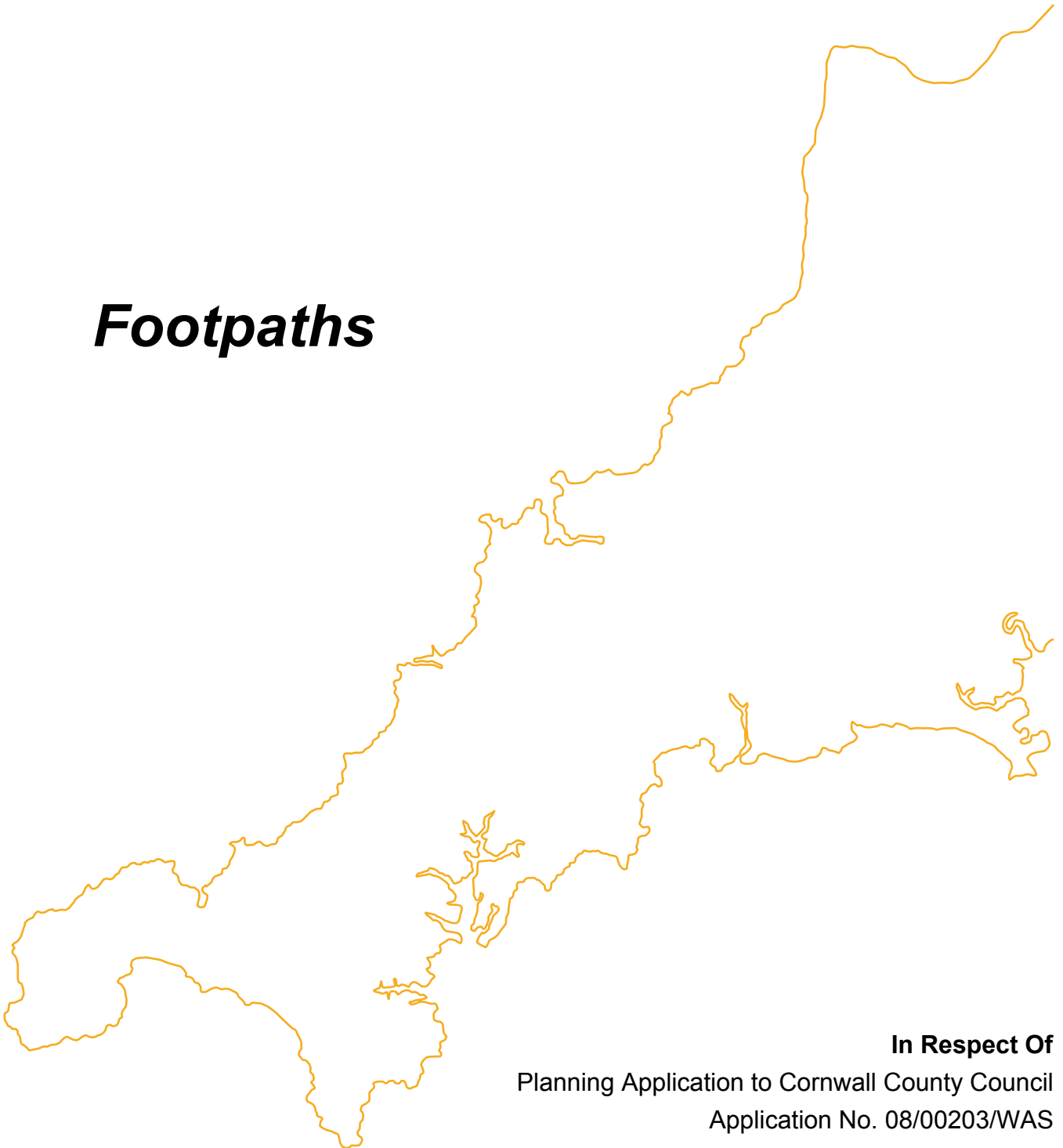




Consultee Response to SITA Additional Information

Consultee
St.Dennis Anti Incinerator Group (S.T.I.G.)

Footpaths



In Respect Of
Planning Application to Cornwall County Council
Application No. 08/00203/WAS

Footpaths

Introduction

The footpaths, which are subject to alteration as part of this proposal, are of the utmost importance to the well-being of the residents of St.Dennis, Treviscoe and Trerice.

Whilst it is accepted that the paths are not used as much now as they once were, and would not be considered “chocolate box pretty”, they do, nonetheless, provide local people with access to the countryside as well as tell a story about the changing environmental and social history of the area.

A number of ancient rights of way have already been lost in the area, as the clay industry has expanded. The incinerator application, if approved, looks set to further diminish the number of opportunities local people have to explore and enjoy the countryside around them.

These footpaths were established several hundred years ago and provided possibly the only route into St.Dennis for the people of Treviscoe, Trerice, Gothers and Enniscaven, and allowed residents from St.Dennis to access the china clay workings sited around the area where the majority of the inhabitants were employed.

These footpaths started as “tracks” and were used long before the advent of the local “B” roads.

They are now a valuable recreational area for several small villages, otherwise surrounded by the china clay industry.

Several of the paths, which are proposed for diversion, provide the only circular walk in the parish, through open countryside and with very limited need to access local roads.

Additionally almost all the properties in St.Dennis, Treviscoe and Trerice are sited in such a way that residents look directly into the area of the proposed plant.

They currently enjoy good views across green fields, a precious amenity in the only piece of countryside not yet taken by the china clay industry.

Footpaths

Footpath Counts

STIG considers that the survey undertaken does not constitute an adequate assessment of the use of the footpaths.

The surveys took place over three days in mid-September after the school holidays and STIG would suggest that the low level of use the survey identified was not representative of the use in better weather and at other times.

Not only are the footpaths used by local recreational walkers and dog walkers, they are used for an annual Fun Run in December as a charity function, local fund raising groups on Treasure Hunts, and by the local school for nature studies.

Additionally the consultation document states *“after consultations with the Footpaths Officer of St. Dennis Parish Council, it was established”* Having checked with the Clerk to St. Dennis Parish Council and the two Councillors charged with regular inspections of the paths, this statement is untrue.

Footpaths 2 & 5

Footpath 5 has a direct access to the village of Treviscoe and when linked with Footpath 2, Footpath 18 and Footpath 14 provides an almost total circular walk without the use of public roads, starting in St.Dennis and returning to the same place in Hendra Prazey.

These footpaths provide the only circular walk, in open countryside, for the whole parish of St. Dennis. Any alteration would have an unacceptable impact on the rights of way and an area of recreation.

Although the proposed diversion would not lead to a “net loss” of the path network, it would totally change the visual and physical enjoyment of the people using the amenities.

Should the planning application be approved and the need arise to divert the footpaths the following points should be considered.

- a. After the construction of the access road, footpath 5 would be severed from the area where it becomes footpath 31.

It would be necessary to provide a safe crossing point here, and this would have to be approved by the local parish councils.

Footpaths

- b. As it is anticipated that approximately 400 vehicles would be using the access road, there would need to be stringent safety measures put into place, bearing in mind that walkers usually have dogs and children running free.
- c. The suggestion that the road would be fenced is noted, but how many people want to walk along a path accompanied by lorries etc. This they can do on our local public roads.
- d. It is unclear exactly what provision would be made for the diverted path around the actual site of the Incinerator, but there is an indication that there would be Cornish hedges. Would these hedges be on the outside of the path, thus making a long corridor between the hedges and the fencing of the site, or would the path be open to the countryside.

Footpath 14

Photographic representations showing the position of the Incinerator are misleading.

The “track” shown on the boundary map for St. Dennis and which is now footpath 14 was originally established to provide access to Rostowrack Farm before the introduction of a public road.

This track is now part of the Parkandillick Complex main road and is unsafe for pedestrian use.

The footpath now commences at the rail bridge. Way markers erected by County Council clearly show that the way is between Footpath 5 and is between the two sets of steps that abut the railway bridge.

Therefore photographs showing impact on the area should have been taken from below the railway arch on the path as it passes through Rostowrack Farm.

The suggestion is that an additional link from Footpath 5 would provide more walking options, but it would be necessary to provide some form of drainage of the path at its lower end to enable ease of use by walkers.

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Footpath 17

This footpath was possibly established for access to the china clay works and much has disappeared under clay workings.

- a. Some form of safety fencing would need to be constructed here in view of the heavy vehicles leaving the haul road and using the public road.
- b. At the exit of the haul road, it is anticipated that several hundred HGVs would exit on to the road.

To assist walkers crossing this area, some form of safety barrier, zebra or pelican crossing would have to be established.

Additionally it would be necessary to have signs stating that “heavy vehicles will be using access ahead” on both sides of the road.

Footpaths 108 & 109

Although part of these paths are in the parish of St. Stephen, the proposals for this area would need to include some form of safety crossing for pedestrians and be positioned to achieve the maximum sight lines in both directions, together with possible signing that HGVs are using the road ahead.

These measures would irrevocably alter the rural nature of the area and introduce unnatural features, which might be acceptable in an urban industrial setting but are certainly not acceptable here.

Policy 32 of the Cornwall Waste Development Framework relates specifically to public rights of way and recreational areas and states:

Development will be permitted where, during the operational life of the proposal, and on restoration, it would satisfy all the following criteria;

- *It would not have an unacceptable impact on public rights of way or areas of recreation.*
- *It would not lead to a “net loss” of the public rights of way network.*
- *The restoration would, where appropriate, make a positive contribution to the rights of way network or areas of recreation.*

STIG believes that all the above criteria would be breached by

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- *Driving an access road across countryside.*
- *By the diversion of historical footpaths.*

The restoration of areas created by the diversion would not compensate for the loss of the recreation facilities provided by the footpaths for the local residents.

- *This area in Cornwall is particularly deprived. Many of the residents are elderly who take pleasure in walking, locally, for their health and enjoyment.*
- *Many local people do not have access to the Coastal Footpath, the Saints Way footpaths, Camel Trail etc., and rely on the local network to provide rural leisure walking opportunities.*
- *The whole footpath network in the parish of St. Dennis would be degraded and local people would lose their last piece of accessible countryside for recreational purposes.*
- *These proposals will deny peoples "right to roam" as provided by Government legislation.*
- *These proposals would divert the two most popular local paths and threaten the remaining circular route around St Dennis.*
- *Walkers would have to cross a new access road and negotiate the considerable amount of heavy traffic heading to the incinerator.*
- *There would be a loss of rights of way that have existed, in some cases, for over 1,000 years and the loss of established Cornish hedges with the consequent loss of local wildlife habitats.*
- *With the chimney stack height at 120m and visible from across Cornwall, the overall loss of views from key, and perhaps more popular paths, would be the inevitable consequence of this application being approved.*