

Report to Ottery St Mary Town Council

Cllr Jess Bailey, Devon County Council (Otter Valley)

November 2022

1. As previously advised DCC's public rights of way committee considered the definitive map review for Ottery St Mary on 3rd November. [Agenda for Public Rights of Way Committee on Thursday, 3rd November, 2022, 2.15 pm - Democracy in Devon](#)

I had received a number of communications from residents concerned about the application by the Trail Riders Fellowship to upgrade Bridleway No. 9 (Lanscore Lane) to a Byway Open to All Traffic ("BOAT") and I had during the consultation opposed the upgrade on the basis of the noise and disruption to a tranquil bridlway. I am pleased that the committee followed the officer's recommendation and there was no upgrade.

In addition, the committee refused the upgrade of footpath 62 to a BOAT. The route starts at the county road, Coombe Lane, point D on plan HIW/PROW/22/03, and proceeds in an east south easterly direction along the enclosed lane to meet the county road, East Hill Road, at point E. The length of the route is approximately 190m.

The committee approved the recording of a footpath which constitutes the missing link between Footpath No. 64 and unsurfaced Unclassified County Road at Hollow Head Cross, points F-G on proposal map HIW/PROW/22/04.

There were however two proposals ((a) and (b) below which were not upgraded because of insufficient user evidence. This does not prevent more evidence being gathered and a subsequent application being submitted called a Schedule 14 application. This is something which the Town Council may wish to do itself – to seek to obtain further evidence to ensure that the right of way is not lost for residents. It may be worth contacting the Town Council contacting Ramblers Association or the British Horse Society with a view to working on a further application.

- (a) Claimed footpath along track (sometimes known as Rill Lane or Rill Path) between unsurfaced Unclassified County Road at Rill and County Road at East Hill Strips, points H-I on proposal map HIW/PROW/22/05 and
- (b) Claimed Restricted Byway at Metcombe, points J-K on proposal map HIW/PROW/22/06.

Please note that Proposal 6 which is the path by the former factory from Mill St to the Tumbling Weir in Ottery St Mary has not yet been dealt with because there has been a change in ownership from Churchill Property - when they were consulted by the PROW officer Tom Green at DCC it was returned as they were no longer the owner. Once Tom gets notification that a new owner is in place, he will re-start the process.

2. You will recall that there was a report carried out by the Department for Education's consultants in relation to various potential sites for Tipton St John Primary School and I had

asked for permission from the DfE to share with the Town Council (and which then may be shared more widely) however consent has not been provided.

3. You may have read in this week's Ottery Herald that South West Water have blocked my FOI application to reveal the sewage discharges into the River Otter in 2022. They are citing the investigation by Ofwat and the Environment Agency as justification. I cannot accept this as a reasonable explanation and have already submitted a request for an internal review, and depending on the outcome of that I will, if necessary, submit a complaint to the Information Commissioner. Further it transpires that SWW are imposing a blanket ban on ANY detailed discharge information in case it prejudices the outcome of the investigation. Surely this cannot be acceptable under the Environmental Regulations.
4. Concerns have been raised with me about the challenges and accessibility issues faced by residents using mobility scooters in Ottery St Mary and I am hoping to meet one of the residents and a representative from DCC highways and once I have a date/time I will let you know.
5. On 1st November John Hart leader of DCC issued a grave budget warning <https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/grave-budget-warning-from-devon-county-council-leader/>. John Hart noted that Devon's core funding from the Government had reduced by 72 per cent in real terms in the 11 years up to 2021/22.

Deep cuts to Devon's vital local services are inevitable unless the Government provides more support, county council leader John Hart warned today.

I have been a county councillor for more than 30 years and leader of Devon County Council for nearly 14 years during which time we have been through the austerity years and the pandemic.

"But our financial situation has never been so bleak as it is now.

"Before the summer we revealed a black hole in our finances for this year due to surging demand for help and support for vulnerable children and adults, the continuing costs of the pandemic and the dramatic rise in costs and inflation.

"We have been working hard to find savings in this current financial year but it's like filling the bath with the plug out as demand for our services and our costs keep escalating.

"On top of that we now calculate that – as things stand – we face a £75 million shortfall in our budget for next year.