



End of Year Report 2021: Brush Cutting and planning

This has been another challenging year for us all however, we have been busy during the year. We have recruited new trustees, run guided walks and improved the ecology of the line. A new website is ready to be launched and we have ambitious plans for 2022.



Our 3 new trustees, Stephen Jeffery, Chris Brunskill and Emma Banks have been integrated into the team and are now leading exciting projects. We have also recruited Julie Fullstone to be our Treasurer. She will be an excellent addition and is aiding planning and financial prudence.

Sadly, two of our long term trustees have retired. Jim Thompson was a founder of the charity and his expertise in ecology and land management will be hard to replace. Kim Adams has been the driving force in organising our guided walks and writing guides in addition to raising funds and developing our social media presence. Both will be greatly missed but will continue to volunteer on an ad hoc basis.

The trustees have continued to meet monthly via Zoom and more recently in person. We have organised a variety of activities including guided walks and regular monitoring and maintenance of the route. This year we were able to hold our AGM in June at Alresford station and were delighted to meet again in person.

If you are interested in helping us or joining in any activities please sign up for our newsletters by becoming a **Friend of the Way**.

We rely totally on donations and grants. Please donate via our website. When doing internet shopping you can support us at no cost via Give As You Live and Amazon Smile. Sign up via www.thewatercressway.org.uk

Activities:

- A series of guided walks in the summer as part of the 8 Walk challenge to complete the whole trail
- Regularly updated the website and social media. On Facebook we set up The Watercress Way group of 256 members plus 1467 followers. On Instagram and Twitter we now have 875 and 82 followers respectively.
- Maintained the Wonston bridge site and improved the route through Sutton Scotney



- Helped maintain the railway paths and improve the ecology. We assisted the Worthy Conservation Volunteer group on habitat improvements at Worthy Down Platforms. Aviva Volunteer Day July 2021. Clearance at Couch Green November 2021
- Conducted tree surveys to identify at risk ash trees on the Martyr Worthy section
- Designed and wrote a new website so we can maintain it more easily and be more responsive to public need
- Prepared a Business Plan to assist in planning our future activities and to support grant applications
- Made a successful bid to Watercress and Winterbourne to fund our activities in 2022 and to improve our volunteer base
- Trustee Stephen Jeffery produced a calendar of The Watercress Way for sale in local shops and online. Profits going to the charity



Local Engagement:

- Re-established contact with local pubs and businesses to act as sponsors as commerce opened up again
- Obtained funding from Hellards Estate Agents for a guide book which will be published in 2022
- Agreed new rights of way along the disused railway line at Top Field, Kings Worthy and helped plan a new path. Worked with Winchester City Council and Kings Worthy Parish Council to implement the plans
- Met with HCC and Itchen Valley Parish Council to make progress on disabled access to the Martyr Worthy mile of the disused Watercress Line following the hiatus of the last year



Plans for 2022

- Install 3 benches generously donated by Alresford Rotary Cub
- Organise and run 10 events to serve the local Community using a grant from Watercress and Winterbourne
- Install a mag post funded by Winchester City Council for children to examine leaves and insects
- Run our dawn to Dusk Day in April and a series of guided walks during the summer
- Continue to enhance the biodiversity of the trail through volunteer sessions



Mike Collis and Trustees