

Parish Paths Partnership Newsletter Summer 2018

We are into August and it has been fantastic to see so much sunny weather this Summer.

Introduction and Grants

Thank you to everyone for sending the surveys and financial information. Grants have been issued for the coming year and hopefully there are lots of great rights of way projects underway across Devon. If you were successful in gaining a grant and need help with your project do get in touch and the team will happily assist you.

Strimmer courses

Details were circulated by email to P3 co-ordinators and parish clerks advertising our course dates for the year. We are delighted to say we had full attendance on our Spring/Summer courses and are adding names to a list for those volunteers that might like to participate in the Autumn. For those of you who use a strimmer on rights of way do check your certificates to make sure they remain valid. We are looking to run refresher courses with Notterbridge training should there be a requirement. For your information the certificates gained from attending a strimmer course organised by Devon County Council last five years from the date of issue.

Safety Matters.....



Ticks

You will be aware from the media that there are concerns regarding ticks and the risk of contracting Lyme Disease. Please click on the link [Lyme Disease](#) for more information and follow the guidance below regarding treatment and prevention of this disease. Additional information regarding ticks may be found [here](#) and a link the NHS advice may be found [here](#).

Be sun aware

With recent heat warnings issued please remember the following:

- Drink plenty of water and avoid strenuous exercise in the main part of the day.
- Wear a cap, long trousers, sun lotion and sun glasses.
- Let people know where you are and what time you intend to return.
- If strimming think about safe storage of fuel and take steps to avoid dehydration – Strim in either the early morning or late afternoon.

Vehicles and hot weather

Please also note the following regarding fire risk:



Are you thinking of replacing green and white signs?

When looking for somewhere to replace or site a sign (not just PRow signs) please do not be tempted to use Western Power Distribution (WPD) poles!

In the last month we have been requested, as an authority, not to add signs to Western Power Distribution poles. In some locations signs have already been removed due to safety risks. A quick call to the power provider to find out the reasons for concern has highlighted the following:

1. WPD Engineers need to climb poles. If there are sign arms sticking out of the pole then this can present danger when climbing and descending;
2. Some WPD cables are not armoured. There is an electrocution risk when attaching sign arms to poles in some instances; and
3. Metal parts of any signs attached to WPD poles could become energised and represent a risk to all.

If you need advice regarding the siting of a sign please do get in touch with your warden.

Rights of Way Projects

We have several projects, ranging from simple waymarking to more complex resurfacing of routes, being considered by parishes across the county. If you need advice regarding any aspect of rights of way please do get in touch and we will happily meet with you to talk through and help organise the work. As with all projects do make sure landowners and rights of way wardens are aware and in agreement with changes that you wish to make to routes. Do check that the necessary insurances are in place if you are employing contractors who are not recorded on the Devon County Council's contractors list. If volunteers are involved with any aspect of rights of way please ensure that your parish/town council are aware of the work being done and have checked that third party insurance is in place. Parish and town council insurance should cover the actions of volunteers but it is up to individuals to take out their own personal insurance should they feel they are at risk of injury to themselves whilst volunteering on a right of way.

In our workshops last Autumn we discussed the subject of risk assessment and the need to show that consideration has been given to likelihood and outcome of an

event as well as action to be taken in the case of an emergency. Please see the following item for further information.

Risk assessments – a simple refresher

Many volunteers feel this area can be complex and onerous – in reality it need not be either. Remember the following:

- Keep yourself and others safe by letting another person know where you are working, how long you intend to be and don't forget to leave a mobile number.
- Undertake a quick assessment BEFORE you commence the task. A risk assessment is designed to show you have thought of dangers and taken steps to avoid them – it demonstrates that you have given thought and consideration.
- If you are working with contractors please remind them to also complete a risk assessment – Devon County Council contractors should do this automatically. An example of a risk assessment follows below, please feel free to copy and alter to your own requirements.

Risk assessment for:

Conducted by:

Date:

Hazard	What could happen?	Who could be hurt?	Action taken to minimise risk

Workshop dates and venues

Our workshops last year proved a real success and we hope to repeat the series of three events in Autumn 2018. Last year there was major emphasis on getting work done. This year we hope to take a look at some of the work that has been achieved, together with ways that parishes programme their work over the year. Dates and venues will be announced later in the summer. Activities are likely to involve the opportunity to 'walk and talk' with fellow volunteers and wardens as well as a brief round-up and of course lunch. The events are likely to be held in early October.

Cutting programmes and vegetation

Following a wet winter and a warm, late spring the vegetation is reaching jungle proportions in places. If you have your own parish cutting programme in place do contact your contractors to make sure they are on the case with managing the vegetation. Many of you do cut around signs, gates and stiles and these are often the most important areas in terms of growth. If you have access to a strimmer and carry an up to date strimming certificate now might be the time to put some fuel in the can and take to the paths!

A quick case study from South Molton – footpath 5

The following is a popular route in the parish of South Molton that receives much use from school children and dog walkers. The path traditionally suffers from lots of vegetation growth in the summer and needs constant monitoring by the parish and the local Devon County Council Public Rights of Way Warden, Simon Houghton. In the past there have been issues regarding bird nesting times coinciding with the summer vegetation cut so this year a new regime was implemented by the Town Council following the warden's advice. Notices were erected at either end of the lane advising locals that the path would be lightly trimmed by hand due to the bird nesting season. As you can see from the photo this provided the perfect solution – a good clear path and plenty of happy wildlife!



Tree Health

You may aware that Devon is a national hotspot for Ash Die back. The following information may be useful to you as a volunteer walking paths. You might also want to share the details with your local parish tree warden and parish council members.

Ash Dieback



Sadly, ash dieback is making an appearance in the county and trees in the Bickleigh area have already been felled. The Devon Wildlife Trust has just reported the Forestry Commission has confirmed outbreaks of the tree infection at reserves in Torridge (Dunsdon, near Holsworthy and Halsdon, Dolton); West Devon (Meeth Quarry); Teignbridge (Dunsford) and East Devon (The Rough near Honiton).

Matt Boydell from the Devon Wildlife Trust said “We need to map where the biggest and most high-risk ash trees are, those close to roads and public footpaths, as any large diseased trees posing a risk to the public will have to be felled. Mapping how quickly the disease is spreading and the age of infected trees is likely to be our focus over the next few years. Then we can plan what level of re-populating of native tree species is suitable for each reserve, in harmony with natural regeneration of the woodland, particularly where hedgerow ashes have died.”

The approach being taken by Devon County Council was the subject of a committee report to Cabinet on 16 May this year. Further information may be found on the following website [Devon County Council and managing Ash Die Back](#)

If you would like further advice please visit the Forestry Commission website <https://forestry.gov.uk/treediseases>

Maize crops and general cropping of paths

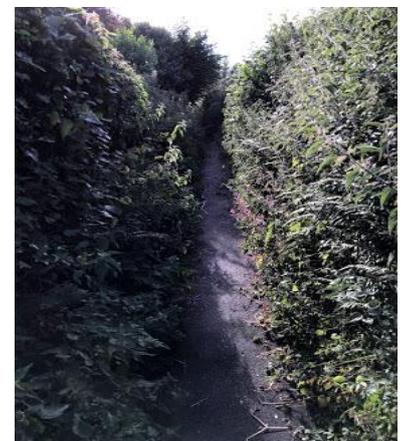
As the season moves forwards crops will begin to reach maturity and in some areas this will lead to the obstruction of routes. A quick trawl of the internet has revealed the following from Devon County Council:

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/ploughingandcroppingchart.pdf>. If you discover a ploughed or cropped path please contact the rights of way team for further advice or you could make the initial approach to the landowner and remind them of their responsibilities.

Round-up from the parishes:

Volunteer rapid response team take on Laundry Lane – Sidford

Last month rumours of encroaching vegetation in Laundry lane, Sidford reached the ears of Ian Collins and the Sidmouth Parish Paths Partnership volunteers. To combat the brambles and overthrow the growing army of nettles, grass and seasonal growth it was decided that a planned assault was required.



Ian mustered the weekly P3 volunteer group and combined forces with the Devon Trail Riders Fellowship to mount a co-ordinated response. Armed with strimmers and hand tools the nine-strong group mounted an impressive onslaught. Within an hour the green up-growth fuelled by recent warm weather and light showers had been defeated. The pictures demonstrate the tremendous results of the volunteers' endeavours – most impressive!

Huge thank you to all concerned for once more responding to the needs of the community and keeping access available for all on this popular minor unclassified county road.



Congratulations to the Trail Riders Fellowship and the Parish Paths Partnership volunteers

Resurfacing of Footpath 1 in Modbury

Following bad Winter weather the surface of popular footpath 1 in the parish of Modbury had deteriorated to such a degree that repairs were in order. A local parishioner and his wife, who are great supporters of the paths donated funds to enable the purchase of 40 tonnes of material to repair this route and one other in the parish. They also agreed to store the material at their property until the day when the volunteers could be gathered! Brian Weeks and Mike Oakins, joint P3 co-ordinators requested help with the project and 16 willing volunteers come forward armed with rakes, shovels and wheel barrows. The material was transported from the storage point to the end of the path in two tonne loads where the volunteers were waiting to commence the task. Within 2 hours 20 tonnes of material had been laid and Brian could be seen in action with a Wacker Plate levelling the surface adding the finishing touches! Following their hard



work all the volunteers celebrated their achievement with pasties from the Modbury Butchers. Well done to everyone – a tremendous effort!

And Finally..... The Musbury Scarecrows



Janet Albano, P3 co-ordinator from Musbury shared this great photo of a scarecrow. The parish are raising funds for their village hall and locals from the community created 54 scarecrows for people to enjoy. Janet's efforts can be seen pictured sitting on her garden wall and is entitled 'Walking the East Devon Way'.

Thank you to everyone for all their great efforts with the P3 scheme and please do get in touch if you would like any help or advice with rights of way.

Best wishes to you all

Ros Davies and the Rights of Way Team

