

20th May 2019

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to update you on the Ripple Greenway project in your area, with work beginning in **June/July** and set to be **completed by December 2019, with trees planted over winter.**

The Ripple Greenway will be a new nature trail for people on foot and bicycle. The path will run parallel to Thames Road, along the south of the Thames View Playing Fields, linking residents with the Ripple Nature Reserve and public transport links.

JOIN US on **Thursday 23rd from 3pm-7pm on Thames View Playing Fields**, where we will have fun activities for children (led walks and seed bomb making) and concept designs on display for all to see and feedback on.



Benefits of the scheme for children

❖ Health

This route will provide safe, healthy, traffic-free routes to schools, encouraging active travel, healthy lifestyles and access to nature

❖ Play

Natural 'play on the way' features such as boulders and wooden stepping stones will invite children to follow their nose along the route, further encouraging exercise and exploration in the area.

❖ Education

Information boards about local wildlife, bug hotels and ecology walks will all offer educational

interactions with nature. There will also be opportunities for your child to build wildlife habitats and plant trees this year.

❖ Wellbeing

It will be a peaceful and enjoyable destination in itself, with benches provided for families to enjoy this community greenspace.

Community engagement events have included:

A steering group has informed the direction of the project since November 2018, with representatives from: Thames View and Barking Reach/Riverside residents associations, schools, councillors, Thames Ward Community Project, local faith groups and wildlife specialists.

7 public design workshops open to all at the Sue Bramley Centre, Rivergate Centre, on the Thames View Playing Field and outside schools from November - March 2019. Local residents contributed views and ideas on issues such as: Wayfinding / signage, bins, benches, play features, wildlife and access points.

Site visit and design session with pupils from Riverside Secondary school.

A disability audit of the site with L.B. Barking & Dagenham Access Group, ensuring that the Ripple Greenway will be fully accessible to all users.

Results of community design process



We surveyed 107 residents at events and found:

- 94% of survey respondents were 'very' or 'extremely' interested in a better path surface to improve access for people with pushchairs, people on bicycles, wheelchair users etc.
 - We have designed a 3 metre wide walking and cycling tarmac path in line with current design standards. This will be the same width as the existing path which leads from Bastable Avenue to Thames Road across the field. We carried out a disability audit of the site with the L.B.B.D. Access Group, who advised us on creating a path fit for purpose for all users.
- 79% are very or extremely interested in educational activities for children
 - This greenway will be a fantastic educational resource, with a wide range of outdoor learning opportunities and events for young people.
- 65% are very or extremely interested in planting fruit trees and 66.3% were interested in natural features and habitats for wildlife
 - This project will receive an extra £40,000 funding to go specifically towards trees. There will be a community led tree planting programme in the autumn, and charity Thames 21 will be bought in to clean up the 'ditch' waterway. If you and your child would like to get involved, contact us (details below).

Top two stated reasons for **not** visiting the site are:

1) **'I do not feel safe here'**

Currently there is fencing which blocks the playing fields from the greenway. Many residents we spoke to reported this as creating a feeling of being enclosed as there are no escape routes. We will open the space up by removing the industrial fencing and adding lighting. This will increase safety by increasing options for users and visibility along the route. In replacement of the fence, bollards, boulders and raised timber flower beds will ensure access points prevent vehicle access onto the field, while making the greenspace more inviting and attractive.

2) **'There are not enough places to sit and rest'**

Both the disability audit and conversations with parents stated this as a major barrier to using the space. Consequently, the concept designs have wooden seating (wood has preferable thermal qualities compared to metal) along the route, retaining a natural feel yet providing much needed seating. This will make the space accessible to a wider range of users.

Would you like to join the **Friends of the Ripple** Group and get involved in training, family-friendly tree planting and other fun events in your area? If so, please join the Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsoftheripple/>

You can view the designs, have your say and read the FAQs at www.lbbd.gov.uk/Ripple-Greenway.

Many thanks,

Jake – Project lead

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See you on **Thursday 23rd from 3pm-7pm on Thames View Playing Fields!**