

Slapton Line Partnership

Date: 24th February 2023

Time: 1230 to 1400

Location: Follaton House, Totnes

Attendees – 26/27 people

Anthony Mangnall MP

Jenny Rackham – Office of Anthony Mangnall MP

Dan Field – South Hams District Council

Chris Brook - South Hams District Council

Vicky Croughan - South Hams District Council

John Fewings – Devon County Council

Peter Chamberlin - Devon County Council

Cllr. Andrea Davis - Devon County Council

Cllr. Richard Foss – South Hams District Council

Cllr. Julian Brazil – Devon County Council & South Hams District Council

Graeme Smith – Teignbridge Council

Lee Dennison – Field Studies Council

Kirsten Pullen – Wild Planet Trust

Tom Gallagher – Slapton Line Partnership

Jane Abbey – Slapton Parish Council

Michael Crowson – Slapton Parish Council

Piers Spence – Stokenham Parish Council

Gill Claydon – Stokenham Parish Council

Graham Campbell – Strete Parish Council

Kate Gill – Strete Parish Council

J Beety – South West Water

Eamon Crowe – Natural England

Michaela Barwell - Natural England

George Arnison – Environment Agency

Martin Davis – Environment Agency

Apologies

Cllr. Judy Pearce – South Hams District Council

Anthony Mangnall MP started the meeting

Agenda

1. Presentation on Background Context to Slapton Line Strategy

Dan Field

- Shared a presentation with the group as a recap of what the current management strategies (Coastal and Highway) are.
- Coastal:
 - Adopts the guidance set out within the Shoreline Management (Policy Units 6B75 and 6B76)
 - Managed Realignment moving towards No Active Intervention.
- Explanation of what a Shoreline Management Plan is and who is responsible for it
- Reminder of the £3 million spent to date
- A379:
 - Adopts the guidance set out within Slapton Line Partnership Revised Strategy (October 2019).
 - The road shall continue to be maintained, by Devon County Council, as a highway and cleared of shingle and debris post storms.
 - In the event of further significant damage, no further retreat of the A379 shall be considered.
- Reminder of the £2 million spent to date

Copy of presentation included with these minutes

2. Protection of the Road

Dan Field

- Included within main presentation (A379 management)
 - Road is maintained whilst it is there by Devon County Council
 - In the event of further significant damage, no further retreat of the A379 shall be considered.
 - This is likely to result in the closure of one or more sections and the eventual full closure of the road.
- No option for further retreat of the road
- £2million has been spent to date by DCC
- Update on the rock armour work undertaken by South Hams in February 2023 following securing of a SSSI consent from Natural England.

3. A379 Storm Response Measures

John Fewings – Devon County Council Neighbourhood Highways Officer

- DCC will continue to maintain the highway whilst it exists
- There is a well-tested diversion plan in place that uses A roads – this is published on the Slapton Line Partnership website
- If simple engineering works need doing to the road, DCC will pay
- If the road is breached, further conversation is required

4. Improvements to the Inland Minor Road Network

John Fewings – Devon County Council Neighbourhood Highways Officer

- Modifications of junctions have taken place to make the routes safer
- DCC will continue to modify the routes within the current footprint where possible
- Hedge cutting, good road surfaces and drainage will also help
- Improved passing places have also been implemented

Conversation opened to the floor

AM – How far can we go with the improvements?

JF – Additional passing places can be implemented and we can continue to improve junctions. Anything further needs conversations with landowners and greater investment

CB – If landowner and financial constraints were removed, what could happen to the back routes? Is there a plan in place for this as a possibility?

JF – Engineering wise anything is possible

RF – Suggested there were areas that could be easily improved but had not been considered by DCC

SLP needs to consult on the back routes and suggestions by DCC are welcomed

PS – Has a feasibility study for widening the back routes been done? Is there the funding available to do this?

JA – Believed a feasibility study was commissioned by Highways two years ago, can we have the most up to date details on the work that has been done

JF – Will circulate after the meeting

AM – What is the timeline for a feasibility study of widening the back routes?

JA – Would also appreciate details of what drainage work has been undertaken

PC – Diversion routes are on the SLP website and always available. Feasibility study is an ongoing process and is always changing. Traffic modelling is in place and is being tested. Drastic changes are unrealistic due to cost, happy to undertake a consultation, must remember the back routes will never replace the line.

JB – Minor modifications were a starting point to get an idea of what could be done due to limited funds and space. Dual carriageway the other side of the ley won't work.

DF – Advised there are mechanisms for reviewing a Shoreline Management Plan policy based upon satisfying certain criteria. The scale of any change possible will then determine the approval route

AM – As I understand we have three options concerning the Shoreline Management Plan, Hold The Line, Managed Realignment and No Active Intervention

CB – Current policy states no new intervention. There is an area where it may be possible for the policy to be changed.

GS – What are shoreline management plans (smp)? They are nationally organised and the one that covers Slapton is one of 18 nationally. It is a DEFRA led initiative and leads to planning and funding. SHDC adopted the SMP in 2011. A current refresh is ongoing for national funding opportunities.

Policies that were put in place in 2011 are still fit for purpose but this doesn't mean they can't change.

SMP's are live documents and there are not fixed in stone as nature isn't fixed.

Minor changes can be undertaken quickly and include changes to boundary limits, minor management changes. Evidence is required before a policy can be changed.

AM – How long does it take to amend a SMP?

GS – Minor changes 3-4 months, major variable

AM – Any money I can secure from Gov. must be inline with the SMP. Does that work at Beesands count as a major or minor change?

CB – Can changes be made without major work being done to the SMP?

GS – Depends on the details

LD – All discussions are being focused around saving the line. We also need to be considering the SSSI and the impact of any major works on the SSI.

AM – We need to improve understanding on the economic, health, tourism etc impact of losing the line

EC – Natural England have taken on board the economic and wider issues, they have a statutory duty to protect the SSI and would most likely object to the adoption of a Beesands style solution.

GA – SMP's amendments represent the outcome of conversations and research and are not the catalyst for then resolving issues. They also can't be changed simply because you don't like them. Need to prove a better option to implement a change of policy.

RF – Difficult to convince the public what should or shouldn't happen. Need to ensure there is a balance between people and the environment.

PS – This discussion has been going on for years, we can't please everyone. Adaptation must be implemented; we must be honest with locals and ensure they know the line is temporary. Adaptation plan must be published ASAP.

KP – A practical solution needs to be found, pressures that the line is facing are only going to increase.

GS – To change the SMP evidence will need to be provided. It is becoming harder to find evidence against non-managed retreat due to climate changes.

LD – Business can continue when the line goes, FSC are making alternative plans

AM – We all know the line will go at some point, we need to slow down the impact of the tide whilst working on an adaptation plan

JA – Consideration needs to be given to agricultural businesses – many of the back roads aren't suitable for agricultural vehicles

LD – We are happy to share our plans for vehicular access

JF – As said earlier, DCC will keep fixing the A379 and we can only work on the back roads within the current footprint

AD – It appears to me that a plan needs to be put in place and quickly, would suggest sure up for now and get an adaptation plan in place as quickly as possible

EC – We need to put forward a range of options that can be looked at by all stakeholders, the line will go, and the adaptation plan must be in place. NE will send the management options to the partnership that they would approve.

PS – We must remember that the end of the road does not mean the end of the shingle ridge and that the loss of the road doesn't mean the loss of the ley. Look at the 2018 plan.

DF – Need to remember that 50% of the road is one 'Storm Emma' away from being breached. Where would new technology go?

LD – Need to also remember that the shingle is part of the SSSI

5. Relocation of the Monument

Peter Chamberlin DCC

- Monument needs to be moved from its current site
- It was unclear who should lead this so DCC agreed to coordinate it
- Sites were considered and Strete gate was chosen
- Parish Councils and FSC need to work together as the planning permission is now in place
- Agreement needs to be written up
- DCC would like to get the move done before the summer

Conversation opened to the floor

LD – FSC are happy with the plan in place

MC – What steps have been taken to keep the monument where it is now, has this been considered?

PC – Easy to put the defences in but it would increase the risk on either side of the monument. Not sensible to leave it where it is. County Council can't sit back any longer on this issue.

AD – This has taken up a lot of DCC time and resource. If an agreement is not met soon, money will be given to Parish Councils and they can sort on their own

JA – What happens to the concrete slab, does that not open Slaton up to a greater risk of flooding?

PC – Land will go back to the Wild Planet trust, not sensible to leave the concrete in place.

AM – Huge thank you to Peter for all the work you have done on this.

6. Torcross Culvert – update and future approach

Chris Brook

- The culvert works most of the time
- Thanks to Devon colleagues for managing it

Conversation opened to the floor

JB – SWW not responsible for the culvert. It can have an impact on SWW infrastructure when blocked

JF – No one accepts responsibility for it

PC - No one is responsible but there needs to be an answer on who should be maintaining it

LD – Gates have eased the issue. There is a SWW outlet that goes through the culvert.

JB – SWW will look into outlet in further detail

7. Summary of Shared Objectives and Associated Funding Requirements

- Consultation to be undertaken on the road network behind the lay
- Shoreline Management Plan
 - SHDC to gather evidence
 - How to manage existing policy
 - Can the policy be changed
- Monument
 - Thanks to Peter and John
 - Next steps are with Parish Councils and FSC to draw up an agreement
 - Hoped it will be moved by the summer
- Culvert
 - Unsolved
- Next meeting: TBC

Tom Gallagher - communications and engagement specialist supporting the SLP partnership introduced by Martin Davis.

TG

- Here to understand how the partnership works
- Improve comms.
- Has surveyed key stakeholders and is looking to interview
- Wants to help carry this partnership forward
- Currently putting together ideas that might help
- Happy to speak to anyone here.