

THE STREETS OF **AXBRIDGE**

PHASE 1

“Getting the balance right between vehicles & pedestrians to create a safe shared space for now and the future”

The Streets of Axbridge – Phase One – 2015

RESULTS FROM THE STREETS OF AXBRIDGE PATH 2015

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS ONE AND TWO - 24TH September AND 22ND October 2015

THE ROLE OF THE FOCUS GROUP

The role of the Focus Group was to:

- a) agree a set of ideas for street design, pathways, activities, etc;
- b) agree proposal on how best to progress our ideas:
- c) contribute to the formulation of a set of proposals to present for public consultation on what could be included within Phase Two of the Streets of Axbridge Project.
Public consultation meeting planned for 9th November.

See Appendix One for background details about the Focus Group Programme and the Street Audit Day that feed into it. In this PATH document the ideas and suggestions generated by The Focus Group are presented. This includes the second Focus Group meeting selecting and incorporating the top ideas that arose out of the Street Audit Day. There are in addition about 2 or 3 other ideas and suggestions that came out as principle ‘themes’ from other engagement and consultation activities. The actual proposals following out of ‘The Phase One Streets of Axbridge Trial’ will be subject to further consultation with the wider public. The final recommendations for Phase Two will come in 2016 and will be agreed via Axbridge Community Partnership. The feedback from The Focus Group will be a key variable influencing the recommendations to be formulated.

PATH

The Focus Group meetings were undertaken using a PATH approach combined with ideas from ‘Appreciative Enquiry’ (see: centerforappreciativeinquiry.net). PATH is a defined method designed to achieve maximum participation and engagement from all individuals who come together with a common goal. The process aims to enable the group to explore options together in a creative and visionary way and to then agree proposals and plans for the future that are real and actually possible to achieve. See Appendix Two for further details.

Peter Harding Chair of Axbridge Action Group facilitated the Focus Groups. Peter has been a major driver behind the Streets of Axbridge Project. He is passionate about the development of

people friendly streets and has a wealth of experience in facilitating and coaching individuals, groups and community ventures.

PARTICIPANTS ON THE 2 FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Laurence Wilson, Francis Rabbitts, Jane Hodgkin, Barbara Wells, David Mc Clay, Maggie Tur, Janet Gwinn, Lynne Jarman, Delia Mc Carthy, Jane Bridgwater, Sharon Anderson, Maggie Stanley, Barrie Cross, Tom Littlewood, Phil Wooky, Liz Walsh, John Albone, Sarah Berry, George Ware, Pete Harding, Niz Hasham, Jenny Hasham, Robin Mace, Robin Goodfellow

STEP 1 - 'BLUE SKY VISION STATEMENTS'

- Pedestrian Bridge over the bypass
- Traffic goes down from bypass but no thru way through square (except for bus)
- Scrubland by sea cadets to be turned into car park
- 40mph limit on bypass
- School to move next to surgery. Pre-fab buildings removed to create a car park and the old school building to be a “community centre”
- All changes to be in keeping with the ambiance of Axbridge
- Improve parking on chestnut ave
- Widen road, Houlgate Way
- Traffic regulation enforcement
- Wall of shame for community offenders
- Good access re ‘coffin lane’
- More innovative public transport systems

STEP - 2 POSITIVE AND POSSIBLE GOALS FOR DECEMEBR 2017

ZONE 1 - High Street and West Street. Townsend, Hillside and route ways leading west and north out of Axbridge.

1. A371 below Hillside to change to a 40mph zone;
2. Provide pedestrian refuges for crossing the A371 at Fennel Lane (Hillside steps) and for the footpath opposite the Sea Cadet buildings – not to be dependent on 40mph speed limit;
3. Develop a parking area in the scrub-land by Sea Cadets;
4. High St – West St - make one way west bound;
5. A detailed study to be carried out on pavements and roads on High/West Street with a goal of making the streets more pedestrian friendly. This should include measuring width, camber and state of repair. Review to include if it would be feasible to move some of the kerbs to create pinch-points/calming measures, remove double yellow lines, have more car parking spaces, create speed humps and widening foot paths.

6. Create gateway/pinch point at entrance into top of West Street;
7. Test out use of rumble strips on High/West Street as traffic calming measure;
8. Support for the 'Coffin Lane' proposal - pathway going up/down Cross Lane – combine with refuge crossing on A38;
9. Reduce speed limit for traffic using Cross Lane.

ZONE 2 - Houlgate Way, Meadow Street and all streets leading into these streets.Route ways leading south out of Axbridge.

1. Houlgate Way to be the main entrance into Axbridge from the west;
2. Undertake a process of reviewing all car parking options throughout Houlgate Way - including on-street parking, Widening Houlgate Way for parking and opportunities for off road parking by surgery and/or below Compton House.
3. Undertake a process for considering different road surfaces at key junction points – with particular focus on top part of Houlgate Way/West Street, top of Moorland Street/entering Square and bottom of Old Church Road;
4. Undertake a process of considering options for speed limiting road design for Houlgate Way – e.g humps, rumble strips, pinch points;
5. Plants at seating area to be maintained and cut as they interfere with visibility for pedestrians and drivers;
6. Entrance to the Furlong from Moorland St to be improved and upkeep maintained. Lighting to be installed along path;
7. Traffic calming measures around Axbridge First School. Could include murals on the walls or road surface. Parents to be encouraged to use walking bus rather than dropping off pupils in cars;
8. Review location options for additional seating – e.g. by bus stop near doctors and/or by The Town Car Park.

ZONE 3 - The Square and route ways leading in and out of it streets

1. Improve bus access by removing the car parking space outside the Co-op;
2. Remove the car parking spaces outside of the florist;
3. Review number, availability and type of bike racks and their positioning – including during farmers markets;
4. Complete a feasibility study surrounding parking and re-locating the bus stop to make entry onto and exit from bus more accessible. See 'options for the Square' for details on ideas;
5. Extend hours of usage of Moorland Street car park to 3 hours;
6. Better traffic management – enforcement in the Square of parking and speeding;
7. Have less parking in the square:
8. Reduce the parking limit time in the Square to 30 minutes;
9. Review the type of plants in the big new planters in the Square;
10. Keep the changes already made in the Square as carried out in the Trial;
11. Have better signage in the Square to where car parking can be found;

ZONE 4 - St Mary Street and Cheddar Road and all streets leading into these roads and route ways leading east out of Axbridge.

1. Improve lines of sight for pedestrians and cars pulling out on Cheddar Rd at Parkway & Orchard roads and consider road markings to designate where it is safe to cross;
2. Undertake a process of considering options for speed limiting road design for Jubilee Road/Cheddar Road – e.g humps, rumble strips, pinch points;
3. Review options for making the road between The Square and The Pennings to be a pedestrian friendly zone - including pinch points, speed humps, different road colouring and gateway/pinchpoint by Pennings and/or at top of St Mary Street by the Old Rectory;
4. Furlong car park - increase parking spaces and make available 24/7;
5. Develop a walking bus – or school drop off zone – at Furlong car park;
6. Have pinchpoint and better welcome signage entrance to town at top of Cheddar Rd.

IDEAS THAT AFFECT THE WHOLE OF AXBRIDGE:

1. Enforce speed limits and parking restrictions throughout the town;
2. Better signage for entering the town (Consider implications of sat nav directions through town);
3. 20mph speed limit throughout all of Axbridge;
4. Establish a group to help maintain access via footpaths;
5. Co-ordinate existing resources for community transport and a car share scheme;
6. Develop an integrated transport plan - including strategy to promote alternative transport -e.g. To include increased bus service evenings and weekends, community transport and a car share scheme;
7. Considered areas for additional public/resident car parks – Chestnut Ave, off of by pass beside Station/Youth club, next to Doctors Surgery and Furlong Car Park;
8. Have a publicity campaign about anti-social parking and anti-social speeding including cycling. Use the children’s paintings that we have already got as part of community engagement and/or a ‘scarecrow policemen’ competition.
9. Review options to instigate a campaign to promote walking;
10. More market days, events and entertainment;
11. Re-direction of National Cycle Route around Houlgate Way rather than High/West Street;
12. Review the state of footpaths throughout Axbridge and plan a repair and improvement programme.

STEP 3 - WHAT IS IT LIKE NOW? – What is working/not working?

Working	Not Working
Current changes in Square	No improvement to safety and welfare
More people now sitting in Square.	Spent excessive money on furniture in the Square
New designs of the Trial have made the Square more pedestrian friendly. Better space - welfare/usage (older people etc).	There are no improvements outside of the Square.
Footfall has increased in Square	Parking in Square
There are now more tourists visiting since the Trial	Bypass – noisy and excludes access to and from Hillside
We have a bypass and we don't have passing traffic going through the Town	Not winning hearts/minds of car drivers (local)
Great Museum	Vehicles still go too fast.
Lots more cyclists	Car park needs to be for 3 hours.
Parking enforcement partly working	Parking enforcement

I LIKE STATEMENTS selected by focus group: (What is positive now about the Streets in Axbridge?)

- I like it that Axbridge has a bypass and the main road does not pass through it.
- I like the fact that I see people I know on the streets and have a chance to chat with them.
- I like the fact that when you pass people by in the streets they say 'hello' to me.
- I like the open views across the fields as I go down Houlgate Way
- I like seeing the people with their families cycling through Axbridge.
- I like it when the square has the Farmers Market in it.
- I like it when the square is closed to traffic for special events such as the Pageant or the carnival.
- I like it when the street is closed and the Roxy has a café out in the street.
- I like there being a car park in the Square so that I can drive down and park up to go to the shops.
- I like it that there is a parking space for disabled car users in the Square.
- I like the car parks now being free.
- I like walking down the old Axbridge streets looking at different buildings.
- I like sitting in the square and watching the world go by.
- I like it that there are lots of different places to sit down in the Square.
- I like walking to the Square to do my shopping.
- I like sitting down in the Square having a drink.
- I like it when the Blackberry Carnival goes through the town.
- I like it being a 20 mile speed limit throughout most of the town.
- I like the walks into the moors that can be done from Axbridge.
- I like the walks up into the hills that can be done from Axbridge.
- I like it when the Town Hall is open for coffees and teas and social activities.
- I like the church as a beautiful place up the steps to go to.
- I like the it that town managed to preserve the car parks and stop them becoming building plots
- I like the recent changes that have been trialled in the Square
- I like there now being more cycle racks in the Square

STEP 4 - STRENGTHS - Strengths that we have that will help us to achieve our goals

- Active community/enthusiasm and will for change
- Good at listening
- Start from high base (e.g. we have a great Square and a bypass)
- Lots of local professionals who could contribute
- Varied community with good skills

- Experience of working with youth
- Lot of older people – not active/seen – must engage with them
- Furlong – good asset for sports/activities
- We are on the cycle path
- Potential of engaging with the Cheshire Homes
- Countryside area attractive/good location to visit
- Small place - possible to talk to anybody

(5) ENROL - Who can and should we enrol to help?

- Specific professionals for traffic flow/parking etc who can help us
- Police
- Legal
- Community
- Chamber of Commerce
- MP - James Heapy
- Somerset Council/Highways
- Tessa Munt
- Churches
- Schools
- Local farmers
- Need clear specification for professionals to get outcome
- Living Streets
- Need funds for impartial outsiders to take on a role
- Key role for Town Councillors (representatives)
 - what is their role?
 - representatives? Or not?
- Need to find ways to enrol 'people who moan'. How do we engage with them? But – we also need to get majority view and 'go with it'.
- Neighbourhood Plan Group (keep our goals in mind)
- Cheshire Homes

STEP 6 - POSSIBLE PLANS – what needs to have happened by June 2016

What needs to have happened by June 2016? What goals?

1. Analysed results from consultations and agree 5 priority specific proposals that are achievable.
2. Move towards action planning and defining specific proposals.
3. Started a dialogue with Sedgemoor/ Somerset/ MP about bypass (40mph speed limit, crossing and car park)
4. We have put questionnaire together to get opinions of residents.
5. Ensure there is ongoing engagement with residents and all have ability to participate – reach out and 'bang on people's doors':
 - leaflets
 - publicity / Facebook / Twitter etc

- identify with people in the community who can engage with particular groups, agencies etc (Council)
 - Farmers Market to publicise plans
 - Use Oyez
6. Do audit of skills in the Town
 7. Second Walking Bus in operation by September 2016
 8. Short, medium and long term goals / priorities have been agreed and defined.
We have defined which we can do ourselves and what will need funding for and costs are specified.

Final Feedback from Focus Group participants

1. I liked the way the meetings provided a programmed structure for guiding conversations and capturing views.
2. It is good that the Focus Group made sure that all parts – all of the ‘Zones’ - of Axbridge were included.
3. Good to see different viewpoints expressed on the Street Audit Day.
4. ‘Made me acutely aware of traffic speed’.
5. I’ve always been a ‘moaner’ – never realised there were so many groups etc. Need to get something done!
6. The focus on ‘what is positive about Axbridge streets’ and ‘positive ideas’ was a good approach.
7. We need to look at what we can do now. What is the next step?
8. It is a shame that we did not have more young people and/or people with children involved in the Focus Group.
9. We lack participation at the Focus Group of people who have ‘influence’ in Axbridge. This should include people who are in key influential positions in the town. For example, there are no Councillors (except Barbara) and few people who were ‘born and raised’ in Axbridge. People who are long standing residents of Axbridge have a strong influence but they are not involved in these sorts of processes. There is a feeling that stuff like ‘The Streets of Axbridge’ has an air of exclusivity only for a certain type of person.

Final comments from Pete

Thanks to The Roxy and The Lamb for providing venues and refreshments for the day. Also big thanks to Sharon, Barbara and George for helping me with setting up and running of the meetings!

Most of all – a Big BIG thanks to everyone who participated throughout the Focus Group (including the Street Audit Day) process. I am humbled by your participation, commitment and enthusiasm for making the Streets of Axbridge a more people friendly place.

Pete Harding – December 2015

Peter Harding Chairman of Axbridge Action Group said: *“Various community engagement activities including the Focus Group meetings and the Street Audit have discovered that the*

majority of people are enjoying the changes that are currently being trialled in the Square. The changes have engendered just the sort of debate we were hoping for. The ideas and suggestions we have gathered are wide reaching and include all parts of Axbridge. Come along to the Town Hall on the evening of 9th November and see what we've found out!"

(From Press release that went out)

APPENDIX ONE

The Streets of Axbridge – Phase One – 2015

“Getting the balance right between vehicles & pedestrians to create a safe shared space for now and the future”

FOCUS GROUP AND STREET AUDIT - THE PROGRAMME DETAILS

DATES AND TIMES:

Focus Group Meeting One – 6.30 to 9.00pm Thursday 24th September –

At **The Roxy, High Street** – coffee as from 6.15pm

Street Audit Day – 9.45am to 5pm Thursday 8th October

(refreshments and lunch provided) – start at **Oak House** – coffee as from 9.30am

Focus Group Meeting Two – 6.30 to 9.00pm Thursday 22nd October –

At **The Lamb** – coffee as from 6.15pm

If you want to participate on the Focus Group and/or Street Audit please read the details below or contact me. Peter Harding, pete.axbirdge@gmail.com Tel 01934 733689

THE GOAL

The goal will be that out of the Focus Group and Street Audit process we will:

- d) agree a set of ideas for street design, pathways, activities, etc;
- e) agree proposal on how best to progress our ideas;
- f) contribute to the formulation of a set of proposals to present for public consultation on what could be included within Phase Two of the Streets of Axbridge Project. Public consultation meeting planned for 9th November.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE FOCUS GROUP AND STREET AUDIT?

For both the Focus Group and Street Audit we will consider The Streets of Axbridge in four zones. The 4 Zones will be:

1. **High Street and West Street**, Townsend, Hillside and route ways leading west and north out of Axbridge;
2. **Houlgate Way**, Meadow Street, Mooreland Street and all streets into these streets and route ways leading south out of Axbridge
3. **The Square** and route ways leading into and out of it;
4. **St Mary Street and Cheddar Road** and all streets leading into these roads and route ways leading east out of Axbridge.

The Focus Group meetings will be facilitated by Peter Harding Chair of Axbridge Action Group. Peter has been a major driver behind the Streets of Axbridge Project. He is passionate about the development of people friendly streets and has a wealth of experience in facilitating and coaching individuals groups and community ventures.

The Focus Group meetings will be undertaken using the PATH approach. PATH is a defined and programmed method designed to achieve maximum participation and engagement from all individuals who come together with a common goal. The process aims to enable the group to explore options together in a creative and visionary way and to then agree proposals and plans for the future that are real and actually possible to achieve.

Membership of The Focus Group will be confirmed by letter to individuals. Membership will be limited to a maximum of 24 and confined to people wishing to see improvements in the streets and their usage. We also require a good cross section of people who have particular interest from all four Zones. All members will need to be able to commit to attend the 2 meetings and at least some of the Street Audit Day.

At **Focus Group meeting one** (6.30 to 9.00pm Thursday 24th September) we will:-

- define some the things that we appreciate most about Axbridge;
- share together - firstly in zone focused sub groups and then all together – our visions and long term aspirations for the streets;
- define possible plans and proposals – once again in zone focused sub groups and then all together – that we want to see in place within the next two years.

Following meeting one Focus Group members will be expected to have conversations with others in Axbridge - especially those who have interest in 'their zone' – about the defined aspirations and proposals and make sure these are considered as a part of the Street Audit Day.

The **Street Audit Day** (9.45am to 5.pm Thursday 8th October) will be conducted in partnership with ***Living Streets*** the national charity working to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets around the UK. Christy Acton Living Streets Project Manager - and possibly another colleague of his – will be with us for the day. The day will start with an introduction on what Living Streets is about and what the Street Audit will involve. We will then all walk together around the town taking each of the Zones in turn.

Times are yet to be confirmed but provisionally the programme for the day will be:

9.45am Introduction

10.30 Zone One (High Street and West Street, Townsend, Hillside and route ways leading west and north out of Axbridge)

11.30 Coffee break

12.00 Zone Two (Houlgate Way, Meadow Street, Mooreland Street and all streets into these streets and route ways leading south out of Axbridge)

1.00 LUNCH

2.00 Zone Three (The Square and route ways leading into and out of it)

3.00 Coffee break

3.30 Zone Four (St Mary Street and Cheddar Road and all streets leading into these roads and route ways leading east out of Axbridge)

5.00 Finish.

The Street Audit Day will involve walking around Axbridge and talking together about different street design ideas. The Day will be for Focus Group members and any other persons who want to participate. People will need to confirm their intent to participate so that we can confirm arrangements. Note that we will try our best to accommodate and assist anyone with mobility difficulties to participate (or any other impairment that might effect their participation).

At **Focus Group Meeting two** (6.30 to 9.00pm Thursday 22nd October) we will:-

- Review what we said from the first meeting regarding long term aspirations and possible plans and proposals that we want to see in place within the next two years;
- Identify where our strengths are and who we need to enrol to progress our plans and proposals;
- Propose and agree plans that need to be in place to progress matters over the next few months.

NB – The Focus Group and Street Audit ideas and proposals will be key determinants for consideration of the future plans. However, precise forward plans and proposals for the Streets of Axbridge Project will actually be finalised by the Streets of Axbridge Core Group and the Axbridge Community Partnership.

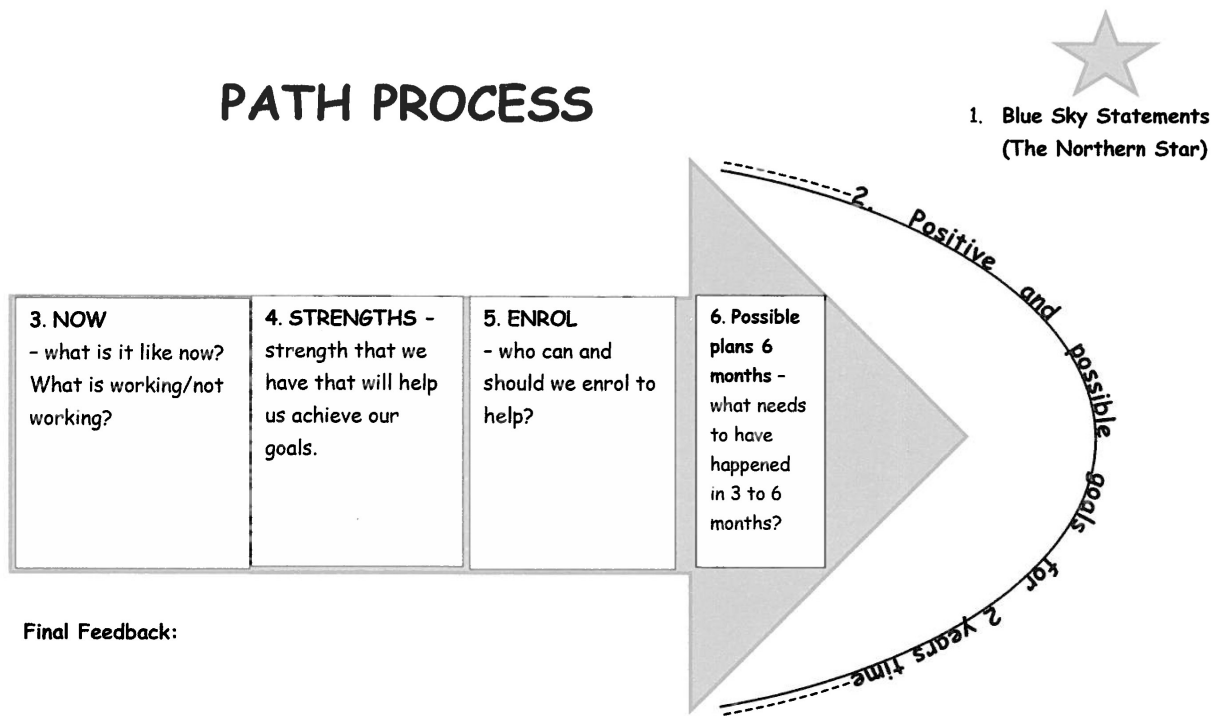
Peter Harding - pete.axbirdge@gmail.com Tel 01934 733689

10.9.15

APPENDIX TWO

What is PATH? "PATH is there when a situation is complex and will require concerted action, engaging other people and resources, over a longish period in order to make an important vision real."

PATH was developed by Jack Pearpoint, Marsha Forest and John O'Brien from 1991 onwards. It can be used as a planning style with individuals and with organisations.



"Path is a way for diverse people, who share a common problem or situation to align...their purposes... their understanding of their situation and its possibilities for hopeful action...their action for change, mutual support, personal and team development and learning."

Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien and Marsha Forest

Step1 The dream

The facilitator asks the group members to identify their personal vision for the future.

Step 2 Sensing the goal

The next step demands that participants imagine two years have passed and that they are back in the same room recollecting what has happened.

They tell the facilitators what it is like to live in a better future, what events have taken place and what they have done to make the dream more of a reality. There are two rules to this stage – all goals recorded have to be both positive and possible.

Step 3 Now

Step 3 examines the situation now and analyses the tension between where the group is now and where they want to be in a year's time. It is this tension that gives energy and dynamism to the process.

Step 4 Enrol/Who's on Board?

None of the goals are achievable by working alone. Step 4 looks at who needs to help. This could be people at the meeting but also those who are not present. Sometimes there are people who could stand in the way of the goals. Their names are recorded so that a strategy can be developed for winning them over.

Step 5 How are we going to build strength?

This can sometimes be a very important step in identifying what the group and others will need to do in order to maintain strength and commitment to the goals.

Step 6 Three/six month goals

The facilitator asks the group to pick a date within the next year, normally either three or six months later, and to set interim goals.

(For further info see PATH in helensandersonassociates.co.uk)