



# Avon and Arrow Greenway Project

Annual General Meeting Minutes

7:00pm, Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Salford Priors Memorial Hall  
School Road, Salford Priors, WR11 8XD

## Present:

Joe Harvey - Chair AAGP  
Jill Smith - Hon sec AAGP  
Daryl Bailey - Treasurer AAGP  
Colin Tether - AAGP Exec (Zoom)  
Liam Maude - AAGP Exec (Zoom)  
Graeme Reeves - AAGP Exec  
Stuart Keighley - Luddington Parish Council  
Andy Hibbitt – Luddington Parish Council  
Robin Walker – Cycle Evesham Vale  
Erick Wilson - Alcester Town Council  
John James - Bidford Health Centre Patient Participation Group  
Robert Hale - Evesham Town Council  
Justin Kerridge – Warwickshire CC  
P Smith  
Alan Saunders - Evesham Rambling Club  
Mark Funnell - Norton and Lenchwick Parish Council  
Jack Fryer - Wixford Parish Council (Zoom)  
Ian Graham - Offenham Parish Council (Zoom)  
Susan Juned – Stratford DC(Zoom)

## Item 1 Apologies:

Thomas Shaw – AAGP Exec  
Martin Philpott – Sustrans  
Julie Tucker – Evesham Town Council  
John Langley - Harvington Parish Council  
Mike Flaxman - Binton Parish Council and Bidford Health Centre  
Karen Lewing - Active Travel Officer, Wychavon District Council  
Stephen Rumble – Warwickshire County Council  
Charles Granlund – Ragley Estate  
Tracey Perkins – Wychavon District Council  
Manuela Perteghuella – Stratford District Council

Election of Chair – Joe Harvey was proposed by Liam Maude and seconded by Jack Fryer. Elected unanimously. The other officers were elected as follows

Jill Smith – Hon Secretary  
Liam Maude – Vice Chair  
Daryl Bailey – Treasurer  
Colin Tether  
Graeme Reeves  
Tom Shaw

## Item 2 Introduction and Chairman's Report – Joe Harvey

Joe welcomed everyone present in the Hall and on Zoom to the meeting. He offered a big thank you to the executive members of the AAGP for all their hard work during a busy and challenging year and to all those present who had continued to support the work of the AAGP so energetically.

He noted that despite some setbacks real progress had been made and the prospects for the next 12 months were looking bright. He then made the following observations.

'The agenda today gives me the opportunity now to look at some of the headlines, the detail of which we can examine later.

1. We have had increasingly helpful engagement with both officers and councillors at Worcestershire and Warwickshire County Councils for which I am gratefully to them.
2. We have seen a potentially significant breakthrough in the ability to create greenway and bridleway delivery through direct collaboration between parish councils and landowners.
3. We can look towards the opening up of some sections of our spine routes with some confidence during the course of 2023.
4. The Feasibility Study (FS) by Sustrans of the Broom to Stratford route is nearly finished and will hugely focus and energise our efforts on the work to take that route forward next year.
5. We now know that Warwickshire County Council are engaged with the delivery very soon of an FS for a new greenway route from Alcester to Redditch which will link to and extend our existing route significantly. We are of course very excited to hear this and will support the work in any way we can.

## Item 3 Progress: Evesham to Alcester

### Wychavon and Harvington updates – Jill Smith

Harvington PC with the AAGP and Norton & Lenchwick PC applied for a Community Legacy Grant. This process involved a six-week consultation with the community. The online survey elicited an overwhelming response and 98% of those that responded were in favour of the cycle path. (Survey report can be found at <https://www.harvington-pc.org.uk/aagp/SurveyReport.pdf>). We were successful and were awarded £150K. Harvington PC have now set up a working group to oversee this section of the route. We have met with officers from Wychavon and have walked them along the route to show what is proposed. Karen Lewing the active travel officer is leaving Wychavon at the beginning of November and has passed on contact details which we are pursuing. The AAGP are now in contact with Worcestershire CC. We are looking at making legal agreements with the 3 landowners along this part of the route, namely National Highways (previously named Highways England), Worcestershire CC and Eagle One (The Valley). The Harvington Working Group are meeting with Phillip Goddard for a site visit on the WCC land that is soon to be planted with trees. This gives us a unique opportunity to establish the cycle track and initiate legal procedures for new Right of Way (ROW).

Question raised about where the Community Legacy Grant money was from. It was established that this was New Homes Bonus money used by Wychavon DC for capital projects.

#### Salford Priors to Alcester progress – Liam Maude

Salford Priors Parish Council Leisure Trails working group are working on this part of the route. It has been established that under section 30 of the highways act if landowners are co-operative it is a straightforward process to move or create new ROW. This section does have 4 landowners who are supportive namely the National Highways, Alamo, The Pollaci family and Ragley Estate. Piers Daniell (Warwickshire CC) is currently working on delivering a system of priority traffic access across the bridge at Wixford (similar to the situation at Welford Bridge) which will enable separate and safe pedestrian and cycle access. This will allow our route to Alcester to run from Wixford to the Three Horseshoes Pub along the lane to Exhall, up the bridleway into Oversley Woods, along their internal road and out the other side to cross the A46 at the bridge which leads down into Oversley Green and Alcester Town. This route does use sections of public road and we will continue to work on a more direct route based on the old railway line. Meanwhile much work has gone on with Alcester TC to link routes with the town and the walking/cycling opportunities there.

Question raised about how much of the old railway route was still in existence from Alcester to Redditch.

Councillor Justin Kerridge explained the route from Alcester to Studley. There were mainly 3 options – River which was prone to flooding, Road which would incur high costs and finally the preferred option of the old railway line. He explained that much of this was still in existence especially around the Coughton area into Alcester. Justin also expressed the idea of joining this route out of Alcester to the AAGP route coming into Alcester. This would potentially link up Evesham, Stratford Upon Avon and Redditch. Electric bike usage is on the increase and with the extended range of these it means our rural routes are a means of linking up urban routes.

#### Item 4 – Broom to Stratford progress

Warwickshire Draft Infrastructure Plan.

Joe noted that this is an exciting opportunity for the AAGP to gain increased visibility and credibility with the County but because the scoring system is based on Department of Transport criteria which strongly favour urban settings, our marks were disappointing. We have responded to the county with a detailed review of the marking system emphasising that such a bias towards urban walking and cycling is completely inappropriate for rural counties such as Warwickshire (and Worcestershire). It may be that it works for major cities but the imperative in our region is for towns, villages and parishes to be linked with an infrastructure of routes allowing short/medium and long journeys whether business or pleasure, to be available. If projects like ours which fully meet the needs of these localities are to be prioritised it requires an overlay of the Dept. Of Transport criteria with county criteria relevant to delivering local objectives and appropriate amenities. We are working

very hard with our county Cllrs and officers to achieve this and feel we are receiving a very sympathetic hearing.  
Success in this debate is vital as it will significantly affect our ability to attract regional and government funding in the future.

#### The Feasibility Study by Sustrans

We are hoping that this is to be completed by Martin Philpott and his team and as soon as it is finished it will be distributed.

#### Work with the Bidford Health Centre

As yet there has been no formal planning application by Oculus the developers of the Bidford Health Centre and we will be following up the news on the development of the project at the Health Centre urgently.

#### Partnership with parishes.

Joe reiterated to the meeting that the whole structure of the AAGP is based on engagement with the parishes along the route. With their support the opportunity to deliver new permanent amenities to their parishioners both within and outside their boundaries is possible.

#### AOB

Questions and comments from the floor.

Point was raised about the development at The Valley to put in cabins this Autumn. Would it be possible to make it a condition of planning that these could not open until a link to The Valley from Evesham is established?

Discussion took place about linking Common Road to Evesham Town Centre. It was noted that the AAGP are happy to get involved in looking at the route.

#### Item 5 – Funding

The AAGP are looking to find matched funding for both the Harvington PC Working Group (who need to find match funding for the 150K) and the Salford Priors PC. (matched funding for £110k). Ideas or information regarding potential funding organisations would be welcomed.

#### Business Plan

The business plan is currently being worked on by Graeme Reeves and others to enable us to go for funding. We hope to have this finished early in the new year.

#### Mapping

The AAGP are aware that better mapping is needed for the Broom to Stratford section and this need is being addressed.

Question raised about the total cost of the route. Initially in the FS the cost was £5 - £8.5 million has this been updated? Joe explained that to look at the overall cost was not helpful in terms of securing a place on council plans. It was much better to approach costs in a section by section method. Costs will inevitably increase but by the above approach offers us greater credibility.

## Item 6 New Name for the AAGP

We are hoping to promote the work of the AAGP using the services of Ollie Gallant. He has explained that the title 'AAGP' does not immediately explain what we are trying to achieve. He has suggested a new name that directly reflects our aims. The names put forward so far are:

The Shires Way

The Two Shires Way (on foot or by bike)

The Mercia Way – This has been rejected as there is already one in existence.

The West Shakespeare Way

The Avon Vale Way

The Shires Cycleway – It was felt that the term 'Greenway' was more inclusive.

The meeting appeared to like either 'The Shires Way' or 'The Two Shires Way' decision to be taken soon.

If you have any other suggestions, please let us know.

## Item 7 A.O.B

Andy Hibbit suggested that the AAGP could use compulsory purchase with difficult land owners similar to the way the National Grid had and asked if Wychavon had considered this option. It was explained that the AAGP preferred to work in a more co-operative way and that although compulsory purchase was an option it was often very costly and likely to create tension between us and landowners which was unhelpful. Councils are under huge financial pressures so this was not a viable option at this time.

Jack Fryer asked what was holding up the progress of the Salford Priors to Wixford route especially as now legal agreements can be made easily without the need to involve the county council. Liam replied that Salford Priors PC have now passed a resolution to fund this legal process.

Meeting ended 8.15pm with thanks from the Chair to all those present.

Gillian Smith  
Hon. Secretary