

## Hulk Lane Reinstatement, Thorverton

Hulk Lane was officially “lost” when a large section of the highway slipped down the hillside following severe wet weather conditions in 2013.

The slippage occurred in a narrow block of land near Thorverton in Mid Devon, where alluvial deposits lie above an impervious clay bed, making it susceptible to land slippage. Unfortunately, the cost of reinstatement of the slipped section as a full all-vehicle highway was deemed financially impossible. However, an initiative led by local residents, who formed Thorverton and Brampford Speke Community Access Project (TABSCAP), raised the funds necessary to re-open Hulk Lane as a bridleway. This resulted in a beautiful and safe route for the villagers of Thorverton and Brampford Speke, connecting to a network of footpaths in the Exe Valley.

A team of professional advisors was assembled, through local contacts, working on a good will, at cost basis to deliver the works at minimal cost. Initial designs were devised, suitable for construction by semi-skilled local labour with some competent contractor support. The works comprised: removal of the land slip material including the existing Hulk Lane; installation of slope drainage; grading of slip area; reconstruction of bridleway; landscaping and planting selected to also provide food for birds and small mammals through the winter months.

Consultation with DCC was required along with agreements to undertake works on what was a public highway. Local funding was raised which was match funded by DCC through their Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund. Councillor Margaret Squires said as she cut the ribbon at the official opening: “The reopening as a bridleway shows what can be done when a group of enthusiastic people come together to improve public access for local people with the support of Devon County Council, parish councils and private funding.”