



The Widcombe Association

Mr Mike Youe,
Enterprise Manager,
Canal and River Trust,
LLanthy Warehouse,
The Docks,
Gloucester,
GL1 2EH

7th February, 2022

Dear Mr. Youe

This letter is written by the Widcombe Association in support of the application for CIL funding for improvements to the canal towpath alongside the Kennet and Avon Canal from Widcombe to Bathwick Hill. The application is being made by the Canal and Rivers Trust. The application relates the section of the canal from Widcombe (St Matthews Place) to Bathwick Hill. The Widcombe Association is the largest Residents' Association in Bath, and is very active in promoting and carrying out environmental improvements within and around Widcombe. The Association has been campaigning for some years for improvements to this section of the canal towpath.

The K&A Canal joins the River Avon in the centre of Widcombe and the canal with its deep locks is a major attraction for Bath residents and tourists. This section of the canal is heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists as it is the entry section to the canal from the centre of the city. It is easily accessible on foot from the bus and railway stations. It is a recognised route from the City Centre to the Holburne Museum and Art Gallery in Bathwick. The canal towpath is one of the principal leisure routes through Bath, and takes people from the very centre of the city to open countryside. It is designated both as a cycle track and as a footpath, and the section from Widcombe to Bathwick Hill must be one the most heavily used along the whole of the canal's length. However, this section of the canal towpath is in very poor condition. It is uneven and numerous puddles form following rainfall, especially on the section that runs behind Caroline Buildings, and also higher up opposite Sydney Buildings. For an asset that is promoted to tourists and is well used by local people, its condition is a very poor advertisement for Bath.

The Widcombe Association has been seeking improvements to this section of the towpath for some years. In 2019 the Widcombe Association prepared a Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Widcombe and the Kennet and Avon Canal on behalf of the Council. It was published in draft by the Council in 2020 and is available on the Banes web-site. In that document (page 33) it states *"The canal towpath from Widcombe Locks towards Bathwick is in a poor state of repair with extensive puddling following heavy rain."* There is a photograph in the report of the towpath to the rear of Caroline Buildings illustrating its condition. Later in the report (page 35) a list of potential improvements includes *"Improvement to the river and canal side to match improvements that have already been applied to both the east and the west, including maintenance of paths. This applies particularly to the canal towpath which was improved between Bathampton and Bathwick, but not along the section to Widcombe"*.

In summary, the Widcombe Association fully supports the application for CIL funding to carry out the improvements to the canal towpath between Widcombe and Bathwick Hill. The project is one that would be of great benefit not just to local people but to the City as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

WWW.WIDCOMBEASSOCIATION.ORG.UK

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