

Exmouth Sea Front Emergency

1) It is widely agreed that the seafront cycle path is currently unfit for purpose.

For many years there have been discussions about the shortcomings of Exmouth Sea Front with regard to the shared use of the Promenade all the way from the Docks to Orcombe Point with its varying widths, some shared parts, some nominally segregated. The building of Sideshore has exacerbated the problems. Covid19 has, we believe, made it necessary to take urgent action. Crowding and interaction between cyclists and pedestrians makes social distancing virtually impossible. The area is being used much more for exercise and relaxation and this will increase as we get through the winter into Spring and Summer. We are all urged to continue to take all possible precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

2) An ideal permanent solution must involve complete segregation of pedestrians, cyclists and motor traffic with speed restrictions and/or one way traffic.

In 2014, Cyclepath Exmouth (now Active Travel Exmouth) suggested to the Town Council that NCN Route 2 (a Sustrans and Devon County Council flagship route) should have an alternative route through the town centre and along the sea front in addition to the established route through Phear Park. The suggestion met with considerable support and the group, working with Sustrans and the very enthusiastic cycling officers at DCC, plotted a route, photographing all the junctions and indicating what signage would be required from Mudbank to Littleham. However DCC had severe cutbacks as did Sustrans and the project fell into abeyance.

A good route via the town centre would bring business to the town and could, if well designed, improve the amenity of the whole sea front.

We are currently in discussions with Sustrans to resurrect this proposal - to bring NCN2 to the town centre and seafront. They are showing interest in our proposal, and if it is adopted, we would hope to gain the benefit of their considerable technical expertise in designing better provision for pedestrians, cyclists and motor traffic on the seafront.

3) It might be possible to devise a temporary one-way system (eg with cones) just for this year only - but this would have to allow for some alterations to car parking provision (ETC and EDDC) and access for buses and the Land Train. It might be difficult to arrange all of this in a short time frame.

4) So what can be done now about the present emergency? Covid will be with us for some time to come and Exmouth must attempt to reduce risk to residents and our many visitors.

A quick fix, at minimal expense, would be to turn over the entire pavement to pedestrians, diverting cyclists onto the highway. It would be essential to impose a 20mph speed limit the entire length from the docks to Maer Road to protect cyclists' safety.

NB. In this event, we must continue to explore more permanent solutions as outlined above in 2) (though the final plan for the development of Queen's Drive is not yet clear and will affect any permanent choices made).

5) Orcombe – From the RNLI to Orcombe Point, the pavement is shared and not segregated at all so different arrangements should be made.

Prominent signage should make it clear that –

- Pedestrians always have right of way over cyclists.
- At busy times, cyclists are asked to dismount and walk or to cycle on the road.

We urge the Town Council to demand that the County Council take immediate action under the Covid19 Emergency regulations in order to improve arrangements on the seafront and restrict the spread of the virus.