

“Step, Ride, Thrive”

An Avalon & Poldens LCN pilot project to provide additional public transport along with active travel opportunities to the Avalon Marshes

Dear Parish Councils

Many of you will have been at LCN meetings and heard feedback from the Health & Wellbeing working group as well as presentations from Fodo Higginson about the SALC Community Health & Wellbeing Programme and associated grants. The H&WB working group have been collaborating with Natalie Watson from the Avalon Marshes Centre on a proposed project and grant application.

To take this forward we're seeking support from all the parish & town councils in the A&P's LCN, and some beyond, to take the project forward. Below is a short summary of the proposal, but we've also attached documents with more detail.

The turnaround is very tight - the deadline for our application is 24 February, to make the Grant Assessment panel meeting on 7 March. Please can you add to your next council meeting agenda and let us know by 21 February, if at all possible, Monday 3 March absolute latest:

- If you're happy to support a grant application for £35,000 to SALC CH&WB.
- If a small amount of financial support would be available - either this year during the project, or whether a commitment to future funding - from your own council's precept.

Project Objective

The project proposes an integrated approach to transport and active travel - improving accessibility to the Avalon Marshes, a cluster of nationally significant nature reserves, while promoting walking, cycling, and public transport use.

- **Providing Bus Access:** Piloting a 6-month extension to the No. 668 Shipham-Steet Bus Service provided by Libra Travel. Weekday stops at the Avalon Marshes Centre (AMC) will be added to this existing route.
- **Promoting Safe Cycling:** Collaborating with local charity *On Your Bike* to offer free local cycling events, bike health checks, school workshops, and more. We're also exploring offering affordable bike hire based at the AMC using refurbished bikes from *On Your Bike*.
- **Encouraging Walking:** Supporting walking with free guided tours of reserves by the Avalon Marshes Partnership, wellbeing events and activities in partnership with Somerset NHS, and developing walking and cycling guides.

The health and wellbeing benefits will be opened up to thousands more residents who don't have access to their own vehicle. For those not on the bus route bike health checks and potentially bike hire will open up the marshes for safer cycling.

Glastonbury Town Council is proposed as the grant holder and the LCN H&WB working group will administer the project.

The longer-term plan is to seek funding through Defra's 20-year 'Adapting the Levels' programme. The evidence from this pilot will be invaluable to securing such funding.

For more information contact:

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