

Bridge closed over the Water of Leith

A 'deteriorating' footbridge over the Water of Leith has been closed off by The City of Edinburgh Council.

It is the third bridge in Colinton Dell to be shut due to damage since 2019, with the others still awaiting repair.

The narrow footbridge connecting part of the Water of Leith Walkway with Redhall Walled Garden was cordoned off on Friday 5 August "to ensure public safety", following an inspection which revealed "deterioration" of parts of the bridge, according to council officials.

Edinburgh Council said the extent of necessary works is being investigated and the timescale of the closure is currently unknown.

A sign attached to barricades at the crossing urged the public to "respect the closure" and use an alternative route, however it was reported on social media that by Monday 8 August barriers had been moved and people have continued to use the bridge.

A spokesperson for the local authority said staff re-secured the barriers and added they will be "checked regularly". It is also understood the sticky tape currently holding them in place will be replaced with a chain and padlock.

A spokesperson for the Water of Leith Conservation Trust said: "It's a shame it needs to be closed but it is for public

safety reasons so we hope people respect the closure and don't put themselves in danger."

People using the path can still cross the water less than half a mile away at Bogsmill Bridge, however the latest footbridge closure marks the third in as many years for Colinton Dell.

The Redhall Weir Bridge and nearby 'pipe bridge' were declared rotten at the end of 2019 and both are still waiting to be fully replaced.

Local councillor for Colinton, Scott Arthur, said having three bridges out of action "significantly reduces the accessibility of the Dell area".

He added: "It makes it harder for people to firstly access the Dell and then walk around them. So without a doubt it makes it harder for people to make the most of the area."

Cllr Arthur who is the Transport and Environment Convener said it was "clear" fixing the structures has "just not been a priority for the council", calling it "unforgivable" that they weren't fixed during lockdown.

"People were desperate to access greenspace at that time and the closed bridges made it impossible," he said. "I think there's a lot of hopes locally that it would be fixed as soon as possible but it doesn't seem to be happening.

"The money was allocated for the repairs some time ago and originally they were supposed to be finished by the end of 2021, then we were told end of the financial year, then August so I think the latest is early next year they'll be complete."

Cllr Arthur said closures of this kind would be less likely if "regular inspection and proactive maintenance of the bridges" took place.

"Instead," he added, "they seem to have been left so they get to the point where they can't be repaired. Two of the bridges

are having to be completely replaced. It's one of these things where you can see the impact of cuts on councils."

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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