

Avon Gorge 'wildlife haven' for derelict Portway sports ground

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From the section [Bristol](#)



Image caption The site is alongside the Portway and the River Avon

A derelict sports ground next to a busy commuter route into Bristol is to be transformed into a nature reserve. Avon Wildlife Trust **has bought the 12 acre site**, alongside the Portway, which was previously used by the then Bristol and West Building Society.

The land has been disused for some 20 years with a number of schemes, including night-time football pitches and a surfing lake, proposed.

It is hoped the nature reserve could be open by 2015.

'Wildlife corridor'

The site is alongside the busy A4, at the start of the Avon Gorge, a route used by thousands of commuters a day.

The trust describes the gorge as an "essential wildlife corridor for foraging species including barn owl and several species of bat".

It is also home to badgers, hedgehogs, slow worms and some rare plant species.

Once open it hopes people will be inspired to create new homes for wildlife in their own gardens.

The charity now plans to raise £120,000 to fund the work which it hopes will help Bristol celebrate being **European Green Capital for 2015**.

Avon Wildlife Trust has more than 16,000 members and looks after 35 nature reserves in the former Avon area.