

Devon Countryside Access Forum

Trail principles

The Devon Countryside Access Forum Trail Working Group met on two occasions and considered principles to adopt when developing trails. It agreed the following as best practice.

- 1) Route design should consider the intended use and this should be reflected in the design specification. . A multi-use route needs to consider all users.
- 2) Trails in rural areas should have regard to a 'spirit of place' so that design is appropriate to both the place and its setting. The countryside should not be urbanised and users should come prepared.
- 3) Work on the base and surfacing should be resilient to allow sustainable long term use.
- 4) Where there are co-existing public and private rights, any surfacing should not adversely affect the private rights.
- 5) Specifications and materials should be fit for purpose and appropriate to the location.
- 6) Drainage should be investigated as this is fundamental and can be a maintenance issue in the long term.
- 7) The totality of the network should be considered to ensure trails maintenance does not lead to neglect of other routes.
- 8) Appropriate access for disabled users should be built in, wherever possible, in accordance with the DCAF Disability Access Position Statement.
- 9) The role of volunteers in maintaining trails for the future should be considered.

Looking at the interface between the Council and user groups/members of the public, the DCAF would recommend:

- a) Timely feedback on complaints.
- b) A rolling update for DCAF on priorities and routes where significant works are needed.
- c) Consideration of additional information to include on the PROW interactive map, such as path furniture and suitability for disabled access, possibly using the Disabled Ramblers path categories. This would help to promote the SW tourism economy.

The DCAF would welcome:

- ✓ The opportunity to have a discussion with PROW Wardens in 2018, possibly as part of an integrated meeting/training day. It would be helpful to have Countryside Mobility involved.
- ✓ Further information on the PROW maintenance priorities and programme.