



TSG Newsletter

December 2023

TWO SHIRES GREENWAY

We hope you have noticed that the AAGP logo is not at the top of this newsletter! After some consideration we decided that we needed a name that better described our project, its ambition and its aims. Our spine routes engage two rural counties; our greenway links them in a potentially mighty partnership to create a new network for walking and cycling. It's a strategic partnership that is both exciting and powerful and offers us a route to government funding through Active Travel and the Department for Transport. Constructing this relationship completes our engagement through all levels of politics, parish, district, county and government and is vital in attracting the money necessary for Two Shires Greenway vision to become a reality - more of this below!

Long term strategy requires county joint action with government.

We are engaged with Councillor Mike Rouse (Worcs CC), Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, and Cllr Justin Kerridge (Warks CC) to achieve cross county support for the project as a whole. The difficult sections of the Greenway project will require serious funding (many millions) from Active Travel and the DfT to complete. Our concern is that Active Travel is currently focused primarily on urban development which is unhelpful to rural counties like Worcestershire and Warwickshire where connectivity is key.

So the aim is to lobby DfT and Active Travel for funding for routes offering 'connectivity' rather than just the present urban focus. Ideally both district councils, Wychavon and Stratford would work to ensure their county council's engagement with the cross county strategic partnership.

TSC Summit Meeting

Tim Snazell (Warks CC) is setting up a meeting with Councillors Rouse and Kerridge and county officers and we will seek to engage District Council leaders in any future meetings.

We also believe that Directors of Public Health should have a powerful voice in supporting the Greenway and we are asking District Council leadership to set up a meeting so we could enlist their support for this project to promote health and wellbeing - they are Dr Shade Agboola, Warks CC and Lisa McNeil, Worcs CC.

We hope to set up a joint meeting between the two District Council leaders - Sue Juned and Chris Day to encourage cross district council co-operation and pushing for the engagement of District Council Cllrs to join in the creation of a pressure group with the two county councils to lobby government.



Two Shires Greenway: Annual General Meeting, 24th January 2024

We are now due to hold our AGM for the year 2023/4 where we hope we can welcome you all to a full update of the project with much more detail and a chance to discuss the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. It will be held in the Salford Priors Memorial Hall and the date will be Wednesday January 24th 2024 at 7.15pm. We will send you a reminder and an agenda after Christmas along with a Zoom link for those of you unable to attend in person. **Please note the date in your diary!**

A brief overview of the both TSG routes

Spine Route 1 from Alcester to Evesham is around 18 kilometres long, 11 kilometres within Warwickshire and 7 kilometres within Worcestershire. Spine Route 2 from Broom to Stratford is over 12 kilometres long and all within Warwickshire. The future route of Spine Route 2 is less certain, partly because much of the old railway line has been lost through road improvements, new housing and sections across fields have been ploughed up.



Spine Route 1: Alcester to Wixford

There is already a route which can be used between Alcester and Wixford. Starting on quiet roads on the outskirts of Alcester it crosses the A46 by a footbridge and runs along a bridleway, through Oversley Woods owned by Forestry England, along another bridleway to join the quiet public road through Exhall village to Wixford, to continue towards Broom over Wixford Bridge. We are pleased to see the scheme recently installed at Wixford bridge to slow traffic down and give some space to pedestrians.



Another route—Alcester to Wixford?

We are continuing to investigate the possibilities of a more direct route from Alcester towards Wixford, partly based on the old railway line. This could end close to the Alcester Town Centre using the splendid section of old railway line pictured and easily seen from the Evesham Street railway bridge.

Alcester is also important because last year Sustrans did an options study for Warwickshire connecting Alcester with Studley into Redditch. One option considered is to follow the old railway line.

Spine Route 1: Wixford to Salford Priors

The section from Wixford to Salford Priors, wholly within the Salford Priors Parish Council area is underway with CIL funding from Salford Priors PC and Stratford District Council to the tune of £500,000. Prior to agreement to go ahead, TSG organised an ecology study which showed that there were no major concerns. Works are under the control of the Parish Council and we expect work to clear undergrowth along the old railway line to commence very early 2024. Also included will be the replacement of the steps with ramps either side of Bomford Way in Salford Priors.

We are fortunate that the land owners along this section of the route have been most co-operative. We think that once this section is improved it will help to show that real change is possible, making further work a little bit easier.

The works to be carried out shortly will not help the two elderly gentlemen pictured on the right who are wondering how to cross the puddle, close to the old signal box you see on the A46. But in general the route is in good order and the work planned close to Wixford will further improve it.



Spine Route 1: Harvington to The Valley

We have CIL money for the section through Harvington. The three landowners along this part of the route are National Highways (contact Fiona McKenzie), Worcester CC (contacts Tina McLaughlin and Phil Goddard), and the Valley land owned by Eagle One Ltd. (contact Phil Maclean marketing director). Harvington PC have been awarded £150K community legacy grant money. We are waiting on National Highways and WCC to process the legal side so we can go for match funding. This would effectively give us £300K for this section.

The parish council has set up a working group to progress this. The Valley owners are very supportive of the project as a whole and specifically look forward to the link towards Evesham Town.

Phil Goddard (WCC) has outlined a plan to create a public right of way across the New Farm nature reserve (WCC land between the accommodation bridge over the A46 and the Valley land). This can later be upgraded to a bridleway. Eagle One have agreed to this being linked into their land.

Spine Route 1: The Valley to Evesham

We know that the original work started over 5 years ago to deliver this route has stalled badly for a number of reasons, however this is the perfect time to resurrect the work as things have changed and we can work with those changes.

Jill and Joe met with Phil Maclean, Marketing Director of Eagle One Ltd. on 28th September. Eagle One are very keen to see this route in place and Phil talked with great enthusiasm about the commercial and tourist benefits for Evesham. He also offered to help us sharpen up the executive summary of our business plan.

Jill and Joe met with Heather Peachy (Wychavon DC) on 10th October. She confirmed to us that several years ago money was given by Eagle One specifically for the route from Evesham to the Valley. This is tied by a legal agreement and cannot be used for other purposes. The amount is over £100,000 and can be used as matched funding. There has subsequently been a land survey to establish the best route.

We understand there is a particular problem with agreeing the route close to where the route crosses under the A46. We have not been involved up to now but we feel in view of the lack of progress, our involvement may be beneficial.

Spine Route 2: Broom to Bidford

On Spine Route 2 we plan a pincer movement strategy for the route as the central section offers the greatest challenge. So, at the western end we are working on the route from Broom to the Bidford Health Centre with Bidford PC and we have bid for £250k of Stratford DC CIL money for this section in this year's CIL grants – we are hoping to hear good news in the next week or so!

Pictured is the Grafton Lane bridge over the old railway line between Bidford and the Health Centre. This could become an active travel route.



Spine Route 2: Welford to Luddington

This is the eastern side of the pincer movement strategy. We are in the planning stage with Luddington and Welford Parish Councils, on the route from the Stratford racecourse to Welford and we intend to bid for CIL funds for this section in 2024. Delivering both sections will leverage extra funding to do the difficult job of joining them up. Once done we then have immediate access to the existing and very popular Stratford Greenway leading to Long Marston

Getting the TSG message across

On 20th November Joe addressed the Town Plan Committee of Evesham Town Council and answered questions. We are happy to meet other Town and Parish Councils and indeed other organisations to tell them all about the TSG.

The TSG Organisation

Joe Harvey:—Chair

Liam Maude: —Vice Chair and Salford Priors Parish Council

Daryl Bailey: —Treasurer

Jill Smith: —Secretary and Harvington Parish Council.

Graeme Reeves:- Business Plan and Economic Research

Tom Shaw: - Special representative for Alcester

Colin Tether:- Stepped back since move to London, but assisting with mapping and Newsletter

Over to you!

We now would be delighted if you could use your influence to push for progress on your section of this unique infrastructure project which will bring significant benefits and offer a huge opportunity to develop a network of walking/cycling paths for the whole of South Warwickshire and Worcestershire. This amazing amenity will connect all the footpaths and bridleways and routes off the Greenway to other villages and places of beauty and interest along the way. We hope that you continue to see the huge benefits of actively supporting this agenda and investing time and political capital as well as cash in its development.

Have a very happy and restful Christmas. We look forward to seeing you at the AGM in the New Year.

Joe Harvey (Chair) Two Shires Greenway, 12th December 2023.