

# *Autumn Message from the Chair*



The Strawberry Line Society  
Reg. Charity No. 1201543  
[www.thestrawberryline.org.uk](http://www.thestrawberryline.org.uk)

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September 2023

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## **Dear Member,**

In my New Year message to members, I said that the committee had taken the first steps to modernise our constitution and become a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). I am pleased to say that our new constitution and status have now been approved by the Charity Commission and a general meeting of members has passed the necessary resolutions to put the change into effect. We have a new charity number (1201543) and will be able to recruit new trustees more easily, but otherwise members will not notice much difference.

We have also simplified our branch structure. The SLS trustees will deal with matters that affect the society as a whole – for example insurance, membership, the website and decisions to acquire or dispose of land. The day-to-day work of maintaining, lobbying and building sections of the line will be managed nearer to the ground through four branches. The existing groups concerned with Yatton to Clevedon, and Wells to Shepton are unchanged. The Axbridge – Cheddar group and the SLA have agreed to form a combined Cheddar Valley branch while oversight of the stretch from the A38 to Yatton will be led by those trustees living in that area.

In January, as well as reporting on new sections of off-road path in Shepton and Westbury I indicated that more good news was to be expected. I am delighted to say that on 16th September we will open a short but vital section between Westbury-sub-Mendip and Easton which, crucially, passes safely under the A371. It forms a vital link between the two villages as well as taking us one step nearer to a continuous path. We are also eagerly anticipating the formal opening of



Creating a new cutting between Erlon Lane and the A371 at Easton.



A stunning new farm accommodation bridge, designed by John Grimshaw and constructed by MP & KM Golding, has been put in place at Easton.



The soon-to-be-opened National Grid path at the new Hinkley Point Sandford substation, broadly following the railway alignment. This will replace the permissive path through Thatcher's orchards and the on-road section at Nye Road.

a splendid new section at Sandford, courtesy of National Grid.

Congratulations are due to our Winscombe based maintenance team who have been selected from hundreds of nominations to be one of the four finalists for the BBC Bristol 'Making a Difference' awards in the Green category. We will know in September whether they have taken the top place but reaching the final is itself a great achievement.

Finally, we are able to unveil our new website ([www.thestrawberryline.org.uk](http://www.thestrawberryline.org.uk)) which will be easier to maintain and keep up to date than our old version which was looking rather tired. The website will focus on information for users of the path and members, both present and prospective. Moving with the times, we will use social media and particularly Facebook for those news items which have a relatively short life.

As a voluntary organisation the SLS is

dependent upon a healthy membership to enable it to carry out its work, whether that be practical tasks on the path, fund raising or helping to promote new sections and links. We have transferred the entire membership database onto an online membership management software package (MemberMojo), and it is now very easy to join and renew via our website. Email reminders to renew annual membership will now be sent out automatically two months before expiry. You might also want to bring joining the Society to the attention of anyone else you feel might wish to support us.



Mick (far left) and fellow volunteers clearing vegetation from Easton cutting in February.

**Mick Fletcher**

Chair, Strawberry Line Society