

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone

The Experience and Views of Village Residents

Final Report to:

Devon County Council

Prepared by:

Lympstone Residents

October 2011

REPORT SUMMARY

The decision by Devon County Council to route the Exe Estuary Trail through the centre of Lympstone has always been controversial. Lympstone Parish Council objected at the planning stage because the village centre was already busy and has narrow roads with few pavements, many blind corners and steep hills. However, the Parish Council was overruled.

Now, more than five years later, the Exe Estuary Trail is increasingly popular and is used by a variety of people for leisure and commuting purposes. This popularity has resulted in a large and growing number of people travelling through Lympstone, and village residents have become increasingly concerned about the impact of the route through the village.

In September 2011, Devon County Council agreed to carry out a safety audit of the on-road section of the Trail in Lympstone, and to receive comments from village residents via the Exe Estuary Trail Project Team. Time has been limited to gather these comments, since the audit is due to be completed in October, so a formal survey and/or consultation exercise were not possible. Instead, posters were distributed around the Village by Lympstone residents (for a period of less than 2 weeks) to encourage people to communicate their views and experience via email or books held in central village locations.

Despite the limited time available to comment, 70 people responded. Of these:

- All respondents expressed concern about the safety risks associated with the routing of the Exe Estuary Trail through the village (many - 41% - in the context of overall support and enjoyment of the off-road sections of the Trail).
- 77% reported near misses involving cyclists, and 17% described specific incidents where physical contact had occurred (15 incidents; 3 resulting in serious injury).
- 90% commented on the problem of speeding cyclists, and 36% reported verbal abuse from these cyclists.
- 43% communicated concerns about families and other groups of cyclists/walkers using the whole width of the road - treating it as an extension of the cycle path and not a highway.
- 60% of respondents specifically requested Devon County Council to address the risks and issues raised, and many particularly mentioned the need to re-route the Trail off-road.

The report concludes that fears of safety risks associated with the 'through village' route of the Exe Estuary Trail were well founded. There are inherent risks - mentioned by 79% of respondents - which have not been recognised or addressed by Devon County Council.

Action is needed. The development of a robust plan to reduce the risks is recommended. This should involve all interested groups and take account of the projected growth in the use of the Trail. Even if more information is gained through the safety audit and any additional surveys, the overall conclusions are likely to remain the same. Above all, there is a strong need to investigate the options for re-routing the Trail off-road, with access points to the village. Other practical safety measures recommended include, for example, improving signage and installing speed control measures. However, many people have highlighted the fact that these other measures alone will not reduce the risks to an acceptable level.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Exe Estuary Trail has been developed and constructed by Devon County Council as part of the National Cycle Network Route 2. Consultation on the initial proposals and design of the Trail took place in 2004-2005, and the first phase from Exmouth to Lypstone was formally opened in February 2008. Since then, the sections between Lypstone and Exton, and between Exton and the River Clyst and Odham's Link have been completed, and the construction of Fisher's Bridge over the River Clyst commenced in early June 2011.

Lypstone Parish Council was consulted about the route of the Trail at the design stage, and recommended that the route pass along the railway line with access points to the village centre (meaning that cyclists, joggers or walkers whose intent was merely to get from A to B would not have to travel through the village). However, this option was rejected by Devon County Council in favour of a route on the roads through Lypstone from Sowden End to Lypstone Railway Station. Objections were raised by the Parish Council but the plans were passed.

In many ways, the Exe Estuary Trail has been a great success, and is used by a variety of locals and visitors (for leisure and commuting purposes). However, this popularity has resulted in a large and ever increasing number of people travelling through Lypstone by bicycle and foot (including commuter cyclists, cycling and walking groups, families, runners/joggers, and walkers). Village residents have become increasingly concerned about the impact of the route through the village, and many have experienced incidents and near misses involving cyclists. The problem is widely recognised and discussed within the Village. However, despite considerable and ongoing efforts by Lypstone Parish Council and the Police, no action has been taken by Devon County Council to address the risks.

In late August 2011, a village resident made a request to Devon County Council for a copy of the risk assessment for the routing of the Trail through Lypstone. A response was provided in September 2011 stating that there is no documented record of a safety audit for the whole on-road section in Lypstone, and an audit would now be arranged. This audit is due to be conducted in October 2011 and the report submitted by the end of the month. No direct consultation with interested parties is planned – but it was agreed that comments from Lypstone residents could be communicated to the audit team via the Exe Estuary Trail Project Team.

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1.2 Objectives & Approach

In view of Devon County Council's planned safety audit of the route through Lypstone, the overall objective of this initiative is to gather facts and opinions from village residents in order to provide practical and relevant information to Devon County Council.

Time has clearly been limited since the safety audit is to be completed in October 2011 and this was only confirmed in September 2011. A formal survey and/or consultation exercise were therefore not possible within the timescale. Instead, posters were distributed around the Village by Lypstone residents to encourage people to communicate their views and experience via email or books held in central village locations (see Appendix C for a copy of the poster). The poster requested the following specific information (in addition to any general comments):

- Details of any incidents⁽¹⁾ or near misses that have occurred;
- Particular concerns;
- Suggestions for improvement.

Due to the short timescale, the posters were in place for less than 2 weeks prior to the deadline of 10th October 2011. Additional flyers, containing the same information as the poster, were distributed during the final week via the Village Shop, Post Office and Hairdressers.

⁽¹⁾ *In this report, 'incidents' are defined as situations that involve actual physical contact.*

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 Number of Responses

A total of 70 people responded to the request for comments on the cycle route through Lypstone (after a short period of informal publicity). This included 44 emails and 26 comments recorded in books held in central village locations. Copies of all responses are provided in Appendix A of this report.

2.2 Common Responses ⁽²⁾

Of the total 70 respondents:

- All expressed concerns about the safety of the cycle route through Lypstone Village, and many expressed very strong concerns.
- 77% reported being involved in, or witnessing, 'near misses' involving cyclists (either cyclists and pedestrians, or cyclists and cars); many people describing numerous near misses ('too many to mention' being a common statement).
- 17% described specific incidents with physical contact – this included 15 incidents; 3 resulting in serious injury.
- 90% commented that a significant problem is fast ('commuter' or 'racing') cyclists travelling through the village at high speed, treating the roads as if they are on the cycle path.
- 43% described the problem of families and groups of cyclists and walkers using the whole width of the road; treating it as an extension of the cycle path and not a highway.
- 79% mentioned specific risk factors in Lypstone such as narrow roads, steep hills, blind corners, no footpaths, doorways leading directly on to the road, and the range of village activity (see Appendix C for photographs showing the specific high risk locations most commonly mentioned in the responses).
- 36% mentioned receiving and/or witnessing verbal abuse from cyclists (particularly the fast cyclists).
- Nearly two thirds (60%) requested specific action by Devon County Council to address the risks and issues raised, e.g., to re-route the Trail, improve signage, and install speed control measures - the greatest proportion requesting re-routing of the Trail.
- 41% made a particular point of presenting their concerns in the context of overall support and enjoyment of the off-road sections of the Exe Estuary Trail (i.e., the main cycle paths).

Examples of the comments provided are shown in the following sub-section of this report (2.3). For full details of responses, see Appendix A.

⁽²⁾ *When viewing these figures and the actual responses, it is important to keep in mind that they are based on an open request for comments, not specific survey questions (see the poster in Appendix C).*

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2.3 Examples of Comments

The examples of comments shown below cover: (a) overall concerns, (b) specific incidents and near misses, (c) key risk factors, (d) verbal abuse & emotional impact, and (e) suggested action. To read the full responses, see Appendix A.

(a) Overall concerns

"I fully appreciate the cycle path as we use it ourselves, but it seems crazy that it goes straight through a busy village".

"The route through Lympstone could hardly be more dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians: steep hills, sharp blind bends & narrow roads. If nothing is done to drastically improve the situation, I will not be surprised if there is a fatality".

"It is abundantly clear that as the path develops around the Estuary the problems will be magnified with an ever-increasing number of users and, consequently, increased danger to the villagers".

"It's only a matter of time before a very serious incident occurs".

"Lympstone cannot cope with the volume of cyclists...our village is being turned into a race track – sometimes the cyclists even shout to one another boasting about what speed they are doing".

"I do approve of the building of cycle trails in principle, but the routing through Lympstone is just plain dangerous. I really do fear a serious accident".

(b) Specific incidents & near misses

"My wife has been hit by a cyclist travelling at speed.....and her friend hospitalised with a fractured arm".

"I witnessed an incident involving a group of cyclists – the last person shot down Station Hill out of control, without stopping at the junction, and crashed into plant containers outside a cottage opposite the Swan – he was unconscious and bleeding".

"My grandson, aged 12, was walking along the road outside the Globe Inn when he was knocked over by a cyclist. The cyclist did not stop and obviously could not care less".

"My husband was knocked over about 18 months ago by a young lad cyclist. This occurred as he stepped out from our house".

"My daughter was walking with her dog near the hill in Sowden Lane when she was very nearly run over but, instead of apologising, the cyclist used abusive language".

"In August, a cyclist went down Cox's Hill so fast he went into a building at the bottom".

"I witnessed a very near miss this morning as a lady of about 80 was nearly knocked over by a cyclist".

"Near misses are too many to mention".

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(c) Key risk factors

"Many cyclists are oblivious to the fact they are leaving the cycle path at Lymestone to join the main, very busy village thoroughfare".

"Cyclists seem to think they have a 'right of way' over pedestrians".

"The main problems are cyclists travelling too fast for safety, or family groups meandering all over the road".

"It's particularly bad early mornings/early evenings for speeding commuter cyclists, and all weekend/school holiday times for slow congested groups".

"It has become a serious safety threat to residents...routed along a road with no footpaths and there are two blind right-angled bends, both at the bottom of steep hills".

"There have been numerous near misses at Station Hill, Cox's Hill, the bend at Quay Lane, and at the very sharp bend at Sowden End".

"The 'give way' junction at the bottom of Station Hill is regularly ignored and I have had to stop suddenly on a couple of occasions when cyclists failed to slow down".

"The homes of many residents open directly on to The Strand. My wife and I have to peer out cautiously, to all intents like meerkats, before emerging onto the street".

"There appear to be no safety notices of any kind".

"The centre of the village is often choked with 4x4 vehicles with cycles attached to the back, and this creates safety issues too by increasing the volume of traffic".

(d) Verbal abuse & emotional impact

"I was walking along the Strand when a cyclist cursed me and told me to 'get off the cycle path'. He used very strong language and it left me feeling very upset".

"My Mother-in-law states that when she wants to walk out of the drive she feels anxious and has to pause before stepping out on to the road".

"When walking near my house a passing cyclist shouted at me: 'If people do not get off the road, they will be knocked down'".

"On two occasions, families have cycled down Pump Lane, a footpath, and been abusive when asked to dismount".

"I have heard many cyclists call to villagers to 'get out the way' or 'get off the cycle path'".

"The cyclists are rude, noisy, selfish and totally discourteous to anybody who dares to be in their path".

"It is no longer a pleasure to walk through the centre of the village – it is an ordeal".

"Most old folk in the village are very wary and fear for their lives when strolling to the village shop or post office".

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(e) Suggested action

"Given the numbers now using the road through the village, the original route contemplated along the railway track should be implemented...this would still give those wishing to access the village the ability to do so...but the majority of cyclists could pass harmlessly through to the mutual benefit of all".

"It is unlikely that the road could be improved to safely accommodate cyclists and vehicles, and the only alternative is to continue the cycle route alongside the railway line".

"Planning action should be taken to re-route the cycleway alongside the railway and take it off the village roads".

"It would be good if the cycle path was re-located along the railway line as it would be far safer and would also ease congestion in the village".

"There must be a 10 mph speed limit enforced before someone is killed".

"Road calming measures to slow down cyclists are needed".

"Exits from the Trail on to the highway should have clear warning signs".

"There definitely needs to be a Halt sign opposite the shop coming down Station Hill, as some cyclists are travelling far too fast and not even stopping".

"More signage of the route is needed – cyclists are often lost in Lypstone and asking where to go".

"Any publicity which gets over to users where the dangers are along the route would be a help".

"Consideration should also be given to a code of use, or bye-laws, for the Trail".

3. CONCLUSIONS

The findings presented in Section 2 clearly show the significant safety risks associated with the routing of the Exe Estuary Trail through the centre of Lympstone Village. The fact that 70 people responded to the request for comments within the very short time scale demonstrates that it is a issue of great concern to village residents. A more formal and widely publicised survey would almost certainly achieve a considerably larger response rate.

An important point is that the responses do not convey a generally negative attitude to the Exe Estuary Trail as a whole, but show a very high level of concern about the routing through the village. This reflects real and tangible risks that are recognised by many village residents and clearly communicated in respondents' comments (see Section 2 and Appendix A). Even representatives of local businesses (such as the Cafe and Post Office), who you would expect to be in favour of the 'through village' route, have raised strong concerns since they recognise that safety is an essential part of a good experience for visitors.

Above all, the findings that 77% of respondents have been involved in or witnessed near misses, and 17% reported specific incidents with physical contact (15 incidents; 3 resulting in serious injury) are frightening. Several people commented that 'it is only a matter of time before a fatality or severe injury occurs'.

Moreover, the negative impact on the health and wellbeing of village residents is clearly significant, with 36% of respondents reporting verbal abuse from cyclists, and many mentioning being fearful or wary of walking on the village roads.

The demand for action is high - with 60% of respondents specifically requesting action to address the risks and issues raised. Many of these stated the need to re-route the Exe Estuary Trail off-road, with clear access points to the village, since this is the only option that will reduce the risks to an acceptable level. This is clearly an option that needs to be re-investigated. Other practical suggestions, such as improving signage and installing traffic control measures, are also provided.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Use this report, including the individual comments, to help conduct a robust risk assessment.*

The Devon County Council Safety Audit Team should use the information presented in this report to help conduct a comprehensive risk assessment of the cycle route through Lypstone. Further consultation with key interested parties, e.g., the local police, Parish Council, village residents, local businesses, and users of the trail, is recommended. Particular consideration should be given to the fact that the safety risks are at their highest during busy holiday times.

2. *Gather further evidence if needed.*

The risks are well recognised by village residents, the Parish Council and local police; however, if further evidence is required to inform and guide decision-makers, consider organising a more formal survey and/or use of other techniques (e.g. CCTV).

3. *Develop a clear and effective action plan to reduce the risks, in consultation with interested parties.*

Start now to develop a clear and effective action plan to reduce the risks identified in this report. The risks are real and tangible and cannot be ignored. Even if more information is gained through the safety audit and any additional surveys, the overall conclusions are likely to remain the same. To be effective, this action plan will require strong leadership and commitment, and the involvement of interested parties (stakeholder groups). Key steps should include for example:

- Investigating the feasibility of re-routing the Trail so that 'through cyclists, joggers and walkers' do not have to enter the village, while other visitors/residents can do so through clear access points.
- Exploring and securing funding options.
- Investigating and implementing other ways to help reduce risks, e.g., improved signage, publicity of the risks, and speed control measures.

4. *Review and confirm methods for monitoring and managing the use and impact of the Exe Estuary Trail.*

The popularity and use of the Exe Estuary Trail are clearly growing, and are likely to increase significantly once the links to the Exeter cycle routes are fully developed. Monitoring programmes are no doubt already in place, but the issues raised in this report highlight the need to monitor and manage the impact of the Trail on the local communities, and the effectiveness of any remedial measures implemented. The involvement of key interested parties in identifying and implementing the best methods is recommended.

APPENDICES

A. Copies of All Responses

B. Photographs to Show Key Locations Mentioned in Responses

C. Poster Used to Help Gather Comments

APPENDIX A

Copies of All Responses

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Email Responses:

From the beginning of public consultation regarding the route of the cycle path through Lympstone, I have had major concerns. These I expressed in writing after the first presentation to the public in the Lympstone car park.

Since then, there have been so many near misses on the Strand, Lympstone, that it would be impossible to detail them.

On a weekly basis, cyclists speed down the hill from Highcliffe seriously frightening and endangering pedestrians on the Strand. The cyclists make no noise so they come upon one without warning. This is highly dangerous as there is no footpath to protect pedestrians.

I am staggered that up to now there has not been a serious accident, either pedestrian or cyclist. There is a very serious possibility that cyclists speeding down the hill will go head on into a car/lorry accelerating to turn the blind corner and go up the hill.

There is without question a number of accidents waiting to happen.

The only solutions I can see would include

- Warning signs at the top of the hill, (but I doubt they would have little effect as many of the cyclists are very aggressive and abusive).
- More effective would be raised bumps that stretch right across the road and, therefore, could not be circumvented by cyclists.

I do approve of the building of cycle tracks in principle, but the routing through Lympstone is just plain dangerous

I really do fear a serious accident and hope you can take suitable measures.

My grandson, aged 12, was walking along the road, outside the Globe Inn, when he was knocked over by a cyclist. Fortunately he was not injured and was helped to his feet by a kind villager. The cyclist however did not stop and obviously could not care less about the event.

ALL cyclists should have to have insurance and should also be required BY LAW to have a bell to alert pedestrians as they approach,

When passing over the railway bridge the cyclists seem to think they have "Right of way" over pedestrians.

I hope these points will be considered when the DCC audit is discussed.

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Good to see people enjoying the open air. However, 2 kinds of people make it dangerous to Lymestone villagers & other cyclists:

1) The ignorant who thinks the cycle path route once on the public road is only for them. e.g. my own experience (July?) at Sowden End. A mother pushing a pram ahead of her two 4/5 year-olds on tricycles let them ride on the wrong *(right-hand side) of the road, unsupervised. This is an accident waiting to happen, and would have been my fault!

2) The inconsiderate going much too fast who forcefully power through the village. Lymestone is busy, with much scaffolding, building, old people on mobility scooters and young children who cannot move quickly out of the way. Again, there are businesses who have to load up in the street and are shouted at by cyclists. 2 accidents have occurred on the steep hills to my knowledge. In August, down Cox's Hill (from Exmouth) a cyclist went down so fast he went into a building at the bottom (blind right bend there), and was badly injured. The second was at the bottom of Station Hill coming out without stopping onto the main village road. A third (unreported) one was when a woman cyclist was brought off her bike by a male who passed too near, was shouted at, then lay in wait round the next bend. After the attack he pedalled off at speed. /This must mean this path in Lymestone is dangerous. Please do something, even only notices or sleeping policemen, to stop this. I would like to see the path re-routed. The businesses are now established and people would come down at Lymestone anyway.

My concerns over the Exmouth to Exeter Cycle Way at Lymestone Village:

- 1) Many cyclists are oblivious to the fact they are leaving the cycle way at Lymestone village to join the main (very busy) village thoroughfare.
- 2) There have been numerous near misses at Station Hill, Cox Hill, and the bend at Quay Lane and at the very sharp bend at Sowden End.
- 3) Cycles are often badly parked often with bikes left flat on the road over double yellow lines.
- 4) There are a number of families with very small children on independent bikes who are not providing adequate supervision under these circumstances.
- 5) Unfortunately there is too often verbal abuse directed at drivers from cyclist.
- 6) Better signage is required for the unsuspecting motorist and for cyclist as they too have responsibilities to ensure that extreme care is taken and the Highway Code is adhered to.

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I would like to add our comments to the Safety Audit re. Lypstone Cycle Path. We live in the Strand, opposite the Globe, and have been enduring problems caused by the Cycle Path as follows:

- 1) Many of the cyclists using the Path obviously do not realise that the Cycle Path ENDS at Lypstone Station and does not start again until just beyond Sowden End with the reverse situation occurring coming down the hill from Sowden Lane to Lypstone Station. This causes many frightening situations and very near misses with not only pedestrians but other vehicles.
- 2) The area of The Strand outside our house is becoming extremely dangerous as many cyclists come down the hill at great speed and many people have had very near misses – only the occasional cyclist uses a bell. This road has no footpath and is frequented by mothers with small children in pushchairs, elderly people with walking difficulties, people on horseback etc.
- 3) There are NO notices to say that this area is NOT a Cycle Path.
- 4) On the cycle path itself very few people use their cycle bells. One of my staff was nearly knocked from her bicycle last June and when she remonstrated with the cyclist he physically assaulted her and knocked her from her bike – she was badly shaken, but did not report it to the Police as she had no idea who the man was.
- 5) Our car was badly scratched down the side by a cyclist who overtook our car going up the hill from our house. When we drew level with him and asked him for his name and address so that we could contact him re. the damage we were told “Bugger Off”. With that he cycled away from us and because of oncoming traffic we were unable to catch up with him again.

For us the Cycle Path is a nightmare and a serious accident waiting to happen.

There definitely needs to be a HALT sign opposite Londis coming down Station Hill, as some cyclists are travelling far too fast and not even stopping.

We must all learn to share the cycle path, walkers are spreading right across the path and some of the cyclists are going far too fast.

Coming into the village from Exmouth cyclists are speeding past The Globe.

Another major problem is dogs should be kept on a lead.

The cycle path is wide enough for everyone to share.

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Overview: Experience to date has conclusively proved the villagers' original fears that the decision to route the cycleway through the village was totally wrong. It has become a serious safety threat to the residents and has had a major detrimental effect on the ambience of the village. The cycleway is routed along a road with no footpaths and has two blind right-angled bends, both at the bottom of steep hills.

Incidents:

- 1) I have been nearly knocked down and sworn at by a cyclist and my wife has had several near misses.
- 2) When walking near my house a passing cyclist shouted at me "If people do not get off the road they will be knocked down".
- 3) There are frequent, regular incidents of cyclists passing at high speed - even racing speeds - without any audible warning of their presence, and therefore many near misses.

Specific concerns:

- 1) Cycleway users are coming to Lypstone by car with their bicycles and filling the car park, thereby preventing residents, who have already paid, from parking at times.
- 2) Because the road is part of the cycleway, cyclists do not adhere to the Highway Code while on the road section, or even show normal consideration to other road users.
- 3) The speed of cyclists through the village is a severe and ever-present danger to pedestrians who have no footpaths and use the many small lanes which emerge directly on to the road, and to the many residents whose front doors also open directly on to the road.
- 4) Cyclists are leaving the route in the village to explore and are cycling on the small footpaths, especially to get to the waterside - this is particularly severe in Quay Lane where, again, the front doors open directly on to the footpath.

Solution:

Planning action should be taken now to re-route the cycleway alongside the railway and to take it off the village roads. This would allow fast-moving commuting and long-distance cyclists to bypass the village. For those wishing to explore Lypstone or visit the public houses or shops, access can be provided at the station through the existing access, or a new access could be provided at the public car park, which would also give cyclists direct access to the public toilets.

It is abundantly clear that as the path develops around the estuary the above problems will be magnified with an ever-increasing number of users and consequently increased danger to the villagers.

Please move the path to alongside the railway line before we have a serious accident - we have been relatively lucky so far but it will only be a matter of time before we do.

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Cycle route through Lympstone – high risk. Near misses occur almost daily.

On 3/11/11 I witnessed the following on seeing a woman & man on bikes round a blind bend in Lympstone narrowly avoiding cycling into a pedestrian walking close to roadside round bend:

- woman to the man: wow I nearly crashed into that pedestrian
- man: me too, I only have one brake
- woman: yes, I only have one brake as well.

Cyclist riding at an inappropriate speed through the railway car park travelling south when car drivers are reversing out of parking slot.

Cyclists descending Station Hill at increasing speed with no noticeable slowing at junction with The Strand, blind views to left.

The route between the two sections of the cycle track through Lympstone could hardly be more dangerous for cyclists & pedestrians - steep hills, sharp blind bends, narrow roads. If nothing is done to drastically improve the situation, I will not be at all surprised if there is fatality or serious injury within a couple of years.

It is very disappointing that all the efforts by the PC & others to avoid these risks in the first place and to reduce them since have produced no response.

I believe that the track should be made continuous at railway level through Lympstone.

I write on behalf of my elderly in-laws who live on Sowden Lane, on many occasions they have struggled to get out of their drive way because of fast cyclists or even very slow families of cyclists who seem to have little regard for the fact that people need to carry on with their daily life even though they live on a cycle trail. Cyclists cycle through the village 2,3 or even more abreast of each other seemingly oblivious to the fact it is a village with a community that needs to function as normal.

My mother-in-law states that when she wants to walk out of the drive she feels anxious and has to pause before stepping out onto the road as she cannot hear the bike's coming.

I fully appreciate the cycle path as we use it ourselves but it seems crazy that it goes straight through a busy village.

I was myself driving to my in-laws only last week when a father and son were cycling towards me, father waved at his son to i presume warn him a car was coming. The son who had little control of his bike took it as a signal to overtake his father heading straight towards my car at great speed and a wobble....

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Thank you for the opportunity to pass on experiences and views in connection with the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone.

I am a Lympstone resident living at Sowden End. I therefore have daily experience of the route through Lympstone as a cyclist, pedestrian and car driver.

As a cyclist, having access to the cycle path either to Topsham or Exmouth avoiding the busy A377 is a great improvement. The extent to which it is used is a great testament to that. However this high level of usage has brought a number of problems that only increase as the numbers using the track (and therefore the public highway through Lympstone) also increase.

The majority of the road from the end of the cycle path from Exmouth through to Lympstone station, where the cycle path resumes, is single track with passing spaces. Within the single track sections there are two blind corners - one at Sowden End and the other at Quay Lane. Both corners are situated at the bottom of steep hills. I have experienced near misses with cyclists travelling too fast in these sections.

Throughout the village there are a number of private drives or doors that open directly onto the road. There have been a number of incidents with cyclists travelling at the edge of the road and giving insufficient clearance to those exiting their properties. My wife has been hit by a cyclist travelling at speed who was unaware of the driveway and her friend hospitalised with a fractured arm.

The section of road from Sowden End going up the hill into the village is not wide enough for a car and a bicycle to pass. As numbers using the path increase (and therefore the road into the village) the number of times that bicycles and cars meet in this section steadily increases - both inconvenient and increasingly dangerous as less experienced cyclist numbers increase. The junction at the bottom of the hill down from the station (opposite the village shop) is the scene of regular incidents. Many cyclists do not stop despite the numbers of cars and pedestrians in this area who use the shop and local pub.

Not a safety issue as such but my other concern relates to the increase in traffic now channelled through the village. Over the years highways authorities and local councils have responded to campaigns to reduce through traffic through towns and villages. The cycle path has vastly increased through traffic detracting from the peaceful village life previously enjoyed by its residents.

Suggestions for improvements:

Given the numbers now using the road though the village, the original route contemplated along the railway track should be implemented. The new cycle path from Exmouth currently joins at Sowden Lane. It should cross the road at that point and then continue up the other side parallel to the railway track through to Lympstone station. This would still give those wishing to access the village the ability to do so from either end of the village but the majority of cyclists could just pass harmlessly through to the mutual benefit of all.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

Some input to the Exe Estuary Trail Safety Audit:

1. As a pedestrian (which I believe is the majority user from Lympstone to Exmouth)

It is difficult to remember to walk narrow file on the sections which are substandard width, particularly the climb out of Lympstone beyond the concrete cutting - can this now be widened please.

Many racing cycles are not mentally prepared to slow down when things get congested.

2. As a cyclist (daily return trip out of peak)

Dogs not on leads are a big issue, and ones on extending cable leads are even more potentially dangerous.

Unnecessary and greater than 1 in 20 gradients are very annoying when my young daughter is with me - can these be re-graded to the legal disabled and grant funding compliant gradient please.

Some reflectors on the fencing and similar locations particularly where there are changes in angle of the path, and even more so on chicannes would improve safety.

The surface on the boardwalk at Lympstone/Exmouth boundary needs resurfacing already - perhaps use the improved material in use on the Exton section.

3. As a Lympstone Village Resident (living on the Strand)

Racing cyclists down the hill from allotments into Lympstone (Cox's Hill) are a serious danger, so are families all across the width of the road at this point esp. at the blind corner at the bottom.

Cyclists very seldom stop or even slow down to give way at the bottom of Station Hill joining The Strand heading southbound.

More signage of the route, cyclists often lost in Lympstone and asking where to go, probably the same in Exton.

Can money be found to put the path along the railway from Sowden End to Lympstone please now that you haven't had to build the 'bridge too far' over the Clyst.

Many Thanks.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

A few comments about the above cycleway:-

1. It has been a disaster for this village apart from the traders who are making a fortune especially the Swan Inn.
2. You take your life in your hands if walking in the village. Riders who cycle too fast, have no road sense or manners. some have no lights and no bells. Some think that no other traffic should be on the road. Parking is a problem where I live as the car park is usually full on a weekend.
3. The give way junction with Station Hill is regularly ignored and I have had to stop suddenly on a couple of occasions when cyclists failed to slow down at this junction.
4. Friends have been verbally abused with rude signs being shown.
5. In support, some walkers on the cycleway show no sense at all and will walk three or four abreast some have dogs which they let run free.
6. Improvements:- Should be re-routed around the village.
7. I personally have strong views on the up keep of the toilets as I feel I should not have to contribute to something I never use.

Hope these comments are of some use.

Thank you for carrying out this exercise.

My wife and I are keen recreational cyclists and have used the above route quite frequently. We support Sustrans and are delighted with the way cycle routes have been developed in and around Exeter and particularly along the Exe estuary.

We are also motorists and regularly drive through Lympstone. The point where the cycle path joins Sowden Lane and the very narrow route, with blind bends, into the centre of the Village is particularly dangerous to cyclists, especially children. On several occasions, while driving very slowly, i have had to brake rapidly when a young cyclist has only just been able to stop inches away from my bumper. I would suggest that it is only a matter of time before a very serious accident occurs in this vicinity.

It is unlikely that the lane could be improved to safely accommodate cyclists and vehicles, and the only alternative would be to continue the cycle route along side the railway.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymptone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I am writing to you with regard to the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymptone.

As a cyclist, walker and motorist I have concerns about the trail using the highway through the village.

Firstly there are many dangerous black spots that cyclists have to navigate, mainly the corner at Sowden End where cars are in the middle of the road, and are not aware of cyclist coming round the corner.

Car drivers have to crawl along Sowden Lane into the village and during weekends the cars can get backed up as they wait for cyclists, children and wheelchair bikes to come up or down the lane.

The junction by The Swan pub is not clearly marked, and many a child has come down the hill too quickly not realising there is a junction at the bottom. Children often go ahead of their parents and cannot read road markings, so better signage is needed.

The estuary trail is a wonderful amenity , but the cycling experience can be ruined by very fast commuter cyclists , not giving walkers and others users space and they screech though the village and not showing care to others. They and other users are better off on a trail that does not use a highway!

I am a resident of Quay Lane, Lymptone and since the cycle path has been in use, we have had a large amount of cyclists coming down Quay Lane, at speed. This and all the narrow lanes in this area are all marked as foot paths but when asked to walk a lot of these cyclist's become rude and abusive.

My other concern is the complete lack of signs for the cycle path through the village. This is a living village, with traffic, cars, lorries and pedestrians. Our council have been asking for a 20 speed limit for years but nothing ever happens. There have been many bump and near misses with cyclists, but it is very hard to identify one person in lycra, helmet and dark glasses from the next one.

It is a shame the cycle path could not have come out at the car park ,then they would not have the dangerous hill and corner at the bottom of Sowden Lane to travel at speed around. There would be a level ride through the village to the Station Hill, which is a speed problem going to Exmouth, as they sometimes don't stop at the halt sign.

It is a good trail and many people enjoy it.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lypstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

With reference to the traffic which rushes through Lypstone I feel most strongly that something must be done and done quickly, my lovely cat was knocked by a car on Sunday and killed outright, the car didn't stop. Next time it will be a child or elderly person. Lypstone is a wonderful place to live but you take your in your hands with all these cyclists that regard the village as an extension of the cycle track, the weekends are absolute nightmare. Surely you can do something to ease the situation. My daughter was walking with her dog near the little hill in Sowden Lane when she was very nearly run over, but instead of apologising the cyclist used abusive language.

We have just noticed you are carrying out a safety audit on the Exe Estuary Trail. Maybe a bit more publicity and longer response period would be helpful to get a clearer picture, however here is our input.

Our front door opens right onto the main village street and since the trail opened we run the daily risk of being run over by speeding cyclists taking a racing line through Lypstone. My husband was actually knocked over about 18 months ago by a young lad cyclist. This occurred as he stepped out from our house and was passed to the parish council as an incident.

We have witnessed many occasions when cyclists do not stop and give way at the bottom of Station Hill. Earlier this summer we had to stop our car very quickly to avoid hitting a boy of about 8 years old who came straight down the hill across the road on his bike and stopped against the Londis shop. His father was following and didn't seem to register the seriousness to his son or, indeed to us and our vehicle!

We regularly encounter impatient cyclists trying to overtake on either side as we are turning right into the blind corner at Chapel Road and have experienced expletives and head shaking from the cyclists as they whizz past.

Another impact is the extra strain on parking on the village streets and the car park. As annual Underhill car park permit holders it is very frustrating to be confronted by a full car park, particularly on Sundays when it is still free to park. Maybe some consideration to parking for cycle path users should be included in the trail, this should not be in Underhill car park which is already full to capacity. I did raise this as a parish councillor when the trail was being planned but nothing was done.

As respondees to your audit, we would like to see the collated comments and your proposed outcomes. We look forward to hearing from you with your timetable and action plan.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our opinions and experiences surrounding the cycle path through Lympstone. We live at the top of Sowden Lane and have suffered many instances of verbal abuse from cyclists when trying to enter or exit our driveway. The problem seems to us that they consider they can use all the road without any thought for other users. The week before last I was gently edging out of my driveway and the road appeared clear only to find a cyclist travelling at speed overtaking pedestrians on the wrong side of the road which for me was unsighted. I cannot write here the language that followed. The offending persons are normally the "professional cyclists" who travel through the village at speeds far in excess of most motor vehicles. We have personally experienced two very near misses at the bottom of the hill into the village. On both occasions which were back in August we were in our car almost stationary at the bottom of the hill when cyclists came down at high speed narrowly missing impacting us in the centre of the bonnet. Amazingly on both occasions they managed to swerve from the wrong side of the road and miss us. On another occasion driving down the hill into the village two cyclists were weaving across the road having trouble pedalling up the incline, I was forced to stop and with that one passed me on the left hand side the other to the right. Just last Friday as we entered the village under the railway arch a cyclist came down Station Hill straight across the road without even looking, I subsequently overtook him and on reaching my house was backing into my drive when he approached then swerved across the front of me yelling various expletives as he went past. Shortly after this experience we overheard our postman "exchanging views" with yet another offender and quite a heated exchange it was too.

To our second concern: It would appear that the pedestrian element of the "trail" think they are still on the route. We are forever seeing really young children many on tiny bicycles, also dogs running free in the roadway only to be yelled and screamed at every time a vehicle needs to come through. The extra litter, cyclists flegm and dog fouling (believe it or not some even in the disposable bags) that we have to remove from our boundary hedge and the road is increasing every week, we have had instances through the Summer months where dogs have been allowed by their owners to foul in our front garden.

My final question is, why was the route not continued along the railway line? The effects to the houses backing onto the railway would have been minimal compared with the inconvenience the route causes passing as it does through the most dangerous road section in the village. If the route had continued along the railway and the access point to the village at Cliff Field was adequately signposted there would I am sure have been no loss of passing trade for our all important retail outlets. Anyone who has walked, jogged or cycled the journey from Exmouth would, I am sure, be quite happy to progress another 25 yds to eat, drink, etc.

It is our opinion that, not will someone be killed or seriously injured, but how soon.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I live in Lympstone and unfortunately the cycle track finishes just outside the village from Exmouth and for the cyclists to rejoin the track they have to cycle through our village!

Lympstone has tiny roads and in the middle of the village there are no pavements on either side of the road. So pedestrians have to walk on the edges of the road, which is bad enough but at least you can hear the cars coming. You cannot hear the cyclists, most of them don't have a bell, and if you step into their path most times all you get from them is a load of verbal abuse!

I used to live on Coxes Hill, think the correct name for that stretch of road is Sowden Hill, so I am very used to crossing that road. Three months ago I was crossing that hill to go straight in to Pump Lane which is at the bottom, a cyclist came speeding down the hill, with his head down over the handle bars and nearly hit me, I only avoided being run over because I was fit enough to jump out of his way. The cyclist swore at me, and then carried on.

Lympstone cannot cope with the volume of cyclists, especially at weekends. Our village is being turned into a racetrack, sometimes the cyclists even shout to one another boasting what speed they are doing!

I am very reluctant to ride my horse through the village at the weekends, so are other riders, not because my horse takes fright over the cyclists but because there is not enough room for him plus cars and bikes.

There will be an accident and the horrible thing is it will more than likely involve a child. Teaching children to ride a bike is great, BUT not using our narrow roads as training ground. The other problem is that a lot of the locals are elderly and their driving skills are not so good, also their reactions are slow.

The cycle track is a fantastic idea, but it's plain antisocial, dangerous and not fair on us residents (who pay very high council tax bills) to route it through a village!!

The speed of some cyclists, both along the path and especially through the village, is a real problem. A car you can hear but a cyclist is on you before you know.

Another big complaint is the cars parked at the bottom of the hill - very dangerous and an accident in waiting.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I am grateful for the chance at last to 'tell it how it is' about the Exe Estuary Trail through Lympstone from a resident's perspective!

In short it's a nightmare!

A lethal cocktail of users squeezed onto narrow lanes with no pavements, blind corners, people's front doors opening directly on to the streets, blind road junctions and steep and single track sections. Experienced road racing cyclists travelling at high speed, dog walkers with dogs on and off leads, mobility scooters, families with young children, some on bikes for the first time, recreational cyclists not always sure where they are going and often in the middle of the road, joggers with or without headphones, youngsters on micro scooters, hikers sometimes in large groups, roller bladers vast numbers of users and many acting like they have rights over other road user groups, especially residents who are trying to drive from A to B going while going about their daily lives.

I have recently been at the receiving end of a cyclist 'race training' past my house and was lucky to escape slightly shaken. My friend was not so lucky ending up with a fractured arm. The speed at which the cyclist hit her was alarming. (police report filled) Lympstone turns into nothing short of an assault course on fine dry days and at weekends.

The failings of routing The Trail straight through the middle of our village are now plain for all to see.

As a result of DCC's lack of genuine consultation & their ignoring of our Parish Councillors' views & recommendations regarding a safe route, the safety of villagers & trail users alike has been hugely compromised. Safety not budget should have been the top criteria and resulted in an extended off road solution with The Trail continuing along the railway line. The pre cycle path photo below clearly illustrates just how much room there is for a totally car free and comparatively level alternative route through the village.

With numbers of trail users increasing all the time and a recent a spate of accidents in the village its time to rethink the route before not after someone gets seriously injured.

The only other point I would like to make is that a safety audit conducted in October alone is not going to accurately reflect the full impact of the route on the village. Assessors will need to return during the various holidays when all the safety issues are exacerbated by users in far larger numbers, made up of a much higher proportion of children and a much higher proportion of visitors who are new to this route and unable to anticipate the hazards in the village.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

The cycle path is great - I use it on my bike and on foot and I like the fact that it has not spoiled the ability to walk quietly and alone on the shore of the estuary.

However, I consider that there are safety issues that should urgently be addressed with regard to the passage of the 'path' through Lympstone. This has become particularly important as there seems to have been an upsurge in 'fast' cycling - and cyclists on these faster bikes seem to treat the village as simply part of the path on which they have right of way. In this respect of course, they are a danger to themselves and the pedestrians who have no pavements to walk on. I have seen a number of occasions where accidents have nearly happened and have been involved in such incidents on foot and on my bike. There are many blind corners in Lympstone village. When I have asked cyclists to give me more space, I have not always had pleasant responses.

I am also concerned about the corner at Sowden End. I walk there often and cyclists cut the corner so that one can be met head on - and there is no way of avoiding the situation.

There was always an alternative route for the cycle path - along the railway line and I think it should be reconsidered before someone is killed in the village.

We live in Underhill, 20 yards back from The Strand and just behind The Globe.

We have had countless near misses from cyclists as we walk our dog across The Strand to the foreshore and been subjected to abuse and shouting from badly behaved speeding cyclists. They are travelling too fast for safety, or are family groups meandering all over the road. It's particularly bad early mornings/early evenings for speeding commuters, and all weekend/school holiday times for slow congested groups.

There must be a 10mph speed limit enforced before someone is killed. Our neighbours cat was killed last weekend by a 4x4 rushing through.

Action must be taken urgently before our worst fears are realised.

To whom it may concern:

I would like to point out the danger at the station car park at Lympstone.

I use this car park throughout the week and have experienced a few near misses with cyclists who seem oblivious to cars reversing in and out of the spaces. As a Lympstone resident I am very aware of the path and take extreme care but many cyclists speed along despite having to negotiate the hill upwards or the gateway to slow them downwards. This is made worse when an arrival of a train brings pedestrians, motorists and cyclists together within a tight space.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lypmstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I was only made aware of the EET safety audit by friends on 8 October. The flyer states that "time is limited because the safety audit is due to be completed in October". Why the lateness of the hour? Why is this exercise having to be rushed through in this way? Is it a case of the authorities being obliged rather grudgingly to have to pay lip service to 'transparency' and 'consultation' with the local community?

The hazards of routing the EET through Lypmstone, rather than bypassing it, and allowing access from a spur track, were surely adequately rehearsed during the consultation and 'roadshow' in the village before planning (presumably) was finalised and construction commenced? Surely, it was at that time that a formal *Risk and Safety Assessment* should have been made and appropriate adjustments undertaken?

If an RA was indeed undertaken I do not recall the outcome being well publicised at the time and, in my opinion, views then widely expressed by many villagers regarding the hazards and associated risks attendant on the proposed routing were seemingly disregarded. So much for 'consultation'?

It is now rather late in the day to be undertaking a 'Safety Audit'. The potential risks to pedestrians, and indeed cyclists and motorists, were well made previously, and it is extremely fortunate that no major damage to life, limb and properties along Sowden Lane and The Strand has yet, to my knowledge, occurred. 'Near misses' have certainly been commonplace.

In brief: the EET is undoubtedly attracting an increasing number of visitors to Lypmstone. This is undoubtedly having a positive effect on perhaps most of the small businesses in the village. This is good.

The downsides are:

1. The increased pedestrian, wheeled and vehicular traffic as a result of the EET have come at cost to village residents in general (and arguably to the pedestrian visitors themselves) when going about their daily routines in the village centre and along Sowden Lane, the southern access road to the centre.
2. The increased demand on the limited parking in the village, such that, particularly at weekends, residents who are permit holders and obliged to park their cars in the village car park can have difficulty (if not the impossibility of) finding a parking bay. Overflow onto nearby residential roads (e.g. Underhill Close, Sowden Lane) causes problems to residents. It does not help that on Sundays, even in these straightened times, visitors are even offered free parking by a munificent council in order to offload themselves and their cycles, etc.
3. The - to some - unsightly clutter of cycles, particularly outside The Swan, but often wherever the owners feel like it also adds to the general hazards in the village centre.
4. The speed and general lack of anticipation by cyclists in particular of likely hazards (narrow lanes, steep hills, sharp bends, other traffic, pedestrians, 'blind' side lanes and passageways). These are all daily occurrences on Sowden Lane (from the Exmouth section of the EET onwards), The Strand and, near The Swan - where cyclists frequently endeavour to pick up yet more speed to tackle the Station Hill, passing cars and pedestrians on both sides in their haste.

Cont.....

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

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The same applies to south bound cyclists proceeding from the Station onto The Strand, which should definitely be classed as a Halt, given the focused activity by the Londis Store, Shears Cafe and The Swan. Outbound motorists emerging from Chapel Road and heading north have to exercise particular caution when negotiating this busy stretch of The Strand and are liable to being 'carved-up' by cyclists on either wing. The latter would come off second best, not necessarily because of vehicle driver error.

The homes of many residents in the central zone open directly onto The Strand. My wife and I, as two of these residents, certainly have to peer out cautiously, to all intents like meerkats, before emerging onto the street. We have had some narrow escapes.

Attempts to urge cyclists to take care/slow down/keep-in/announce their presence with a warning bell, etc. are often ignored and on occasion result in a bad-mouthing response.

Families on bicycles: Parents often accompanying young children who have varying degrees of competence on their own cycles, or riding bikes with child 'trailers' attached. The family groups often spread across the road or, if in line ahead, are well separated and have little or no chance of preventing an accident to their children should the latter panic on meeting oncoming traffic, whether motorised or pedestrian.

In short: it is perhaps miraculous that there have been, to my knowledge, no serious accidents - *yet*. *Time for a rethink*. Over to you.

In response to your request for feedback on the cycle trail, I have a number of concerns. we live in Lympstone in the Strand and our front door and drive open directly onto the roadway with no pavements.

(1) The utter ignorance of the majority of "speed cyclists" defies belief. There is a misconception that they have priority over other road users. Never acknowledging other legitimate road users or warning of their presence. Speed is also a major concern cycling too fast for the conditions and other users.

(2) Near misses are too many to mention. Only the other day a cat was run over and it won't be long before there is a serious accident involving children or our elderly residents.

(3) Improvements:

- Road calming measures to slow down cyclists.
- Remove the direct cycle path through the village centre. It could be located adjacent to the train track.
- Provide painted lines and hatching outside homes with no pavement outside so that cyclists and indeed cars are forced to the middle of the road

I do worry that this survey has been hastily arranged and lacks widespread publicity meaning that feedback is inevitably going to be limited

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymptone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I am a resident of Lymptone and want to express my strong feelings about the cycle track. I frankly and honestly do not know one single resident who is now in favour of the cycle track. Last night I met a middle aged resident who has lived in the village for 30 years. His comment to me says it all. He said "the cyclists have totally ruined this village it is no longer a pleasure to live here and we (he and his wife) have decided to move out of the village as soon as they have an opportunity".

The cyclists are rude, noisy, selfish and totally discourteous to anybody who dares to be in their path. Every resident has stories of near misses with cyclist or a personal encounter with an aggressive cyclist.

The problem on the track itself, is that the cyclists consider that other people should not be on it. It is their property and walkers are invading their right to cycle. Whilst I understand their frustration, at times it is difficult for walkers. Most cyclists these days do not have bells on their bike and often, if the cyclist is coming from behind, you do not know they are coming until they are right behind you, shouting at you to get out of the way.

Through Lymptone their behavior is totally disrespectful to the residents. They cycle in groups so that walkers have to jump out of the way, or stand rigid as they pass you on either side. They cycle at speed, especially down the hills into the Strand. Because they are going at speed, they shout and have conversations so loud as to be heard inside the houses backing on to the road. Often this problem is early in the morning as people use the track to go to work, totally oblivious that other people might still be in bed. The peace of the village has gone.

Finally safety. It is a miracle that somebody has not been killed. The speed at which people cycle into the centre of the village, is frightening. In particular, coming in from Exmouth onto the Strand, in particular coming down from the station onto the Strand is quite frightening at times and finally the junction of Burghmanns hill and Church Road. I would also want to make the point about young children. Many parents take children onto the cycle path who have just learned to cycle. Whilst this is great on the path, it is totally a different matter when they cycle into the village and come into contact with pedestrians and motorists. You would not believe the number of times I have seen "little Jonney" wobbling ahead of the pack, going down the hill, around the corner totally oblivious of the fact that a car might be coming the other way. Disaster is waiting to happen!

I know I sound like a "kill Joy" but it is no exaggeration to say that the cycle track has ruined the peace and tranquility of our village. It is no longer a pleasure to walk through the centre of the village. It is an ordeal.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I have no objections at all to the cycle paths or cyclists in general, and am one myself. I would promote it as healthy leisure activity; I enjoy the walks tremendously and think it is a wonderful facility, although my concern on the actual paths for pedestrians is that cyclists do ride too fast and do not ring their bells to let you know they are approaching.

I live in the middle of Lympstone Village and I have had three incidents where I have almost been knocked flying by cyclists. On two occasions by cyclists coming very fast down Cox's Hill (the Station Hill) - in both cases, they did not stop at the junction, nor slow down. The first cyclist was on the left side of the road; the second was on the right hand side of the road. The third incident was a cyclist coming down the hill towards the Post Office at high speed. None of these cyclists used their bells or called out.

In addition, I find that many cyclists do ignore the stop sign at the bottom of Cox's Hill. They do not indicate right, they cycle far too fast, and they seem to think the road through the village is a cycle path itself. I have heard many of them call to villagers to 'get out of the way' or get off the cycle path', whilst straddling the road four abreast. At the weekends, the centre of the village (which is very small), is often choked with 4x4 vehicles with cycles attached to the back, and this creates safety issues too by increasing the volume of traffic. Many of the cyclists are polite and friendly, but a persistent number are extremely rude and have no due care for the villagers or the environment. Again, I cannot emphasise enough the lack of bell use when approaching pedestrians. I am concerned that a serious accident will happen before long, and wonder how we could get cyclists to have more respect for the village and its inhabitants, and how we can encourage them to take more care and pay more attention on the road and the cycle paths.

We live on Sowden Lane and on many occasions have had to jump out of the way of speeding riders when walking or crossing the road as they come down the hill in to the village.

Many have no regard for the speed limit and seem to use the cycle path as a training route rather than a leisure ride.

The hill is also a problem for children riding out of control

I do feel we are waiting for a very nasty accident to happen, I hope I am wrong.
Use of passing places for car parking is also an issue in the nearby roads

I am a keen cyclist and regularly use the cycle path at Lympstone; however I find cycling through Lympstone itself quite dangerous as there is never enough room to pass cars safely.

On one particular occasion i was very nearly hit by a car around one of the corner. It would be lovely if the cycle path was to be relocated up along the railway line as it would be a far safer option and would also ease congestion in the village.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

People who cycle through the middle of the village seem to have the idea that the main road is still only the cycle path, and we see families with young children right in the middle of the road, or worse, on the wrong side of the road, all the time. An accident will happen sooner or later. No one seems to have a bicycle bell either, so that people doing 25 miles per hour along the Strand outside my house, are a dangerous menace.

I have nearly been knocked over many times, and take my life in my hands every time I step out of my front door.

We need better road signs telling cyclists to keep to the LEFT at all times. Also, speed humps on both Sowden Hill and Station Hill.

The quality of life in Lympstone has been much depleted by the cycle path. In many instances, they are a menace.

As someone who uses the same route into the village as the cyclists, I experience the dangers that are present to cyclists and motorists.

The first being where the Exmouth trail comes into Lympstone. Cyclists come out of the path at a speed, they do not look left or right as they cycle onto the road. This is particularly dangerous for the motorists who although go slowly could be faced with a head on collision.

There are many blind corners in Lympstone which the cyclists are unaware of. When entering the village from Exmouth, the cyclists travel down the steep hill on Sowden Lane. They travel at extremely high speeds and usually in the middle of the road due to the scaffolding and cars on the left side. There is a sharp corner at the bottom.

There are very little warning signs for the cyclists and the directions are poor.

I feel that the highway through the village is not the right route for the cyclists.

Thought you might like some feedback from a Mum with a tagalong!! We do the section from Lympstone station all the way round to Exminster once a week to school. The bit we find difficult is the bit between where the track stops at Sowden End and goes through the village - tight corner and narrow up the hill. It feels really dangerous sometimes and at weekends when there are lots of people using the route it can get really congested. We also use the path towards Exmouth and it appears to be OK if not a bit narrow sometime again because it is so popular.

As an aside, the gates are OK down past CTC but the one at the Exton station end is a bit tricky - quite tight. Now the gate at the end of Exton has been opened up that is fab. We can't wait for the new bridge to open and are OK with the bit through Topsham.

We are loving it!!

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

Witnessed a very near miss this a.m. as a lady of about 80 who was approaching the Swan Inn from the railway bridge direction and probably unaware of the danger of cyclists approaching at speed down Station Hill, was nearly knocked over by a cyclist on a white lightweight road bike. He should have rung his bell but probably doesn't have one. He probably expected her to be aware of his approach. Big mistake. He missed her by about 12 inches. She was visibly shocked. He was already 30 yards away by the time she realised what had happened.

This sort of potential mayhem is not uncommon around Lympstone's own Piccadilly Circus.

I use the trail myself regularly both on foot and on my bike. The degree of conflict between the two modes is generally unacceptable, and at its worst at the bottom of Station Hill. In all other respects I applaud the facility.

Some sort of physical restraint is clearly necessary. I'm normally not enthusiastic about speed bumps, but a series of three bumps specifically designed to jolt a cycle if taken too quickly could be the answer. A cross section of roughly one inch square might do the trick and not unduly hamper other road users. They could be set in series, with the last where the white stripe is at the junction, the full width of Station Hill as most cyclists at speed cut this corner by the Swan.

I wish to express my concern regarding how unsafe it has become to travel along The Strand in Lympstone as a result of the cycleway.

My wife was forced to crash into the wall by the Post Office (last year) in order to avoid a cyclist travelling at high speed towards Station Hill. She was about turn into Chapel Road passing a pedestrian walking in the same direction; a cyclist travelling at some speed tried to squeeze in between, and if my wife hadn't steered into the wall the pedestrian would have been knocked down. The cyclist didn't stop and my wife was extremely upset by the whole incident.

On a personal note, my hearing isn't very good and I am becoming increasingly anxious walking along The Strand because there is no pavement and I have to walk in the road where I don't always hear cyclist coming up behind me, I have had a number of near misses! I experience a similar problem with a cyclist coming towards me because unlike maritime rules where two oncoming vessels know which side to pass, on The Strand I have jumped one way only see a cyclist change course and still be heading straight for me. The shouting and rude gestures don't help.

I am an occasional user of the Exe Estuary Trail and think it is great, but I do wish it could follow on the railway as the rest of the route does and avoid the inevitable fatality - I only hope it isn't me or anyone else for that matter!

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

We both have grave concerns regarding the safety of pedestrians, cyclists & even motorists at many points on the road section of the Exe Estuary Trail in the village of Lympstone.

Starting at the southern end of the village & travelling northwards from the point where the purpose built cycle track meets the road we have:

1. The notice advising cyclists that they are joining a public highway is ludicrously/ completely inadequate. Both the sign & writing are much too small. The location needs a sign comparable to the normal public highway "STOP" sign in order to make adequate impact on some cyclists. It should be noted that - absurdly - this section of Sowden Lane is not even in a 30mph area.

The route now travels westwards to Sowden End & turns right giving a second serious hazard:

2. It is very likely that a vehicle turning this narrow blind corner, which is not wide enough for two cars, will meet cyclists speed right across the road. Some are quite likely to be racing down the hill at brakeneck speed!

The route now travels northwards along Sowden Lane, up the hill, into the residential part of the village, & then down Cox's Hill to the Strand. This downward section, whose gradient is estimated at 10% at least, gives a third serious hazard. My wife has even been hit at the top of the hill by an incompetent cyclist travelling slowly but luckily she suffered no damage.

3. The combination of a steep hill plus a narrow bendy road with overhanging walls & trees makes this part of Sowden Lane hazardous for both cyclists & pedestrians. Many cyclists travelling southwards find they cannot cycle up the hill & get off to push. On the other hand many race northwards cycling down the hill at breakneck speed as if taking part in the Tour of Britain.

The route now travels northwards along The Strand. This is a narrow road with no pavements & occasional parked cars plus many narrow pathways opening blindly onto the road. The nature of this layout constitutes a fourth hazard:

4. The combination of cyclists travelling too fast round the bend at the bottom of the hill & elderly pedestrians winding their way through the village is frightening at many times. We have lost count of the number of near misses.

In addition some cyclists are travelling too fast to react properly to warning signals of other road users resulting in a fifth type of hazard:

5. A car slowly towing a boat indicates "turning left" just before The Swan. The road close behind appears clear so the driver & starts to turn left. A cyclist travelling very fast races through on the inside & passes the boat & car. I was very relieved that my car & boat & also the cyclist were not damaged!

We live on Sowden Lane on the north side of Cox's Hill. We see these problems very frequently & also suffer abuse from cyclists who appear to think that racing recklessly through a village is a God-given right!

Cont...

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

Cont....

We frequently see groups of cyclists riding both up & down the hill spread right across the road - this is dangerous for everyone, including the cyclists.

We believe that the following action is necessary:

1. 20mph speed limit through the village starting from before the cycle route joins the highway.
2. Notices easily readable by cyclists warning either that they are entering an active village or warning of pedestrians &/or old people walking through the village.
3. Notices advising cyclists to make good use of their bells.

I am a resident of Lympstone and walk, cycle or drive through the village daily.

I have observed many near accidents, especially on Station Hill and along the Strand. Most involve speeding cyclists who ignore the Highway Code and regularly give abuse to other users. Some families and groups also cause problems by using the highway as if it is the Trail – very relaxed but very dangerous.

A few weeks ago I was travelling into the village centre and avoided a collision with a cyclist coming down Station Hill without looking or giving way, only by making an emergency stop. He then gave me abuse.

I believe the only long term solution is to re-route the trail past the village along the railway line with access points for users who wish to enter the village – thus avoiding problems with ‘through commuters’.

In the short term, exits from the Trail on to the highway should have clear warning signs, and the exit gate at Sowden End needs to be set back to avoid being immediately on to the highway.

Consideration should be given to speed limits, speed bumps and a ‘Halt’ at the bottom of Station Hill.

Consideration should also be given to a code of use, or bye-laws, for the Trail so that advice/censure can be given when necessary.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I live opposite the trail in Lympstone (our house is opposite the station and the Swan Inn) and I use the trail several times a week to commute to work in Exeter and to visit Exmouth. As I experience it as a regular cyclist/walker using the trail at different times of the day and throughout the year, I would say that the majority of trail users are considerate of other users and obey the Highway Code once joining the road. Regular dog walkers are aware of other path users and keep their dogs under suitable control while regular cyclists ride appropriately and with care and consideration to other users (i.e. always riding to left as if on a road, slowing down and stopping as appropriate, using an audible signal of their presence where appropriate, using lights in low light and wearing suitable reflective/bright clothing). All the regular cyclists I see treat the junction with Station Hill and The Strand correctly.

I have never witnessed any accidents or 'near misses' with cyclists and other vehicles at the junction with Station Hill and The Strand, although I have on occasion seen incidents in other parts of the village, such as at the junction of Chapel Lane and The Strand. I would point out that this particular junction is almost blind and near misses involving two motor vehicles or a pedestrian and motor vehicle are relatively common as a result. I would not say that these sorts of 'near misses' would indicate any particular carelessness or dangerous riding on the part of regular cyclists using the trail through the village but are a product of that particular junction. As a motorist turning out of Chapel Lane you cannot see in either direction and have to 'creep and peep'.

Both my husband and I have, however, witnessed near misses between pedestrians and cyclists on Station Hill. Virtually all of these incidents were the product of people leaving the station and not looking over their shoulder to see if any cyclists were approaching before crossing the road. There is also a minor problem with the footpath along Station Hill as its quite common for cyclists to mistake it for a continuation of the cycle trail as it looks like the green cycle tracks found in other locations. Clearer marking of the path as a footpath would help alleviate this problem.

The biggest problem with the trail comes from non-regular cyclists and walkers. This is mostly because they don't recognise that they are leaving the cycle trail and rejoining the highway and therefore need to apply the highway code - i.e ride to the left, ride single file where appropriate (as it is legal to ride two abreast unless you are going to cause an obstruction). The recently posted signs on the exits from the path to the road are a good idea as it will draw people's attention to the fact they are now on a road, although I suspect many will not actually read them! Many non-regular cyclists are not treating the junction of Station Hill and The Strand properly and have tendency to sweep down and onto the road without looking very well, which again is more to do with their perception that they are still on a traffic-free trail rather than being on a road. Walkers are equally guilty of this and in particular tend to forget that Sowden Lane is the main road through the village and not a footpath and therefore walk in large groups sprawled across the road. The implementation of better and more permanent signs stating that you are rejoining the highway may help to remind people of this. It is also worth noting that a lot of pedestrians on the trail seem to interpret the 'be considerate to other path users' proviso on the signs as meaning 'all cyclists should give way to walkers at all times, even when people are walking three or four abreast'. I have encountered verbal abuse from walkers in this situation, despite my having slowed down to walking pace and both rung my bell (often ignored or not notices) and asked politely to go past.

Cont....

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymestone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

Cont....

There is also a perception amongst some walkers that cyclists, especially those dressed in cycle-specific clothing (who have been described as 'lycra louts' or 'lycra-clad hooligans' in my hearing despite riding safely), should not be on the path at all,

despite it being a cycle trail! I have encountered those who think I should stop entirely and wait for them to pass before riding on as they are with uncontrolled dogs - despite the 'dogs should be on leads' signs - or because they have children with them. These situations are the only times I've encountered any sort of problem between users on the path. As I've said previously, the majority of people are courteous and do use the path with common sense.

I think some of the complaints regarding cyclists and the trail are in fact borne out of people perceptions of how cyclists should behave/ride rather than any actual problem. There is a definite perception that cyclists should be riding slowly and sedately at around walking pace and anything faster than this is reckless and wrong (although I think as more people ride this is beginning to abate). In reality regular cyclists will, of course, be riding faster than walking pace as the whole point of cycling is its faster than walking! The majority of cyclists I encounter are riding at around 10-15 miles an hour, on a clear path, which considering that mobility scooters can travel at 8mph and are less manoeuvrable, doesn't seem excessive. The other perception which seems to cause problems is with the junction of Station Hill and The Strand. I suspect that the majority of complaints stem from the fact that people seem to think that cyclists are obliged to or ought to stop at the give way sign at the bottom of the hill. This junction is essentially an open junction, and therefore there is no obligation for any vehicle, including cycles, to stop if the road is clear. As a cyclist you do have a good view of the road to the right and a better than average view of the road to the left which means you can see quite easily any vehicles approaching and if you need to stop. As a result the majority of cyclists don't stop on this junction as they can see the road is clear and they can turn into the road safely. The major problem with this junction, and in fact the hill in general, is illegal parking. This is a particular problem in the summer and at weekends as motorists do tend to park on the double yellow lines all the way up station hill over the footpath. Cars are also often parked on the double yellow lines just in front of the bridge. The illegal parking has two effects - one is to reduce the visibility at the foot of the hill on the junction and the other is that it forces pedestrians to walk in the road. This is dangerous for all road users as the reduced visibility makes it very difficult to see if the road is clear to the left and it makes pedestrians more vulnerable. More frequent patrolling by parking enforcers in the village would be very helpful to reduce the problem.

On the whole the trail is an asset to the village and brings a lot of additional trade to the shop, cafe and pubs. The trail is a fantastic route for commuting and an excellent way for people to return to cycling or to introduce their children to cycling. The problems regarding non-regular cyclist could be easily addressed with a little more information about cycling (and walking) considerately (ASK CYCLISTS FOR ADVICE ON THIS!!) and within the highway code which could perhaps be added to leaflets publicising the trail.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymestone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I have recently become aware that a safety audit is being carried out on the Exe Estuary Trail.

The trail is a triumph for Devon County Council, providing an excellent path for cyclists and walkers, both local and from further afield.

How sad then that the job remains unfinished.

I am a regular user of the Exmouth to Topsham section of the trail. There appear to be no safety notices of any kind along this section of the trail. Indeed, in Lymestone and Exton residents seem to have erected home-made warnings to protect trail users and villagers. I believe a number of accidents have already occurred in Lymestone at the Station Hill entry/exit point - a combination of a steep hill and lack of signage perhaps?

I request that DCC finish the job they have started with due regard to the safety of both the people using the trail and those living in towns and villages through which it runs. Not to do so is nothing short of negligence.

I have an incident to report on the cycle path/Lymestone:

It occurred around early September. I was an observer. A party of cyclists had come down Station Road into The Strand. They were shouting. Most, including two children had come down into The Strand and they were laughing at the last person. The last person shot down the hill, out of control and without stopping at the junction and crashed into the plant containers outside the cottages in The Strand opposite The Swan. He was unconscious and bleeding - probably a nose bleed. I was involved in calling an ambulance.

The point I am making re the cycle path and the junction into the road is that he came down out of control and there was no attempt to stop. As it was, he damaged himself but he could have collided with vehicle or person innocently walking under the railway bridge or coming out of Londis.

Two suggestions - the first the more desirable:

- Reroute the path along the railway line.
- Put sleeping policemen down the slope so that cyclists cannot come down quickly.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymestone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

Last May I was working under the railway bridge in The Strand at a table with a clear view of the bottom of Station Hill. A cyclist, part of a group, swooped down the hill and turned right towards Exmouth around the back of a delivery van without stopping. At the same moment the van, which was turning round, started to reverse towards Exmouth. The van missed the cyclist by inches and only because the cyclist swerved at the very last moment.

After that I took note of the cyclists descending Station Hill within the next hour only 6 out of 34 actually stopped, 10 just came out dangerously at speed and the remainder at least slowed down.

Station Hill represents 2 problems -

1. The speedsters who are trying to get from A to B as quickly as possible
2. The rank amateurs/children who are taken completely by surprise at the steepness of the hill.

I am sure that Cox's Hill is much the same and both are accidents waiting to happen.

I live along this route and use it as a pedestrian, cyclist and motorist. Any comments from your survey should be read in context with the road layout in the village. With no pavements it has the appearance as a pedestrian precinct where people, having little regard for their own safety or the hazards caused to others, stroll along 3 or 4 abreast. With illegal parking such hazards are easily increased. As regards cyclists in particular, the essence of what I have outlined should be emphasised in any publicity.

Sowden Lane is even narrower than the trail giving users even less indication that they are on a highway used by cars.

Bells should be made mandatory and a short 'ding' given when approaching pedestrians from behind.

The exit from the trail onto Sowden Lane by the railway bridge is a danger.

Road traffic cannot see cyclists preparing to exit onto the lane and equally cyclists cannot see traffic; sight lines are just not there. As a motorist this was my near miss. As a cyclist it is convenient to weave through the gates, perhaps this should be made impossible.

On a constructive note, from my garden I do hear parents urging their young families to keep left and take care descending Cox's Hill into the village.

Again any publicity which gets over to users where the dangers are along the route would be a help and help advise parents in advance. Common courtesies such as not congregating around gates and laying bikes on the trail blocking progress should be made aware.

Despite all this I regard the trail as an asset it just need users to use a bit of road sense at times.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymptone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I use the cycle trail and it has brought benefits to Lymptone, however there are numerous problems:-

1. Cyclists travelling far too fast.
2. Cyclist coming down the hill towards the Londis shop and coming straight across the road. I have seen on at least three occasions very near misses.
3. Cyclists coming around the corner on the wrong side of the road at Sowden End - 4-5 times.
4. Cyclists again coming down the hill into the village and causing near misses 6-7 times.

The cycle track should be taken alongside the railway line and not through the Village it's far too dangerous.

Also cyclists using the road when there is a cycle track. It should be made law they use a cycle track and not the road.

I am a Lymptone resident and support the Exe Estuary Trail in principle. However, it was a serious error to route the Trail through the centre of Lymptone village. I am really surprised that the safety risks were not identified and assessed at the planning stage. The risks are clear and significant now – the incidents and near misses are regularly discussed by our neighbours and friends in the village – and these will almost certainly increase considerably as the popularity and use of the Trail continues to grow.

I have witnessed more and more dangerous near-accidents and conflicts between trail users and villagers going about their normal lives. Much of the problem is caused by speeding, often abusive cyclists, but families and groups of people spread out across the road are also a problem. Basically, a large number of people are using the village roads as if they are on the cycle path, not a public highway.

The village roads/lanes are totally unsuited for use as a main part of the Trail. They are narrow with steep hills, few pavements and blind corners, with many houses opening direct on to the road, and several crossing footpaths. Also, there are no warning signs or speed control measures. Often people are totally ignorant about the route of the Trail and show no respect for villagers' lives and privacy – I live on Quay Lane, a cobbled footpath and people frequently cycle down the Lane (often thinking it is the Trail!).

Action to address these risks and issues is needed urgently. I really fear that there will be a fatality or very serious accident.

The only really effective option will be to re-route the Trail off-road along the railway line. This will mean that the fast, commuter cyclists and joggers, etc. will be able to carry on to get to their destination, while local residents and people who wish to visit the village will be able to enter at clear access points. As a cyclist and jogger myself, I would much prefer to continue along the Trail (off road) rather than to enter the village.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

Handwritten Responses (written in books held in central village locations):

I live and work in the cafe in Lympstone at the bottom of Station Hill. In the last few months I have witnessed a lot of near misses with bikes and cars. Bikes come down Station Hill at a rate of knots, not knowing that the main village road is at the bottom of the hill. As a non-driver, I had to ask what the road markings mean, and as a lot of families and children use the path 'Do they know what the road markings mean?'

Lympstone is a village and not part of the path, and signs would help as most cyclists seem to think they 'own the roads'.

A recent event witnessed by me from the cafe window:

A family of four (Mother, Father, and two small children) emerged from the cycle path onto Station Hill. The youngest child at the front, gathered momentum and was soon going so fast as to be 'out of control', a car at the bottom of the hills ('blind to the child') approaching. A male passer by grabbed the child from the bike as the bicycle proceeded to hit the car. This was a VERY near miss.

Cyclist do not realise the steepness of Station Hill and descent far too fast. Almost all cyclists fail to realise they are approaching a road, and fail to look either left or right.

One thing in defence of cyclists, the charity race on Sunday 9th October through the village, was stewarded by Ian Fry and almost all participants shouted 'Thank you' as they passed.

I have a bike (no car) and welcome the cycle path. However, I do not appreciate the 'boy racers' and others who use the village street as a race track endangering pedestrians, pushchairs, children, older people who are walking slowly, and so on. Nor do I appreciate being shouted at for walking out of Quay Lane (where I live) on to the Strand. A through link from south to north Lympstone should be built beside the railway for through cycle traffic, leaving the Lympstone exits for those who wish to visit or who live in the village.

I live at Quay Lane. It's simply a death trap going on to the Strand. Bikes whizz down that hill. One day a small child or doggie will walk out and.....well, I dread to think.

Also, why do cyclists have to cycle down Quay Lane, a little cobbled lane leading to the water? Please, please, please can we have a 'No Cyclists Allowed' sign as in Pump Lane (opposite us).

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

All in all, I think the cycle path is a very good idea. It allows people to enjoy the Exe Estuary without the hassle of being on roads. However, so far the problems have been the way the cyclists have acted through the village. I have had two major incidents on two different occasions.

The first incident was when I was walking along the Strand in a normal manner when a man cursed me and told me to 'get off the cycle path'. He used very strong language towards me and it left me feeling very upset.

The other incident was when I was driving down by Sowden End. As I am a local, I am very aware of the blind corner and I always take extra care when I drive it. However, when I took the bend this time, I was greeted by a family of cyclists. Parents on one side of the road and the children on the other. I was lucky not to knock those children off. I was then told I was in the wrong and that I should read the Highway Code. This left me upset once more because again strong language was used and once again I was not in the wrong. As I said, I do not have a problem with the cycle path itself, but I do feel that the people who use it need to understand that Lympstone is not the cycle path and, from a locals point of view, more respect for the roads and the people of our village needs to be used.

I was not against the cycle trail in principle but I have very nearly been knocked down by cyclists coming from nowhere so fast, not using bells, and not considerate.

Cyclists do not stop at the bottom of Station Hill – an accident waiting to happen.

Because of the lack of pavements, anyone living in the Strand area has be beware coming out a door to be faced (side on) by a speeding cyclist. The hairdressers and the Globe are points at issue.

Weekends and holiday times make it difficult for pedestrians to shop and negotiate the road due to the parked vehicles, mobility vehicles and hoards of cyclists who demand a right of way.

Many are cycling at high speed (some timing themselves and racing against companions).

Cyclists are also driving into the village with their bikes on cycle racks before going on to use the cycle track. They bring their own food and drink and clutter up the car park leaving the locals with less places to park.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I run the village Post Office with my husband. We are both at our wits end with the number of 'near misses' that we have experienced – myself included on several occasions. Each time I have been subjected to verbal abuse. I am able-bodied and have had to dodge or rush out of the their path. My sympathies go out to the older folk in the village who not as nimble on their feet.

Something has to be done to stop these 'boy racers' tearing through our usually peaceful village without a thought to other traffic and people on foot.

I live in Sowden Lane, our drive comes out almost at the bend of the road. The speed that some cyclists come through is dangerous, not only for them but also for us. Our daily concern is now think BIKE!!!

My concerns are:

- 1) The speed of cyclists (with or without bells)
- 2) The tendency of some pedestrians to block the whole width of the pathway even when a cyclist rings his bell.

I am all for cycling and have no objection to cyclists and families visiting Lympstone – good for business! However, it is unfortunate we are subjected to those cyclists who have no consideration for village folk and hurtle through Lympstone at 'high speed' from the cycle path as if in the 'Tour de France'. They pay no attention to signs or people. Most old folk are very wary and fear for their lives when strolling to the village shop or post office.

I am very concerned about cyclists descending the hill into Lympstone with a blind corner at the bottom of the hill. I fear a serious accident. Also MAMILS (Middle Aged Men in Lycra) who treat the village like a cycling track. Ban lycra!

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymestone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I live in Underhill and on many occasions when I come to the junction by Chapel Road and The Strand I cannot see bikes until I have got at least half way across the junction. Clearly, cyclists will see me before I can see them, but rarely do they stop or even slow down. Bikes are required to have bells now when using the highway. We should ensure they use them. I am a cyclist but try to use as much caution as necessary.

The speed of cyclists coming down Station Hill is a real concern. I have seen several cyclists coming down the hill very fast and going straight into the road without stopping or looking. Pedestrians and cars have nearly been hit.

Cyclists are travelling far too fast. Also using the road when there is a cycle path. In particular the 'lycra' people.

I live on the Strand and my post of geraniums is used as a footrest frequently when the cyclists contemplate cycling up Cox's Hill.

On walking down the road, my shopping bag was knocked out of my hand.

I am very concerned about the speed and silence of the cyclists. Many residents, like me, are getting unsteady on their feet and are frightened. There seems to be little consideration for pedestrians.

On two occasions families of four have cycled down Pump Lane – a footpath – and been abusive when asked to dismount.

I've had a few misses over the Summer. I'm very concerned about the general speed of cyclists coming Cox's Hill (Sowden Lane) into the village and lack of bell use to warn pedestrians of their approach from behind. Otherwise, a wonderful facility that I use a lot.

Cyclists are coming down Station Hill at speed, and are cycling down on the route marked out for pedestrians.

Also a sign should be created at the end of the cycle path at Sowden End to say they are entering the main road through the Village. So many cyclists think that they are still on the cycle path and that it goes straight up to the main road at Saddlers Arms.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone: The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I find that the cyclists don't seem to have bells, they ride up behind you and can be quite rude. They seem to think that the cycle track is just for them, and pedestrians are not allowed to walk anywhere. They ride too fast on the roads and, when there is a lot of them, they ride right across the road. I think a lot of them think that the road through the village is part of the cycle track.

The lyra clad speed cyclists use the cycle path as a race track with no regard for other road users be they pedestrians, motorists, dogs or children on scooters. They never use a bell as they are going so fast it would be useless.

Cyclists pass through the village too fast, often passing pedestrians very closely and without warning. A serious accident is likely to happen.

Try walking slowly to enjoy the views. If you arrive without having a heart attack, then you'd be lucky.

The cycle (pscho) path has made the village a place of danger. The cyclists disregard the highway code, ride two or three abreast, and seem to be unaware that the public highway is for the use of everyone. They do not have to have insurance. As a 84 year old, partially deaf resident, I dare not walk and am wary of driving. Please extend the cycle track along the railway line to avoid Sowden Lane.

A while ago a family was cycling outside the hairdressers – the parents were on one side of the road and the children were on the other (wrong) side. I pointed out that this was the main road, not the cycle path, and the children were on the wrong side. They side they know how to look after their children and I replied 'clearly you don't', and then the abuse came forth. I am a horse owner and rider, and the abuse from the cyclists is so unnecessary. They whizz past me and spook the horse and don't hang around to see the consequences. The weekends are never the same now. Our village is invaded by rude cyclists who seem to have no consideration for the residents of Lympstone.

Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone:
The Experience and Views of Village Residents

I was driving very slowly under the railway arch because of parked cars both sides of the road when a young woman cyclist came at great speed down Station Hill. She spotted me at the last moment, braked and went right over her handlebars right in front of me. Had I been going even 15 miles an hour, I would have run right over her. There is an accident waiting to happen, not only on Station Hill but in the rest of the village.

Cyclists are riding without thought for pedestrians, villagers and children. Instead of welcoming them, we now dread them. Those riding as families are the exception and do ride with more thought – on the whole!!

APPENDIX B

Photographs to Show Key Locations Mentioned in Responses

Note: The photographs shown on the following pages are presented to identify the specific village locations mentioned in respondents' comments. They were taken at a very quiet time of day.

**Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lympstone:
The Experience and Views of Village Residents**



Station Car Park & Entrance to/from the Trail



Station Hill



**The Strand by the Swan Inn (showing
bottom of Station Hill)**



Junction of Chapel Road & The Strand



The Strand – near the Globe Inn



**Junction of Cox's Hill (Sowden Lane), The
Strand, Quay Lane & Pump Lane**

**Safety of the On-Road Section of the Exe Estuary Trail in Lymestone:
The Experience and Views of Village Residents**



Hill on Sowden Lane – commonly known as Cox’s Hill



Quay Lane (cobbled lane)



Pump Lane (cobbled lane)



Sowden End (blind corner)



Entrance to/from the Trail on to Sowden Lane

APPENDIX C

Poster Used to Help Gather Comments

Exe Estuary Trail in Lypstone



Devon County Council Safety Audit



***Please tell us
your experience & views***

Devon County Council is in the process of conducting a safety audit on the cycle route through Lypstone. This is an opportunity to communicate your experience, concerns and suggestions. We need to collate comments and send them to the Exe Estuary Trail Project Team.

Useful information:

- Details of any accidents, incidents or near misses that have occurred
- Specific concerns
- Suggestions for improvement.

Please either:

(1) Send an email to: cyclewaysafety@sky.com

(2) Write your comments in books held in [Shears Cafe](#) and [The Swan Inn](#).⁽¹⁾

Time is limited because the safety audit is due to be completed in October, so please communicate any comments **by 7th October**⁽²⁾

(2) A book was later also provided in the Post Office.

(3) The deadline was extended to Monday 10th October.