

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

ITEM 14

SOUTHERN WILTSHIRE AREA BOARD  
(7 June 2012)

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## Rights of Way – Making Tracks

### Purpose of the Report

To set out our proposals for the theme of Rights of Way.

### Introduction:

Area Board participants have identified footpaths as a theme for 2012/13.

This paper proposes three workstreams:

- a collaborative maintenance programme
- the publication of walks linked to local businesses such as pubs and shops
- Making representations to Wiltshire Council's Corporate Director to give delegated powers to Rights of Way Wardens to enforce rights of way issues.

So far, we have met with South Wiltshire Ramblers to discuss their work in the area and how they could contribute to this project.

We have also met with Nick Cowen (Wiltshire Council – Rights of Way Warden) and Sarah Manchester (New Forest National Park Authority - Countryside Access Officer) to discuss our proposals. They were very supportive.

### Where to start

A necessary starting point for participation is to:

- Ensure each PC has a definitive map of the Rights of Way in its patch.  
An online version of the definitive map can be found here:  
[www.wiltshire.gov.uk/publicrightsofwaymapping](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/publicrightsofwaymapping)
- Encourage each PC to nominate a Lead for footpaths and Rights of Way issues. Then bring nominated people together to ensure a coordinated approach.

## **1. Maintenance**

We need to establish what the issues and requirements are for each Parish.

Each participating PC prepares:

- **Ongoing maintenance requirements:** A list of maintenance works together with an indication of local priorities (with top priority being given to keeping RoWs open).
- **Capital requirements:** Stile, gate and kissing-gate requirements.

In order to ensure we can get work done during this summer we will need to know requirements quite soon. Therefore please submit requirements by Monday 16<sup>th</sup> July (for PCs where this is not feasible we will have another tranche later in the year but as installation is better done during summer months we would like requirements in asap).

See the attached example from Whiteparish (appendix 1).

The Area Board can assemble a pool of resources as follows:

### **Money:**

- Area Board funding
- CATG funding
- Parish Improvement Grants
- Parish Council contributions
- R2
- Other grants – NFNPA, Paths for Communities

### **People:**

- Lead members from PCs
- Community Payback
- The leisure credits scheme
- The Ramblers
- Contracted workers funded from the above supplemented by PC contributions
- Local volunteers
- New Forest Rangers

As a result of this work we will need to:

- (i) Negotiate and place bulk purchase to meet capital requirements.

- (ii) Via a Community Wide Footpath Group, made up of all PC leads decisions about work programmes and priorities can be made. This will encourage cross border collaboration.

## **2. Walks publication**

The idea is to produce a series of walks (short and long) in our community area to promote walking and enjoying our countryside. The walks could link up to special places of interest and also local shops and pubs.

In order to achieve this we would require:

- (i) Working Party formed consisting of PC Leads.
- (ii) Each participating PC prepares descriptions and directions covering walks of varying lengths and degrees of hardship using footpaths in its parish and adjoining parishes.

Walks should ideally link to village shops and pubs which could then be approached for sponsorship.

- (iii) We would work on a common template so that the individual walks can be brought together into a booklet covering the Community Area as a whole. The Area Board will commission the template.
- (iv) Working Party merges/collates individual walk descriptions. The Area Board can arrange and fund printing.
- (v) Distribution through shops, pubs, libraries, local events, schools, churches etc. for a small fee.

## **3. Action on Enforcement**

The Area Board would like to see the Rights of Way Warden given delegated authority to serve notice to landowners who unlawfully block legitimate Rights of Way. This would increase the efficiency of the system.

Further to this, it has been suggested that once the lead members for footpaths have been identified, that they could discuss how to improve local enforcement before a problem escalates. Sharing ideas and best practice examples should improve outcomes when dealing with enforcement issues.



**Recommendations:**

1. That the Area Board adopts the proposals in the report and the implementation plan.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: **Example of Parish Rights of Way Survey**

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