

Batheaston Parish Council – Council Meeting 13th January 2026
Woodland Walk Project Proposal



Summary

In January 2026, Council approved the scoping of a project to create a footpath on the Parish Council's land along St Catherine's Brook, from the playground to the Rhymes Pavilion, and possibly further onto land owned by others.

The project objective is: "To develop a path that provides access to this space which is safe; as accessible as possible; and preserves the natural environment and wildlife"

This report **seeks approval to proceed**, providing an outline of likely costs and budget, and the submission of an application for match-funding from the West of England Combined Authority Community Nature Fund (www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/community-nature-fund/).

Outline of the Proposal

To provide a path and public access to the wooded area on Parish Council land, lying between the football pitch and St Catherine Brook. The path will run from the southwest corner of the playground to either the Rhymes Pavilion, or – if extension can be agreed with neighbouring landowners – further to the south. The conversations with landowners are underway currently; this proposal allows for either option.

Progress

I have:

- sought advice from a Land Management Adviser of B&NES
- commissioned tree and badger surveys
- met members of Grow Batheaston and Cotswolds Volunteers to discuss the project and agree in outline what they might be prepared to do to help to create the path. They have already cleared part of the path (see the appendix for photographs of the work last weekend).

Costs

Total approx. £7,000 as follows:

- to design and produce interpretation boards and safety signs - £1,000
- to replace the existing fence in the playground and install a gate - £1,000
- to provide a wooden walkway, capable of withstanding floods, at the north end of the path - £3,000
- tree surgery to clear the path, and to remove potentially hazardous trees - £2,000
- publicity and opening of the path - £200.

These figures will be confirmed over the next month by seeking quotes, and a bid for 50% of the costs will be submitted to WECA.

Ongoing maintenance

- Remove invasive plants, remove or cut back dangerous trees, encourage native species.
- Maintain paths, fences and signs.
- Monitor use, periodically clear litter, address any vandalism.

Addition to the Project: Replacement of Leylandii Hedge

Replacing the leylandii with a variety of more nature-friendly trees, subject to planning permission and to agreement with BSF (especially with respect to any co-dependencies with plans for sports facilities replacement. To be discussed with BSF Trustees. I have undertaken the following preparatory steps:

- A badger survey has been undertaken: there is a sett in the tree roots but would not present a major obstacle.
- I have spoken to an ecologist who lives in the village and intend to commission a bat survey next spring (when it is next possible).
- I have sought advice of the Forestry Commission, who will require a felling licence.

Next Steps

- Confirm this plan with Batheaston Sports Foundation (BSF), to whom the land is to be leased in the coming months.
- Confirm whether the extension of the path to the south will be possible.
- Submit a bid to WECA for their Community Nature Fund, to match fund the costs (the deadline was this Friday, 11th September, but has been extended to 13th October).

Approval is sought to proceed

Richard Maccabee

Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

7th September 2026

Appendix – Photos of work carried out on Saturday 5th September, showing before and after.