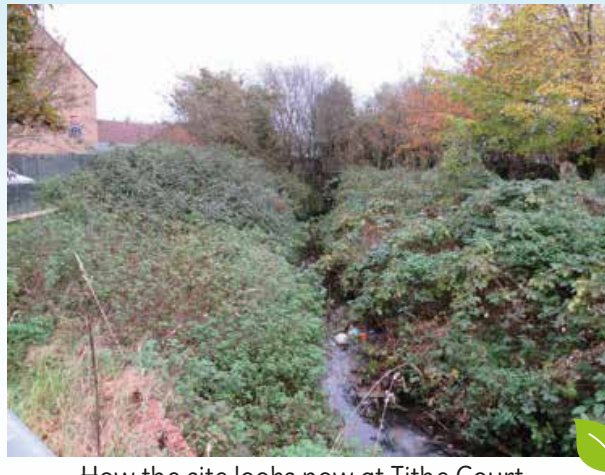




PRESTON BROOK RESTORATION PROJECT

Project Location

Monk's Dale to West Street bridge, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2FL



How the site looks now at Tithe Court.

Project Description

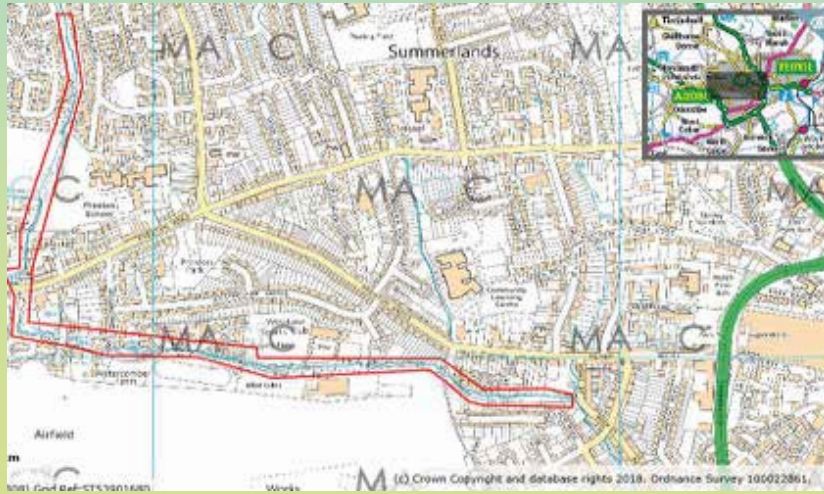
The project's main aims are to restore selected sections of the brook as the first phase of an on-going project to revitalise the brook and maintain the improvements in the long-term. It is hoped that the proposed measures will transform the watercourse from its current neglected and uninviting condition into a high quality urban green space which is attractive to people and wildlife!

The main features include the construction of two backwaters, small areas of bank reprofiling to form flood plain, planting water plants in created backwaters, sowing wildflower seeds to establish areas of wildflowers for pollinators, tree and shrub management, e.g. coppicing and canopy reduction, litter clearance and removal of damaging plants such as Himalayan Balsam. Currently the site is poorly maintained and is covered in scrub in places. The absence of effective tree management has resulted in the degradation of an area of water vole habitat and the project aims to restore this. The brook is in a narrow but deep channel and reacts quickly to heavy rainfall leading to greatly increased flow levels. This poses an increased flood risk and it is planned that the proposed features will help to mitigate this risk.

A limited start to the project was made in September 2017 and thus far areas in Monk's Dale, Bell Chase and near West Street bridge have seen works undertaken such as tree management, clearance of scrub and preparation of areas for sowing wildflower seed, litter clearance and removal of Himalayan Balsam. A key part of the project was to carry out a series of surveys to obtain valuable data and form the basis for an eventual monitoring programme when the works are completed.

The works to create the backwaters and reprofile the bank require consent from the Lead Local Flood Risk Authority. This requires modelling of actual and potential flood water flows on a special computer programme. This work is still being undertaken but it is hoped that this can be completed in the near future to enable the new features to proceed. These are designed to increase flood storage capacity and it is hoped will help mitigate any flooding risk.

The project aims to deliver multiple benefits to the community in a safe and sustainable way while providing opportunities for community involvement at every stage.



Location of Preston Brook Restoration Project

Main Features and Benefits

Proposed Features:

- Two new backwaters connected to brook
- Creating new habitats with water plants in backwaters and bank margins
- Removal of litter and invasive plants and on-going maintenance
- Establishment of wildflower areas and tree management on banksides
- Restoration of water vole habitat
- Interpretation boards
- Putting up bird nest boxes, bat boxes and creating insect houses



Himalayan Balsam Clearance, Bell Chase.



Degraded water vole habitat, Bell Chase.



Poorly managed area with Himalayan Balsam infestation.



Restoration – wildflower area establishing.

Benefits:

- Alleviation of flood risk along the reach from Preston Road to Century Park
- Environmental benefits through improvement of water and air quality by removing pollutants
- A bigger and better range of homes for wildlife which promotes biodiversity
- A higher quality green space for the community to enjoy with the brook reconnected as an exciting visual feature and focal point
- Restoring habitat for water vole.
- Promoting a sustainable resource which responds to climate change positively and promotes the security of the site
- Provides a show case for future projects and adds to our knowledge base through effective assessment and monitoring
- Indirect benefits include: improved stakeholder involvement and empowerment, raised awareness of environmental issues and benefits, promotion of public investment in environmental wealth, enhanced sense of community and place.



Wildflower area for pollinators generating, Monk's Dale.



This part has great potential for enhancement!

Project Timetable

The project started in July 2017 with extensive surveys carried out to assess the condition of the brook and the wildlife living there. A list of recommended improvements was also prepared and outline designs developed. The scheme will need Land Drainage Consent to create the backwaters and reprofile sections of bank which requires hydraulic modelling.

Funding is the main constraint with phases being implemented as money becomes available.

An approximate timetable for the project is shown below:

Surveys and Concept Design: July – November 2017 (completed)

Vegetation clearance and sowing wildflower seed: November 2017 - February 2018

Tree management (coppicing, canopy raising and reduction, thinning): November 2017 - March 2018

Outline Design of in-channel features (backwaters, reprofiled bank sections/flood meadow) and hydraulic modelling (computer simulations): October 2017 – On-going (subject to further funding)

Detailed Design, Land Drainage Consent and implementation of in-channel works: November 2018 – October 2019 (Funding dependent).

Maintenance of restoration works: October 2018 – on-going.

Want to get more involved?

YRCT welcomes the involvement of all members of the community in all our activities.

If you would welcome the chance to make improvements to our environment and the community by supporting our work through volunteering or are thinking of becoming a trustee please do contact us either by email, Facebook or our website.

