Northney Coastal Path Project

NORTH EAST HAYLING RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

JULY 2017

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Northney Coastal Path project. July 2017

General Introduction

North East Hayling Residents Association, (NEHRA) has been running for many years taking an active part in working with our local community to maintain and improve the area where we can make a difference. We have produced a Village Design Statement, helped with maintenance on the sea wall surrounding the farm, and carried out a ditch and tidal flap survey to help with the improvements to surface water drainage. We hold monthly committee meetings, and a main meeting every six months for all residents. We encourage as many as possible to join the association and participate where they can.
The proposed Northney Coastal Path is a response to problems highlighted at such a residents meeting about five or more years ago. We had all became aware of the difficulties facing drivers along this stretch of road, even if the pedestrians had not. We approached the county authorities, who informed us that there were no funds available, but we decided in the back ground we could start investigating what the requirements would be needed from all the interested parties. It is of course in an area of AONB, SSSI etc and is widely used by walkers and birdwatchers, because of its unique location. So we have highlighted the basic problems with the present path along the North coast of Hayling.

Location

The existing grass path is on a bank of varying width and height, along the north shore of Hayling Island extending approximately 220metres westwards from the hotel on the corner, up to the small parking area midway along the northern shore line. The grass bank has had some maintenance in the form of wire mesh inserted on its surface, but this is well embedded and the surface wearing away. It is a very narrow uneven path, slippery in winter, and runs between a ditch and the shoreline. At high tides the ditch is frequently filled with water, and pedestrians have been known to fall into the ditch avoiding traffic and the slippery path. (see photo on the front cover of a typical high tide situation, which maybe readily negotiable in daylight, but impossible and unsafe in the evening darkness of the autumn and winter months.)
The route along Northney Road is one of the missing links for pedestrians going to and from from the village, to the bridge. This proposed path would link up with the existing car park and thence to the existing tarmac pavement and the bridge itself. From the bridge, pedestrians can walk north to Havant, or west across the main road, to the northern end of the Hayling Billy track, which is a cycle and footpath to the south of the Island. The Northney Coastal Path we understand, is likely to form a valuable part of the proposed pedestrian route round the Island which is currently being studied by Natural England. This would improve the linkage with the Billy track and Northney Farm Tea rooms, and the village.

The safety of pedestrians:

The road running from the bridge along and south through Northney is a single carriageway, which winds its way along the shore and down through the village. There is no street lighting or pavement, over most of this section. Due to the inadequate width and state of the 'path' on the bank, pedestrians frequently use the shore side of the road. The existing bank is well worn down, very narrow and uneven. Using it during the hours of dusk and darkness is a greater hazard for pedestrians, than using the road. There have been several near misses each year reported by local drivers, especially where pedestrians are usually wearing dark clothing and no hi- visibility jackets or bands to help. We have talked to local people at the hotel & marina , it appears there are at present approximately 350-400 pedestrian movements per week , including local walkers, and bird watchers The Chichester Harbour Conservancy who run the solar boat, are also interested in having a landing point in this area, which might also add to the pedestrian traffic, but in daylight hours.

Sea defences

The bank on which the path is situated, has been subject to constant wear over many years, both by tides and people who have contributed to erosion. This together with some higher tides which we are now experiencing, enables the sea to over top the bank on this section of the shore, more frequently each year. The road can at present be flooded to the extent of cutting off access to the northern part of the village. Climate change is increasing the number of storms each winter, so by raising the bank and forming a new path along the top, we can protect this corner from some of the extra high tides. Indeed the existing well worn bank , is now at road level in many places. It is all that separates the road from the shore and tidal mudflats, which are part of the AONB, SSSI etc. In order to protect these and the access to the village, it is proposed to raise the bank as much as is feasible, without compromising and invading the special areas of the adjoining harbour, and also to include a kerb edge to the 'parking area', to maintain the improved level throughout.

General information:

Initially when we discussed the possibility of a raised path, there was no funding available from the HCC highways department, but we were informed of some of the hurdles we would have to cross, because of the sensitivity and protected state of the site. We have held many meetings over the last years with all the interested bodies to sort out all the requirements, and iron out as many difficulties as possible. Over this period of time, we have held meetings in one of the hotel conference rooms, which was kindly provided by them.
The interested bodies included the Environment Agency, Natural England, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Hampshire County County, HBC and the Coastal Engineers, (East Solent Coastal Partnership) all of whom have been very helpful. We hope we have resolved a lot of the potential problems and taken on board the different requirements from all these bodies.
Earlier this year, we were awarded CIL funding up to £90,000, which is an amazing incentive to continue, and hopefully obtaining Planning approval, perhaps with view to the work being carried out later, next year 2018 at the appropriate time to minimize the impact on the special sites.

Ownership of the land:

We investigated the ownership, and although the eastern end did not have any record of ownership from the Land Registry, we were able to establish approximately half of the foreshore is owned by Northney Farm. The Farm have agreed that their land can be used for the path, and in connection with this the legal team at the County have been preparing a Deed of Dedication for signing by Northney Farm, which is now completed. Over the years, Mary Pike, representing the farm, has attended most of the meetings, to discuss the proposals. Regarding the reminder of the land, we have put in a public notice in the local paper.

Construction:

Following discussions with all those concerned over the years, we have arrived at a basic design for a combined solution. It is hoped to pipe the existing ditch, with as large a pipe as is practical, to minimize the effect of reducing the ditch's capacity. This pipe would then be connected to the existing tidal flaps , or larger ones in the existing locations , if found to be necessary. The bank would then be constructed over this,giving a 1200mm wide walkway, with a gravel finish. This is a sympathetic rural solution which has been tried and tested around other parts of the Chichester Harbour. See detailed cross sections, prepared by HBC, This is based on the information provided by the Coastal team, and HBC. (see drainage layout drg No 11/007 and sections 11/008A)

Funding

Having a budget figure to work with has enabled us to make initial funding enquiries from several different sources. We made an application for CIL funding from Havant borough Council, and received approval for it in the sum of up to £90,000, in February. We already have pledges made by local people which amount to several thousand pounds. However most funding organizations need to know that we have a fully designed scheme, and that the application for all the consents is completed or at least well under way, when they consider the scheme. Havant Borough Council (with the East Solent Coastal Partnership supplying survey information), have prepared a detailed design, so we are moving forward to work with them to realize the scheme. We would be grateful for any funding that maybe available for this project, but realize we will probably have to raise a certain percentage ourselves and thereby work with the local authority to see the project completed. Outlined below are some of the bodies we have or are approaching, with a view to making a formal application when planning and other consents are achieved.

Veolia:

We are looking to a Veolia for a grant for a portion of the cost. Initial conversations with them indicate that we are the right sort of scheme and in the right location. To be in next years funding, for them, we need to make an application once Planning and other approvals have been achieved. Their programme is quite tight with only three or four meetings per year., but a year to carry out the work once everything has been approved. This of course also has to fit in with other criteria, including the absence of the winter waders. So we accept that the programme for construction may have to be late spring or early summer of 2018

Natural England:

We have also approached Natural England who are investigating the possibility of a coastal path in this area at the moment, and we see this path as being a valuable section of their goal to walk around Hayling Island.

English Heritage:

We are also contacting English Heritage, as this has a connection at its western end to the ancient Wadeway connecting Hayling to the mainland. We feel this should have a greater prominence, than just a note on some of the old maps.

Friends of Chichester Harbour:

Although various schemes have benefited from the Friends of Chichester Harbour in the Northney Area, generally Hayling has not been helped to the same extent as other parts of the Harbour. We are approaching them likewise with details of this scheme.

NEHRA are also investigating these and other funding bodies, as well as organizing fundraising events at our local village hall each year, as part of the residents contribution.