

Statement of Support for Avon Wildlife Trust's Proposal for Entry Hill Golf Course, Bath

By Adam Gretton, Chair, More Trees for Bath and north east Somerset

moretreesbanes@gmail.com | 07739 737274

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Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Adam Gretton, and I'm the founder and chair of More Trees BANES, a non-profit community group, which has been going for 12 years.

We have been made aware of Avon Wildlife Trust's bid for Entry Hill Golf Course and would like to voice our support for their plans.

You, the council, have declared a climate emergency, and tomorrow are voting on whether you declare an ecological emergency. Whether this is voted through or not, we are in an ecological and climate emergency. The two go hand-in-hand and cannot really be separated from each other.

As you will see in this bid, AWT have pointed out that 41% of UK wildlife species are in decline and 15% are at risk of extinction, primarily due to the threats of climate change and habitat loss.

Although they are green and pleasant to look at, golf courses are typically quite sterile environments, where chemicals such as pesticides are used. Even where these aren't used, the frequent mowing and emphasis on certain grasses makes them deceptively barren places as far as wildlife goes.

Most of us are acutely aware of the importance of bees and pollinating insects, and yet we continue to allow widespread use of pesticides and removal of habitat.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity here to create a rich wildlife haven, which local residents and visitors can also enjoy. It's an innovative model and one which we hope to be part of. We're exploring the potential for More Trees BANES to have a Community Tree Nursery as part of AWT's plans for Entry Hill. This would see us engage with the local community and schools etc, to collect seed from local trees, germinate and grow these on, for planting out in the local area. We hope to be able to make it easier for you to hit your target of planting 100,000 trees by May 2023, and reduce the need for you to import saplings from abroad.

We have nothing against golf, but do feel there are plenty of other places to play locally. This nature reserve will appeal to a much broader and larger group of people.

I ask you to support Avon Wildlife Trust's bid and grab this incredible opportunity for Bath.

Thanks for listening.