



MINUTES

Committee: Parish Council
Date: Thursday, 01 September 2022
Time: 7:00pm
Venue: Peter Gunning room, Parish Hall

Present

Cllr Vivienne Hodges (Chair)
Cllr Malcolm Chudley
Cllr Gordy Keep
Cllr Mike Warner
Cllr Mike Jeffery
Cllr Farrand-Rogers
Cllr Richard Short
Cllr Catherine Fileman-Wright
Cllr Jan Evans

Also Present

Samantha Parkin (Clerk)
County Councillor Jerry Brook
Jane Davies Evans (Landowner/Local families' representative)
30 members of the public

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and explained the format the meeting would take.

The 30 members of the public were landowners and families affected by the Greenway project; they attended to inform the council of their views and how they had been affected by the project thus far. One member of the public appreciated the opportunity the council had created for the public to be heard.

137/2022 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mogeni, Simpson and Dodd.

138/2022 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No declarations of interest or requests for dispensation were received.

139/2022 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Jeffery, seconded by Cllr Chudley and **resolved to accept and sign** the minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2022 as a correct record.

140/2022 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

County Councillor Brooks report focussed on the current inflationary situation. Devon County Council is looking at a possible £30 million overspend by March 2023. Contributory factors: the possible civil servant pay deal will add £10 million to running costs; inflation was set at 2% when the budget was set, in reality it has increased to 10% resulting in £10 million; inflation on top of a number of the assets that DCC has purchased for everyday running for the services it provides. As a net result, DCC has frozen the locality budget and Cllr Brook does not see it coming back. Any residue that was in county councillors accounts will not be made available for community projects, it is in the region of £4-500,000.

Children and young people services and adult services are still dealing with the same battles with central Government. Devon school children have lived on a much lower budget per head than many other children. Devon's OFSTED report is making slow progress for children and young people services; progress is being made but it is hindered by not being able to find enough people to maintain the service. There is a shortage of social workers and children coming into care continue to have a multiplicity of issues requiring a broad service remit.

Cllr Brook welcomed the repairs to road services and noted the Highways Officer is working hard to address the issues but funding is a big issue.

Overall the county council is functioning but Cllr Brook cannot stress enough that the financial implications are taking a strain and for the first time in a long time DCC will not come to the end of the financial year within budget.

Cllr Hodges asked Cllr Brook if it was likely that DCC will have any spare funds to put into the Greenway project. Cllr Brook noted that there is a list of cycleway projects and the Green way project is barely on the list.

141/2022 GREENWAY PROJECT REPORT

The Chairman read the report written by a member of the disbanded Greenway steering group who was unable to attend the meeting. The report is attached at appendix 1 on page 49.

142/2022 LANDOWNERS REPORT

Jane Evans is a construction Lawyer working pro bono on behalf of the families affected by the Greenway Project. The council invited her to represent the affected families.

Ms Evans pointed out that it is important to remember that the 'landowners' are actually families that will be impacted by the Greenway project.

Ms Evans responded to Cllr Brooks comment that the Greenway project is not a priority and her understanding from freedom of information requests is that the project is not even on the county council's aspirational lists. Cllr Brook confirmed this. Ms Evans also commented on the aforementioned report that the questionnaire mentioned was not widely publicised and many responses were derived from cycling groups who were not local.

Ms Evans questioned why her clients should have to pay for legal advice from planning lawyers when the Greenway steering group received public money to carry out the feasibility study.

Ms Evans gave a presentation, the slides can be found on the council's website at [Microsoft PowerPoint - JDE slides for Moreton PC \(1 Sep 2022\) \(wordpress.com\)](#)

The families requested that the Parish Council reconsider their position on the Greenway Project. Ms Evans asked the council to consider the significant detriment the project will have on the environment, the residents, community assets, local businesses and the social cohesion. She noted the project has caused an enormous amount of upset in the community. The families understand why the council supported the project in principle but request that the support is withdrawn and formally record objection to an off road trail. The families also requested that the council support improvements to the existing National Cycle Network (NCN) 28.

Ms Evan's report focussed on:

- Improving NCN 28; the families have cycled the route and identified possible improvements such as additional passing places and improving the road surface
- Questioning why Sustrans didn't consider improvements to NCN 28
- Freedom of Information requests to District and County councils
- Communication to the Greenway steering group
- Concerns over Greenway steering group; the Facebook page is still live, the website is still live and the CrowdFunder is still live requesting donations
- Diminution in value to families property due to public rights of way

143/2022 CLIMATE CHANGE & ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

The working groups report had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found in the meeting papers on the council's website.

Cllr Fileman-Wright explained that the working group had looked at the feasibility study and the environmental impact assessment that had been done as part of the feasibility study. She explained that the environmental impact assessment is a desktop review and is not sufficient for planning applications or to form any detailed design work should the scheme go forward. The environmental impact assessment does not include any consideration of NCN 28 because that wasn't within the scope of the feasibility study.

Cllr Fileman-Wright concluded that from an environmental perspective, in principle, if the right route can be found, it is desirable to have a safe, quiet route that encourages more sustainable transport between Moretonhampstead and Chagford. This does not mean an off-road route.

The Chairman invited County Councillor Brook to comment. Cllr Brook noted that Sustrans remit is to find cycle routes. Cllr Brook thinks it is right that a feasibility study was done at the request of the Greenway steering group. Cllr Brook noted it is a feasibility study which he thinks should be caveated because it did not look at NCN 28. The study looked at off-road routes because that was Sustrans remit for the feasibility study. Cllr Brook noted that the environmental impact of any of the routes, other than NCN 28, will be quite excessive. Cllr Brook challenged anybody to consider a route with no steep hills! Cllr Brook stated that it will be very difficult to find a route like the Wray Valley Trail because of the topography of the ground between Moretonhampstead and Chagford. He concluded that it is a question for everyone to find a sensible solution such as improving NCN 28 to make it safe.

144/2022 CYCLEWAY BETWEEN MORETONHAMPSTEAD AND CHAGFORD

The Clerks report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Farrand-Rogers thought it would be helpful to hear feedback from the members of the public.

It was proposed by Cllr Farrand-Rogers, seconded by Cllr Warner and **resolved** to suspend standing orders.

Members of the public were given the opportunity to comment, comments included:

- Being in favour of improvements to NCN 28

- Sustrans study looked for a route suitable for an 8 year old to cycle; the routes crossed roads therefore routes are unsafe
- Steep hills should be embraced as they are an integral part of the charm of Dartmoor
- Lack of communication from Sustrans
- One route would dig up a wildlife sanctuary and replace with concrete and tarmac
- It would take years to offset environmental impact should the project go ahead
- Maintenance of routes would fall to landowners
- Wray Valley Trail follows disused railway line, suggested routes cut through farmland resulting in devastation to family businesses
- Lack of maintenance to NCN 28; hedges overgrown, potholes (Cllr Hodges reminded members of the public to report problems to DCC)
- Greenway project is not a green solution; we need to change people's mentality about roads – they are public spaces for all users, not just cars

It was proposed by Cllr Farrand-Rogers, seconded by Cllr Chudley and **resolved to reinstate** standing orders.

Cllr Hodges asked councillors to consider supporting the principle of an improved cycleway between Moretonhampstead and Chagford, subject to the identification of a satisfactory route.

It was proposed by Cllr Fileman-Wright to continue supporting the principle of an improved cycleway with NCN 28 as the preferred route. This was not seconded.

It was proposed by Cllr Short to continue supporting the principle of an improved cycleway between Moretonhampstead and Chagford subject to the identification of a reasonable route and consider further investigation and research of NCN 28 as the preferred route. This was not seconded.

It was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr Chudley to support NCN 28 as the preferred route from Moretonhampstead to Chagford.

It was proposed by Cllr Fileman-Wright and seconded by Cllr Short to amend the above motion to 'in principle, to support improving NCN 28 as the preferred route from Moretonhampstead to Chagford subject to detailed investigation. The amendment failed.

It was proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Chudley and **resolved to support** NCN 28 as the preferred route from Moretonhampstead to Chagford.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.19pm.

MPC Minutes 05.07.2022 Attachment no.1 – Greenway steering group Report

TO MORETONHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

THE GREENWAY PROJECT

I would like to apologise to everyone that I am not able to be at the Parish Council meeting on 1 September, as I am away on holiday in North Wales until next week. If there are any follow-ups I shall certainly do my best to be there.

Meanwhile, as the Greenway Steering Group no longer exists, I am providing some personal comments here which I hope will be helpful.

The Greenway Project was launched after conversations between Sustrans and local volunteers recognising that the current section of Route 28 between Moreton and Chagford did not meet Sustrans' current standards for a designated cycle route; it was narrow, hilly and the road surface was in poor condition.

It was agreed that local volunteers (the Greenway Steering group) would work with Sustrans to look at how the route could be improved, in particular by creating a safe traffic free route.

A questionnaire launched at the end of 2020 – advertised via all the local magazines such as News in Moreton, as well as Facebook and in local shops - suggested that there was local support for a better cycle link than the existing route. The questionnaire was completed, either online or on paper, by nearly 1,000 people, ranging from those who didn't cycle at all, to occasional cyclists and "serious" cyclists, horse-riders and walkers. Over 96% supported the idea of a traffic-free route and 98% said they would use it. From the comments and contact details given, we are satisfied that the large majority of respondents lived or worked in this area.

To work out what was possible, a crowdfunding exercise raised money to pay for a "feasibility study" which considered a number of possible options, and was intended to demonstrate what the most feasible route would be. Sustrans was the obvious organisation to carry out this study on behalf of the group.

As part of that feasibility study process, Sustrans wrote to landowners about the suggested route, asking for their own suggestions too. As a result it became clear that there was significant opposition from some landowners to at least one of the routes which created an off road cycle way through local farm land.

The final version of the feasibility study which was published by Sustrans in June this year and which is currently open to comments, recognised this opposition. It suggests that there could be alternative or hybrid options, in particular improvement of the existing Sustrans route. There are significant changes in this final version from the earlier one.

Personally, I think there is still the potential for a route on the north side of the A382, whether on lanes or off-road, though to reach Chagford this would obviously involve a major road crossing.

The consultation process for the feasibility is on-going and comments can be made via the Greenway Project website, which will be passed to Devon County Council.

Having arranged for the publication of the feasibility study, the Greenway Steering Group (of which I was a member) has passed the managing of any future work to Sustrans and Devon County Council, who will make the final decision about whether to pursue it further, and if so about improvements to the route based on comments received. The Group no longer exists as such.

I don't claim that we did everything right earlier, but that ought to be water under the bridge now. I believe this is an ideal opportunity for the community to work together on a realistic option that would meet the original aims of the project, perhaps ourselves improving parts of route 28 and combining that with a less controversial traffic-free section using some suggestions from the Study. I understand that a working group has been set up to do this. And of course we should all submit comments to the published Study; you can download the Study, and place comments on the website:

<https://greenwayprojectcha.wixsite.com/website>