

THE AVON AND ARROW GREENWAY PROJECT

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

**Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Charity number: 1188324**

THE AVON AND ARROW GREENWAY PROJECT

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

Trustees

Jeremy Harvey	Chair
Liam Maude	Vice Chair
Colin Tether	Trustee
Daryl Bailey	Treasurer

Principal Office

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ALCESTER
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Registered CIO Number 1188324

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS – 31 MARCH 2022

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THE AVON AND ARROW GREENWAY PROJECT

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The trustees present their annual report and the unaudited accounts of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("CIO") for the period ended 31 March 2022.

The organisation became a registered CIO on 4 March 2020.

Charitable Objects

The objects of the CIO are to promote and encourage in the Avon and Arrow river valleys in Warwickshire and Worcestershire for the public benefit the development and provision of safe routes, paths and facilities for cyclists, walkers and persons with disabilities and to undertake such projects and activities of a charitable nature which will assist in promoting health, wellbeing and the protection of the environment.

Activities

Activities include the promotion of cycling and walking environments and infrastructure within the valleys of the rivers Avon and Arrow in Worcestershire and Warwickshire to support the creation of traffic free leisure paths linking rural communities to the principal towns in the area. The paths will support health and wellbeing, local tourism and responsible cycling for all ages and abilities.

Trustees

The trustees of the CIO who served during the period were:

D Bailey	(appointed 4 th March 2020)
J Harvey	(appointed 4 th March 2020)
L Maude	(appointed 4 th March 2020)
C Tether	(appointed 4 th March 2020)

Acknowledgements

The trustees acknowledge the ongoing support received from its stakeholders and Sustrans during the period.

Signed by order of the board of trustees

J Harvey
Chair

Approved by the board 26th October 2022

THE AVON AND ARROW GREENWAY PROJECT

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE TRUSTEES

Route 1 – Evesham to Alcester

Salford Priors Parish Council made a brave and far sighted decision in early 2018. Through their Neighbourhood Plan process, they called a meeting of adjoining parishes extending to Alcester Town Council to the north and Evesham Town Council to the south. Their purpose was to investigate the potential of developing pathways for walkers and cyclists across parish boundaries.

It soon became clear that there was enthusiasm for such a project among the parishes. The route would be based on the old railway line between the two towns that closed in 1962 and would run along a 10-mile spine route between Alcester and Evesham. As a result of that first meeting it was agreed to set up a group and take the challenge on. That group was comprised of representatives from the parish and town councils of Alcester, Bidford on Avon, Cleeve Prior, Evesham, Exhall, Harvington, North and Middle Littleton, Norton and Lenchwick, Offenham, Salford Priors and Wixford. It was originally called the Cross Parish Cycle and Pathways Project (CPCPP) but this was changed soon after to the Avon to Arrow Greenway Project (AAGP).

An early decision was taken to commission and fund a Feasibility Study for the project from 'Sustrans', the National Sustainable Transport Charity. This excellent comprehensive study has formed the basis for the work of the group since then.

We have made very significant progress over the last four years or so since then. We properly established the organisation, gained charitable status and worked hard to start the implementation of the Sustrans Feasibility Study. From the start the AAGP's strategy has been to progress through forming positive partnerships and we now have all Parish, Town and District Councils along the proposed route supporting us both in principle and financially. We have increasingly strong links with County councillors and officers from both Warwickshire and Worcestershire County Councils and We are in discussions with major local landowners and have the strong backing of organisations such as the Heart of England Forest and the Avon Navigation Trust.

Adding the Broom to Stratford upon Avon Route

Early in 2020, an approach was made by a representative of the Bidford Health Centre Patient Participation Group (BHCPPG) about extending the AAGP route from Bidford Village to the Health Centre. The Health Centre is located close to the old railway line which used to run from Broom to Stratford upon Avon and closed in 1960. It is located about a mile from the centre of Bidford on the B439 which has no footways so walking the Health Centre is not an option. The BHCPPG representative felt using the old railway line from Bidford village was an option to provide a good route with health benefits. AAGP Officers have met with BHCPPG and subsequently held a site meeting. Initial investigation of land ownership and other enquiries have shown that there seems to be a very good prospect of a continuous route to Stratford upon Avon being possible along the old railway line. This route, around 7.5 miles, would link up with an existing shared pedestrian cycle way within Stratford town along the old railway line, past Stratford Racecourse and join to the existing very popular Stratford Greenway.

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This route passes through the parishes of Bidford on Avon, Temple Grafton, Welford on Avon, Luddington and Stratford upon Avon. The route is wholly contained within Stratford upon Avon District Council and Warwickshire County Council areas. Contact has been made with senior officers and politicians including the sitting MP. The political and financial support of all parishes, the Stratford Town Council, and Stratford District Council have been achieved and close working relationships with Bidford, Welford on Avon and Luddington Parish Councils have been extremely productive.

A high quality Feasibility Study similar to the one commissioned for Spine Route 1 has been delivered by Sustrans and paid for by grants from the Parish Councils, Town Council, Stratford District Council and Warwickshire County Council. This comprehensive commitment from grass roots all the way to county is crucial and a key part of the AAGP's strategic approach. It establishes the project as an element of future infrastructure planning at all political levels and is vital in order to open up the opportunity for substantial funding via government grants.

The Broom to Stratford upon Avon spine route matters because:

- The link will be an important part of the off road network being developed in the area and would link up with both the AAGP spine route and the existing Stratford Greenway.
- The link will allow longer journeys to be made to between the three historic towns Alcester, Evesham and Stratford and would have massive tourist potential.
- The inclusion of Stratford upon Avon will substantially increase the profile of the AAGP and could become a key tourist amenity as well as having massive local benefits.

Most recent progress and plans

Worcestershire

- We continue to liaise with Wychavon and Worcestershire County Council on the route from Evesham to The Valley and hope to see some progress there using the existing funding they have accrued.
- We have worked very closely with Harvington Parish Council and as a result they have been awarded £150,000 to develop the AAGP route within their parish – we are of course delighted and excited and our aim is to pursue a matched funding bid this year (see below).
- If as expected work on these two sections begins next year then the focus for us will be on linking them to the start of the Salford Priors program at Salford Priors Church.

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Warwickshire

- We are working with Salford Priors Parish Council to enable the generous allocation of part of their CIL funds to be out to use early next year. Though the funding does not cover costs of the whole of the route from the Church to Wixford it should allow an ambitious start to be made. As with the Harvington funding it is our intention to use the existing monies to bid for matched funding this year.
- The invaluable support of Warks County Councillor Piers Daniel has given us hope that Highways will proceed with a 'priority' traffic system for Wixford bridge. The bridge is very narrow and very dangerous for those brave enough to seek to cross over it as heavy vehicles use it day and night with little thought to pedestrians or cyclists! A priority system will allow one way traffic and a wide pedestrian and cycle way to be created.
- This in turn means we have a route to Alcester going via Exhall and Oversley Woods and across the A46 into Oversley Green and on to Alcester Town. Though it is not our preferred route, the access directly over the road at Wixford bridge and down the existing path along the side of the River Arrow to Alcester requires further work with the landowners and significant funding. However, the opening up of this significant stretch of the route will undoubtedly give the AAGP a huge boost in terms of both profile and credibility.
- Bidford Health Centre is seeking planning consent for a major redevelopment on its large existing site. It went out to public consultation last year and we are a part of the grand plan. The section of our Spine Route 2, from the branch line at Broom following the old railway line to the back of the Health Centre, will be included and costed into their strategy. This is a very exciting prospect for us and a very valuable addition to access to the Health by walking and cycling!

The Warwickshire Draft Infrastructure Plan

Earlier this year WCC issued its draft infrastructure plan and invited feedback. We have both spine routes mentioned as proposals under consideration but there were problems. WCC officers had marked our plans under the guidance issued by the Department of Transport ("DOT"). DOT criteria heavily favour urban proposals and our routes engage urban areas but go to the next logical step and seek to link them. Given that both our routes are essentially of a rural flavour we have sought to persuade Warwickshire County Council that they overlay DOT criteria with those that relate more closely to the needs locally.

I know a number of you wrote to support our evidence and we are very grateful. More lobbying is needed as the delivery of these new Greenways can only be completed with significant funding from the top. We will continue to build strong relationships with our two county officers and politicians, your support when in conversation with those who you work with will be invaluable.

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Business Plan and Funding Strategy

We are continuing to build a strong business plan in order to support the project as a whole but also, vitally, to underpin our ambitious funding strategy mentioned above. We are currently identifying potential funding organisations and prioritising funding targets on our routes. Any of you who have fund raising experience or advice to share please do not hesitate to offer your help.

The potential of our project is growing all the time as the country begins to understand the value it offers in terms of the environment, public health and zero emissions. The impact of opening up such an ambitious network of paths and cycleways giving access to the rich environment that surrounds us is enormous.

- It offers the opportunity to build on the new enthusiasm for walking and cycling.
- It will accelerate the situation where children and adults alike rely less on cars and public transport getting to school and to work respectively.
- It crosses District and County boundaries which only increases its already huge potential value and offers the opportunity for a wider partnership of those working to see this project succeed.

I can only reiterate last year's report in which I stated that it really is something worth fighting for – a new Greenway with spines from Evesham to Alcester and Broom to Stratford linking to the existing and well used Stratford Greenway from the Racecourse.

I would like to thank you all for your support up to now and ask that you continue that support for us, and guidance to us, during the evolution of the project.

J Harvey
Chair

THE AVON AND ARROW GREENWAY PROJECT
FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2022

	<u>2022</u> <u>£</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>£</u>
Income:		
Donation from Evesham Town Council	-	1,500.00
Donation from Worcestershire County Council	-	2,235.00
Donation from Broom Action Group	-	500.00
Donation from Luddington Parish Council	-	500.00
Donation from Bidford on Avon Parish Council	3,000.00	-
	<u>3,000.00</u>	<u>4,735.00</u>
Expenses:		
Hire of Village Hall	(45.00)	(9.00)
AAGP website	(164.75)	(547.98)
Professional Indemnity Insurance	(244.00)	(244.00)
HM Land registry fees	(156.00)	(103.00)
Publicity costs	(71.89)	-
Ordnance Survey licence costs	(80.99)	-
Meeting costs	(54.50)	-
	<u>2,182.87</u>	<u>3,831.02</u>
Total income less expenditure		
	<u>2,182.87</u>	<u>3,831.02</u>
<u>Balance sheet:</u>		
Cash at bank	8,105.89	5,996.02
Accrual - hire of Broom Village Hall	-	(45.00)
Accrual - land registry fees	-	(28.00)
	<u>8,105.89</u>	<u>5,923.02</u>
Reserves b/fwd	5,923.02	2,092.00
Income less expenditure in year	2,182.87	3,831.02
	<u>8,105.89</u>	<u>5,923.02</u>
Reserves c/fwd		
	<u>8,105.89</u>	<u>5,923.02</u>

Accounts prepared by D Bailey, Treasurer