



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL



MINUTES OF THE TOWN PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 20th NOVEMBER 2023
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, EVESHAM TOWN HALL AT 6:30PM

PRESENT: Councillors: Mrs J. Tucker (Chair), A. Booth, Mrs J. Haines, M. Goodge and W. Kimberley
Mrs G. Pawson; Mr R. Hale; Ms C. Tredwell, Place Project Officer

ALSO PRESENT: Mr T. Tarver, Chair of Place Board; 3 members of Two Shires Greenway Project; 1 member of the public

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs J. Adams, Town Clerk

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr S. Schaathun and Mr R. Walker

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests

There were none.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the 25th September 2023

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2023 be adopted as a true record.

4. Update report from Two Shires Greenway Project

Mr J. Harvey reported from the Two Shires Greenway Project – his report is attached to these minutes.

5. Plant Based Treaty

A resident asked if the committee would sign up to the Plant Based Treaty which had multiple aims but stated a wish to reduce animal farming. In general the proposal was not supported and it was no resolution to support the treaty. Although the role of animal farming in climate change was acknowledged, the committee felt the Treaty's proposal were too far-reaching in their opposition to animal farming to be reasonable to local residents and farmers, and would tie the council's hands on some decisions, notably planning decisions, if it signed up to it.

6. Draft response to the Biodiversity Duty

The Environment Act 2021 requires all public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity while carrying out its work. A policy was required to be drawn up, and a

document had been circulated. Some good work was already taking place at Battleton Brook and the wider Greening Evesham work. Consideration could be given to increasing areas of grass left uncut. Cllr Tucker noted that the town council would need to co-ordinate with the district and county councils regarding biodiversity aims.

7. Water Quality

Cllr Tucker reported that the first set of results had come through from the testing kits funded by the council. The funded kits had increased the coverage of the Avon testing.

8. Town Plan Review

Some replies from organisations were still awaiting but other than these the report would soon be ready to circulate.

9. Evesham Place Project Officer Report

Caroline Tredwell reported:

Shop front improvement scheme: Three enquiries had been received for larger works and feedback had been given to inform an application. The district council was approaching the owners of tired looking shopfronts directly to promote the grant.

Solar Lighting in Abbey Park: The application for scheduled ancient monument consent had been successful. The lights would be installed by the year's end.

Battlefield site: The Place Board had approved funding for a feasibility study for the site.

Love Evesham day: The district council had supported the Love Evesham event.

Accessibility Audit: The action plan was now complete.

Noticeboards: the Place Board had funded the restoration of the boards and this was now complete.

Communications specialist: The Place Board had recommended funding be put towards employing a communication / social media officer to promote Evesham and its facilities.

Gill Pawson reported that the Place board had funded the Christmas icicle lights in the Market Square.

10. Transport matters:

a) Active Travel Update

Reported at item 4.

b) Public Transport

A meeting of the Vale Park Transport Group had taken place, now renamed Vale Bus and Rail. Cllrs Lyon and Tucker had met up with Luke Farley from GWR who had agreed to fund the repair of the bus shelter nearest the station

and promote train travel to bus users. Investigations were being made into extending the route of services from the bus station to the railway station.

Cllr Tucker had met up with Fiona Saxon, who represented the Worcestershire Community Railway Partnership. Promotional events had been held in station grounds to promote rail services.

11. Battleton Brook Update

Cllr Tucker reported that the bird and bat boxes and hedgehog home would go in next month. Works to some of the trees was also scheduled for December. A representative of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust has visited to look at the wildflowers and said that there was a greater divergence of species since the planting, even though early results had appeared disappointing. She advised waiting before planting any more seeds.

Public Questions

Minuted at items 4 and 5.

Date of next meeting: 22nd January '24

Cllr Julie Tucker
Chairman

Meeting with Evesham Town Council Planning Committee 20th November 2023
TWO SHIRES GREENWAY PROJECT

A brief overview of both routes –

Evesham to Alcester is Spine 1 and Broom to Stratford is Spine 2. The section from Salford Priors church to Wixford and onto Alcester is underway with CIL funding from SPPC and SDC to the tune of £500,000 and we expect work to commence very early 2024.

We have CIL money for the section through Harvington. The three landowners along this part of the route are National Highways, Worcester, and the Valley land owned by Eagle one. 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 – see above. The Valley owners are very supportive of the link to Evesham Town.

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

In partnership with this we are also in the planning stage with Luddington and Welford Parish Councils, on the route from the Stratford racecourse to Welford. (we intend to bid for CIL funds for this section in 2024.) In effect we are coming at it from both ends inwards, Broom to Stratford and from Stratford to Welford. Delivering these sections will leverage extra funding to do the difficult job of joining them up. Once done we then have immediate access to the Tramway to Long Marston

Long term strategy requires county joint action with government.

We are encouraging Councillor Mike Rouse (Worcs CC), who has responsibility for Highways and Transport, and Cllr Justin Kerridge (Warks CC) to work together 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 focused primarily on urban development which is unhelpful for 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. Tim Snazell (Warks CC) is setting up a meeting with Councillors Rouse and Kerridge and county officers and we will seek to engage DC 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 DC leadership to set up a meeting so we could enlist their support for this project to promote health and wellbeing.

Evesham to Harvington

We know that the original work started over 5 years ago to deliver this route has stalled badly for a mixture of reasons:

- Perhaps a lack of CC engagement in creating a clear infrastructure plan.
- Possibly the frustration caused by one or more landowners who own ransom strips.

This is the perfect time to resurrect the work as things have changed and we can encourage that change.

We hope to set up a joint meeting between the two District Council leaders to encourage cross district council co-operation and pushing for the engagement of District Council County Cllrs to join in the creation of a pressure group with the two county councils to lobby gov't.

Jill Smith and I met with Heather Peachey (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 was £108,971.09 and can be used as matched funding.

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

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

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 to the Town and offer a huge opportunity to develop a network of walking/cycling paths along the Greenway to Alcester and beyond and via Broom to Stratford and on to Long Marston. Just think about the amazing amenity that will be created by connecting all the footpaths and bridleways and routes off the tracks to other villages and places of beauty and interest along the way. We hope that you can see the huge benefits of readopting this agenda and investing time and political capital as well as cash in its development.

Joe Harvey Two Shires Greenway 20/10/23.