

Parish Paths Partnership Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2017

The presence of wild flowers in our hedges heralds the start of hopefully brighter days and a warm summer ahead. We have had a relatively dry winter and this has had a positive effect on our rights of way.

This year's P3 Surveys have, as always, reflected the hard work of volunteers and the plethora of completed improvements over the last twelve months. We look forward to showcasing some of the achievements in the



Autumn workshops and hope that you will be free to join us at an event in the coming months. We shall be in contact with dates and venues and are delighted to report that these ever popular events shall take our usual format of morning presentations followed by lunch and walks with members of the rights of way team.

Annual Return forms and projects for the coming year

Thank you to all P3 Co-ordinators and Parish Clerks for completing and returning the annual surveys

and finance forms. It is always a busy time of year and one that involves much deliberation regarding planning and allocation of grants for the coming twelve months. Please do get in touch if you have been awarded a grant and need assistance organising the work.

View from a footpath in Membury, East Devon - May 2017

At the moment we have many ongoing P3 projects such as bridge deck replacements, swapping stiles for gates, repairing muddy surfaces, improving access for all and of course adding signs that have fallen foul of hedgetrimmers during autumn.

Regardless of whether your task is simple or complex please don't forget to take both before and after photographs – they are a great way of

demonstrating success and often inspire others to consider improvements to their local network of paths.



Brushcutter Courses

We have organised our ever popular brushcutter courses for **15th and 16th June 2017** and **20th July** and welcome volunteers from all parishes to attend if they wish to assist with vegetation management

during the growing season.

With a maximum of less than 10 people per course there are plenty of opportunities for discussion and sharing of practical experience. We have several volunteers already wanting to participate but please do get in touch if you relish the opportunity for a bit of training. The courses are free of charge to P3 parishes and comply with the volunteer element of Parish and Town Council insurance requirements for Zurich and Cornhill. If you would like to attend a course please send an email to ros.davies@devon.gov.uk.

As always you are able to spend your annual grant on the purchase of brushcutters, Personal Protective Equipment and the associated fuel, servicing and maintenance. If you need advice on the most appropriate makes and models of brushcutters please do get in touch.

Devon Countryside and Access Forum (DCAF)

Many of you might well have heard through the local press that we have been advertising for members to join the DCAF. This group of volunteers all bring a specialism to the Access Forum to ensure the voices of groups they represent are considered when we are creating policy documents for the future. In recent times members have had their say on such topics as dogs in the countryside, windturbines, photovoltaics and planning guidance regarding rights of way.

The Chair, Vice Chair of the Public Rights of Way Committee and County Solicitor have appointed new members in recent weeks and we are delighted to welcome them to the Forum and look forward to working closely to assist with access related matters over the coming months.

If you would like to find out more about the work of DCAF or indeed to contact Hilary Winter, the DCAF Officer, please follow the link [here](#) for additional information.

The Countryside Code

Natural England have recently published an updated version of the Countryside Code. The details can be downloaded from the following link: [Revised Countryside Code](#) . It is refreshing to see the new code lays emphasis on respecting the countryside and those who live and work within it as well as protecting and encouraging the wider enjoyment by all. The messages are simple but the greater detail offers explanations and better prepares those who may be nervous of venturing into the wider rural area. There is a significant section regarding all aspects of managing dogs in the rural environment as well as what to do if chased by cattle. Landowners are also included in the publication and encouraged to maintain rights of way for the enjoyment and safety of all. Take a look if you have a moment and please share the link with family and friends.

Tree Diseases – an update on the current situation

You will have heard in the media that many of our beautiful trees that play such a major part in our rural landscape are under threat. The list of diseases continues to grow with the latest affecting our Sweet Chestnuts trees. Information regarding trees is constantly being updated but should you discover a diseased specimen there is plenty of information available if you require advice.



The Forestry Commission have played their part in producing an excellent guide that highlights the types of tree under threat and what symptoms to look out for. The information provided is useful for landowners and tree wardens who are identifying

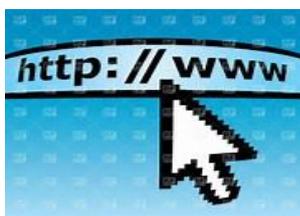
potentially sick trees that may need attention in the future. If you would like further information please follow the link to the Forestry Commission website [here](#).

Should you find a tree that is blocking a right of way or a road because they have fallen over or become hung up (when they are falling but caught in the branches of another tree) please do report the matter using the following link [here](#).

Remember – even signs and gates need a little love

We have all heard of the term tree huggers well now is the season to show some care towards signs and gates. The warm wet weather of late has encouraged our summer vegetation to put on a bit of a growth spurt in recent days and subsequently our signs, gates and stiles will be feeling the effects as nettles and brambles take a strangle hold. If you have access to a brushcutter and have been trained now might be the time to add some fuel, put on some protective gear and start the summer assault! If you are planning a walk why not pack the secateurs and do a little clipping as you go? Clearing signs, stiles and gates helps keep rights of way in great order and it can make the difference between a walk being a great experience or one that is memorable for all the wrong reasons!

Updated Website for Rights of Way



Over the last few months the Rights of Way website has undergone a refresh. The information is available for all to see with useful links to related topics such as sources of funding, definitive map updates and forms for a diversion or temporary closure. There is an interactive map showing the location of all rights of way in the county plus the opportunity to quickly report a problem to your warden. Please do take a look when you have a minute by clicking [here](#). We hope to be able to upload forms for P3 parishes to use in the future.

P3 News Story of the season:

For the last twenty plus years the parish of Kenton has organised its traditional Good Friday Walk event. Peter White has stepped down from the role of P3 co-ordinator in recent years but still organises the event for the community. This year there were 30 locals who joined in the 4.5 mile event walking the rights of way round the parish and taking in the local views from various paths. As always, the returning walkers made their way to Peter's garden for well- earned hot cross buns and a cup of tea.

Kenton Parish Walk Easter 2017

If your parish is thinking of holding a walking event or a vegetation clearing party please do send in some photos of the occasion. We would love to hear what you are up to in the community and who knows you might just feature in our next newsletter or indeed at our Autumn workshop.

... and finally

Thank you as always for all your help and support with rights of way, our P3 communities really do make a difference to improving access in Devon for all to enjoy.

Best wishes

Ros and all the Rights of Way team

Ros Davies

Public Rights of Way

Highways and Traffic Management

Tel: 01392 383000 website: http://www.devon.gov.uk/public_rights_of_way

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