

Report of the Nidderdale Greenway Extension Steering Group

February 2024

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1 Introduction

The ambition to develop a multi-user pathway through Nidderdale, from Harrogate to Scar House Reservoir, was first documented in 1996, in minutes of a meeting of Pateley Bridge Town Council.

The current Nidderdale Greenway extends from the centre of Harrogate to the village of Clint. The section from Harrogate to Ripley was opened in 2013 and later extended to Clint. It has proven to be a popular off-road route for walkers, cyclists and wheelchair users. There were an estimated 196,000 users in 2018.

The local community organisation, Nidderdale Plus on behalf of the Nidderdale Strategic Partnership (which included parish councils in Nidderdale other community organisations) commissioned Sustrans to produce a feasibility study to examine the potential extension of the pathway for almost 20km as far as Pateley Bridge and Wath.

The study was financially supported by 23 local businesses and residents, Nidderdale Chamber of Trade, 3 Parish Councils, 2 Trusts, a walking group, a cycling club, and a grant from North Yorkshire County Councillor Stan Lumley's locality budget. A draft report from this study can be found at:

<https://democracy.harrogate.gov.uk/documents/s11333/Appendix%20-%20Nidderdale%20Greenway%20Extension%20Study.pdf>

At a meeting of the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) executive members, held on August 20th 2021, a report from the Assistant Director for Highways and Transportation was presented (Appendix A). The only commitment made by NYCC at the meeting was to provide officer input into a project steering group.

Subsequently NYCC and Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) set up a steering group to investigate the possibility of establishing the Nidderdale Greenway Extension (NGE). In May 2023 the establishment of a new unitary council, North Yorkshire Council (NYC), took the place of HBC and NYCC.

A service level agreement was agreed between Nidderdale Plus Community Hub, North Yorkshire County Council, Harrogate Borough Council and Nidderdale AONB, to provide administrative support for the steering group. (Appendix B)

2 The Steering Goup

2.1 Terms of reference of the steering group

The role of the group is to determine how to make progress on the development of the Nidderdale Greenway Extension (NGE) and to work with others as and when necessary or desired in pursuit of this goal.

2.2 Membership of the group

The initial membership of the group was as follows:

Helen Flynn – Nidderdale Plus (HF)

Rupert Douglas – Sustrans (RD)

Iain Mann (IM) – Nidderdale AONB

Tom O’Donovan (TO) - Economy and Transport officer, HBC

Ian Kelly (IK) - NYCC Countryside Access Manager, NYCC

Malcolm Margolis (MM) - Harrogate District Cycle Action

Paula Newson Smith (PNS) – Nidderdale Plus - secretary for the meeting

Subsequently, Cllr Nathan Hull and Cllr Andrew Murday joined the steering group following the NYCC elections in May 2022, and Natalie Rea replaced Roberts Douglas as the Sustrans representative.

Secretarial duties were passed to Rosie Moorman from July 2022.

2.3 Responsibility of the group

Individual members will provide advice and guidance as appropriate to progress development of the Greenway.

Appropriate documents and policies to support the development of the NGE will be written (via the secretariat role {see below}) and approved by members as and when needed.

The group will receive and respond to any questions from members of the public, businesses, local groups or other agencies regarding the progress of the Steering Group.

The group will provide a forum for discussion of progress, where and when determined to ensure that members of the local community can be kept informed.

The group will help guide the development of recommendations for further work.

2.4 Ways of working

The group will meet monthly, and all secretarial work will be carried out to facilitate and record meetings, and will carry out actions, where specified, between meetings, by an independent secretariat provided under contractual agreement by Nidderdale Plus Community Hub.

Members of the Group will receive papers one week before each meeting.

Minutes of the meeting will be recorded and maintained by the clerk provided under the secretariat agreement with Nidderdale Plus Community Hub. They will be kept in draft until approved by Members at the next sequential meeting of the Group. The minutes of the steering committee are at Appendix C.

Members may be contacted between meetings for advice/information by the clerk should the need arise.

A Chair will be elected at the first meeting of the Group. The Chair will chair meetings and be the main point of contact for the Group, and the main point of contact for the clerk, between meetings.

From time-to-time sub-groups may be formed to work on specific issues as appropriate.

From time-to-time individuals may be co-opted to provide specific advice and expertise as required.

2.5 Initial term

The Group will meet monthly between April 2022-April 2023. Towards the end of this initial term, a further term may be agreed by Members, depending on the progress of the Group and any matters which have come to the fore during the initial term.

3 Funding

3.1 Funding of the Greenway from Harrogate to Clint

Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) promoted the greenway scheme, commissioned the original study and was already the landowner of the Bilton track, which became part of the greenway.

North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC), as the statutory highways authority successfully applied to Sustrans for a grant. HBC and NYCC helped match fund the Sustrans grant. HBC took the bridleway notices through the Borough Council and hosted the Steering Group to oversee co-ordination of the project and the public inquiries.

HBC compensated the landowners where relevant.

3.2 Funding of the NGE

There is currently no funding allocated for the NGE.

There are two elements of funding to be considered. The first element is the establishment of the route for the pathway by means of creation agreements and creation orders. Once they are established, the second cost element is that of construction of the pathway.

The first part would need to be met from the public purse, ie NYC. It is possible to make a very approximate estimate of the maximum cost of this part of the process. Using the amount estimated for the equivalent costs of the 10km pathway between Hawes and Garsdale (£600,000), we estimate that NYC would need to set aside a sum of approximately £1,000,000 as a contingency for this process for the whole Nidderdale Greenway Extension. However, for the section from Clint to Birstwith, a distance of approximately 3km, the contingency would be commensurately less.

The costs to construct the complete multi-user pathway were originally estimated to be of the order of £4,500,000. The steering group believes that this is an under-estimate of the costs, which may be as high as £10,000,000. There are various sources for such funding, and although the sum sounds challenging, the steering group has confidence that it would be possible to raise such funds from various sources.

The steering group took the view that the NGE should be considered in a series of sections, to be planned and constructed over a period of several years, according to availability of finance for planning, legal processes and construction.

4 Benefits of the Nidderdale Greenway Extension (NGE)

4.1 Nidderdale National Landscape

The primary purpose of Nidderdale National Landscape designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. The statutory management plan explains the importance of the area for people and quiet recreation alongside this purpose. The NGE particularly fulfils this function, by making the beauty of Nidderdale increasingly available to public. At the same time the NGE should avoid despoiling the natural heritage of the area. The current Nidderdale National Landscape management plan contains objectives for the area that were agreed by the AONB partnership. The Greenway Extension is included in the current management plan.

4.2 Health benefits

Providing a multi-user path will provide residents and visitors with the opportunity to take exercise in a safe environment. In particular, the nature of the pathway will enable families as well as those with disability to enjoy the health benefits of the countryside.

4.3 Economic benefits

The economic benefits of these developments are difficult to predict without the benefit of an economist. However, anecdotally the greenway from Harrogate to Ripley has benefitted the café and shops at Ripley:

“The extension of the Nidderdale Greenway through Ripley has brought more all-year-round trade to the village without creating any additional demand for parking. The people who arrive in the village via the Greenway spend thousands of pounds every year in our shops, tearoom and pub. For some of those businesses it has meant the difference between closure and survival. Let the Greenway bring more business to the local village shops that you value, and provide safer roads for everyone. Those who live near the Greenway will walk, jog and push the pram in the safe environment that it provides. You will be surprised by the number of people who will use it to cycle to school and work. The Nidderdale Greenway enhances the safety, the amenity and the sustainability of every community that is linked to it.”

Sir Thomas Ingilby

Prospective proprietors of the shop and café in the Glasshouses Mill development have carried out an analysis of potential footfall as part of their business case. The number of pedestrians that currently use the path from Glasshouses to Pateley bridge is up to 100 each day. They are enthusiastic about the development of the Greenway Extension, which they would see as a significant boost to the potential of the prospective business in Glasshouses.

Sustrans estimates that, on average, homebased leisure cyclists each spend £9.20 per day and overnight tourists spend significantly more at £22.90 per day.

5 Downsides of the Nidderdale Greenway Extension

5.1 Cost

See 3.3

5.2 Environmental damage

It is very important that construction of the NGE avoids damage to the riparian corridor. The Nidderdale Catchment Anglers Group commissioned a report on the possible consequences to the riparian ecology of the NGE, between Hampsthwaite and Summerbridge. Professor Grey, who wrote that report has kindly agreed to allow it to be attached to the steering group's report. It can be found at Appendix D.

The final route and its construction must be drawn up to avoid environmental damage, by seeking solutions wherever necessary.

5.3 Local residents' objections

See sections 6 and 7

6 Consultation with landowners

Two separate consultations with landowners have been carried out. The first by David Hall and Malcolm Margolis on behalf of Sustrans and the second by Nidderdale AONB (now National Landscape).

6.1 Sustrans consultation

David Hall and Malcolm Margolis contacted 41 landowners and other interested parties between April 2019 and June 2020.

The responses are confidential and therefore cannot be published within this report. Of the 40 responses the majority were in favour of the project in principle. However, 20 out of the 40 respondents stated that either they were not in favour of the project in principle or that they would not wish for the NGE to impinge on their land.

6.2 Nidderdale AONB consultation

Peter Lambert, an experienced ranger conducted this consultation whilst employed on a short-term fixed contract for Nidderdale AONB. He systematically contacted all landowners from Pateley Bridge to Dacre Banks along the potential routes of the NGE. These consultations were carried out verbally. These consultations were conducted according to the code of practice for local highways authorities, including mentioning that there would be financial compensation for landowners. The following is a summary of the responses:

| Overall Summary | No. of landowners | Length of route (km) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Landowner View | | |
| Favourable | 2 | 0.55 |
| Concerned/possible compromise | 4 | 2.25 |
| Opposed | 7 | 4.5 |
| Total | 13 | 7.3 |

2 landowners were favourable to the creation of the route over their land. They have control over 8% of the proposed route investigated.

4 landowners were concerned about the creation of the route over their land but there is potential to negotiate a compromise. They have control over 30% of the proposed route investigated. Note that this includes 1 landowner who was not contactable and whose current views are not known.

7 landowners were opposed to the creation of the route over their land. They have control over 62% of the proposed route investigated.

7 Consultation with the public

There have been two public consultations conducted which cover part of the potential routes of the NGE. One was conducted by Andrew Murday and the other by Robert Lloyd on behalf of Hampsthwaite Pathfinders.

Detailed reports of the surveys are at Appendix D.

7.1 Survey of Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale residents

In summer 2023, a questionnaire was delivered to every resident within the boundaries of the Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale division of NYC. The questionnaire could be completed and returned via freepost, or completed on line.

There are 2,378 doors and 4,403 residents eligible to vote, although there was no eligibility requirement to complete the survey. Some 261 replies were submitted. The average score of respondents when asked their opinion of the NGE was 8, where 1 is least in favour and 10 extremely in favour. 79% of respondents said that they would use the extension if it was constructed.

Of the 37 free comments submitted, 29 were positive and 8 negative. Negative comments mostly expressed concerns about the cost of construction of the greenway or anxiety about increasing the number of visitors to Nidderdale.

7.2 Survey by Hampsthwaite Pathfinders

Hampsthwaite Pathfinders is a sub-group of Hampsthwaite Parish Council. They carried out an online survey. 1,345 responses had been received. Of these, 139 were resident outwith the postcodes HG1,2,3,4 and 5.

The average score of respondents when asked their opinion of the NGE was 9.6, and 89% of respondents scored 10 (most favourable response to the NGE).

Of particular note, there is great local support for a suitable pathway between Birstwith and Hampsthwaite. At present residents have to walk for part of the distance along the road, where there is no pavement, along a narrow road on which there is only the national speed limit. The paucity of public transport means that for most people the journey between the two villages has to be taken by car.

It is our understanding that Birstwith Parish Council are considering conducting a survey amongst their residents asking their opinion of NGE.

8 Conclusion

The steering group supports in principle the extension of the Nidderdale Greenway from Clint to Wath.

We believe that any detriment to the natural environment can be mitigated through suitable strategies.

The steering group envisages that the extension will be carried out in stages, with the first stage extending the greenway from Clint as far as Birstwith.

The next stage is for North Yorkshire Council to commit resources to establish creation agreements and orders with the relevant landowners. The steering group understands that only 400m metres of the section of the most likely path between Hampsthwaite and Birstwith is objected to by the land-owner.

Subsequent negotiations with landowners will require more resources, but a gradual extension of the path into Nidderdale, starting at the end of the current greenway at Clint, would seem the most likely way to make progress.

Appendix A

North Yorkshire County Council

Business and Environmental Services

Executive Members

20 August 2021

Nidderdale Greenway Extension

Report of the Assistant Director – Highways and Transportation

1.0 Purpose Of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval from the BES Corporate Director in consultation with County Councillor Don Mackenzie, Executive Member for Access for NYCC's involvement in the proposed governance framework to progress an extension to the existing Nidderdale Greenway cycle route.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Nidderdale Greenway opened in 2013 as a multi-user route between Harrogate and Ripley, with the route subsequently extended further through Hollybank Wood and Clint. The Community Development Agency, Nidderdale Plus, later commissioned Sustrans to undertake a scoping study to consider the potential for extending the route further to Pateley Bridge.
- 2.2 The scoping study, produced by Sustrans, was in-part funded from a variety of sources, including an NYCC member's environmental locality budget contribution. NYCC officers were not aware the study was taking place and had no input into its production.
- 2.3 A significant proportion of the route is off-highway. The study is attached as Appendix 1.

3.0 Opportunities

- 3.1 In terms of usage, the route's purpose is largely recreational, but with the proposals to extend further into the Dale and connecting in with settlements along the route, including Pateley Bridge, its value as a traffic free utility cycling and walking route, is likely to increase.
- 3.2 In addition to the wider benefits of cycling to physical and mental wellbeing, the potential exists for the route's extension to benefit the local economy from cycle tourism related activity.

4.0 Challenges

- 4.1 Land: Much of the land on which the route is proposed, is privately owned, crossing multiple landowner interests and from whom consent would be required. Currently, 43% of the planned route (8.5 km) is public footpath, requiring upgrade to bridleway status, with another 40% (7.9 km), having no existing route status at all. The

remaining 17% of the route is either publicly maintainable highway (12% or 2.3 km), public bridleway (5% or 1 km) or in use by the public, but with no recorded rights (<1% or 0.2 km).

- 4.2 Funding: The feasibility study suggests a cost estimate figure of £6.6M for the extension, which includes for 10% contingency. This is considered light for a 21 km route, requiring not inconsiderable engineering, particularly alongside the River Nidd. The study though does recommend, prior to bidding for capital funds, agreeing an appropriate level of optimism bias. It is also worth noting, the study cost estimate does not include for land purchase/landowner compensation costs.
- 4.3 Community views: Feedback from stakeholders suggests a level of parish council support, but that there has otherwise been a cautious response to the proposals. In a similar way, the Nidderdale AONB has already taken an earlier report to its Joint Advisory Committee and it considers a sustainable route to be a good opportunity for the Dales, whilst at the same time, sounding a note of caution around materials and surfacing and highlighting the need for meaningful community input and engagement.
- 4.4 NYCC input: From a practical perspective, whilst there may be some resource implications for Highways and Transportation teams, as the majority of the route is off-highway, the largest service demands are likely to be felt in the Countryside Access team, given the current nature of the route and the need to change its status.
- 4.5 More widely, NYCC has made clear in meetings with stakeholders that it would not be in a position to lead on the project, but, subject to BES Corporate Director approval in consultation with the BES Executive Member for Access, the Council would be happy to lend limited support through involvement on a project board or steering group. This offer has been welcomed.
- 4.6 Further, following informal discussions with stakeholders, including Sustrans, Harrogate District Cycle Action (HDCA), Nidderdale AONB and others, the consensus appears to be that organisations other than NYCC, will essentially perform the heavy lifting, around leading on funding bids, landowner negotiations, community engagement, detail design and further business case development and works tendering.
- 4.7 Nevertheless, as NYCC has expertise in these areas and in consideration also of the statutory duties and responsibilities of the Highway Authority, there are a number of key questions, currently remaining unanswered, around who would take on future maintenance liability and general route management, or which organisation would take on accountable body status for any grant award, there may be calls further down the line for the Council to expand its role in the project. Following the recent Local Government Reorganisation announcement, whilst it is more likely that it will be for the new unitary council to consider at least some of these issues, these are also material considerations for the County Council now.

5.0 Proposed Next Steps

- 5.1 What the precise governance arrangements will be for the project is as yet unknown, but the immediate next steps, following the recent publication of the feasibility study is for Harrogate Borough Council and NYCC to seek approval for involvement in the project via a proposed steering group to oversee the project.
- 5.2 For the project to develop at pace, a funding stream is needed with ideally, a dedicated project officer, but in the meantime, given the challenges associated with

development of the project, the feasibility study recommends delivery, section by section, which seems a sensible approach.

6.0 Equalities

6.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any equality impacts arising from the recommendations. It is the view of officers that at this stage the recommendations do not have an adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment screening form is attached as Appendix 2.

7.0 Finance

7.1 There are considered to be no financial implications associated with the initial proposal for NYCC to have a role on the proposed steering group apart from the cost of officer time which will be absorbed by the service within existing budgets. There is no funding for any work on this project in NYCC's budget.

7.2

7.3 There is the potential for there to be financial implications for NYCC in the future, depending how the project progresses and / or some involvement in accessing and managing funding streams. A report setting out any financial implications for NYCC will be brought forward in the future, at an appropriate time once implications are known, for a decision before any costs are incurred or additional involvement required.

8.0 Legal

8.1 There are considered to be no legal implications arising from the proposal for NYCC to have a role on the proposed steering group. Further consideration of legal implications will be required as the project evolves.

9.0 Climate Change

9.4 A climate change impact assessment has been carried out, see Appendix 3. There is no negative impact associated with NYCC involvement in the governance framework for the Nidderdale Greenway. In addition, there are expected benefits of the project as a whole following construction and potential modal shift.

10.0 Recommendation

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services in consultation with the BES Executive Member for Access approves:
- i. The participation by NYCC in the project steering group and supporting governance framework for the proposed extension to the Nidderdale Greenway.

BARRIE MASON
Assistant Director – Highways and Transportation

Author of Report: Allan McVeigh

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Initial equality impact assessment screening form (As of October 2015 this form replaces 'Record of decision not to carry out an EIA') | | | |
| This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate. | | | |
| Directorate | Business and Environmental Services | | |
| Service area | Highways and Transportation | | |
| Proposal being screened | Proposal for NYCC involvement in a proposed extension of the Nidderdale Greenway | | |
| Officer(s) carrying out screening | Allan McVeigh | | |
| What are you proposing to do? | Have an oversight role on a proposed extension to the Nidderdale Greenway | | |
| Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes? | NYCC involvement on a project steering group is considered beneficial from a sustainable transport perspective. Greater utility and recreational cycling in the Dales. | | |
| Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details. | From a strategic perspective, the implications are limited to officer involvement on the proposed steering group, though it is likely that there will be resource impacts on ecology and public rights of way teams. | | |
| Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics? | | | |
| As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? • Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? • Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? | | | |
| If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt. | | | |
| Protected characteristic | Yes | No | Don't know/No info available |
| Age | | ✓ | |
| Disability | | ✓ | |
| Sex (Gender) | | ✓ | |
| Race | | ✓ | |
| Sexual orientation | | ✓ | |
| Gender reassignment | | ✓ | |
| Religion or belief | | ✓ | |
| Pregnancy or maternity | | ✓ | |
| Marriage or civil partnership | | ✓ | |
| NYCC additional characteristic | | | |
| People in rural areas | | ✓ | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|-----------------------|
| People on a low income | | ✓ | |
| Carer (unpaid family or friend) | | ✓ | |
| Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details. | No | | |
| Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion. | No | | |
| Decision (Please tick one option) | EIA not relevant or proportionate: | ✓ | Continue to full EIA: |
| Reason for decision | No adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics. | | |
| Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent) | Barrie Mason | | |
| Date | 09/08/21 | | |

Appendix B

Nidderdale Plus Community Hub Service Level Agreement

Nidderdale Greenway Extension Steering Group Secretariat

28 February 2022

Between: Nidderdale Plus Community Hub and Harrogate Borough Council, North Yorkshire County Council and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Beauty

Nidderdale Plus will provide a secretariat function for the Nidderdale Greenway Extension Steering Group for 13 months starting Vt March 2022 and ending 31 March 2023, which will be comprised of the following services:

1. Organising agendas in consultation with the Chair, involving meetings with the chair where necessary
2. Organising and assembling (sometimes writing documents where necessary) all documents connected with the agenda
3. Emailing out all documents to Steering Group members ideally 7 days before each meeting
4. Booking meeting space when needed (small fund needed separate to this costing for meeting room hire), or organising online meetings via TEAMS or Zoom.
5. Writing ad hoc responses to correspondents between meetings (in consultation with chair where necessary) and acting as communication point for all external queries about the Greenway project
6. Taking the minutes for each meeting and circulating to Steering Group members.
7. Following up on action points from each meeting to aid progress of Steering Group business
8. Being a general admin contact point for partners between meetings and directing on queries to the relevant agency where necessary Meetings will be held monthly in order to ensure smooth progress of the project.

In consideration of these services Nidderdale Plus will be paid the following amount: £3,730.00.

There may be services required outside of those enumerated above, such as website design and hosting, which Nidderdale Plus will quote for separately when requested by the Steering Group. Nidderdale Plus will invoice Harrogate Borough Council (€1,865), North Yorkshire County Council (€932.50) and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Beauty (€932.50) for the amounts shown in brackets after each agency named on signature of this agreement.

Appendix C

Minutes of the steering group

Monday 25th April 2022, via Zoom, 10.30am

Present:

Helen Flynn – Nidderdale Plus (HF)

Rupert Douglas – Sustrans (RD)

Iain Mann (IM) – Nidderdale AONB

Tom O’Donovan (TO) - Economy and Transport officer, HBC

Ian Kelly (IK) - NYCC Countryside Access Manager, NYCC

Malcolm Margolis (MM) - Harrogate District Cycle Action

Paula Newson Smith (PNS) – Nidderdale Plus - secretary for the meeting

Apologies:

None

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | <p>Welcome and Introductory Discussion:</p> <p>HF opened the meeting, welcoming all to the first meeting of the steering group. Members of the SG introduced themselves.</p> <p>IM noted that the AONB management plan contains objectives for the area that have been agreed by the AONB partnership and the Greenway Extension is included in the management plan. Although their resources are limited the AONB is very actively interested in helping people to access and enjoy the countryside. The AONB is hosted by HBC currently, but will be hosted by the new North Yorkshire Council from 1 April 2023.</p> <p>TO mentioned the low vehicle emission strategy and that his team currently operates Harrogate Greenway. Their focus for the foreseeable future in terms of local government reorganisation (LGR) is and will be to be ‘safe and legal’ from day 1 of the new authority, limiting the ability to do much work on new initiatives.</p> <p>IK leads the Public Rights of Way team in NYCC and they are separate to Highways colleagues. HF asked re no. cycleways that NYCC maintains. Highways look after these but IK team is bridleways and rights of way. Therefore, cross over with Allan McVeigh is strategic cycleways. IK concurred with TO re the focus of LGR.</p> <p>RD observed that responsibility for the National Cycle network will need to be within new NY Authority. He also informed the meeting that Natalie Rea will be attending the next meeting and then taking over from him on the steering group.</p> | |
| 2 | Election of chair for first meeting: | |

| | | |
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| | <p>HF was elected Chair for this meeting. She pointed out that local council elections are not too far away and that the newly elected members who cover the area of the proposed extension to the Nidderdale Greenway from Ripley to Pateley Bridge be invited to join the steering group. New ward boundaries were questioned by IM, sec to check against new NY Wards. Also the MP should be kept in loop for future.</p> <p>Map of new North Yorkshire Council Divisions here:</p> <p>https://maps.northyorks.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=General</p> | Sec |
| 3 | <p>Correspondence received to date:</p> <p>There have been some emails from landowners wanting to know what's going on. MM confirmed feasibility report is public, been circulated to specific stakeholders. PNS asked if the report is publicly available via a website. TO circulated link to HBC website:</p> <p>https://democracy.harrogate.gov.uk/documents/s11333/Appendix%20-%20Nidderdale%20Greenway%20Extension%20Study.pdf</p> <p>IM / IK pointed out that proper public consultation has not yet taken place and this would be essential in the future.</p> | |
| 4 | <p>Discussion and approval of Terms of Reference (previously circulated):</p> <p>HF asked for comments. TO asked if someone opposed to the Greenway should be on the Steering Gp? MM wanted the group to focus on developing the proposal and should be those who see the value of the proposal in broad terms. There was broad agreement among attendees that those on the steering group should be supportive. HF pointed out that in order to have broader stakeholder engagement, there should be a council to oversee and comment on the work of the SG. That way there could be transparency about the work of the SG and accountability, as there would be some public money (no doubt) being spent on the work of the SG. IM said once political reps are on board then to plan re public consultation for the whole project.</p> <p>Agreed TOR as final draft for now, subject to action below.</p> | |
| 5 | <p>Discussion of broad governance arrangements (including membership and chair):</p> <p>It was agreed that it should be the Chair who pushes matters between meetings. Comms will come to the secretariat who will field queries to the most appropriate group member. Will lead to a Project Officer in the future – HF said ideally hosted with NY or AONB.</p> <p>Discussion of email address to be used – MM's view was keep it simple and it was agreed to use:</p> <p>Nidderdalegreenway@gmail.com</p> | Sec |

| | | |
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| | <p>RD asked what if a local politician doesn't want to be chair? Maybe consider other local people? Item for the future once local politicians involved.</p> <p>MM asked about co-opting other people to support the group. He suggested someone in Hampsthwaite, who he felt would be a valuable addition to the group. HF said there is currently no mechanism for recruiting new members, she will tweak the TOR and recirculate. e.g. Yorkshire Water or the Environment Agency</p> <p>In future the steering group will consider setting up a council of stakeholders (as mentioned previously in these minutes) to reflect a wide range of views. This could also act as an advisory group and be part of the governance arrangements in future.</p> | HF |
| 6 | <p>Discussion of outline plan of activity for the Steering Group:</p> <p>Although it's early days, HF asked in anything that needs to be addressed at this point. She emphasised the need to add a process for public consultation and aim for a consultation date within the year.</p> <p>RD asked would the secretariat organise the public consultation - HF thought the local authority would have to do this. The new elected representatives would have to have the input into the plan. RD also pointed out that it would be useful to update on the proposals before the consultation, the Secretariat could help to arrange to room bookings etc.</p> <p>MM would like to look at crowd funding in the future, once there is clarity about the elements required. RD highlighted that Sustrans has DfT funding that may be able to fund specific elements of the programme of work.</p> <p>HF said one of the first tasks would be to look at stages of development for the Greenway extension and if the work can be "chunked up". IM expressed a different view, saying that it would be preferable to go for a large project to start with and aim to get resources for the whole project as it stands now in the current feasibility study. The SG will need to discuss this in future.</p> <p>General discussion about the employment of a project officer for example 3 days a week. IK stressed that he is attending in an advisory role from NYCC and TO said that HBC will be the same. HF said a project officer externally funded but based within a statutory body would be ideal. This had worked in the past with the Dales Integrated Transport Alliance (DITA) and TO mentioned another instance of this happening at HBC.</p> | Sec |
| 7 | <p>Items for future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit terms of reference • Elect a Chair of the steering group • Arrangements for public consultation • Sources of funding • Possible employment of a project officer • Packaging of programme of work • A dedicated website for the project | Chair |

| | | |
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| 8 | <p>Any other business:</p> <p>After discussion on status of the minutes, it was agreed that once the draft minutes are agreed then they will be in the public domain.</p> | |
| 9 | <p>Future dates:</p> <p>Monday 30 May 2022</p> <p>Monday 27 June 2022</p> <p>Monday 25 July 2022</p> <p>Monday 22 August 2022</p> <p>Monday 26 September 2022</p> <p>Monday 24 October 2022</p> <p>Monday 28 November 2022</p> <p>Monday 19 December 2022</p> <p>Monday 30 January 2023</p> <p>Monday 27 February 2023</p> <p>Monday 27 March 2023</p> <p>Monday 24 April 2023</p> <p>(NB: time to be 10.30am-12 noon for all meetings)</p> | |
| | Meeting closed 12:00 | |
| | | |

Monday 27th June 2022, via Zoom, 10.30am-12 noon

MINUTES

Present: Helen Flynn – Nidderdale Plus (HF) Iain Mann (IM) – Manager, Nidderdale AONB Malcolm Margolis (MM) - Harrogate District Cycle Action Cllr Andrew Murday (AM) Tom O’Donovan (TO) - Economy and Transport officer, HBC Natalie Rea (NR) - Sustrans

Apologies: Ian Kelly (IK) - NYCC Countryside Access Manager, NYCC outside of National Parks Cllr Nathan Hull (NH)

1. Welcome and introductions: All introduced themselves to the meeting and explained their roles with regard to the Nidderdale Greenway extension project.

2. Apologies – as above

3. Correspondence received to date: No correspondence had been received

4. Minutes of meeting held 30 May 2022: The draft minutes had been circulated in advance and all agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. All outstanding actions points would be covered in the business of the current meeting.

5. Website costings: HF had circulated a proposal for costings to set up a Steering Group Website. HF to go back to the web designer to see if he could reduce his monthly maintenance cost. All were in agreement that the proposal seemed fair. Financing would be discussed under item 8. HF

6. Consultations with stakeholders and channels for consulting: AM is currently meeting with each parish council that has land along the proposed route to get their concrete feedback on the feasibility study. AM mentioned that Yorkshire Dales National Park has just consulted on the Hawes to Garsdale cycle way over social media and got 1,700 responses, and 77% in favour. It may be possible to conduct a large scale survey over social media for the Nidderdale Greenway. Once we have concrete feedback from PCs, we should be considering this. Agreement that public consultation should cover the whole route but that the work on establishing it should be achieved in shorter sections. AM is going to speak to the Agricultural Soc before next meeting to gather their opinions. Broad discussion held over what the formally constituted nature of the SG should be. Could sit in a LA or could be a registered charity or CIO. At some point there will need to be a formal constitution so that the SG can apply for and receive funds. NR mentioned a rolling Government funding programme called "Paths for Everyone" to which Sustrans can apply for funding for feasibility studies, etc, for cycleways that may be relevant for the SG at some point. AM AM

7. Discussion of potential route, Glasshouses-Pateley: Glasshouses-Pateley route is already there apart from the Showground. AM proposed that the first section should be Dacre Banks-Pateley, as it has more ambition to it, but there would need to be some more consultation. It is already a public right of way apart from a parcel of land which is owned by a landowner who is keen on the project. All the SG members were supportive of this being the first section. AM to ask NH if he is supportive, as NH had mentioned starting from Hampsthwaite. HBC has it designated as a "protected route" which cannot be built on, but can be developed as a train line/cycleway/etc and a greenway would fit the criteria. AM

8. Discussion of potential finance sources: Next stage is to accurately map out the route inc engineering, legal, construction and planning costs—and landowner liaison. We would need a project manager to do this work. HBC uses WSP as a sub-contractor to do this kind of work. Some possibility of NYCC finding the funds. Maybe someone who could do this work for a reduced price—but would they be able to do landowner-liaison? Sustrans has strong landowner liaison capabilities. Probably two separate skill sets. AM to speak to NYCC re how to progress. Funding of website—AM to go away and try to find. AM

AM Future dates (NB: time to be 10.30am-12 noon for all meetings) Monday 25 July August date tbc
Monday 26 September 2022 Monday 24 October 2022 Monday 28 November 2022 Monday 19
December 2022 Monday 30 January 2023 Monday 27 February 2023 Monday 27 March 2022 9.

Discussion of ongoing Greenway maintenance: Stretch of current greenway has multiple ownership and maintained by authorities and supplemented by volunteers. Public right of way should fall under NYCC as highway authority. Final Greenway maintenance needs to be considered at the feasibility stage to see who is going to be responsible for what.

10 AOB: A discussion over the value of holding face to face public consultations throughout the dale. There would be significant costs to this. Before this can happen all parish councils need to be

consulted which AM is in the midst of doing currently . The SG to come back to methods of public consultation.

Monday 25th July 2022, via Zoom, 10.30am-12 noon

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Helen Flynn – Nidderdale Plus (HF) Cllr Andrew Murday (AM) Cllr Nathan Hull (NH) Malcolm Margolis (MM) - Harrogate District Cycle Action Rosie Moorman (RM) - Nidderdale Plus Greenway Secretary Iain Mann (IM) – Manager, Nidderdale AONB Tom O’Donovan (TO) - Economy and Transport officer, HBC Apologies: Natalie Rea (NR) - Sustrans Ian Kelly (IK) - NYCC Countryside Access Manager, NYCC outside of National Parks

1. Welcome and introductions: Introducing Rosie as Nidderdale Plus Secretary for the Greenway project.
2. Apologies – as above
3. Minutes of the last meeting for approval Approved. RM to distribute. RM
4. Correspondence received to date: Mr. Rusby has been sent minutes from April/May and will be sent approved minutes from June meeting. RM
5. Consultations with Parish Councils AM has met with parish councils, general feeling is that feasibility studies need to be undertaken prior to consultations with parishioners. There is general support, with some objections regarding safe crossing of roads. MM states safe crossings are included in the Proposal, signalised crossings can be addressed if needed. This was successfully for the crossing of the Greenway at Ripley A61 by introducing a signalised crossing which doesn’t impinge on the traffic. AM suggests the report requires further development prior to public consultations. Diagrams may need to be clearer to be easily understood by the public, and the route also requires further consideration. NH suggests a strategy should be put in place to manage stakeholders and to work alongside landowners. IM supports and suggests consultation with landowners to clarify and negotiate the route ahead of public consultation. MM clarifies the Railway line is the favoured route but not always practical, best alternative routes were considered in feasibility study. TO suggests that alternative routes should have visuals within the document to evidence considerations have been made. NH suggests a map showing alternative routes considered.
6. Membership of the steering group: AM raises question of Parish Council/HBC representation in the steering group. MM supports membership from HBC. NH agrees. HF suggests rather than membership to the steering group being opened, a ‘council’ format be implemented that meets quarterly. This council would be sent minutes and communications from meetings, and provide a forum to voice opinions which can be fed back to the steering group. HF
7. Future of the steering group: AM raised discussion of funding the Greenway. In order to move forward and receive funding, the steering group would need a structure and a bank account. To do this the steering group needs to develop a written constitution and become a constituted body. AM asks if there is a model Sustrans could guide towards? Would it be a registered charity, CIO or CIC. HF suggests CIO would be beneficial. NH defines CIO vs CIC. All agree we must set up ‘officially’ before we go further. IM states that the AONB and HBC will be consolidated into NYCC before the Greenway is built. The benefit of being an independent organisation is that it offers access to a range

of funds. HF suggests in order to be able to apply to/access grant funds would need to be an official and organised structure. HF supports first step to become a legal structure. NH asks what the structure was for Harrogate Greenway when that was built. MM believes it to have fallen under HBC. NR 7. Next steps for the project: AM will look into options for becoming a constituted body and revisit at next meeting. MM to send the written alternative routes & initial consultation discussions with landowners for RM to distribute for review at next meeting. MM to look into creation of a map with alternative routes. RM to circulate link to the feasibility study. AM & HF to meet separately to discuss development of a website. HF to look into hosting minutes on the Nidderdale Plus site until a site is up and running. AM RM/ MM MM RM AM/ HF HF

8. Any other business: Agreed there will be no August meeting due to bank holiday. The SG will reconvene on Monday 26 September 2022. Date of next meeting: 10.30am Monday 26 September 2022

Future dates (NB: time to be 10.30am-12 noon for all meetings) Monday 26 September 2022
Monday 24 October 2022 Monday 28 November 2022 Monday 19 December 2022 Monday 30
January 2023 Monday 27 February 2023 Monday 27 March 202

Monday 26th September 2022, via Zoom, 10.30am-12 noon

FINAL MINUTES

Present: Helen Flynn – Nidderdale Plus (HF) Cllr Andrew Murday (AM) Rosie Moorman (RM) - Nidderdale Plus Greenway Secretary Tom O'Donovan (TO) - Economy and Transport officer, HBC Ian Kelly (IK) - NYCC Countryside Access Manager, NYCC outside of National Parks Malcolm Margolis (MM) - Harrogate District Cycle Action Cllr Nathan Hull (NH) Natalie Rea (NR) - Sustrans Apologies: Iain Mann (IM) – Manager, Nidderdale AONB

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Apologies – as above
3. Minutes of the last meeting for approval Approved. RM to distribute. RM
4. Correspondence received to date: RM explained new Google Drive folder system for public access documents. RM
5. How to take the project forward: Greenway and Cyclerroutes Ltd or CIO AM states we need to establish a public right of way (PRoW) with the Highways Authority before we are able to access funding. Currently the Steering Group (SG) is a Community Organisation but lacks expertise. NR put forward 2 ways of moving forward for the SG: Option A: SG provides a series of linked PRoWs, setting up a CIO to allow the SG to crowdsource funds to carry out PRoW orders with local authorities. Option B: SG pursues a route where an Active Travel Route compliant with LTM120 is deliverable. This has significant cost implications and requires local/county authority support, and Government level funding. This is not something a CIO could deliver. AM states costs to establish PRoW must be undertaken by the establishing organisation, and suggests Option A is the necessary first stage but the long term goal is to create a multi-user pathway. AM asks MM to talk though John Grimshaw's proposal of supporting the Nidderdale Greenway through his company Greenways & Cyclerroutes LTD. TO asks if it's on the lines of what were doing currently with Nidderdale Plus doing admin etc? How would the financing work? MM unsure, further conversation with JG required. AM states the SG needs a source of funding to develop the Sustans feasibility study to move forward. TO

asks if we can do a lottery heritage bid, but AM believes not without PRoW in place. HF asks if we can only access financial support if we have a legal structure? AM states yes, that can be through JG's company, CIO or CIC. Any legal structure would be a holding position until the new local Authority is established. NH prefers CIC for benefit of personal liability. A CIO would mean being answerable to the Charities Commissioner. CICs are fairly easy to establish and to dissolve when needed. CICs can fundraise in the same way as CIOs. AM asks NR what Sustrans position is? Project isn't yet viable for Sustrans funding. NR Advises there are two very different scales when building Active Travel Routes. Either the SG can negotiate full funding from a funding body which includes funds for PRoW, or negotiate funding just to cover PRoW and find remaining funding for build later. It's harder to get full funding outright but it does happen. AM feels If we're going to establish PRoW we should establish them across the whole route rather than sections at a time. HF agrees good approach - at least you know you have something if PRoW is established. Can then decide what approach to take with building.

MM asks how the project will move forward if you don't get all PRoW in place? MM would prefer to establish and focus on one section to show intent and build momentum, suggests Dacre to Pateley route. NR states that landowner negotiations to establish PRoW is under County Council jurisdiction and will be dependant on new Authority funding availability (considerations of maintenance etc). AM & IK to discuss prospects for next year. NR asks if the PRoW from Dacre to Pateley would connect to the PRoW network at both ends. IK states it would connect to a road or public highway. AM states we cannot apply for funding until we establish PRoW. AM will start consulting (using MMs consultations from feasibility study as a starting point) with landowners by next meeting. Until we are ready for finance we don't need to establish organisation/legal structure. MM asks what is the realistic way of moving forward, and how would Sustrans be involved? NR states at this stage Sustrans is supportive of the principle but cannot offer support other than observational. There could be a partnership in the future and happy to have conversations then, but Sustrans will not be involved in establishing PRoW. HF/AM suggest JG join the next SG meeting. TO agrees would be good to speak to him directly to clarify positioning. MM to ask him to attend next meeting. AM to talk to landowners between Dacre and Pateley.

6. Any other business: No.

Monday 28th November 2022, via Zoom, 10.30am

DRAFT MINUTES

Present:

SG Members

Cllr Andrew Murday (AM)

Helen Flynn – Nidderdale Plus (HF)

Cllr Nathan Hull (NH)

Tom O'Donovan (HBC) (TO)

Ian Kelly (NYCC) (IK)

Malcolm Margolis (Harrogate District Cycle Action) (MM)

Natalie Rea (Sustrans) (NR)

Iain Mann (NAONB) (IM)

Richard Rusby – (in attendance as a landowner) (RR)

David Hall – (in attendance as an independent advisor) (DH)

Apologies: None

Absent: None

Abbreviations: NG: Nidderdale Greenway

SG: Steering Group

1. Welcome and introductions

2. **Apologies** – as above. To note: Rosie Moorman has stepped down from secretarial duties, owing to being absent in Australia and work commitments.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting for approval:** Approved. HF to distribute

4. **Correspondence received since last meeting:** none received (HF)

5. **Dacre Banks to Glasshouses Bridleway (AM).** Quite a lot of this (proposed by British Horse Society) route follows the same proposed route of the NG. There is a 30-day informal consultation in progress currently. This is a separate issue to the NG, so may give rise to some confusion. AM has heard that there will be quite a lot of objection to it from a number of people/organisations. Whole process will take some time.

6. **Discussions with landowners.** AM had taken on the task of consulting with landowners between Dacre Banks and Pateley Bridge since the last meeting. MM asked if everyone happy to have RR in meeting if names are being spoken about. Agreement to keep all names confidential and not to mention them in the meeting. AM said that Glasshouses to PB, things have changed in terms of landowner support. Only section now without objection is section owned by company who owns Glasshouses Mill. Glasshouses to Dacre Banks has 50% of length where proposed route on feasibility study is objected to by landowners. So the route would require a significant amount of intervention

against the wishes of landowners. Therefore, the prospect of this becomes extremely difficult. NH has spoken to a couple of landowners in Birstwith area, covering just over a mile, who object. Forced intervention is going against wishes of landowners, and NH would struggle to support, despite the potential benefits of the NG.

MM very uncomfortable having this discussion with RR in room. MM feels we should be able to hear the names of the landowners. MM and DH had met the owners originally and there were objectors. However, the route is protected in the Local Plan for transport purposes, so if we had just listened to objecting landowners, then the public benefit of the Greenway would never have got off the ground (bearing in mind that a section of the Greenway, Bilton-Ripley, had gone ahead despite significant objections). NH says just because something is protected in a Local Plan it does not mean it has to go ahead. NH says this could drag on for years and years, and has serious concerns over the costs and the possible outcome. So, it is important for us to conduct a risk analysis of spending time and money on something which may not go ahead. MM believes it is reasonable to go ahead as the public benefit outweighs the concerns of landowners.

DH says it is important to bring people along with us. A report had been done in 1990s and had brought about the first section of the Greenway. MM and DH had spoken to 42 landowners, re the NG, and most had thought it was a good idea in principle, however, difficult to gauge how responsive they would actually have been, and many were not keen to have it on their land. Perception was that where there was already access, then a lease may have been attractive to landowners.

DH of opinion that village to village connection was the most important thing, and indeed the normal *modus operandi* for cycle routes, rather than looking at the whole route. It is normal for people to feel anxious when such an issue comes up. RR—from Ripley Woods to Darley—he has spoken to a lot of landowners and none of them are keen on the route. He thinks it would be damaging, wrong to call landowners “selfish”. In many cases the NG would not improve the economy of their farms, as DH had mentioned it might if leases were in place. DH agreed that there had been a lot of objection lower down the dale. No objection from Pateley up, as Yorkshire Water had no objection.

AM alluded to the route between Dacre Banks and Pateley as a “brick wall”, as so much objection. Agricultural Society would not countenance any pathway through their land, and in some cases the proposed route goes through some people’s gardens. DH and MM assert that there is support from quite a number of these landowners.

AM cannot see any way that he can support any more of his own time on these matters for the steering group, as it seems that the route is a no-go. NH notes that landowners can change their minds and maybe this has happened. Going forward if there has to be legal action, then it would probably be the new LA having to do that, and we currently do not know if the NG would be an NYC priority. IK confirmed that this would be the case—NYC would have to set up a creation order. NH says we have no idea if this is going to be a priority after April.

TO says that currently both LAs, NYCC and HBC, have supported the steering group looking at this, so we should be continuing as an SG on this basis. NR says it comes down to funding, feasibility and political will. So next step is to increase public awareness of the benefits of

the NG. NH wants to know how much this might cost to do all the preliminary work might cost. AM refers to a scheme in YDNPA for a six-mile path that will cost £500k.

DH notes that Sustrans has experience of paths that gather their own momentum, and that “trampling on a flower before it blooms” is not a good idea. Often people welcome schemes when they see them in reality. Re: Money, DH mentioned that MM had raised £20k to get the NG feasibility off the ground and that volunteers had done the bulk of the initial work. Next step might be to go back to landowners to ask if the report was acceptable, as COVID had got in the way, and having a public exhibition would also be a good idea. DH thinks dropping the project now would not be a good idea.

AM of the strong opinion that there is currently no support at NYCC for the Greenway. AM also said that Glasshouses--PB route is currently riven with landowner objections, and cannot see the way forward.

TO says that NYC will have to write a new Transport Plan, and this is long term, so we need to understand that the potential public benefit of the NG is no in doubt, so needs to be kept alive as a potential project. AM and NH cannot speak on behalf of the NYC Executive, as they are not members, so while people have been broadly supportive, they cannot speak on behalf of the new Council. TO does not believe that we can kill it off now, as there has been support until now.

MM adamant that compulsory purchase was never discussed with landowners, despite what RR says on this matter. DH says we should be careful of hearsay. DH says he would be happy to return and ask the landowners their views again. DH does not think we have got to the end of the conversation yet, and supports the view of TO. DH quotes the economic benefit of the Bilton-Ripley Greenway, which was largely funded by external funds. NH says it is not hearsay, as both NH and AM have heard directly from the landowners.

DH says that there is an approach to take when talking to landowners—it is in effect a negotiation. Unless we move forward to a public consultation then there is no other way forward. AM agreed, but says there is currently no money for this at the LAs. TO says that there are alternative funds to do this, and we do not have any evidence base yet. He believes that Sustrans can advise on this. NH asked how much money it would cost. Depends on format, TO said-- many options for doing a proper consultation.

IM says that the NG is in principle of public benefit, so finding the resource to fund consultation is important. IM says professional access officers need to have the conversation with landowners, rather than someone with vested interests. NH says it needs to be someone who is impartial, who can explain the ideas behind the NG. DH says the feasibility document needs explaining and engineering issues need to be taken into account.

AM proposes to focus on section between Glasshouses and PB, and some rangers to discuss with landowners the ideas behind the route. Re: future dates, we lose the Dec meeting and meet on 30 Jan next, and in the meantime NH and AM to try to find funds. MM believes AM proposal is not necessary, and that he and DH can do the work as volunteers. NR thinks it a good idea to have the public exhibition going hand in hand with this work. DH says it is important that we are pulling in the same direction on the SG.

The SG will meet again on 30th January 2023 and AM and NH will come with information about how we can raise funds for a public consultation of some form. There will be no meeting on 19th December 2022.

7. AOB. There was no other business and the meeting ended at 12.10pm.

Future dates 2023: Meetings to take place by Zoom, 10.30am-12 noon.

Monday 30 January

Monday 27 February

Monday 27 March

Monday 30th January 2023, via Zoom, 10.30am

DRAFT MINUTES

Present:

SG Members

Cllr Andrew Murday (AM)

Helen Flynn – Nidderdale Plus (HF)

Cllr Nathan Hull (NH)

Tom O'Donovan (HBC) (TO)

Ian Kelly (NYCC) (IK)

Malcolm Margolis (Harrogate District Cycle Action) (MM)

Natalie Rea (Sustrans) (NR)

Apologies: Iain Mann (NAONB) (IM)

Absent: None

Abbreviations: NG: Nidderdale Greenway

SG: Steering Group

NYC: North Yorkshire Council

1 Welcome and introductions

2 Apologies – as above.

3 Minutes of the last meeting for approval: Approved. HF to distribute

4 Correspondence: Note from IM re Peter Lambert, the ranger who the AONB have appointed to carry out landowner consultation. AM had consulted with him and is very experienced in the kind of work he is doing. See item 7 for more info on this.

5. Updates on landowners from County Councillors: AM nothing to report. NH reported that there is a 1 km stretch from weir in Birstwith to Hartwith toll bridge. Two landowners in fierce opposition to this. MM confirmed that the landowners had been in opposition in the original work. MM and DH had had a discussion with a landowner in Glasshouses area who had originally been in support, then been against. During the discussion, the landowner mellowed to a certain extent and now appears more open-minded. General discussion with the tone to be taken during consultations—not neutral, but promoting the NG, as this should be the role of the SG.

6. Updates on public consultation funding possibilities: NH had brief discussions with Keane Duncan (Exec member for highways, NYCC) re possibility of funding from NYCC. Money very tight at moment and a lot of money now being deployed in keeping the 24 bus service going in Nidderdale. Probably not money available for feasibility studies and in any case is still in the remit of HBC (til April 2023). Report from Peter Lambert is going to be critical in determining whether this is something that NYC will support. TO said that there is potentially the Net Zero Fund from the Devolution Deal, but unlikely to be able to get an EOI in by 6th Feb. AM mentioned that when NYC has a policy position on tourism, the NG may well fall into the tourism agenda. AM mentioned the prospect of a roadshow through Nidderdale for public consultation, but AM does not think it would be realistic til the report is in from the AONB. MM disagrees with this. He believes that the way forward is to consult with the public as that will potentially create an appetite for the NG, and in no way would antagonise the landowners. NR questioned whether the current AONB exercise would affect the route alignments, as these should be the proposed

alignments that are consulted on with the public to avoid public confusion. NH asked MM if there is any prospect of Birstwith stretch going south of the Nidd, through school playing fields. General discussion about the possibility of this and is something that could be explored. AM said that that it is very likely that a roadshow to facilitate consultation with the public on the NG will go ahead at some point in the future. IK said it would be worth getting in touch with the people who did the Garsdale consultation to find out how they sequenced the work, and whether they had the precise alignments when they went to consult. NR said it important to find out what is amenable to public re alignments, and get people to start talking about the NG. **AM to speak to Katherine Beardmore at YDNPA.**

- 7. Progress with AONB Ranger Project:** IM had not been able to attend the meeting but provided the following update by email on 23 January:

Helen – you left me a message asking if Peter Lambert, the Project Ranger seconded to the AONB team from the YDNPA, would be able to attend the steering group meeting. The role I have agreed with Peter is on-the-ground landowner liaison and it is not part of his role to attend the steering group, so he will not be in attendance. Given that he only started a couple of weeks ago and is working on the Nidderdale Greenway only 1 day/week, there is very little that either of us would realistically be able to update on at this stage anyway.

I expect to be in a position to give a brief verbal update on progress at the meeting on 27 February.

- 8. Greenway Secretariat function: future need and funding.** HF reminded the SG that the meeting scheduled for 24 April would be the last meeting that was funded under the current SLA that Nidderdale Plus has with NYCC, HBC and NAONB. AM asked about the basis and funding that the service is currently provided under. **HF to circulate to all members of the SG details of the SLA and costs.** The future of the secretariat function--who is to provide it, what costs should be attributed to it, and who should fund it-- could then be discussed in full at the next meeting on 24 February.

- 9. AOB:** There was no AOB and the meeting ended at 11.15am.

Future dates 2023: Meetings to take place by Zoom, 10.30am-12 noon.

Monday 27 February

Monday 27 March

Monday 24 April

Monday 27 March 2023, via Zoom, 10.30am

DRAFT MINUTES

Present:

SG Members

Cllr Andrew Murday (AM)

Helen Flynn – Nidderdale Plus (HF)

Cllr Nathan Hull (NH)

Ian Kelly (NYCC) (IK)

Malcolm Margolis (Harrogate District Cycle Action) (MM)

Natalie Rea (Sustrans) (NR)

Iain Mann (NAONB) (IM)

Apologies: Tom O’Donovan (HBC) (TO)

Absent: None

Abbreviations: NG: Nidderdale Greenway

SG: Steering Group

NYC: North Yorkshire Council

1. **Welcome and introductions**
2. **Apologies** – as above.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting for approval:** Approved. HF to distribute
4. **Correspondence:** Email from MM which had been distributed to the whole SG
5. **Updates on any discussions with landowners from County Councillors, or any other matters concerning the Greenway:** Richard Rusby (RR) had been in touch with NH saying he was disappointed that he had not been invited to SG meetings following his attendance at an earlier meeting. RR gave a long list of 9 people who objected to the Greenway, but NH had not spoken to these individuals himself. NH spoke with Jonathan Brown a landowner in Birstwith. He was happy for people to cycle on his land, but does not want a tarmacked Greenway.

6. **Progress with AONB Ranger Project:** Peter Lambert had been doing the Ranger work on a short-term fixed contract for the AONB. Systematically contacted all landowners from PB to Dacre Banks. This had been done verbally, and it had been mentioned that there would be financial compensation for landowners. Results very similar to what AM and NH had communicated in December in terms of landowners' reactions to the route. Extract from report below:

| Overall Summary Landowner View | No. of landowners | Length of route (km) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Favourable | 2 | 0.55 |
| Concerned/possible compromise | 4 | 2.25 |
| Opposed | 7 | 4.5 |
| Total | 13 | 7.3 |

- 2 landowners are favourable to the creation of the route over their land. They have control over 8% of the proposed route investigated.
- 4 landowners are concerned about the creation of the route over their land but there is potential to negotiate a compromise. They have control over 30% of the proposed route investigated. Note that this includes 1 landowner who was not contactable and whose current views are not known.
- 7 landowners are opposed to the creation of the route over their land. They have control over 62% of the proposed route investigated

AM asked how we would deal with the objectors, if we needed to “force it through”? IK said would have to be “creation order”. The objecting landowners would object and it would end up in a public enquiry and Planning Inspectorate would have to determine the resolution. The Authority would have to establish that there was a need for the route. It is a long and protracted process. Legal representation would be needed so is a costly process. MM explained that this is what happened with the existing Nidderdale Greenway, where there were 2 objectors. He explained that public enquiry is a last resort, negotiation is the best route and this happens elsewhere in the country with respect to cycleways. MM explained that Harefield Hall was a good example where positive negotiations had taken place recently. (However, IM said that the negotiations MM referred to were not actually with the landowner.) MM also stated that compensation would likely be minimal, as public rights of way already existed and they would be relieved of their obligations to maintain the rights of way. NR asked if there were copies of the conversations that had taken place during the Ranger consultation projects so we know the reasons why landowners objected. IM assured that the AONB does have this level of detail. NR wanted greater clarification on how the questions had been framed. IM confirmed that the way that the project was described was that the greenway would

be sympathetic to the landscape, would not be tarmacked and would not impact biodiversity. IK stated that 40% of the route in fact does not currently have status as a public right of way (despite what MM had said above), so this would be a considerable issue to address. Horse usage is also an issue. AM mentioned that Ramblers Assoc has an issue with sharing paths with cyclists. NR says best practice states you should separate cyclists from walkers, but this is more for urban environments and often this does not apply to rural areas. NH said that people were not happy about the amount of money this would cost and money would be spent better elsewhere when people were having difficulty paying bills. Also, people think maintaining and safeguarding the 24 bus should be a higher priority. In addition, mountain bikers can use much of the right of way that currently exists. So there is a range of objections to the route. NR wanted to clear up the fact that Sustrans would not necessarily pick up the costs of maintaining the greenway as MM had indicated earlier. It is not a precedent that Sustrans would want to have set. IK supported this and mentioned that ongoing costs would fall to the highway authority and that this would be a consideration in taking a decision to support the greenway. NR said the delivery mechanism and business case are important in establishing the case for needing the greenway. This could be done by NYC or Sustrans, depending on funding pots available. AM summarised and said that it would be down to himself and NH to go to the new authority (NYC) and begin negotiations, to begin to establish the case. At the moment, the unitary council, NYC, would not be in a position to take forward the project. Difficult to see the way forward at the moment. A lot of it is down to money, and the authority has just increased the council tax by the maximum amount possible, as it does not have sufficient resources. NH clarified that his support would be for the No 24 bus, and that would be a priority for him rather than the Greenway currently. MM of the opinion that the project needs to be kept live however that is done. MM in favour of the bus being maintained, but how many people actually use the bus as opposed to the number of people using the current Nidderdale Greenway? HF said that grass roots support from Nidderdale communities and individuals was essential—we need there to be a groundswell of support from locals, as that will help to persuade landowners. HF also did not think this was the right time owing to LGR and local capacity issues owing to the CoL crisis, etc. NR and MM agreed with these points. NH agreed that this is not the right time, owing to people being under pressure due to CoL crisis. NR asked when is the right time? AM said that the only time it would be successful would be if there was a groundswell of support from locals. This could happen at parish councils and other community events. However, over the next year, this would not be the highest priority for NYC, owing to finance and capacity issues. No point in meeting again for at least 6 months in AM's opinion. AM asserted that he wants a Nidderdale Greenway but that public support needs to be engendered and that this can be done on an ongoing basis at Nidderdale events and NR and AM can work out how to do this. MM queried best way of having presence at events over the summer. NH and AM said that they would ensure that there was a presence at

local gatherings, meetings and events over the summer. HF suggested having next meeting in October to review progress over the summer. This was agreed.

7. **Greenway Secretariat function: future need and funding** This point was deferred, owing to the content of the previous agenda point.
8. **AOB** None
9. **Next meeting:** Monday 23 October, 10.30am via Zoom

Minutes of Nidderdale Greenway Extension Steering Group Meeting, 23 October 2023

In attendance: Rob Lloyd, Andrew Murday (NYC), Malcolm Margolis (Harrogate Cycle Action), Josh Molyneux (Sustrans), Iain Mann (NAONB), Helen Flynn (Nidderdale Plus--also minute taker)

Apologies: Tom O'Donovan. Ian Kelly and Nathan Hull were non-attenders.

1. Andrew welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that Tom O'Donovan would not longer be attending the meeting, owing to LGR. He had been the HBC rep. Robert Lloyd from Hampsthwaite Pathfinders was in attendance to report on the surveys that had been carried out.
2. See above re Tom O'Donovan.
3. HF to send out again with these minutes, though the previous minutes had been circulated after the March meeting and all had been happy with the accuracy.
4. AM had received an email from Jane Hall from Harrogate Ramblers saying that they would want to be involved if things move forward. MM had an email from Harrogate Ramblers via Andrew Willoughby saying the same.
5. Two surveys had been carried out. AM had carried out a survey in his NYC division where every resident (approx.2,500) had received an invite to respond to a survey about the Greenway. 261 replies had been received. Hampsthwaite Pathfinders had also carried out a survey where 1,345 responses had been received. Robert had analysed the results of both surveys and presented to the meeting the results of both surveys in a powerpoint presentation—included with these minutes. The responses to the two surveys had been overwhelmingly positive. AM pointed out that the 2 surveys are different, as AM's survey covers just the area that would be affected. IM pointed out that AM's survey had been as fair as you could get and wanted to understand the group that RL had surveyed. AM answered

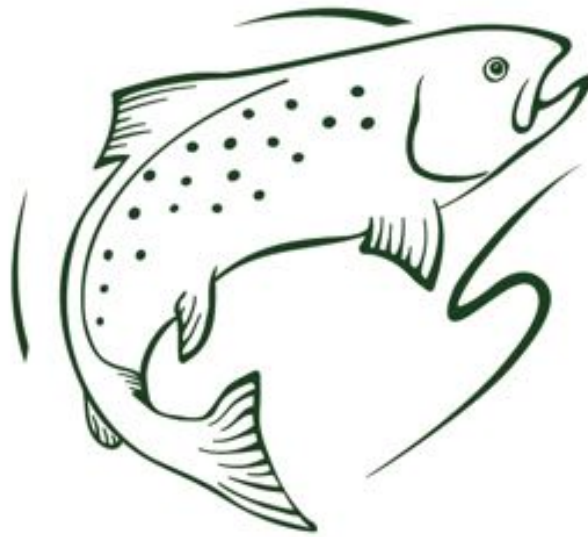
that inevitably you get bias in a survey like RL's, but that a 10% response rate to the HG3 only survey had been good statistically. In addition, the RL survey had gone out to every household in Hampsthwaite, which is part of Nidderdale.

6. HF sought some analysis on the relative balance between the overwhelming negativity of the landowner work that the SG had been concerned with to date, and the positivity of the two recent surveys. She asked JM if there was any insight on this balance from Sustrans. JM commented that this was typical, but that NYC would be the key to unlock the potential of the project. AM said that the SG probably needs to prepare a report to go to NYC in the light of these 2 surveys, and the earlier work of the SG with reference to landowners. RL commented re the need of Hampsthwaite to have a safe walking route to services in Birstwith, and therefore the support of the PC there. IM pointed out the negativity of some PCs however. AM proposed to write the report, then ask PCs for their reaction to the report. JM said that NYC are key to this and would be a good idea to get a steer from officers during the preparation of the report. HF remarked re the DfT report on Future of Transport and £3 bn investment in active travel—so the money would most likely be there for NYC to bid for in due course. MM stated that he had not been happy with the work done with landowners—IM in opposition to this as the work that the AONB rangers had done had been professional, so was not going to respond to MM's remarks.

All in agreement that AM should prepare a report, the final destination of which, after consultation, should be NYC for consideration

7. HF to send AM costings for the secretarial work so that these could be included in the report
8. AM re future meetings. Proposed that the report would take around 6 weeks, then 6 weeks to circulate round the SG. So next meeting will be on Monday 29 January 2024 at 10.30 am to approve the report.

Next meeting: Monday 29 January 10.30am



WILD TROUT TRUST

Walkover of Proposed Nidderdale Greenway

R Nidd ([GB104027068295](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gb104027068295) & [GB104027068296](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gb104027068296))

Prof J Grey (jgrey@wildtrout.org), May 2022



1.0 Introduction

The following is a brief report based upon observations during a walkover of the Nidd between Summerbridge and Hampsthwaite. An extension of the Nidderdale greenway (a ~3m wide, formalised track primarily for cycling so requiring a low gradient) has been proposed to run parallel to the channel and within the riparian zone in various places. The walkover was requested by representatives of the Nidderdale Catchment Anglers Group (who have expressed concerns about the environmental impact of constructing the greenway and detriment to local ecology) and was carried out by Prof J Grey.

Throughout the report, normal convention is applied with respect to bank identification, i.e. left bank (LB) or right bank (RB) whilst looking downstream. Upstream and downstream references are often abbreviated to u/s and d/s, respectively, for convenience. Positions are noted via latitude and longitude which can be pasted into Google maps for reference.

Nidd from Ashfoldside Beck to Birstwith Water Body

Moderate ecological status

Viewing latest data (Updated on 20 May 2022). [Switch to draft river basin management plan data](#)



Get Nidd from Ashfoldside Beck to Birstwith data

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Related links

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[Draft flood risk management plans](#)

Attributes

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Water Body ID GB104027068295 | Water Body Type River | Hydromorphological designation heavily modified | NGR SE1560065538 |
| Surveillance Water Body No | Length 22.8 km | Catchment area 50.338 km ² | Catchment area 5033.78 ha |

Map & data extract from:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB104027068295>

The Nidd from Ashfoldside Beck to Birstwith (GB104027068295) is considered as *Heavily Modified*. The EA data give an overall classification of *Moderate* ecological status driven primarily by the failing for Macrophytes & Phytobenthos (plants and algal biofilm that forms on the rocks) and Fish. Reasons for Not Achieving Good status (RNAGs) are listed as point & diffuse source pollution from agriculture and the water industry, and physical modification, respectively.

The Birstwith to Hampsthwaite reach under consideration d/s (see Fig 1b) falls under a different waterbody ([GB104027068296](#)) which is not designated artificial or heavily modified but returns the same *Moderate* ecological status and suffers from generally the same RNAGs.

2.0 Habitat Assessment

A series of images are used to exemplify issues and opportunities generated during the walkover, progressing u/s in Reach 1, and d/s in Reaches 2&3 (for logistics purposes; see Fig 1a&b for extent of reaches). Specific detail is given in the extended legend for each image, and summarised in 3.0 Comments.



Fig 1a. An excerpt from the Ordnance Survey map of Darley environs with the red rectangles depicting the affected reaches (1 & 2). The Ross (toll) Bridge is visible at RHS and provides a reference to continuation of river in Fig 1b below.

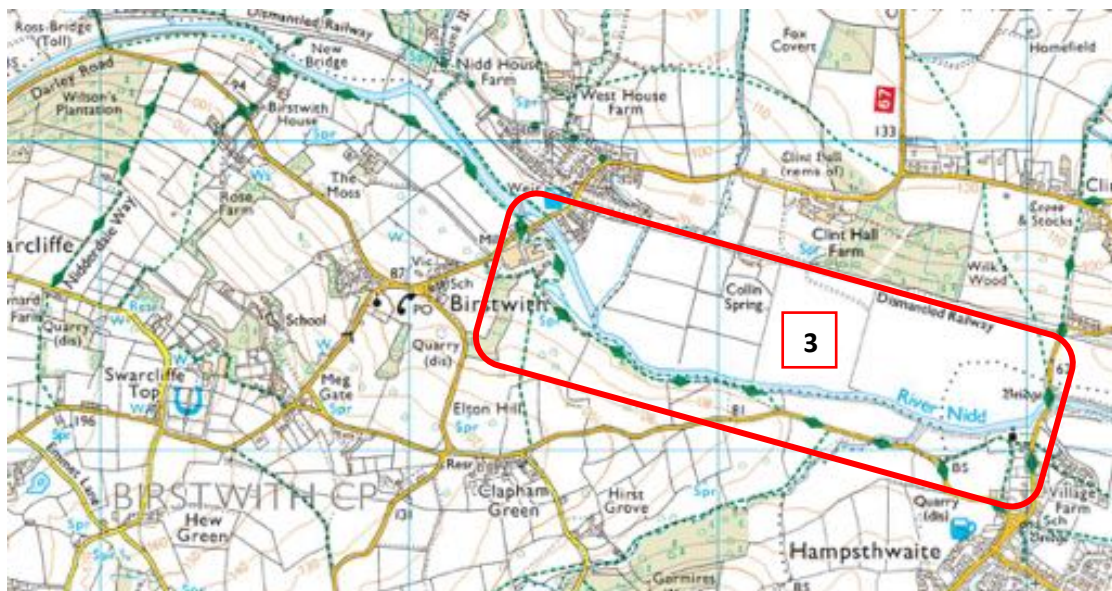


Fig 1b. An excerpt from the Ordnance Survey map of Birstwith and Hampsthwaite environs with the red rectangle depicting the affected reach (3). The Ross (toll) Bridge is visible at LHS and provides a reference to continuation of river from Fig 1a above.

Reach 1 – Darley u/s towards Low Hall



Fig 2a. 54.034378, -1.6867578 at the d/s end of Reach 1 where the proposed greenway joins from Station Rd in Darley and runs parallel to the river. The existing footpath was typically <1m width, heavily used, and the footfall keeping the path free from plant growth has exposed the roots of mature trees within the bank. Formalising the greenway here will irreparably damage those trees. Note, there was little evidence of self-set regeneration of trees under the current scenario (so even less under the proposal), primarily because there was insufficient space in the riparian zone ie between the path edge and the bank toe (waterline).



Fig 2b. 54.038090, -1.6938382 looking d/s along the path of the proposed greenway with the viable alternative of the disused railway line (in use elsewhere) to the RHS. Compared to Fig 2a, natural regeneration of tree cover was evident where there was sufficient space and there was a more diverse understory flora adding to the resilience of the bank.



Fig 3. 54.03637, -1.6891176: The confluence of Darley Beck with the mainstem Nidd and existing footbridge. The area is prone to frequent inundation during spate flow when water from Darley Beck backs up against a typically much higher Nidd. Tree cover and diversity was good, but the understorey was compromised in various places by footfall accessing the beck. These desire lines, generally created by dogs, can lead to further erosion and ingress of fine sediment.

It is important to note that there was significant disparity between bank height on either side of the beck. To maintain the proposed greenway gradient, a clear-span bridge (of sufficient aperture to accommodate spate flows) would require substantial engineering and effectively pinning the position of the confluence. If it were to proceed at this location, any designs would need to demonstrate that the beck would not become 'perched' at the structure; ie fragmenting the river system and impeding fish passage or hydrogeomorphic processes further.

A fully functional confluence should be dynamic, responding over time to vagaries of climate and hence flow on both (in this instance) the Nidd and the Darley Beck. Using the existing footings for a clear span crossing on the disused railway line at 54.036206, -1.6908366 would negate any requirement to engineer a costly new bridge, the construction of which would significantly impact upon the local environment.



Fig 4. Between 54.038902, -1.6949755 (upper image) and 54.039737, -1.6963853 (lower), the Nidd has been historically pinned tight to the SW side of the valley and hence the bank was steep and relatively inaccessible. The tree cover was more mixed in terms of age and species diversity and the understorey covered with indicators of long-established woodland (wood anemone, bluebell, dog's mercury).

There was barely room for an informal footpath <1m wide with such a steep gradient perpendicular to the river, and parallel to the river were substantial undulations of gradients in excess of those required for the greenway.

Note:

- **The level, disused railway at the top of the embankment adjacent to the footpath (RHS of the lower image; and see Fig 5).**
- **The patches of bare ground to the left of the path in the lower image, scoured clear of vegetation by recent spate flows.**



Fig 5. At the u/s end of Reach 1, the proposal routes the greenway from the riverbank to rejoin the perfectly functional, level, disused railway line – see disparity in height between riverbank and railway line in the upper image. This will again involve considerable disruptive landscaping to achieve the low gradient required.

However, keeping the greenway on the railway line throughout would involve less invasive engineering and as exemplified here, it would be set back sufficiently to not impact upon the riparian ecology and remain unaffected by spate flows.

Reach 2



Fig 6. Upper: Looking u/s from the upper limit of Reach 2 towards the former railway bridge crossing – the route of the railway embankment is highlighted by the white dashed line. Lower: Satellite image of the route of the railway embankment, the relative position of the Nidd, and a white arrow marking from where the upper image was taken. The green arrows denote the proposed path of the greenway through ancient woodland to rejoin the railway embankment.

The channel of the Nidd was entirely realigned and artificially constrained historically to accommodate the railway line. At this location, one of the few crossover points, the channel was forced to the northerly side of the valley, and then abruptly turned to the right to pass perpendicular below the railway. To maintain the stability of the bridge footings, the channel was routed fully across to the southern side of the valley and effectively retained there for a considerable distance d/s.

In long profile then, the channel has been routed along a contour on the northerly side, so it is sluggish and impounded in character. Where it has been abruptly turned across contours, the gradient of the channel is steepened as a consequence and hence water velocity greater.

The full force of that accelerated flow is felt at the apex of the two green arrows (see Figs 7-9) along the bankline within the ancient woodland where the greenway is proposed.

As can be seen in the following figures (7-9), there have been repeated attempts to 'protect' the right (southerly) bank from the force of the accelerated water using boulders estimated at several tonnes each. These are all failing and the only resilience within the bank soils was the floral root matrix.

At the time of the walkover, the field in the upper image appeared to be under silage with little margin to provide buffering between the agricultural practices and the river. As elsewhere, the mature tree cover was only 'one-tree-deep' with no natural regeneration visible. Moreover, some of the specimens were ash, with signs of *Chalara* onset. It would be beneficial for the wider ecology to give over a wider margin here to allow the development of a natural riparian zone flora to ensure the continued protection of the river.

Development of the greenway would reduce the ecological value of that bank as well as the ecosystem goods & services associated.



Fig 7. 53.927199, -1.7678501. The boundary of the ancient woodland at the apex of the green arrows depicted in Fig 6. Specimen trees such as the beech to the LHS would be irreparably damaged by the proposal.



Fig 8. 53.927199, -1.7678501. Large boulder revetment, historically used to protect the right bank from artificially accelerated flows caused by routing the river perpendicularly across the valley and under the former railway line.

The revetment has failed; the boulders were in various stages of slumping into the river. However, the long-established root matrix of the native riparian flora and tree cover has provided resilience, despite the soils being extremely wet from springs and seeps up the valley side (see Fig 10).



Fig 9. Complex root matrix within the soil provides some resilience despite accelerated flows.



Fig 10. Throughout the ancient woodland around 54.035224, -1.6615803, the terrain was incredibly varied and generally steep, with lots of springs and seeps introducing an impressive diversity of flora and associated fauna.

The diversity of tree cover alone would provide an array of benefits to the river, not least of which would be leaf litter subsidy during the autumn. Many aquatic invertebrate taxa are reliant upon such a subsidy with different tree species providing leaves of different nutritional state, palatability and longevity within the river.





Fig 11. Various images from between 54.035224, -1.6615803 and 54.037890, -1.6517825, where the right bank was slightly flatter and not so high above the waterline compared to Fig 10. There was plenty of evidence of woody and fine debris from previous spates strewn throughout the woodland and even across onto the road, so it was abundantly clear that the route here was routinely inundated.

Debris piles and dead wood each have their own specific communities dominated by 'decomposer' invertebrates, providing valuable food resource for both invertebrate and vertebrate predators. The trapping of this material is also a valuable ecosystem service – better it being deposited here where it can decompose naturally, rather than blocking a bridge or culvert further d/s.

Backwater pools, formed by scour amongst the trees, are also important temporary habitats; for example, stillwater nurseries for fish and amphibians. They form because the river can interact with its floodplain.

In conjunction with the ancient woodland upstream, the entire reach exhibited high quality, biodiverse riparian habitat, virtually undisturbed by human activity.

Reach 3 – Birstwith to Hampsthwaite



Fig 12. 54.031850, -1.6280485: The feed factory at Birstwith presents a dilemma. It is a former mill and sited on an island created by the mill leat (blue line) being taken off from the Nidd at the weir u/s of Birstwith Bridge.

The proposed greenway route (green dashed line) requires crossing over the mill leat twice (and hence construction of one crossing point, the other already in existence at the u/s end). From the d/s crossing point it is proposed to run parallel and adjacent to the Nidd around the factory, and then away from the channel between the factory and private residences. The lower image shows the proximity of the factory fence (LHS) to the channel, insufficient space to accommodate a wider path whilst retaining an undisturbed riparian zone.

Furthermore, the proposed route involves a considerable loss in height from the bank d/s across the leat and onto the island (see Fig 14). The alternative route (already a Right of Way) is depicted by the white dashed line, does not affect the river bank ecology, and allows for a gentle gradient to be maintained without engineering and landscaping.



Fig 13. Upper image: the island (looking towards the factory) appeared to have been grazed recently but exhibited good potential for diverse meadow flora and could be left to naturally succeed providing a relatively quiet area with low footfall (the footpath was a dead-end). Lower image: a badger sett in the bank immediately adjacent to the current footpath which would be displaced by the proposed route.



Fig 14. The mill leat returning to the Nidd at 54.029878, -1.6261176, taken from u/s and d/s of the confluence to show the disparity in bank height. Any bridging solution would require significant engineering and landscaping, severely damaging the long-established woodland to maintain suitable gradient.

As noted previously, bridge designs have a propensity for disrupting or fragmenting river systems.



Fig 15a. A couple of images of the proposed route along the current footpath highlighting the gradient of the bank (ie lack of space for the 3m wide track) and its undulating nature (ie unsuitable gradient), the presence of vulnerable roots from the riparian trees, but perhaps most importantly the height of the debris line in the sheep netting demonstrating that the path is frequently inundated.

The fencing has allowed the riparian zone to recover from sheep grazing and natural regeneration of both trees and a 'shaggy' understorey herb layer currently provide greater hydraulic roughness, helping to slow the flow and trap finer debris.



Fig 15b. Another low-lying section of footpath on the proposed greenway route highlighting one of the numerous small, ephemeral channels which would have to be crossed. Historic and current malpractice involves culverting these small watercourses.

Culvert pipes:

- are generally inadequately sized to cater for all contemporary and predicted rainfall events, leading to them impounding water on occasion and often blocking, requiring ongoing maintenance.
- accelerate flow within leading to increased erosive force on the d/s side and becoming perched as the bed is scoured away.
- interrupt or more likely prevent fish passage and free movement of sediment.

If a crossing point is required, then a clear span bridge of adequate proportions or an oversized culvert sunk 1/3rd diameter below bed depth to allow for adjustment of channel width and flow volume must be considered.



Fig 16. Around 54.027970, -1.6172575, there was scant tree cover along either bank and insufficient space given to allow for a functional riparian zone due to accommodating the already narrow footpath or simply by placing the fence too close to the bank top.

The lower image shows a fantastic deposition bar, some within channel habitat diversity and a hint at reverting to a more natural, sinuous path. It appeared that at least two bird species (common sandpiper and greylag goose) had nested upon the safe haven of the island. Formalising the bank even further by routing the greenway along it would prevent such valuable features developing.



Fig 17. 54.027151, -1.6098461: The confluence of Tang Beck with the Nidd was in relatively poor ecological condition because of unfettered livestock access denuding and destabilising the banks. However, it would be relatively simple, quick and cheap to remedy this situation using livestock exclusion fencing. As noted previously for Darley Beck, constructing a substantial crossing point at the confluence would be extremely costly and environmentally unsound.



Fig 18. 54.026818, -1.6076522: Mature ash trees of considerable girth dominate the right bank to the west of Hampsthwaite Church. The proposed route would run along the bank top here, requiring the removal of the trees and no opportunity for instating a natural riparian zone and all the ecosystem goods and services that it would provide within what was a heavily grazed field. Compare the scenario above to Fig 19.



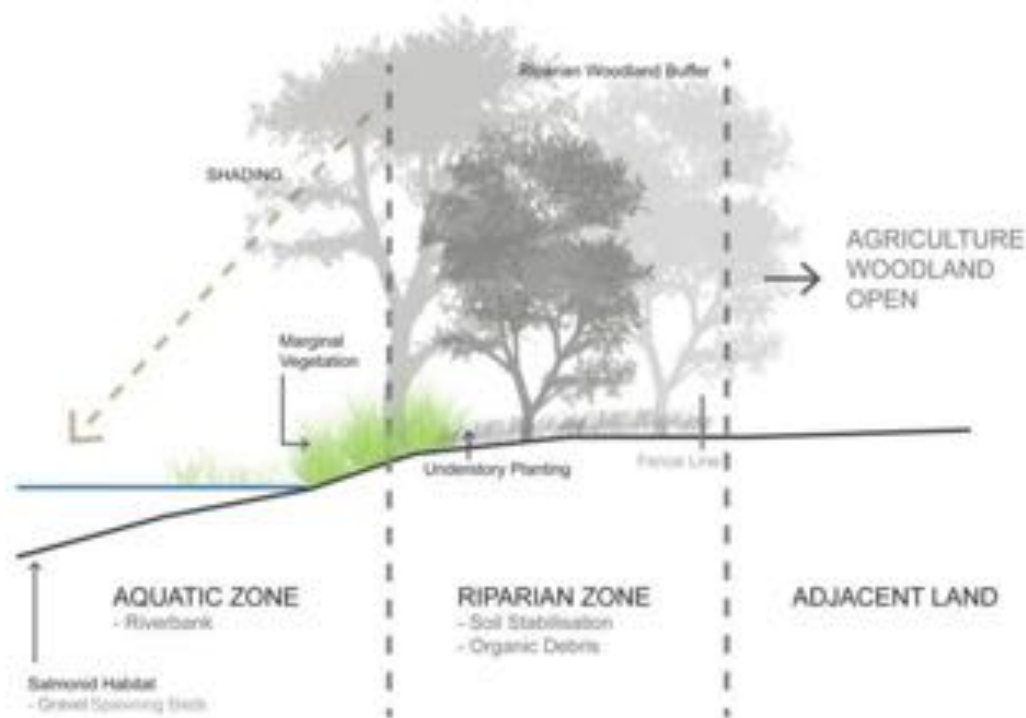
Fig 19. Looking u/s (upper) and d/s (lower) around 54.027000, -1.6052036. This strip of land between Hampsthwaite Church and the Nidd exhibited a diverse, undisturbed understory and natural regeneration of a variety of tree species, clearly providing resilience to the bank integrity as there was absolutely no evidence of erosion yet plenty of flood debris indicating periodic inundation. High quality habitat for terrestrial organisms and emergent aquatic insects.

The proposed greenway would involve removing most of this short but important oasis, and in doing so would degrade any remainder.

3.0 Comment

The Riparian Zone

Most concern is associated with the proximity of the proposed greenway route to the riverbank, within the riparian zone which is the interface between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems (Schematic 1), so it is worth reflecting upon the importance of that ecotone. Indeed, 'the Riparian' is considered as a distinct biogeographical unit or biome.



Sch 1. Derived from the Latin *ripa* or riverbank, the riparian zone encompasses an area from the toe of the bank (waterline) and overlapping with but not including the wider floodplain (source: Lenane 2012 Keeping Rivers Cool; Environment Agency report).

The environmental benefits, ecosystems goods and services that a functional riparian zone provides are numerous and the following list is not exhaustive:

- Habitat & specialised niches (eg wet woodland, deposition bars) for a multitude of species of conservation concern, for feeding, breeding and refuge.
- Corridors linking fragmented or isolated habitats through typically depauperate agricultural landscapes, allowing taxa to move and thus maintaining / increasing biodiversity.
- Habitat (trailing or fallen branches, root masses, emergent plants) and food (subsidies of terrestrial insects and leaf litter) for aquatic macroinvertebrates and fish.
- Shade – mitigating for climate change by keeping river water cool.

- Resilience – a diverse root matrix binding bank soils together thereby reducing the risk of erosion.
- Reduction of conveyance by increased 'hydraulic roughness', slowing the flow during spates.
- Intercepting and absorbing pollutants (soil loss, excess nutrients, biocides) via throughfall and overland flow, thereby reducing diffuse pollution.
- Considerate amenity and recreation but only in moderation if the ecological value is to be retained.

Hence, the structural integrity, species composition and spatial extent of the riparian zone play disproportionately important roles in wider ecology and water quality. However, the riparian zone is all too often degraded and dysfunctional, either via intensive agriculture removing the natural flora and destabilising the soils, or modification using hard engineering.

Recognition of the importance of the riparian biome has led to increasing emphasis on:

- working with natural processes rather than fighting against them,
- reconnecting rivers to their floodplains and allowing space for rivers to be more dynamic rather than shackled on a fixed course,
- the role of trees along riverbanks in mitigating for climate change,
- and the role of green or softer engineering to replace historic, hard engineered solutions, thereby dissipating and absorbing energy rather than simply bouncing it further downstream to cause problems elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the proposed 3m-wide, formalised track along the bank of the Nidd is in direct contravention of all the above. While it is a worthy aspiration to encourage more people to appreciate the natural world, destroying the riparian zone and routing pedestrian and cycling traffic disturbance into an environmentally sensitive habitat seemingly is also counter to the mission.

4.0 Disclaimer

This report is produced for guidance; no liability or responsibility for any loss or damage can be accepted by the Wild Trout Trust as a result of any other person, company or organisation acting, or refraining from acting, upon guidance made in this report.