



Grand Western Greenway

Work-Book setting out the details of a Wellington and Taunton Active travel Route
Grand Western Greenway CIC with Greenways and Cyclerroutes Limited, August 2025

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The ever-increasing traffic on roads is a considerable deterrent to people wanting to walk and cycle. This is especially true in the immediate hinterland of towns and villages where the nearby countryside is tantalisingly out of reach unless one first drives out to a chosen spot. In response to this numerous example of good traffic free paths have been created along canal towpaths, disused railways and other corridors, and these are extremely well used.

Options for running adjacent to the main road have been considered in recent studies. This report instead looks at a traffic free route following the corridor of the Great Western Canal, with extensions to connect to stations and town centres in both Taunton and Wellington.

The route is slightly longer than the routes adjacent to the main road, but avoids the noise and stress of adjacent motor traffic, which discourage use for pleasure. In Greenways experience it should also be substantially

cheaper to build as it would avoid roadside properties, services and the necessity of affecting the flow of traffic on the road, especially through the urban sections at either end on the way to the town centre.

Once the complex phase of land negotiation is well under way, such a route can be delivered for a known and modest cost.

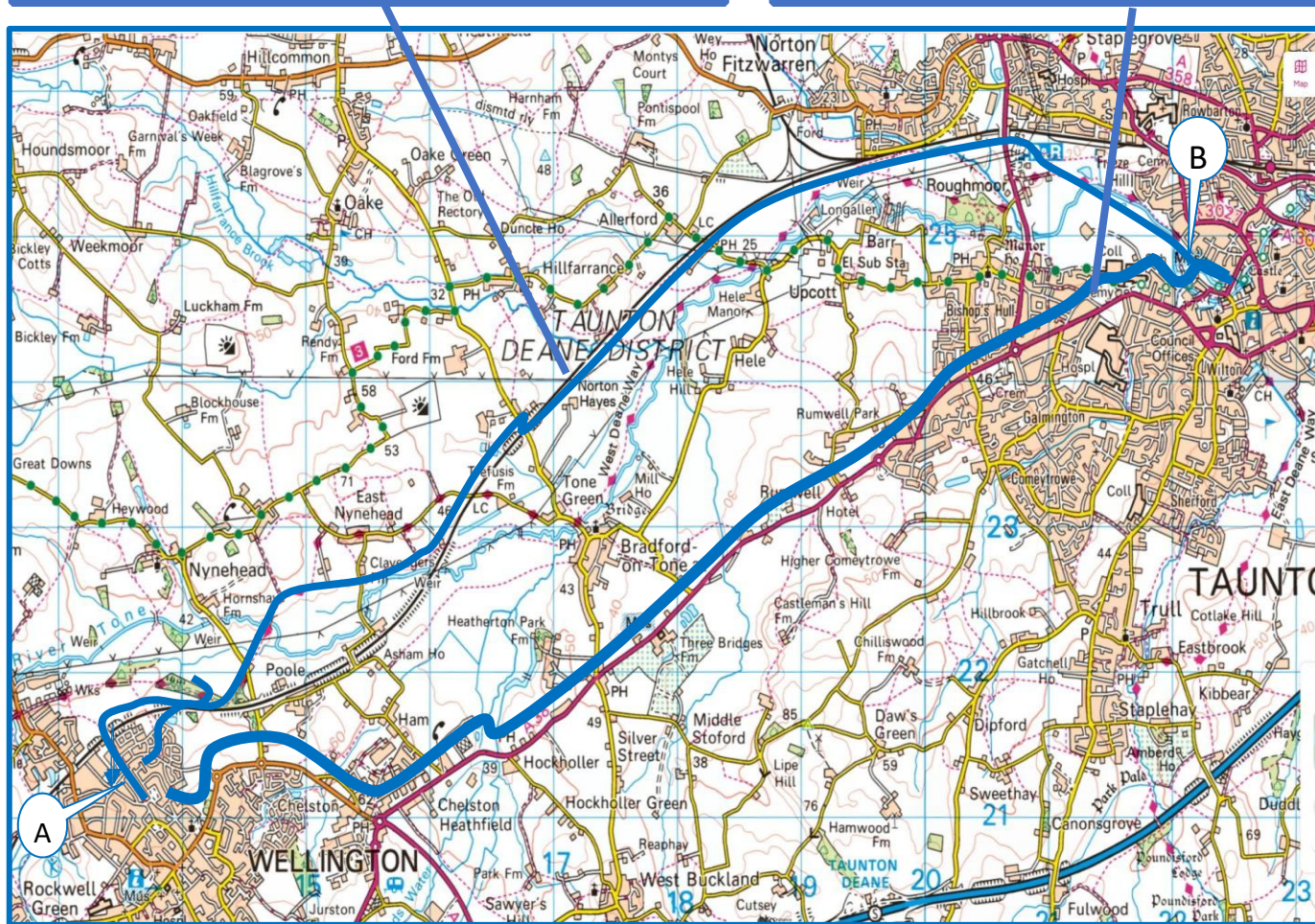
A route away from the main road will attract people who would not use a roadside path, for example, people walking out for pleasure, family trips by bike, and those who want the tranquillity and security of a traffic free path. The Grand Western Greenway is guaranteed to be popular.

This Workbook sets out how such a route might be created. For some sections there are options, and the details of the route will evolve as agreements are reached of landowners along the way.

Greenways and Cyclerroutes August 2025

A-B via the planned Greenway is 11.3kms. The traffic free sections can extend far in towards the town centres at each end.

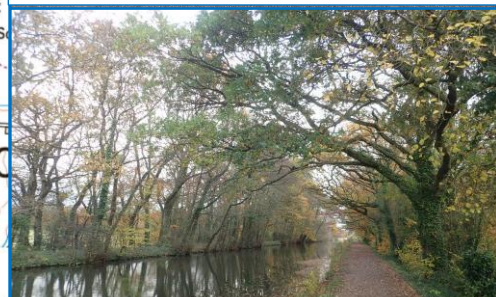
A-B is 10.5kms via a roadside path, the most direct, but there a real problem dealing with the urban sections either end.



A-B via the planned Greenway is 11.3kms. The traffic free sections can extend far in towards the town centres.



The Strawberry Line near Easton



Canal - side path near Tiverton Parkway



Roadside path A38

Background

This workbook outlines the urgent need for a safe, accessible, and attractive cycling and walking route between Wellington and Taunton. Despite the relatively short distance between the two towns, current road conditions are unsuitable for all but the most experienced or determined cyclists. The absence of a viable active travel corridor countermines broader goals around sustainability, public health, and transport equity.

Previous work

Over the years, several studies have examined potential solutions, including a comprehensive report by consultants Stantec in 2023. That report recommended prioritising a route adjacent to the A38. However, national experience suggests that such roadside routes rarely attract high levels of public use. The proximity to fast-moving traffic, combined with noise, pollution, and perceived danger, significantly reduces their appeal—particularly for leisure users and families.

Challenges with Roadside Routes

The prevailing assumption among many road engineers and consultants—often themselves motorists—is that the most direct and desirable option lies alongside the A38. While this land is largely under the control of Highways authorities, making acquisition simpler, roadside routes are typically expensive to construct and fail to meet the expectations of the wider public. It is unreasonable to expect people to voluntarily endure the stress, noise, and environmental discomfort of travelling immediately adjacent to heavy traffic.

Evidence from Comparable Schemes

Somerset already benefits from successful traffic-free routes such as the Strawberry Line, and further afield, the Bristol and Bath Railway Path continues to demonstrate exceptional levels of use. These examples highlight the public's willingness to embrace active travel infrastructure when it is well-designed, scenic, and separated from motor traffic.

In Aylesbury, Greenways recently completed a traffic-free route connecting two quadrants of the urban area. This route mirrors a nearby roadside path built along a main road. Usage data shows that the Greenway is used seven times more frequently than its roadside counterpart—underscoring the importance of route quality and user experience.

This workbook advocates for a traffic-free Greenway between Wellington and Taunton, following the general alignment of the old canal, disused railway, and river corridor. The route would be:

- **Safe and Accessible:** Designed for all non-motorised users, including cyclists, walkers, wheelchair users, and families.
- **Attractive and Tranquil:** Free from the stress and hazards of adjacent traffic, encouraging recreational use and tourism.
- **Cost-Effective:** Likely to be more affordable than roadside alternatives, with fewer engineering constraints and land acquisition complications.
- **Culturally and Socially Valuable:** A route that residents can take pride in, fostering a sense of place and community ownership.

This Greenway would serve as a vital link between Wellington and Taunton, enhancing connectivity, promoting sustainable travel, and delivering a high-quality public amenity. It would become a cherished asset for both towns and a destination in its own right. In contrast, a route alongside the A38 cannot deliver these benefits and is unlikely to achieve meaningful uptake. This document sets out the practical steps required to realise the Greenway vision, including route alignment, land considerations, and implementation strategy.

Comparative usage of roadside paths and Greenway routes

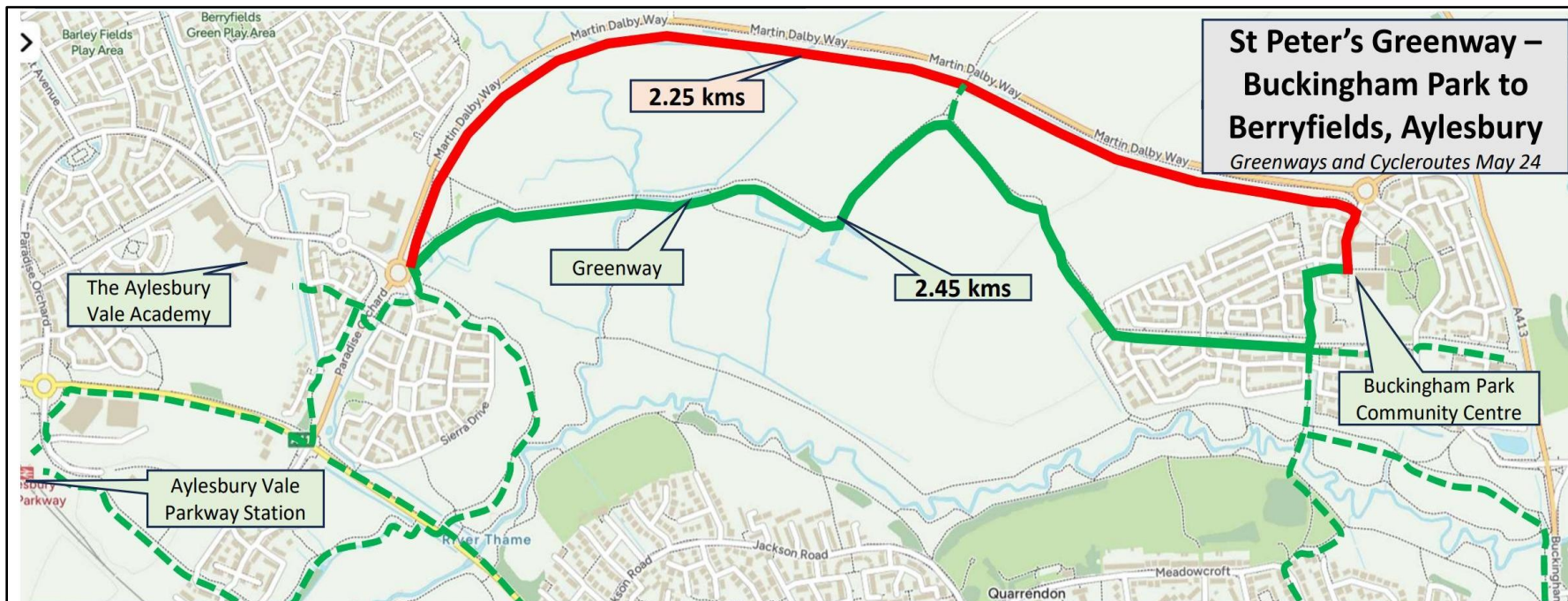
St Peter's Greenway (opened September 2022) provides for the same journey as the nearby Martin Dalby Path. Both are built to almost exactly the same standard but are set in very different environs. Detailed counts and questionnaire surveys were carried out on Wednesday 15th May, and Saturday 8th June 2024 to establish the comparative usage of both routes.

Findings were almost identical both days

The counts covered 08:00 – 17:30. On each day, the weather was dry and over 300 trips were recorded. On the weekday, 86% were on the Greenway and only 14% beside the road. At the weekend, the proportions were 87% and 13%. Of the roadside path users, about half on each day were doing a circular trip that also involved the Greenway, so fewer than 1:10 were using the roadside path alone.

On the road route, users were aged between 10 and 60 years. On the Greenway, users were young and old and some in wheelchairs.

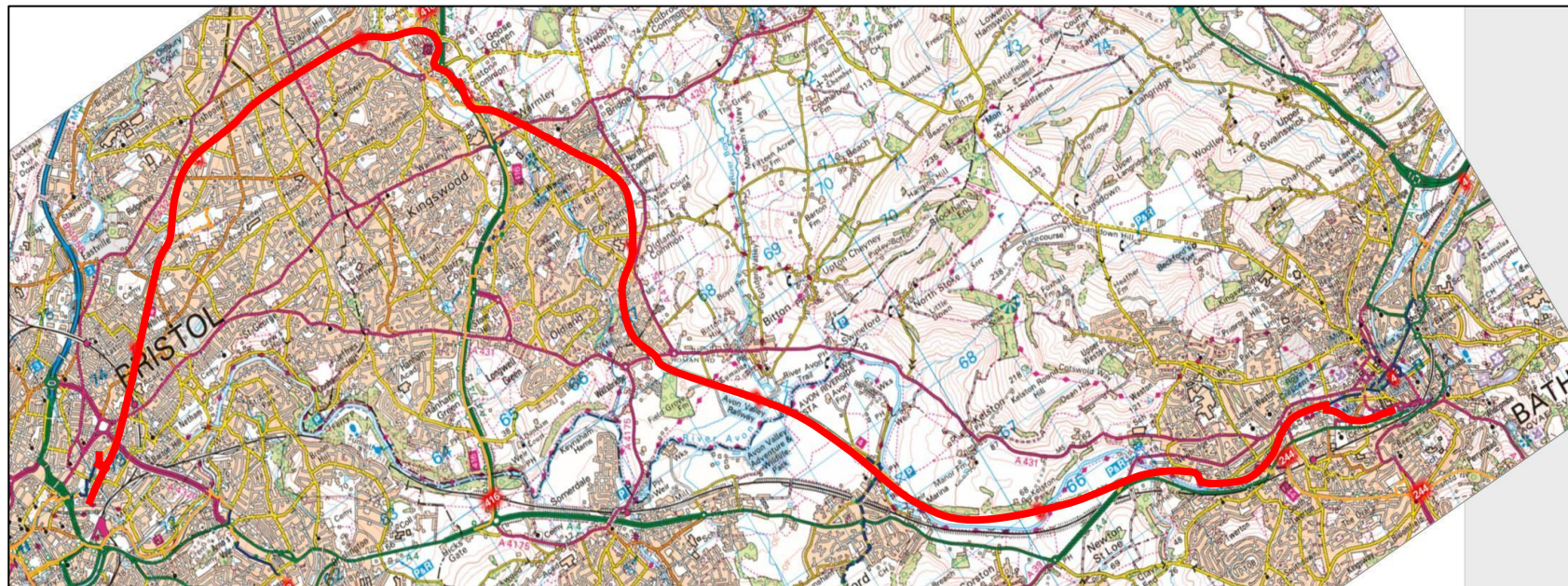
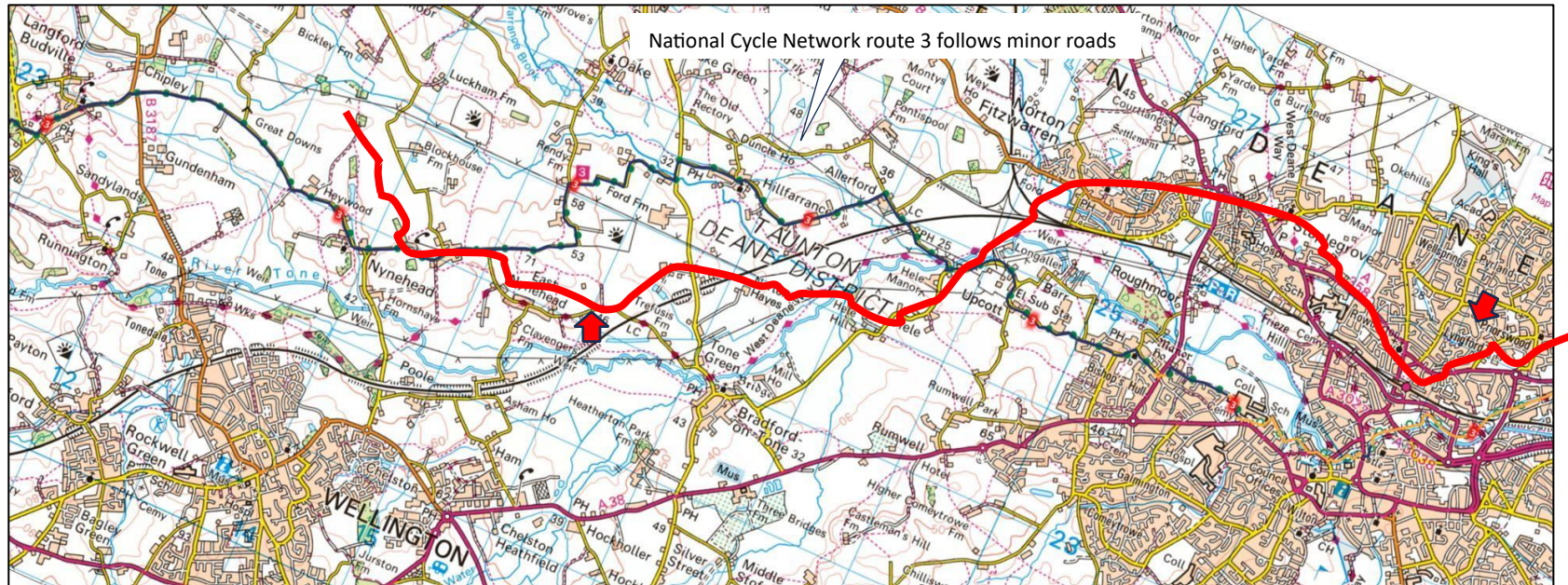




Grand Western Greenway - Comparison with Bristol and Bath Path

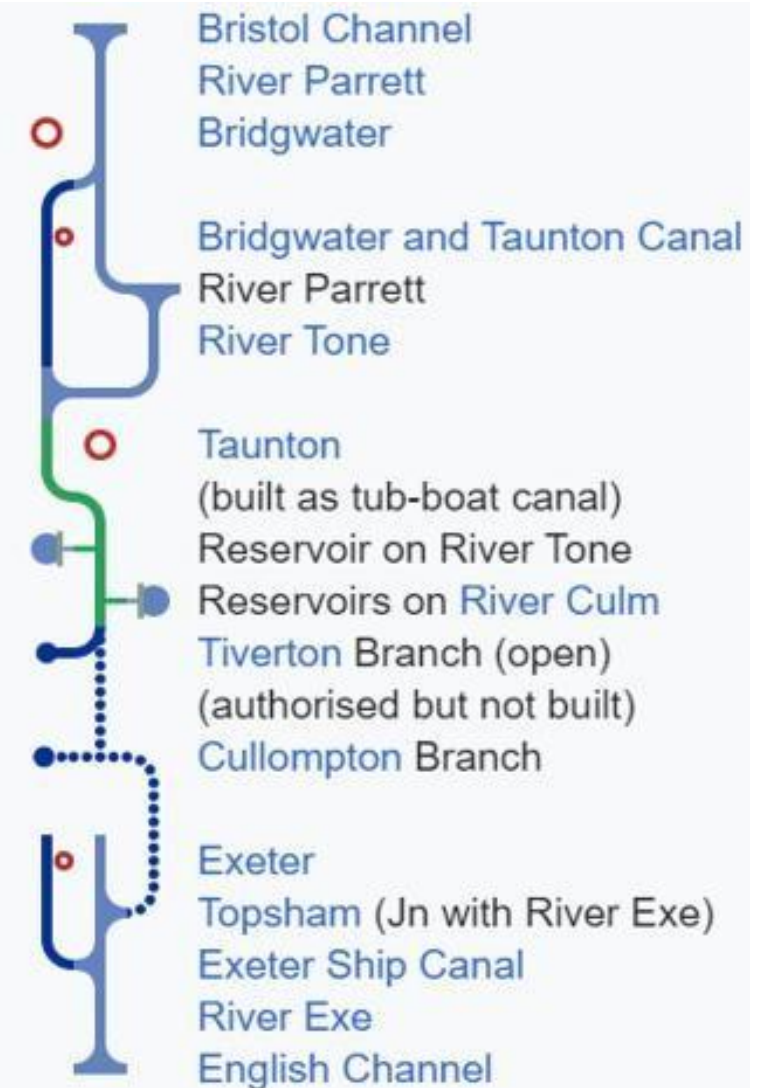
These two maps are shown side by side to highlight the ambition of the Grand Western Greenway in comparison with the well-established and much-loved Bristol and Bath Path. The map above has been extended westward to Langford Budville, incorporating a particularly scenic stretch of the old canal. At its eastern end, the route links directly to the Bridgwater Canal.

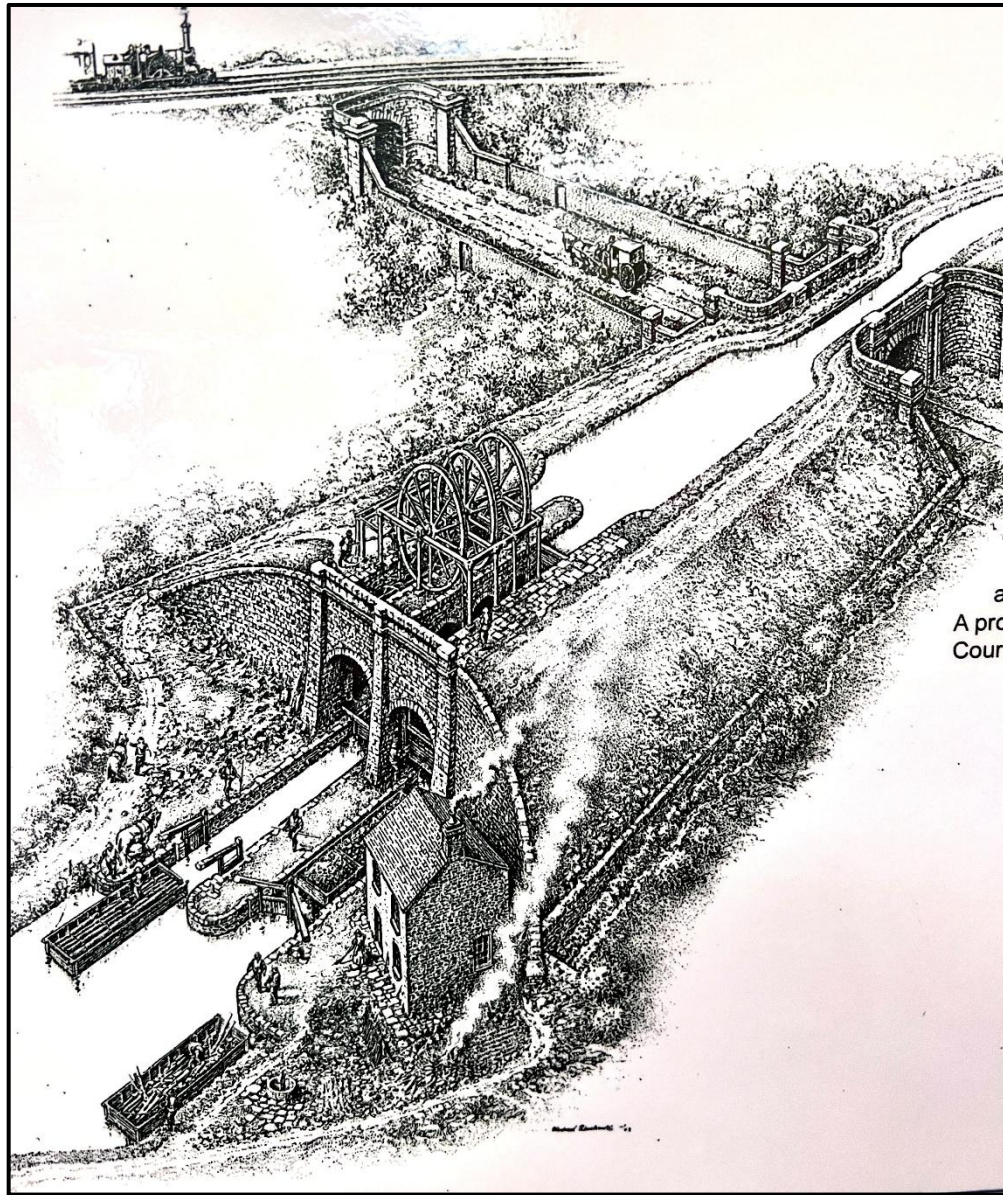
The Grand Western Greenway holds similar transformative potential for walking and cycling as the Bristol Path once did. That route remains, to this day, the leading example of how infrastructure can normalise cycling as an everyday activity across our region.



The **Grand Western Canal** ran between **Taunton** in **Somerset** and **Tiverton** in **Devon** in the United Kingdom. The **canal** had its origins in various plans, going back to 1796, to link the **Bristol Channel** and the **English Channel** by a canal, bypassing **Lands End**. An additional purpose of the canal was the supply of **limestone** and **coal** to **lime kilns** along with the removal of the resulting **quicklime**, which was used as a fertiliser and for building houses. This intended canal-link was never completed as planned, as the coming of the railways removed the need for it.^[1]

Construction was in two phases. A level section, from Tiverton to Lowdells on the Devon/Somerset border, opened in 1814, and was capable of carrying broad-beam **barges**, carrying up to 40 tons. The Somerset section, suitable for **tub boats** (which were about 20 feet (6 m) long and capable of carrying eight tons) opened in 1839. It included an **inclined plane** and seven **boat lifts**, the earliest lifts to see commercial service in the UK. The lifts predated the **Anderton Boat Lift** by nearly 40 years.





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Grand Western Greenway – Overall route and options

Wellington

At the Wellington end, the proposed Greenway follows along, or close to, the line of the canal towpath together with links and connections associated with new housing developments and the planned reopening of Wellington Station

Central Section

The central section between East Nyngham and Allerford should take care to avoid a level crossing of the railway. Several options might be possible, and a successful route depends upon the final support of landowners along the way. The course of the Grand Western Canal makes for an attractive route, but as it cuts through open fields a new path adjacent to the railway boundary would minimise inconvenience to farm operations and provide a more direct route

A38 Route

Proposals for a path adjacent to the main A38 road cannot achieve a popular and attractive route for all active travel users on account of the proximity of traffic and the difficulty of providing real continuity

West Deane Way

The West Deane Way provides a through walking route albeit with some on road sections, whilst a network of minor lanes provides a somewhat circuitous route for cyclists

Taunton

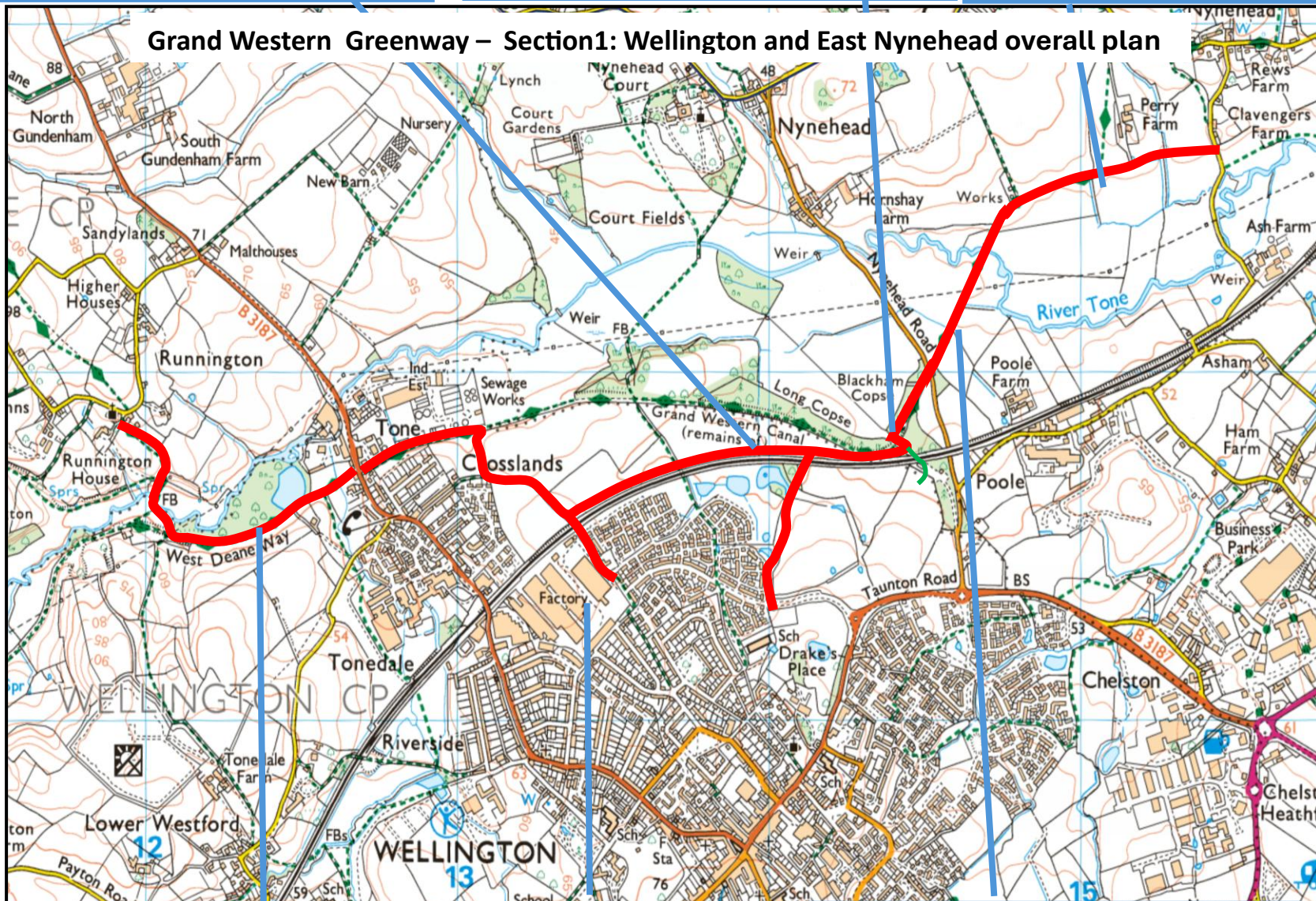
Taunton's Longrun Park and river corridor provide a number of potentially excellent routes which could be enhanced to make an all-weather resource for the town and complete the Grand Western Greenway through to the canal towpath for Bridgwater

Integrate the path into any development and anticipate a link to a new station. With a ramped bridge over the line

Link into the Nynhead Court Drive to pass under the aqueduct to then follow the works track on the west side of the canal as far as the Nynhead Road

Follow the line of the canal towpath through to the East Nynhead road.

Grand Western Greenway – Section1: Wellington and East Nynhead overall plan



Continue along the canal towpath for a link to Runnington and thence Langford Budville

This lane makes the vital link towards the Town Centre

A link taking advantage of the existing bridge under the main line should be made into the existing development as soon as

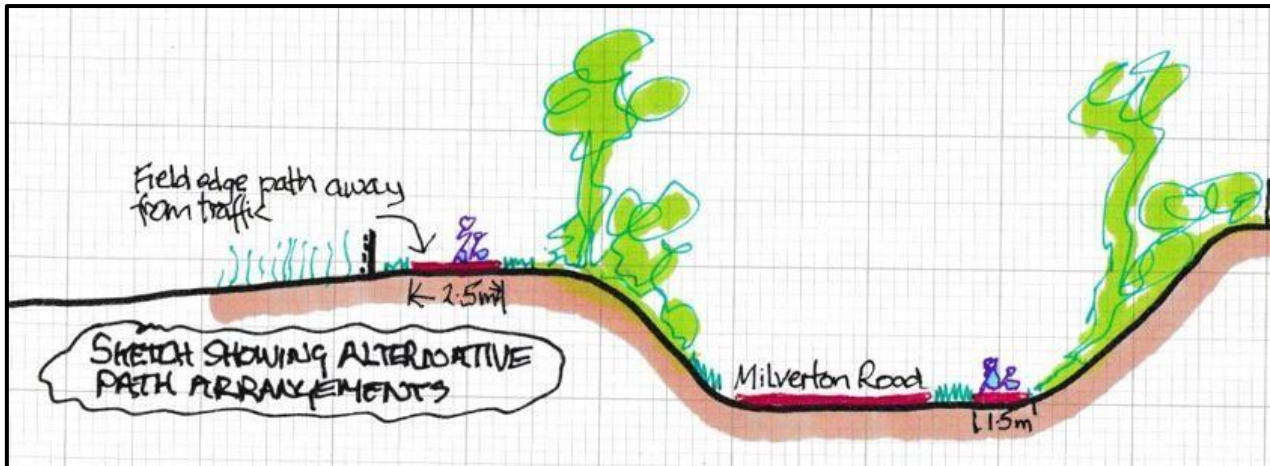
Grand Western Greenway – Section1: Map 1 of 5 Langford Budville and Wellington

Central to the ethos of the Grand Western Greenway is the opportunity to connect several communities both together and with the two urban centres of Wellington and Taunton.

At the western end of the Greenway to the north is the village of Langford Budville. The Parish Council has been energetic in planning to create an active travel route between there and Wellington. This, in turn, would link smoothly on to the Greenway by way of an access road that follows the path of the former canal

A narrow lane link Langford Budville with the B3187 Milverton Road, and discussions have begun about this potentially becoming a Quiet Lane which encourages cycling and walking whilst attempting to reduce vehicular traffic through signage etc.

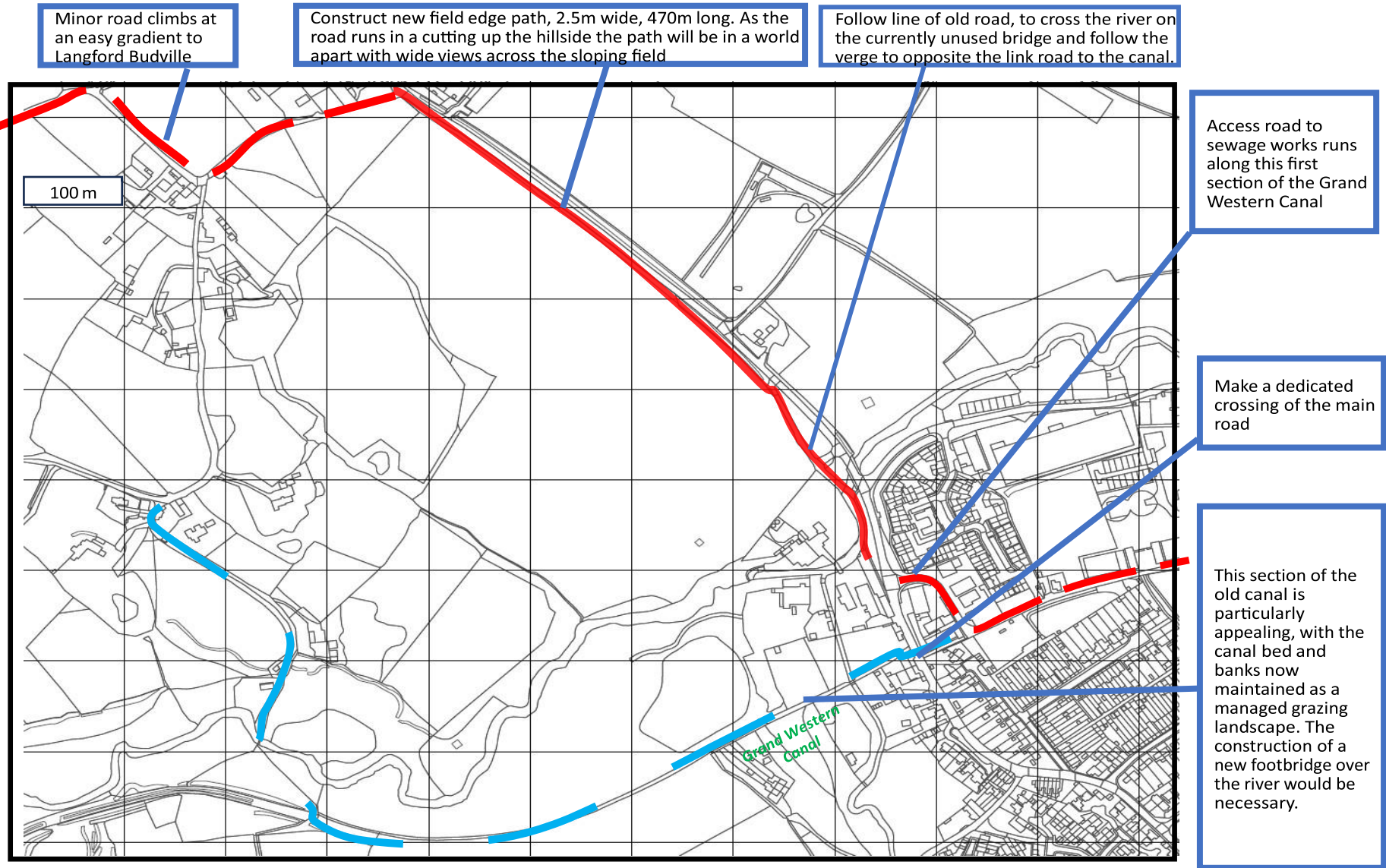
A recent feasibility study suggested a link between the junction of Runnington Lane and Milverton might be place 'behind the hedge' and would cross the River Tone on the old disused bridge by the Tone Works.



Sketch contrasting field edge path with path next to main road



A field edge path on the Strawberry Line near Wells



Plan of the link from the Grand Western Canal towards the town centre via the Longforth Farm bridge over the railway.

1. A crossing is needed over the Milverton Road to link The Canal towpath, and this could also be connected with the link from the Tonedale development.
2. The existing public footpath link is rather hilly, and it would be better to continue on the canal towpath alignment to reach the new development planned for the area where there will be the opportunity to create a much better-quality path through towards the town.
3. Longforth Farm Bridge over the railway makes for an excellent connection and a safe crossing of the main line. At the end of the lane routes will need to be signed through to the town centre and there may well need to be work undertaken on streets to create a higher quality walking and cycling route than we have at present.
4. With the confirmed construction of a new station for Wellington this link alongside the railway will become the route of the Greenway when it is adopted by the developer and upgraded from a haul road. The Grand Western Greenway can follow this route. Regarding timing it would be a useful target to open the whole of this section from Langford Budville to Nyngham at the same time as the station is opened so that these communities can get to the station, and so that the town gets a double attraction after so long years waiting.

Grand Western Greenway

Wellington and Taunton Section 1

Wellington and East Nynehead Map2 of 5

Canal link to Wellington Town Centre

1. Milverton Road showing the necessary link for the canal towpath walkway with the land required.

4 This field edge path will be the route of the new station access road.

3 Longforth Farm Lane leading up to its bridge over the railway in the distance.



Grand Western Greenway

Wellington and Taunton Section 1. Wellington and East Nynehead

The very welcome **Wellington Station Project** should carefully incorporate a ramped bridge over the railway to take the Grand Western Greenway towards the town centre. These should be used here rather than the more usual lifts because the latter will not be so accessible to the public. The route on the southern side linking from the Town Centre should be developed as part of the station work to ensure that as many people as possible in Wilmington can walk and cycle to the station along attractive routes.

1. The Grand Western Canal towpath is an attractive footway but because the canal itself is so heavily overgrown with trees it would be better to continue the Greenway along the foot of the canal embankment as shown here. This will ensure that it avoids the complications of dropping down steep ramps at the Nynehead Boat Lift.
2. The fascinating walled arrangement built between the mainline railway and the Canal will be a memorable feature along the whole of the

proposed route. The bridges at each end are grand statements would have been grand statements along the drive to Nynehead Court. The path would come in through the gateway shown illuminated in the sunlight in the picture. Its 1.0m width is just adequate for the Greenway as visibility is good. Note, that here, as all along the proposed Greenway route the support of landowners will be essential. The final designed of the walled area which might include the reconstruction of the original drive together with gardens either side should all be considered.

3. Once under the aqueduct the path would veer around the side of the Boat Lift and follow in established track through to Nynehead Road. On the right is a rare section of canal in water, and on its far side the towpath remains for walkers. If the opportunity allows in the future, then the Greenway should link under the railway bridge into planned development south of the railway where it would pass the remaining gatehouse.

Grand Western Greenway

Wellington and Taunton Section 1. Wellington and East Nynghed(Map 3 of 5 Wellington Railway Station)



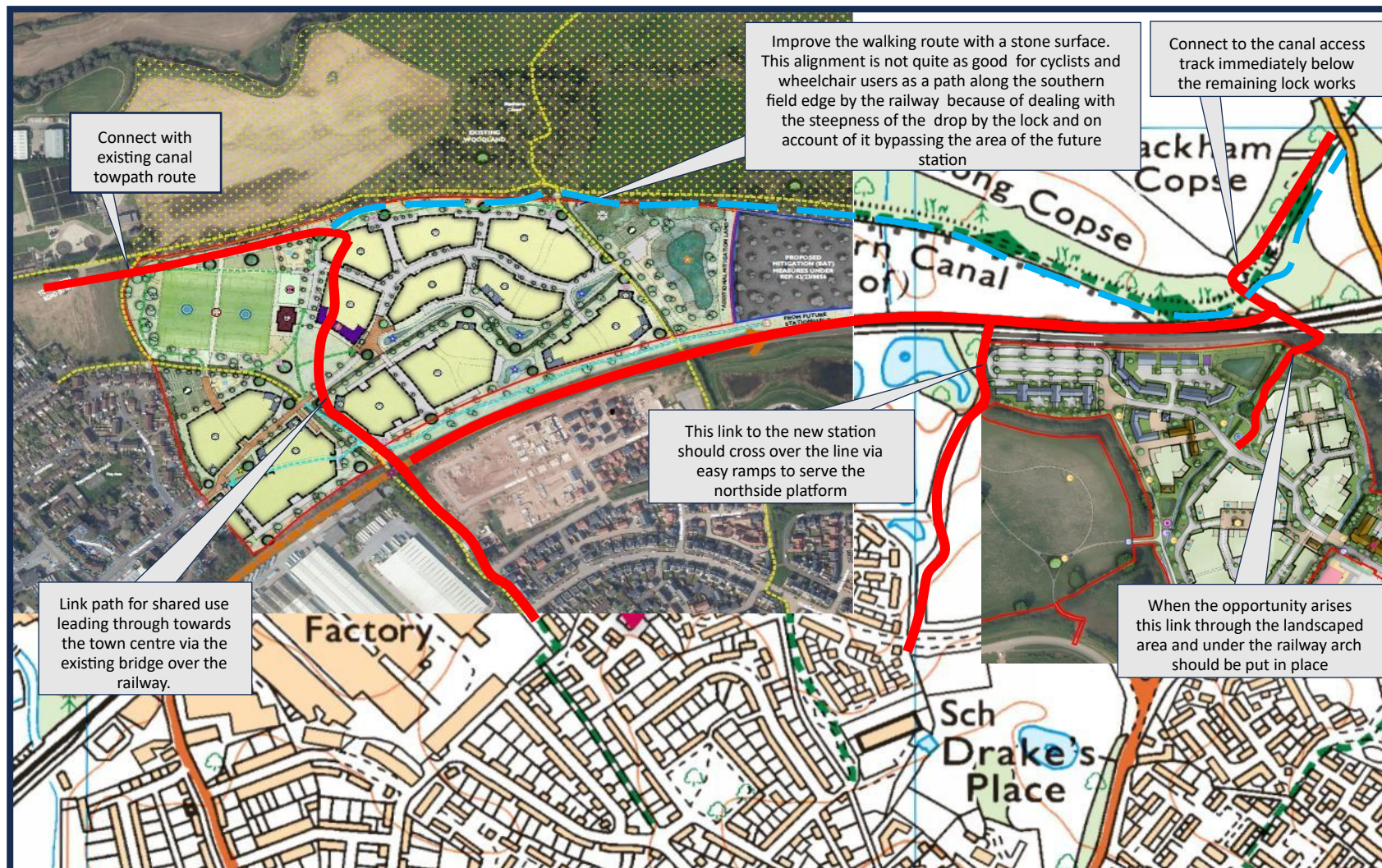
The canal aqueduct. The ground either side could be planted as a garden framing the avenue.

The main line railway bridge. The Greenway would come in by the opening on the right.

Detail of the existing opening. If this was to be widened it would need to be detailed in the same style

The wide access track on the west side of the canal looking towards Nynghed Road





Grand Western Greenway Wellington and Taunton Section 1 Wellington and East Nynehead(Map 3A of 5)

Montage showing planned and existing developments with the proposed shared path and cycling links shown in red.

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Grand Western Greenway
Wellington and Taunton Section1
Wellington and East Nynhehead Map 4 of 5
Nynhehead Road

1. Once under the aqueduct the path would veer around the side of the Boat Lift and follow in established track through to Nynhehead Road.
2. The crossing of Nynhehead Road needs some careful thought; hedges will need to be cut back either side to enhance the visibility and measures introduced to reduce traffic speed at this point. The kissing gate will need replacing with a wider wicket gate.
3. The line of the towpath continues as a welldefined public footpath along the side of the field as shown in these photographs and its reconstruction to create an almost standard field edge path should be quite straightforward with minimum interference to the adjacent fields
4. The remaining aqueduct is another the most attractive and significant feature on the route. The cast iron trough of the canal itself is still intact, and the public footpath follows the towpath which is carried on an adjacent stone arch. There are two options here; either to run in the trough of the canal or to rebuild towpath which would then require a new steel balustrades either side.

Wellington and East Nynghad Map 4 of 5

Nynghad Road



Looking away down the field edge.



View of the aqueduct over the Tone



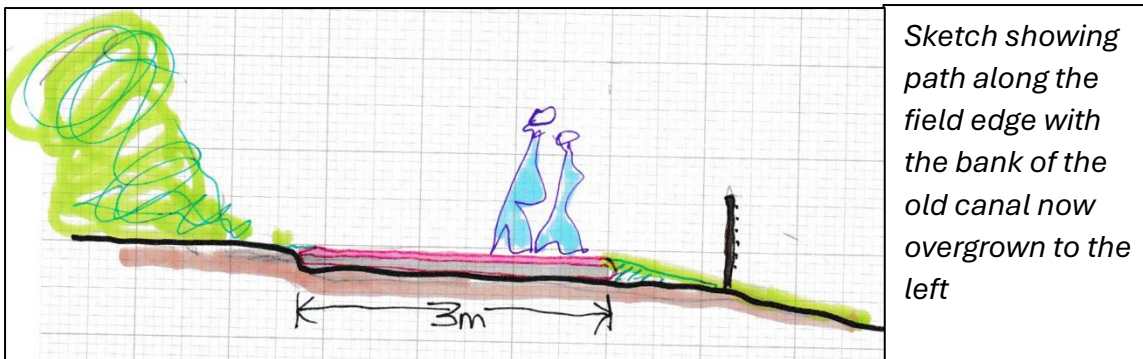
Existing kissing gate on east side of the road



Nynghad Road showing the approximate crossing of the Grand Western Greenway

Grand Western Greenway
Wellington and Taunton Section 1
Wellington and East Nynghed
East Nynghed

1. The Canal Aqueduct
2. The final part of this route to join the road for East Nynghed continues along the line of the canal path where it passes the end of the sewage works. This is an important detail because the sewage works access road will be an important entry point for construction vehicles. This will also be the link from Nynghed, Milverton and Wiveliscombe to join the Grand Western Greenway.
3. Continue along the attractive field edge which has extensive views over the countryside.
4. Existing public footpath (West Deane Way) turns north at this point and is not suitable for the shared use Greenway as it cuts right across the field. It would be preferable to continue along the line of the towpath, now a field edge as shown in the picture to reach the road. This would be the end of the first phase of the Grand Western Greenway work. It would provide a good link to ongoing rural roads and perhaps more importantly it would complete a good one-mile-long promenade from the station into the open countryside which would be a real resource and asset for residents of Wellington.



Link to Nyncehead

Wellington and Taunton Section 1 Wellington and East Nyncehead Map 5 o 5 East Nyncehead



1 Bridge over the River Tone carrying the canal aqueduct



3. Footpath along the line of the towpath. The canal itself has been filled in and is now part of the field



2. Looking east past the sewage works



5. Looking towards the East Nyncehead Road along the boundary of the old canal

Grand Western Greenway
Wellington and Taunton Section2
Overview of the options between East Nynghed and Allerford

It would probably be more practical to run a path under the existing railway river bridge than to try to reopen the canal tunnel which was back-filled in 1975 with the advent of high speed trains

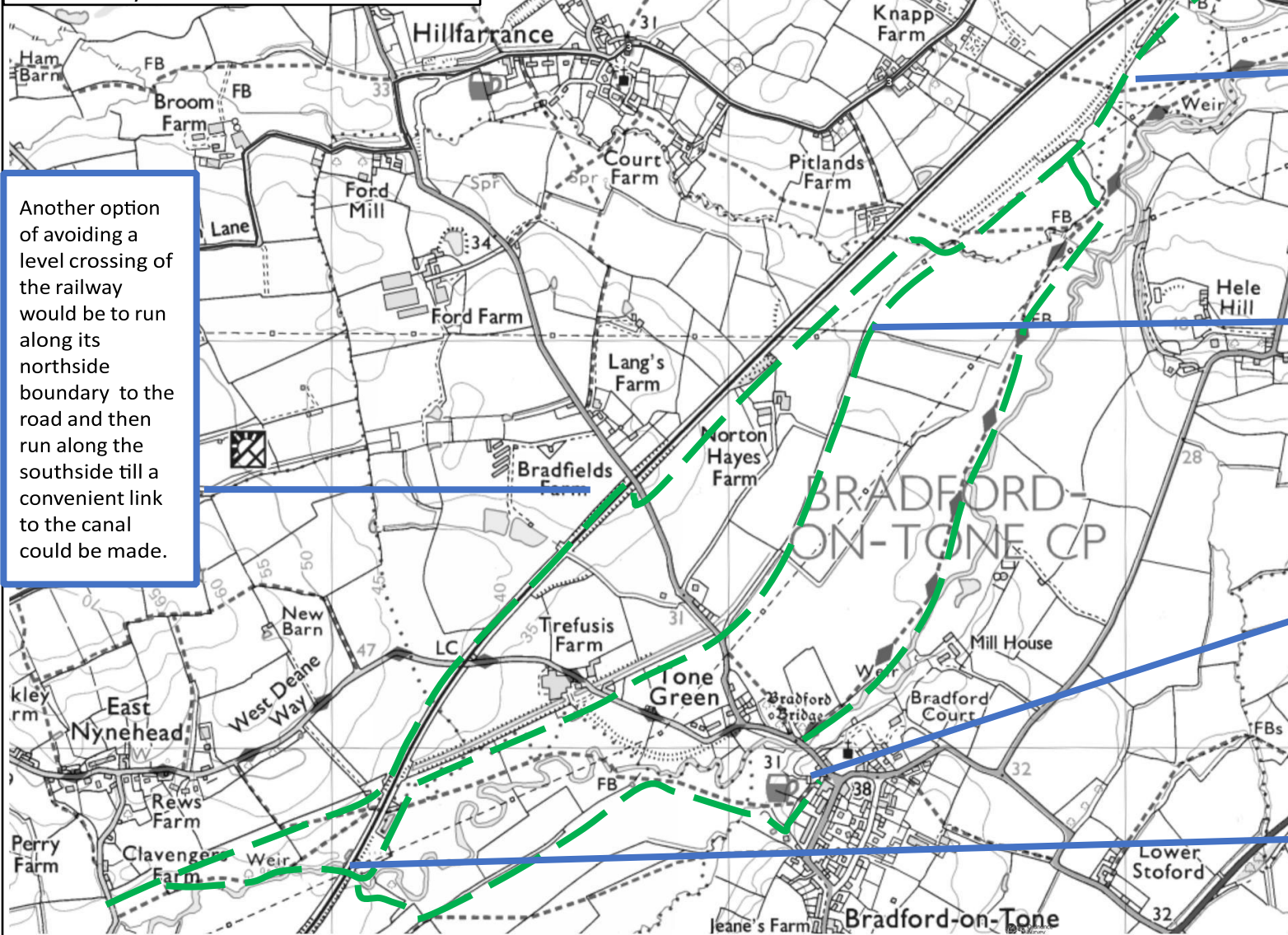
Another option of avoiding a level crossing of the railway would be to run along its northside boundary to the road and then run along the southside till a convenient link to the canal could be made.

A route along all or most of the canal towpath alignment would be probably rather difficult to achieve but it would be clear of much of the flooding.

The existing signed route of the National Cycle Network (NCN 3) follows circuitous lanes and minor roads.

A riverside route would be most attractive over this section even though the path would be flooded for a number of days each year

Grand Western Greenway Wellington and Taunton Section2 Overview of the options between East Nynehead and Allerford



Another option of avoiding a level crossing of the railway would be to run along its northside boundary to the road and then run along the southside till a convenient link to the canal could be made.

The existing signed route follows circuitous lanes and minor roads.

A riverside route would be attractive over this section but prone to flooding

A route along all or most of the canal alignment would be difficult to achieve but it would be clear of much of the flooding.

A path through to Bradford-on-Tone would be particularly useful

It would probably be more practical to run a path under the existing railway river bridge than to try to reopen the canal bridge, even if it is still intact. 30

Grand Western Greenway Overview of Section 3 - Allerford to Taunton Station

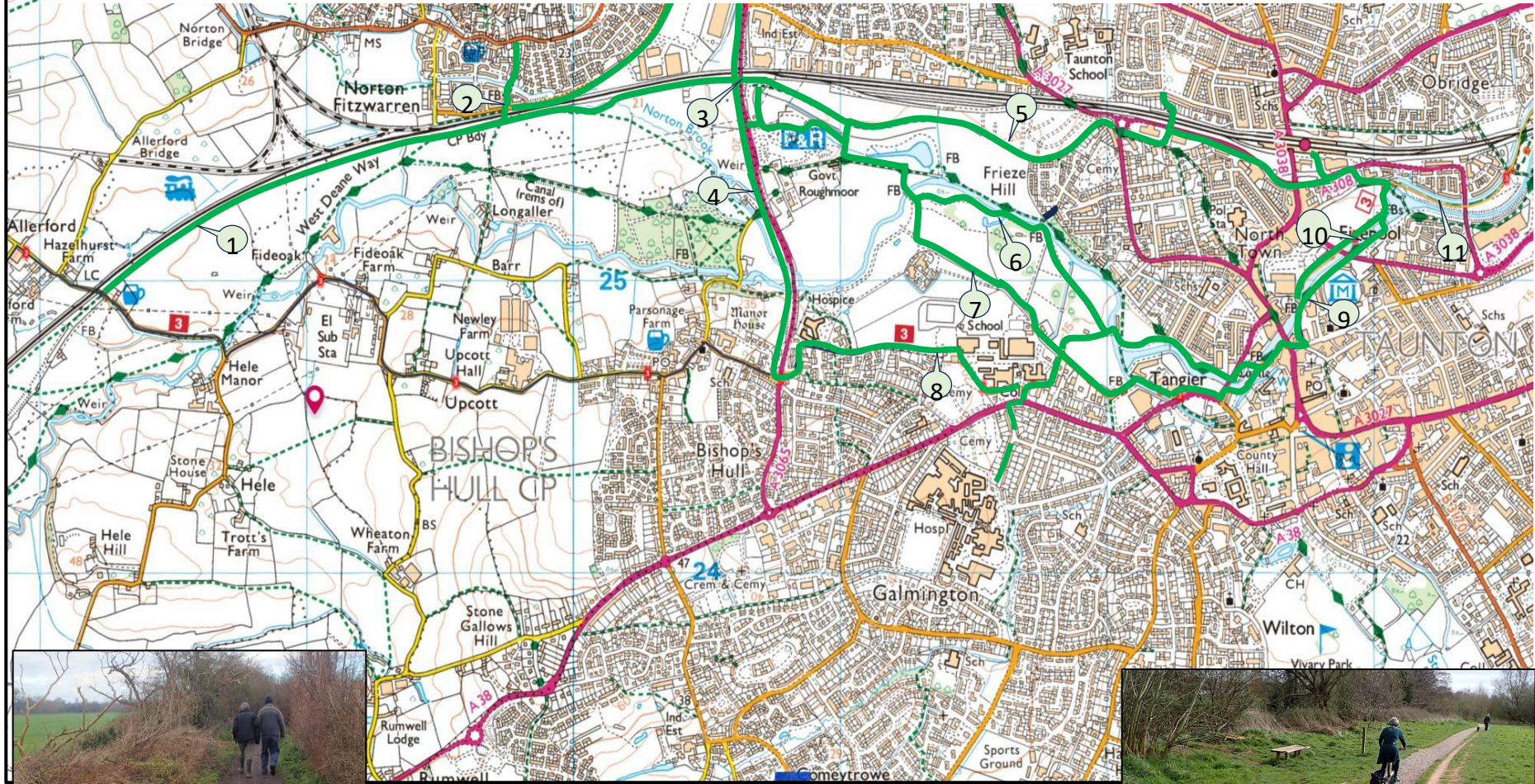
Plan showing how the River Tone corridor provides green and traffic free corridor right into the heart of Taunton. There is no one best route and a number of paths should be brought up to a good standard to create a network of routes for everyday journeys. Of every kind

1. Proposed Grand Western Greenway running along the field edge to the south of the main line railway
2. Existing footbridge over the railway with steep steps either side
3. Existing bridge under the main road carrying Wessex Water's access road
4. Existing cycle path along the western side of Silk Mills Road . As this is on the west side of the main it rather limits access to the east except at the two crossing points shown.
5. The Grand Western Canal continued along this route which could form a direct link to the station via Priory Bridge Road. This would be a route above the flood levels.
6. Attractive direct to the town centre runs along this line, although like other parts in Roughmoor, it needs to be reconstructed
7. This route has advantages of linking direct to the college and the hospital and for much of its way it is above the flood level
8. National Cycle Route3 runs through the college and along roads to continue westwards through Bishops Hull. This is a not an unattractive route, but it is of course overly trafficked at rush hours and is entirely on road.
9. 9Through the town centre there are paths on both sides of the river for some way and in order to diffuse use it is probably worth utilising both parts for walkers and cyclist
10. New housing development in this area will provide direct routes to the station

Grand Western Greenway

Overview of Section 3 - Allerford to Taunton Station

Plan showing how the River Tone corridor provides green and traffic free corridor into the heart of Taunton. There is no one best route and several paths should be brought up to good standard to create a network of routes for everyday journeys. Of every kind



Grand Western Canal towpath



Roughmoor Path

Allerford to Silk Mills Road – overview

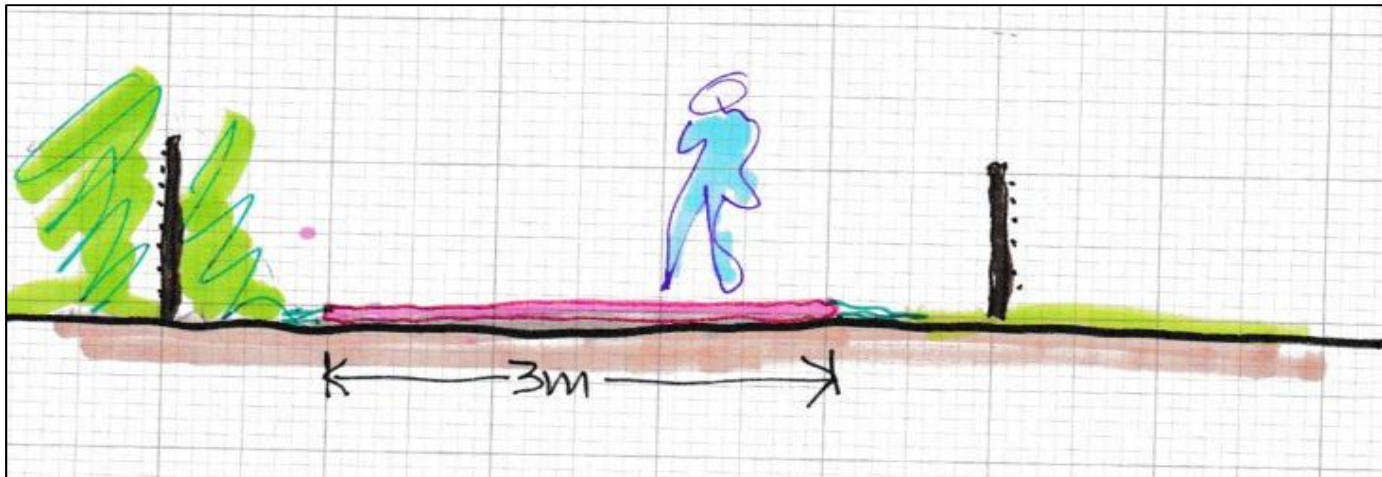
1. Over this section part of the Grand Western Canal remains as a clearly used foot path but the rest has been absorbed into the fields.
2. The riverside route is attractive but would be the most prone to flooding
3. The most practical route is to run from the Allerford Inn alongside the railway boundary all the way through to the Norton Fitzwarren Footbridge from where one could follow the existing footpath alongside the Norton Brook till the point where it veers away from the railway. Here a new bridge is required to again run along the field edge to Wessex Waters works and their existing access road under Silk Mill Road
4. The existing network of footpaths will benefit from the all-weather greenway surface especially when the field paths are wet or waterlogged.
5. The footbridge over the railway has very steep steps and in a perfect world it would be reconstructed with accessible ramps so that the residents of Norton Fitzwarren could cross the railway directly & safely to reach the Grand Western Greenway to Taunton and to Wellington.



Grand Western Greenway Wellington to Taunton – Section 3
Allerford Inn to Taunton Station Map 1 of 8
Railway Boundary

Map 1, and the following seven maps, describe the works required in detail

1. The path would leave the Allerford Road through the gardens of the Allerford Inn, approximately on the line of the canal. This could be developed as a feature including possibly restoring a short section of the canal with water all to enhance the setting of the Inn.
2. The proposed path would run along the field edge all the way to the Norton Brook. For most of the way the railway has an access track along its south side as well as a densely planted fence, so the public are well away from the operational railway.
3. The cross-section shows a typical arrangement of how the path might look over this section. The railway runs through the flood plain on a very slightly elevated track-bed. The path would be built on a very low bank to be above winter wet areas but even so this route will occasionally flood.



Sketch showing path along the field edge adjacent to railway boundary to the left. The path would be constructed with 200mm of compacted stone 3.0m wide laid on a polypropylene filter fabric and finished with 20mm of limestone dust for a smooth surface suitable for all. The arrangement of the new boundary fence could allow space for a hedgerow, for tree planting or for a wider wildlife verge if this suited the landowner.

Grand Western Greenway

Wellington to Taunton - Section3

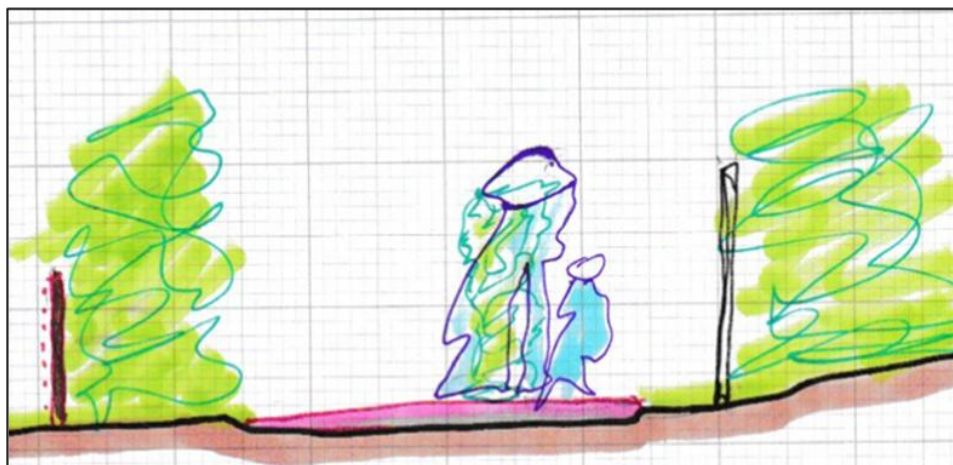
Allerford Inn to Taunton Station Map1o8

Railway Boundary



Norton Fitzwarren footbridge.

1. The path continues along the field edge. Any railway drainage will need to be picked up and extended across the path
2. There is an existing narrow public right away. It's possible that this could be used as the basis for the Greenway although the fence on one side or the other would have to be moved out to create sufficient space. Because widening into the field might entail losing hedgerow trees it might be best to continue along the field edge. Or the path could bifurcate around the trees.
3. This footbridge over the railway is a considerable challenge. At the very least wheeling ramps are needed to help cyclists across but really a new bridge with accessible ramps is needed if the residents of Norton Fitzwarren are to enjoy the Greenway.
4. The existing public foot path continues along this generous field margin which is quite wide enough for the proposed Greenway
5. The margin continues along the very attractive bank of Norton Brook.
6. The existing public footpath runs along the line of the Grand Western Canal as far as this point where the canal is completely lost into the open field.
7. These two linking paths might with some advantage be diverted to the field edge once the Greenway is built.



Sketch showing path along the field edge adjacent to railway boundary showing the existing hedge and fence removed with new replacement hedging planted along the replacement field

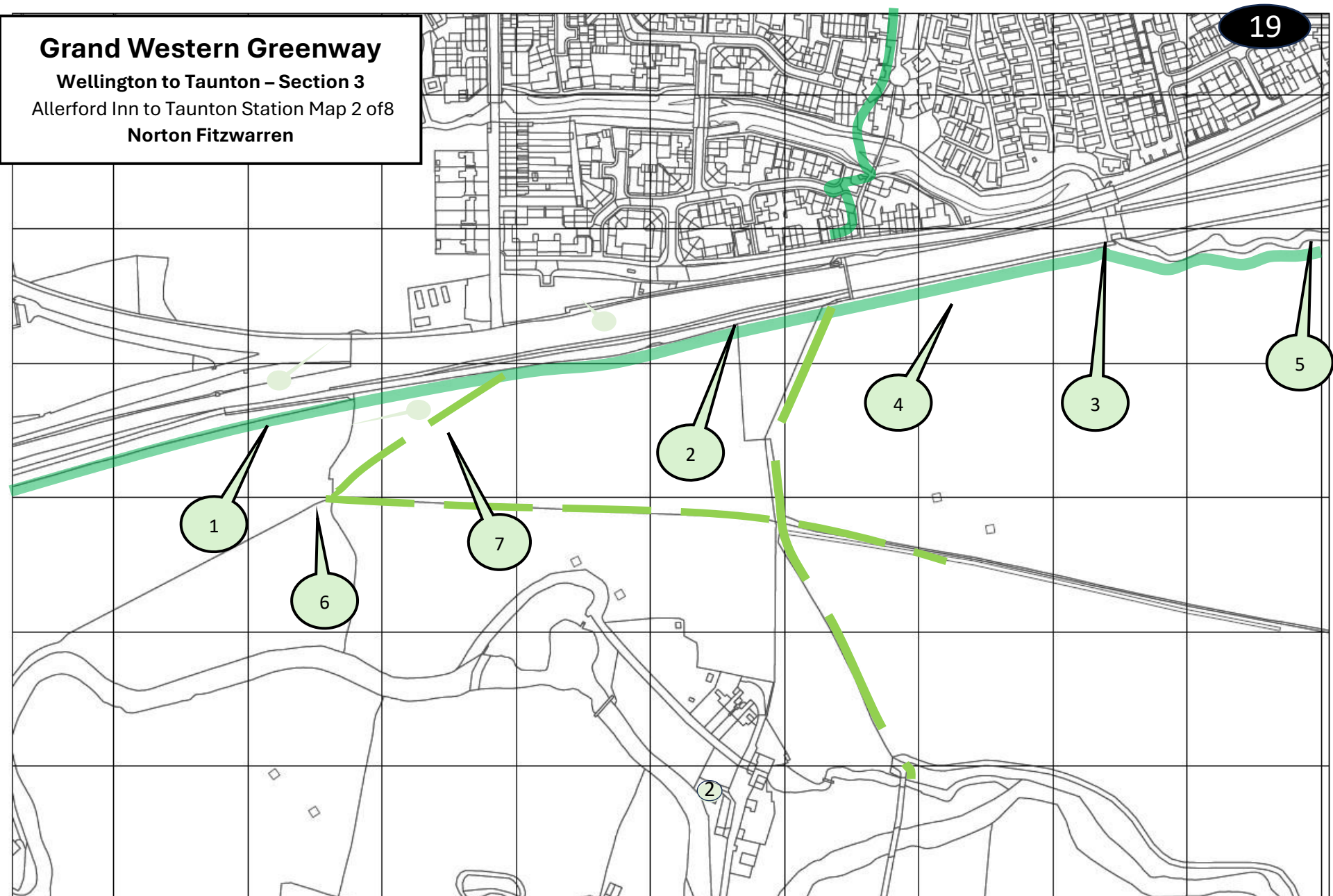
Grand Western Greenway

Wellington to Taunton – Section 3

Allerford Inn to Taunton Station Map 2 of 8

Norton Fitzwarren

19



Silk Mills Road

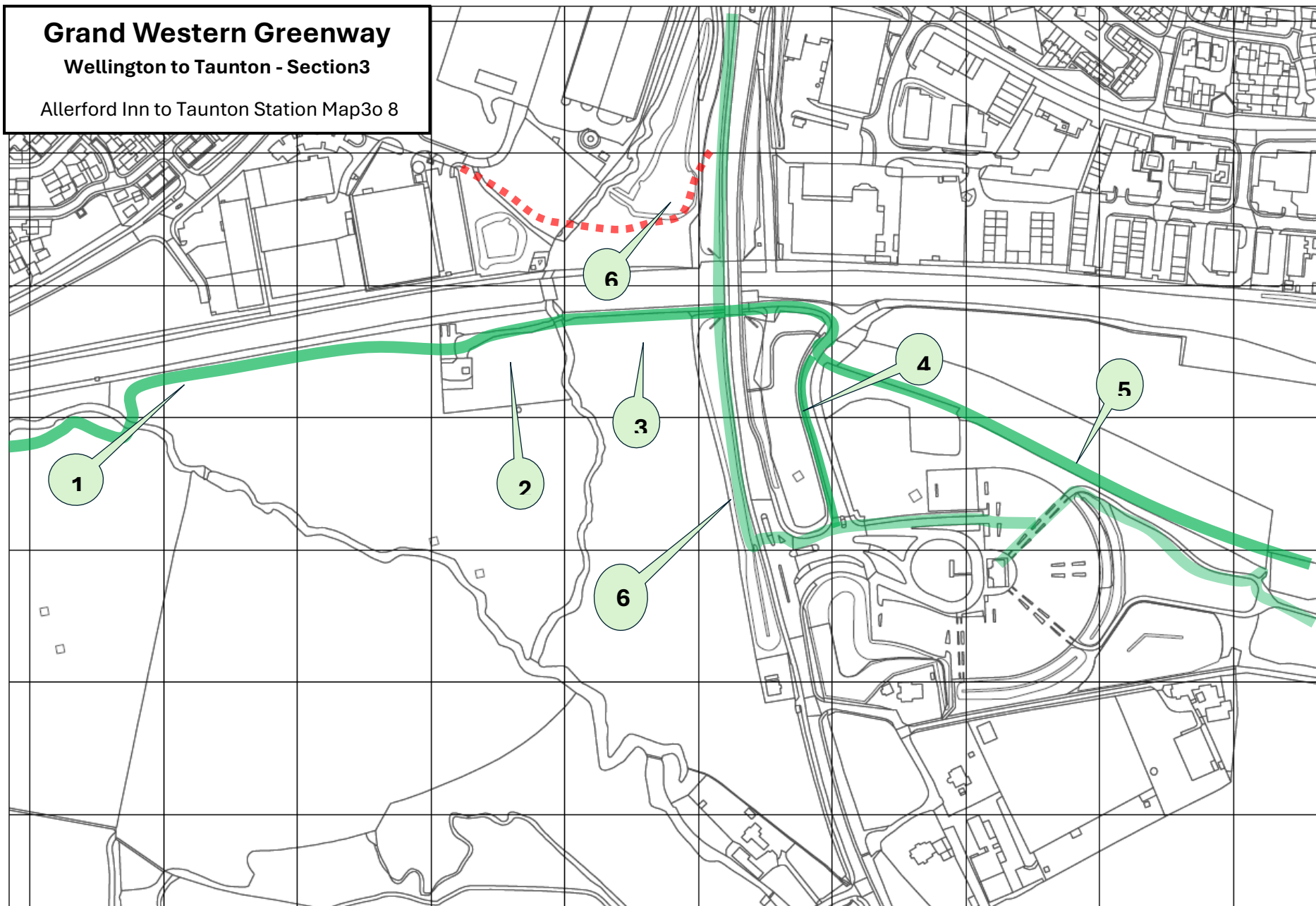
1. The path continues beside the Brook until it is opposite the end of the field where a new bridge across the brook is required to reach the field edge by the railway boundary
2. Continue along the boundary of the field as far as Wessex Water's pumping station
3. The public could use the access road to the pumping station to pass under the wide Silk Mills Road Bridge'.
4. From here on there are a number of choices. One of these is to follow the railway access road down towards the park-and-ride to pick up the existing Cycling provision through to Roughmoor with its plethora of paths. But note that the condition of most of these paths is poor and not up to the standard required for everyday cycling into an urban area.
5. The second option is to join the line of the canal and follow this for a direct route to the station
6. This plan also shows existing Cycling route which runs on the west side of the main road and crosses at a light provision to reach the park-and-ride site. Unfortunately, from the perspective of people in Norton Fitz Warren this is a rather circuit route and it would be very much better if a new path could be built along this line with a ramp up to join the cycle route over the railway bridge



Grand Western Greenway

Wellington to Taunton - Section3

Allerford Inn to Taunton Station Map3o 8



Roughmoor

1. The path could continue along the line of the Grand Western Canal. This would give a direct route to the station for Norton Fitzwarren residents. But its last section hard adjacent to the Priory Road is very harsh and constricted. But this alignment is perched above flood level.
2. A much more attractive route runs through the fields of Roughmoor to French Weir Park. This could provide a memorable Greenway
3. An alternative would serve the College and link to the hospital as well as the town centre. These last two routes would be prone to flooding and so would be out of action for a few days each year.

In practice all three routes are required as they all serve somewhat different destinations and taken together, they would make for a far more complete infrastructure in this area.



Grand Western Greenway
Wellington to Taunton - Section3
Allerford Inn to Taunton Station
Roughmoor Paths

Roughmoor

This plan shows the three basic routes in the area, all of which are required to make a really useful network for Taunton.

1. The line of the Grand Western Canal towpath is very clearly defined as a footpath. This section is a field edge path - difficult to use in the winter even though it is situated above the floodplain
2. This section runs through a Community Orchard and eventually leads to a hard stone path running past the allotments to reach Priory Road
3. The existing bridge over the river is quite good, but the paths each side are narrow, gravel with flooded potholes. See the next page for discussion on the path construction on Roughmoor.
4. An example of a well-defined desire line cutting across a corner.
5. Towards the College, the stone path rises up onto bank above the general floodplain area and it eventually reaches a sealed section
6. The 'cathedral' is a memorable feature, set a little one side of the path
7. The photograph shows the problem of almost all the paths on Roughmoor. The stone surface is sunken and rough, so the public beat out a preferred path to the side, and the sunken surface fills with water when it's wet.
8. This bridge provides a convenient link into the housing area and could make an alternative route to the station



Grand Western Greenway

Wellington to Taunton – Section 3

Allerford Inn to Taunton Station Map 4 of 8

The state of the paths on Roughmoor

These pictures illustrate the reality of the paths crossing Roughmoor. They are mostly built in gravel, which originally may have provided a smooth surface and met a local desire to have a rural or` informal feel , but now are often so rough that the public walk on the grass verges creating the sort of situation that is shown in picture. (1)

The path fills with water when it's wet or with silt after occasional flooding and takes a long time to drain away (2)

Alternatively, as can be seen in picture (3) an unsurfaced path is beaten out wider and wider as a public try to find a dry way through.

The frustrating thing about all this is shown in picture (4) where approaching from the college there is a perfectly well surfaced route. This abruptly stops on the edge of the floodplain.

There is no need to have poor paths just because it's a floodplain. Paths need to be constructed very slightly

above the general ground so that they drain dry and they need to have a sealed surface which will resist the flow of water and not erode.

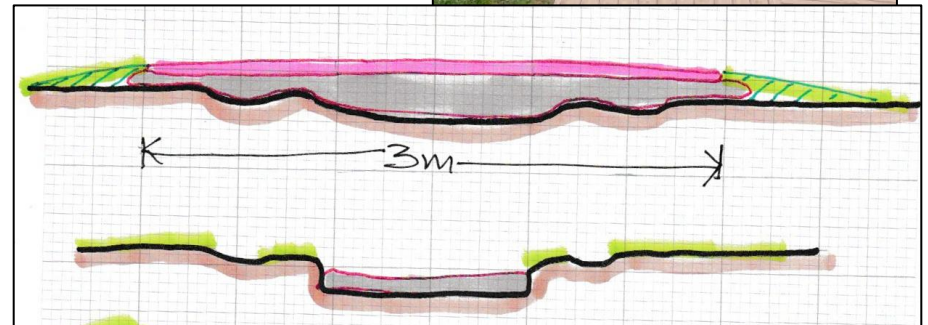
Picture (5) shows an example of a path built by Greenways in the floodplain of the river Thame at Aylesbury .

If Cycling and walking for everyday trips is to flourish in Taunton then the reconstruction of the paths on Roughmoor is a critical first step. Partly because it would be convenient for local people making that everyday trips but also as a symbol of the town's intention to encourage widespread use of cycling through creating really good routes.

At present the state of the main path running from the park-and-ride towards the town centre pi(2) does the opposite. It just gives a message that walking cycling are not considered to be important and significant methods of transport in Taunton



St Peter's Greenway in Aylesbury, cross the flood plain of the River Thames. Path surface is bitmac



Sketch showing proposed reconstruction of the main Roughmoor paths with a 3m wide sealed surface all compared with the existing stone paths shown in the picture above

Approaching the Town Centre

In this part of Town the routes follow existing signed routes although there are some opportunities for improving the quality of these.

1. The path from the College and the park-and-ride join at this point to cross the Tone on a perfectly acceptable bridge although only 1.5m wide, which has the advantage of an adjacent café
2. Continue on existing paths through French Weir Park
3. One has to use a short section of this residential road - Clarence Street
4. Existing path now runs along with riverside and passes under the arched main road Tangier Way Bridge.. This could be widened in places to give a more spacious feeling even though some sections would remain relatively narrow.
5. The bridge has recently been removed, but the Council are intending to replace it to make this vital crossing over the river
6. Existing riverside path continuous through to the main road which one crosses via dedicated crossings and then winds through largely pedestrianised backstreets to regain the riverside on the way to the cricket ground
7. National Cycle Route 4 is not as attractive as the proposed riverside route but will be more convenient for some. This first section is already signed with a good surface
8. But the bridge over the river is narrow and one is asked dismount
9. Existing shared use path alongside the river leads through to cross the entrance to the industrial estate
10. A roadside Section which is rather gruesome being hard up against the main road, but there are dedicated crossings leading through.
11. Through route continues through Goodland Gardens to join the preferred Riverside option
12. Access to the town Centre could be done via a number of paths past the Castle or one could simply walk or Cycle down the street

Grand Western Greenway

Wellington to Taunton – Section 3

Allerford Inn to Taunton Station Map 6 of 8



Taunton College

1. There are several good routes in the immediate vicinity of the College. These are shown in red on the plan and are all constructed to high standard picture (1)
2. (2 and 3) Once the students leave the confines of the College for their journey through to the town, the station or the park-and-ride, tarmac abruptly ceases and gravel paths takeover (2&3) These sorts of surfaces are all very well when first built, and in the summer when the weather is dry, but if they're not maintained they become rough to use and puddle in wet weather.
3. National Cycle Route 4 winds its way around the college following access roads to join residential streets for a signed route towards Wellington via minor roads
4. he route works crosses the main road at a signalised crossing, then uses a short section of narrow shared use pavement to reach Ashley Road for Musgrave Hospital. This is another important destination which deserves very much better-quality paths than are currently on offer across Roughmoor.

Grand Western Greenway

Wellington to Taunton – Section 3

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The Riverside routes to the railway station

1. Staying on the south side of the river is potentially the
2. paths through Taunton are largely in place easiest route but the narrow section behind the cricket ground does need to be widened. This could be done by constructing a revetment along the riverbank
3. The north side riverside path is much wider, but the footbridge over the river would be difficult to make particularly suitable for cyclists, although of course it's possible to use it at present. The narrow ramp connection on the north side is very mean.
4. 3 By contrast main road Priory Bridge Road is wide and open which gives a generous route through along the riverside towards Firepool which we hope will be enhanced further in the current development.
5. Good quality Cycleroles are being incorporated in the current development.
6. Existing route to the station is well defined
7. These paths link to the Bridgwater Canal tow path which is signed as National Cycle Route 4 This starts off well but deteriorates rapidly and needs some care and maintenance since it's construction the best part of 30 years ago.
8. In summary the Riverside corridor they need a certain degree of enhancement to make it a generous and welcoming Cycling route

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Riverside and Station



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Priory Road to the Railway Station



*Trenchard Way cycle route looking
towards the Railway Station*



Grand Western Greenway Project - Summary



In compiling this workbook for the 7-mile-long Greenway from Wellington to Taunton, we have aimed to steer a line between sufficient detail to assure the reader that the Grand Western Greenway is a practical proposal and too much detail, which would be premature at this stage.

All Greenways depend upon the support and cooperation of landowners along the route, and this project is no exception. The details set out here will evolve through discussions and there will be several iterations of this workbook before works commence on site. Agreements may be of different types, but Greenways has found that long-term leases for permissive routes are generally a satisfactory way of proceeding, as the landowner retains control of the land while the public can enjoy journey without hindrance.

The route may provide opportunities for extending the landscape planting along this corridor to provide wide open views with more variety and wildlife buffer zones.

The role of the local support groups should not be underestimated because their enthusiasm and

commitment will assist with the construction, and be vital for the ongoing maintenance and care of everything including the planting, verges, litter and voluntary path rangers. Everything possible should be done to ensure that there is local ownership in what will always be a partnership between the public and the private spheres.

It is sensible to open a long route of this kind in sections. A practicable first section would be the reconstruction of the paths in Roughmoor because this land is public and need is pressing. The section at Wellington is likely to revolve around the programme for the opening of the new Wellington station. The path from the station to East Nynnehead could be opened as part of that project along with a high-quality route from the station to the town centre, partly be running on traffic-free Greenways and partly on repurposed roads. This link from Wellington to the station is a vital part of the project both for the Grand Western Greenway and for the station. It is to be hoped that Network Rail will create a clear and welcoming path through the station towards the town centre, rather than the all-too-common sea of parked cars.

Greenways and Cyclerroutes August 2025

With support from Tim Adams and Charles Biscoe

Appendix 1. Comment and alternative perspective on Somerset Council report on Sustainable Travel between Wellington and Taunton

Comment and alternative perspective on 2023 report.

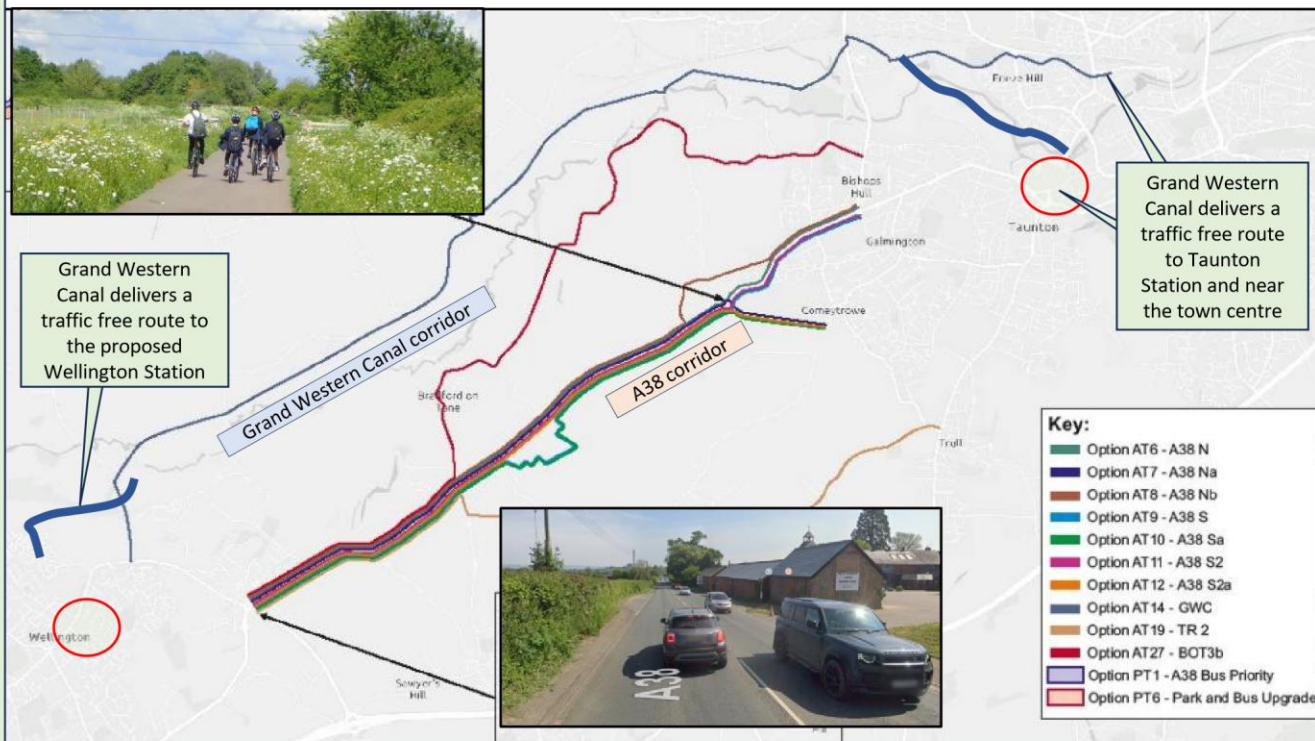
This page shows extracts from the 2023 Stantec Consultants report. Several elements of the analysis are contradicted by Greenways' direct experience.

The 2023 report rates the off-road option **strategically** lower than the road adjacent options. This off-road route runs from station to station rather than from the outskirts to outskirts, and is therefore significantly more useful.

The 2023 report rates the off-road option **financially** lower than the road adjacent options, while Somerset's experience shows the construction of off-road routes to the same standard is significantly less costly and less disruptive than building routes beside main roads. The **wellbeing** ratings of 31 for the off road option and 36 to 38 for the A38 adjacent route fail to reflect practical experience. The Greenways 2024 survey of routes in Aylesbury (see earlier) showed 7 times as many people chose to use a parallel route away from a highway, on grounds of well being. In Gloucestershire the Local Authority was perplexed that its high-quality routes adjacent to highway in Lydney attracted virtually no users, while Greenways' nearby offroad route attracted 100,000 in its first year of opening.

The **economic** ratings of 16 for the offroad option and 20 or 21 for the A38 adjacent route also fail to reflect practical experience. A Greenway generates economic opportunities by way of bike hire and cafes which a roadside route will not. Examples include the Camel Trail, Tarka Trail, and Greenways' own Brean Down Way, all of which saw the opening of new bike hire and cafe provision for path users.

The 2023 report rankings are reversed if only minor changes are made to reflect this experience. Rating the off-road route at just 2 points higher than the A38 adjacent routes for well being (40) and economic benefit (23) gives a total of 113 for the off-road route, compared with 111 for the highway adjacent route.



Extract from Wellington to Taunton Sustainable Transport Options report with Greenways alternative rankings

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Option Ref	Option	Description	Strategic	Wellbeing	Economic	Managerial	Financial	Commercial	Total	Recommend
AT12	A38 S2a Dedicated Cycle Infrastructure	This option will seek to deliver a segregated cycle track to the south of the A38 between the Chelston Roundabout and Orchard Grove Roundabout with wayfinding improvements linking to the town centre via the Comeytrowe Garden Community spine road and LCWIP Route 5.	20	38	21	11	14	7	111	●
AT7	A38 Na Dedicated Cycle Infrastructure	This option provides strong strategic alignment by providing a new dedicated cycle facility to the north of the A38 from the Chelston Roundabout in Wellington to the Orchard Grove roundabout in Taunton. It will then be utilising wayfinding to direct users along the cycle infrastructure delivered by Comeytrowe Garden community to the LCWIP Route 5 known as the Blue Route, which will provide access to the town centre.	20	38	21	11	14	7	111	●
AT10	A38 Sa Dedicated Cycle Infrastructure	Option AT10 will seek to deliver a segregated cycle track to the south of the A38 between Chelston Roundabout and Orchard Grove roundabout with a southern loop around the Sheppy's Cider factory. Linkages to the town centre will be provided via wayfinding improvements to existing infrastructure along the Comeytrowe spine road and LCWIP Red Route.	18	37	21	11	14	7	108	●
AT11	A38 S2 Dedicated Cycle Infrastructure	This option will seek to deliver a direct segregated cycle track between Chelston Roundabout and Silk Mills Roundabout to the south side of the A38.	20	38	20	11	14	7	110	●
AT6	A38 N Dedicated Cycle infrastructure	This option will seek to deliver a segregated cycle track to the north of the A38 between the Chelston Roundabout and Silk Mills Roundabout.	20	38	20	11	14	7	110	●
AT8	A38 Nb Dedicated Cycle Infrastructure	Option AT8 will aim to deliver a segregated cycle track to the north of the A38 between Chelston Roundabout and Silk Mills roundabout with a section of wayfinding provided to route users via Stonegalions.	17	37	20	12	14	7	107	●
AT9	A38 S Dedicated Cycle Infrastructure	This option will aim to deliver a segregated cycle track to the south of the A38 between Chelston Roundabout and Silk Mills Roundabout with a loop to the south of the Sheppy's Cider factory.	17	37	20	11	14	7	106	●
AT14	GWC Grand Western Canal Off Road Cycle Track	This option will provide wayfinding improvements along Hymehed Road to Hymehed Boat Lift. It will then deliver dedicated off-road cycle track provision along the former Grand Western Canal alignment, linking to existing provision and LCWIP Green route at Silk Mills P&R.	40	31	23	16	13	12	113	●
AT19	TR 2 Active Travel Route	The AT19 - TR2 option will seek to deliver a dedicated cycle facility to the south of the A38 from Chelston Roundabout to the junction with Silver Street. From this point it will provide wayfinding improvements to the quiet lanes, via Middle Stafford to Monitor Road, Taunton. The option will then link to the LCWIP Red route providing onward access to the town centre.	16	38	17	13	14	7	105	●
AT27	BOT3b Active Travel Route	The AT27 option will aim to deliver a dedicated cycle facility to the northside of the A38 to its junction with the unclassified highway in the approximate location of the World's End Pub. This option will then deliver wayfinding improvements through Bradford on Tone to Hele where it will adjoin the MCRS. It will then link to existing infrastructure in Taunton providing onward connection to the town centre.	18	36	15	13	14	7	103	●
PT1	A38 Bus Priority	This option will seek to provide bus priority at key congestion locations/junctions within the study area. This is likely to be Chelston Roundabout and the A38 approach to Taunton which will see an extension to the bus priority measures to be delivered by the Comeytrowe A389 south station.	18	27	27	11	17	7	107	●
PT6	Park and Bus upgrade to multi-mode Hub	Option PT6 will deliver and upgrade to the proposed Park and Bus facility at the Comeytrowe Garden Community by expanding the provisions available to support multi-mode onward travel.	15	30	27	12	11	7	102	●