

Dorset Coast Forum Dorset Coastal Connections - People and Places Project: Lyme Forward - River Lim Footpath Improvement – Lyme Regis to Uplyme Summary

1 Background

1.1 The Dorset Coast Forum was successful with its £5.6 million bid to the government's Coastal Communities Fund for funding to implement a series of coastal access improvement schemes, at a range of locations from Christchurch to Lyme Regis. One of these projects involved improving the footpath from Lyme Regis up the River Lim Valley, to the village of Uplyme, just over the border from Dorset into Devon. It is important to recognise that this path is part of the East Devon Way which extends for 38 miles from Exmouth to Lyme Regis and also that part of the path, as far as the Old Mill is part of the Wessex Ridgeway Long Distance Path that extends 136 miles from Lyme Regis to Marlborough in Wiltshire.

1.2 The overall coordination of the Coastal Connections Project is being undertaken by Dorset Coast Forum, but Lyme Forward, as a community interest company, with responsibilities for initiating and implementing various projects in the Lyme Regis area over a period of years, has been commissioned to plan the details of the footpath improvement and coordinate the implementation of this part of the scheme.

1.3 A detailed programme of work for the project has been prepared and this is being actively progressed. This divides the project into three phases;

- Phase one, preparation and planning;
- Phase two, implementation;
- Phase three, monitoring and review, following completion.

It is proposed that this path be called... 'The River Lim Path'. This improvement and funding is something of a 'one off' and so the aim is to bring to path up to a high standard that will last for many years.

1.4 Site visits and walks along the path have been held with a range of statutory organisations that have informed the preparation of this proposed schedule of works following appraisal work to identify areas where potential improvements need to be made, highlighting where appropriate, any options that may need to be considered, before further decisions are made and wider consultation undertaken. Further engagement has taken place with key landowners along the route.

1.5 It is also considered important that links to the path from other footpaths need to be addressed and to ensure that good signing towards the path is in place, so as to maximise publicity for the path and its use. Interpretation, an information leaflet and artistic input into the path improvements are all planned, but details have yet to be discussed or agreed. Some interesting research is available on the Lyme Regis Museum website, about the mills and cloth industry along the valley and this is referenced in the detailed schedule of works.

1.6 The overall project includes a wide range of consultation, initially with the statutory authorities and landowners and then the general public via a range of consultation methods. A detailed schedule of works presents an appraisal of the path and required works for discussion with interested parties, with the path being described from the direction of Lyme Regis to Uplyme and sub divided into separate sections as appropriate.

1.7 It is emphasised that there is no question of the path being 'urbanised or over engineered'. The aim is to retain and simply enhance is beauty, natural character and history

but also to improve access as much as is reasonable, practical and economical. Both Dorset and Devon Highways have agreed to continue the long term maintenance of the path.

2 Recent & Next Steps August 2017+

More recent and future stages of the project are as follows:

- A meeting has been held with representative of British Horse Society to discuss proposed improvements to bridleway section of the path route [Springhead Road to Old Mill/County boundary], including possible route diversion options.
- Need to agree with East Devon AONB Team and Dorset Countryside which footpath signs the AONB Team are replacing as part of the East Devon Way review and improvement of East Devon Way signing, which has been planned for some time and prior to the CCF grant being secured.
- Engage with the Artistic Coordinator for the Dorset Coastal Connections project, to establish the extent and nature of possible artistic input, in the light of landowners' views on this issue.
- Complete discussions between Dorset CC and Devon CC procurement officers to ensure that contractors on the Devon Highway footpath contractors framework list can be appointed to undertake the surface improvement works on the path, as they mostly fall within Devon County and Devon CC requires the confidence that the work will be carried out to their standards, as in due course they will be responsible for the path maintenance.
- Subject to the above, discuss the project and have site meetings with prospective/preferred contractors and to seek their views and advice on the required surface improvement works and options where appropriate.
- New gates have been installed in Bumpy Field already and this work was carried out by Dorset Countryside who will also install other hardware; signs gates etc., along the rest of the route in due course as part of the project.
- Prepare illustrated presentation and provide updates/presentations to both Uplyme Parish Council and Lyme Regis Town Council Committees on the path project, as required.
- Continue discussions with DCF/ DCC project officers on the planned public consultation event to be held in October and work with DCF Project team to prepare/coordinate the material for exhibition and arrange dates for events in Uplyme & Lyme Regis in due course.
- Contractors to be appointed in due course and work to commence.
- Subject to the above progressing well, it is planned that the work to the path will be completed by Spring/Summer 2018.

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