

RYBURGH

Parish Council

Bridge Farm

Footpath

December 2024

Bridge Farm Footpath Safety Improvements

A Report for the Residents of Ryburgh

Introduction

Ryburgh Parish Council is pleased to share plans for the improvement of the Bridge Farm footpath (shown on map below). This project has been developed in response to safety concerns along Bridge Road and to enhance pedestrian connectivity for residents and visitors alike.

The footpath, which runs along the north side of Bridge Road from the River Wensum bridge to the junction with The Street leading to Little Ryburgh Cemetery, is currently overgrown and uneven. This condition forces pedestrians, including children and the elderly, onto the narrow and flood-prone road. Bridge Road is not only unsuitable for pedestrian use but also poses significant risks due to limited visibility and frequent traffic, including large vehicles accessing the Crisp Maltings.

This improvement project is part of the Walsingham Way, a historic pilgrimage route, making it not only a vital pedestrian link but also an enhancement of Ryburgh's contribution to Norfolk's walking heritage.

Proposed Project Scope and Overview

The Bridge Farm Footpath Safety Improvements project aims to restore a 350-meter stretch of footpath along the north side of Bridge Road. The proposed improvements will create a safe and accessible grass pathway approximately 1.5 meters wide, benefiting pedestrians and improving connectivity to the A1067 bus stop, the Walsingham Way permissive path, and other local amenities.

The project works include:

1. Clearing and Preparing the Path:

- Removal of overgrown vegetation and debris to restore the route's accessibility.
- Levelling the surface to create a stable and uniform base suitable for pedestrian use.

2. Improving Drainage:

- Addressing water runoff issues to minimize pooling and ensure the path remains usable year-round.
- Norfolk Highways may undertake some drainage improvements in January, subject to remaining funding.

3. Resurfacing:

- Reseeding the cleared and prepared area with durable grass to create a natural, low-maintenance surface.

4. Ongoing Maintenance:

- Regular mowing and inspections to ensure the path remains safe, functional, and accessible in the long term.

These works will result in a visually appealing footpath that integrates seamlessly with the surrounding environment. The proposal has been reviewed and supported by Norfolk Highways engineers, who have confirmed the project's feasibility and alignment with community safety goals.

Community Benefits

The improved footpath will provide numerous benefits:

- **Safety:** Creating a secure alternative to walking along Bridge Road, reducing risks for pedestrians.
- **Accessibility:** Supporting vulnerable groups and improving connections to the bus stop and surrounding walking routes.
- **Heritage:** Enhancing a key section of the Walsingham Way, a historic and cultural walking route.
- **Recreation:** Encouraging outdoor activity and leisure, benefiting both physical and mental health.
- **Community Engagement:** Offering opportunities for residents to participate in shaping local infrastructure projects.

By improving the footpath, this project also supports the wider goals of creating a safer, more sustainable, and healthier community.

Securing Funding

To make this project a reality, Ryburgh Parish Council has applied for funding under Norfolk County Council's Parish Partnership Scheme (PPS). This scheme is designed to support local councils in delivering small-scale highway and footpath improvements that directly benefit the community.

The Parish Council has committed to covering 50% of the total costs, demonstrating our proactive approach and dedication to the project. We believe the strong alignment between this project and the Parish Partnership Scheme's objectives enhances the likelihood of securing the remaining funding.

Stakeholder and Community Support

This project has received enthusiastic support from key stakeholders, including:

- **Steffan Aquarone MP and NCC County Councillor:** Highlighting the project's importance for safety, sustainability, and community infrastructure.
- **Ryburgh Wildlife Group:** Supporting the project for its potential to improve pedestrian safety and access to the countryside.
- **Ryburgh Village Shop:** Emphasizing the value of the path in improving connectivity and access for residents.
- **Norfolk Highways Engineer:** Providing professional support and validation for the project's feasibility and importance.

We are grateful for the feedback and support received from the community and encourage all residents to share their views as we move forward.

Timeline and Next Steps

Funding decisions for the footpath improvement project will be made in early spring. If successful, work is expected to commence in summer.

The Parish Council has spoken directly with Norfolk County Council regarding drainage improvements in the area. NCC has confirmed that improvements are part of a list of 11 projects for which funding has been secured. However, the completion of these works will depend on available resources and priorities. If sufficient funding remains, the drainage improvements could be carried out as early as January. These works would also provide a sound basis for the footpath improvements, ensuring long-term resilience and usability.

We encourage all residents to share their feedback on this project or suggest alternative infrastructure improvements of a similar nature that could benefit the community.

We Want to Hear From You

Your feedback is invaluable. If you have suggestions, concerns, or ideas about this project or other potential infrastructure improvements, please contact the Parish Council Clerk. Together, we can ensure that Ryburgh continues to thrive as a safe and vibrant community.

