

Littlehempston to Totnes Path Project



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Littlehempston to Totnes Path Project

Littlehempston is isolated from Totnes unless you want to travel via the main road in a car. The back lane to Bridgetown offers a good walking route albeit one which extremely steep. Cyclists have nowhere to go.

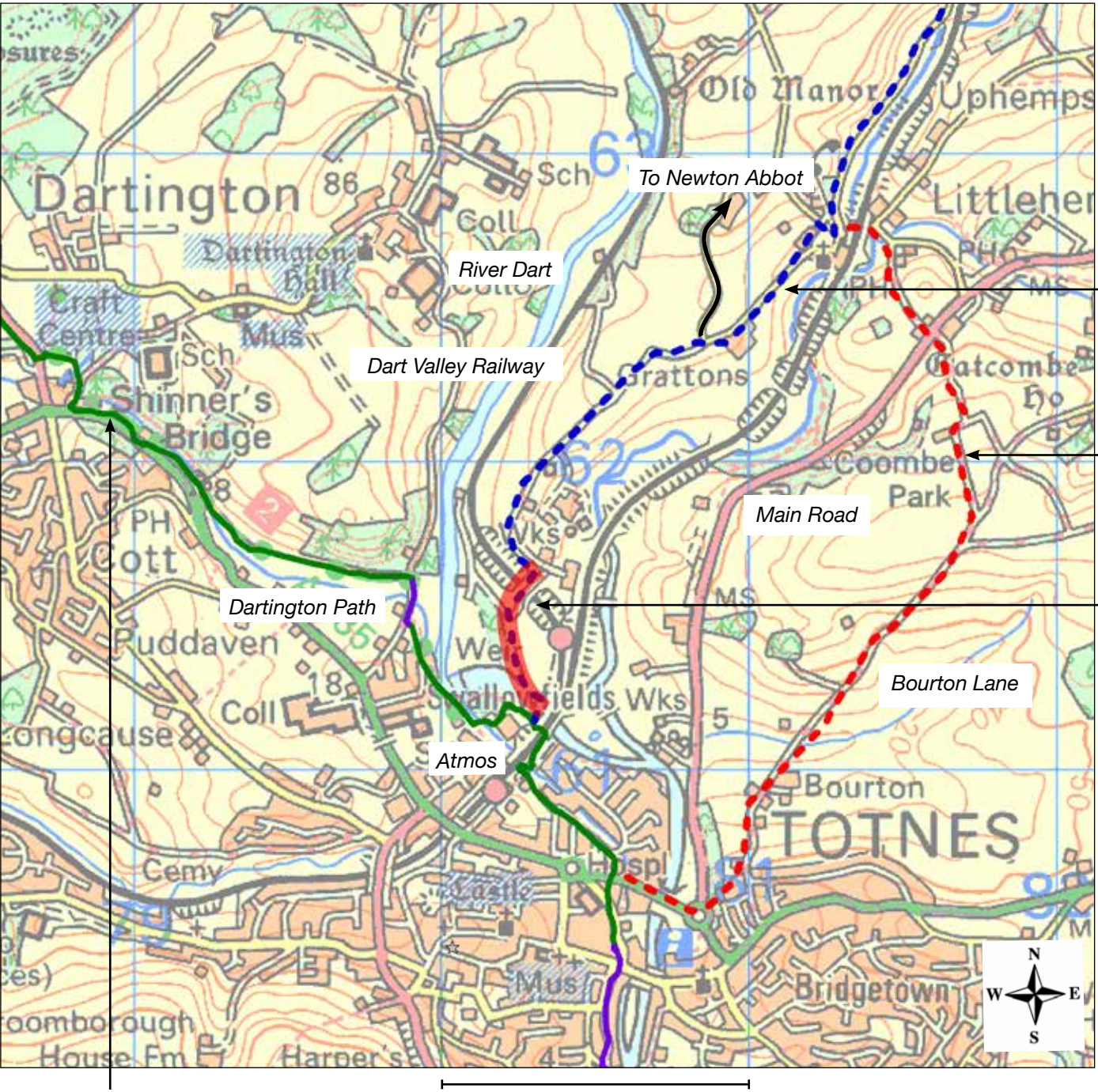
It has long been hoped that a route could be worked out via the footbridge to the South Devon Railway Riverside Station and these notes describe how this might be arranged.

As well as being of great value to local Littlehempston residents this route would give an opportunity of Totnes people walking and cycling out to enjoy a maze of quiet Devon lanes stretching northwards, all the way to Newton Abbott.

The River Dart footbridge is owned by the South Devon Railway whose support is key to realising this project. Our notes give particular care to detailing the fencing and boundaries in the vicinity of the Railway Station, and suggest our carrying out maintenance works to the bridge as a positive contribution to the Railway.

The proposed route is described by notes on the plan and illustrated with sketches and photographs.

Map of Route Options



Proposed route

Very steep alternative

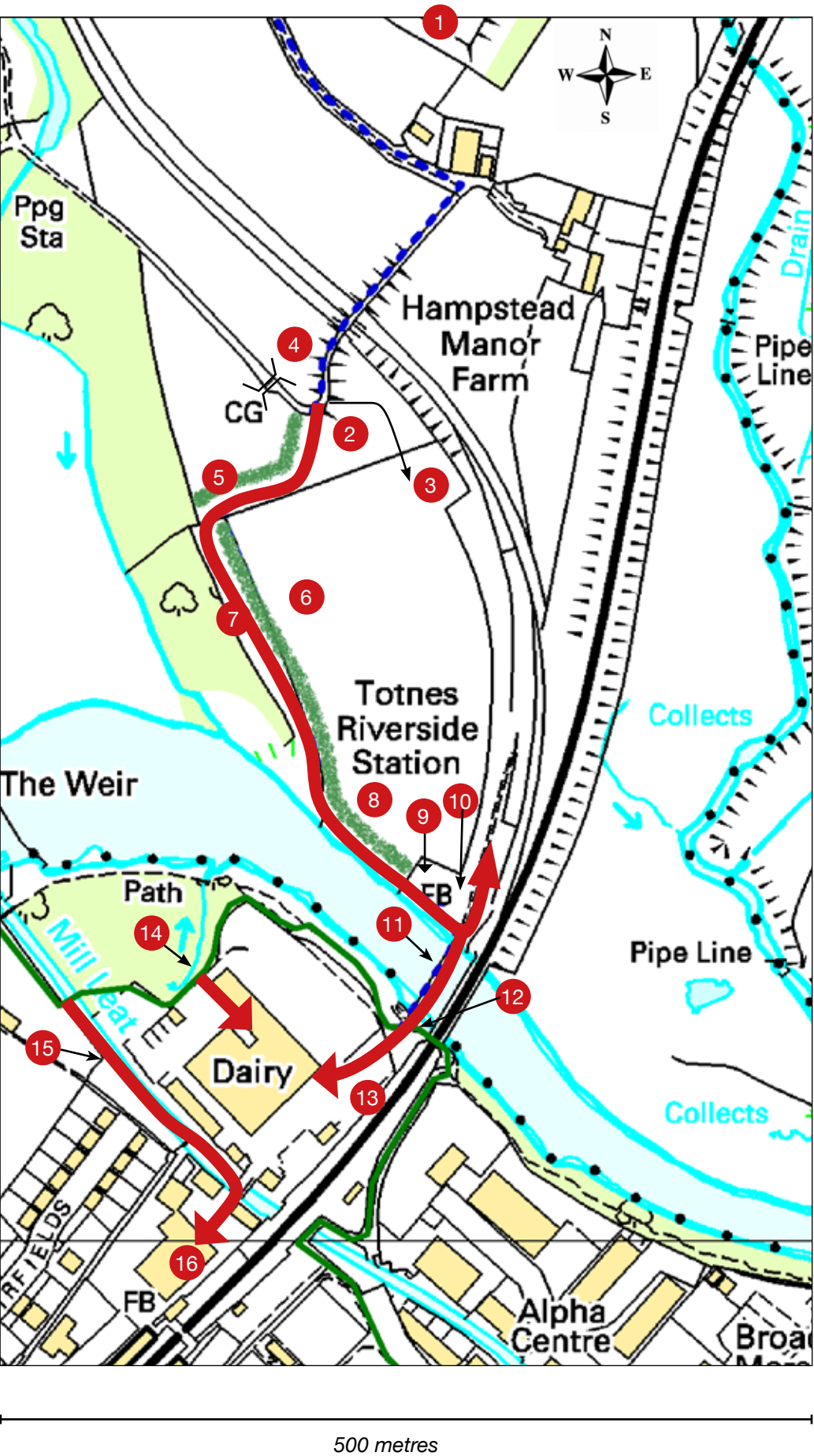
Section detailed in these notes

Plan showing prosed route from Littlehampstead to Totnes

The route follows existing lanes from the village to Hampstead Manor Farm, then a new field edge route to the River Dart Bridge. It should be noted that for part of the way the lane is privately owned. As it is quite narrow we suggest that the path project could make a contribution by constructing one or two passing bays at locations to be agreed with the landowner.

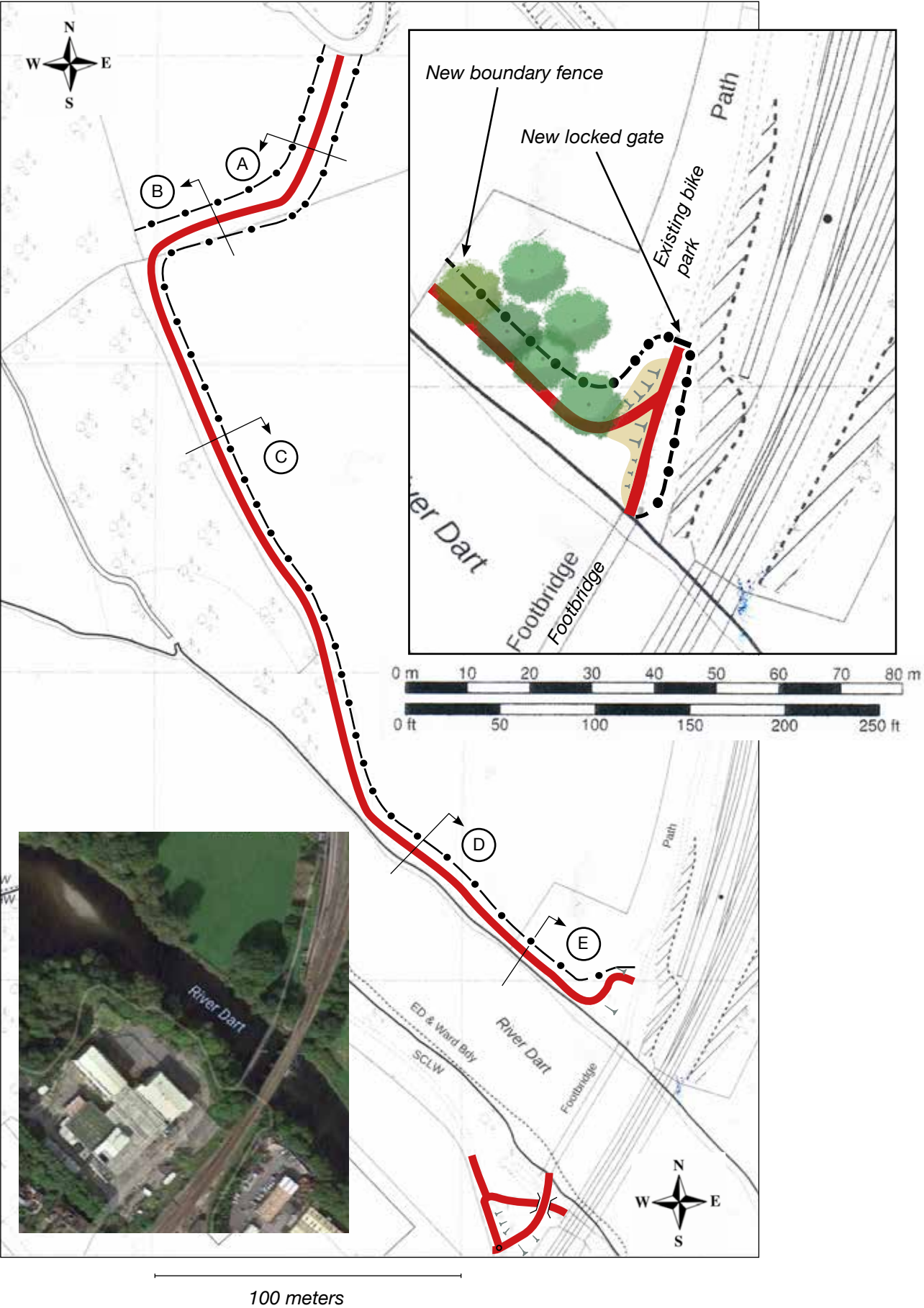
On the Totnes side of the river the Atmos Project offers the opportunity for an enhanced link from the bridge and a route direct through to Brunel's Atmospheric Railway pump house.

Plan showing detailed arrangement of suggested route from Hampstead Manor to Totnes Station



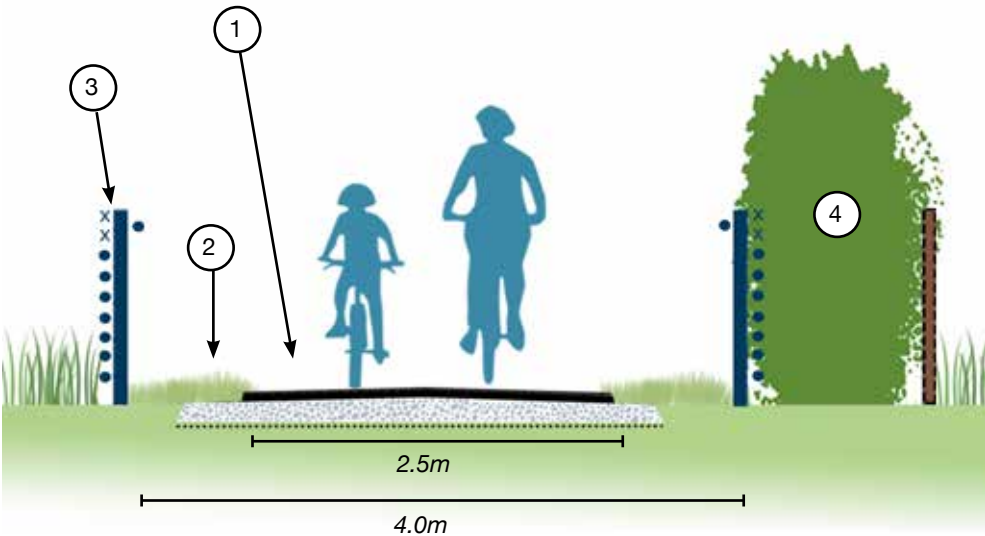
- The suggested route largely follows field edges, tucked out of sight from the Dart Valley Riverside Station, but offering lovely views over the river and upstream to the weir.
1. Lane from Littlehempston comes down the hill and crosses over the Dart Valley Line. This bridge gives a good vantage point to view the Steam Railway.
 2. We suggest that the Greenway leaves the road at this point and cuts off across the field as shown. This will ensure that the public stay well clear of the South West Water intake works. The path to be fenced and hedges on both sides to make a new green lane.
 3. The existing field access gate to remain but this hedge could be removed to make one larger field.
 4. Make a new field entrance into this now smaller field, and reinstate the gate over across the lane to secure access to the water works.
 5. Fence off path along field edge and cut through boundary hedge on edge of wood.
 6. Continue along the field edge. Plant a hedge all through so as to prevent any overlooking of the distant Railway Station in order to minimise any possible trespass. The final location of the path runs in a bit of a dip and for most of the way the swell of the ground hides all the railway so a hedge might not be considered necessary over the while length.
 7. The adjacent woodland and bank slope down to an old channel of the river makes for an interesting backdrop and there will be opportunities for making openings and views into the woodland and possibly also for making a woodland walk if this strip of ground was to be included in any agreement with South West Water, the landowners.
 8. The path reaches the riverside here where a seat overlooking the water would be most attractive especially as it faces south into the sun. the path now runs parallel to the river bank with a fence and hedge securing the station area.
 9. The Station Boundary Fence needs to be made in the style of the railway. It will tie into the existing access and fencing as shown in the sketch and will include a secure gate to be locked when the railway is closed to the public.
 10. The path ramps up to join the existing ramp as shown in the sketch so as to minimise the space taken in the floodplain.
 11. The River Dart Bridge needs a certain amount of attention and the project would put in hand a programme of refurbishments to be agreed with the Dart Railway. The existing central gate would be removed and the structure made good. In use cyclists would be advised to walk over the bridge.
 12. The southern approach ramp is rather awkward. If possible we suggest that it is modified as shown in the sketch with an additional short span into the Atmos site and a curved earthwork ramp down to join the riverside path passing underneath.
 13. A direct promenade from the Dart Bridge through the Atmos site to connect to the Atmospheric Building would be ideal.
 14. The existing riverside path can be integrated into the Atmos café area to create a much more open feel compared with the existing arrangement crawling around the security fence of the old dairy.
 15. The existing path to Dartington is very narrow as it goes past the end of Weirfields. The Atmos project is an opportunity to open up the boundary here giving views through to the Mill Leat and the possibility of widening the path.
 16. The existing public footpath runs in a narrow corridor at the back of the fences. We suggest that this is diverted to run through the Atmos Scheme direct to the Station for a more attractive route. The width of the old path could then usefully be taken into the Atmos development.

Totnes Sections



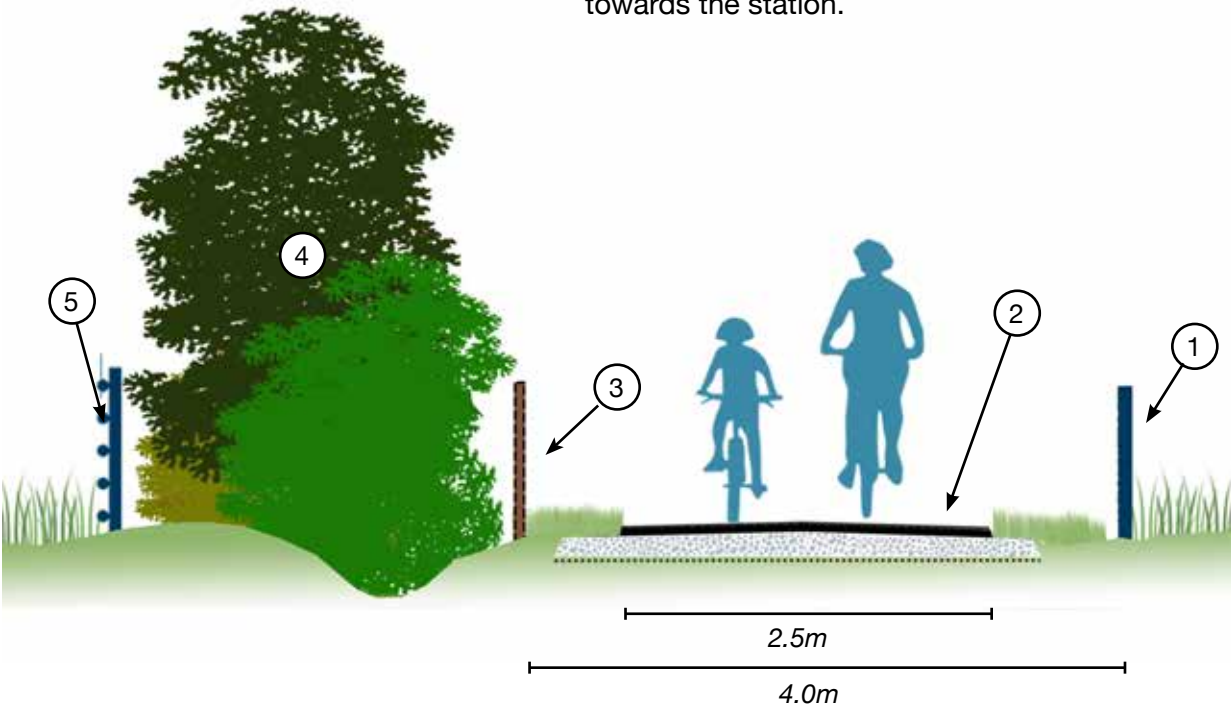
A Across First Field for direct route

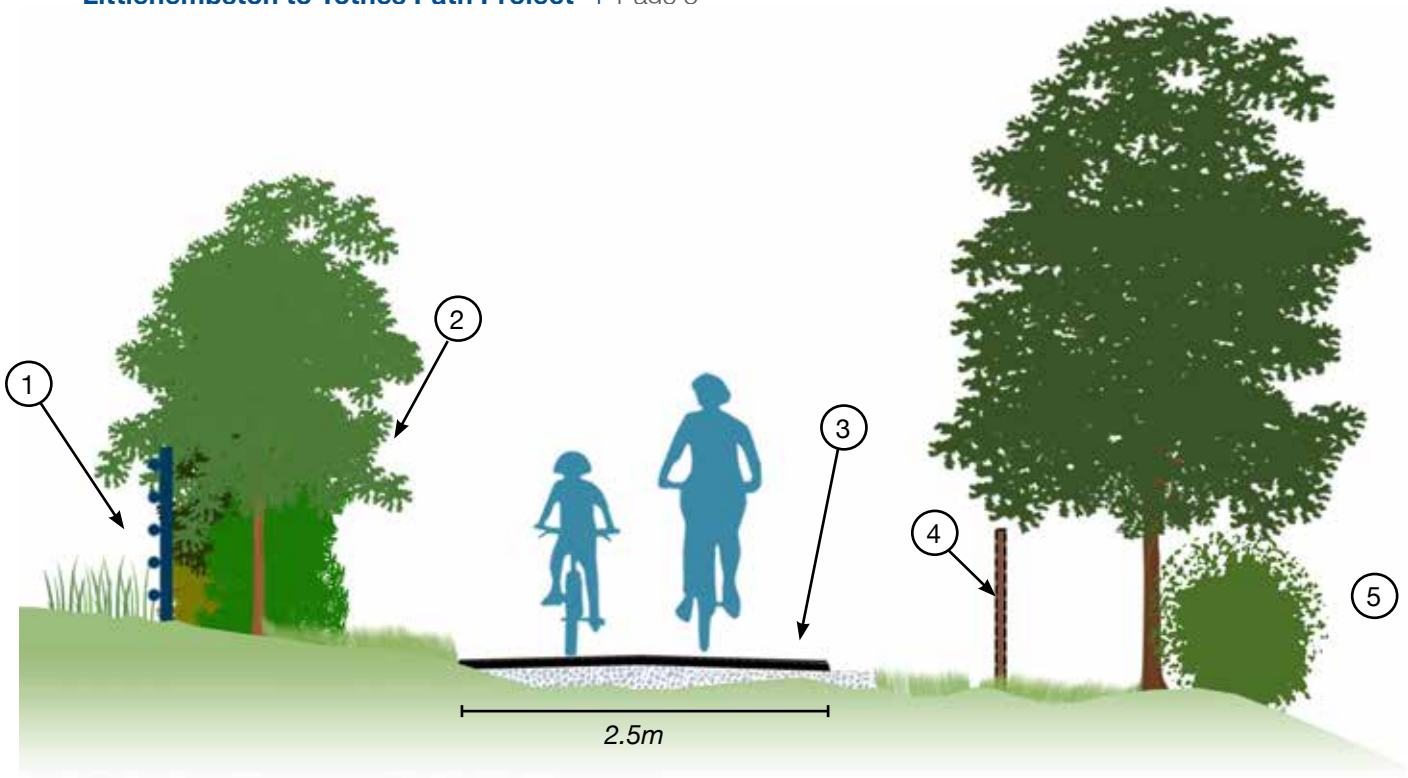
- 1. New path, 2.5m wide, stone finished with stone dust.
- 2. Mown grass verges either side.
- 3. New field fences either side, 7 strand sheep netting (to prevent dogs straying) two strands of barbed wire on field side and one smooth on path side.
- 4. Hedging either side if required.



B Along field edge looking towards the River

- 1. New field fence.
- 2. New stone path finished with stone dust.
- 3. Remove existing overgrown fence and cut hedge back.
- 4. Maintain the main part of the hedge as a dense barrier preventing any overlooking of station area.
- 5. New field fence to replace existing so as to secure this boundary on the field side towards the station.



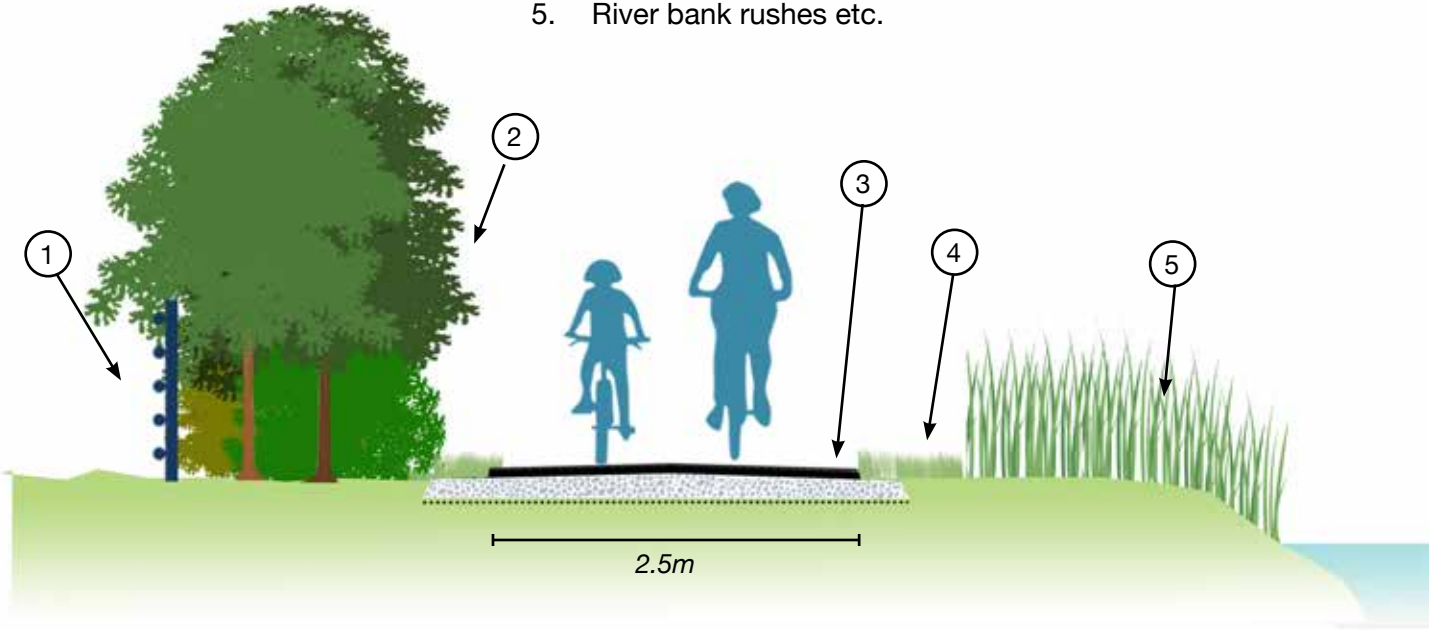


C Running along the field edge beside the wood

1. New double field fence, set 1.0m apart each with sheep netting and two lines of barbed wire. This arrangement to create impenetrable barrier to approaching station area.
2. Plant the double fence solidly with hawthorn.
3. New stone path finished with dust.
4. Remove the existing fence along the edge of the wood and clear away the understorey and bank of nettles so as to allow the public to see into the wood.
5. Existing woodland dropping down to the flood plain.

D Beside the River Dart looking downstream towards the bridges

1. New double field fence for security.
2. Plant densely with hawthorn.
3. New path.
4. Maintain grass verges.
5. River bank rushes etc.

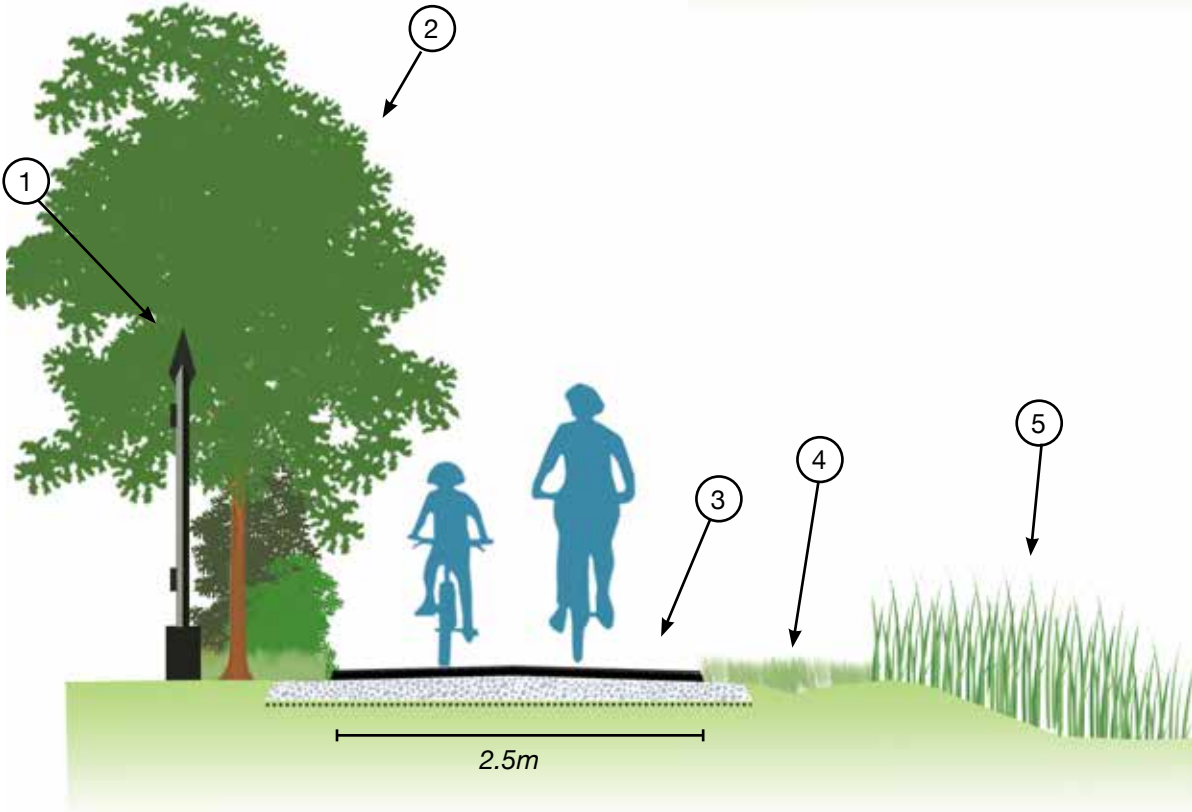


E Across the Station Lawn

1. New security fence, boundary to boundary, designed and built in the style of GWR station boundaries.
2. Maintain some trees within the “public” areas.
3. New stone path. Note that if this section lies within the 100-year flood zone then this section will require a sealed surface.
4. Maintain mown grass verge.
5. Riverside rushes etc. to be retained.



Bike park



Project Development

These draft proposals are put forward by Littlehampstead Parish Council working in partnership with local Charity Greenways and Cyclerroutes limited. The Engineer for Greenways, John Grimshaw, developed the nearby path from the Dartington Drive to Shinnars Bridge and constructed it in 1986 by means of a summer workcamp. This path is now very much part of the scene in Totnes and provides an easy way to avoid the main A385 Road to Buckfastleigh. We hope that this can be replicated on this side of the river to bypass the equally forbidding A381 road to Newton Abbot.

The next stages if taking this project forward includes,

- i. Refining and agreeing details with all the landowners including South West Water, The South Devon Railway and Atmos.
- ii.. Discussing improvements with neighbours and users.
- iii. Reaching formal agreements with landowners.
- iv. Securing the support of the Parish, Town, District ad County Councils.
- v. Preparing and submitting a planning application.
- vi. Securing the necessary funding.
- vii. Constructing and opening the route and hopefully seeing its full integration into the operation of the South Devon Railway, the Wildlife Farm and Atmos.

All of these actions will be coordinated and delivered by the Parish Council/Greenways Project working Group, who will also be responsible for promoting, managing and maintaining the project.

Maintenance of this 500m long Littlehampstead Link Path

This path will be maintained by local path rangers coordinated by Greenways. We would aim for a walk through every week, if not most days to deal with litter, overhanging briars etc. grass cutting of the verges would be done as required and we plan a spring cleaning weekend each year to deal with any winter damage.

We see the path as becoming a popular route for a modest flow of pedestrians and cyclist who either want to enjoy the local area or go further afield.