

The Arrowhead is part of an island in the Stour which directly abuts onto land now owned by the Abbot's Mill project. It extends from this piece of land to run along the left bank of the River Stour, ending in a point where the channel for excess water joins the main river. It also lies opposite the local (presently unmanaged) Nature Reserve on Bus Company Island. Therefore it is in an ideal position to be incorporated fully under the management of the Abbot's Mill Project. It has an extensive river bank and at the moment much of the cover is still wild sown sycamore and other invasive native species. Both areas are under a covenant from the Hooker family which states that it (they) should be kept accessible to the public.

The chief aim of the present application is to unite the two areas so that improvements to the Arrowhead can be carried through from the work already done on the other piece of land. This would include clearing certain of the invasive species, brambles, ivy, saplings and overshadowing trees like self sown sycamores to open out the canopy, and removing large blocks of concrete. The other important aspect would be to strengthen the river bank with willow and basket work. Their volunteers have already cleared away a great deal of human waste – asbestos, evidence of drug usage and other nasties. They would now like to move to the next stage so that the Arrowhead can be protected and managed as a woodland and wildlife zone, where a number of interactive educational opportunities for local people can be instituted.

As a representative of Canterbury Community in Bloom, I can mention two important factors to recommend this application. First the judges for SE in Bloom and Britain in Bloom were full of praise for the scheme as it already exists- and we won gold! Secondly, as the Co-ordinator for the Schools Competition which we run every year for Primary School children in the Canterbury area, I would like to wholeheartedly endorse this application. The Project has already put on Forest School open days for local children, and with the additional area available, this can become a regular occurrence.

The list of topics proposed which the interactive educational opportunities would offer, include many which would be of great value to our school children, and can only be of benefit to them. I pick out:

\*Learning about the importance of our native wildlife - both on land –bat boxes, owl boxes, nesting boxes and feeders, and on the river = heron's fishing, ducks upending to catch worms etc, and a very rich diversity of fish and amphibians.

\* Knowledge extending to wild plants and flowers –which the project intends to plant in the cleared area – many of which have both medicinal and nutritional uses – a subject of fascination to children.

\*Gardening to encourage wildlife as well as a way in to understanding the principles of Nature conservation

. \*Opportunities to learn woodcraft and other traditional natural crafts – like the use of willow to sustain and protect the river bank.

And finally , and perhaps most importantly, it will increase opportunities for children to work together responsibly, out of doors in the fresh air, as well as enjoying and exploring an area independently and safely.