

Littlehempston Cycle Path Proposal

Position statement by the South Devon Railway Trust

We support the principle of a cycle path between Totnes Town and Littlehempston as part of National Cycle Route 2 but we do not support the currently proposed route via our pedestrian footbridge and the SWW private lane.

We have stated our concerns regarding the route quite clearly and so far no-one involved with the scheme has responded to us with any proposals that would adequately address them. They are:

- **Safety:** the bridge was built for pedestrian traffic only and is not suitable for safely mixing regular cycle traffic with families with buggies and wheelchair users due to its length, limited width and tight approach ramp. We are the legal owners of the bridge and have full responsibility for all the costs of its maintenance and repair and this includes the legal duty of care for the safety of its users.
- **Security:** the bridge is locked outside working hours which provides a deterrent to thieves and vandals and there is no easy access to the site of our station or the Totnes Rare Breeds Farm for emergency services to provide a rapid response in the event of intruders gaining access. There are no measures that would provide an equal level of security and anything close to it would be exceptionally unsightly and very damaging to our image and therefore our business.

Our station at Littlehempston was built over a 15 year period starting in 1980 almost entirely by volunteers using unique historic buildings recovered from former railway sites throughout the West Country. Many of these buildings are of timber construction and are irreplaceable examples of early rural railway architecture.

To demonstrate our support for the scheme in principle we have proposed an alternative, more attractive and safer route for the cycle path alongside the River Dart and offered to facilitate a suitable crossing of our railway line.

With regards to meetings we have always said we are very happy to meet all parties in a properly constituted meeting. In the absence of anyone else taking the initiative we are trying to arrange this with DCC as they are the principal decision maker as far as this proposal is concerned. Our expectation would be that this will allow all the concerns of all landowners, not just ourselves, and our suggested alternative route to be debated and addressed in a businesslike forum.

The Board of the SDRT
July 2011