

Entry Hill Golf Course, Bath – Statement to Cabinet

I am speaking today as both a Bath resident and Director of Conservation at Avon Wildlife Trust.

As the Council has recognised, we are facing a climate and nature emergency locally as well as globally, with accelerating declines in wildlife undermining the natural systems on which we depend. Entry Hill presents a significant opportunity to address the ecological, climate, health and economic crises we now face. Avon Wildlife Trust and Forest of Imagination have submitted a proposal to maximise this opportunity by creating a new nature and art park for Bath.

Bath is an internationally important area for wildlife so greenspaces like Entry Hill can provide vital links in the “wildlife corridors” needed to support nature’s recovery and deliver a net gain for biodiversity in Bath. Sites like Entry Hill can help to tackle air pollution through natural solutions such as tree planting and improving the ability of the land to absorb and store carbon through the restoration of soils and meadow creation. This is currently limited by intensive and damaging management.

Opening the site to everyone will enable people to get closer to nature and have enormous health and wellbeing benefits for residents and visitors, placing the importance of the environment, creativity and the arts at the heart of this process. Developing a new landscape scale outdoor offer for visitors to the city will aid a green recovery for Bath. It will offer something new for visitors and residents by establishing a nature-rich landscape and create valuable green infrastructure that contributes to the West of England Nature Recovery Network.

Bath and North East Somerset Council have limited assets available for such transformational projects with long term ecological, societal and economic benefits. A nature and art park at Entry Hill can incorporate multiple benefits for the local community, visitors, Bath’s economy and the environment whilst enabling the Council to deliver their ambitions to address the ecological and climate emergencies.

Nature urgently needs our help to recover and we need nature and creativity to thrive, it is not yet too late to make a difference. I urge Bath and North East Somerset Council to make addressing the ecological and climate crisis the most important factor in determining the future of all their land holdings and in doing so instigate a green recovery for the city.