

The aim of the Abbot's Mill Project is to create an urban hub of sustainable and compassionate living. The arrowhead is integral to our overall project and we would like to manage the entire area as a nature reserve and community education project.

The covenant left by the Hooker family on the whole site (including the arrowhead) states that it should be accessible to the public. However, this was not the case for over 50 years.

Since taking on our own piece of land, antisocial behaviour there has dropped enormously. When we first bought the site, we found three large drug dens and hundreds of used hypodermic needles and other drug paraphernalia (as well as a huge amount of litter and other unpleasant human detritus).

One neighbour to the site, Jan, told us 'before you were here, we used to see an ambulance at the site for people who had overdosed at least once a week. Now I can't remember the last time there was one here!'

Our team of volunteers (many of whom are local residents) have worked so hard to improve the site, restoring native habitats, improving biodiversity, encouraging more native wildlife and providing educational opportunities for local people.

Now, people constantly remark at how lovely the site is, 'a little sanctuary' in the middle of the city. All sorts of people use the site, from the very young to the elderly, people with mental health problems and those with learning difficulties, local residents, dog-walkers, students, tourists, nature-lovers and environmentalists.

If we were given permission to manage the arrowhead, we would be enabled to extend our habitat restoration and educational work there, as well as removing the large concrete slabs that are on the site (remnants from when the site was a plant nursery) so that flora and fauna can flourish.

Of course, there is still some anti-social behaviour in the area (inevitable in the middle of a city) and we have had some homeless people sleeping on the

arrowhead site during the summer. However, local residents keep an eye on our site and we work closely with the local PSCO to deal with any issues sensitively. We will also be working closely with the new River Warden.

If we took on the management of the arrowhead, we would also be able to extend our prevention work to that site too (presently we are not permitted to do so). This could include adding a fence and locking the site at night, like Solly's Orchard and Abbot's Mill Garden, if that was what local people wanted. This would consequently make the entire site even safer for everyone and less of a burden to the City Council.