



Sidmouth Cycling Campaign

Annual Report 2023/24

Introduction

The Sidmouth Cycling Campaign was formed 2 years ago, building on the work of the Sidmouth Cycling Action Group, which had been a VGS project since 2008.

During the past year we have continued to engage with decision makers, raising awareness of opportunities for encouraging cycling in the Sid Valley, as summarised below.

Sidbury to Sidford Path

We've been actively engaged with Devon County Council (DCC) about their plans to create an offroad path from Sidbury to Sidford.

At the beginning of the year we responded to the pre-planning consultation on DCC proposals for a path on the west side of the main road from Sidford to Hillside in Sidbury. This route has some problems including a potentially dangerous, steep exit from Hillside onto the main road. We suggested an alternative flatter route on the east side of the main road that would potentially be more attractive to users.

However, in spite of various objections, DCC persisted and have submitted a planning application for the route they had consulted on. This has received objections from ourselves, a number of residents of Hillside, the Devon Countryside Access Forum, 2 EDDC Councillors and Sidmouth Town Council.

We've now suggested some improvements to the DCC proposals that we feel will overcome many of the objections. Councillor Stuart Hughes is considering these.

Sidmouth Town Council

We've had useful discussions with the Town Council. We attended a committee meeting of the Environment Committee to give an update on our work. At their request we've provided some suggested cycle rides for visitors, that are now available on-line: <https://www.visitdevon.co.uk/sidmouth/things-to-do/activities/cycling-cycle-routes/>

Cycle Parking

At our request, Lidl have installed stands outside their store for cycle parking, that are well used.

We've also commented on various planning applications relating to cycle parking. For instance, we objected to the proposed reduction in parking outside the swimming pool, which has now been refused.



Devon Countywide LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan)

This plan is being produced by Devon County Council and identifies the 10 most important rural routes across the county for improvement. This is in addition to previous LCWIP that have already been adopted or are in development for more urban areas, such as Exeter and Cranbrook.

The draft plan is currently out for consultation and we've written a piece for the Sidmouth Herald urging people to contribute.

The plan includes the path from Sidbury to Sidford and the Otter Trail. We're currently drafting a formal reply from the Cycling Campaign.

Otter Trail

The Otter Trail Group is dedicated to the creation of an off-road cycle route following the route of the disused railway line from the Bowd through Ottery St Mary to Feniton. We've met with the group to discuss joint interests and in particular improvements to the permissive bridleway through Harpford Woods.

Funding

There was an announcement in the recent Budget of an extra £100m funding for Active Travel. When there is some clarity on how this will be awarded, we'll arrange to meet our MP, Richard Foord to discuss funding for local schemes. We met Richard a number of times before he was elected as our MP, as he is very supportive of active travel.

Other Activities

We have a Facebook group with regular posts.

We arranged for a speaker from Exeter Uni to talk about Sports Nutrition at a well-attended meeting at the Science Festival.

We designed and produced a flag for the Flag Festival in the High Street.

Looking forward

We plan to continue our current activities, pushing for improvements to encourage cycling in the Sid Valley.

Roy Russell

Secretary, Sidmouth Cycling Campaign