

# Traffic & Transport Forum

25 October 2023, 6.30-8pm

Guildhall, Totnes & via Zoom

## Present:

Graham Bennett	GB	Totnes Ramblers (Chair)
Cllr L Auletta	LA	Totnes Town Council (Deputy Chair)
Cllr T Cooper	TC	Totnes Town Council
Cllr C Beavis	CB	Totnes Town Council
Cllr J Cummings	JC	Totnes Town Council
Cllr J Hodgson	JH	Totnes Town Council
Maiken Hutchings	MH	TTC Sustainability Officer (notes)
PW	PW	Town centre resident
NR	NR	Salcombe ZEST
JS	JS	Follaton resident
FP	FP	Plymouth Rd resident
CP	CP	Plymouth Rd resident
SG	SG	Bob the Bus
SC	SC	Inclusive Totnes
VC	VC	Kingsbridge Hill Area Residents Association
Cllr A Presswell (online)	AP	South Hams District Council
MC (online)	MC	Totnes Chamber of Commerce
SW (online)	SW	Salcombe ZEST

## Recommendations

1. The Green Travel Guide was presented to the Forum. They had supportive comments and suggestions and no objections to it proceeding through Committee. A briefing document for Cllrs will be created.

## Actions carried across

1. VC to investigate postmen/women safe route requirements (in relation to Plymouth Road)

## Actions

1. MH to share the Cllr Hodgson's correspondence with DCC on the Plymouth Road issues with the Forum notes. MH to add as agenda item for Steering Group to discuss.
2. ALL to feedback any thoughts, questions or ideas regarding an e-bike project in town
3. SC to share accessibility guidance document with MH for Green Travel Guide
4. MH to send Green Travel Guide to Forum notes and anyone with comments to email [greentravel@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:greentravel@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk) by 02 November 2023
5. LA and JH to work together on feeding into the South West Peninsula Group regarding infrastructure funding

## 1. Welcome & introductions

GB ran through some of the actions from the last Forum meeting in July.

- The Traffic, Transport & Pedestrian Policy has been formally adopted by Totnes Town Council (TTC)
- Hotspot map issues identified will feed into workstreams activity by the Steering Group
- Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)
  - MH had found some guidance from Devon County Council (DCC) on whether community groups/parish councils can purchase their own
  - The guidance can be downloaded here:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IsRxCHwDYRI0PILafie1NJpGI1XoO1Gq/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IsRxCHwDYRI0PILafie1NJpGI1XoO1Gq/view?usp=drive_link)
  - MH noted that it is possible, but you have to have DCC SCARF (Speed Compliance Action Review Forum) approval. The parish council/community group also has to cover all costs: Purchase, installation, maintenance and removal. Insurance for injury, accident or damage, public liability cover for at least 10million.
  - Cllr Hodgson said that signs cost about £2,500 per sign and that other local areas doing it, such as Dartington and Staverton. It is generally recommended that two portable signs are purchased.
- Parish Council engagement has been added to the agenda for the January Forum (which will also be the AGM)
- Agenda item and VC action on postal workers has been carried forward to future meeting

### **Plymouth Road – DCC correspondence**

JH gave an update from some correspondence she had with DCC regarding issues along Plymouth Road (discussed at previous Forum). Please see the appendix to view the correspondence.

GB mentioned that SG now has rep from Plymouth Rd residents (Follaton end).

- Plymouth Rd residents have set up Community Speed Watch, however, there are concerns that the rules around these (hi vis, standing somewhere very obvious) means the readings are not accurate as people slow down.

**ACTION 1:** MH to share the Cllr Hodgson's correspondence with DCC on the Plymouth Road issues with the Forum notes.

The group noted that it was an unsatisfactory response. SC noted that DCC do not mention the Equalities Duty which should be considered.

### **Morrisons car parking**

At a previous Steering Group meeting, an issue was raised around lack of parking at Morrisons after they introduced all day parking at a low cost.

AP gave a brief update on some investigating that she and another Steering Group member, RM, have been doing.

AP noted that RM has spoken to the Morrisons manager who says that 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the car park is available for all-day parking.

- AP has spoken with South Hams District Council (SHDC) on whether their car park takings are down. They have said they are not but their figures are only up until the end of September 2023. There is some uncertainty as to when the Morrisons scheme was introduced.

## **2. E-bike proposal**

MH presented a possible alternative solution to getting more residents in Totnes the opportunity to try e-bikes. This is in response to the e-bike hire trial not going ahead as Co Bikes – the Town Council's partner in the trial – ceasing trading.

The proposal is a variation of a project successfully running in Frome by Frome Town Council:

- Totnes Town Council collaborates with a local e-bike conversion professional and Totnes Bike Hub to purchase two used bicycles that are converted to e-bikes (using safe UK systems).
- These two bikes would be loaned out for a month/two months to residents wishing to test an e-bike and/or increase their confidence when cycling on the road.
  - Ideally this would be for free, but a small contribution to cover maintenance cost between loans would also be possible
- The loan would include lock, lights, helmet, panniers and hi-viz.
- While they have the bikes, participants would attend 6 hours of guided sessions with a qualified ride leader to help them gain confidence (run by Bike Hub). They would also be given a bike maintenance workshop, also by the Bike Hub.
- When the bikes are not on loan, they would be stored in a secure garage in Follaton.

- Once the loan period is over, hopefully the participants would like to get their own bike. They would then know about the refurbished bikes at Totnes Bike Hub and the potential to get them converted to an e-bike.

MH is currently working up costings, but the second-hand bikes would cost about £200 each and getting them converted £750. The key potential barrier is insurance. MH is speaking to Frome Town Council and their insurance providers to get more information. It may be this is prohibitively costly.

MH said that she would like to get input from the group on this idea and opened up to questions.

**This project would not allow residents to use bikes whenever they need one?**

- No, this is an entirely different type of project to the Co Bikes project. TTC do not have the ability or finances to fund a similar project (which was funded by grant money from SHDC).

**Would it be better to loan the bikes out for 2 weeks rather than 2 months as this would allow more people to borrow them?**

- The idea is to enable behaviour change and two weeks would likely not be enough for this. People need to have the time to try the bike out in various life situations (e.g. shopping, cycling to work/leisure, etc). Also, they also would have to have time to go on the confidence building led rides and to do the maintenance workshop.

**Would TTC take a percentage of potential converted bikes, if the e-bike converter saw a big increase in business?**

- This is not something that has been considered but it is worth pondering.

**Has any market research been done?**

- No, the idea has been taken from Frome Town Council who have done something similar with a lot of success.

**Does the Town Council promote pushbikes?**

- Yes, TTC promotes cycling in general through the support it has given to Totnes Bike Hub and the various projects run by the Sustainability Officer (such as bike parking map, increased bike parking infrastructure, getting more cycle routes, etc).

**Could the kit (helmet, hi-vis, etc) be sold to those loaning the bikes afterwards to make some profit?**

- That could be something to consider.

**What are the legal liabilities of such a scheme? They would need to be addressed and it would be worth getting legal advice.**

- People loaning the bike would sign a contract prior to the loan which would outline everything clearly. Everything would need to be checked thoroughly before commencing.

LA commented that she felt it would be beneficial to have a small, local project like this. She had worried that there would be some considerable issues with the Co Bikes trial, primarily bikes being in the wrong places.

SC commented that a core issue for the town is lack of safe bike storage and that it could be better to spend money on improving this situation.

- Many people cannot safely store their bikes in or near their house, especially e-bikes and other expensive ones
- Could TTC look at implementing some safe storage with CCTV? This would reach more people and potentially have more impact than e-bikes.

MH invited feedback via email if other thoughts, questions or ideas arise.

**ACTION 2:** ALL to feedback any thoughts, questions or ideas regarding an e-bike project in town

### 3. Bob the Bus town centre timetable

This agenda item was deferred to another time as SG felt it is something that can be addressed at a later stage.

He did note that Bob the Bus have committed to buying a new bus which will be delivered in May next year. They are therefore focusing on fundraising for this. They are looking for match funding of about £50K.

CB highlighted the TTC fundraising webpage which might be useful for signposting to funding sources.

### 4. Green Travel Guide

MH presented a Green Travel Guide that she has created. The intention for this is to include relevant information related to active travel: walking, wheeling and cycling. She briefly ran through the guide and opened it up to some comments. Given the time constraints at the meeting, she said she would circulate with the Forum notes and asked for feedback to be sent via email: [greentravel@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:greentravel@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk)

A few comments were raised:

- It could benefit from an accessibility appraisal. Is the font okay? Capitals can be difficult for some to read.
  - **ACTION 3:** SC to share accessibility guidance document with MH
- It might be worth adding in a section on accessible routes, either to each section or in a separate section

**ACTION 4:** MH to send Green Travel Guide to Forum notes and anyone with comments to email [greentravel@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:greentravel@totnestowncouncil.gov.uk) by 02 November 2023

## 5. Update on Steering Group work

GB gave brief update on the work the Steering Group has been doing the past few months.

Traffic, Transport & Pedestrian Policy and hotspot map approved by TTC in October Full Council meeting.

SG met with MP Anthony Mangnall

- Traffic issues with Torbay were highlighted. They have a combined population size of Exeter in winter, but Plymouth during the summer. With many people working outside of Torbay, much traffic comes through Totnes
  - There are significant plans to grow Torbay further. There was a call for funding to support better infrastructure in Totnes as currently it cannot cope.
  - LA noted that she was hoping to work with JH to feed into the South West Peninsula Group

**ACTION 5:** LA and JH to work together on feeding into the South West Peninsula Group regarding infrastructure funding

- The SG is working to assess wide range of issues
  - There is a danger of the group's organisational eyes could be bigger than our bellies. There is a need to structure and prioritise work.

## Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) update

MH gave an update which had been provided to TTC by SHDC

- South Hams DC are in process of creating one for the South Hams
- Comes from the Government's 2017 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy
- LCWIPs were identified in the strategy as a new strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements at a local level. They normally run for 10 years.
- The LCWIP is designed to facilitate a long-term approach to developing networks, but also designed so that the document can be updated and revisited throughout the 10 year period.

The key out puts of an LCWIP are:

- a cycle and walking network plan identifying preferred routes

- a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment
- a report setting out the narrative behind the prioritisation of routes

The consultants (PJA) have identified the 29 priority cycling routes in South Hams.

- Over the next month PJA will be auditing these routes in person to identify barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling, and then suggesting possible interventions to overcome the barriers.
- They will agree a prioritisation framework to identify which interventions are the most important for the district and the respective communities.
- When the auditing is complete and the prioritisation framework applied they plan to share the conclusions so far with residents and seek views on other barriers not currently identified.
- Cycling UK will be developing a behaviour change strategy with PJA

The project should be concluding by March next year.

## 6. Local issues of concern

### **ZEST Salcombe**

GB invited NR and SW to give a little background information on their company, ZEST: Zero Emission Shuttle Transit.

NR explained that they are a Salcombe-based company who will be introducing electric buses to the town.

- Salcombe has similar problems to Totnes
- Lack of public transport infrastructure makes it hard to attract employees which impacts the economy.

They are introducing two fully electric, wheelchair accessible buses, to encourage people to park outside of town and they can be transited through town by bus.

- The first vehicle is arriving in the next couple of weeks and the second vehicle by April.
- Service will be up and running before Christmas.
- They are the first company to be given a proficient road licence for these vehicles.
- One of the vehicles will also have an AED / External Defibrillator fitted

SG noted that unfortunately the buses are not quite suitable for the types of routes that Bob the Bus runs, primarily due to length and topography.

GB thanked NR and SW for joining the meeting and asked them to keep in touch with any developments.

GB opened the floor to other issues of concerns.

## **20's Plenty for Devon update**

JH gave an update on the 20's Plenty motion that she had put to DCC.

- The motion initially went through in May. This then gets sent off to officers for a 'factual report'. Then it goes to Cabinet. She was not allowed to speak at Cabinet as she was told she'd have plenty of time when it went to Full Council.
- However, they refused to table the amendment. When she was speaking to it, a plane went over, they decided not to listen to her amendment and voted on the original motion. This motion is flawed as 1) is painfully slow and expensive and 2) fails to address the poor criteria and scoring system used to allow local areas to get 20mph limits.

DCC rules mean there has to be a 6-month period between amendments being tabled. JH said she will wait for 6 months and table it again.

## **7. AOB**

### **Plains roundabout**

MH said she had been asked to bring an issue to note to the Forum. A local resident has been in touch with TTC and the Police to raise concerns over how drivers cross the mini-roundabout at the Plains, at the bottom of Fore St. Many drivers cut across the middle circle/roundel which is particularly dangerous to cyclists.

There were a few questions around whether it is legal to so if the roundel isn't raised. A subsequent check of the Highway Code reveals:

*"Mini-roundabouts.*

*Approach these in the same way as normal roundabouts. All vehicles MUST pass round the central markings except large vehicles which are physically incapable of doing so. Remember, there is less space to manoeuvre and less time to signal."*

### **Access only**

FP asked whether the Green Travel Guide mentions anything about the High Street being Access Only. MH said it doesn't as it focuses on active travel and not driver behaviour. However, it might be worth adding a sentence somewhere on this, including that it is not allowed to cycle *down* the High St.

There was a suggestion that it could potentially include a bit on 'friendly' driving behaviour.



### **January High St road closure**

SG mentioned that the High St will be closed again in January 2024. This will be for three weeks. MC said the Chamber has had the notification from the utilities company. She noted that it is set to close again in January 2025.

**End of meeting 20:00**

## Appendix

*Extract from DCC Cllr Hodgson's September County Councillor Report*

### **Traffic issues on Plymouth Road.**

Further to a group of residents contacting the Town Council and attending a Totnes & District Traffic and Transport Forum meeting, I referred the matter to DCC Highways team for response. [*DCC response to Cllr Hodgson's points/requests in bold below*]

"The stretch of Plymouth Road passing through the Follaton narrows has been a subject of contention for many of its residents for many years. We understand that the perception of vehicular speeds through the narrow section can appear excessive. Although we appreciate the difficulties residents face daily, the lay out of this road is historic in nature with limited options for improvement and enforcement. In answer to the issues raised:

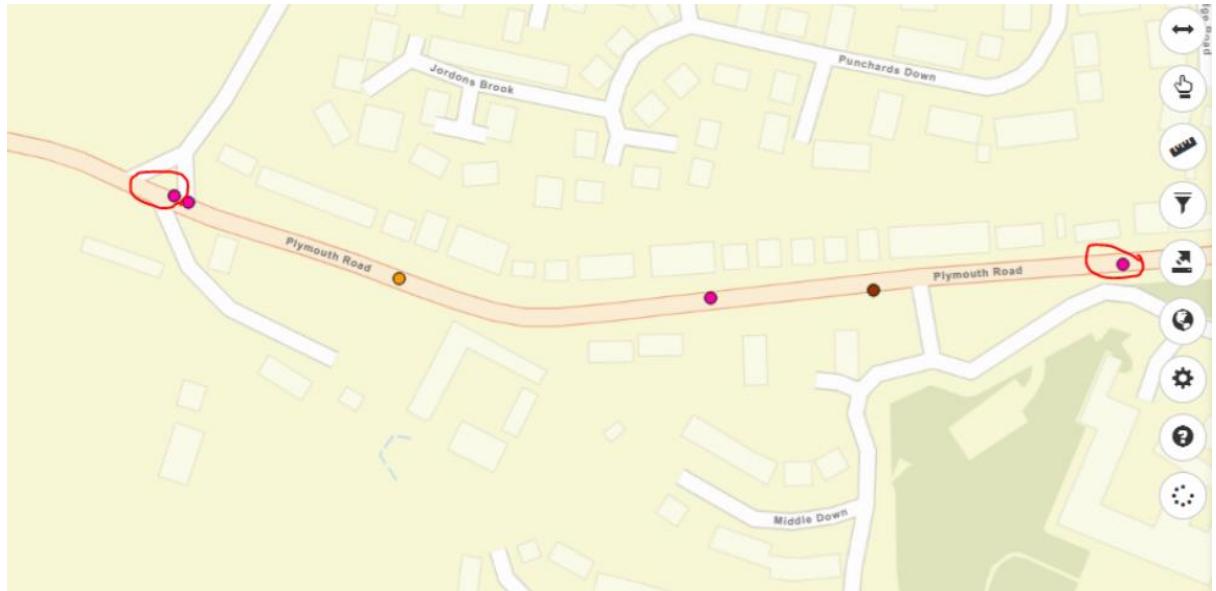
- **Poor visibility at the pinch point: requests for action**
  1. **Overgrown foliage overhanging the highway (there is no footpath) needs trimming back:**

None of these hedges are maintain by DCC, they are all privately owned. DCC would only make contact with the property owners if their hedges force pedestrians/cyclists away from the nearside of the carriageway by more than 1m. The property owners would be expected to undertake the work to cut back their hedges. I can review this when next passing.
  2. **Overgrown foliage is obscuring traffic signage needs trimming:**

I can review this when passing, depending on the level of work required I may cut offending foliage or contact the owners as above
  
- **Traffic speeds along the residential area of Plymouth Road: issues raised**
  - **Reference to the comments by police that agree there is excessive speeding along this road:**

I am surprised and disappointed to learn of the apparent response provided by the local police team. They have neither contacted the NHT in relation to this, or submitted data from any of their enforcement. I have reached out via our Road 3 Safety Team in an attempt to retrieve a copy of their reply given to Mr Edmonds and any supporting data they may have collected.
  - **Reference to the previous speed survey carried out in 2018:**

The 2018 data was taken in two locations on either side of the narrow section:



In summary the data provided for vehicles travelling in either direction was:

	85 <sup>th</sup> %ile	Mean Speed
Eastern location	33.9	27.7
Western location	36.7	31.3

- The faded white lines have allowed the road to become a racetrack with dangerous overtaking:**  
 I am unclear how the faded lining is causing the poor driving reported. In many areas authorities have deliberately removed centre lining in order to reduce speeds. DCC have a very limited number of road markings that cause a defect when worn by more than 70%, these are restricted to junction markings, stop lines, pedestrian crossings and solid centre lines. Outside this DCC refresh road markings through a cyclic process. Totnes is not in the programme for 2023/24 but is for 2024/25.
- Anecdotally speeding has increased since COVID – in particular more motorbikes:** DCC have to remain evidence led to justify using our limited resources and funding so anecdotal opinions can not be considered. Government statistics would suggest that speeds have dropped since the known increase during Covid when there were less vehicles on the road: Speed limit compliance increases in 2021 (roadsafetygb.org.uk)
- Anecdotally an increase in larger commercial vehicles using this route:**  
 There are no weight restrictions on this section of the C794 so there are no limits on use by larger commercial vehicles

### **Requests for action:**

- 1. A request for the non-operational speed camera by the cemetery to be relocated and set to work near the western entrance to Follaton House (it was suggested this could be self-financing!):**

As you know, DCC are currently reviewing camera locations and are looking to replace/upgrade both speed and red light enforcement cameras with consideration given to where they are now needed (Four new high-tech speed cameras for highrisk roads in Devon & Cornwall - vision-zero ([visionzerosouthwest.co.uk](http://visionzerosouthwest.co.uk))). Therefore the existing camera on Plymouth Road is under review. I have put forward your request via our Road Safety Team to move the camera nearer the narrow section.

- 2. A request for Vehicle activated signs to be installed either side of the pinch point (this will also be raised with the Town Council, but your views would be welcome too):**

DCC have a limited number of VAS which are circulated around the county to known sites with evidence of non-compliance. TTC can choose to purchase their own VAS and move it between locations. I have attached a spreadsheet which provides information.

- 3. A further speed survey to update the previous records:**

Rather than to commit to undertaking a new survey immediately, I will wait to see if the police can provide any newer data. If they cannot I am willing to request a new survey as this will aid future decisions in relation to the permanent camera move, the VAS, or SCARF

- 4. 20mph speed restriction along Plymouth Road where there are residences:**

There remains only one channel for this type of request which is the annual 'Expression of Interest' managed by our Traffic Team. It must be remembered that this would provide a limit and not a zone which would install traffic calming features so is reliant on the existing speeds already being at 20mph

### **Lack of safety for pedestrians – issues raised:**

- **Includes all residents where there is no foot path along this narrow road**
- **Cycling is extremely dangerous along this section of road**

### **Requests for action/information:**

- 1. What options have been investigated to install some kind of pavement or footpath (an offer to DCC by Mr Perrin who owns/owned the old barns some years back was referred to)?**

Options are limited to provide a footway as there simply isn't the width of adopted highway to provide one. Beyond limiting the route to a single carriageway managed by signals I see no alternatives. However, that would require huge financial outlay and there is just no evidence to support such a design. I suspect that this design would also increase speeds as the risk of the pinch point is removed. I have managed the South Hams area for only seven years but I have never been aware of any offer of land. That said, even an offer of land is not sufficient reason to progress

as there are legal process and numerous costs involved. For those further east than Follaton Gate there is a walking route from Copland Lane to Winslade Avenue, this means that any provision benefits a limited number of properties, all of whom purchased their property knowing the situation.

**2. What traffic calming options would be possible to reduce speeds and increase pedestrian safety around this pinch point?**

DCC do not generally impose traffic calming features in a 30mph limit but use these features when reducing the speed of traffic to 20mph.

**3. What other pedestrian safety measures have been considered regarding this particularly dangerous pinch point?**

This section already has all the warning signs required for a section of carriageway that narrows and has no footway.”