



## Devon Countryside Access Forum

Lucombe House  
County Hall  
Topsham Road  
EXETER EX2 4QD

Tel: 07837 171000  
01392 382084

E-mail: [devoncaf@devon.gov.uk](mailto:devoncaf@devon.gov.uk)

[www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf)

Mr S Gardner  
Senior Manager  
Public Rights of Way  
Lucombe House  
County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
EX2 4QD

19 September 2017

Dear Steve

### **West Bowerland Plantation, Thorndon Cross**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum working group met a couple of weeks ago to discuss trail surfacing and in particular the new stone surface at West Bowerland which continues to be difficult for dog walkers and horse riders to use.

The Pegasus Trail is primarily a bridleway and equestrians are the main users. The working group acknowledges there is a difficult balance between capital works and long term maintenance. However, the ideal surface for horse-riders (and other users) is a soft and non-slip surface.

The working group advises that additional work on West Bowerland should be undertaken on a pilot basis to improve the ease of use of the trail, preferably with waste products from local tree surgeons or contracting companies. This material would be obtainable at a much cheaper rate than specialist bark-based products which are frequently too slippery. The working group viewed samples of suitable vegetation/wood chippings and recommends that DCC consider a central strip to a minimum width of at least a 1m, but wider (say at least 2m) where the width permits this. Some sections of the track are at least 4m wide, so in those places a 2m strip would not be unreasonable. This would have the effect of several years leaf litter. Leaving the sides stoned would assist with drainage and allow a firmer surface for forestry extraction where necessary.

If you would like to see samples of the material viewed by the working group please let me know.

Voluntary work to assist with spreading the material could be explored with SW Riders, the



Ramblers and a local dog training group. Initial discussions with SW Riders suggest that this may not be an unrealistic expectation.

The DCAF working group suggests that such a pilot could be monitored and reviewed to inform surfacing good practice.

The DCAF is next meeting on 12 October and it would be helpful if you could provide a response by this date.

Yours sincerely

██████████

Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

*Letter sent on behalf of Devon Countryside Access Forum*

*Chair: Sarah Slade  
Vice Chair: Chris Cole*