

# Public Art Brief

## Holwell Lane

### *Expressions of Interest*



This brief outlines details of the Holwell Lane Public Art Project (HLPAP), as part of the new Stonewater and Bloor Homes housing development, situated in Cheddar. The organisation 'a space' arts have been appointed as the public art consultant to deliver this project on behalf Stonewater Procurement Ltd.

### **The Commission**

This public art project is a really exciting opportunity to create a unique artistic intervention; the brief is unrestrictive and open to artistic interpretation.

The commissioner would particularly favor an artwork that is site specific, responding to the localities history and context, and one that allows visitors to experience the landscape in a new and unexpected way.

The artwork should consider its users, who are likely to be both local residents from the housing development and members of the public using the strawberry line for outdoor leisure pursuits.

### **Context**

The artwork should be inspired by the site's location, which is a hub of activity and holds a rich source of history. Headlines for artistic inspiration are given below with further details in Appendix 1.

To the west of the development is the Strawberry Line Trail, a walking and cycling route from Yatton to Cheddar. The Strawberry Line takes its name from a former railway line, built in 1869, which transported large cargos of Cheddar strawberries to London and beyond. The famous strawberries are still a staple produce of Cheddar Valley due to its rich soil combined with heavy rainfall and shelter of the Mendip Hills. The line was well used for nearly a century until its closure in 1965; since then, a wealth of wildlife habitats have been allowed to flourish.

The nearby Cheddar reservoir was built by Sir Robert McAlpine and completed in 1937. Remnants of the machinery used in constructing the reservoir are buried around the site, with some evidence that a complete railway engine may lay near the playing fields. It was the first British reservoir to permit sailing and remains a busy site for watersports today, such as paddle boarding, kayaking and canoeing. It is also one of the best sites in the county for water birds, and regularly attracts scarce and rare species.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for an overview of the history of the Strawberry Line, the construction of the reservoir and the area's wildlife.

### **Timeline**

- Wednesday 22 August 2018 > Open Call launched.
- Wednesday 19 September > Deadline for expression of interest from artists.
- Wednesday 26 September > 4-5 artists will be invited to develop a Round 1 proposal.
- Wednesday 31 October > Deadline to receive Round 1 proposals from artists. Following this the Project Partners will review all proposals and conduct artist interviews as required.
- Wednesday 16 November > Project Partners select artist.
- Wednesday 23 November > Appointed artist contracted.
- Wednesday 23 November – Thursday 31 January 2019 > Selected proposal undergoes further development, to produce an updated artwork proposal, a project timeline and budget.
- Thursday 31 January - Friday 21 June > Artistic production and permissions period with agreed milestones and studio visits.
- Monday 24 June - Friday 28 June > On-site installation of artwork. Maintenance and handover pack produced ready for sign-off.
- Saturday 29 June 2019 > Commissioner sign-off.

## **Budget**

Artists invited to submit a Round 1 proposal will receive a £200 fee whether they are selected or not. If selected, there is a £14,000 budget available to deliver the project.

## **Expression of Interest (EOI)**

At this stage we are looking for artists to submit an Expression of Interest only – a selection of artists will then be offered the opportunity to develop and submit a Round 1 proposal.

Please only submit an Expression of Interest if you can commit to the project timeline shown above.

If you're interested in submitting an Expression of Interest, please email Alex Batten at [alex@aspacearts.org.uk](mailto:alex@aspacearts.org.uk) with the following information:

- 250 words explaining why you are interested in this project and what your approach to developing a work would be
- A link to your website
- Artist CV

The deadline for EOIs is Wednesday 19th September 2018

## **Appendices**

Please find attached, the following supporting documents:

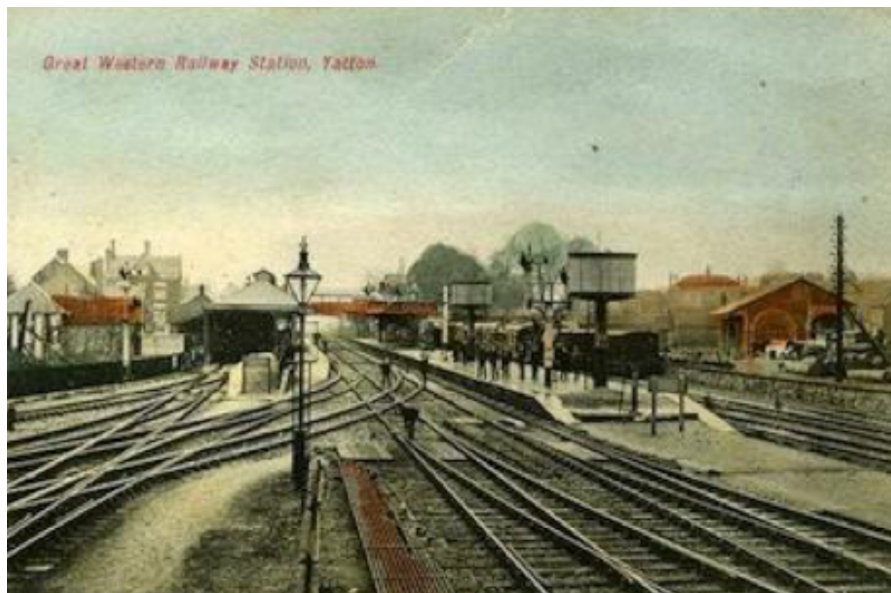
- Appendix 1: Historical context
- Appendix 2: Photographs, location and site maps

## The Strawberry Line



### Heritage

The Cheddar Valley Line, which ran from Yatton railway station through to Cheddar and Wells, became known as the “Strawberry Line” because of the volume of locally grown strawberries that it carried to London markets. Strawberries were collected from a string of Cheddar Valley village settlements sheltered under the southern slopes of the Mendip Hills between Cheddar and Wells for transporting to Yatton Junction. The line was also a vital economic link for passengers, quarrying, agriculture and general goods.

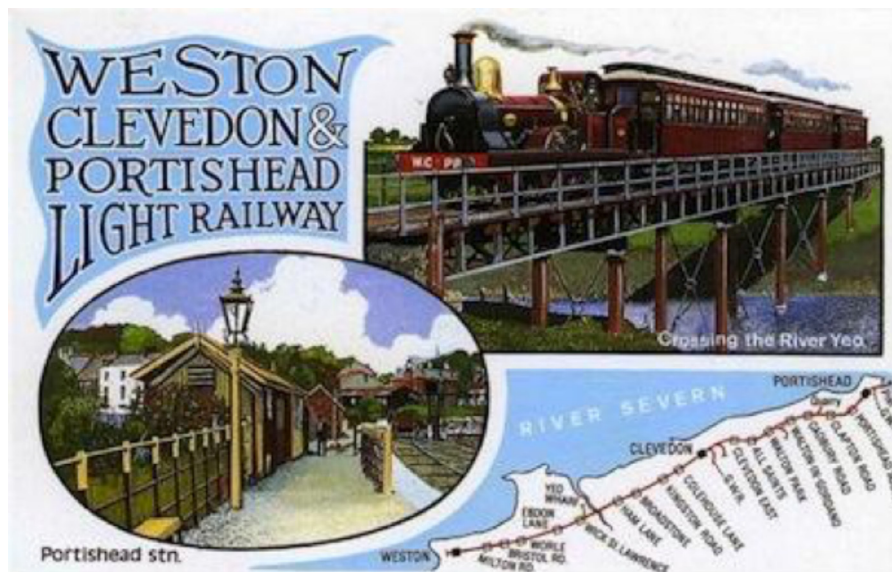


### Route Description

The Strawberry Line takes its name from the delicious cargo that this former railway line carried from the strawberry fields of Cheddar. The line was well used for nearly a century until its closure in 1965 and since then a wealth of wildlife habitats have been allowed to flourish. Volunteers from the Cheddar Valley Railway Walk Society began converting the line into a walking and cycling route in 1983.

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### Appendix 1: Historical Context



## Cheddar Reservoir



### Birdwatching

A concrete bowl, first opened in 1937, the reservoir doesn't look much, but is one of the best sites in the county for waterbirds, and regularly attracts scarce and rare birds. In winter it hosts up to 3,000 Coots, 50+ Great Crested Grebes, and large flocks of Tufted Ducks and Pochards, which attract other diving duck (Scaup and Red--crested Pochard are annual, Ferruginous and Ring--necked Ducks have occurred several times). Great Northern Diver and Black--necked Grebe appear in most winters, sometimes staying for long periods; other divers and scarcer grebes appear occasionally, and usually relatively briefly.

Late winter into spring is the best time for gulls: the roost occasionally attracts an Iceland or Glaucous Gull (Mediterranean Gulls are more regular) and Bonaparte's and Franklin's Gull have both been recorded. Little Gulls are regular, though often brief, passage visitors, and it is one of the better sites in the county for passing terns (Common, Arctic, and Black are all pretty much annual).

Low water levels in autumn can attract passage waders, which have included Pectoral Sandpiper, Little Stint, Ruff, and Grey Phalarope. The latter is one of the more regular of the storm--driven seabirds which have been occasionally recorded, so the reservoir is always worth a quick check during/after westerly gales.

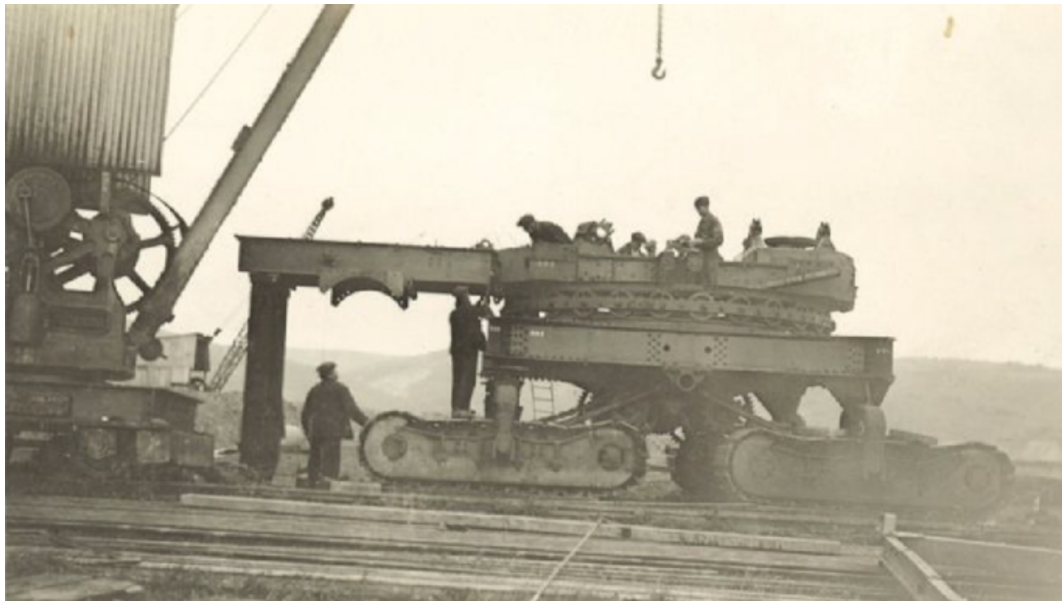
The sheep fields and the reservoir banks attract migrant wagtails and pipits, even once a wintering Snow Bunting. Little Owls are among the resident species which may be seen, usually around the sewage works.

### Building The Cheddar Reservoir in the 1930s

New images of the original reservoir's 1930s construction have recently emerged, including this one which shows men at work on a large piece of machinery.

Bristol Water said Cheddar had been a key part of it's supply "grid" for nearly 100 years. In 1914, it was decided to take water from the village to increase supplies to Bristol. In early 1922 the dams and intake in Cheddar Gorge, next to the Cliff Hotel, were built and a pipeline laid to a pumping station in Lower New Road.

Eventually, Bristol Water decided that a reservoir was needed to make better use of water from the springs. Work began on Cheddar Reservoir in April 1933, with an estimated total cost of £450,000. The company actually wanted to build a much larger reservoir, or a second one as well, but funds did not allow.





Over 400 men were employed on the site, with wooden huts provided for accommodation near the tower on the Axbridge side. Bristol Water said many of the so--called navvies were Irish Catholics, so they even had their own priest.



Raw manpower, horses, steam shovels and cranes were all used to build the reservoir and there was little regard for health and safety. A branch of the Axbridge to Cheddar railway was built across the fields behind the sailing club to bring in materials.



Bits of the machinery used in construction are buried around the reservoir including, some believe, a complete railway engine near the playing fields. An eight--week programme of archaeological investigations by Wessex Archaeology is currently underway.



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### Appendix 2: Location and Site Maps



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