

# The Clarke Street Route

This route begins at the junction of Windmill Hill, Hereford Street and Whitehouse Lane, and leads through to where Clarke St joins Philip St.

## Coming out of Windmill Hill, through the railway bridge

- We know that the River Malago runs beneath our feet, but the only clue to this is the enamel artwork on the wall of the bridge. It would be good to have the river more in evidence at this point.
- Opposite is the green space (Bedminster Green?), with a good path across it, leading from the zebra crossing to Dalby Avenue. The zebra and the green space are good and inviting.



- The Daisy Walk, with flower prints on the pavement is interesting, but already looks a bit faded.
- There are a number of signs on a pole opposite, not all make sense, looks jumbled.



## Walking along Whitehouse Lane towards Clarke St

- Immediately on the right is an area of nettles. It feels good to have this green space, in the summer you can't see the litter! We know that this is the site for the proposed new entrance to the station.



- Hereford Rd into Whitehouse Lane is a blind bend. You can hear cars approaching fast as you cross the zebra ... and hope they will stop in time.
- Walking past the green, the bushes are overgrown and come right out over the pavement. We can see lots of rubbish and fly-tipping amongst them. Would be good if these were managed better and litter cleared.



- On the right, the beginning of all the car-repair workshops and car cleaning places. Lots



of barbed wire, too many signs and litter.



- On the left, St.Katherines Trading Estate, bit of a tricky entrance for vehicles and for pedestrians to cross.



## Clarke Street

- There is nothing welcoming about Clarke St! No sign to direct you this way, nothing to tell you where it goes, cars parked either side of the road, you would have to be exploring and quite intrepid to try this route out if you didn't already know about it!



- There are 2 empty posts at the start of the street, either of which could be used for a directional sign to go up on.



- As you walk along the pavement, the Malago wall is too high to see over, the river is hidden from view completely.



- The wall itself is a good old stone wall, with a variety of plants growing on it – ferns, buddleia, valerian, ivy leaved toadflax.
- A metal barrier across the road marks the end of the cars and the road, and the beginning of the carpark area.
- More unused posts which could be removed.



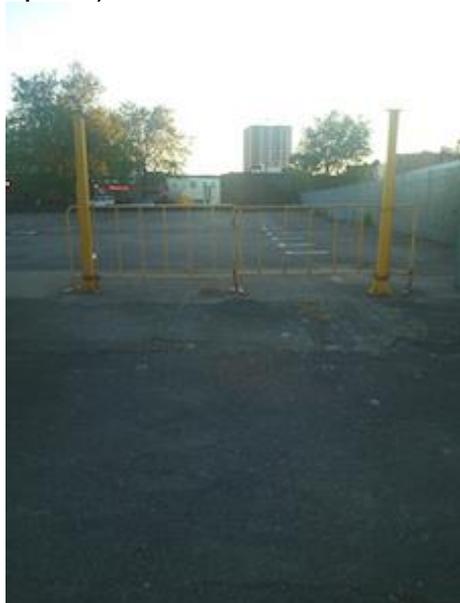
## The Clarke Street Triangle

- As you enter the Clarke Street Triangle (area between the barriers, part of the NCP car park, triangular in shape) there are 2 opposing impressions. One is, an area covered in litter, a falling-down wall, broken glass. Not good! The other, is swathes of green, touches of colour with the flowers coming out, birdsong (we visited in the evening, beautiful evening birdsong!) and if you lean your head over the wall you can hear the Malago running below you.





- As you keep walking, you pass the bridge over to the main NCP carpark – with barrier closed (when is this open?)



- As you get closer to the next barrier, you can see the larger amounts of rubbish that are tucked in behind the central bushes on your right and evidence of drug taking and a large amount of alcohol litter. Glass, rubble, sacks of stuff. We met a man who went on round into the corner, eventually hidden from our sight. We would not feel safe alone in the evening there, even though the users are probably not interested in us.



- High wall on left is where the old sluice gate is hiding. There is nothing to draw you in to have a look, no reason to think there is anything worth looking at here.

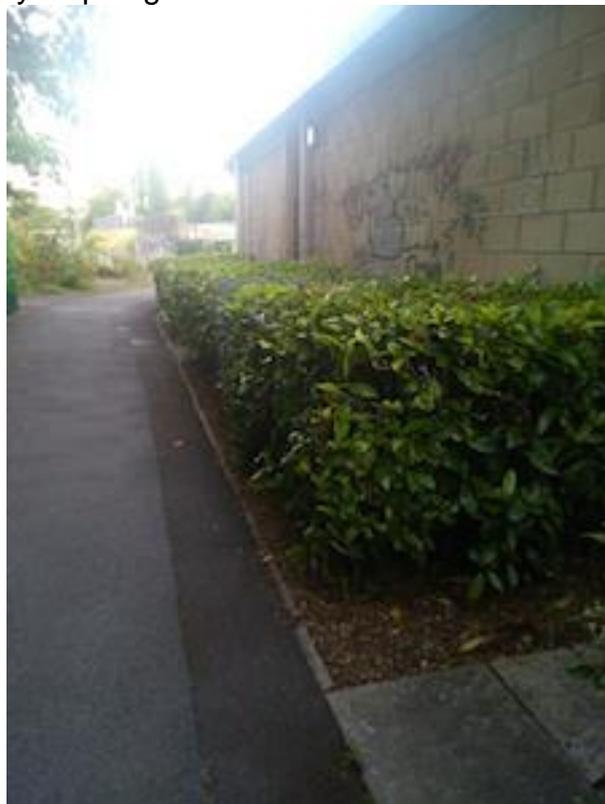


- Then the broken down gate on the left, which leads alongside the Malago. Presumably this footpath is closed because the river-wall has collapsed. But this gate is broken open permanently, and if you walk along there, the next gate is also pointless as a hole has been cut in the fence. The river here feels really unloved, but when you stop to look at it, it is full of life, lots of plants, fantastic old industrial fixtures, sound of water, all good.



### **Farm Gate and path between farm and industrial units to Philip St**

- Gate plans all looking good ... this is going to make a big difference to the Clarke St route once it is open.
- Footpath lead between farm fence and industrial units. All looks well maintained. Bushes are quite boring, but well cut. Again, alcohol litter in evidence and this has been where historically drug users have discarded needles. Wall of building has some graffiti on it, none particularly inspiring.



- At end of path, where it opens out onto Clarke St again, there is no sign to tell people where the footpath leads to.

- Footpath along used road to Philip St – all fine, farm on right. But no sign at corner of Philip St to direct people to go this way. Is the farm going to put any signage in to tell people where the other gate is?

## Changes we could make

### Street Furniture

- Signs to direct people along Clarke St would be good. One at the junction with Whitehouse Lane, One at the junction with Philip St and one where the footpath leaves the road to head down to the farm gate, between the farm and the industrial units.
- The 2 large road barriers need painting. Could we paint these in a more interesting way? Pictures of bees and butterflies, flowers along them?? Need to investigate best colours for safety.
- There are lots of spare poles along the way. We could use some of these for signs, and get rid of the rest. The unused ones create an uncared feel.
- A couple of bins would be good. These should be dog bins, or are they all mixed use bins nowadays? As the area has a history of drug use and drug dealing there is a large amount of cans and bottles and plastics so it is probably worth us investigating also getting in some bins that specifically take plastics, cans and glass bottles.

### Clarke St Triangle

- Removing the central fence and shrubs and possibly one tree, to open up the triangle so that it has no hidden corners.



- Cutting back some of the trees and shrubs which overhang the triangle (perhaps planted within the farm boundary?) to make it lighter and more open, less places to dump litter and feel you can get away with it.
- Massive litter clearance, to give the triangle a fresh start, clear rubble, glass, needles (sex and drugs litter team).
- And then .... our most exciting idea !!! ... plant swathes of wildflowers and grasses. Looking closely at the triangle, we can see that quite a few species have colonised the old tarmac and concrete and begun to spread. Taking this as inspiration, we should encourage wildflowers and grasses to grow here. This may mean spreading some subsoil lightly over some of the areas, or just going for species that don't need more than is there already. We would like to ask Avon Wildlife Trust to survey the area for wildlife

and we'd also like a landscape architect/planter to look at it and see if we can add soil/seeds to create swathes of colour which will also provide nectar. A colony of Sedums is starting to establish, this could be one plant to go for. Can also see potentillas. After the initial soil/seed work, this would need much less maintenance than another sort of garden or food growing area.



- This nectar source could be part of a Bee Corridor ... and we could also add bushes around the edges to provide more nectar.
- Tessa's idea of fruit trees planted in huge soil sacks could tie in with this – providing more blossom for the bees.
- If we do create a Bee Corridor, we could also look at introducing some bee hives??

## River Malago

- Too much buddleia growing out of the river walls, needs cutting well back.
- Be good to get AWT to survey the river too, see what is there, and possibly after that, remove other river plants where too clogged up.
- Be good to find out who is responsible for care of the river here.
- In the long term, it could be good to have the footpath on the other side of the river, as there is no wall here to prevent walkers enjoying seeing and hearing the water and its wildlife.
- The wall is falling down quite badly in one place along Clarke St, be good to get this fixed, or open it up in a safe way to make the river more visible.
- The Sluice Gate is a gem! Fantastic industrial history, where the river passed by (and was probably utilised by) Cappa Pass (spelling?!) smelting works and the tannery. The sluice gate marks the start of the 1800 flood relief channel. It would be good to find someone who could have a look at the sluice gate and give a date to it. Perhaps talk to English Heritage.
- All in all, wondering if this stretch of the river could be helped by looking for a large grant ... HLF, Big Lottery? It is a good wildlife and heritage site, close to the farm, a community and a shopping centre.
- Wondering if it would be worth paying to have a feasibility study done by a Landscape Architect, looking at the wall, river, and landscape.

## Actions

- Helen to contact AWT, see how much it would cost to do a wildlife survey, and see if their My Wild City project would like to get involved.
- Kim to talk with neighbour Will, who is a Landscape Architect. Find out if he would be interested/able to do a wildlife planting plan for us. And whether this would cost/what it would cost.
- Kim to contact Malago History Society, to see if they have any further knowledge of the sluice gate, and this stretch of the river.
- Helen to contact BCC to investigate ownership and responsibility for this stretch of river
- Helen to let Kingfishers know what is happening.
- Kim to talk with Bristol Drugs Project about drug use on the site and how best to deal with this.