

Wharfedale Greenway – Briefing Note

The Wharfedale Greenway Steering Group seeks the support of the Outer North West Community Committee for the principle of a Wharfedale Greenway to run between Pool-in-Wharfedale, Otley, Menston and Burley-in-Wharfedale.

Greenways can come in many forms and may originate from disused railways, farm tracks or bridleways and are intended for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair and pushchair users and usually horse riders. They encourage physical activity by providing attractive traffic free connections between towns, villages and neighbourhoods and are popular for both commuting and leisure journeys and particularly suitable for less confident cyclists and family groups. Where possible, Greenways have a level gradient and a surface suitable for all year use.

A Wharfedale Greenway Feasibility Study was prepared by Sustrans in 2010 for Otley Town Council. This study highlighted the opportunity to create a series of greenways along extant sections of the former Arthington to Burley-in-Wharfedale railway (closed in 1965) and to provide primary walk/cycle routes to Menston and Burley railway stations.

In 2013, the Wharfedale Greenway Steering Group was formed involving Otley Town Council, Burley-in-Wharfedale Parish Council, Menston Parish Council, Pool-in-Wharfedale Parish Council, Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Leeds City Council and Sustrans. There was a desire and objective to see a safe walking and cycling route that would link all these parishes and Wharfedale communities together. It was decided to follow the recommendations of the 2010 report and put forward the old railway corridor, to be named the Wharfedale Greenway, as the proposed route.

The Steering Group commissioned a public consultation on the proposals in 2014 which found that the vast majority of people are in favour of the Greenway. The consultation also highlighted the lack of suitable routes for horse riders in the area and it was decided that the Greenway should be open to them.

The four parishes alongside the two principal authorities have been working with Sustrans on the preparation of an ecology survey and initial negotiations with land owners to establish heads of terms.

A key issue is securing support for the project from both Leeds City Council and Bradford Metropolitan District Council through written 'in-principle' agreement, and to protect the line of the route and make available their land ownerships along the former railway for the Greenway. Formal approvals for funding will be separately pursued. There is an opportunity for both principal authorities to use their land ownerships as 'demonstration projects' to stimulate the entire scheme.

Bradford Metropolitan District Council has confirmed their 'in-principle' support and offered to gift necessary land to Burley-in-Wharfedale Parish Council.

A drawing showing the line of the route is attached. The 2010 Sustrans report and Consultation report are available on request.

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Timothy Parry – Leeds City Council Transportation