



**Devon Countryside Access Forum
c/o Public Rights of Way team
Great Moor House
Bittern Road
Sowton
EXETER EX2 7NL**

**Tel: 07837 171000
01392 382771**

devoncaf@devon.gov.uk

www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf

██████████
Planning, Transportation and Environment
Devon County Council
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
EX2 4QD

6 September 2023

Dear ██████████

Planning application for multi-use path. Buttercombe Lane to Foxhunters Inn, West Down. DCC/4363/2023

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice “as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area...” Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the Forum has a statutory function to give advice, and this includes county councils.

The DCAF currently has seventeen members, appointed by Devon County Council, who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.

This response has been agreed by the Forum and will be on the agenda for formal approval at its next meeting on 18 September. These comments accord with advice submitted to other consultations.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum strongly supports the proposal to reduce the extent of on-road sections on the popular Coast to Coast (Ilfracombe to Plymouth) trail, National Cycle Network route 27. These trails take many years to reach fruition and it is

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a local access forum. It is required, in accordance with Sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, to provide advice as to the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment.

fortunate that funding from the Department of Transport's Active travel scheme has now been obtained.

The inclusion of horses on this section of the trail is welcome and accords with the Devon Countryside Access Forum's position on multi-use and Devon County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2012), currently being reviewed. The additional off-road section will improve safety for all users and enable quiet enjoyment and re-connection with nature.

The DCAF is keen to see Phase 3 pursued, southwards towards Knowle, as soon as practicable and resources allow as this would enable greater use of the route for sustainable transport between Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.

This is a multi-use trail and will be used by walkers, dog walkers, cyclists, mountain and gravel bike cyclists, horses and people with mobility scooters, wheelchairs, pushchairs and other aids. In this respect a sealed, smooth asphalt surface is considered inappropriate. Whilst recognising this is seen as a compromise, the majority of users will be using it for leisure and therefore a more natural surface would be much more appropriate and more suitable in landscape terms. The British Horse Society suggest a crushed stone to dust (Type 1 or 40mm scalplings) with quarry dust is a good surface for horses and this would be suitable for walkers and most cyclists. A smooth surface can encourage cyclists to cycle at a speed inappropriate for safe use of the trail by other users and a design life of 20 years seems short-term and potentially expensive to deal with in the future. Using a compacted stone surface with dust stone e.g. a 25mm depth of 6mm to dust stone and rolled to compact it would be more beneficial. For more information see the BHS Advice on Surfaces for Horses [surfaces-1122.pdf \(bhs.org.uk\)](https://www.bhs.org.uk/resources/surfaces-1122.pdf)

The DCAF would like confirmation that the bollards can be easily removed for maintenance access without causing a trip hazard. One solution recently seen on the newly constructed A379 bridge near Matford involves a moveable chicane – see photograph in appendix. This might be worth considering.

Whilst not relevant to the planning application, the DCAF welcomes discussions on improving a road crossing of the A361 at Foxhunters as it advised on this matter at the time of the previous application.

This response constitutes formal advice from the Devon Countryside Access Forum and feedback on its comments would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

*Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum
Chair: Sarah Slade
Vice Chair: Chris Cole*

Appendix

Photograph of chicane on A379 bridge, near Matford, Exeter

