

Bennerley Viaduct,

a 10-year vision for future development, 2022 -2032



Friends of Bennerley Viaduct, 10-year vision document; 2022 – 2032

This document sets out, in broad outline, the vision for the development of the Bennerley Viaduct and its surroundings as a successful, financially viable heritage attraction and community asset.

The development of greater links to, and working partnerships with, the Erewash Canal and the Erewash Museum present the possibility of an 'Heritage Hub' which will contribute to the revitalisation and regeneration of the area.

The Friends recognise that the organisation has to be ambitious in its vision and must consider the long-term development of its role within the community, the region and the heritage sector, at the same time recognising that the Friends group are new to the management and development of such heritage attractions.

Over the next 10 years, the development of the Viaduct, its surroundings and its potential partnerships, can be seen in three phases:

Phase 1: March 2022 – February 2024

Funding: National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), up to £250k

The Bridging the Gap application for NLHF funding has now been approved.

Bridging the Gap is intended to build the skills and capacity within the Friends for the future successful development of the Viaduct as a visitor attraction, a community asset and a pivotal partner in the regeneration of area and is, in effect, a feasibility study for the ambitions described in this document.

The bid includes full and part time staff posts to undertake the project management, maintenance of the natural environment and community engagement. It will contain funding to build important, long-term partnerships with the other neighbouring heritage attractions and test the concept of a 'Heritage Hub'.

The bid will allow the Friends to understand the skills required and develop the experience needed to take on the lease of the Viaduct and to take on the role to develop its future.

Close relationship with the adjoining landowner should allow the Friends to purchase pockets of land to enable long term environmental management and future development. During this phase, it is hoped that land between Shilo Way and the eastern end of the viaduct will come under ownership of the FoBV, having been transferred from present owners. This enables the ambitions set out in Phase 2 to be realised.

Also, during Phase 1 the work will start on a second application for Lottery funding to enable the development work set out in Phase 2 to be undertaken.

Fundraising will take place during this phase to address a shortfall in the match funding.

Phase 2: 2024 – 2027

Funding: NLHF +, Circa £2.5m

Phase 1 has been a success. Partnerships with the community, public bodies and other heritage attractions have been developed and tested, the lessons have been learnt and skills and experience developed. The lease is in place for the Friends to continue the management of the Viaduct.

Development during this phase will increase physical access, increase connections to public rights of way and develop visitor facilities.

Capital works:

- Building an Eastern Ramp
- Creating a visitor welcome and cafe building
- Creating picnic areas for visitors to rest and enjoy the viaduct and its surroundings



With the acquisition of land, the construction of an Eastern Ramp will provide a fully accessible link from the Viaduct to the Nottingham Canal and Shilo Way, to create walking and cycling access for visitors to and from the Nottinghamshire area. This will be important in the development of the Great Northern Greenway. It will also make possible further development of links to public transport. It is the Friends' intention not to be reliant upon car borne visits, but to ensure that the attraction becomes easily accessible by public transport, on foot and by cycle.

The increased accessibility of the Eastern Ramp and added facility of a cafe will allow the Friends group to become more ambitious in its calendar of events and increase the financial income, creating greater sustainability and opportunity for continued development.

The two canals of Erewash and Nottingham already form a major part of the Erewash Valley Trail.

The Eastern Ramp and a visitor centre will link the Erewash Museum, Erewash Canal, the Bennerley Viaduct and the D. H. Lawrence Birthplace in Eastwood in a heritage landscape in the same model as the Ironbridge Gorge. Distinct, individual attractions will together create a greater whole, communicating the important cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

The attractions tell the story of the area, its people and its industrialisation, but also that of the industrialisation of Britain, through the canal and railway systems, steel and coal industries. Equally, the two canals and the surrounds of the viaduct have a more modern narrative of care and management of the natural environment.

Phase 3: 2027 – 2031

Funding: NLHF +

Phase 2 has been a success. The Viaduct is a popular, accessible and financially viable heritage attraction, providing a full calendar of successful visitor events. It has physical links to the Erewash Valley Trail including the Erewash and Nottingham canals and is part of the **Great** Northern Greenway. The public transport links have become well used and are facilitating a successful working partnership with the Erewash Museum. Bennerley Viaduct becomes part of the National Cycling Network managed by Sustrans.



The Visitor Centre allows visitors to explore the history of the viaduct, the surrounding site, the Great Northern Railway and the Erewash and Nottingham Canals. It will partner with the Canal Lock Cottage at Sandiacre and the Erewash Museum, and be accessible between both by foot and short public transport journeys.

The Heritage Hub provides exciting and engaging attractions to explore the heritage of the area, the beautiful natural environment, canal side walks and cycling.

Trustees

Friends of Bennerley Viaduct

February 2022