

Looe Valley Trails



Creating over 50kms of trails in South East Cornwall for residents and visitors to walk, bicycle and horse ride.

“ Welcome to the latest edition of Looe Valley Trails News ”

The last few weeks have been very busy as we have been working hard to develop the recommended or alternative routes for the three trails so we can share them with you as soon as possible.

Thank you to everyone who has contacted us via the Let's Talk site: letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/looe-valley-trails or by email: lvt@cornwall.gov.uk to give us their views on the project so far.

It has been great to see the level of support for creating the trails, with many of you telling us you can't wait for them to be ready. We share your enthusiasm!

We are also listening to the concerns which have been raised. While we have been responding directly to the people who have contacted us with their questions and comments, we are also publishing information in the FAQ section of our Let's Talk site. You can read some of the responses at the end of this newsletter.



**Sign up for future editions
by emailing us at:**

lvt@cornwall.gov.uk

Our newsletter will keep you in touch with what is happening with the development of the Looe Valley Trails project by providing the latest information about events, activities and key milestones.

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What we have been doing

Although we are making good progress in developing the proposed routes, there is still some more work to do before we are able to publish them for your feedback.

We want to find the right balance between protecting the environment and encouraging people to get into their local, natural environments and improve their health and wellbeing, and supporting economic regeneration. The routes are being designed to minimise, wherever possible, any negative effect on residents and the environment.

We are also looking at opportunities to make improvements in and around the proposed routes. These could include providing new stopping places, parklets, additional signage and bike parking facilities.



As well as creating a network of multi-use trails connecting Looe, Liskeard, Bodmin and Cremyll and opening up access to some of the most beautiful and distinctive landscape in Cornwall, the project will play a key role in supporting the economic regeneration of South East Cornwall.

By supporting the development of new businesses, including cycle hire operators and cafes, and encouraging more local people and tourists to visit the area all year round, the project can help to boost the local economy, secure existing jobs and create new ones.

We are currently drawing up a business case which identifies the economic benefits to the local community and will be publishing this as soon as it has been completed.

We are continuing to talk with landowners, local communities and with other key partners on specific areas of concern and hope to be able to share details of the recommended routes next month.

Unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions mean we are still unable to hold public exhibitions and carry out other face to face engagement as we would normally be doing at this stage.

However if the Government's recovery roadmap continues as expected we hope to be able to stage out first community engagement events later in the summer.

In the meantime we will be publishing all the latest information on the Let's Talk site, as well as in our newsletters.



Working with partners

South East Cornwall is at the centre of an exciting emerging network of integrated travel and leisure opportunities, including rail, road, coastal ferries and cycling and pedestrian networks.

Our project will connect into a number of existing and developing cycle hubs in the communities it links to, as well as closing gaps in the National Cycle Network along the south of England coastline. The aim of the wider scheme is to mirror the success and popularity of the North Cornwall trails, including the Camel Trail which attracts more than 500,000 visitors a year to the local area.

There is already a cycling hub in Bodmin which links to the Camel Trail, with Looe and Liskeard now developing their own local plans for new walking and cycling hubs. We look forward to working with them to create an exciting network of routes which will support the economy of South East Cornwall and bring environmental, health, and wellbeing benefit to local communities.



Design Panel

In the last newsletter we provided details of the new Design Panel we were setting up and invited people to apply to join.

We had a positive response to the invitation so thank you to everyone who expressed an interest in taking part.

A preliminary meeting of the Panel, with representatives of the main Town Councils, Community Network Panels and the Looe Development Trust (who were the originators of the Looe Valley Trails project), met last month.

Members discussed the rules of the group as well reviewing the applications received from the wider community.

We have identified a number of new members to join the Panel who will represent the communities in which they live. However it is vital for the Panel to represent all the communities the project will serve. There is currently a potential gap in the representation of young people and those with different needs.

To address this we have reserved two seats for these groups and are now actively seeking people to come forward to join. If you would like to get involved, please contact us at LVT@cornwall.gov.uk

The first full meeting of the Design Panel is due to take place during the next few weeks. This will start to look in detail at different elements of the scheme. We will be providing feedback on the meeting on the Let's Talk site and in future newsletters.





Environment Panel

Now that the Design Panel is up and running, we will be establishing our Environment Panel.

This group will focus on scrutinising and directing best practice in all aspects of the environment.

We recognise that protecting the environment is very important to the local community and the Panel will include representatives of key stakeholders and relevant community groups to ensure that the environment is protected.

Details of the application process for this Panel will be published on our Let's Talk site in the next few weeks so make sure you keep an eye out.



“ It has been great to see the level of support for creating the trails, with many of you telling us you can't wait for them to be ready. ”



What you have been asking us

During the past few weeks we have received a wide range of queries and comments about the Looe Valley Trails project.

Some of the most recent questions and responses include:

? How will you protect sensitive environmental sites along the trails?

While draft proposals have been developed for the three multi-use trails, no decision has been made on the final routes. We are seeking the views of stakeholders and local people about the current proposals to help ensure that we shape the best possible routes for the majority of users.

We are committed to finding the right balance between protecting the environment and encouraging people to get into their local, natural environments and improve their health and wellbeing and supporting economic regeneration. The routes are being designed to minimise, wherever possible, any negative effect on residents and the environment.

We will be carrying out a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (update to the 2018 version) to understand all habitats in the area. This will provide us with the evidence to support avoiding irreplaceable areas of the wild environment.

Once the proposed routes have been identified a series of surveys, including topography, ground investigations, existing drainage, utilities, environmental and ecology, will be carried out. The ecological and environmental survey requirements will be determined by an initial assessment and

could include surveys of trees; hedgerows; nesting birds; overwintering birds, endangered species; invasive plant species; dormice; bats; badgers; otters; invertebrates; water voles etc.

The results of these surveys will be used to inform the final design of the routes and the start and finish points.

We are setting up a specific Environment Panel which will include representatives of key stakeholders and relevant community groups to ensure that the environment is protected.

There are also a number of statutory mechanisms designed to protect the environment which we will be meeting as part of the project. These include providing a minimum of 10% increase to the biodiversity along the routes of the trails. Many species of flora and fauna are also protected by law.

? How will you prevent conflict between different groups of people using the trails?

Our aim is to create multi use trails which will provide safe and attractive routes for walkers of all ages and abilities, including parents with buggies, people with disabilities and wheelchair users, and horse riders, as well as cyclists, including e-bikes, and people riding scooters.

We want to ensure that the trails are used by as many different groups as possible and will be establishing a code of conduct for people to follow.



? For any one trail, would construction commence if any part of the overall route had not been agreed and finalised?

This is possible and depends on how funding becomes available. This would obviously have to be managed carefully ensuring that there would be no abortive works completed. The 'constructed' sections would also have to make sense in their own right for the purposes of accessing funding. This is a very positive position to be in as it does not put time pressures on the project and ensures that we do the right thing for each area.

? How will be the trails be maintained?

The Highways Department of Cornwall Council will be responsible for the long term maintenance of the trails. However there will be opportunities for the community and other volunteers to assist in maintaining the routes close to their communities.

? How can people get involved in the project?

We want local residents and businesses to help shape the project so we can ensure that it meets the needs of all parts of the wider community.

We are currently not able to meet in person due to pandemic restrictions, however we will be providing information and updates at key milestones throughout the project via the Looe Valley Trails Let's Talk pages, at exhibitions and events (subject to covid restrictions) as well as in articles in the local media .

We will be attending meetings of the main town councils, and Liskeard and Looe, Bodmin and Cornwall Gateway Community Network Panels to give updates on a regular basis. These meetings are open to the public. We will also be happy to give presentations to other groups on request.

We will be using surveys and online questionnaires to enable local people to give us their views on the proposals and you can also give us your views via email at lvt@cornwall.gov.uk . Members of the public are also be involved in the new Design and Environment Panels .



You can find out more about the Looe Valley Trails project on the Let's Talk site **letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/looe-valley-trails**

You can also email us at **lvt@cornwall.gov.uk**

