



Devon Countryside Access Forum
c/o Public Rights of Way team
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**Minutes of the Sixty-Ninth meeting
of the Devon Countryside Access Forum
held at County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QD**

Monday, 20 January 2025

Attendance

Forum members

Andrew Baker
Cllr Richard Chesterton
Tim Felton
Lucinda Francis
Gordon Guest
Cllr Linda Hellyer
Dean Holland

Tino Savvas
Robert Sewell
Lorna Sherriff
Sarah Slade (Chair)
Tim Spray
Rosie Wibberley

Devon County Council Officers and others present

Philip Hackett, Access Field Officer South West, British Horse Society
Alan Mighall, Chair, and Debbie Board, Walks Coordinator, South Hams Ramblers'
Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager, DCC
Hilary Winter, Forum Officer, DCC

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Jo Burgess, Chris Cole, Jo Hooper, Sue Pudduck, Bryan Smith and Glynn Yabsley.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To approve minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2024

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September were approved and signed.

4. Matters arising

4.1 Network Rail

Network Rail had been asked for an update on the Rewe crossing but this had not yet been received.

Tim Felton requested information on Network Rail works affecting an additional footpath crossing the main railway line between Silverton and Killerton. He was asked to provide the footpath number so that Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager could check whether a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is in place and the length of the closure. Network Rail normally had the right authorisation.

Action: Tim Felton and Richard Walton

4.2 A379 bridge

A contractor had been appointed for footpath works and to instal additional artistic panels. It was hoped to commence work in February.

4.3 Ridgetop Country Park

Sian Avon, Senior Ranger at Teignbridge District Council, had thanked the DCAF for its response following the visit in April. The Council is discussing the possibility of a couple of blue badge parking places at the top of Ridgetop Park with DCC planning and highway teams. This may not be feasible due to difficulties of access along the narrow lanes, Old Matford Lane and Deepway Lane.

4.4 Haldon Forest horse riding meeting

The Forum noted the Forestry England engagement report on the horse riders meeting held at Haldon earlier in the year. An email had been received indicating follow-up actions:

- 1) A communications plan had been formulated for upcoming felling works in Harcombe Woods to give horse riders more information and to give machine operators specific guidance.
- 2) A digital map of horse trails was being worked on.
- 3) An additional horse stile access point had been procured.
- 4) To reduce people parking close to the gateway of the horse box car park entrance, new 'no parking' signage had been installed.
- 5) The protruding metalwork at the horse stile entrance had been removed.
- 6) Events which may affect horse-riders were being posted on the 'Haldon horse riders' Facebook page.
- 7) Any incidents reported were being logged into the reporting system.
- 8) 'Horse riding route' waymarkers had been obtained to identify routes

suitable for horse riders and to highlight the potential presence of horses to other users.

It was suggested a person to liaise between the horse-riding community and Haldon staff would be useful.

It was noted that trombone handles on gates are suitable for both horse riders and disabled users.

It was agreed to send an email thanking Haldon staff for progress made to date.

Action: Chair and Forum Officer

4.5 Annual Report

The DCAF Annual Report for 2023/24 was now on the DCAF website and the Natural England SharePoint site.

4.6 Public question

The response to the public question on Lighthouse Beach was noted.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum had recently received a couple of additional emails about progress on opening up Lighthouse Beach under coastal access legislation. Additional emails had been received by the Public Rights of Way team.

The landowner of Lighthouse Beach had instructed solicitors to act on his behalf and the Devon County Council legal team was now negotiating with those solicitors to conclude the negotiation stage, and hopefully secure landowner agreement. There were several stages to this process, as outlined in the response to the public question. If negotiation is unsuccessful, the next stage involves serving Notice (as per arrangements set out within the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009).

The landowner had also seemingly obstructed the top of the footpath leading to the beach, Kingswear Footpath 8. The Public Rights of Way area warden and DCC legal team are seeking removal through the appropriate processes and will serve notice if this is not done (as an enforcement matter under the Highways Act 1980).

Beacon Road, at the top of the footpath, was subject to court orders regarding destabilisation works by the respective landowner (not the same owner as Lighthouse Beach). Some of the physical restrictions were starting to ease as work is carried out and Devon County Council engineers will assess the situation when the landowner stabilisation work is complete to see whether pedestrian rights can be reinstated along the road, which could provide an alternative, more pleasant route for the South West Coast Path

and England Coast Path – the official route being along Beacon Lane. Beacon Lane did have scaffolding along it but this had now been removed.

Tino Savvas had, by chance, spoken to the landowner when visiting Kingswear in association with the SWCP and felt he might be open to discussions. Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager, confirmed that this option had been offered.

The Devon County Council legal processes would take time and it was agreed this was not a matter the DCAF could get involved with. Richard Walton was asked to consider whether there was a potential go-between who could help with discussions. Richard Walton said accessing the beach and removing the obstruction were important priorities and actions were being taken, with potential to recover costs.

Action: Richard Walton

4.7 Forestry England new woodland creation

The response from Forestry England was noted.

Although not part of Forestry England's Woodland Creation plans, it was noted that additional grants of £3,700 per hectare were available under the Forestry Commission's England Woodland Creation Offer grant where public access was offered. The FC would be asked where information about such access is made publicly available.

Action: Forum Officer

5. Meetings and events attended by members

5.1 South West Heritage Centre

Post the September meeting, a group of DCAF members had enjoyed an interesting tour round the South West Heritage Centre looking at records which inform the Definitive Map review process and work carried out in the conservation studio.

5.2 Devon Countryside Access Forum working group

A working group had been held in November to draft replies to the Devon Local Transport Plan 4, the Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the Boniface Trail options. Responses had been circulated and submitted and were on the agenda for approval.

5.3 Ludwell Valley Park

Gordon Guest explained that following earlier visits by the DCAF some years

ago, he had visited Ludwell Valley Park, at the invitation of Devon Wildlife Trust, to look at some improvement work. He had been accompanied by some other disabled ramblers'. He had been disappointed that the improvements meant the new accessible gates would be padlocked in the summer, whilst livestock was grazing, and left open in the winter. Design of the new kissing gates, adjacent to the field gates, improved access but were insufficiently wide for mobility scooter access. In Riverside Valley Park, airlock gates allowed use by mobility scooters but did not risk cattle escaping and had an associated kissing gate, gate and cattle grid. The new gates were at the top of the Ludwell Valley Park site allowing extensive views over the city. Unfortunately, advice was sought at the end of the project and changing the gates now would inevitably incur major works. He and the other disabled ramblers had felt unable to give full endorsement of the project to the grant funders. Discussions had taken place around alternatives and amendments to other gates, such as at Pynes Hill, should additional funding become available.

Dean Holland, Devon Wildlife Trust, explained that the airlock gates and associated gates at Riverside had cost many thousands of pounds and had been possible through landfill credits. Ludwell Valley Park had smaller funding pots and was a challenging and complex site to manage due to the large number of principal and minor entrances and steepness of the site.

More access had been provided than previously thanks to the generosity of a funder who focusses on accessibility but, in the future, the DWT is keen to have airlock gates. Different groups of the public provided comments and advice, many conflicting. For example, the new field gates can encourage more dogs off lead and not under control.

Cattle grazing was an essential part of management of the Park and the DWT had to ensure the risk of escape was carefully managed. A new Valley Parks officer would be in post shortly as Chris Moulton had moved to a different post within the DWT.

It was suggested a meeting with the new officer would be useful and Dean Holland said DCAF advice would be useful before the next phase of improvements, subject to funding bids that had been submitted.

Gordon Guest confirmed that cattle were an important part of the experience. Disabled ramblers would not necessarily be requesting mobility scooter access to all of it. Improvements at Pynes Hill would provide a solution.

Dean Holland said there was a supportive grazier and not many farmers would take on that area of land as it was well-used by the public and dogs. Although airlock gates were good, sometimes people propped these open or caused other maintenance problems.

It was agreed that the useful dialogue on access matters between the DWT and the DCAF should continue.

Dean Holland confirmed the building at Northbrook Park had been demolished and the site had become more accessible.

5.4 Restoring Stover Country Park launch event

The Chair had attended a big opening event to celebrate completion of phase 1 works at Stover Country Park. (Funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, National Highways, Devon County Council, Devon Remembers, Teignbridge District Council, Bovey Tracey Town Council, Kingsteignton Town Council, and Friends of Stover Park). These included the restored gatehouse, new paths, a roundhouse for events, a new workshop building, improved visitor centre and lake desilting.

Gordon Guest commended the new disabled toilet facilities. He had taken a group of Disabled Ramblers' for a mobility scooter walk, some of whom were nervous and would not have gone on their own despite it being an easy, level walk. Accessibility is very good but there is a challenge to increase awareness of this.

6. North Devon Coast National Landscape Management Plan workshop

The Chair had attended a workshop at the North Devon Coast National Landscape. The NL was holding many workshops and consultations. The main focus was transport and how to get people to, from and around the National Landscape. Other concerns were funding, getting information across to visitors and the spectrum of disability requirements. It was agreed public transport was an issue for disabled users and other groups, such as cyclists.

It was noted the 2023 Outdoor Access Guide covered a range of disabilities and their requirements.

7. Correspondence log

The email from Philip Hackett, British Horse Society, about inspection and maintenance of promoted routes was noted. The Chair suggested a public rights of way warden gives a presentation at the next meeting on reporting systems and inspections. The current reporting system does not say when the problem will be fixed, or possibly what the problem is.

Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager said reports could now be entered against a category but it was predominantly a customer reporting system rather than a specific fault management system.

Gordon Guest noted the consultation on options for the Exmouth Beach Management Plan, commending the use of matting which made beaches much more accessible.

With reference to item 12, Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager, said that the public rights of way team continued to raise concerns about

the impact of the Lower Brenton landfill site proposals on the public rights of way network.

8. Public questions

There were no public questions.

9. Cycling opportunities and issues on sections of the South West Coast Path

Lorna Sherriff, South West Coast Path National Trail Officer and DCAF member, gave a presentation about cyclists and the SWCP. The majority of the SWCP is classified as footpath and includes 30,000 steps, often narrow and close to the cliff edge. Seventy miles of the coast path approximately are bridleway or multi-use path, including fifteen miles of the Tarka Trail and areas around Penzance and Torbay/Plymouth.

Complaints were increasing about cyclists on the SWCP. Gates to slow speeding cyclists would have implications for other users. (Legally, the electric bike motor must not be able to propel the bike when it is travelling at more than 15.5 miles per hour).

The National Trust had initially installed some gates on a multi-use path in North Cornwall but had since removed them. Cyclists likewise complain about other users and dogs.

Once improvements are made to allow greater accessibility for mobility scooters and wheelchairs, for example at Bolberry in South Hams, this provides additional opportunities for cyclists. Cyclists are now using the section from Plymouth to Wembury and Noss Mayo and there were videos on Youtube.

The South West Coast Path Association is backing up its messages with information and a working group had been set with voluntary path representatives, the Ramblers', Lorna and the Director.

The local access forums in the SW had been contacted for their views. Exmoor did not have an issue; a response was awaited from Cornwall LAF and Dorset LAF wished to see multi-use maintained without barriers, with signing to alternative routes for cyclists.

Signage discs are being put up which state no cycling.

A trial area is being set up to see what can be done to alleviate the problems through discussions with users. The trial would be taking place on National Trust land near Godrevy, which featured in the Spring 2024 National Trust magazine.

Cycle shops and cycle hire places are being contacted to make sure the information they supply is correct. E-bikes increase the issues and opportunities for cycling on the SWCP.

The SWCP had linked in with Great Western Railway to develop 'train to trail' and 'cycle to trail' opportunities.

A discussion took place. It was agreed the trial was interesting and might reveal whether cyclists were unaware that cycling was not permitted or just did not care.

Although cycles had to be sold with a bell, there was no legal requirement to have a bell. Many cyclists did not use a bell or cycled several abreast. Concern was expressed at the comment that one member would not walk with young children on the Tarka Trail for that reason.

It was noted that e-bikes could be modified and could now include child carriers, making it increasingly likely that cyclists might use additional routes. The surface of any section would impact on speed too.

In law there was a duty of care and the revised Highway Code (2023) included a hierarchy of vulnerable users, of which walkers were top.

Lorna confirmed there had been about fifty complaints last year but confirmed it was not clear whether they were repeat offenders, local residents or people coming on holiday.

Information was required on where bikes were allowed as it is only a small percentage who did not respect the law and other users. On bridleways near Hartland there was not an issue. The challenge was how to install respect.

A suggestion was made that there should be green tick signs where cyclists were welcome, or some method of colour coding.

Lorna had showed Strava Data and it was suggested that Strava should be contacted to pull the data where cycling is not permitted as it otherwise gave the impression that these were cycle routes. It was also suggested that the cyclist on the Youtube video should be reported to the Police for trespass or, possibly, endangering other people. The legislation that can be used is outmoded.

Landowners had the right to give permissive access to cyclists.

It was noted that improving paths and taking out gates increased usage and potential issues. Part of the issue was education as there was no-one to police speeds.

The usage of multi-use paths, type and frequency of user had changed. Sustrans had started to move away from shared-use paths.

Dean Holland said the DWT had put soft messaging signs in at Northbrook Park, but cyclists still used the gravel paths in addition to the tarmac through route intended for them.

Lorna Sherriff made a note of suggestions put forward.

10. South Hams Way

Alan Mighall, Chair of the South Hams Ramblers, and Debbie Board, Walks Coordinator for the group, gave a presentation on the proposed South Hams Way, a

100 mile circular trail around the South Hams council boundary. The aim is to showcase the beauty and diversity of the South Hams.

Starting notionally at Totnes, with good transport links, the route could be accessed at any point and done in either direction. It would cover the Dart River Valley, southern edge of Dartmoor, Erme River Valley and countryside to Noss Mayo, and the South West Coast Path to Dartmouth.

It would incorporate the following existing trails: Dartmoor Way; Abbots Way; Two Moors Way; Erme-Plym Trail; South West Coast Path; and Dart Valley Trail. The route would follow established footpaths with some short stretches on quiet lanes.

The idea came about as other Ramblers' groups had established trails, such as the Franklyn Trail (Totnes Ramblers) and John Musgrove Trail (South Devon Ramblers).

Landowners had been informed as a matter of courtesy.

The hope is the trail would become a destination in its own right. The route had been designed to take in major settlements so walkers can find accommodation or use local services.

So far, volunteers had walked the route and produced reports which are being assessed and pulled together in a narrative document. A website is being constructed. Over sixty connected/affected organisations had been contacted for permission, support or funding. These included Dartmoor National Park, South Hams District Council, Flete Estate, Dartington Estate, Public Rights of Way DCC, Devon Countryside Access Forum, Visit Totnes and Parish Councils. A full list of organisations contacted was provided. The DNPA, South Hams DC, Ramblers (Devon Area and Head Office) were all supportive, along with Visit Totnes and the Long Distance Walking Association. 70% of parish councils had now responded and were positive. The Totnes Ramblers' Chair who created the Dartmoor Way had offered his expertise.

Signage and media are the main requirements for funding. A bid had been made to the Ramblers' Path Accessibility Fund. Ramblers-Webs had agreed to fund the website, Visit Totnes had offered to pay for promotional material and the Long Distance Walkers' Association had offered financial support. A bank account is being opened shortly. If necessary, a crowdfunding page would be set up, promoted by South Hams District Council.

Some accessible routes had been identified, such as Dartington to Staverton and Shipley Bridge to Avon Dam, and the intention is to make the trail as accessible as possible. The website would include details of public transport and car parks with easy access to the trail. A decision had not been made about whether to include information about taxi services where access is difficult. The South West Coast Path Association does this.

The trail website would point walkers to other points of historical interest, such as Buckfast Abbey, as well as cafes, pubs, restaurants and toilets. In due course, accommodation information would be provided. Where the trail uses or crosses other named trails, links would be provided to online information about those trails.

Parts of the route would be incorporated into the normal walks programme so the condition of the path can be checked, with Ramblers' working parties helping to keep the route passable. The public could make comments on the condition of the route via the website, the Dartmoor National Park Authority or Devon County Council's Public Rights of Way interactive map.

The dedicated website would include downloadable, amendable documents describing the trail, links to points of interest, a bus route map and GPX files. There would also be a promotional A4 tri-fold leaflet, similar to that for the John Musgrave Trail.

Discussions are ongoing regarding an appropriate waymarker. A round blue background with a yellow arrow, perhaps with a boot print, are being considered. An outline of the South Hams had been disregarded.

Organisations who had not yet responded are being chased up with a target date of end of January, with a view to finalising the exact route and compilation of the website manual and documents by the end of February. Regular updates/newsletters were being issued, with the next in February. South Hams Ramblers would be walking and checking the definitive route, with a target date of the end of April, with launch of the website at the end of May. Press and media will be targeted prior to launch in the summer.

It is hoped to have a launch day with simultaneous walks commencing from different locations, led by South Hams Ramblers walk leaders. Invitations would be sent to dignitaries and celebrities, for example representatives of walking holiday companies, Councillors, CEO Ramblers, Clare Balding (Radio 4 'Ramblings') and others.

A discussion took place and the following points were raised.

In relation to the estuaries, it was confirmed that it would be an all-year round route. Taxi services might be needed for the Erme Estuary. The ferry on the River Dart operated all year round.

The longest stretch of on-road route would be between Dartington and Buckfastleigh (1.5 miles).

It was suggested that other colours for the waymarker should be explored to avoid any confusion with footpath or bridleway waymarkers.

The Dartmoor Walking Festival includes some accessible walks but no accessible accommodation. A request was made for the website to include accessible accommodation and for the South Hams Ramblers' to explore whether any barriers could be removed in certain areas to improve accessibility.

It was confirmed that where footpath routes are permissive, alternative routes would be explored if landowners were not amenable to the promoted route.

11. Current consultations

11.1 The Exeter Plan 2021-2041: Publication Plan (Regulation 19), Exeter City Council

The summary for DCAF members included aspects of the Exeter Plan within its statutory remit. Comments at this stage were confined to conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, legal requirements and tests of 'soundness' and whether it had been developed in accordance with the 'duty to cooperate.'

Whilst supportive of healthy eating as part of overall health and well-being, this was not within the Forum's remit. Similarly, Councillor Chesterton confirmed that national guidance for local plans determined who should be consulted and the process.

The need for additional open space in proportion to the scale of development was noted (15.30). Improving existing provision was regarded as important, although section 106 monies could sometimes be less easy to pull down than for new open space. The condition of open space was important in terms of future maintenance.

The reference to Clyst Valley Park (10.10) referred to the valley park having the potential to link to the wider Clyst Valley Regional Park. It was agreed that this should be amended to 'should' link to the CVRP.

A draft response would be circulated.

Action: Forum Officer

12. Green Space Position Statement

The position statement was approved.

13. National Landscapes Position Statement

The position statement was approved.

14. Minutes of the Public Rights of Way Committee held on 14 November 2024

Minutes of the Public Rights of Way Committee meeting held on 14 November were noted.

15. Public rights of way update

Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager, gave an update.

- *Recruitment*
A new Senior Officer for the warden team (south) had been appointed, commencing 1 April.

- *Framework agreement for maintenance*
The procurement process was close to completion and there would be a Cabinet report on 14 April. A good number of existing public rights of way contractors had bid, plus some new contractors.
- *King Charles III England Coast Path*
Works at Mothecombe were almost complete. Additional work had been agreed with the estate to improve and upgrade the existing seawall alongside the new work to create the high tide route (extending the wall and providing steps).

A contractor was due to start work on the cross-field route at Shady Lane, Stoke Fleming, in February. A Natural England grant was in place.

At Blackpool Sands, work had been constrained by the complexities relating to the impact of the fallen tree and associated ground stability, resulting in a lengthy temporary closure and short diversion involving steps and road verge. A level bridging structure is planned to be put in during the next financial year.

- *Meldon Viaduct*
Decking replacement works at Meldon Viaduct on the Granite Way had been completed, despite storm damage to materials on site in December. Feedback had been positive.

Tim Spray mentioned that the Devon Ramblers' would like to progress next steps on some joint work with DCC through the Parish Paths Partnership Officer and had made initial contact. Richard Walton would follow this up.

Action: Richard Walton

16. To note and approve responses to consultations and submissions. To note any feedback.

16.1 Forestry England. New woodland at East Worth near Northlew.

The response was approved.

Forestry England had sent a consultation report which identified some changes in accord with advice from the DCAF. These include a small area of hardstanding for a couple of cars and disability access provision. Where suggestions had not been taken up, the rationale was explained.

16.2 New community woodland at Ide.

The response was approved.

The landscape architect associated with the scheme had sent a useful response to all the matters raised by the DCAF.

- *Access to the site*

The Parish Council had proposed a stile rather than a gate due to the field being four foot above the road at that point, meaning creating an accessible entrance would not be possible. The accessible entrance will be nearer the village, where the kissing gate currently is. This will be modified to create a 1.5m wide, two way self-closing gate with “easy latch” latches and trombone handles.

- *Paths*

The path is subject to funding and construction is limited by the gradient of the slope on which woodland is proposed. A compacted stone path of minimum 1200mm width is suggested but, if forced to compromise for reasons of cost, it is suggested the project goes for a shorter, high quality level accessible path.

- *Maintenance*

It is intended that grass paths and open spaces are mown. The introduction of species rich grassland seed mixes to reduce soil fertility will be suggested to the client.

Access for maintenance will be possible through Weir Meadow.

It is intended to use compacted stone along footpaths, subject to funding, with ditches alongside to prevent waterlogging and pooling.

The design of the woodland includes 4m rides for maintenance access and gates will be installed in any fenced areas of woodland.

- *Additional matters*

These matters will be considered at the next stage.

- *Dogs*

It is likely to be a popular dog walking area. Given the small scale, it will probably not be feasible to have dog free areas. Consideration will be given to adding words about responsible dog ownership to any information and signage. Extra dog bins were installed two years ago, emptied by Teignbridge District Council and further bins on the highway are unlikely. Nor is the Parish Council in a position to run a parallel dog bin emptying service.

Woodland and shrub species have been chosen with sensory enhancement in mind and visual diversity throughout the year.

Given the small scale of the site and rural location, it may seem out of place to include lighting and there is no supporting infrastructure. The site would be open from dawn to dusk, bearing in mind public liability, proper use of the site and safety.

16.3 North Devon Coast National Landscape Management Plan survey

The response was approved.

16.4 Local Transport Plan v.4 draft, Devon County Council.

The response was approved.

16.5 Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, Devon County Council.

The response was approved.

16.6 Boniface Trail options, Devon County Council.

The response was approved.

**16.7 Sidford to Sidbury new cycle and pedestrian multi-use path
DCC/4404/2024**

The response was approved.

17. Devon Countryside Access Forum appointments 2025-2028

Tim Felton, Gordon Guest, Tino Savvas and Sarah Slade had been reappointed for a further three-year term. Rob Sewell, Bryan Smith and Tim Spray had not sought reappointment and Sarah Slade, Chair, expressed the Forum's appreciation and gratitude for the experience and contribution they had brought to the Forum's work.

The Forum Officer confirmed the Selection Panel had made three new appointments and names would be released once all had accepted.

18. Training Day 2025

After discussion, it was agreed to see whether a Training Day to discuss access improvements at Killerton and in the Clyst Valley Regional Park area could be arranged. A visit to the Grand Western Canal might be possible after one of the public meetings.

Action: Forum Officer

19. Any other business

19.1 Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS), Broadclyst

The application for Clyst Meadows SANGS, Broadclyst, had been approved with conditions on 19 December. This included a cycle route heading towards Exeter and associated open space and footpaths.

19.2 Heaths to Sea

The Chair had attended a couple of meetings of the Heaths to Sea Landscape Recovery Project. One of the themes was access. Timescales were tight to submit the necessary information to Defra. The Lower Otter project, part of this overall vision, would be worth the DCAF revisiting. Discussions had taken place over water/flooding and paths.

Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager, said that contractors had completed work just north of Clamour Bridge to reinstate Otterton Footpath 1 which had been severely eroded by river flooding events. Despite a notable flood subsequently, works had held up reasonably well.

19.3 Devon Wildlife Trust bid

Dean Holland said the DWT had submitted a bid, alongside partners, to the National Heritage Lottery Fund 'Nature Friendly Towns & Cities' initiative.

19.4 Disabled notices

Gordon Guest asked whether it was possible to put up notices stating 'no entry to mobility scooters.' Richard Walton said mobility scooters were a normal accompaniment so this would be misleading. A sign stating 'unsuitable for mobility scooters' might be acceptable.

19.5 Works to footway

Andrew Baker mentioned a matter where a footway alongside the A396 was insufficiently wide for mobility scooters. The parish council had proposed to fill in the adjacent ditch with hardcore to achieve the preferable width and would arrange the work. The benefit of this had gained support from some contacts within DCC, and Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager had passed the details on to the relevant teams, but there was currently stalemate, possibly because of constraints relating to highway authority permissions with a requirement that works had to meet specific highway standards. Site constraints are such that improvements could potentially be carried out, but to a different standard than usually prescribed for a pavement. Councillors present advised writing to Meg Booth, Director of Climate Change, Environment & Transport, copied to Councillor Stuart Hughes, Cabinet Member for Highway Management.

20. Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be on Monday, 28 April, venue to be confirmed but hopefully at Stover Country Park.