested the new flood gate, using 3,500 litres of water.

During the works under Lendal Bridge, Environment Agency contractors used solar panels and a solar powered generator as part of efforts to lower carbon emissions during construction. The use of the solar powered generator aimed to reduce generator emissions by 85 per cent, compared to using a regular generator.

Mark Fuller, project lead at the Environment Agency, said:

“This important work under one of York’s main bridges has been complex but essential to ensure we upgrade the flood gates to better protect homes and businesses, making them more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

“Installing a gate in this location has been challenging and has taken us longer than expected but the new gate is taller so it can protect against a higher flood level as well as achieving a greatly reduced leakage rate.

“We’re pleased we can reopen this route for pedestrians, cyclists and local businesses and we want to thank everyone for their patience and understanding during construction.”

Cllr Paula Widdowson, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change said:

“The Environment Agency’s work in York will protect more than 2,000 homes and businesses, particularly in local communities which unfortunately have had to regularly endure worsening flooding events. City of York Council is working in partnership with the Environment Agency to help them deliver this ambitious and necessary work to ensure that residents and businesses in York are better protected in the future.

"Today marks another milestone, now that the work on Lendal Arch is completed. As well as protecting properties, this reopening also provides easier access to the riverside cycle route and Scarborough Bridge for local residents and businesses."

Rupert Douglas, Sustrans Network Development Manager for Yorkshire said:

"I'm really pleased to see this very popular section of National Cycle Network back open for walking and cycling. It's been a great opportunity to work with the Environment Agency and other local partners to reduce inconvenience for people walking and cycling during the closure. Active travel is increasingly important in York and other cities and towns. We look forward to continuing with this sort of cooperation on other flood defence works in the future."

The works at Lendal Bridge took longer than anticipated because during construction, contractors found a large concrete slab directly over the top of two high voltage power cables which then needed to be safely removed by National Power Grid.

The reopening comes ahead of the Environment Agency's Flood Action Week, where people are being encouraged to find out more information on how to make their homes, businesses and communities more resilient to flooding, and sign up for flood warnings.

The Flood Warning Service gives people vital time to prepare in advance of a flood, such as securing important documents, switching off gas and electricity and moving valuables to safety.