

ADEPT President's Awards 2023

Entry form

Main contact name Miriam Woolnough

Email miriam_woolnough@bathnes.gov.uk

Award category Shaping Places for People

Project Title Somer Valley Rediscovered

Local authority entrant Bath & North East Somerset Council

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

Somer Valley Rediscovered aims to improve biodiversity and, by increasing people's connections to nature, improve health and wellbeing.

Please note we need at least one supporting image per award submission. Upload your image/s below.



Video - please paste links to any video evidence here. (Leave blank if not relevant.)

https://youtu.be/LPQbF_ptwB0

Shaping places for people: How was this project an innovative response to a significant concern? (150 words max.)

An area of stunning landscape but also high health need, in sharp contrast to other areas of B&NES, with higher levels of childhood obesity, people living in poverty, higher levels of physical inactivity, and poor adult mental health.

Recognising the link between good quality greenspace and health and wellbeing, B&NES Council (Public Health Team and Green Infrastructure & Nature Recovery Team) came together with Wessex Water and Natural England in 2020 to seed fund a Project Officer to develop a project in the Somer Valley that looked at improving health and wellbeing by connecting people to nature. By improving the quality of greenspace and stemming wildlife loss alongside creating a programme of community engagement opportunities, Somer Valley Rediscovered aims to help people to rediscover their local walks, heritage and natural environment and show how this can influence positive change for communities and nature.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the quality of outcomes obtained from the

project (for example improved/more efficient services, increased inclusivity for residents, futureproofing the service). (150 words max.)

SVR has worked with Radstock Town Council and Westfield Parish Council to aid the purchase of land and creation of masterplans of Haydon Batch and Waterside Valley. SVR has also worked with Midsomer Norton on the development of Midsomer Norton Town Park and Wellow Brook Walk. All these sites now have masterplans which detail improving biodiversity, access and interpretation and encouraging the local community to visit and spend time connecting to nature. These masterplans informed the successful WECA Green Recovery Fund bid.

Somer Valley Rediscovered has worked with Radstock Town Council, Midsomer Norton Town Council and Westfield Parish Council to create a new greenspace map which appears on bus shelters around the area and is also available to download. The map shows a range of greenspaces to visit in the area including woodlands, meadows, streams, cycle-paths and parks.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of collaboration between place and people services (both within the council and with external partners/providers). (150 words max.)

SVR is a strategic project listed in the WECA Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Initially led by B&NES Council, Wessex Water, Natural England and B&NES Public Health, now also includes Radstock Town Council, Westfield Parish Council, Midsomer Norton Town Council, 3SG, BACP and University of Bath.

SVR linked closely with Wessex Water's Innovative Pathway Control project which looked at pharmaceutical load in watercourses in the Somer Valley and the link to Green Social Prescribing.

SVR is working with the DfT Active Travel England funded project 'The Active Way' providing a range of walking and cycling interventions in the Somer Valley, which health authorities can refer clients to activities, led by B&NES Public Health Team and Sustainable Transport Team. The crossover provides opportunities for added value around green social prescribing activities and volunteering.

SVR also works with BART, Midsomer Norton Community Trust, B&NES Parks department and 3 Valleys Primary Care Network (PCN).

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of buy-in to the project or its goals from members of the local community, health and social care and external organisations. (150 words max.)

These greenspaces are small sites located in urban areas but linked by the tributary watercourses of the Wellow Brook. However, their small size should not take away from the larger gains to be made from making a start on nature recovery with the active engagement of local and often "harder to reach" communities.

There has been strong buy-in from the town and parish councils for SVR which has culminated in the WECA SVR Greenspaces funding. This funding will help to realise the aspirations that have been identified in the masterplans for the key greenspaces.

Bath College, Somer Valley Campus has expressed interest in the project and new links are being forged with students.

Work with 3 Valleys PCN has been well received and SVR is working with local providers of green prescribing activities.

The events and activities that have already taken place have been well received by the local community.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the use or consideration of new sources of investment to fund projects. (150 words max.)

WECA Green Recovery Fund awarded £923,246 to SVR in 2022. This was matched by £436,384 to create a 3-year project with a budget of £1,359,630

The match funding is made up of contributions from project partners, CIL funding, S106 and volunteer time.

Until 2010 Radstock, Midsomer Norton and Westfield were one council; Norton Radstock Town Council. After 2010 they devolved to three separate town /parish councils and to each individually raise the funds needed to roll out greenspace improvements would have been challenging. Working together with SVR has enabled significant funding to improve biodiversity, improve the accessibility of the sites and also to provide a programme of community engagement.

All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry

Somer Valley Rediscovered is led by a small team of staff – Miriam Woolnough / Jess Taylor Project Manager (jobshare), Phoebe Webster, Project Officer, Emma Carlisle, Volunteer Co-ordinator (from May).

Natural England have also provided Project Officer time to support the Green Social Prescribing element of the project.