

# By-pass set to open in two weeks time

LOVE it or hate it, Tiverton's £8 million southern relief road will be opening in two weeks time on May 18.

Since plans were unveiled for the by-pass local people have reacted with mixed feelings.

Some claim it is a waste of money, others believe it will improve the quality of life in the town centre.

Work started on the mile-long distributor road almost a year ago. It runs from the end of Heathcoat Way, along Blundell's Road, around the back of Phoenix Lane and out through Westexe towards Exeter Road.

The scheme was first drawn up in the 1960s but lack of funding from Devon

County Council has seen the project repeatedly shelved.

Tiverton MP Angela Browning and Mid Devon District Council have been at the forefront of the campaign to get the road built.

Both camps believe it is crucial for the survival of the town especially when work starts on the pedestrianisation of Phoenix Lane and Fore Street.

But some local people do not agree.

Betty Coles lives alongside the relief road in Westexe. She has had to bear the brunt of traffic jams and noise pollution

while the road was being built.

She said she missed her privacy and added: "I think it's a waste of money - it will drive people away from the town."

In contrast another resident, Ken Holland, had nothing but praise for the project: "There will be no traffic through the town, therefore it will be quieter.

"As a result the quality of life will go up so I think it is a very good idea."

But the scheme has also had its fair share of controversy.

The demolition of

the historic railway bridge over the old Exe Valley Line saw a storm of protest from conservationists and local people alike.

Impassioned pleas for a road bridge to be built over the relief road at Canal Hill fell on deaf ears at County Hall.

Despite a 1,000 signature petition and town council backing, Devon County Council said its budget was too tight to pay for a £500,000 footbridge.

Residents will have to wait until next year at the earliest before the situation can be reviewed.