

## **BONIFACE TRAIL ASSOCIATION**

**REGISTERED CHARITY NO 1168111**

**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1 JULY 2023 TO 30 JUNE 2024**

### **Contact Details**

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### **Names of Trustees**

Paul Taylor (Chair as at 30 June 2024)

Clive Smith

Stephen Parker

Robert Lunnon

Nick Dyer

### **Structure Governance and Management**

The Charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) using the model Constitution for a CIO with voting members other than its charity trustees.

Membership is currently composed of six core members and is also open to those representatives from local Parish Councils, District Council and County Council representatives and local sustainable transport interest groups who fit the purpose of the objects of the Charity and accept the duties of membership.

Members and Trustees meet together as and when required.

A chair and an administrator/treasurer have each been appointed, and sub committees for various tasks have been appointed in the areas of the intended route of the trail, legal matters, and publicity and website respectively. Under the constitution Trustees retire by rotation at each AGM and are eligible for reappointment.

The Charity currently has five Trustees. This number is considered sufficient to meet the Charity's current objectives.

### **Objects of the Charity and Aims and Objectives.**

The objects clause of the Constitution reads as follows

*To promote, encourage, provide and maintain an all purpose, traffic free trail, for general use by pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair and mobility scooter users, in whole or in part between the town of Crediton, the village of Newton St Cyres and the city of Exeter, in the County of Devon.*

The Association wishes to support and promote a significant large scale, long term project with the ultimate aim of securing a motor vehicle-free all purpose trail from Crediton to Exeter passing through the village of Newton St Cyres in Devon. This will comprise approximately 6 miles in distance.

The Association's website is at [bonifacetrail.org](http://bonifacetrail.org)

Public consultation carried out by the Association has shown much support for the proposed project with intrinsic benefits to the public at large. The scheme will offer an alternative for pedestrians, pedal cyclists, and wheelchair and motorised mobility scooter users to what is currently a very busy and dangerous main road, the A377. For most of its length the main road is narrow with no pavement for pedestrians and along which there have been numerous serious accidents over the years, some involving fatalities to cyclists as well as car users.

On line and printed surveys carried out by the Association in 2016 showed large-scale public support and demand for the trail.

Initial consultations with an engineer with specialist experience in this type of project, resulted in the engineer's opinion that there should be no unsurmountable burdens in the project in terms of construction, and that the scheme would be workable in practice. The construction methods would largely comprise a tarmac path of suitable width, with stock proof fencing for most of the route with a small number of small scale bridges over streams, a limited amount of excavation, improvement to an existing railway bridge, and it is likely that one river bridge may be required, which would be the biggest expense of the project. As mentioned further below, the view that most of this preferred route was workable was confirmed by consultants appointed by Devon County Council (DCC), now that the project has reached this level of consultancy stage, with the precise extent of the engineering challenges requiring further assessment.

Land owners have been very supportive of the project and a number of land owners along the proposed route of the path have confirmed an intention in principle to grant legal agreements without payment to facilitate construction and use of the trail along their respective sections of the route. The first and most comprehensive land owner agreement covering the whole length of that part of the route which runs past the village of Newton St Cyres was completed in April 2020. This comprises an agreement for a twenty five year lease of land conditional upon funding and planning permission. It is recognised that revisions to the agreement and lease will probably be necessary depending on the requirements of the appropriate authorities, and if DCC eventually takes over construction of the trail (as now seems likely if the whole length of the trail between Crediton and Exeter is to be built) new agreements between DCC and relevant landowners are likely to be required.

Relevant Parish, District and County Councils have been notified of the project and discussions have taken place with various officers regarding the project.

### **Background activities prior to the current year**

By way of prior background in July 2020 the Association held an on-line meeting with DCC Officers for Cycleway Engineering and Design and Highways Development and respective County and District Councillors in an attempt to progress the project. This was followed by a site meeting along a major part of the route in September 2020 between Trustees of the Association and the appropriate DCC Officers. These meetings together resulted in DCC volunteering to provide input in terms of design, planning and promotion of the project.

The Association continued to meet in order to progress matters with particular emphasis on DCC's input, since this was likely to have a major positive influence on the future status of the project in terms of acquiring planning approval and funding.

The Association has been glad to note the work of the recently formed A377 Action Group, which is a campaign group composed of relevant ward Parish Council Chairs, District and County Council Ward members and appropriate DCC Officers. The aim of this group is to campaign for improved road safety along the A377, an issue which is intrinsically linked to the Boniface Trail project. The Group promotes two main campaigns, one being better speed control and traffic calming along the A377, and the other being the advancement of the Boniface Trail Project itself.

The first significant development from the Group's work was that in November 2021, DCC agreed to allocate funding of £20,000 for an outline feasibility study of the route from Crediton to Exeter with focus on the route between Crediton and Newton St Cyres (but with the hope that the Association may be able to persuade DCC to extend this focus further along the route towards Half Moon). The appointed Consultants, WSP,

had a background meeting with the Association in March 2022. At the meeting WSP confirmed that on the instructions of DCC they would work towards producing a consultancy report on the project which was expected during summer 2022. The Association continued to meet and liaise with the A377 Action Group and the consultants WSP.

At further meetings of the A377 Action Group two options for schemes were produced, one being a “quiet lanes” route (ie the enhancement of existing country lanes) the other being a route close to the A377, closely following the preferred route which the Association has been working on. It would appear that there is little public support for the quiet lanes option for reasons of feared congestion and likely conflict between agricultural and other vehicles on the one hand and pedestrians, cyclists and other users on the other, and the fact that it would be an indirect route distant from the main road which would not link the communities of Smallbrook or Half Moon to Newton St Cyres (resulting in likely lack of use by many of those the route was intended for). Following a further meeting in March 2023 the more comprehensive second option was accepted as a scheme that could be achievable and DCC agreed to instruct WSP to carry out further work to prepare a report on the two alternative schemes for presentation at a public consultation.

### **Activities during the year**

During the year ending 30 June 2024 the Crediton Cluster Group (consisting of local town and parish councils) has effectively taken over the work of the A377 Action Group so far as it relates to the Boniface Trail. Members of the Association attended a meeting of the Crediton Cluster Group at which representatives of the DCC and their consultants WSP were present. DCC/WSP suggested that from their investigations to date the cost of promoting and constructing the section of the trail from Crediton to Newton St Cyres, most of which was likely to be on highway land or verge, might be in the region of £11 million to £13 million. WSP shared at

the meeting their initial plans indicating the route the trail might follow using the A377 option, much of it following the route already identified by the Association. The Association was glad to hear that WSP had carried out an initial investigation of the whole route as far as Cowley on the edge of Exeter and had not concentrated solely on the Crediton to Newton St Cyres section as had originally been suggested. It was pointed out that there were significant engineering and other challenges at the Exeter end of the route due to the convergence of road, railway and river. DCC stated that they were intending to hold a public consultation on the two alternatives, namely the “quiet lanes” route and the A377 route but it was not confirmed whether the consultation would be face-to-face or online.

Members of the Association attended a further meeting with DCC and WSP at which it was confirmed that the Boniface Trail was now included in the list of ten routes for construction/improvement listed in the Devon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). At the meeting the Association presented a virtual “fly through” of their proposed route using its online mapping tool and engaged in a detailed discussion of the route with the support where appropriate of Google Maps and Google Street View. The particular challenges at the Exeter end of the route and the various options for resolving them were a particular focus of the discussion.

Whilst it is recognised that the “quiet lanes” option would require much less funding than the A377 route and would probably therefore be achievable at an earlier date the expectation of the Trustees is that it would receive little support from the public. It is hoped therefore DCC will be prepared to promote a more comprehensive route largely following the Association’s preferred route.

The funding situation has been discussed at relevant meetings. Whilst it is likely that no immediate funding is directly available from DCC save that to continue the consultancy study, if a viable scheme can be shown to be achievable and meet government objectives, then bids can be made to fund the scheme from central government and other grant providers. The

inclusion of the Boniface Trail in the LCWIP is an encouraging development in this direction.

Unfortunately there have been delays in the holding of the public consultation, apparently partly due to resource issues, but as at the end of June 2024 it is understood from DCC and WSP that it should be held in Autumn 2024. It is unclear whether it will be held face-to-face or online, but in either case the Association intends to play its part in the consultation.

The Association is aware that in order to obtain the necessary planning permissions and other consents to enable the trail to be constructed it will be necessary to comply with all statutory requirements as to route and as to engineering specification and if, as is likely, substantial sections of it are to be adopted by DCC to be maintained at the public expense, it will need to be constructed to adoptable standards.

The Association accepts that it is unlikely to be able itself to raise the substantial funding required to meet these requirements and standards. Accordingly, looking forward, the Association's main focus will be to continue to work with DCC and other relevant Councils, authorities and interest groups to advance the project, to press for the trail to follow the best possible route, to assist DCC if required in negotiations with local landowners and to press DCC to hold the public consultation as soon as possible with a view to a viable scheme being presented for funding at the earliest opportunity.

### **Public Benefit**

The Trustees declare that they have had due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit and they confirm that the objects of the Charity have appropriate public benefit.

In carrying out its activities during the year the Charity has had due regard to its objects and has served the public by continuing to promote the

objects of the Association and has worked to promote support from local government, thus furthering the objects of the Charity which will ultimately benefit the public.

The Trustees can summarise how it is anticipated that the project will benefit the public as follows:

- a) It will provide a facility open to all persons which does not presently exist.
- b) It will be accessible to a wide range of potential users comprising pedal cyclists, pedestrians, and those with mobility impairments.
- c) Any person living within, or visiting, the geographical area will be able to enjoy the facility.
- d) Walking and cycling are widely regarded as having benefits for public health and well being.
- e) The proposed route of the path is in a place of high natural beauty thus providing further benefits to well being.
- f) The path will bring large improvements in terms of safety to the public, with a large percentage of respondents to the Charity's initial survey having expressed the view that the only currently available equivalent route along the A377 is particularly unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians.
- g) The project will improve air quality particularly in the Crediton area.

#### Financial Review of the Year

No grant monies have been received during the year as the Association's expenditure has been minimal while the outcome of the long-delayed public consultation remains outstanding. Expenditure during the year has been limited to meeting room hire fees. There remains cash in hand in the sum of £13,066 as at the year end for the purposes of discharging any further consultancy and legal or other professional fees which may be incurred and



other general expenditure which may be required in order to achieve the construction of the trail.

As mentioned above the Trustees consider it likely that funding may be forthcoming in the longer term from DCC, utilising appropriate allocated funding streams and central government initiatives for this type of project.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

**Nick Dyer (Chair appointed 9 July 2024)**

**21 October 2024**



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Boniface Trail Association

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## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

Period start date  
01/07/23

To

Period end date  
30/06/24

### Section A Receipts and payments

|   | Unrestricted funds<br>to the nearest<br>£ | Restricted funds<br>to the nearest £ | Endowment funds<br>to the nearest £ | Total funds<br>to the nearest £ | Last year<br>to the nearest £ |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>A1 Receipts</b>  |   |                                      |                                     |                                 |                               |
| Crediton Town Council Grant                               | -   | -                                    | -                                   |                                 | 400                           |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Sub total</b> (Gross income for AR)                    | -   | -                                    | -                                   |                                 | 400                           |
| <b>A2 Asset and investment sales,<br/>(see table).</b>    |   |                                      |                                     |                                 |                               |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Sub total</b>  | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Total receipts</b>                                     | -   | -                                    | -                                   |                                 | 400                           |
| <b>A3 Payments</b>  |   |                                      |                                     |                                 |                               |
| Geosphere mapping software                                | 90  | -                                    | -                                   | 90                              | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Sub total</b>  | 90  | -                                    | -                                   | 90                              | -                             |
| <b>A4 Asset and investment<br/>purchases, (see table)</b> |   |                                      |                                     |                                 |                               |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
|   | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Sub total</b>  | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Total payments</b>                                     | 90  | -                                    | -                                   | 90                              | -                             |
| <b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>                         | - 90                                      | -                                    | -                                   | - 90                            | 400                           |
| <b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>                         | -   | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>                        | 13,156                                    | -                                    | -                                   | 13,156                          | -                             |
| <b>Cash funds this year end</b>                           | 13,066                                    | -                                    | -                                   | 13,066                          | 400                           |

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

| Categories  | Details  | Unrestricted funds<br>to nearest £ | Restricted funds<br>to nearest £ | Endowment funds<br>to nearest £ |
|---|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>B1 Cash funds</b>  | Cash in bank   | 13,066                             | -                                | -                               |
|   |  | -                                  | -                                | -                               |
|   |  | -                                  | -                                | -                               |
|   | <b>Total cash funds</b>                                | 13,066                             | -                                | -                               |
|   | (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s)) | OK                                 | OK                               | OK                              |
| <b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>                             | Details  | Unrestricted funds<br>to nearest £ | Restricted funds<br>to nearest £ | Endowment funds<br>to nearest £ |
|   |  | -                                  | -                                | -                               |
|   |  | -                                  | -                                | -                               |
|   |  | -                                  | -                                | -                               |
|   |  | -                                  | -                                | -                               |
|   |  | -                                  | -                                | -                               |
|   |  | -                                  | -                                | -                               |
| <b>B3 Investment assets</b>                                 | Details  | Fund to which asset belongs        | Cost (optional)                  | Current value (optional)        |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
| <b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>         | Details  | Fund to which asset belongs        | Cost (optional)                  | Current value (optional)        |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
|   |  |                                    | -                                | -                               |
| <b>B5 Liabilities</b>                                       | Details  | Fund to which liability relates    | Amount due (optional)            | When due (optional)             |
|   |  |                                    | -                                |                                 |
|   |  |                                    | -                                |                                 |
|   |  |                                    | -                                |                                 |
|   |  |                                    | -                                |                                 |
| Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees | Signature  | Print Name                         | Date of approval                 |                                 |
|   |  | Nick Dyer (Trustee and Chair)      | 21/10/24                         |                                 |