

Congresbury Station Project

History of Congresbury Station

Congresbury railway station was opened with the broad gauge line to Cheddar in August 1869 as a single-platform station. The railway was extended to Wells in 1870, converted to standard gauge in the mid-1870s and then linked up to the East Somerset Railway to provide through services from Yatton to Witham in 1878.



Figure 1 - Congresbury Station in its heyday

Congresbury was remodelled as a two-platform station when the Wrington Vale line opened in 1901. The Wrington line shut to passenger traffic in September 1931. The Yatton to Witham line closed to passengers in September 1963. Congresbury remained opened for goods traffic for a few further months, closing on 1 October 1964. The station buildings were later demolished, though the platforms can be seen on the Strawberry Line Trail.

Proposed Project

Over recent years the platforms at Congresbury station have become very overgrown to the point that many people are unaware they are walking or cycling through an old station with such history. This proposal describes a three phase approach to reveal some of the station's heritage as well as working to support local flora and fauna. The first phase as described in this summary is to clear the undergrowth from the around the platforms themselves.

- Phase 1 – Congresbury Station Platform Clearance
- Phase 2 - The Reedbed
- Phase 3 - Bridge the Yeo

Phase 1: Congresbury Station Platform Clearance

The photo to the right shows the platforms approximately 7 years ago following a clearance. Since then the platforms have become overgrown and the information signs have suffered from weathering (although some signage has recently been replaced).



Figure 2 - The station in the early 2010s

The proposal, working through YACWAG, is to bring together volunteer work parties to clear the platform areas.

Work parties will be coordinated by Steve Rea, YACWAG member and Congresbury Station project lead.

It is important that the clearance has benefits from both a historical interest point of view as well as from a nature conservation perspective. Activities will include:

- Clearing undergrowth (including ivy, young willow, laurel) however protecting established trees and ensuring no disturbance to protected wildlife such as badgers.
- Erecting new information signs providing more information on the history of the station and local flora and fauna.
- Replacing or fixing worn or broken nest boxes put up by YACWAG in the station area.
- Exploring opportunities with YACWAG conservation leads for making new habitat in the area for species such as glow worms.

Key Information:

The success of this project depends on local volunteers giving their time, particularly during the initial clearance. Volunteers will be sought using a number of different communication methods including via:

- The YACWAG mailing list
- Posting on Congresbury.net
- Congresbury mums' and dads' Whatsapp groups and posting on other local social media pages
- St Andrew's school bulletin
- On community notice boards in the village
- St Andrew's church bulletins

Volunteer lists will be coordinated and maintained by Steve Rea. Volunteers will be asked to bring their own tools (loppers/secateurs etc) and a safety briefing and awareness of key risks will be carried out at the start of each session.

Work parties will be undertaken over the autumn and winter months to prevent disturbance to nesting birds in the spring.

The work will generate a substantial amount of cleared material, however it has been confirmed this can be cleared away behind the west 'up' platform.

North Somerset Council will also be asked if North Somerset Recycling and Waste or other local organisations experienced in this kind of work can help with initial clearance.

Local businesses will be engaged and grant funding explored to support any costs incurred such as providing new information boards.

Working groups will be coordinated on a recurring basis going forwards to prevent the site becoming overgrown in subsequent years.

Insurance and Indemnities

All proposed aspects of the project will be carried out under the auspices of YACWAG which as a registered charity is an appropriate vehicle for applying for funding, working under its organisational policies, insurance and accounting systems.

Risks:

Please see the risks log and mitigations at the end of this document relevant to Phase 1 of the project.

Key stakeholders:

The following are key individuals and groups who will be engaged prior to starting Phase 1 of the project.

- North Somerset Council (as owners of the site) – Sam Phillips, Natural Environment Officer.
- YACWAG – trustees via Tony and Faith Moulin
- Strawberry Line Society
- Congresbury Parish Council – via clerk@congresbury-pc.gov.uk
- YACCART (Yatton Congresbury Claverham and Cleeve Archaeology Research Team) – www.ycccart.co.uk
- Congresbury History Group – www.congresburyhistorygroup.co.uk
- Sustrans

Next Steps

Seek initial feedback on this project plan with YACWAG leads. Completed 16.10.22

Share this project plan with North Somerset Council (Sam Phillips) as owners of the site. They have already been engaged prior to developing this plan. (Oct 22). Support gained 2.11.22

Share this project plan with the other key stakeholders listed above answering any questions or concerns that may arise. (Oct/Nov 22)

Issue comms to groups described above seeking volunteers for initial work parties (Nov). First work parties to be planned between Jan 2023 and Feb 2023.

Phases 2 and 3

As noted above, this document describes Phase 1 of the Congresbury Station Project. Phases 2 and 3 will be planned following completion of Phase 1 and specific project plans will then be developed.

Phase 2 seeks to restore the Congresbury reed-bed. If reed-beds are not maintained on an annual basis they dry out and degenerate into scrub and ultimately woodland. This is what is happening to an important reed-bed habitat to the south west of the station area.

Phase 3 is a more ambitious and longer term project that aims to bring to life a project that first came to light in the early 2000s which is to install a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Yeo opposite the station to create a path towards Yatton that follows the original route of the railway.



Figure 3 - The reed-bed

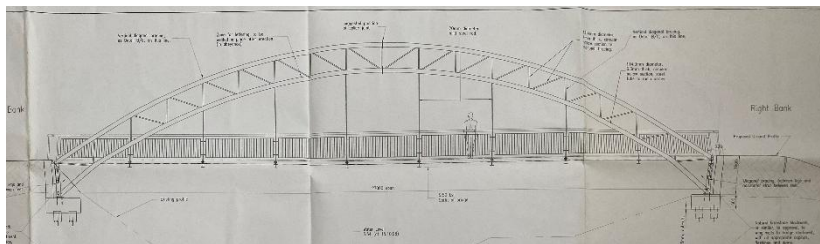


Figure 4 - Previous drawing for 'Bridge the Yeo'

Steve Rea (bass_man100@hotmail.com)

Resident of Congresbury and YACWAG member

16th October 2022

Appendix - Risk Assessment for Phase 1

Risk Assessment Matrix

The following tables give a framework for assessing the risks identified, with some guidance to assist with what a score might mean. The scoring system deliberately places additional emphasis on risks with the most severe consequences but are not very likely over those that are likely but have limited consequence. This aligns with the most recent best practice in assessment and management of risks.

Likelihood / Probability
5. Likely to occur at least once in any 12-month period
4. Likely to occur at least once in a 3-year period
3. Likely to occur at least once in a 10-year period
2. Likely to occur at least once in a 50-year period
1. Unlikely in a 50-year period

Severity / Significance / Consequence
5. Expected to result in building/organisation closure or significant harm to multiple individuals, death of an individual
4. Material threat to continued existence of building/organisation, or significant harm to single individual
3. Substantial adaptation required to ongoing operations
2. Minor adaptation required to ongoing operations
1. Inconvenience to ongoing operations

RISK / PRIORITY INDICATOR MATRIX						
LIKELIHOOD / PROBABILITY	5	7	14	21	28	35
	4	6	12	18	24	30
	3	5	10	15	20	25
	2	4	8	12	16	20
	1	3	6	9	12	15
	1	2	3	4	5	
	SEVERITY / SIGNIFICANCE / CONSEQUENCE					

Score = (Severity x Likelihood) + (2 x Severity)

(this formula places additional emphasis on high severity issues)

Summary		Recommended timeframe for implementing any identified control measures
20+	High	Immediate / within days
15-19	Medium	Within weeks
1-15	Low	Whenever viable to do so

Risk Assessment

The following risk assessment relates to Phase 1 of the Congresbury Station Project – the platform clearance:

Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Score	Control Measures/Mitigations	Person Responsible
As a result of clearance activities there is a risk that badgers or other protected wildlife will be disturbed.	3	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to starting the local environment will be checked for presence of wildlife such as sets or scat.• Clearance activities will cease in the local area if protected wildlife is discovered, such as the presence of badger sets	Steve Rea
As a result of work parties on the Strawberry Line there is a risk that pedestrians/cyclists will be impeded.	4	2	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hi-vis tabards will be supplied and traffic cones used to separate workers from pedestrians/cyclists.• At all times there will be a clear path maintained for pedestrians/cyclists.	Steve Rea
As a result of clearing undergrowth a lot of green waste will be produced which could cause a hazard or obstruction	4	2	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As noted above land has been identified to the west of the platform where green waste can be safely left to decompose.	Steve Rea
As a result of the work nesting birds might be disturbed	2	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The work will be undertaken in the autumn and winter months to prevent disturbance.	Steve Rea
As a result of the clearance established trees might be put at risk.	2	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no intention to fell established trees on the platforms.• If trees are identified as hazardous then the local authority will be consulted and their parks team engaged.	Steve Rea