



Wellington Town Council – Council of the Year Finalists

In October Wellington Town Council was named as one of five finalists in the National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) Star Council Awards in the Council of the Year category. They were recognised for a range of work that they have undertaken including support of heritage projects in town, collaboration with local groups, and engagement with the public through consultations and surveys.

One of the main factors that got Wellington Town Council into the finals was their work towards securing "The Green Corridor", a 64-acre area of open land that was bought by Somerset West and Taunton District Council (now Somerset Council) and leased to the Town Council for 150 years. The area of land stretches south from Fox's Field adjacent to Tonedale Mill, a Grade II listed Heritage at Risk Site, and ends at Exeter Road. The land's western and eastern boundaries are the village of Rockwell Green and the area known as The Basins, man-made ponds that once supplied water that powered the machinery at Tonedale Mill.

The Green Corridor project highlights Wellington's commitment to preserving and improving our environment. The land that composes the Green Corridor would have been tempting for housing developers and the purchase and lease of this land ensures that it remains as green space that is open to the public.

One of the few areas of the Green Corridor that is not open to the public 24/7 is an area of land that the Council has leased to a newly established Community Farm. Having started their pilot earlier this year, the farm has produced an abundance of crops for their crop shareholders, even having extra pumpkins leftover that they were able to sell throughout October. The future of the Community Farm looks bright as the Council has agreed to extend the amount of land they can use, As a result they have just advertised for a full-time paid grower to join their otherwise voluntary team. In the coming years the farm hopes to become an educational resource for the town's schools and aid in children's understanding of food production and our environment as a whole.

A Green Corridor Advisory Board has been established led by the Council but including a number of interested voluntary and other groups such as The Woodlad Trust which advises the Council on developing plans for the land over the next years and decades as it hopes to increase biodiversity and shape the land into an area that promotes healthy living, environmental preservation, education, and leisure. The local Sports Federation have a keen interest in part of the land as there is a shortage of junior sports pitches in the town and an ever-increasing young population. Feasibility studies are yet to be carried out but there is hope that even if the pitches cannot be built, that walking, running, and cycling facilities can be improved in the area and that more outdoor activity can be encouraged. Transition Town Wellington

are key partners on the biodiversity front and have worked with the Council and its other stakeholders to formulate planting strategies and identify the species of flora and fauna that already flourish in the area and to consider how biodiversity can be improved.