

Smugglers Way

Report to Communications and Engagement Committee 9 November 2023

This is a project linked to the Looe Valley Trails and Moor to Sea project. It is led by Sue Brownlow.

The aim is to rebadge existing footpaths as a Smugglers Way which initially links Looe and Liskeard but can also be extended up onto Bodmin Moor and eventually maybe to the North Coast. This will encourage locals and visitors to use the footpaths (maybe in conjunction with train travel one way) and to visit Liskeard and Looe town centres.

Liskeard and Looe Town Councils and the relevant parish councils have been meeting for a while to develop the route. David Ambler was previously the Town Council representative and Yvette Hayward has also been involved in some liaison with Sue Brownlow.

The project has obtained around £25k of funding from Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and the Community Capacity Fund and there is a little more funding available from overlap with the Moor to Sea project. This all needs to be spent by March 2024.

A meeting was held on 26 October to discuss finalising the proposed route, the design and locations of signage, community consultation and engagement and launch activities. I attended because of my familiarity with the Looe Valley trails and Moor to Sea project.

This report is a summary of the outcomes of this meeting and the issues Liskeard Town Council needs to address.

The route

The agreed route currently does not include the sections leading into Liskeard and Looe town centres and the town councils were asked to recommend what these should be.

The Liskeard end currently goes as far as Moorswater. Following some discussion with Yvette, I'm recommending that we put forward two links into town. One would come past Coombe Junction, Pencubitt and the railway station. There is already a spur of the route which leads to Coombe and it's important to include the railway station, not least because of the funding from the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership. The second would go under and along the A38 and in through New Road and Dean Street. This is a reasonably level route into town (both the Pencubitt section and the third possible option via Old Road have some very steep parts) and is also part of the route for the Liskeard Loop of the Looe Valley trails.

Other points to note about the route which came out of the meeting are:

- Sue is also talking to the World Heritage Site about linking to the Caradon Trail and them getting some funding to redo signage. I pointed out that there is a link to the Caradon Trail from Liskeard town centre and it was agreed it would be useful to show on maps both the Moorswater-Caradon Trail link (via High Wood) and the option of coming into town and going out again.
- They are looking at having at least one section accessible to people in motorised wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
- Once the route and signage proposals are finalised they will need to consult with landowners and would appreciate local knowledge about who those are.
- They need to get the route professionally drawn up and, at my suggestion, will include Graphic Words (who designed our walks leaflets and signage panels) as a possible way to do that.

Signage concepts and locations

It was agreed to go for a black and gold colour way. It would be good to find a simple symbol for the route like the acorn for the coast path, En route the signs will be roundels or finger posts saying Smugglers Way. They could include QR codes to link to further information/stories/artworks relevant to the location.

In Liskeard and Looe it would be good to have a large sign which shows the whole route, has images and recognises the funders. **We have been asked to propose a location for this in Liskeard.** One, which came up at the meeting, is opposite the Spar on Dean Street. This would relate to both the proposed routes into town and could perhaps be put in the wall of the ladies toilet (which of course we own). **We would probably need planning permission and this should be applied for ASAP.** Yvette has contacted the area planning team for advice as it is located within the conservation area. This will also have good proximity to the proposed new bus facilities in the cattle market.

Community consultation and engagement

It was agreed that this should happen as soon as we have an agreed route and design concepts.

It will include town and parish councils, Cornwall Councillors, the MP and all sorts of local interest groups. We came up with a list which will be circulated and **we will be invited to add to this and to provide contact details of groups where we know them.**

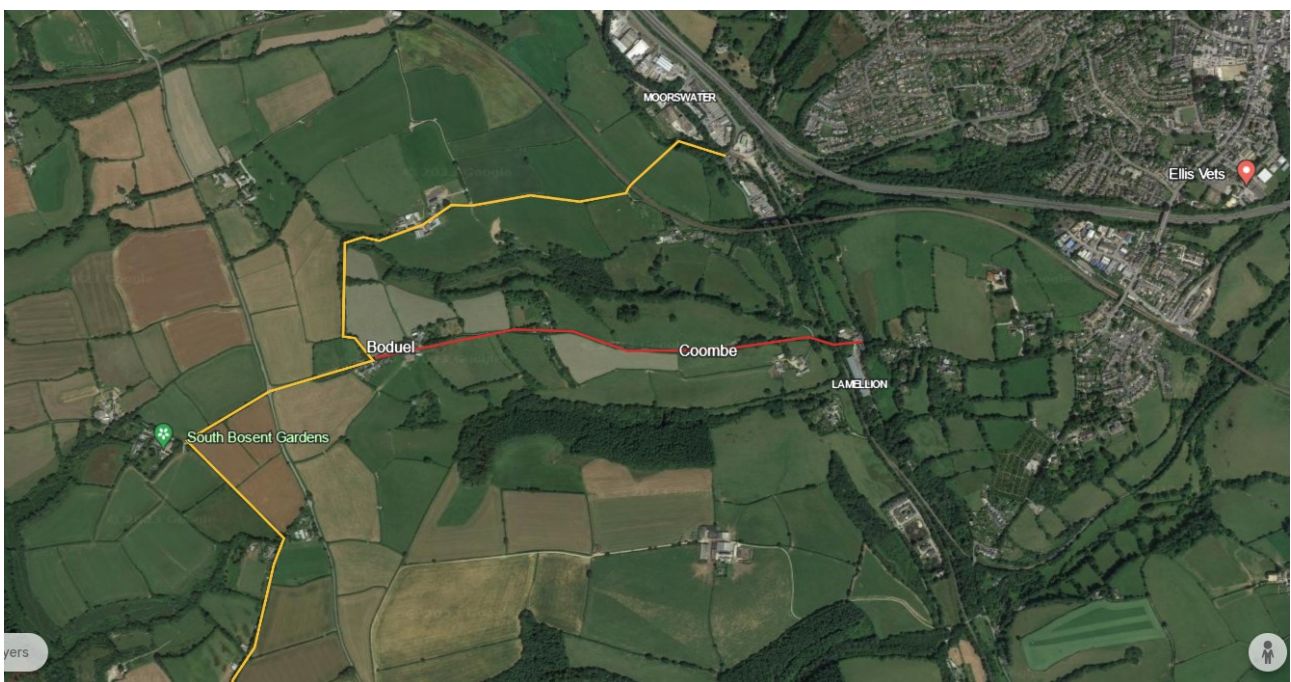
Launch activities

These will include a programme of walks and we suggested a sponsored walk for young people (perhaps linked to DoE), a foraging walk and an art for wellbeing walk amongst others.

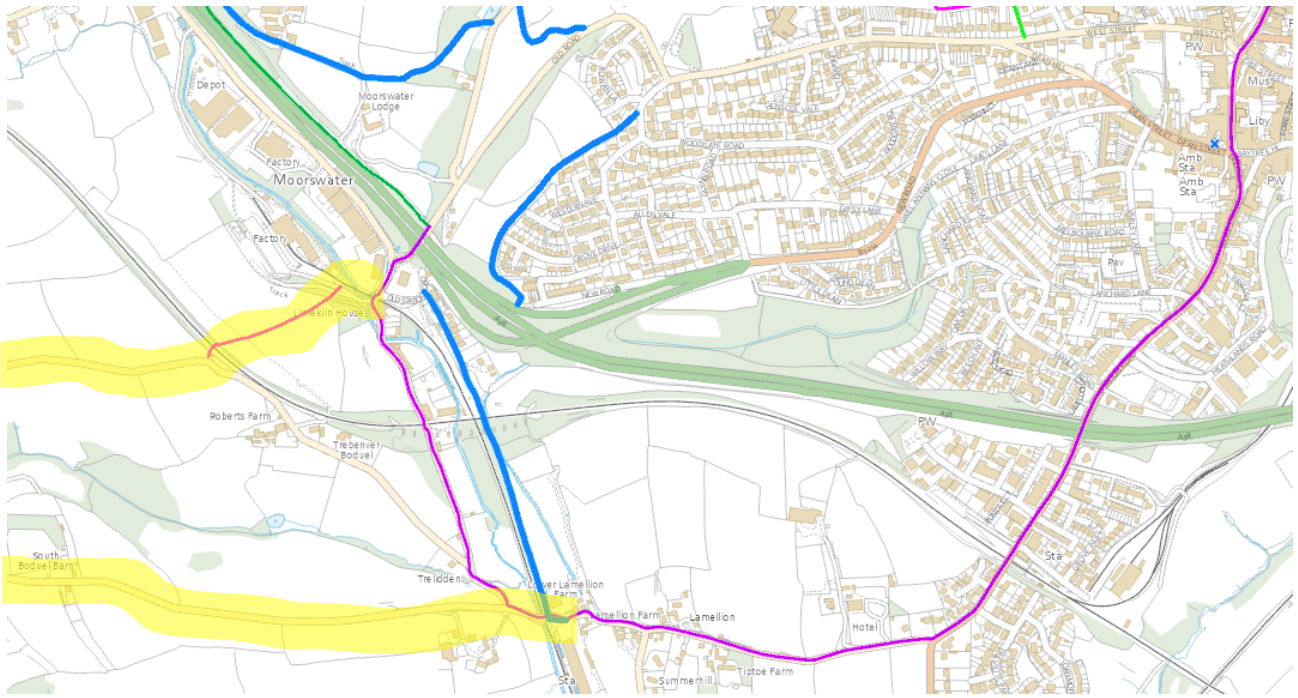
Future meetings

The next meeting will be in late January (date tbc) when I will be away.

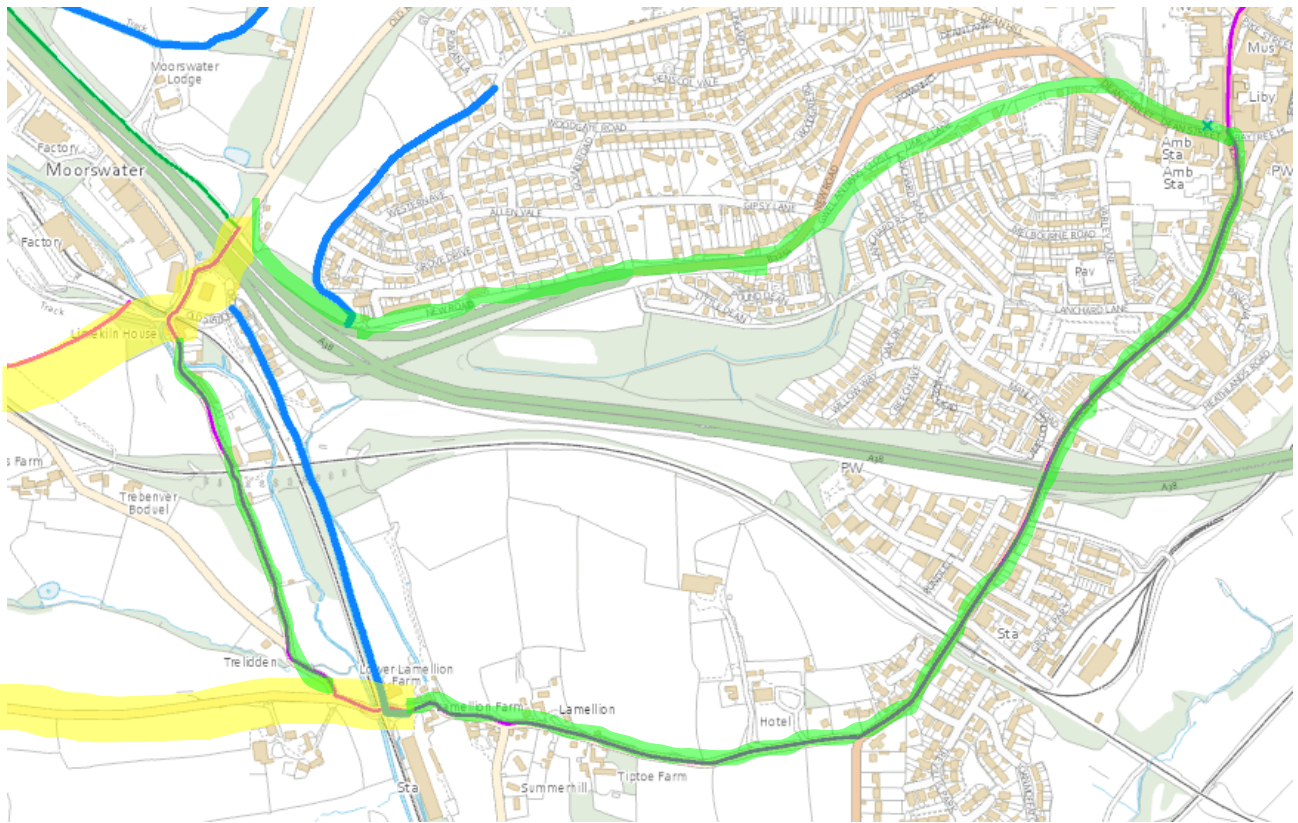
Rachel Brooks



Route of the Smugglers Way as it approaches Liskeard from Looe



Routes approaching Liskeard, with existing footpaths and the Caradon Trails shown



Recommended link routes to the town centre:

- via Coombe station, Lemellion Hill, and Liskeard railway station, using the existing Caradon Trail
- taking the steps from Old Road by the underpass, along the A38, into Wadland Terrace, New Road and Limes Lane. This is part of the proposed Liskeard Loop of the Looe valley Trails, and Route 9 of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which includes an assessed with recommendations for improvements.