

8 December 2005

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM RESPONSE TO MRS HULLS

Proposed Thorndon Cross to Halwill Junction Bridleway

As requested I am writing to provide a response to the public questions which would have been raised at the meeting last Friday, 25 November. We share your disappointment that the meeting did not take place as planned.

- *Is the Forum aware that there would be no off-road link of this linear route to Dartmoor without using 3km of parish roads and a major road crossing of the A386 at SX 55059285, as well as negotiating the road-bridge over the A30 dual carriageway?*

The Forum is aware that some of the route to the south is on minor roads and involves other crossings. The Forum used the word 'potential' and, as with many rights of way improvements, achieving the best solution may be a long process. If the Public Rights of Way Committee accepts the bridleway as a strategic route, the Forum would expect further improvements to be made over time to maximise the potential benefits.

- *Is not the A386 a more major route, with a larger volume of heavy traffic to and from the A30 junction, Tavistock and Plymouth, than the A3079 at Thorndon Cross? Surely, safe crossing of the A386 is also "paramount" to this proposal, yet there has been no reference to it.*

A crossing of the A386 is not part of the proposals being considered at the moment but the above comments would also apply.

- *Is the Forum aware that there is no off-road link to the Forest land from Halwill Junction?*

Yes, the Forum is aware of this. If Phase 2 was approved by the Public Rights of Way Committee, connecting this link to the Forestry would be a logical, and vital, part of further improvements.

- *Is the Forum unaware of the 8 bridlepaths to the south-east of Thorndon Cross which would still need to cross over the A3079 in order to link into the proposed linear route and also the very dangerous crossroads (across the A3079) at Venn Down Gates and Castle Cross?*

Or - would horse-riders from the south-eastern bridlepaths near Bratton Clovelly and Germansweek be expected to ride up to Thorndon Cross in order to travel down the proposed linear route to Halwill?

Or - is this proposal mainly for the benefit of a few riders who live near Thorndon Cross?

The proposal is for the benefit of walkers, cyclists and riders both residents and tourists. As part of any scheme the Forum would expect Devon County Council Officers to assess the current rights of way network in the area and explore how maximum benefit could be achieved. It would not necessarily be cost-effective to rationalise the whole network and provide safe crossings at all points. However, any scheme should aim to enhance current access, improve opportunities for circular routes and explore where safe (or safer) crossings could best be provided. Any package of measures has to be considered against costs, benefits and the ease of achieving the desired result.

- *Is the Forum also unaware that further links to the proposed linear route across parcels of privately owned land will be required in order to connect existing bridlepaths into this proposed linear route. Will these other land-owners/users be consulted?*

Consultation on any changes to the network would, of course, take place.

As you know the Public Rights of Way Committee will be meeting on 11 January, following receipt of a full report, and will be making its recommendations.