

Statement of Community Views

Public Consultation on Extension of the Crab & Winkle Way in Whitstable

Exhibition held on 22nd and 23rd June 2018



Produced by

Christopher G Rogers Road Safety and Traffic Consultant

on behalf of The Crab & Winkle Line Trust

and Canterbury City Council



List of Contents

Page

1. Context	2
2. Executive Summary	2
3. History of the Crab & Winkle Railway	3
4. The Crab & Winkle Way	3
5. Extension of the Crab & Winkle Way in Whitstable	4
6. The Community Engagement Process	6
7. Levels of Participation – Summary	7
8. Feedback – Analysis	9
9. Feedback – Main Themes	14
10. Conclusion	17

Appendix 1 – Feedback from Area 1

Appendix 2 – Feedback from Area 2

Appendix 3 – Feedback from Area 3

Appendix 4 – Feedback from Area 4 and unknown addresses

Appendix 5 – Attendees at Public Exhibition

Appendix 6 – Feedback Form

Public Consultation on Crab & Winkle Way Extension in Whitstable

1. Context

In 2018 the Crab and Winkle Line Trust and Canterbury City Council consulted on its revised plans to extend the popular Crab and Winkle shared use footpath and cycleway into Whitstable along part of the route of the world's first regular passenger railway. The plans that were on display have been further modified as a result of this public consultation in order to take account of local peoples' concerns, where possible.

The Crab & Winkle Line Trust appointed Christopher G Rogers Road Safety and Traffic Consultant as Project Manager to help deliver the scheme.

2. Executive Summary

The scheme has been reviewed since the previous planning applications and approvals in 2010/11. This scheme aims to address the previous concerns raised by local residents, for example by retaining more of the important trees, proposing smaller and lower bridges with less requirement to raise the height of the embankments, and revised street lighting.

Before seeking planning consent for the improved design, a public exhibition was advertised and held over two days in June 2018 with plans and drawings on display. Up to around twelve Crab & Winkle Line Trust volunteers, an officer from the Canterbury City Council's Transportation team and the Trust's project manager were on hand to answer questions.

The event was well attended by 168 people and 62 responses were received. The response rate of those who attended the exhibition was 30%. Overall, the majority of visitors and respondents were supportive of the scheme with 76% of respondents in support and the Whitstable Society was also in support. 30% of the supportive comments came from residents who live adjacent to or very close to the scheme. Ten objections were received (one of which was resolved by subsequent amendments to the scheme) representing 16% of responses. Nine of the objections came from residents living adjacent to or very close to the scheme. Further correspondence and meetings took place with some local residents to try and allay their concerns. Following a desktop exercise, it was gauged that 15% of properties most likely to be affected by the scheme attended the exhibition, and that 8% of these potentially affected households responded.

3. History of The Crab & Winkle Railway

In 1830 a steam-powered railway opened between Whitstable and Canterbury to serve the important city after boats could no longer navigate the River Stour to Fordwich. It took two years to build and George Stephenson was the engineer. The line was the first regular steam passenger carrying railway in the world (as stated in the Guinness Book of Records). It was the third railway line ever to be built and the first to carry regular passengers. The world's first season tickets were issued at Canterbury in 1834 to take people to the beach for the summer season. Whitstable was home to the world's oldest passenger railway bridge. The seven-mile journey took twenty minutes.

The line fell into disuse in 1953 but much of the route of the line is still undeveloped. The original brick bridge at Old Bridge Road was demolished in 1969. The bridge spanning Teynham Road was demolished in 1972 although its abutments are still in place.

4. The Crab & Winkle Way

In 1999 a seven-mile long shared use footway and cycleway was established between Canterbury and Whitstable running along some of the original track bed, or close to it where the original line could not be accessed.

The route forms part of National Cycle Route 1 (between Dover and Inverness) and is popular for leisure and commuting and university/college use with daily traffic between Whitstable and Canterbury, but also many local trips to the supermarket, industrial estate, local primary schools, secondary school and shops for workers, shoppers and students.

Between Ivy House Road and Canterbury city centre the route is mainly traffic-free with very little interaction with traffic (apart from South Street, crossing Tyler Hill Road, and roads at the Canterbury end) making it a safe and pleasant route.

However, at Whitstable the shared use path terminates adjacent to All Saints Close where it meets Ivy House Road. Pedestrians and cyclists must follow roads via a circuitous route and a narrow underpass with low headroom to reach the town centre.

5. Extension of The Crab & Winkle Way in Whitstable

Between All Saints Close and the centre of Whitstable pedestrians and cyclists must currently negotiate roads. To cross the mainline railway there is a bridge with steps at the station or a narrow low underpass near Cromwell Road (where cyclists must dismount) which is also reached via steps near the station car park, or via a longer route around the nearby streets. The current route is therefore indirect and difficult for those with mobility impairments including people with prams, pushchairs and mobility scooters.

The embankment of the former railway in Whitstable lies dormant, although is used by a few dog-walkers or as a cut-through on the All Saints Close section, but is otherwise waste ground popular for dumping rubbish. The current seclusion of the site has enabled anti-social behaviour to take place.

The embankments are owned by the Crab and Winkle Line Trust and Kent County Council in different parts and have long been identified in Local Plans (since 2006) for use as a sustainable transport link. The footway/cycleway scheme was originally published for consultation in the Forward Plan in 2002 for the Canterbury District Transport Plan later adopted in 2003, and approved by Kent County Council in 2004.

An extension to the existing Crab and Winkle Way cycle route along the disused railway line towards the sea front is included in the Canterbury District Transportation Strategy (last updated in July 2017) and the land use has been designated for this purpose in the Local Plan. It is also one of the three priorities for Whitstable in Kent County Council's Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 4).

Canterbury City Council granted planning consent for the new paths in 2010 and the new bridges in 2011 (now expired). The city council and the Crab and Winkle Line Trust are jointly working to re-open the remaining sections of the embankment to extend the well-used shared use path closer to the centre of Whitstable with a direct, step-free accessible path easily used by all. The bridges would allow the popular shared use path to be used to take people safely from the railway station to the sea, as well as connecting local walkers and cyclists to the medical centre and schools via a more direct and traffic-free route. The extended path would be lit on winter evenings.

Since 2011, the Trust has been working with Canterbury City Council to address concerns that had previously been raised by some local residents. The latest revised design which takes into account many of the residents' previous concerns were put on display at the public exhibition, prior to seeking planning consent.

The scheme involves laying a path along the top of the embankment (from where vegetation is to be removed from the route of the path) and building two bridges: one to span Old Bridge Road and the railway (one long bridge) and one to cross Teynham Road.

Canterbury City Council has allocated £150,000 of developer funding to start the construction of the footway/cycleway, and works will get started this year (2019).



Photo: scheme drawing showing landscaping details at public exhibition