



Upper Don Trail Trust Annual Trustees Report 2022

Upper Don Trail Trust

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UPPER DON TRAIL TRUST ANNUAL TRUSTEES REPORT 2022

Overview

Despite the severe restrictions imposed by the Pandemic 2021/22 has seen exciting progress on planning and extending the Trail from Kelham to Langsett including construction on the Barnsley Little Don and at Oughtibridge Mill. The coming year should see more work start at More Hall and Club Mill Road and a breakthrough at Kelham's Brooklyn Works.

Reluctantly Trustees decided to withdraw from the long-standing Little Kelham Bridge project and to concentrate efforts and resources on other priorities as set out in detail below.

As restrictions on outdoor gatherings reduced, we organised a series of successful volunteer events and will be stepping up this side of our work in the coming months. We are keen to offer our many members and supporters more opportunities for active involvement in promoting, maintaining and waymarking available sections of the trail. In light of latest information and public concern over the poor quality of many of our rivers we are also planning to start training for a 'Citizen Science' campaign to monitor and report water quality and contamination in the Upper Don, working with kayakers, swimmers, anglers, environmentalists and local residents.



Pollution Hunters on an "Outfall Safari"

Route Development

Kelham Neepsend

The Trust's longest standing project has been to achieve a bridge crossing of the Kelham Goyt to provide a walking and cycling link from the Island to Brooklyn Works and Ball St Bridge. In early 2021, after lengthy negotiations the Trust succeeded in securing funding from its own resources and the Council's S106 fund for a bridge to be constructed and maintained by Citu, developers of the Little Kelham housing scheme. However, after a year's delay Citu failed to sign a funding agreement for the project or demonstrate any will to do so.

In the meantime, the Council's Kelham Neepsend Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) has turned Alma St/Green Lane and Ball St into a safe low traffic and low speed cycle route. The Little Kelham development is also about to be connected directly to Ball Street Bridge and will require a new direct off-road public walking route. These two routes largely provide the envisaged benefits of the bridge for the Trail, sadly other than a link to the Museum. Trustees reluctantly agreed that we should focus our energies and resources and those of the Council on Club Mill Road which together with Parkwood is becoming increasingly recognised as a fantastic 'green lung' for Inner City residents.



Ball Street Bridge, temporary closure soon to be made permanent and a key part of the Upper Don Trail

The LTN will also improve the trail between Rachel's Corner community garden and Rutland Road by closing a short section of Neepsend Lane and providing a long needed signalised crossing of Rutland Bridge.

We also look forward to the anticipated redevelopment of the former Hydra Tools site on Penistone Road for housing which will offer the opportunity of a new trail linking Rutland Rd to Penistone Rd at Packhorse Weir.

Hillfoot to Herries Rd (Club Mill Road etc)

This has been the Trust's priority project since 2019. An initial proposed new accessible cycle-footpath route between Wardsend and Herries Rd had to be abandoned in 2021 when insuperable problems with unrecorded electric and gas lines were discovered and Sustrans funding was lost. However, with help from Gill Furniss MP and Coun Douglas Johnson (Cabinet Member for Transport), an alternative route is being investigated which would in part follow the Toad Hole Dyke (a small forgotten brook in sore need of some TLC). It is hoped that subject to feasibility work now underway funding from Sustrans and the Council can be secured in the next twelve months.



Proposed new route from Livesey St Bridge to Herries Rd Following the Toad Hole Dyke.

The Trust has also obtained an in-principle agreement with the owners of the Old Park Silver Mill site to allow construction of a new cycle-footway on their riverside land at a dangerously narrow part of the road. The Trust has also facilitated discussions with a potential developer to take the historic building on for a new use which would improve the attractiveness of the Trail.

An important outstanding issue is for the Council to find alternative accommodation for the traveller camp currently occupying part of Club Mill Road in unsuitable and unsafe conditions. The travellers also want to move.

Penistone Road:

The Trust and Cycle Sheffield have worked jointly to get developer Jaguar to provide a proper segregated cycle and footway on Penistone Road alongside their large development site and to include provision of a signalised Toucan crossing of the busy Herries Road South. Although our efforts have so far been only partly successful there is now a fresh opportunity with a new planning application for part of the site - the former Charlie Browns autoparts store which we are pursuing again with Cycle Sheffield.

Oughtibridge to Wharnccliffe Side:

The redevelopment of the former Oughtibridge Paper Mill (now being named Oughtibridge Valley) by David Wilson Homes is progressing rapidly and the first few metres of the riverside trail are already built. The developers have also made the first S106 ('Planning Gain') contribution towards a new bridge over the Don and connecting trail to Oughtibridge village. We await the Council's long-promised public consultation on exactly where this route goes and how it connects to Beeley Woods - ideally in our view with a second bridge to Coronation Park thus avoiding dangerous junctions.



The first few meters of the UDT have now been built at Oughtibridge Valley

Wharncliffe Woods

We are now starting discussions on a possible linking trail from the Oughtibridge Valley site upstream to Holmes Farm through land and paths owned by Yorkshire Water and Forestry England.

More Hall Tip

Funding is identified in the Stocksbridge Towns Fund Health and Wellbeing Programme (SHTP) to build a high quality cycle footpath and possibly equestrian lane from Holmes Farm west to Station Road Deepcar through the former Wraggs Quarry and Liberty steelworks tips. In principle wayleave has been agreed with the Wharncliffe Estate. Planning application expected shortly with a possible construction start by the end of the year.

Bloor Homes

Although substantial site access work has been completed including a new road and bridge there is still no date for housebuilding to start on the site due to outstanding planning conditions. However we believe that these may now have been resolved. The development will create a new 1km trail giving access to one of the most beautiful sections of the Don.



The Don at Deepcar these wet woodlands will become accessible but not affected by the new housing

Little Don- Hunshelf to Underbank Lane: SHTP also propose modest improvements to the link between Fox Valley and the Steel Valley trail and more substantial improvements on Underbank Lane with a signalised crossing of Manchester Road to Underbank Reservoir.

Little Don -Underbank Reservoir

Yorkshire Water are still planning improvements to public access around the reservoir but details are unclear at present.

Little Don -Equitrek Crossing

A critical new crossing of the A616 at Equitrek has been promised by National Highways to link Underbank Reservoir to Barnsley's improved Little Don trail but construction has been set back and a new date is awaited.

Little Don- Underbank to Langsett

The majority of the improved trail following the former reservoir rail trackbed has been completed by Barnsley MBC with European Union funding. The final link from Alderman Head to Langsett Reservoir is apparently in the hands of Yorkshire Water and National Highways but the programme for this work is not yet known.



In summary of the estimated 22.5 km total planned trail (including the Little Don Trail to Langsett)

Completed	8.2 km	
Useable but needs improvement	3.5 km	(some duplication with section below)
Construction funded/committed	9.3 km	
Needs proposal/funding	2.52 km	
Total	22.52 km	(includes some duplication)

Volunteering

As restrictions were reduced in 2021, we began to re-establish volunteering events. Two very well supported 'clean-up and cut-backs' were organised on sections of the Hillfoot to Herries route with great support from Litter Pickers, Friends of Wardsend and Friends of Parkwood Springs. Temporary waymarking and historical interpretation was installed. The Trust is also working with SOAR on a pilot 'Green Social Prescribing' project to install improvements to the Wardsend section of the trail, working with local volunteers and the Conservation Volunteers.

A further mass clean-up of the central section of Club Mill Road is planned for 2 July 2022.



Clean-up and Signage Day with UDTT, Litter Pickers and Friends of Parkwood and Wardsend October 2021

Design and Waymarking

We have been encouraged by the decision of the Trans Pennine Trail to designate the UDT as its main route from Wharncliffe to Sheffield City Centre when missing links are provided and Sustrans similar commitment to re-signing the Trail as part of National Cycle Route 627.

SHTP has also accepted our proposal to commission a Wayfinding and Naming strategy for the Trail to resolve some overlapping and confusing naming issues and very incomplete signing and mapping in and around Stocksbridge.

We have also welcomed a project proposal from the Ramblers to produce a summary map of riverside walks in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire.

Public Engagement

- We took part in the week of consultations on the Stocksbridge High Street programme where the trail received an overwhelming positive response.
- We had a stall at the 2021 Kelham Christmas Market where we engaged with around 100 interested people and groups.
- We also had a stall at the recent showing of the inspiring feature documentary 'River' at the Showroom Cinema which attracted wide interest.
- We have new display boards and have produced UDT Mugs and an updated 3D map of the Ladys Bridge to Oughtibridge section of the Trail.

Future Work – How to Get Involved!

In 2022 we will be working with other rivers trusts in Sheffield to provide 'Citizen Science' training in pollution spotting, reporting and sampling.

We need lots of volunteers who walk, cycle, kayak, fish or swim our rivers regularly.

Contact simon.ogden43@gmail.com



Club Mill Clean-up Summer 2021

We also need people to fund raise, promote and signpost the trail, help with volunteer events, talk to schools, comment on planning applications, record our river history and wildlife or help with our administration and accounts. **What could you do?**