



**PEAK
DISTRICT**
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Design and Access Statement Footbridge at Cressbrook Mill

Peak District National Park Authority
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1 Summary

This document has been prepared in support of the Planning Application submitted for the proposed development of a replacement footbridge over the river Wye adjacent to Cressbrook Mill. These works are described in detail in the planning application and accompanying plans and drawings.

The proposal is to:

- 1 Remove the existing bridge which has been deemed to be unsafe
- 2 Construct new foundations on the east bank and make alterations to the abutment on the west bank.
- 3 Install a new GRP decked bridge with timber parapet.
- 4 The new bridge will form part of a concessionary footpath that is an important access route in the area.

2 Description of the property and current use

The existing footbridge forms part of a concessionary footpath (Brushfield C1) that allows access from the West bank of the Wye (i.e. the Monsal Trail) onto the East bank and subsequently the concessionary footpath that takes walkers from Cressbrook Mill along the East bank of the Wye via Water-cum Jolly to Litton Mill where access can be made back across the river to the Monsal trail.

While this path was originally formalised to allow access for walkers from one end of the Monsal Trail to the other (before the Litton and Cressbrook Tunnels were opened to the public in 2011), even with the very popular alternative route along the trail now being an alternative, the concessionary path is still extremely popular with both visitors and locals. The Access and Rights of Way team within the National Park Authority have recognised this as a priority route and one that should be retained.

The existing bridge has been closed to the public since 2019 when it was deemed to be in an unsafe condition. A full condition report detailing why the existing structure is not viable to be retained is attached to this application (45374-001-Cressbrook footbridge - Structural Report).

3 Proposal

The proposal is to replace the existing timber structure with a more resilient, longer lasting GRP alternative that has been designed in such a way so as to provide an unobtrusive structure that is similar in design to the existing structure while being in keeping with the surrounding environment.

The proposal has been designed to compliment the surrounding environment by the use of a relatively slim deck construction with a neutral colour and timber handrails treated to ensure longevity. The size and shape of the structure is dictated by the surrounding environment while providing a longer lasting solution within a relatively harsh environment (the adjacent weir results in significant levels of water vapour in the air).

The existing abutment on the west bank provides a foundation for that end of the bridge and will be retained. There may be some alterations required to ensure the structural integrity of the abutment but it is not possible to assess the extent of this fully until the existing bridge is removed.

The pier close to the east bank is not required for the structural integrity of the new bridge but will be retained to minimise the visual impact of the new development but also to minimise the impact of the actual works on the local environment.

Ground works are required to form a new foundation to the west bank.

4 Environmental Management

4.1 – Internationally / Nationally Protected Sites

There are two protected sites partially located within the footprint of the western abutment of the bridge and are designated as follows:

- The Wye Valley SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). Complex unit (Upper Dale 048) comprising Calcareous grassland with vascular plant interest Limestone fern is abundant on and around the screes in the SE of the unit with thousands of plants.
- Peak District Dales SAC (Special Areas of Conservation). The SAC Qualifying Features are listed as follows:
 - 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)
 - 9180 Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines * Priority feature
 - Annex 1 habitats (qualifying feature but not primary)
 - 4030 European dry heaths
 - 6130 Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae
 - 7230 Alkaline fens
 - 8120 Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (Thlaspietea rotundifolii)
 - 8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation
 - Annex 2 species 1092 White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* (the River Dove represents White-clawed crayfish in a high-quality, upland limestone river, in the north-east of the species' UK range.)
 - Annex 2 species (qualifying feature but not primary)
 - 1096 Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
 - 1163 Bullhead *Cottus gobio*

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Assessment in relation to land surrounding the footbridge is attached to this application and recognises a number of recommendations that will form part of the construction contract.

4.2 – Impact on trees

The East bank of the river is subject to an area TPO. It is very likely that some trees will need to be removed to facilitate the construction of the bridge.

Advice has been sought from the Authority's Tree Conservation Officer and, due to the age of the trees, the TPO does not apply to them.

It is likely that 2 trees on each bank will need to be removed but this will be avoided wherever possible.

4.3 – Sustainability

The primary deck element of the structure is proposed as GRP. While this is not a recycled or recyclable material and has a relatively high production impact, given the environment, it's longevity will likely result in lower impact over its lifetime than alternatives such as steel.

The parapet handrail will be made from treated timber and will be relatively easily replaced in future when this element reaches the end of it's lifespan.

5 Accessibility

The bridge has not been designed to be accessible. While it will provide a relatively level, flat access from the east bank, the west bank is very rough ground and moving beyond the immediate vicinity of the bridge requires walking up steep rock ground that is not suitable for those with limited mobility.

The bridge is therefore not required to be accessible.