

The Watercress Way

Strategic Plan 2015 -18



What are the charitable aims of The Watercress Way?

Develop a route (non-motorised), which will be waymarked as The Watercress Way, based on the disused railway lines from Alresford to Sutton Scotney via Kings Worthy in Hampshire

Connect sections of the route that are publicly accessible (by connecting paths or seeking new connections)

Ensure the sections open to the public are well maintained

Develop the route for all ages and levels of mobility

Offer opportunities to volunteer (in physical or other activities)

What are the opportunities?

A significant distance of The Watercress Way is in public ownership or enjoys access through a network of rights of way.

The public will learn more about the heritage, and ecology of The Watercress Way.

The public will enjoy the health and leisure benefits of The Watercress Way.

The Watercress Way will link to other sites of interest

Volunteers interested in heritage and ecology will be able to take up volunteering opportunities, training etc.

What are the challenges?

The land is not all in public ownership.

There are a number of homes built along or near the disused railway lines.

The access points to the line are poor and need to be upgraded for accessibility purposes.

The route will need deviations from the disused lines and will need to incorporate any changes as time allows and the project develops.

The funding for such projects traditionally comes from a variety of sources. The Trustees of The Watercress Way intend to communicate with stakeholders to achieve this.

What are the Milestones along the Way?

2015-16

Milestone 1: Set up quarterly newsletter, at least twenty recipients from the public and interested parties to become a 'Friend of the Line'

First newsletter 15 December 2015

Milestone 2: Following a meeting of interested stakeholders Identify founding trustees and agree a constitution.

**EGM held on 7 September 2015 at Martyr Worthy Village hall, 17 attended
4 Founding trustees were identified at a meeting on 13 October 2015
Constitution based on Charity Commission model agreed 12 January 2016**

Milestone 3: Apply to the Charity Commission to be registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

**Application made April 2016
Registered Charity 16 June 2016**

Milestone 4: Design and publish website.

**Domain name purchased November 2015
ITC Online commissioned to design website December 2015
Website live March 2016**

Milestone 5: Bank account set up and funds sought to commence operations. Donations received and HCC grant for £1000 applied for and received.

**Bank account set up 17 November 2015
£1000 grant received February 2016**

Milestone 6: Carry out a study of the route, to include the railway heritage, ecology and potential health and recreational benefits for the community. This will inform the priorities of the trustees and identify points where

- changes are desired and could be made,
- improvements have to be made on health and safety grounds,
- improvements could be made to interpret and develop points along the line, sites off to visit etc.

Milestone 7: Five initial projects have been identified and planning has been started. The projects will commence once CIO status application submitted.

- Project 1: Set up the Charity and launch the website: thewatercressway.org.uk
- Project 2: (Kings Worthy)
Extension of route alongside former railway from Lovedon Lane to the A33
- Project 3: (New Alresford)
Establishing a route in New Alresford linking the Station area to New Farm Road
- Project 4: (Itchen Abbas)
Establish a passable route from Northington Road to Rectory Lane following the track of the former railway, starting by trying to get a link between Footpath 33 to the south of the track and Footpath 39 to the north.
- Project 5: (Sutton Scotney)
Establish a route to the centre of Sutton Scotney gaining access through a new housing development which is in the course of planning.

**Projects identified at meeting on 13 October 2015
Projects officer developed detailed plans ready to commence in April 2016**

Milestone 8: Talk to potential partners to seek support: Parish Councils, local businesses, historic sites, public houses, HCC, SDNPA, WCC, The Country Access Forum and appropriate voluntary bodies

November 2015 – January 2016 the Chairman attended meetings of local parish councils to brief them.

In 2016 meetings held with HCC, WCC, Winchester Ramblers and The Gratton Trust.

Very positive responses.

Milestone 9: Draw up a 'temporary route' based on the land in public ownership so that the public can enjoy and understand the route of The Watercress Way in total or in part. Map this route and measure the length. Publish the route and a series of suggested walks on the website.

Planned April 2016

Milestone 10: Hold a variety of launch events to publicise The Watercress Way – website, aims, signage of first section.

April – September 2016

Milestone 11: Design and fund appropriate signage to mark the Watercress Way. Liaise with Hampshire County Council to mark the first sections.

April – September 2016

Milestone 12: Investigate liability insurance and purchase suitable cover for volunteers working on The Watercress Way.

April – June 2016

Milestone 13: Increase the number of trustees by identifying and recruiting people with relevant knowledge and expertise. Liaise with local voluntary organisations and the South Downs National Park to provide volunteers and expertise to work on projects identified by the trustees

3 new trustees appointed February 2016

2 further trustees appointed May 2016

Total of 9 trustees of registered charity June 2016

Milestone 14: Search and identify the ownership and contact details of all land and structures along the route.

Commence June 2016

Milestone 15: Trustees identify future plans for development of the route.

June – September 2016

Milestone 16: Hold the first AGM of The Watercress Way

June 2017

2017

Carry out audits of heritage, ecology and access to the route

Milestone: Audit of accessibility needs completed against criteria set with stakeholders

Assessing the cost of the project:

The audit of each section will reveal the need for works which can be costed.
The Trustees will seek funding for these projects.

Milestone: Funding is achieved to carry out the identified projects

Communicate changes and progress to the public:

Update route maps of The Watercress Way online, and republish maps as appropriate.
Publicise changes of environment, improvements etc. with events to raise public awareness of the route and seek to gain more support as project progresses.

Milestone: At least 200 members of the public receives 'Friend of the Line' newsletters

For The Future

- Set annual goals for progress, communication and public involvement.
- Determine progress against these goals. Agree the final ownership of any changes or improvements with stakeholders and public bodies.
- Report back to 'Friends of the Line' and registered stakeholders at each Annual General Meeting of the Charity.
- Publicise progress of the plans, and any changes.
- In the event of unforeseen difficulties, agree exit strategy, including measures of success, handover of responsibilities and any future planning needed.

Milestone: Celebrate the final route of The Watercress Way

1953 OS map showing the Disused Railway lines

