

Notes of joint meeting of Bishopsteignton Parish Council working group and Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group on 12 July 2022 at 7pm via Teams

Present:

Bishopsteignton Parish Council: Cllrs Kate Benham, Henry Merritt (Chair)

Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group members: Bill Bailey, Claire Quelvennec (until 7.40pm), Judith Sharples (note taker)

Devon County Council: Hannah Clark

Teignbridge District Council: Estelle Skinner

Apologies: Cllr Ron Peart, Cllr Andrew McGregor, Norman Maudsley, Roger North

1. Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and referred to the meetings taking place with Cllr Stuart Hughes and DCC officers on 29th July and Cllr John Hart on 5th August. He said the purpose of these meetings was to ensure the Teign Estuary Trail is treated as a priority by members as well as officers of DCC.

2. Update from Hannah Clark

Hannah provided an update on developments since the last meeting on 12 April 2022 as follows:

- Hannah is pleased that the meetings with councillors have been arranged and looks forward to meeting members of the campaign group and parish council in person;
- DCC faces a very challenging financial situation due to inflation and other pressures and it has been an extremely busy period for officers in her team;
- The main focus over the last 3 months has been on finalising the Levelling Up funding bids in advance of the submission deadline of 6th July;
- The engineering team have also been carrying out work to estimate the cost of building the section of the trail from the Passage House Inn to Bishopsteignton and their cost estimate is expected in the next couple of weeks;
- Negotiations between land owners and DCC's land agents are continuing but funding will need to be identified to acquire the land. It is unlikely that external funding could be secured to purchase the land and so DCC's own very limited capital budget would need to be used. This may mean that the land would need to be purchased in phases;
- The section from Teignmouth to Dawlish has not been forgotten about and further work will be undertaken to ensure the design is compliant with the latest national guidance (LTN 1/20) subject to suitable funding for design;
- DCC officers are in contact with Sustrans but no funding has been identified yet;
- Detailed design drawings still need to be developed for the section from Bishopsteignton to Morrisons;

- There is huge inflation in the cost of capital projects and so cost estimates will reflect costs now rather than in the future;
- The cost of officer time to work on the plans is funded through the revenue budget which is also under a lot of pressure.

3. Discussion and questions

Hannah responded to questions and comments as follows:

- The purchase of land and construction of the trail could be conducted in phases as funding becomes available;
- It is hoped to have cost estimates in time for the meeting on 29th July;
- DCC's land agents will provide a progress report as soon as possible but this may not be in time for the meeting on 29th July;
- The Teignbridge Levelling Up Fund bid will be for improvements to the cycle path from Newton Abbot to Torbay but it has not yet been submitted as the national portal for submitting bids has not yet gone live. This, together with changes in ministerial positions, may delay the decision-making process.
- Discussions are still taking place on how DCC's allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be spent. This may include some funding to promote active travel, including in Teignmouth;
- The DCC annual capital budget for transport is only £3.6m in total;
- DCC spent in the region of £200k from this budget on work to prepare the planning application and Hannah thinks a good outcome from the meeting on 29th July would be to secure a commitment to a similar level of annual investment for the Teign Estuary Trail. This would enable a fund to be built up for land acquisition and other work related to the trail;
- DCC's land agents will be asked to provide an estimate of how much funding will be required in total for land acquisition;
- Estelle confirmed that the Teign Estuary Trail remains a high priority for Teignbridge District Council and CIL funding of £200k was used as a contribution to the work on the planning application. It is expected that there will be further allocations of CIL funding which could be used as match funding when applications are made for external funding;
- If the Levelling Up Fund application is unsuccessful, the DCC match funding cannot be re-allocated. However, it would mean that a portion of the Teignbridge CIL funds earmarked for active / sustainable travel delivery would be reallocated as appropriate;
- Negotiations with land owners will include consideration of modification to the plans to accommodate their wishes and concerns.

4. Other matters

The Chair asked whether DCC could issue a press release to reassure the public that the Teign Estuary Trail remains a priority and that work is underway to progress

the plans. Hannah did not think the DCC Press Office would issue a press release unless there was something sufficiently newsworthy to report. However, she did say a graduate has been updating the Teign Estuary Trail webpage (which has not been updated since March 2021) and an updated webpage would be published shortly.

Judith thanked Hannah for sharing the report on the economic benefits of multi-use trails in Devon and reminded her about the request she made at the last meeting for the analysis showing that Teignmouth was one of the most economically vulnerable parts of Devon following the Covid pandemic to be shared. Hannah agreed to pursue this. Judith said she thought Keir Duffin in the Economy Team may have this information.

The Chair thanked Hannah and Estelle for attending the meeting and for the information they had shared. He also expressed concern about the challenging financial situation at both a national and local level and said that that the parish council and campaign group members would do whatever they can to assist the process.

5. Date of next meeting

This was arranged for Tuesday 20th September at 7pm. Ben agreed to send a Teams meeting invite. Hannah advised that she would be on leave for a period of 3 months from October 2022.

The meeting finished at 8pm.