

My name is Paul Wontner, I represent the **Somersetshire Coal Canal Communities Alliance**.

You have all received documents in recent days, via the Guildhall, which describes in detail the concerns we have on this subject and I urge you to read them.

The Somersetshire Coal Canal is a much respected and well enjoyed heritage asset, however the Coal Canal Society have vision and plans to restore it to a navigable waterway along it's Northern Arm.

PAUSE

B&NES have a policy proposal, **HD/SCCW**, which was in the November 2025 Reset Local Plan Options Consultation that supports the restoration.

We believe that the inclusion of the proposed policy is at complete odds with the **Draft Climate and Nature Strategy**.

Our **Alliance** is formed from 5 of the 7 Parish Councils, landowners and residents along its route all who object and have already objected formally to the inclusion of the restoration policy.

It is our intent to have B&NES withdraw the proposal for support of restoration including the safeguarding of land.

The restoration would destroy countless mature habitats that have developed in the 125yrs since it closed, it would remove the enjoyment so many have from the current status.

Within **Combe Hay** alone, the plans include :

- Building of x5 new road bridges
- Rebuilding a tunnel and an aqueduct
- Extracting water from Cam Brook
- Destruction of over 2000 mature trees
- Threatens the village cemetery
- Safeguarding of land for diversions not discussed with landowners
- The plans do not include the digging out of the 100,000's tons infill of the original canal, filled in the 1940's 50's and 60s with building rubble and waste from Bath City.

This detail applies to Combe Hay, similar is planned for **Dunkerton, Monkton Combe, Camerton, Midford**, all of whom have a variety of other challenges including threats to property survival where diversions are not possible.

There are in total, 22 bridges planned, including over the A367.

There is no evidence of public support, no evidence of ecological benefit, no evidence of economic benefit, no evidence of feasibility of what amounts to a major infrastructure project for decades, no funding demonstrated.

This restoration and the support of B&NES would rip apart rural communities, and we believe is wrong for B&NES to consider a policy that supports such unfeasible and unpopular plans.

Our aim is to have B&NES withdraw the proposed policy.

We want this to be withdrawn now and not appear in Draft Local Plan.

For these reasons, **The Alliance** respectfully ask you to look carefully into how the proposed policy has been developed and request reconsideration of its inclusion.

A more appropriate approach would be to leave things as they are and recognise the historic and ecological importance of the canal corridor while supporting the conservation and protection of existing structures and landscape character.

We look for your support in this matter and thank you for listening.