



Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds

SPECIAL NEWSLETTER October 2022

De-culverting Gilwiskaw Brook

Trent Rivers Trust has prepared a feasibility report on a project to 'daylight' Gilwiskaw Brook in the Bath Grounds which was presented at Ashby de la Zouch Town Council's Parks and Cemetery Committee meeting on Monday 26 September.

De-culverting Gilwiskaw Brook, Bath Grounds Feasibility Assessment



Report to Trent Rivers Trust
September 2022



PR122/RL1/F

The scheme would open up the brook which currently runs through a culvert straight underneath the town, emerging south of Ashby before joining the River Mease.

This would essentially mean an open stream running across the Bath Grounds

Trent Rivers Trust says it wants to de-culvert the waterway to promote bio-diversity and wildlife, while providing an added feature for visitors to the Bath Grounds.

Councillors' Comments

Ashby Town Councillors had mixed views on the scheme, but one described the idea as potentially 'catastrophic' and 'ludicrous'. Concerns were raised about flooding, fly-tipping & urban waste and loss of land, in addition both Ashby Bowls Club and Ashby Hastings Cricket Club, have concerns about the proposal.

Cllr Jim Hoult said that the brook was channelled in a straight line underneath the town for a good reason.

He said: "The culvert was put there to stop Ashby flooding. It goes from Brook Street and comes out the other side of the railway line. The reason is it takes the water out of the town fast. I think if this plan happened, then insurance premiums for businesses would rocket. I'm against this all the way and I think it's absolutely ludicrous."

Cllr John Deakin, Ashby's Mayor, speaking as a member of the public, was also critical of the idea.

He said: "Trent Rivers Trust do a great deal of good work and try to make a difference in this area. But most of their work takes place in country areas not in urban areas. There are many considerations to take into account when undertaking a project of this magnitude and providing a new course, although I don't criticise the report itself. The site has Green Belt status, the highest level of planning protection against new developments, this would require planning permission. The site is already used by sports club and for organised events, and there would be a loss of land. It would, in my opinion, be catastrophic."

But Cllr Barbara Kneale felt the project was worth looking into further and perhaps putting to the public. She said "We need to have as wide a public consultation as possible to get the views of the people in the town. I've been to places like Salisbury and seen what they've done by using the water to make a really attractive park. I think it'd be interesting to take it further to see if it's a good idea or not. "

Trent Rivers Trust Comments

Alan Graham, from the Trent Rivers Trust, responded to the comments made during the meeting and said: "It's come across that there are some issues. But we're not just doing this for the wildlife, it's for the people as well. We're trying to create a better and more attractive environment. That's something we have to try and sell to you. With the cricket club, we've gone around the outfield so that wouldn't be affected, and there'd still be a large green area for events".

"You'd lose a bit of land, but I'd say the benefits outweigh any of the issues. The main thing I'd say about the flood risk assessment is that they are very expensive to do and, at the moment, this is a feasibility report and we haven't gone to that level yet, but it would certainly be done".

"We need to have discussions to see if people would want it or not. It's something we'd like to do, but if there isn't the desire for it, we wouldn't go ahead with it. Consultation will be required as part of seeking the necessary planning consents and environmental permission relating the de-culverting of a main river".

We want to hear your views

The meeting concluded with the Town Council resolving to formulate a plan with Trent Rivers Trust for wider public consultation on the feasibility study.

As part of this the committee of the Friends group are keen to hear the views of our members on this matter and we will be discussing the pros and cons at our AGM on 18 October at 7pm at the Ivanhoe Club 1 Wilfred Pl, Ashby-de-la-Zouch LE65 2GW.

We'd be delighted if you could attend to share your opinions and to comment on the other matters covered in our agenda. If you are unable to attend, please email us at bathgroundsfriends@gmail.com to let us know if you are for or against the proposal to open up the brook.



Finally, our thanks to Graham Hill at the Ashby News Nub for reporting this story.