

## Slapton Line Partnership meeting

**Date:** 20/10/2023

**Location:** Follaton House, Totnes

### **Attendees**

Chair: Anthony Mangnall MP

Dan Field (South Hams District Council)

Chris Brook (South Hams District Council)

Cllr Laurel Lawford (South Hams District Council)

Cllr Samantha Dennis (South Hams District Council)

Peter Chamberlin (Devon County Council)

Meg Booth (Devon County Council)

Eamon Crowe (Natural England)

Michaela Barwell (Natural England)

Martin Davies (Environment Agency)

Roger English (South Devon AONB)

Lee Dennison (Field Studies Council)

Dennis Flynn (Wild Planet Trust)

Gareth Jones (Hardisty Jones)

Stokenham Parish Council representatives

Strete Parish Council representatives

Slapton Parish Council representatives

Stoke Fleming Parish Council representative

Chivelstone Parish Council representative

### **Agenda items**

#### **Anthony Mangnall MP opened the meeting**

In the case of a vote, each organisation which is part of the Slapton Line Partnership will have one vote.

#### **1) Slapton Line Partnership Revised Strategy document**

Anthony Mangnall: Drew attention to the main points in the revised document, primarily on page 5.

Dan Field is responsible for revisions.

Dan Field (SHDC): Ask was to review existing strategy and see whether there is any conflict with current thoughts. Proposed changes are at a very high level – the majority hasn't changed, and technical aspects could be updated if needed.

Eamon Crowe (Natural England): Asked whether this is a consultation – specialists would need to look at it in detail, don't agree with certain parts.

Michaela Barwell (Natural England): Meaning isn't clear in parts, such as "extending the A379 as long as possible". Would need to understand timescales.

DF: Details need to be discussed further. Will update further following feedback.

EC: Natural England will provide feedback in the next few weeks.

AM: If the revised strategy is adopted, a health check would still need to be done. Would like to get agreement in principle today.

Piers Spence (Stokenham Parish Council): Great job tweaking the document, however some language is ambiguous. "Maintenance" and "reinforcement" are different.

"...all options and engineering solutions...should be fully explored..." (p.19) – this has already been done, so would be a waste of time to look again if options have already been ruled out.

Chris Brook (SHDC): Should treat this as a high level, non-statutory document - does not give permission for any work to take place. Good work by Dan.

Dennis Flynn (Wild Planet Trust): Supportive of direction of travel.

AM: Proposed motion to approve the document but with clarification on language and feedback from Natural England.

Martin Davies (Environment Agency): Although document is high level, need to unpick the details before agreeing. If there is confusion, this won't work.

AM: Won't be able to get money from Government if SLP say they are happy for the Line to go. Document does not allow planning permission or any formal changes.

Cllr Dennis (SHDC): Why has "resources will need to be assigned in order to complete these planning processes" on p.6 been deleted?

DF: Seemed unnecessary – will put back in.

MB: Not happy to endorse the document today – need to have a conversation to understand better and more time to scrutinise.

AM: Proposed a vote to adopt the new strategy in its current form.

For:	Against:
SHDC	Natural England
DCC	Environment Agency
Slapton Parish Council	South Devon AONB
Strete Parish Council	Field Studies Council
Wild Planet Trust	Stokenham Parish Council

Vote is tied.

AM proposed a meeting in 2 weeks (on zoom if easier) to make a decision.

MB: Last SLP meeting was months ago, 2 weeks to make a decision is challenging.

MD: Agree in principle to the strategy despite voting no, but can't agree details today.

AM: Document isn't strategy, just a statement of intent. Planning permission would still need to be applied for.

Peter Chamberlain (DCC): Existing strategy is to attempt to maintain the road as long as possible, new strategy is to give consideration to other options.

PS: Issue is the word "extension" – would like to be able to support but details are important. Will offer feedback, but Parish Council hasn't had a chance to consider yet. Deadline is unreasonably short.

MD: If any proposals are taken to Government, there needs to be a firm plan.

PC: Will propose revised wording within 2 weeks.

PS: Propose adding "where acceptable" and "where permissible".

Lee Dennison (Field Studies Council): Document needs more detail. What is the importance of the document? A lot of pressure is being put on this document while saying that planning permission would still be needed.

AM: Document shows that SLP has a view on the future of the Line.

PS: Why consider things that aren't up for consideration or are unfeasible. A quick edit would get everyone's support.

MB: Very unhappy with 2 week deadline due to half term.

DF: Many discussions have been had about the document before presenting, but happy to amend wording.

AM: Next meeting to discuss revisions to the document on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

## **2) Slapton Line Economic Impact Assessment**

Gareth Jones (Hardisty Jones): Ran through the study undertaken by Hardisty Jones and discussed positive and negative impacts.

Hard to quantify impact on education and some other areas.

Impacts are significant and mostly negative in the primary and secondary areas. In the tertiary area, some impacts are positive due to displacement. Overall net impact is smaller when looking at a larger area.

Within 5 years, behavioural change will lessen the impact.

Forecast impact over 25 years (using Treasury mechanism) is around £18 million net economic loss in the South Hams.

Tim Moseley (Stoke Fleming Parish Council): Have businesses been consulted on what they would do if Slapton Line closed?

GJ: No but parish councils were consulted.

Jane Abbey (Slapton Parish Council): Parish council recommended that Hardisty Jones should speak to businesses including holiday letting agencies and NFU. They did consult with FSC, which is a business. 2011 census was quoted so old data was used.

DF: Consultation included members of SLP, hence FSC being included. Would speaking to more businesses have made a difference? Probably not as the impact on them has been considered using other methods. Most important thing is that the consultation shows a negative impact and financial loss.

GJ: It takes a number of years for ONS to undertake analysis of census – only data on commuting patterns comes from 2011 census. Looking at patterns, not specific data. Report shows significant loss of employment in the primary area.

Graham Campbell (Strete Parish Council): Does this include self employed?

GJ: Yes, data is from ONS which includes self employed

GC: Have drivers been taken into consideration?

AM: Need to monitor traffic in high and low periods.

PS: Impact on tourism economy might be overstated, due to using car park data. When road was shut previously, the middle car park was closed but people parked on the road. His business was not negatively affected.

EC: Has impact of Ley being downgraded been considered? Nothing in the report indicating this has been taken into account.

GJ: No this hasn't been considered. Could look into but would require very sophisticated analysis. Analysis takes data from various car parks into account. Feedback has been negative about impact on tourism, tying in with data from car parks.

LD: If the focus is on saving the road, need to look at changing the SSSI and National Nature Reserve status – these measures are in place to protect the environment, shingle is part of the SSSI. Inland routes are not being discussed.

AM: Dawlish Warren is an example of SSSI working with reinforcements.

DF: Wild Planet Trust is owner of the land. Need pragmatic approach – living with nature is different to being overwhelmed by nature.

LD: Field Studies Council is also supportive but need to make sure boxes are ticked.

Michael Crowson (Slapton Parish Council): Some prominent stakeholders such as Blackpool Sands and Stokeley have not been consulted. They will have historic turnover data from when road was previously closed.

AM: Happy to make introductions to businesses, chambers of commerce etc.

Kate Gill (Strete Parish Council): Lives at one end of the line, has campsite at the other end. When the road was shut, only business was from people working on the road.

MD: Might be solution linked to Dawlish Warren – where works are done in SSSI, relates to being temporary and when trigger is met, works will be removed. Can only have conversations around “temporary” and “triggers” when linked to existing development areas.

Have lots of paperwork where they agreed, with Natural England, repair works with time limit (5 years) for Dawlish Warren. For Slapton Line, could be linked to a trigger (ie amount of damage to road) instead of to time limit. Need to discuss further.

DF: Agrees, this is mentioned in the report (section 6) but not in that detail.

EC: Need to continue discussions from 6 months ago and update strategy report to reflect this.

Roger English (South Devon AONB): Consistency of terminology is needed – for instance the conflation of Slapton Line as being the road, and the shingle barrier. The Line hasn’t actually ever been breached, just suffered damage.

GJ: Can update the Economic Impact Assessment within 2 weeks if people provide feedback.

### **3) Vulnerability Assessment & Inland Minor Road Network**

DF: Assessments have been undertaken a number of times but have been quite crude. The most recent assessment was carried out by Plymouth University, looking at the buffer between the road and the shingle ridge and the maximum erosion caused by a storm similar to Storm Emma. This statistical analysis was applied along the whole line, and showed that the original analysis was conservative. The most vulnerable section is the Torcross end.

Meg Booth (DCC): Working up to doing an assessment on minor roads. In 2 weeks, will be able to give an idea of the work being done on traffic modelling. Hoping to get a consultation out soon. Highways Agency survey has been done, which was used for modelling. Someone will provide an update at the next meeting.

Richard Tucker (Chivelstone Parish Council & local NFU Chairman): When the Slapton Line was closed last time, the road from Kingsbridge through Frogmore was also closed. Arctic lorries couldn’t get through on the back roads so had to use two separate lorries. Could take off about 4 corners from Stanborough along the back roads to allow large vehicles to get through and give a secondary route.

PC: This detail is useful in the consultation Meg mentioned – minor details on local improvements.

JA: Meg previously said updates had previously been carried out but where? Can't see any evidence of this.

PC: Work was done in 2018/2019 – information has previously been shared.

**4) Any Other Business**

Anthony called for any other business – none.

**Next meeting: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November**