**BONIFACE TRAIL ASSOCIATION**

**Summary of Information for Newton St Cyres Parish Councill Grant Application 2020/21**

## Background and Current Update

Boniface Trail Association is currently a regular working group of interested parties, now a registered Charity Incorporated Organisation, which has the objects

*To promote, encourage, provide and maintain an all purpose, traffic free trail, for general use by walkers, cyclists and wheelchair and mobility scooter users, in whole or in part between the town of Crediton, the village of Newton St Cyres and the city of Exeter, in the County of Devon.*

The organisation's working group was formed in April 2015, and currently the group meets once every six weeks. The constitution follows the Charities Commission model format for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

## Progress to date

This organisation is expected to oversee a significant large scale, long term project, with the ultimate aim of securing an all purpose trail from Crediton to Exeter.The organisation has researched the feasibility for demand, benefits to the public and various route alternatives and carried out a large amount of consultation on line in 2016. This was met with a very high level of support for the project, which continues to grow.

The organisation currently enjoys a free meeting room in Club Crediton and communicates by email, and collect and examine results of the questionnaire, thereby reducing costs.

As mentioned below, the first intended Phase of the project starts within the Newton St Cyres Parish and this Parish will be the first to benefit. The completion of Phase 1 of the scheme (further details below) will bring a safe, motor traffic free path which will link up the village of Newton St Cyres to Smallbrook in one direction and Half Moon and then on to Newbridge in the other. The Association

is committed to seeing the whole project through to eventually link up to Crediton and Exeter, and see this as a feasible objective.

The route of the first Phase within the Parish is intended to follow closely alongside the A377 and diverting away in appropriate positions. The route intends to link up to the new primary school site. Illustrative plans are available on request.

The scheme has met with support from local landowners and from discussion with relevant land owners for Phase 1 of the project, a willingness in principle has been given to grant legal agreements for the building of the Trail and use, without financial consideration. The Organization's immediate objective is to endeavour to formalise appropriate legal agreements with landowners for the whole of Phase 1. Whilst progress was regrettably delayed a little by unexpected periods of absence from the Chairman due to medical reasons, the first main legal agreement, which affects a substantial amount of land in the first Phase, is, we are pleased to report, expected to complete very shortly. Once this legal agreement is completed the other agreements, which should be simpler in content, will be expected to follow, and it is expecting to complete all legal agreements for Phase 1 of the Scheme, by Spring 2020. This will provide legal title to enable to Association to construct and grant use of the path for this Phase.

The next objective following would be to seek formal planning permission and consultancy reports supplementary to a planning application. The Association has had preliminary meetings with Mid Devon District Council and has lodged a pre application document to Mid Devon DC in respect of Phase 1. Initial responses from Mid Devon have been very positive, subject to the request for the usual consultancy reports, ie drainage, ecological, highways junction safety audits, flooding noise and the like, and following completion of the Phase 1 legal agreements the Association will seek applications to fund the planning process for Phase 1. A copy of the Pre-Application document can be provided on request.

3 Trustees of the Association also had a meeting with, Simon Trafford, Planning Officer at Mid Devon District Council, and Ian Sorenson and Jamie Hulland from Devon County Council, at County Hall in July 2018, for preliminary discussions regarding the scheme. The meeting met with overall support for the project and

Jamie Hulland would consider allocating a future budget for a feasibility study, as part of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan infrastructure improvements, to investigate the possibility of moving the position of the A377 along part of the Phase 3 portion of the route (Newbridge to Cowley Bridge), would could possibly facilitate a full path along the roadside on that Phase. A further meeting at County Hall took place with the same Trustees in September 2019 where a Sustainable Transport Officer was appointed to offer assistance with the project. Further offers of professional assistance have also been given by Devon County Council since and we are expected to hold a further meeting at County Hall shortly, once further progress has been made with legal agreements.

An engineer has been appointed as consultant, agreed to work at reduced rate and has direct experience of SUSTRANS paths. Our appointed engineer could see no major issues in construction, although some additional bridges may be required (see below).

## Route and Phasing

The members consider that it would be appropriate to approach the scheme in the following phasing.

**Phase 1** – Smallbrook to Half Moon

**Phase 2** - Smallbrook to Wellparks Roundabout, Crediton (an alternative route away from the A377 to link up on the Exhibition Road side of Crediton to serve the new developments whitin Crediton, may also be considered. There is considered to be very few engineering difficulties in this section since the path is intended to largely utilities existing verges alongside the carriageway which would be publicly adopted.

**Phase 3** – Half Moon to Langford Bridge

**Phase 4** – Langford Bridge to Exeter. It was initially thought that an appropriate link point would be Cowley Bridge, but the members are encouraged to note the mew flood defence work being carried out beyond St Davids Station towards the direction of Cowley Bridge and there may be a possibility to construct a path section along the new flood relief channel. The organisation has obtained informal opinion from the Environment Agency that, whilst there is no promise to fund the

particular part, the path could link up to join alongside the new flood defense work. That would take away the need for potentially expensive bridge construction to navigate the Creedy/Exe and Railway line, and would allow a link up to the Exeter Quayside cycle routes.

**Rough sketch costing** - £40 per linear meter in accordance with SUSTRANS guidance for tarmac path upon hardcore. Wellparks Roundabout to just before Cowley Bridge, linking up to flood relief, say 11.5 km cost £460,000

5 upgraded watercourse bridges required £50,000.

Advance carriageway works (possibly excavation/barrier at Hookway junction, additional protection barrier at Downes railway bridge) £50,000

Fencing and signing and lighting £100,000.

This is estimated and final costs dependent upon any additional civil engineering activities required.

Excludes professional fees, consultancy reports etc.

## Key objectives 2020/21 Grant Year

To secure legal easements with Land owners in Phase 1 of the scheme, thereby facilitating the advantage to Grant Bodies of an established legal title to facilitate the scheme.

Secure recognition by MDDC and DCC of the scheme in any relevant strategic plans and endevour to secure the benefit of S106/CIL funding.

Instruct engineer to prepare drawings, specifications and notes for planning application for Phase 1

Establish requirements and conduct necessary consultancy reports for planning application for Phase 1

Launch planning application for Phase 1 with necessary reports and supporting documents.

Progress discussions regarding land owner agreements for Phase 2.

Progress discussions with DCC Highways relating to highway improvements to form potentially adoptable sections of the path within Phases 1 and 2.

## **Longer term Objectives**.

To secure Landowner permissions and advance planning permissions and consultancies in relation to Phases 2 and 3.

To seek approval of funding from larger scale grant providers and other funding avenues.

To continue to discuss with Mid Devon District Council, East Devon District Council (partly concerning Phase 3), and Devon County Council, to consult generally in relation to the whole project, in connection with planning applications, Highways requirements/enhancements, strategic plans, any available funding and support etc.

To commence construction (in order of numbered phases)

## **Funding Possibilities**

Small grants for start up work appreciated from Town Council and Parish Councils.

Section 106/CIL funding.

Landfil Tax Credits

REAL Devon Leader funding (possible withdrawn following EU referendum result)

Local fundraising/donations/crowd funding.

Volunteer labour

Business sponsorship

Lottery/Heritage

Sport England

Supermarket “bag tax” credits

A budget for the Charity's current financial year to 30 June 2019 is enclosed, further financial details can be provided on request.

**Key Benefits to Newton St Cyres Parish**

The completion of Phase 1 will provide a safe and accessible path for the full length of the Parish for all users, providing a safe and scenic route between the village of Newton St Cyres and the hamlets of Smallbrook and Half Moon (in respect of which safe routes do not presently exist).

It will provide an added amenity for parishioners.

It will be the start of a scheme to mitigate in part very well documented concerns regarding safety along the A377 for all users.

When Phases 2 and 3 are completed it will provide a like safe and accessible route to Crediton and Exeter.

Once Phase 2 is completed, it will provide a safe route for children to cycle to school from Newton St Cyres to Crediton.

The completion of Phases 2 and 3 will provide an additional sustainable commt

**PAUL TAYLOR**

**CHAIRMAN**

**22th NOVEMBER 2019**