



Devon Countryside Access Forum
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Sixty-Third meeting
Devon Countryside Access Forum
Committee Suite
County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QD

Tuesday, 31 January 2023 at 10.00 am

The meeting will be open to the public in accordance with provisions of reg.7 of The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007 (under s 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of interests
3. To approve minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2022 (Pages 1 - 12)
4. Matters arising
 - 4.1 Dartmoor Way
 - 4.2 Network Rail
 - 4.3 Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme
 - 4.4 Riverside Park, Exeter
 - 4.5 Clyst Valley Trail
 - 4.6 Dog legislation
 - 4.7 A379 bridge
5. Correspondence log (Pages 13 - 20)

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a local access forum. It is required, in accordance with Sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, to provide advice as to the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment

6. Meetings attended by DCAF members
 - 6.1 BHS/Ramblers - Restoring the Record workshop (Pages 21 - 22)
7. Public questions
8. Minutes of the Public Rights of Way meeting held on 3 November 2022 (Pages 23 - 26)
9. Public Rights of Way update
10. Devon Countryside Access Forum working group on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Pages 27 - 32)
11. Rights of Way Improvement Plan review (Pages 33 - 44)
12. Presentation by Julie Owen, Devon Loves Dogs Coordinator
13. To note and approve responses and any feedback
 - 13.1 DCAF response A379 bridge (Pages 45 - 46)
 - 13.2 Pebblebed Heaths HLF bid (Pages 47 - 48)
 - 13.3 Fire Beacon Hill (Pages 49 - 50)
 - 13.4 North Devon and Torridge Landscape Character Assessment (Pages 51 - 52)
 - 13.5 East Devon draft Local Plan (Pages 53 - 56)
14. Current consultations
15. Training events 2023
16. Any other business
 - 16.1 Access to the Countryside for All Networking Conference 22-23 March 2023
 - 16.2 Devon Countryside Access Forum membership
17. Date of next meeting

Notice of questions from the public should be submitted in writing four working days before the Forum meeting. At the discretion of the Chair members of the public may be invited to ask a question or make a statement.



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Minutes of the Sixty-Second meeting of the Devon Countryside Access Forum held at Westbank Community Health and Care, Farm House Rise, Exminster EX6 8AT Thursday, 20 October 2022

Attendance

Forum members

Andrew Baker	Jo Hooper
Joanna Burgess	James Nevitt (virtual)
Cllr Richard Chesterton (virtual)	Sue Pudduck
Chris Cole (Vice-Chair)	Tino Savvas
Tim Felton	Sarah Slade (Chair)
Lucinda Francis	

Devon County Council Officers and others present

Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way Manager, DCC
Hilary Winter, Forum Officer, DCC

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Holly Daniels, Gordon Guest, Councillor Linda Hellyer, Sue Leith, Robert Sewell, Lorna Sherriff, Bryan Smith and Tim Spray. The change of date from the day of the State Funeral meant fewer members able to attend.

2. Declaration of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To approve minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2022

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 April were approved and signed, subject to amending a couple of typographical errors.

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4. Matters arising

4.1 DCAF Position Statements and vulnerable users

The DCAF Position Statements had been amended to include vulnerable users, where appropriate. A link to the up-to-date statements would be circulated.

Action: Forum Officer.

4.2 DCAF training events

Andrew Baker was thanked for offering to host a farm-based training event focussing on public rights of way. The poor weather forecast had meant it unfortunately had to be cancelled. A new date would be discussed at the January meeting.

Action: Forum Officer

5. DCAF events and representation at meetings

5.1 Dartmoor Way launch

Jo Burgess had attended the formal launch of the Dartmoor Way in April. The Devon Ramblers' had actively looked at the route and Dartmoor National Park Authority had been involved in practical work and promotion. Jo Burgess had subsequently completed the walk, finishing with the High Moor link in August. It was well-signed, but she had reported instances where signs were difficult to follow. There was a separate cycling route. Confirmation was requested as to whether this was a multi-use route.

Action: Jo Burgess and Forum Officer

5.2 Lower Otter Restoration Project. Liaison group meeting.

Chris Cole had attended the Lower Otter Restoration Project Liaison Group meeting. The project was largely on target. The footbridge was being realigned in a minor way for construction reasons. The FAB Link interconnector project in the valley looked less likely and the option agreement with Clinton Devon Estates would run out in 2024. However, the FAB link is likely to benefit from a compulsory purchase order if the option agreement has expired and would mean excavating footpath 12 and the installation of additional infrastructure

A new sewer outfall pipe is to be installed by directional drilling from Lime Kiln car park to the far side of the River Otter to ensure it remains below the tidal range and is not susceptible to damage.

Many of the major paths would have a concrete surface. Richard Walton

confirmed specialist advice had been provided by the Materials Lab at DCC to look at materials to withstand water pressure and concrete had been selected for some path sections. As the project involves road realignment, other 'highways' teams at DCC were also involved in influencing specifications. There were supply shortages of some materials, for example recycled/ composite plastic path edging, and so hard wood was being used as an alternative. Some changes had been made to fencing to minimise use of barbed wires. The FAB Link interconnector project may provide future opportunity to upgrade the width and surface of Footpath 12.

It was confirmed that the breach to allow the valley to flood will take place in May 2023.

It was suggested and agreed that the DCAF continue to monitor the development of the project. A training day visit was suggested.

5.3 Parish Paths Partnership (P3) workshops

Tim Spray had attended the East Devon event.

5.4 Other meetings

The Chair reported that the national Stakeholder Working Group continued with its work.

6. Correspondence log

After the Correspondence Log had been published, the Chair had advised a response to a consultation by the Forestry Commission on a thinning licence for removal of diseased trees at Beckland Woods, between Bideford Bay and Hartland, was appropriate. A brief response had been made stating that the DCAF recognised the need to remove such trees for public safety reasons and that any public rights of way closures should be well-signed. This would be on the next correspondence log. Approval for this response was given.

The need for dates on temporary closure or diversion notices was raised as this impacted on people planning walks. Richard Walton confirmed that, if available, dates were put on (including in the press notices) for example, if a six-month closure was required but works were programmed for completion prior to the legal end date; however this is often not feasible.

It was noted the Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum give advice on replacement with alternative species.

It was agreed to send an addendum stating that dates of closures would be helpful.

Action: Forum Officer.

Work by Network Rail included on the correspondence log was noted. The new wall section mentioned in item 3 had not yet opened.

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Andrew Baker mentioned that Network Rail planned to close paths crossing railway lines for safety reasons, including one at Rewe. It was noted a path at Silverton also crossed the line. A presentation on level crossing closures had been given at the National LAF Conference in 2017.

Richard Walton confirmed that the PRow team were involved in networking meetings with Network Rail and requested details of specific instances from members. Any proposals impacting on a public right of way were required to follow the appropriate legal process.

The Institute of Public Rights of Way Officers had been working with Network Rail on these issues and the production of good practice guidance. Richard Walton confirmed that IPROW had been trying to lobby and encourage Network Rail to keep paths open and that Network Rail was looking at alternative options such as kit bridges. There were some crossings on the Two Moors Way which Network Rail had committed to upgrade rather than trying to pursue permanent closure/ extinguishment.

It was agreed the DCAF should ask to be consulted on proposals and a relevant Network Rail contact would be ascertained. Andrew would supply further information on the Rewe issue.

Action: Andrew Baker and Forum Officer

Correspondence log item 2 referred to problems with the online portal. Richard Walton said that the reporting portal map did not give information on the type of fault so people did not know if their issue had already been reported. It was proposed to improve this and provide visual or text indicating categories of fault. He agreed to keep the DCAF updated on progress.

Action: Richard Walton

7. Public questions

There were no public questions.

8. Minutes of the Public Rights of Way Committee meeting held on 30 June 2022

Minutes of the Public Rights of Way Committee held on 30 June were noted. A Modification Order for the Schedule 14 application (item 33 – Parishes of Loddiswell and Aveton Gifford) had not been made. An indication had been given that this decision might result in an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate by the applicant, but Richard Walton was not sure that this had been done within the required timescale.

9. Public Rights of Way update

Richard Walton, Public Rights of Way Manager, gave the following updates:

Staffing

- The Technical Officer post had been filled by Rachel Dixon. The response rate was good, with several impressive candidates.
- Peter Guy, warden in south Devon, had taken early retirement and his post would be advertised.
- Despite advertising three times the Senior Officer post, Legal and Development, had not been filled. Discussions were taking place with service heads to reassess the post. Recruitment issues were on the strategic risk register for the Council.

Budget

Devon County Council faced a £40m funding gap due to inflation and additional costs to support children and vulnerable adults. The Council was looking at areas where savings could be made. The PRoW budget was not currently directly impacted, and revenue and capital budgets were fully allocated. PRoW contractors were permitted to adjust their rates mid-term to partly deal with inflationary pressures.

Removal of barriers

Devon County Council had committed to remove barriers where assessed as feasible on multi-use trails and replace with signs, markings and/or bollards. This was a positive improvement for all users, including people with mobility scooters. The process was being coordinated through the road safety team but no specific programme was in place. Richard Walton requested examples of barriers that could be removed which he could pass on to be audited.

Stover Country Park

An application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for £2.5m had been successful. The overall project cost was around £4m and would include restoration of the lake and granite gatehouse, new paths, an improved visitor centre and engagement work with under-represented groups. A meeting is taking place with the NLHF to ensure legal requirements were in place to proceed. Historic England was very involved and the aspiration is to work with Stover School on additional listed buildings in a later phase. Two project team members were leaving and these posts would be filled, possibly including through secondment.

BHS/Ramblers

A joint training event was being held, led by Phil Wadey and Sarah Bucks, to look at historical sources used to provide evidence for Definitive Map Review claims. DCC carried out its Definitive Map Review on a parish-by-parish basis and many claims may already have been considered as part of that process.

Richard Walton said he was liaising with the BHS about use of trails. Network Rail did not permit horse use on the Exe Estuary Trail. On other trails some structures were not to required standards or landowners had not given permission for horses. The intention was to audit trails to identify sections which could be made available.

Definitive Map Review

The Definitive Map Review process had slowed during CoVID, with a subsequent move to online meetings. Progress had returned to normal and the team was on

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target to complete by 2026. The 2026 date is due to be abolished but this had not been implemented in regulations. The DMR map would be shared with members.

Action: Forum Officer

England Coast Path

- The dramatic path at Torcross had been restored on its original line.
- Funding had been approved for restoring a causeway path on the beach at Down End at Croyde and a new contractor had been lined up to complete the work. This should be done by the end of 2022, depending on weather.
- A bid is due to be put in shortly for signs on the Kingswear to Lyme Regis stretch. Natural England can then finalise arrangements with the Secretary of State to open the route. Once the England Coast Path is open, the County Council would have powers to facilitate coastal access rights, for example at Lighthouse Beach. Legal costs would fall to DCC. The South West Coast Path Association and National Trail Officer were providing support.
- As a result of a court case, the landowner of the unstable cliff at Beacon Road, Kingswear, had been required to carry out stabilisation work and contractors were on site. Once complete, a safety audit would be carried out by DCC to ensure it was stable to reopen for non-vehicular traffic. An alternative route for the South West Coast Path (and England Coast Path) could then be signed providing walkers with the option to use Beacon Road.
- Bids for a high tide route at Mothecombe (South Hams) and improvements at Dyer's Lookout (Torridge), which had been agreed with the landowner, were progressing slowly.

10. Rights of Way Improvement Plan review

Richard Walton explained that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan was a legal requirement under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and had to be reviewed every ten years. The Devon RoWIP had been published in 2005 with a review in 2012.

The RoWIP examines how the network meets the needs of the public, including those blind or partially-sighted or with mobility problems. The network connects people and communities and is important for health and well-being, as evidenced during CoVID-19. Statistics and anecdotal evidence provided information on the mental and physical health benefits. The RoWIP is strategically important and fitted in to Devon County Council's Strategic Plan. The Devon Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, of which Public Rights of Way is a subset, also included policies, strategies and action plans. This document was also being reviewed and there was the opportunity to optimise priorities.

As part of the review, Richard Walton was asking groups about changes over the past ten years and priorities which can inform the RoWIP. He requested a DCAF working group to sift responses and look at priorities and potential changes to the RoWIP, which will either be refreshed or an addendum added. The working group can report back to the next DCAF meeting in January.

Richard Walton asked DCAF members to feed back their own thoughts and suggestions through the Forum Officer. He confirmed that the RoWIP will have an Equality Impact Assessment.

The Forum Officer would circulate dates for a working group.

Action: Forum Officer.

11. Riverside Valley Park, Exeter

Members noted and formally approved the report from Gordon Guest. It was resolved that it should be submitted to Devon Wildlife Trust. DWT would be thanked for improvements it had undertaken but requested to explore additional work to improve disability access. The reference to cycling on page 1 would be removed as it was not a cycling route.

Action: Forum Officer and Gordon Guest.

12. To note and approve responses to consultations and any feedback

12.1 England Coast Path - Variation Report CMM VR 11 Down End, Croyde, North Devon. Natural England

The response was noted and approved. A decision by the Secretary of State was awaited following a visit by the Planning Inspector.

12.2 Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme coast to coast walk - Tamar Valley AONB

The response was noted and approved.

The Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme team had looked at suggestions and finalised details of path improvements needed. Work had begun on researching the history and points of interest. It was planned to open the route in spring 2023.

A writer had been commissioned to create 28 walks of varying lengths from villages and train stations in the Tamar Valley, downloadable from the website.

It was agreed an update would be requested, plus responses to points made in the DCAF letter.

Action: Forum Officer

12.3 Drake's Trail. Clearbrook to Roborough multi-use trail consultation, Devon County Council

The response was noted and approved.

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Results of the public consultation had been analysed. 89% of respondents supported a new trail and 76% said route B would serve them better – the route supported by the DCAF. Findings will inform further development of the proposed route.

12.4 Lower Otter Valley - planning application 22/0804/VAR

The response was noted and approved.

The application was approved with conditions on 1 June 2022

12.5 Planning application 22/0711/FUL - Car park improvements at Estuary View, The Warren and Woodbury Castle

The response was noted and approved.

The planning application had been approved with conditions on 12 July 2022.

The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths status as a Natural Nature Reserve meant access had to be managed. Visitor numbers had increased markedly since CoVID so that they had already reached numbers projected for the end of the ten-year plan.

It was mentioned that car park improvements had resulted in a more urban feel with hard landscaping and that closure of informal parking had caused people to seek out other places. The closure of Estuary View car park was noted with regret.

It was agreed the Forum should continue to engage and monitor developments.

Action: Chair and Forum Officer

12.6 Clyst Valley Trail consultation, Devon County Council

The response was noted and approved.

A consultation report was being compiled.

12.7 Dog legislation

The response was noted and approved. It illustrated how complicated and difficult it was for dog owners to comply with legislation.

The feedback from Natural England, just received, had been forwarded to members.

The lack of consistency was raised, and it was suggested and agreed that a letter to Defra should be sent. Dartmoor LAF should also be contacted initially as the National Park Authority was looking at its bylaw review. It was agreed it would be useful to send the DCAF letter to local authorities in Devon.

In the future, it was agreed it would be helpful to engage with other Local Access Forums, user groups and landowning organisations to see whether a combined approach on this matter could achieve a positive outcome.

Devon Loves Dogs would be giving a presentation at the next DCAF meeting.

Action: Forum Officer

12.8 Review of statutory directions at Gittisham Hill. Natural England consultation

The response was noted and approved.

Natural England had made a decision to revoke the directions at Gittisham Hill. The landowner could continue to use the discretionary day process to close the hill for shooting purposes.

It was noted that some access gates were no longer stockproof and had been made secure which meant they no longer functioned as gates. The land agent had stated that the estate would be very happy if DCC wished to reinstate these access points. Richard Walton confirmed that this was a discretionary rather than statutory duty which could not be adequately resourced at the current time, despite a wish to do so, and priority had to be given to statutory work and core activity. Priorities in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Highway Asset Management Plan gave an opportunity to be more proactive and pick up such a scheme with the land agent when time and finance permitted.

12.9 A379 bridge, near Matford, Devon County Council

The response was noted and approved.

Whilst the design for the landing areas with seating appeared good, it was unclear why the step to resting areas on the bridge itself could not be overcome. It was important to get a good outcome following guidance, as at Sidmouth, to ensure people with limited mobility, for example with mobility scooters or pushchairs, could use the rest areas.

Gordon Guest had agreed to assist with an access audit, and it was agreed that he and Jo Hooper should liaise over input.

Action: Forum Officer, Gordon Guest and Jo Hooper.

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12.10 Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Assessment (A382 between Newton Abbot and Drumbridges Junction)

The response was noted and approved.

13. Current consultations

13.1 A38 corridor - Access Review. Dartmoor National Park Authority

The Chair suggested that individual members respond if they have proposals for specific routes. Richard Walton confirmed he was comfortable with the consultation covering areas within and outside the National Park.

It was resolved to submit relevant DCAF position statements to inform the consultation.

Action: Forum Officer

14. Any other business

14.1 Fire Beacon Hill, Sidmouth

14.1 Fire Beacon Hill, Sidmouth

A consultation event took place at the end of September to discuss putting overhead electricity wires underground. As this is Common Land, an application would need to be made to the Planning Inspectorate for consent.

It was agreed the DCAF should support these proposals, requesting that access is managed when works take place and that the ground should be made good afterwards. The site was prominent with far-reaching views.

14.2 Pebblebed Heaths

The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust would be submitting a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for engagement activity and sought letters of support.

In principle, it was agreed the DCAF should support this project but it would be useful to understand further details including how it would enable people to reach the Heaths and the infrastructure required. The Chair and Forum Officer would agree an email.

Action: Chair and Forum Officer

14.3 Adventure Okehampton

An email had been received from Adventure Okehampton updating the DCAF on new facilities at its site, including a range of new e-trikes and e-cycles for hire suitable for disabled people or those balanced

challenged.

They had noticed the publicity about removing barriers on multi-use trails and requested information on the process. It was agreed Adventure Okehampton should be asked for details on specific gates and other barriers that would be useful to remove.

Richard Walton agreed to talk to Sustrans about possible signs for the NCN 27 route, between Jacobstowe and Abbeyford Woods, which Adventure Okehampton had identified as a safety risk as there were insufficient signs to indicate it was a cycle route.

The correspondent had requested an update on plans to construct the Meeth to Hatherleigh section of NCN 27, currently on-road, and this would be supplied.

Action: Richard Walton and Forum Officer

- 14.4 *BHS/Ramblers Restoring the Record training event*
Tim Felton and Sue Pudduck would be attending the event on Saturday, 22 October.

15. **Date of next meeting and proposed dates for meetings 2023/24**

The next meeting would be on Tuesday, 31 January 2023.

Meeting dates in 2023/24 would be:

Monday, 24 April 2023
Monday, 18 September 2023
Monday, 22 January 2024

Training events would be discussed at the next meeting.

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Devon Countryside Access Forum CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND RESPONSE (not specifically on agenda)

Available to view on request subject to General Data Protection

	Sender	Subject	Action and any feedback
1	Forestry Commission 6.09.22	Beckland Woods thinning licence consultation (between Bideford Bay and Hartland).	<p>Consulted with Chair and sent brief response.</p> <p>The Devon Countryside Access Forum recognises the need to remove diseased and dying trees in the vicinity of public rights of way to minimise the risk to public safety. There are several footpaths crossing the site, including the South West Coast Path.</p> <p>Any temporary rights of way closures should be well signed and diversions provided where possible. The public should be kept well away from any areas of work to ensure their safety.</p> <p>This response was reported at the DCAF meeting on 20 October. Following the meeting, an additional point was sent requesting that any public rights of way closure notices give clear dates when paths are closed. Notices should be removed promptly when the routes reopen after thinning work. This will assist people planning walks.</p>

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2	Defence Infrastructure Organisation 8.09.22	<p><i>Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 - Section 14. Devon County Council (Bridleway no. 19, Braunton) Temporary Prohibition of Traffic Order 2022</i></p> <p>Notice is hereby given that Devon County Council intends to make the above titled order. From: Monday, 15th August 2022 To: Tuesday 14th February 2023</p> <p>No persons and/or horse riders shall proceed on the affected paths except for access to land or premises on or adjacent to that length of path: Public rights of way affected:</p> <p><i>Bridleway No. 19, Braunton from Sandy Lane car park to Crow Point</i></p> <p>The alternative route for walkers is via signposted tracks and paths through Braunton Burrows. There is no alternative route for horse riders or cyclists. The closure is necessary to enable surface repairs and improvements to the American Road. Works are expected to be complete within 4 weeks.</p>	For information
3	Mid Devon District Council 20.09.22	Mid Devon District Council are producing a Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for East Cullompton.	No response.
4	Open Access Centre 22.09.22	<p>2022099761 (for year 2022) and 2022099762 (for year 2023) - Gittisham Hill - Notification of discretionary '28 day' restriction under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</p> <p><u>Case numbers 2022099761 and 2022099762</u></p> <p>Natural England has accepted notification of discretionary restrictions under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p> <p>The restrictions apply to land at Gittisham Hill for the following dates :</p>	This is related to the consultation on whether to renew a Direction to restrict access on which the DCAF commented. (See agenda paper 12.8 20.10.22). The Direction was not renewed, and the landowner is using the discretionary process.

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		<p><u>2022099761 which expires at the end of 2022</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 -15 October • 14 – 16 November • 12 – 14 December <p>10 of 28 days have been used including one of the four available weekend days.</p> <p><u>2022099762 which expires at the end of 2023</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 08 -10 January <p>3 of 28 days have been used including one of the four available weekend days.</p> <p>The details of the restrictions appear on the Open Access website.</p>	
5	Devon County Council October 2022	Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (BBN LCWIP)	In consultation with Chair submitted Disability Access and Planning Position Statements.
6	East Devon District Council 13.10.22	Consultation on varied Public Spaces Protection Orders.	Insufficient time to respond.
7	Mid Devon District Council 21.10.22	Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Non Statutory Interim Planning Policy Statement: Climate Emergency.	No response. Outside remit.
8	East Devon District Council 24.10.22	<p>Cranbrook Plan - Adopted Cranbrook Plan DPD 2013 - 2031 - East Devon</p> <p>On 19 October 2022 East Devon District Council adopted the Cranbrook Plan DPD. The Adopted Plan will form part of the Development Plan for East Devon and provides the basis for decisions on spatial planning within the relevant part of the District up to 2031 (or until superseded).</p>	For information.

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9	East Devon District Council 3.11.22	<p>The Kilmington Neighbourhood Plan was formally 'made' by East Devon District Council on 10 October 2022.</p> <p>Accordingly, the Neighbourhood Plan now forms part of the Local Development Plan for East Devon and will be taken into account in determining planning applications in the parish of Kilmington.</p> <p>The Made Version of the Plan, together with further information about all stages of its development, and neighbourhood planning across the district, is available to view on the neighbourhood planning pages of East Devon District Council's website.</p>	For information.
10	Open Access Centre 4.11.22	<p><u>Case number 2021099474</u></p> <p>Notification of a discretionary restriction under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p> <p>The restriction applies to land at Hartridge Hense Moor and Luppitt Common for the following dates in 2022</p> <p>10/11/22 24/11/22 08/12/22 22/12/22</p> <p>12 of the 28 days allocated to this case have now been used. The details of this restriction appear on the Open Access website.</p> <p><u>Case number 2022119787</u></p> <p>Notification of a discretionary restriction under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p> <p>The restriction applies to land at Hartridge Hense Moor and Luppitt Common for the following dates in 2023</p> <p>5/1/23 19/1/23</p>	For information.

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		1/2/23 3 of the 28 days allocated to this case have now been used. The details of this restriction appear on the Open Access website	
11	The Boundary Commission for England 8.11.22	Review of Parliamentary constituencies and their boundaries to rebalance the number of electors in each.	Outside remit.
12	Open Access Centre 18.11.22	<p><u>Case number 2021099474</u></p> <p>Notification of a discretionary restriction under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p> <p>The restriction applies to land at Hartridge Hense Moor and Luppitt Common for the following additional date in 2022</p> <p>13 December</p> <p>13 of the 28 days allocated to this case have now been used. The details of this restriction appear on the Open Access website.</p> <p><u>Case number 2022119787</u></p> <p>Notification of a discretionary restriction under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p> <p>The restriction applies to land at Hartridge Hense Moor and Luppitt Common for the following additional date in 2023</p> <p>17 January 2023</p> <p>4 of the 28 days allocated to this case have now been used. The details of this restriction appear on the Open Access website.</p>	For information.

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13	Land Charges 24.11.22	<p><i>Commons Act 2006 — Schedule 2(4) Waste land of a manor not registered as common land.</i></p> <p>Application has been made to the registration authority, Devon County Council, by The Open Spaces Society under section Schedule 2(4) of the Commons Act 2006 and in accordance with the Commons Registration (England) Regulations 2014.</p> <p>Luton Green. Located within the hamlet of Luton, between Cullompton and Honiton. The land abuts the finally registered section CL101. Approximately centred on grid reference ST082027</p> <p>A summary of the effect of the application is as follows: the land is waste land of manor, the land was provisionally registered as common land under section 4 of the 1965 Act, an objection was made in relation to the provisional registration; the person on whose application the provisional registration was made requested or agreed to its cancellation (whether before or after its referral to a Commons Commissioner).</p> <p>If the application is granted, in whole or in part, the registration authority will give effect to the determination by adding the land to the register of common land.</p>	For information. No response.
14	Land Charges 30.11.22	<p><i>Commons Act 2006 — Schedule 2(4) Waste land of a manor not registered as common land.</i></p> <p>Application has been made to the registration authority, Devon County Council, by The Open Spaces Society under section Schedule 2(4) of the Commons Act 2006 and in accordance with the Commons Registration (England) Regulations 2014.</p> <p>The application relates to CL214 land at Farway Common, Broad Down and Strip Common. The application land is located</p>	For information. No response.

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		<p>to the south-west of Farway Village. Approximately centred on grid reference SY166947.</p> <p>A summary of the effect of the application is as follows: the land is waste land of manor, the land was provisionally registered as common land under section 4 of the 1965 Act, an objection was made in relation to the provisional registration; the person on whose application the provisional registration was made requested or agreed to its cancellation (whether before or after its referral to a Commons Commissioner).</p> <p>If the application is granted, in whole or in part, the registration authority will give effect to the determination by adding the land to the register of common land.</p>	
15	Exeter City Council 13.12.22	Planning consultation on proposals to amend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) rates in the city.	No response.
16	BT Jenkins 23.12.22	Proposals for a temporary soil landfill and recycling centre at Lower Brenton, Shillingford St George, prior to submitting a planning application.	<p>The Forum Officer had attended a Zoom meeting on 6 December related to revised proposals. (The earlier planning application in 2022 was withdrawn). An email was sent requesting further information. This was received on 23 December, with a consultation deadline of 10 January.</p> <p>In consultation with the Chair and Jo Burgess who had attended the earlier site meeting, prior to the DCAF response (agenda paper 11.3 25.4.22), it was agreed to send an email stating that the information on fencing, banks and public rights</p>

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			<p>of way was insufficient to allow comment on whether concerns had been addressed, or whether there were new concerns.</p> <p>Further opportunities to respond either before or after a planning application are likely.</p>
17	<p>Land Charges DCC 12.01.23</p>	<p>Commons Act 2006: Section 15 - Land at Greenmeadow Drive Barnstaple (CA0396/DEV007/025)</p> <p>Application has been made to the registration authority, Devon County Council, by the applicant Barnstaple Town Council under section 15(2) of the Commons Act 2006 and in accordance with the Commons Registration (England) Regulations 2014.</p> <p>The owner of any land may apply to the commons registration authority to register the land as a town or village green.</p> <p>If the application is granted, in whole or in part, the registration authority will give effect to the determination by registering the land in the register of town or village greens.</p>	<p>For information. No response.</p>
18	<p>Project Lead Sustrans 16.01.23</p>	<p>Project led by Sustrans in partnership with DCC (Public Rights of Way and Road Safety) to remove barriers on various National Cycle Network trails.</p> <p>Request for DCAF involvement regarding disability use of the Exe Estuary Trail initially.</p>	<p>To discuss at meeting.</p>

Several Commons Act 2006 – schedule 2(4) applications were received relating to the Dartmoor National Park area and have not been included on the Correspondence Log.

In addition, the DCAF Forum Officer receives a large quantity of e-mail updates from Devon County Council and other organisations. Relevant information is extracted and circulated to DCAF members via regular newsletters, available on the website www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf or forwarded direct.

BHS and Ramblers – Restoring the Record - Training Day 22/10/22

Presented by Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey. Location – Willand Village Hall.

Attended by DCAF members Tim Felton and Sue Pudduck

This training day was a joint enterprise between the BHS and Ramblers. It is part of the ongoing project to identify and record as many historic but unrecorded rights of way before the 1st January 2026 when the period for recording historic rights, for which no application has been made to the appropriate local authority, will come to a close. Although the Government has stated that this date will not be adhered to, until the threat of a 'cut off' is rescinded by the necessary statute, the BHS and Ramblers take the view that the date remains live and as many rights of way should be subject to an application as possible.

The purpose of the day was to give attendees the tools and confidence to locate, research and submit an application to the local authority that will ultimately result in an order confirming and recording the existence of a right of way. The important thing is to have the application entered and registered by the LA before the 1/01/26.

The speakers were, without doubt, very, very knowledgeable and dedicated to the cause.

For those who want to follow in their footsteps they have produced a very effective text book, Rights of Way, Restoring the Record. Every LAF has been provided with a copy.

The authors have set out a straight forward methodology for the process of researching and making an application. They have identified the types of evidence available and scored them according to their evidential value. They suggest that if you cannot reach a certain score level the application is not worth pursuing either as regards the time involved or the likelihood of securing a positive outcome.

During the training event the attendees were taken through the types of evidence available to researchers, where and how it can be located, how it should be interpreted and its potential evidential value. For example, evidence created as a result of a statutory requirement and recorded as such provides strong evidence as opposed to rights of way recorded in sales particulars or in maps on sale to the public that contain standard disclaimer as regards their accuracy.

Attendees were also provided with a template on which to base their application statement. As part of emphasising the need for a systematic approach to the whole process it was suggested that an application statement should be produced that would provide the basis for any further applications, the evidence and analysis being adjusted as necessary.

Once an application is submitted it takes a length of time for the local authority to make a decision. Currently, the LA is meant to respond within a year. The Deregulation Act proposed putting applications through the Magistrates Court if undetermined within a required timescale. Such regulations are not yet in place.

This was a thoroughly informative and practical training day. In conjunction with the text book and the information provided to us on a USB stick the tools for making a sensible application were provided.

Tim Felton

23/10/22

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

3 November 2022

Present:-

Councillors L Hellyer (Chair), D Barnes, J Bradford, P Henderson and D Sellis

Apologies:-

Councillors R Chesterton, J Brook, I Chubb and D Thomas

Member attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillor J Bailey

* **38** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2022 be signed as a correct record.

* **39** **Standards Committee**

The Chair welcomed Mr R Hodgins who was attending (remotely) in his capacity as a Co-opted Member of the Council's Standards Committee to observe and monitor compliance with the Council's ethical governance framework.

* **40** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* **41** **Devon Countryside Access Forum**

The Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager reported on the meeting held on 20 October 2022. The meeting had covered ongoing consultations and updates including proposals for the Drake's Trail extension, Natural England proposals on access land restrictions at Gittisham Hill, Network Rail pedestrian access restrictions; and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The draft minutes would be circulated when available.

* **42** **Parish Review: Definitive Map Review - Parish of Ottery St Mary - Part 1**

(Councillor J Bailey attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 and spoke in support of the officer recommendations).

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PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

3/11/22

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/22/63) on five proposals arising from the Definitive Map Review in the parish of Ottery St Mary. Six proposals arose from the consultation, but one required additional research/consultation and would be presented at a future meeting.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor L Hellyer, **SECONDED** by Councillors J Bradford (for recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 5) and D Sellis (for recommendation 4), and

RESOLVED

(a) that a Modification Order be made to record a Footpath in respect of Proposal 3; and

(b) that no Modification Order be made in respect of Proposals 1, 2, 4 and 5 detailed in the Report.

* 43 **Public Path Orders**

The Committee noted the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/22/64) on the Public Path Orders made and confirmed under delegated powers.

* 44 **Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan**

The Committee noted the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/22/65) on arrangements to review and update two key plans that set out priorities and actions pertinent to management, maintenance, and development of the public rights of way network.

Members' discussion points with the Officers included the role of Members in promoting liaison between Local Planning Authorities, Parish and Town Councils (and other statutory consultees) in relation to public rights of ways in order to help safeguard the network and the value of regular training and updates for Members.

* 45 **Dates of Future Meetings**

9 March, 13 July and 23 November and 7 March 2024

Details available here: [Browse meetings - Public Rights of Way Committee - Democracy in Devon](#)

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*

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PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

3/11/22

2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 2.55 pm

Notes of the Devon Countryside Access Forum Rights of Way Improvement Plan review working group

24 November 2022 – Stover Country Park

Present: Sarah Slade (Chair); Chris Cole (Vice Chair); Lucinda Francis; Gordon Guest; Sue Pudduck; Tino Savvas; Bryan Smith and Tim Spray.

Richard Walton (Public Rights of Way Manager), Hilary Winter (Forum Officer)

History

- 2005 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) – in accordance with guidance and regulations.
- 2012 RoWIP review – sets out main management objectives.
- 2022 – formal ten-year review process.

RoWIP 2022 process

Themes have been informed by P3 workshops and responses from DCAF members. Richard Walton to produce a report for consideration at the next DCAF meeting in January. This will be sent to other organisations too, such as the Ramblers and BHS.

It was noted that the National Parks are included in the RoWIP. The National Parks were experiencing implications of funding cuts and Exmoor National Park is exploring handing back the day-to-day management of public rights of way to highway authorities, a role currently done on an agency agreement. It is important to include National Parks even though they have their own recreation strategies.

Despite budget constraints, the policies, objectives and priorities should stand even if delivery is implicated.

Other authorities were not all on the same timeframe. The review formed part of discussions between rights of way managers at the SW Adept Group meetings.

The format of the 2022 RoWIP had not been determined and would depend on issues raised.

Headline points

There was similarity in headline points between the DCAF and P3 workshops. Some Parish Councils and volunteers were very active.

Use of 2012 document

Richard Walton confirmed this was more useful than the 2005 document and could be used to check or challenge process. In addition, there was a Service Plan and the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.

Use of statistics

Statistics to back up, support and inform RoWIP policies was raised. Systematic data was essential, together with achievement data. Some Best Value Indicator data was still used.

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It was difficult to find meaningful data on permissive paths and any changes in availability.

At a service level, legal agreement information was not fully known.

Enlisting the support of a university to complete some data analysis might be useful. PRoW staff resource was limited.

During CoVID people valued the network and were more aware of health and wellbeing, even if usage had returned to pre-CoVID levels.

RoWIP Impact Assessment

Attention was drawn to the themes in the Impact Assessment:

- the actual or potential effects of DCC decisions and actions on people;
- the impact on the environment, including biodiversity, energy and water; and
- that public authorities must consider economic, social and environmental well-being.

Key themes

Development and urbanisation

Exeter was a growth area and had some funding from developers for connectivity of routes and opportunities for new infrastructure. Some issues arose from requests to tarmac bridleways, for example. How were such networks to be maintained in the future? Recreational and commuter routes often had different requirements.

It was important for people to be able to access rights of way and green space close to where they live to reduce the impact on the environment.

There should be more emphasis at the planning stage on recreational access through better design guidance to protect the character of areas. Health improvements had a monetary value. Planning was a district council function and authorities often had a policy approach of so much greenspace per 1000 population.

Trees in urban streets provided shade and reduced pollution yet some authorities did not like the ongoing maintenance.

Many developments did not provide sufficient green space in the right areas. e.g. near Pinhoe. Budgets should be frontloaded for this purpose. Some initiatives such as Haldon Forest Park and Dawlish Country Park provide good green space but, in the case of Haldon in particular, public transport links from the areas it serves are extremely poor with no direct service.

Technology

This should include communications.

The Plan should identify people who have the responsibility to deliver, get the message across and monitor. The RoWIP should be responsive to changes in technology.

The Creature Comforts campaign (Aardman) was very memorable.

Education

This is an overarching issue but could be included under technology. Consideration needs to be given to how education (as opposed to information) could align with RoWIP policies; should DCC work with other partners/organisations, influencers, campaigns; Apps etc. To what extent does or can DCC get involved?

Partners/organisations could include the Kennel Club; Dogs Trust; Sustrans; Countryside Mobility; Disabled Ramblers; Caravan and Camping clubs, vets etc. The University of the West of England had done a research project with information posters on buses which were found to impact on behaviour.

The Plan could include suggested actions if ways could be found to deliver them, or higher-level aspirations.

The technology topic could include communications and education.

Education could be at a site-specific level e.g. Stover Country Park.

Agriculture/land management

The RoWIP should consider the impact on landowners e.g. dogs, trespass, how people use the countryside and how to use it responsibly. The current RoWIP policies do not emphasise issues from the landowner perspective.

Signposting and waymarking can assist.

The Report a Problem on the DCC website was useful but not so helpful for landowners where the response was not a DCC responsibility, for example livestock worrying or trespass.

Use of cycles on footpaths could put landowners at risk of future path claims.

Education was key in this area too.

Population

Irresponsible dog ownership continued to be an issue.

Again, from an education perspective, targeted campaigns could be instigated to see what the impact is. This required funding and links to other teams in DCC, for example Communications.

Accessibility

Attention was drawn to the rising number of people of over 65s – nearly 12 million and by 2030 this is estimated to rise to 21.8% of people in the UK. The Department of Work and Pensions, (March 2020), gave a figure of 14.1 million disabled persons in the UK. February 2022 figures suggest there are about 3.12 million Blue Badge holders.

Demand for mobility scooters will increase and restrictions on size do not apply to class 2 scooters which have to do 4 miles per hour or less.

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The RoWIP should recognise these increasing demands plus the inclusion of blind/sight impaired people and other groups, perhaps with a view to keeping up to date with good practice.

Accessibility should include 'inclusivity' and widening participation, for example ethnic minority groups.

A question was asked about where 2 in 1 gates fitted in the hierarchy. The aim was to improve to the least restrictive but this was not always possible, so it was sometimes a case of making path furniture better than it was. A preference for 1.2m gates rather than 1m gates was raised.

Public/animal health

Public rights of way sometimes had to be closed due to avian flu and culling of birds. With CoVID and animal health issues, it was possible for DCC to do an alternative route with the landowner so long as the legal route was not closed. However, this was the responsibility of the landowner to maintain and there were insurance implications.

Climate change

This had implications for management of the path network. There was a balance between the cost of doing things such as maintenance more frequently and carbon/energy use and biodiversity. Carbon impacts could depend on the surface type and maintenance regime.

Travel to greenspace should be reduced.

There should be routes to public transport hubs.

Biodiversity

There was a duty to incorporate nature recovery.

The DCAF had previously raised instances where invasive species had ended up on verges and lanes following highway maintenance works.

Health and wellbeing

Path surfaces could put people off using them. Quality was important – balance – but not tarmac.

The RoWIP could consider partnership working, for example social prescribing.

Local economy

Thinking to the future, the possibility of a tourist tax was raised or using finely tuned Apps to trigger payment for use of certain areas of activities.

Funding

The role of volunteers was recognised as very important. Could the principle be taken further and perhaps overlap with education? There were insurance implications to consider. The ageing population offered opportunities.

Apprenticeship schemes and career paths were mentioned.

New funding sources needed to be explored with much less reliance on national government or local government funding. Support will be required to make public rights of way successful over the next ten years.

Legislation

Agri-environment policy potentially had an impact.

It was likely the Deregulation Act outcomes for public rights of way produce fewer changes than anticipated. Work was currently very slow.

The 2026 cut-off date had not been implemented but lost paths remained a matter to investigate.

Other themes raised

- **Unclassified, unsurfaced county roads**

These need to be considered more fully in the RoWIP. They made an important contribution to health and well-being. The number of category 12s had increased as roads had fallen into that category through deterioration. These should also be shown on the interactive map.

Chris Cole confirmed the Trail Riders Fellowship is working on a green road map at national level and was seeking local authorities to take part in a pilot. Richard Walton suggested Chris speak to the PRow Technical team. Tim Spray asked to be kept informed.

A DCC internal project had been set up to look at maintenance categories.

- **Multi-use**

Multi-use was generally supported. Concerns were raised about the increase in type of user, especially on footpaths.

- **Electric bikes, e-scooters etc.**

Increased use posed challenges. There were issues around safety and enforcement and shared space on multi-use trails. It was not entirely clear where they were permitted and legislation might change.

- **Role of the Public Rights of Way team**

This should be clearly acknowledged in the RoWIP and the contribution made by rangers/wardens etc.

Members of the working group agreed the 2012 format was useful and already comprehensive. Priority themes were education/information provision and getting better outcomes from developments.

Views differed as to whether a new RoWIP was required or whether an addendum or list of priorities should be added. The Chair said that Richard Walton should come back with suggestions for the review format as part of the report to the DCAF in January.

Devon Countryside Access Forum, 31st January 2023 Rights of Way Improvement Plan Review

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is produced by Devon County Council in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and taking account of guidance issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The key purpose is to encourage and guide improvements to the public rights of way network to provide a better experience for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, horse and carriage drivers, people with mobility problems, and people using motorised vehicles, for example, motorbikes.

At a strategic level, Public Rights of Way are of significant importance in;

- Connecting people and places
- Supporting health and wellbeing
- Contributing to green infrastructure (including for biodiversity, landscape, heritage, and climate change)
- Facilitating recreation and tourism (vital to the local economy)

The initial Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Devon on the move) was published in 2005. This was reviewed, with a new summary document published in 2012. The table below sets out the main headings for the objectives set out within the 2012 plan, with the document available to view on the Devon County Council website at [Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2](#).

1. MANAGEMENT OF THE ACCESS NETWORK

- A** Legal: Definitive Map and Statement
- B** Legal: Public Path Orders
- C** Maintenance
- D** Signing and waymarking
- E** Information and communication
- F** Road safety
- G** Planning
- H** Access Land
- I** Permissive access

2. PROVISION FOR USERS

- A** Users with limited mobility
- B** Walkers
- C** Horse-riders and carriage drivers
- D** Cyclists
- E** Motorised users
- F** Dog walkers

3. THE WIDER CONTEXT

- A** Environment
- B** Tourism and economic development
- C** Health
- D** Agriculture
- E** Partnerships

The legislation sets out that the RoWIP should be reviewed every 10 years.

This includes considering the role of the plan in:

- (a) meeting the present and likely future needs of the public
- (b) opportunities provided for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment
- (c) accessibility to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems
- (d) such other matters relating to local rights of way as the Secretary of State may direct.

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In accordance with this legislation, a review was instigated in 2022. This has been co-ordinated alongside updating the Public Rights of Way Annex to the Highway Asset Management Plan (ref. [Highway Asset Management - Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/transport)), which is due to be published in 2023.

Initial consultation has included workshop sessions with local partners participating in the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme. Discussion has focused on considering what has happened in the last 10 years which did or could impact on use and management of the Public Rights of Way network; and suggestions for priority actions to include within an updated RoWIP.

Feedback has subsequently been considered by a DCAF working group which met on 24th November 2023, with the main points outlined within the draft table, attached as an annex to this report. This table summarises key themes from the last 10 years, alongside appropriate objectives.

Review of the RoWIP (including oversight) is also being considered by the Devon County Council Public Rights of Way Committee.

Recommendations on next steps:

1. That the RoWIP is updated in a similar format to the 2012 review i.e., as a stand-alone document. This will include an annex providing examples of improvements / good practice delivered in the last 10 years; information setting out how delivery of the plan will be monitored and reviewed; and links to relevant research, policy and guidance.
2. That the draft summary table be distributed to relevant internal and external groups – including the Environment, Transport Planning, and Equality and Diversity teams (at DCC), Exmoor and Dartmoor National Park Authorities, AONB units, Devon Ramblers, Open Spaces Society, Devon TRF, Devon BHS, P3 members, South West Coast Path Association, Disabled Ramblers, Countryside Mobility South West (N.B. this is not a definitive list of the relevant groups). This wider consultation period will be to mid-March 2023.
3. That a draft of the updated RoWIP be considered at the DCAF meeting in April, with the working group potentially meeting prior to this (at the end of March) to consider the wider feedback.

Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Themes: changes in the last 10 years, and proposed actions (December 2022)

Topic	Issue (summary examples)	Activity / Priorities	Current RoWIP
Development / Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth • Landscape character • Demand / levels of use • Impact on existing infrastructure • Opportunities for new / improved paths • Risks re. negatively impacting on character and use of existing paths • Traffic 	<p>Active Travel: create new routes and enhance quality of existing paths to support and encourage non-car based travel. This includes improving connectivity between residential areas, recreational destinations, places of work, public transport, and other local facilities</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements: create new routes and enhance quality of existing paths to meet existing needs and to mitigate impacts arising from new development. This should seek to optimise the contribution that paths provide to green infrastructure, and social inclusion</p> <p>Design and Materials: ensure that path creation and improvements are sensitive to local character, heritage and biodiversity; and positively contribute to Devon County Council's target to reach net zero carbon by 2030</p> <p>Planning Policy and Plans: influence and inform development management to optimise and improve access as an important part of green space and green infrastructure. This includes contributing to delivery of local and national guidance e.g., National design guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Legal: Definitive Map and Statement</p> <p>Legal: Public Path Orders</p> <p>Information and Communication</p> <p>Road Safety</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Walkers</p> <p>Cyclists</p>

<p>Information, Education and Technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media • Smart Phones • GIS • Webpages • Information provision • E-bikes • Attitudes 	<p>Communication: utilise a range of media to optimise understanding and awareness of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Delivering the RoWIP ❖ Accessing the countryside ❖ Feeding back and reporting <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns: work collaboratively in identifying and communicating key messages – for example veterinary practices and The Kennel Club on guidelines for safe, enjoyable, and responsible dog walking</p> <p>Information and Guidance: support and influence production of easily accessible, effective guidance on accessing and enjoying the countryside, and minimising associated impacts</p> <p>Adapting to Technological Advances: work flexibly to optimise opportunities arising from technological advances over the plan period</p>	<p>Information and Communication</p> <p>Partnerships</p>
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<p>Agriculture / Land Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm traffic – volume and size of vehicles • Livestock and crops – restricting access • Shoots and hunts • Working landscapes – impact of dogs straying and trespass • Carbon offsetting e.g., tree planting etc. • Land use changes – loss of farmland to development 	<p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Information and Guidance</p> <p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Alternative Routes: work cooperatively with landowners and occupiers to identify opportunities for additional temporary permissive routes to enable people to bypass sensitive locations. This can only be done if the legally defined route remains available, and there is no misleading signage, intimidation, or obstruction</p>	<p>Legal: Definitive Map and Statement</p> <p>Legal: Public Path Orders</p> <p>Information and Communication</p> <p>Permissive Access</p> <p>Dog Walkers</p> <p>Agriculture</p>
<p>Population Profiles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in dog ownership • Ageing population 	<p>Information and Guidance</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p>	<p>Walkers</p> <p>Dog Walkers</p>

<p>Accessibility / Social Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in mobility scooters – importance of recognising the advancement in size, length, and range of mobility scooters • Growth in range and availability of E-bikes • Better understanding of need, including the importance of protected characteristics and tackling issues such as racism • Gaps gates and stiles – least restrictive • Aging population • Blind and partially sighted people • Importance / value of the unsurfaced Unclassified County Road (uUCR) network – ‘Green Lanes’ / Quiet Lanes • Availability (or lack of) public transport connections to green spaces 	<p>Information and Guidance: including identifying and promoting guidance on and for different categories of mobility scooter (with examples)</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication: including uUCRs: as a layer on interactive maps</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns: including a potential project with the Trail Riders Fellowship re. uUCR mapping</p> <p>Adapting to Technological Advances</p>	<p>Users with mobility problems</p>
<p>Public / Animal Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash Dieback • Covid • Avian Flu • Increase in awareness and appreciation of the value of local path networks (particularly during periods of restrictions on movement due to the Covid pandemic) 	<p>Alternative Routes</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance</p>	<p>Agriculture</p>

<p>Climate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation growth – longer growing season and increasing number of cuts • Surface water / flooding • Storm damage • Erosion / cliff falls 	<p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Alternative Routes</p> <p>Adapting to Technological Advances</p>	<p>Environment</p>
<p>Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Recovery • Rural landscapes • Pollution / littering • Invasive species • Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces 	<p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Alternative Routes</p>	<p>Environment</p>

<p>Health and wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in demand for walking, cycling and equestrian provision – but is this a long-term trend • Connection to nature • Multi / shared use paths 	<p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance: including targeted information to encourage greater use by under-represented and excluded people e.g., looked after children, children with special educational needs and disabilities, and blind and partially sighted people</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns: including supporting social / green prescribing; and promoting research opportunities with universities and other further education establishments. This should include adding to the evidence base to demonstrate the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation, and impacts from actions delivered as part of the RoWIP.</p> <p>A good example is work commissioned by the South West Coast Path Association with the University of Exeter – available to read at The South West Coast Path Health & Wellbeing Assessment Report 2020 by southwestcoastpath - Issuu</p>	<p>Health</p>
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		<p>Another example is research carried out on the health and wellbeing value of the Pebblebed Heaths (ref. Understanding-and-quantifying-the-health-and-wellbeing-value-of-the-East-Devon-Pebblebed-Heaths-and-exploring-the-potential-of-partnership-working-involving-private-sector-organisations.pdf (pebblebedheaths.org.uk))</p>	
<p>Local Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel • Growth in holiday accommodation – inexperienced and less well-informed path users • Recreation and leisure / demand for trails • Increase in home working • Importance of the network to local business involved in management and maintenance activities (Framework Contractors) 	<p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Information and Guidance: including working with Tourist Information Centres</p> <p>Community Engagement and Campaigns</p> <p>Adapting to Technological Advances</p>	<p>Tourism and Economic Development</p>

<p>Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austerity • Reduced public transport (especially rural buses) • Partnership working • Volunteers • Corporate Social Responsibility • Grants 	<p>Visitor Payback / Visitor Giving and Sponsorship: identify opportunities to encourage and enable people and business to contribute financially - for example as outlined in Visit England guidance at visitor_giving_helpsheets.pdf (visitengland.com)</p> <p>Participation and Involvement: support and extend the ways in which individuals and groups can directly participate and contribute to maintaining and improving recreation and access. This includes through volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships, education, training, and skills development.</p>	<p>Partnerships</p>
<p>Legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Coast Path / Coastal Margin • Deregulation – ‘right to apply’ • 2026 Cut-off / lost paths • Brexit and changes to agri-environment policy 	<p>Coastal Access: work closely with Natural England and local partners and stakeholders to complete the designation process for the England Coast Path. This includes delivery of implementation works for the National Trail and associated access improvements to coastal margin</p> <p>Planning Policy and Plans</p> <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Design and Materials</p> <p>Recreational Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>Alternative Routes</p>	<p>Legal: Definitive Map and Statement</p> <p>Legal: Public Path Orders</p> <p>Access Land</p>

		Communication Information and Guidance Community Engagement and Campaigns Adapting to Technological Advances	
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Adam Baldwin, MEng, CEng MICE
Senior Engineer (Bridges & Structures)
Engineering Design Group
Devon County Council
County Hall
Matford Offices
Topsham Road
Exeter EX2 4QD

1 November 2022

Dear Mr Baldwin

A379 bridge

Thank you for consulting the Devon Countryside Access Forum on the bridge design for the proposed structure over the A379.

Forum members discussed this at the meeting held on 20 October. It was agreed that the dedicated areas with seating would be a useful addition to the bridge landing areas, allowing people to rest and socialise.

It is noted that you will be sharing further information on the landing areas, but the Forum was of the opinion that any rest areas on the pull up to the bridge need to be fully accessible in line with guidance, allowing people with mobility scooters, reclining cycles and pushchairs to stop, particularly as a 1 in 12 gradient is proposed. The width and length therefore need to be wide enough to accommodate such users. It is assumed that the gradient and available land does not permit full level stages on the approach.

The bridge is likely to serve an ever-increasing number of people as the new developments progress and is likely to be an increasingly important traffic free link for this side of Exeter so needs to reach the highest accessibility standards possible. This is an expensive project, and it is therefore important to ensure the design is suitable for purpose from the outset.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a local access forum. It is required, in accordance with Sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, to provide advice as to the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment.

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Gordon Guest, a mobility scooter user on the Devon Countryside Access Forum, and possibly one other member would be pleased to assist with an access audit which can inform your equality impact assessment.

The Forum would welcome feedback.

Yours sincerely



Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of Devon Countryside Access Forum.

Chair: Sarah Slade.

Vice Chair: Chris Cole

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice “as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area...” Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the Forum has a statutory function to give advice, and this includes county councils.

The DCAF currently has nineteen members, appointed by Devon County Council, who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.



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East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust
Rolle Estate Office
Bicton Arena
East Budleigh
Budleigh Salterton
Devon EX9 7BL

21 November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

National Lottery Heritage Fund bid **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is aware of the significant importance of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths to recreational access in East Devon and the contribution it makes to supporting health and wellbeing. This was demonstrated particularly during COVID-19 when visitor numbers to the Heaths increased markedly. The Pebblebed Heaths is an important area of access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Clinton Devon Estates has given additional permission for horse riders and cyclists to use the heaths. It therefore represents one of few areas in Devon which can be enjoyed by a range of access users and is a key area for dog walking too.

The growth of population to the east of Exeter and in particular the new town of Cranbrook provides an opportunity to engage with new audiences. The town is expected to house 20,000 people by 2027 and East Devon as a whole has seen population growth of 13.8% between 2011-2021. Whilst there are a number of green space areas and SANGS sites (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) in the vicinity, these do not offer the space and interest afforded by the Pebblebed Heaths and it is inevitable that more people will seek to visit. This will put additional pressure on the Pebblebed Heaths and a programme of education and engagement with the nearby population is critical to ensure the benefits of health and wellbeing and, importantly, to increase understanding

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so that the internationally recognised biodiversity status of the site as a National Nature Reserve is appreciated and valued.

In its responses to consultations over the past few years the Devon Countryside Access Forum has highlighted issues around responsible dog ownership and the key role of education in addressing this, as well as increasing awareness of the Countryside Code so that users of the countryside are able to respect it and enjoy their experience.

Additional resources for a Community Engagement Ranger would enable the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust to build on its existing and excellent work with the community and expand its engagement and education work. The Devon Countryside Access Forum is aware from published research that many groups are under-represented in using the countryside including those from ethnic minority groups, people with special needs, young people and people living in deprived communities. This project will assist the Pebblebed Heaths to take further positive and proactive work to reach these groups and build up its programme of activities as well as creating opportunities for more volunteer engagement. This will benefit the health and wellbeing of the local community as well as helping to protect and nurture the Heaths as a National Nature Reserve.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum supports the application made by the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust for grant funding.

Yours faithfully



Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of Devon Countryside Access Forum.

Chair: Sarah Slade.

Vice Chair: Chris Cole

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Mr T Taylor
Site Manager
RSPB
Hawkerland Brake Barn
Exmouth Road
Aylesbeare
EX5 2JS

26 October 2022

Dear Mr Taylor

Fire Beacon Hill – Landscape Enhancement Initiative
Undergrounding 33Kv powerline proposal (1.3km/12 poles overhead line removal)

The Devon Countryside Access Forum held its meeting on 20 October, postponed from 19 September. Therefore its comments on the above consultation are being submitted later than would have been the case and the Forum hopes its views can still be taken into account.

Fire Beacon Hill is a prominent site with outstanding views over the East Devon AONB. Undergrounding the current overhead lines would result in a landscape enhancement which would add to people's recreational access enjoyment of the Hill and adjacent woodland.

It is vital that any public rights of way and road closures during works, in addition to any restrictions on access to common land, are well-signed and managed. It would be very helpful for dates to be put on closures so that people can plan visits, with notices removed as soon as works are complete.

There will inevitably be disruption on the ground so ensuring that the ground is made good properly is important.

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It would be appreciated if you could advise the Forum of the decision by the Planning Inspectorate.

Yours sincerely



Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

cc. Chris Woodruff, East Devon AONB Manager

Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum

Chair: Sarah Slade

Vice Chair: Chris Cole

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice “as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area...” Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the Forum has a statutory function to give advice, and this includes county and district councils, the Forestry Commission and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

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Mr M Saunders
Sustainability Officer
Strategic Development & Planning
North Devon Council
Barnstaple
EX31 1DG

4 January 2023

Dear Mr Saunders

North Devon and Torridge Landscape Character Assessment

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice “as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area...” Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the Forum has a statutory function to give advice, and this includes county and district councils and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

The DCAF currently has nineteen members, appointed by Devon County Council, who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.

This response submitted by the Devon Countryside Access Forum will be on the agenda for the next meeting on 31 January for formal approval.

The DCAF welcomes the inclusion of references to the public rights of way network in the Landscape Character Assessment. To achieve consistency it would be helpful if the public rights of way network could be highlighted for all the Devon Character Areas, with the exception of Lundy.

The review makes no reference to the England Coast Path and the associated spreading room available for recreational access. There may well be instances where Natural England has proposed roll-back provisions in its reports on the England Coast

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Path, based on the National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping and subsequently approved by the Secretary of State, and this may impact on those areas in the Assessment where concern is raised about the resilience of the South West Coast Path. The Forum advises that the Assessment should reflect designation of the England Coast Path.

For consistency, green infrastructure links to facilitate sustainable recreation and travel, and connections to public rights of way and trails should be reflected in the plans for all Character Areas, with the exception of Lundy. This would accord with climate change policies.

A couple of the landscape guidelines include “Protect rural lanes and tracks and their associated hedges and flower-rich hedge-banks, resisting unsympathetic highways measures and intrusive signage” (page 9 of the DCA Combined document) and “Protect rural lanes and tracks and their associated hedgebanks, resisting unnecessary signage, lighting and other insensitive highways measures” (page 84 of the DCA Combined document). ‘Protect the natural qualities of rural lanes and tracks’ would be sufficient wording for these statements.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum would welcome feedback on its comments.

Yours sincerely



Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum
Chair: Sarah Slade
Vice Chair: Chris Cole



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Planning Policy
East Devon District Council
Blackdown House
Border Road,
Heathpark Industrial Estate,
Honiton,
EX14 1EJ

13 January 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

East Devon draft Local Plan consultation

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice “as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area...” Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the Forum has a statutory function to give advice, and this includes district councils.

The DCAF currently has nineteen members, appointed by Devon County Council, who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.

This response has been agreed by the Forum and will be on the agenda for formal approval at its next meeting on 31 January. These comments are along the lines of advice submitted to other consultations.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is submitting two of its agreed position statements on Greenspace and Planning and advises that these should be taken into

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account in developing the East Devon Local Plan. The Forum welcomes the emphasis on green infrastructure included in the draft Plan.

In addition, the following specific advisory comments have been agreed.

Item	Statement in Plan	Comments
Local Plan Vision (p.11) (Second of the three priorities)	A Greener East Devon, which prioritises issues arising from climate change and supports our natural environment.	This priority statement should be expanded as follows – , including access to the natural environment.'
Clyst Valley Regional Park (p.58 & 59)	<p>16. Strategic Policy – Green infrastructure and the Clyst Valley Regional Park</p> <p>Objective</p> <p>e) Promote cycling and walking opportunities to link habitats and sustainable movement networks that promote the overall recreational experience.</p> <p>g) To create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to learn outside the classroom.</p>	<p>The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that additional statements should be added to the following clauses to strengthen them.</p> <p>e) Promote cycling and walking opportunities to link habitats and sustainable movement networks that promote the overall experience for recreational users, for travel to work and to school.</p> <p>g) To create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to learn outside the classroom and increase their understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment.</p> <p><i>An extra clause should be added to the effect that funding (including s106 money) should be secured to fund a ranger post, or training for volunteers, to encourage people to use the Park and enjoy it in a responsible manner.</i></p>
Walking, cycling and public transport (p.229)	65. Strategic Policy – Walking, Cycling and Public Transport “Walking and cycling links should be prioritised in new development – such links should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. Cycle paths should be segregated from pedestrians to reduce the potential for conflict.	This statement should be expanded to be clearer. The DCAF recognises that planned, dedicated cycle paths can facilitate and encourage cycling and sustainable transport, enabling cyclists to travel more quickly. However, the associated pedestrian routes should be accessible for all and clear of obstacles as mobility

		<p>scooters and powered wheelchairs are not legally permitted to use cycle routes, despite the benefits that using a well-surfaced cycle route would provide. Where there are multi-use trails, including bridleways, that are not segregated, “share this space” should be the preferred strategy for the management of these. Pedestrians, horse-riders, cyclists, dog walkers and people with mobility scooters should be encouraged to recognise their shared responsibilities to other trail users.</p>
<p>SANGS (p.262)</p>	<p>13.24. SANGS will need to include substantial open space areas ideally of semi-natural character and should specifically be appealing to dog walkers.</p>	<p>The Forum advises that the statement on SANGS should recognise other needs and not just those of dog walkers. 13.24. SANGS will need to include substantial open space areas ideally of semi-natural character and should specifically be appealing to young families and those with limited access to other nearby natural open space, and also to dog walkers.</p>
<p>Omission from the Plan</p>	<p>Public Rights of Way</p>	<p>The Plan as a whole makes scant reference to public rights of way. The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that developments should seek to link new cycling and walking routes to existing public rights of way and trails, and enhancing these where appropriate. This would maximise the potential recreational and sustainable transport impact. This is particularly pertinent with the proposal for a new town as there will be a need to take account of the impact on existing PRow and access, the need for integrated green spaces and also links to the regional park.</p>

Agenda Item 13.5

This response constitutes formal advice from the Devon Countryside Access Forum and feedback on its comments would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully



Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum
Chair: Sarah Slade
Vice Chair: Chris Cole