

## **Cycling in Sidmouth - report for 2021 VGS AGM**

### **From Devon to Sidmouth**

Sustrans has had the odd Zoom meeting for the SouthWest, but the networking that was valuable at face to face meetings has of course not been possible.

For the enthusiastic cycle person a most interesting route is now open between Bovey and Mortonhampstead, mainly on the old rail line - this was expensive, which goes to show that money is still available from DCC and other sources. The section between Bovey and Lustleigh has been opened for many years, but the (longer) extension to Mortonhampstead required new bridges, etc. The stretch south from Bovey to Newton Abbot has been opened for about 4 years, its very flat, pretty and a lovely teashop half-way between Bovey and Newton A.

Why is Sidmouth so neglected? For many years my view has been that we do not have a critical mass of enthusiastic and committed persons in our area, who are willing to pursue issues over long periods of time.

### **Sidford to Sidbury**

Sustrans is not interested in this route, any longer

Its a dead end route in the sense that v. few ordinary cyclists (as opposed to professionals) can cycle north, west or east of Sidbury - because of the long steep hills.

I attended the open meetings arranged by DCC in 2014 in Sidbury and Sidford. DCC at considerable cost had arranged for 3 so called consultants to DCC to be at the meetings for most of the days. They knew nothing much about the topography of the area and their plans suggested the northern part of the route emerge at a v. dangerous junction in Sidbury. Subsequently DCC took no notice of suggestions made by Sustrans and a few of us who know the area well.

The route and its construction has been bound up for years with the controversial plans to develop a business park in Sidford.

On a personal level, I quite often cycle to Sidbury via the Byes and the Byes road that enters Sidbury from the east. And I would use a dedicated cycle route, but why spend a great deal of money for the few who would use it, when the money could be spent elsewhere on routes that make connection with the NCN?

**Michael Britain - 9 December 2021**