

Notes of joint meeting of Bishopsteignton Parish Council Working Group and Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group on 8 December 2022 at 7pm at Bishopsteignton Community Centre

Present:

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

Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group members: Bill Bailey (by phone from 7.30pm), Rona Boyne, Norman Maudsley, Ben Northcott, Judith Sharples (note taker)

Teignbridge District Council: Estelle Skinner, Cllr Andrew McGregor (until 7.30pm)

Apologies:

Cllr Chris East, Cllr Jo Head, Cllr Keith Lambert, Roger North, Cllr Ron Peart

1. Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a summary of what had happened since the last meeting on 12th July:

- A meeting with Cllr Stuart Hughes and DCC officers took place on 29th July at County Hall and the notes of this meeting had been circulated and shared on Facebook;
- Henry and Judith had a meeting with the Leader of the Council, Cllr John Hart, on 5th August but did not learn anything new;
- Hannah Clark sent an update by email on 20th September – as some of the information in this email was confidential at the time it was sent, it has only recently been shared with everyone;
- Henry had invited Arron Carpenter and Jamie Hulland to a meeting in Hannah's absence but both had declined;
- Jamie Hulland sent an update by email on 8th November after Henry had contacted Meg Booth, the Director for Highways and Transport, and spoken to her PA, Helen Stevens;
- Judith sent a follow-up email to Jamie Hulland on 14th November seeking clarification on a number of issues but had not yet received a response;
- Henry and Judith met Anne Marie Morris and her office manager, Oz Taylor, on 18th November.

2. Thoughts from Cllr Andrew Mc Gregor

Cllr McGregor referred to the funding challenges currently faced by both TDC and DCC and thought the campaign group needed to step up its campaign if funding for the TET is to be prioritised above other pressing needs. In view of the forthcoming local elections and potential general election in 2023, he thought politicians should be targeted and asked to give their support for the TET. He suggested that the following action could be taken:

- Writing letters to the Teignmouth Post (he also suggested that Cllr Alison Eden could make the TET the topic of one of her weekly columns);
- Writing to candidates for local and national elections;
- Contacting John Ware and asking for his support to give the TET greater prominence in the Teignmouth Post;
- Asking the county councillors for Teignmouth and Dawlish to be more involved in the campaign;
- Asking for the TET to be an agenda item for HATOC (Cllr McGregor agreed to speak to Cllr Martin Wrigley who chairs HATOC about this);
- Organising protest bike rides and other events to raise awareness of the need for the TET.

Cllr McGregor also said that it was unlikely funding could be secured to build the whole trail in one go and so a phased approach would need to be adopted. A discussion took place on this.

Although attendees thought the section from Bishopsteignton to the Passage House Inn was the most important because it would avoid the need to cycle on the most dangerous section of the main road, it was also recognised that this was the most challenging and expensive section to deliver.

Judith suggested that it may make sense to build the section from Dawlish to Teignmouth first as this was relatively inexpensive – when a bid for funding to the Coastal Communities Fund had been made in 2014 the cost at that time had been estimated to be £1.6m.

Rona queried whether there was a deadline that needed to be met in relation to land near the Passage House Inn. Judith agreed to clarify the position on this with Roger North.

3. Update from Estelle

Estelle said there was no news on the Round 2 Levelling Up Fund bid submitted in July for an improved cycle path between Newton Abbot and Torquay. It was noted that the Chancellor had said the Round 2 funding would be allocated by the end of the year.

Judith advised that Anne Marie Morris had been under the impression that a further round of funding from the Levelling Up Fund had been announced as part of the Autumn Statement and she had agreed to contact DCC and TDC to seek to persuade them to bid for funding for a section of the TET that was ready to be delivered. Estelle advised that it was not known at this stage whether there would be any further rounds of bids for funding from the Levelling Up Fund.

Estelle also advised that she had attended a meeting with Anne Marie Morris and DCC officers in the summer to discuss the TET. DCC officers had explained the difficulty of securing government funding to extend its network of multi use paths as the Government funding was currently targeted at improving facilities for cycling in large urban areas. Anne Marie had agreed to pursue this with the Government. A second meeting was arranged for the end of September to discuss the Dawlish to Teignmouth

section but Anne Marie Morris was unable to attend. Oz Taylor and another member of her team attended on her behalf.

With regard to the Dawlish to Teignmouth section, Estelle advised that Sustrans had agreed to fund the review of the plans for the section from Dawlish to Holcombe to ensure compliance with the latest government guidance. DCC and TDC had agreed to co-fund the plans for the section from Holcombe to Teignmouth.

Estelle felt that it was a very positive development for Sustrans to be involved in this way and might make it more likely for Sustrans to allocate further funding for the TET in the future.

It was noted that Network Rail were no longer proceeding with their plans for moving the railway line away from the cliffs and building a new sea wall and therefore the inland route would still be required.

4. Update from Bill

Bill advised that he had been trying to secure private sector funding for the TET. He reported that Shell and British Cycling had formed a partnership to promote cycling and Shell was providing a significant level of funding. He felt the TET could fit the criteria for this funding as it was about increasing the participation of disabled people and other groups in cycling. He had contacted a number of people at British Cycling and Shell but had still not received a response. He had also contacted Chris Boardman at Active Travel England to ask if there were any examples of corporate / private funding of cycling infrastructure but had received an unhelpful response from one of his colleagues suggesting that he liaises with his local authority.

Bill was thanked for his efforts so far. It was agreed that, given the shortage of public funding at present, Bill should continue to explore private sector funding and contact other companies that may have funding to invest in cycling infrastructure.

5. Action plan

The following actions were agreed:

- Kate to speak to Cllr Andrew McGregor and Cllr Martin Wrigley about getting the TET onto the HATOC agenda;
- Rona to contact Cllr Chris Clarence who has been very helpful in the past;
- Kate to speak to Cllr Jackie Hook to ask for her assistance;
- Judith to contact Cllr Richard Ash who has expressed strong support for the TET;
- Bill to continue to pursue funding from private sources;
- Judith to supply Ben with a list of key local politicians so that he can use their social media details to include them in social media posts;
- Ben to continue to engage people on social media e.g. by asking them whether politicians' support for the TET would influence their voting decisions;

- Henry and Judith to discuss how to follow up their meeting with Anne Marie Morris now that it has been clarified that there is no further government funding we can bid for at present;
- Henry to seek a meeting with Hannah on her return from leave in January;
- Henry and Judith to compile a list of questions that need to be clarified with Hannah on her return;
- Further consideration to be given to other ideas e.g. organising an event to attract attention involving a range of groups including ramblers and runners as well as cyclists; getting local celebrities involved in the campaign e.g. Muse, Coldplay.

The meeting finished at 8.30pm. Henry thanked everyone for their attendance and input.