



## Devon Countryside Access Forum

Lucombe House  
County Hall  
Topsham Road  
EXETER EX2 4QD

Tel: 07837 171000  
01392 382084

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

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

Mrs J. M. Hart  
The Town Clerk  
Buckfastleigh Town Council  
Town Hall  
Bossell Road  
Buckfastleigh  
TQ11 0DD

7 April 2017

Dear Mrs Hart

### **Buckfastleigh Neighbourhood Plan- Pre-submission Consultation**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its remit is to advise “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...” It has a statutory function to give independent advice to named bodies under section 94 of the CRoW Act, including borough and district councils, and they are required to “have regard” to “any relevant advice” given to them.

The DCAF currently has sixteen members who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.

The timing of this consultation did not coincide with a meeting of the Forum. This agreed response will be on the agenda for formal ratification at the next meeting on 27 April. The comments in this letter reflect advice previously provided by the DCAF.

The Forum has produced a Position Statement on Neighbourhood Plans and this is attached for information and to cross-reference against your published Plan.

Your aspirations to improve recreational access in the Parish are noted and the Forum strongly advises that early and full negotiation takes place with any landowners to discuss any proposals. You may not have seen Devon County Council’s guide to improving community paths and this can be found on

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/prow/rights-of-way-improvement-plan/>

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.





Your section in the Neighbourhood Plan on 'Walking Trails', page 46, covers more than just walking and it would be appropriate to change the title of this section to recreational access trails. The Forum also advises that it would be helpful to clarify whether use by horse-riders is proposed at all, for example on forest tracks.

The Forum is currently developing a position statement on disability access and will forward this once it has been adopted. It advises that any new recreational routes and improvements should, wherever possible, consider the requirements of users with disabilities.

The section on 'Walking Trails' refers to a map on page 25 which does not appear to be included in the Plan.

There is a comment in the second paragraph of the 'Walking Trails' section which refers to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. "Residents love the surrounding landscape, the woodlands, the river and the hills and would like to have wider access to them. Farmers and landowners have legitimate anxieties especially concerning dogs and livestock. This is, after all, an area with sheep farming. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, has however extended rights of access, and we want to ensure that this is responsible." From scrutiny of the Public Rights of Way interactive map [www.devon.gov.uk/prow](http://www.devon.gov.uk/prow) it does not appear that there is any CRoW Act land in the parish of Buckfastleigh. The CRoW Act only extended access to designated mountain, moor, heath and downland and to no other land. Reference to the CRoW Act should be deleted but the Forum would strongly support inclusion of a comment about responsible access use.

The DCAF hopes its comments will be taken into account and would welcome your feedback.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

*Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum*