

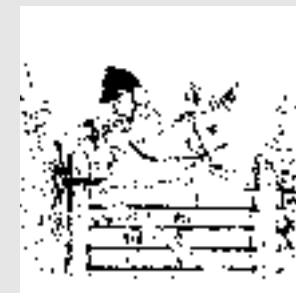
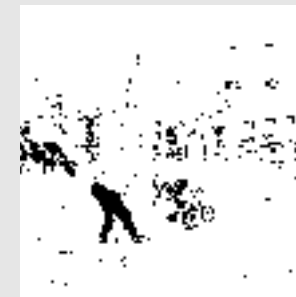
Dorset Local Access Forum

Tara Hansford
Countryside Access Development Officer
County Hall, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XJ
Telephone: 01305 228577
Fax: 01305 224835
email: t.s.hansford@dorsetcc.gov.uk
Website: www.dorsetcc.gov.uk/laf

Produced by: Dorset Local Access Forum

Designed by: Dorset Design DD/00297

Printed by: Dorset County Council Print Services



A Future for Countryside Access in Dorset

...to make Dorset
the finest county
for walking in
Southern England...

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Vision	5
3	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	6
4	Practical Management and Maintenance	7
	• Route Hierarchy	
	• Monitoring the Network	
	• Disability Discrimination Act	
	• Enforcement	
	• Signage/Furniture/Surfacing	
	• Countryside Access Management Manual	
5	Promotion and Information	10
5.1	Introduction	10
5.2	Promotion	10
	• Profile/awareness raising	
	• Public Displays	
	• Website	
	• Local Media	
	• Posters & Adverts	
	• Public Places	
	• Dorset Countryside Access Information Base	
5.3	Promotional Strategy Information	12
	• Method	
	• Content	
	• Duplication	
	• Distribution	
5.4	Information for landowners and public	14
5.5	Information for landowners/managers	14
5.6	Information for the public	16
6	Access for All	18
7	Economic, Environmental & Social Benefits	19
	• Planning & Transport	
	• Social Exclusion	
	• Health	
	• Recreation	
	• A Safer & Healthier Environment	
	• Vibrant Communities	
	• Tourism - Local & Visiting	
	• Economic Value	
8	Partnership	23
9	Resources	25
10	Monitoring	25
11	and Finally	26
	Appendix 1 - Strategies & Plans	27
	Appendix 2 - Glossary	27



Preface

The Coast Path? The Avon Valley? Wareham Forest? Eggardon Hill? The Blackmore Vale? Badbury Rings? All of us have our favourite places when we get out and about in this lovely County of Dorset. Whether we drive, ride or walk, whether for recreation or necessity, there is a network of paths and places provided for our use and enjoyment.

But does it really meet our needs? Are there enough paths and places? Is there enough information about them? What changes would we like to see, either as users or those who own or manage them? These and many more questions are raised and perhaps some answers are included in this consultation document from the Dorset Local Access Forum.

The Forum was set up as an independent, statutory body in May 2002 to advise the Highway Authorities of Dorset, and others, on public access to land and open-air recreation and enjoyment throughout the County. It is therefore taking this early opportunity to consult widely on these questions which are all of great importance and interest to those of us who live here or visit.

The Forum needs to know your thoughts and ideas to enable it to offer the best advice, and support future policies and Rights of Way Improvement action plans for access to the countryside.

Please send/email your views and comments to:

Dorset Local Access Forum, **Tara Hansford**, County Hall Dorchester Dorset DT1 1XJ
t.s.hansford@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Bob Burcher

Chairman of the Dorset Local Access Forum June 2003

This document is also available in audiocassette and/or in large print on request from:

Tara Hansford, Countryside Access Development Officer, Dorset Countryside County Hall Dorchester Dorset DT1 1XJ Telephone: 01305 228577

In addition this document is available for reading and downloading from the Local Access Forum website: www.dorsetcc.gov.uk/laf

1. Introduction

1.1 Dorset is a truly beautiful and interesting place in which to live and work - but perhaps more importantly a great place in which to enjoy spending time with family and friends or simply to indulge in by yourself!

1.2 It is renowned for its fascinating geology and amazing landscapes, which in turn support a wealth of habitats and wildlife - a diverse range of everyday and unique plants and animals.

1.3 From high up on the chalk escarpments over rolling wooded fields down into the river valleys across open heath land and along dramatic coastline - Dorset is a County of contrasts.

1.4 It is therefore of little surprise that the Dorset landscape is highly valued not just locally but recognised at both national and international levels.¹

1.5 In conjunction with this rich, natural resource are us - you and me - the people who live here today and those generations before us.

1.6 Collectively we have shaped this landscape making it what it is today - productive, rich in history, strong in local character and vibrant with its numerous market and coastal towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads.

1.7 Dorset has so much to offer and is enjoyed by so many local people and visitors in so many ways.

“The key way in which people can get out into, explore, experience and enjoy Dorset are through its 4541 km of Public Rights of Way² and numerous countryside sites - country parks, National Trust land, picnic areas, green spaces, nature reserves, permissive routes, public woodlands ... etc”

1.8 Until quite recently footpaths, bridleways and byways were seen, perhaps, as a minor, cultural recreational facility. Today the demand for access within our county has grown and continues to do so rapidly.

1.9 Its popularity and vital link with the local economy was brutally brought home to us through the terrible outbreak of Foot and Mouth in 2001.

1.10 Since then the original historic role of rights of way as an important, practical resource has been brought back into the public arena - but now in a contemporary context faced with new roles and responsibilities - as an asset inextricably linked to modern day issues.

1.11 Public Rights of Way (PROW) are now being acknowledged and understood not only as an important recreational asset but also for their wider values - as a positive resource advantageous to Public Health, Environmental Conservation, Sport and Recreation, Cultural Identity, Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Tourism, Planning, Social Inclusion, Land Management and as a key driver for the local and wider economy.

1.12 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) reinforced this view through various legislative requirements including the duty on the Local Highway Authority (Dorset County Council) to prepare Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP's) and establish a Local Access Forum.

1.13 The County Councils previous Milestone Statement³ of May 1999 set out 3 clear targets in maintaining an open and usable right of way network. They were to have the network well publicised, properly maintained and legally defined⁴. With additional resources and hard work the entire network was properly sign-posted and fully surveyed and maintenance standards have been improved. However the survey, undertaken by the Ramblers Association, also revealed a range of legal problems which need to be resolved if the legal record of rights of way is to be correct and up to date. Progress with these has been slower and there remains much work to do in addition to the every day legal changes that go on.

¹ Almost 55% of Dorset is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The County contains 10 National Nature Reserves, 141 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, nearly 13,000 listed buildings and 190 building conservation areas. It has 1,500 scheduled ancient monuments and the coast has recently, together with East Devon, been designated a World Heritage Site.

² Or alternatively, walking 10 miles a day Dorset's Rights of Way network could provide a different walk every day of the year (est).

³ Milestones Statement A document that sets targets and tasks for the maintenance and improvement of the management of public rights of way in Dorset. There are three set target areas - Public Rights of Way should be 1 Legally defined 2 Properly maintained 3 Well publicised.

⁴ Legally defined. This is the legal requirement for the exact line and legal status of all Rights of Way to be shown on the Definitive map and statement of Public Rights of Way. The survey showed many discrepancies or "anomalies" (ie where the walked route and the line on the map differ) which need to be corrected for the benefit of landowners and users. In addition, rights of way may exist which have not yet been recorded on the Map, or recorded with the wrong status. New evidence may come to light, which allows changes to the Map to be applied for, ~ (claimed).



1.14
Moving forward to today the Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be an assessment of:

- The extent to which Local Public Rights of Way (LPROW) - footpaths, bridleways, cycletracks and restricted byways - meets the public's - our - present and likely future needs.
- Opportunities Local Rights of Way can provide for exercise, recreation and enjoyment of the authority's area (eg Dorset)
- The ease of accessibility for people with vision and mobility impairments.

1.15
Rights of Way Improvement planning and action plans will be the principal method of identifying the way ahead for the local highway authority - Dorset County Council - in the future management, development and improvement of Dorset's LPROW network.

1.16
In achieving this the ROWIP will carefully consider the needs of the public, landmanagers, specific interest groups and other individuals/organisations and necessitates considerable input by such people in working together to deliver positive action on the ground.

1.17
However LPROW should not be viewed in isolation when considering their future improvement and development. They are only part of a wider access network.

1.18
Numerous individuals and organisations provide other land or routes with public access. Landowners may include "access" in agricultural support agreements, and nature conservation bodies such as the Woodland Trust and Dorset Wildlife Trust allow access to their reserves. Local Authorities, The National Trust and Forestry Commission all make available areas of land for public recreation.

1.19
Recent legislation may soon provide additional areas of public access - Access Land - which for Dorset means areas of heath land, down land and registered common land.

1.20
And then there is the wider highway resource - byways, lanes, roads etc.

1.21
Collectively this has the potential to provide an efficient and effective integrated access network - LPROW, publicly accessible areas of land and other highways- for people living in and visiting Dorset.

1.22
Serious commitment by both Government and Local Authorities together with adequate resources are vital if a more strategic, sustainable approach to Rights of Way management and development is to be delivered in Dorset.

1.23
But what are your thoughts and ideas concerning Dorset's access network? Does it provide for our current day need and how might it be adapted, changed or managed in the future to provide maximum benefits for the environmental, economic and social well being of Dorset? What is our vision for access in the 21st Century?

2. Vision

2.1.
The Dorset Local Access Forum recommends a vision for those who provide and/or use access in the countryside in the county.

"... to make Dorset the finest county for walking in Southern England ..."

To have a Rights of Way and Access network...

- **That is easy to find, straightforward to follow and safe to use.**
- **Where walkers, cyclists, equestrians and vehicle drivers feel confident in the countryside, and landowners' needs are understood and respected.**
- **Where landowners can capitalise on opportunities generated from a successful network and build support for their work and custom for their produce.**
- **Where good relationships between providers and users of access is encouraged through a clear understanding of our rights and responsibilities.**
- **Where "best practice" - is practised.**
- **That enables local people and visitors to experience and understand Dorset's living, working landscape.**
- **Which from wheelchair users to pushchair users, the elderly to toddlers - provides reasonable access for all needs and abilities so that everyone can enjoy the network together.**
- **That is brought to life by creative and stimulating information and enables people to choose where to go and what to do.**
- **That is signed discreetly, but effectively, and where appropriate contributes to a "sense of place" and informs the walker and rider about the locality.**
- **That connects people with places - and - people with people.**
- **That opens our eyes to all the good things Dorset has to offer...**
- **That brings us in touch with Dorset's wonderful wildlife.**
- **That respects the sensitivity and vulnerability of our natural habitats and species.**
- **That allows us to travel far across Dorset's amazing landscapes.**
- **That enables us to experience Dorset's rich, cultural heritage.**
- **That provides opportunities for us to sample Dorset's local produce.**
- **That teaches me - and the people who visit - about the place in which I live.**
- **That enables people to move freely and safely throughout Dorset.**
- **That enables people to keep fit, have fun, access local facilities, relax and unwind.**
- **That sometimes takes me where I want or need to go...and at other times on a new adventure.**
- **That encourages people to work together in enhancing their locality.**
- **That develops friendships from which great ideas can grow**
- **That improves the Quality of Life for the people who live, work and play in Dorset.**
- **That is reliable to use but able to respond quickly and positively to new demands and needs.**
- **That delivers environmental, social and economic benefits to the whole community whilst sustaining the very assets that make it so attractive.**



“That is easy to find, straightforward to follow and safe to use”

3. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act - CROW 2000

3.1.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) came into force just before the foot and mouth crisis. It is a wide-ranging Act, covering wildlife; the need for management plans to be prepared for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Access Land proposals. It also reinforces existing legislation and brings new powers and duties for Highway Authorities in the management, maintenance, promotion and improvement of the Public Rights Of Way network and development of an integrated access network.

3.2

This includes:

- The completion of the Definitive Map and accompanying statement - the legal record of the PROW network⁵.
- Increased powers and new responsibilities regarding obstruction, diversion and extinguishment of PROW.
- Legislation preventing vehicular use of certain classes of PROW.
- The requirement of Highway Authorities to provide information highlighting their performance regarding their PROW responsibilities ie. published reports, publicly accessible registers of applications for definitive map orders, applications for all extinguishment and diversion orders and information on permissive paths.

- The obligation for Highway Authorities to create and administer Local Access Forums (LAF's)
- Improvements to the network identified through the preparation of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan within 5 years of commencement of the Act and then at 10 yearly intervals.

3.3

CROW 2000 underlines the importance of an improved, integrated access network as a key local resource.

3.4

The Government recognises that to achieve greater benefit from the current PROW/Access network additional financial support is necessary. Consequently they have made financial provision to the Highway Authority to contribute to the additional costs incurred by the new legislation.

4. Practical Management and Maintenance

4.1

The practical management of sites where public access is permitted is nearly always the responsibility of the owner. Often access is ancillary to other purposes of land management, for example for wildlife, protection of landscape value, timber production or some other, but the needs of those using the site for recreational purposes are usually well catered for and managed, often clearly set out in a site management plan.

4.2

Public Rights of Way are rather different. They are public highways forming part of the wider highway network in the same way as roads. They are for the use of the general public along which to travel by foot, bike, horse, vehicle, and carriage according to their status. For many years they have been the “Cinderella’s” of that network, but the launch of the “Milestones” project by the County Council in 1999 saw increasing levels of co-operation between the Council, landowners and those who enjoy using the paths to restore a fully open and well maintained network for everyone.

4.3

Fundamental to the efficient & effective running of a PROW/Access network is a highly organised and first-class maintenance system.

4.4

This aims ...

- To provide a PROW access network that is easy to find, straightforward to follow, safe and a pleasure to use.
- To provide one that meets its legal requirements (statutory duties) and provides the essential foundation from which wider benefits and opportunities can be realised to meet the needs of modern life.

4.5

Due to various factors - drainage, soils, topography, vegetation, location, land use, class of PROW & level/degree of usage, each PROW is confronted by its own unique set of pressures and requirements for frequency and amount of maintenance. However all PROW are susceptible to accidental damage, natural events, vandalism and obstruction. For example through being exposed to all weather conditions and through use PROW are susceptible to general wear and tear. Signs & way marker's fade or get broken, bridges wash away, gates

drop and latches misalign, timber rots through, metal rusts away and surfaces can become uneven and unstable. The rate and intensity of vegetation growth can vary from season to season and year to year, but when the conditions are right it can rapidly block a path. New developments - roads and housing - can alter the character/nature of a PROW necessitating sensitive guidance and possibly new structures/surfacing. Landowners can vary in their attitudes to paths. Some appreciate and reap the benefits of maintaining an effective network whilst others either don't understand or simply choose to neglect their responsibilities towards the PROW access network.

4.6

Managing these pressures, coping with increasing levels of use and expectations, and preparing statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plans all add up to a considerable job for the County Councils Dorset Countryside Team responsible for Rights of Way and Access Site management.

4.7

The Dorset Local Access Forum believes that if its vision is to be realised, not only should this management be highly professional, proactive and adequately resourced but an overall management policy is needed that specifically addresses the following key issues:

“Where ‘best practice’ - is practised”

4.8

Route Hierarchy

This needs to be investigated in conjunction with clear criteria for identifying different levels of management for each pathway within the network. This may be based upon the expected/known use of the route, where major routes such as the South West Coast Path National Trail would receive greater management attention than, say, that of a village trail which itself could be considered of higher priority than that of a remote pathway in the wider network. A route hierarchy will therefore set out clear priorities for management attention. This would not mean that remote paths would be overlooked or neglected, but would assist the realistic and sensible use of new resources.

4.9

Monitoring the Network

Existing, effective mechanisms need to be put to good use for the network. The County Council operates a Countryside Access Management System (CAMS)⁶ designed to collate and administer identified and reported

⁵ The closure of the Definitive Map and Statement in 2026 to the addition of highway that was in existence in 1949. These will be extinguished on that date. However this does not affect claims on rights of way that come into existence after 1949.

⁶ CAMS is a system that matches a database to a map. The database takes such information as path furniture, position, surface type, route type etc and has the ability to display the data on a map base. The system also records incoming path problems and monitors the progress in resolving such reports. It has great potential for the systematic monitoring and management of the network.



problems or queries and “improvement” opportunities or ideas that will:

- Inform & direct work schedules for rights of way and Access Site maintenance.
- Enable Access Officers and Rangers to work more systematically.
- Identify particular problem areas that necessitate customised measures and/or regular attention.
- Effectively track and measure progress and provide a clear picture as to the condition of the network at any one time.
- Monitor the subsequent restoration of PROW with regards to ploughing and cropping problems.
- Draw attention to Health and Safety measures that need to be implemented throughout the network.
- Highlight matters that need urgent attention.
- Generate valuable information for BVPI’s (Best Value Performance Indicators).
- Identify the needs & expectations of landowners and network users.
- Provide an indication as to usage of paths & popular routes.

4.10
This system is still being refined, and will increasingly assist progressive management, which is flexible and helps resources to be used intelligently.

4.11
The expertise and experience of County Council Countryside Access Officers needs to be utilised to its full potential freeing up their time from administrative duties and allowing them to work more proactively on the ground monitoring the state of the network. This will enable them to work with landowners to reinforce their

roles and responsibilities in reinstating and managing PROW/Access, tackle known problem areas with regards to vegetation overgrowth, oversee volunteer work/community projects and providing a public face for PROW access.

4.12

Disability Discrimination Act

Clear criteria are needed in guiding and supporting management and maintenance decisions in meeting responsibilities in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 where duties relating to service providers come into force in 2004.

4.13

Enforcement

A review of current County Council enforcement activity, together with certain delegated powers for officers to act is needed in developing a more cost and time effective system. This should be clearly written up in a policy and procedures manual, which will make clear how the problem of obstructions on rights of way, particularly by crops, will be dealt with.

“That is signed discreetly, but effectively, and where appropriate contributes to a *Sense of Place* and informs the walker and rider about the locality”

4.14

Signage, furniture and surfacing

Their look, feel and practicalness are very important to how we use and enjoy the paths and sites that make up the access network. Materials, designs and technologies should be afforded special consideration. Signposts, stiles, bridges, and gates - such features of the access network

contribute to detail within the countryside. They are ingredients that should enrich a locality and enhance cultural landscapes helping to give identity to a place.

4.15

Wherever possible and appropriate they should be of good local materials and befit the location and character of the route. Where it is possible to use Dorset products this will support local business, manufacturers and craftspeople and contribute to local pride.

4.16

In meeting practical and financial constraints materials, designs and technologies should be of a high standard, require low maintenance and be appropriate to the status of the route and its level of use.

4.17

Signage should be used sensitively so as not to litter the landscape unnecessarily but also explored for its widest possibilities in meeting it’s practical, promotional, cultural and educational roles.

4.18

Signs along our PROW primarily serve the same practical role as signs on our other highways - for example road signs on roads. That is to provide a user new to a route with enough information to be able to follow it confidently knowing that they are going the right way along a public path.

4.19

In meeting this practical need signage should be visible but discreet, traditional or contemporary according to the context, permanent or temporary depending on need, durable and understandable. It should clearly show people where routes exist and direct them along the line of the pathway. However through text, images, signs and symbols etc signposts can become information posts and achieve so much more in conveying practical information and encouraging responsible usage.

4.20

Signage can inform the walker/cyclist/equestrian/vehicular driver as to the nature of the route - for example if it were boggy or steep - enabling people to decide for themselves the routes they would like to take according to their needs and abilities.

4.21

It can tell the public where the route will take them and the distance they will have to cover in getting there. It can also let people know exactly where they are through place names, map grid references and compass directions.

It can make people aware of their responsibilities highlighting the Country Code, for example.

4.22

In meeting an educational and cultural role through materials, words, local dialect, font style, images, signs, symbols etc - signposts can even become interpretation posts and convey insights into cultural and natural heritage. Methods and approach should be careful not to emulate a theme park or allude to an idyllic perception but complement the real, living, working Dorset landscape by reinforcing its character and highlighting its special qualities.

4.23

For example in promoting the work of farmers signage could provide simple but effective messages about good agricultural practice - food production, biodiversity measures and local produce. It could explain how the land is being used, identify types of livestock to be seen and the crops being grown, draw attention to wildlife habitats, promote local produce and lead the walker to the “farm-shop” to purchase the goods!

4.24

Information & Interpretation” are further explored in section 5.

4.25

As well as traditional forms of signage, for example fingerposts and way markers, ways to carefully incorporate signage information/interpretation into structures - stiles, gates, bridges and surfaces - should be explored. In certain situations this may prove to be more practical, effective and economical

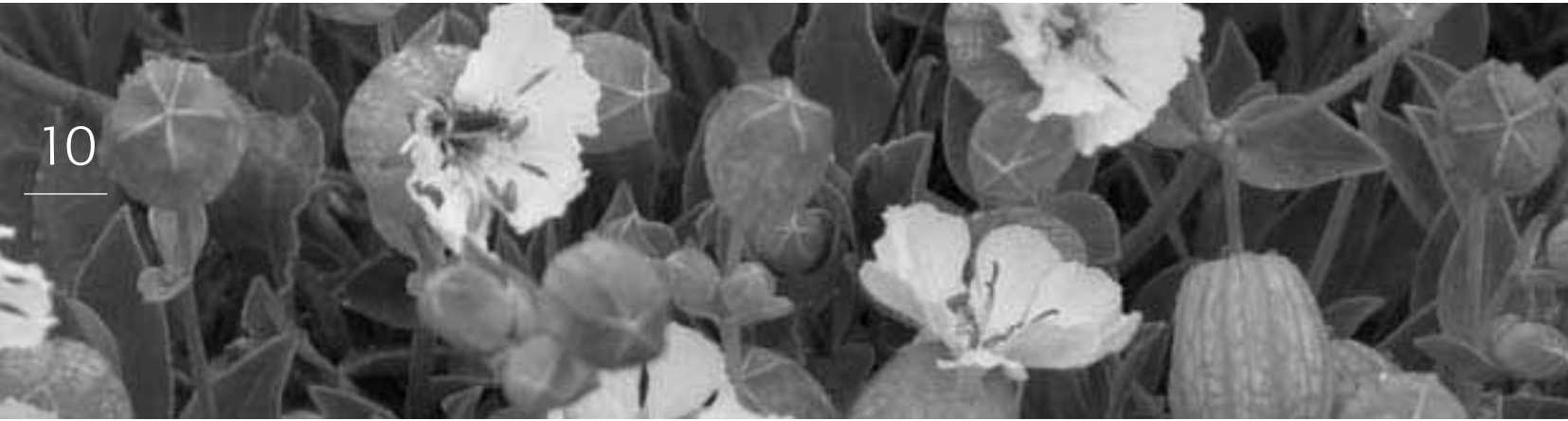
4.26

Signage should aim to be able to be read and understood by people of all ages and abilities, local people and visitors from overseas. A language of widely understood symbols should be developed and used with care taken to ensure that such uniformity does not detract from the character of the path or site.

4.27

Countryside Access Management Manual

It would be helpful to all concerned with Rights of Way if all the above criteria could be compiled in a Countryside Access Management Manual, identifying clear roles, responsibilities, procedures and best practice for Dorset.



“That opens our eyes to all the good things Dorset has to offer”

5. Promotion and Information

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Good maintenance and signage on the ground is vital but are complemented by promotion and information in raising awareness, broadening understanding and educating both landowners and the public about Rights of Way and Access.

5.2 Promotion - profile/awareness raising

5.2.1 If you don't know about it - you can't use it!

5.2.2 People need to be able to identify with the “product”, see the possibilities and appreciate the benefits. Their attention needs to be grabbed and their imagination fired!

5.2.3 Effective promotion is essential to highlight the opportunities, raise awareness and maximise the potential of Rights of Way and Access Sites. It has the capability to make contact with the whole community, local people and visitors, reaching both existing and potential users of the Rights of Way and Access network.

5.2.4 Promotion can also clarify for the public where responsibilities lie for managing and maintaining the superb resource that is available to them. This can help minimise confusion, encourage realistic expectations and re-enforce good relationships between users and providers of access.

5.2.5 It therefore needs to be creative and deliberate in its methods for reaching and engaging with a wide range of people.

5.2.6 The following methods should be explored.

5.2.7 **Public Displays**
Dorset Countryside, the County's Access and Ranger Team has for many years promoted its activities and the opportunities available for access to the countryside with a mobile display at agricultural shows and other events. This display needs to be totally revamped and brought up to date. Through images with impact complemented by adequate text it needs to clearly convey the whole story. It should explain access in the Dorset countryside - for example - what it is - the integrated network - the wide partnership that manages it - how its managed and the work on the ground - peoples roles and responsibilities - best practice and bad practice - the great range of people who enjoy using it - the broader issues it is connected with and the wider benefits it achieves ... health, sustainable transport, local economy, cultural identity, land management, biodiversity etc!

5.2.8 The display needs to be eye-catching, stimulating, exciting and engaging. It also needs to be clear in its layout but flexible so that it can be adapted to suit various situations.

5.2.9 The display needs to set the scene and bring access in the Dorset countryside to the public. Imagery and anecdotes providing stories recounting projects from start to finish, detailing the people involved and achievements made! Gates, finger posts, signage and machinery, local produce reached via pathways - things to see, touch, hear, taste and smell!

5.2.10 It needs to engage both adults and children encouraging them to learn and discover through play and participation - interactive activities that get them thinking and ensure that they leave the display with positive memories. Activities must be fun but pertinent - relating to the Country Code, roles and responsibilities, map reading skills, signage design, agricultural practice, landscape and wildlife to be experienced through exploration of the countryside.

5.2.11 Useful literature should be readily available, possibly in “customised” packs according to need. Officer contact cards and query and compliment forms should also be readily available.

5.2.12 Manned displays are a great, informal way for those who manage rights of way and access sites to meet the public and make contacts and collate information about problems on the network, and ideas about how to improve the network.

5.2.13 Use of an interactive, working, evolving map - a simple, inexpensive large paper copy - which allows people to see and appreciate the whole, integrated network and annotate their thoughts and ideas onto it, would be an effective means of securing information and getting people involved!

5.2.14 Leaflet stands could be organised into “Dorset Areas” - ie things to see and do in West Dorset, North Dorset etc - and also into “subject areas” - eg Tourism - places to stay/visit tied in with the network, Health - why its good to get outdoors and go walking, Local producers/produce - foodstuffs and products, Archaeology - sites which are accessible from PROW etc, highlighting the wider role of PROW and Access Sites. It is important that leaflets are up to date and accurate.

5.2.15 Many other organisations either provide or are involved in the provision of access to the countryside - and they too can emphasize the importance of their sites for recreation. Round walks from and between sites could be promoted in their literature and displays.

5.2.16 **Websites**
These are now popular and widely available promotional tools.

5.2.17 An exciting, user friendly website that - for example - defines countryside access, displays the whole integrated network, clarifies roles and responsibilities, explores the wider issues, highlights improvements and team/community/partnership achievements and enables people to interact should be developed. Printing off route/site information, obtaining detailed path/site character information and exchanging information with the Dorset Countryside Team will surely become commonplace with the public now and in the future.

5.2.18 **Local Media**
Strong, positive relationships with the Local media - TV, radio, press, free publications etc all assist promotional efforts and need to be carefully built.

5.2.19 **Posters and Adverts**
Adverts, posters etc should be developed promoting specific themes/issues. In the right places these can play an excellent promotional role.

5.2.20 **Public places**
The use of public places in reaching the wider public should be investigated.

5.2.21 Supermarkets, market town and village shops visited by all members of the local community and visitors to Dorset could house displays, network maps and theme posters.

5.2.22 Outdoor shops/leisure centres - venues with specific interests in countryside access, recreation and sport - could be encouraged to promote outdoor recreational and fitness activities.

5.2.23 Pubs/tea-rooms/restaurants could supply beer-mats, place mats, and leaflets etc that suggest customers “work off that pudding “or” work up an appetite/thirst with a local walk” and/or detail local routes/sites.

5.2.24 Public transport companies could be encouraged to display posters and information on appropriate busses, trains, their associated timetables and stations etc detailing recreational walks/sites that can be reached using specific routes and the practical integrated access/transport network linking people to local services, places and friends.



“That is brought to life by creative and stimulating information and enables people to choose where to go and what to do”

5.2.25

Information shouldn't just be promoted and available locally but also accessible to commuters from different parts of the county, neighbouring counties and from further afield.

5.2.26

Where people have to wait or queue displays could be on show for people to see. Places such as doctors and dentists waiting rooms and hospitals could be ideal places to promote, for example, “healthy walking” messages!

5.2.27

A Dorset Countryside access information base

The establishment of a definitive source of rights of way and access site information covering the county, for all to refer to. This could house slides, presentation notes, accounts of projects, mini displays, current information relating access opportunities and issues.

5.2.28

Promotional strategy

All of these promotional efforts should focus on a clear, pertinent and understandable aim that is “... to make Dorset the finest county for walking in Southern England” and a Promotional Strategy agreed in which:

- The messages are clear, accessible and thought provoking
- The methods are creative and far-reaching.
- Care is taken to ensure that all promotion is sensitive to the people carrying capacity of sites and routes and not to the detriment of the Dorset countryside.

5.3

Promotional Strategy Information

5.3.1

Method

People differ in the ways that they need to receive information. One method may make information easy to understand/comprehend for some people but difficult to grasp for others.

5.3.2

Leaflets, articles, maps, flagship projects, storytelling, IT/websites and web cams, imagery, people, workshops, guided walks, signs, symbols, interpretation boards and trails, information days, games, practical tasks, questionnaires, competitions, sculpture, living history, challenges, fundraising activities.... fortunately there are numerous ways we can convey information.

5.3.3

But information provision isn't just about what you give out - it's also a great way of bringing people together and receiving information! Many of the methods can also be used to get people to work together and gather feedback, opinions and ideas at the same time.

5.3.4

Content

Information needs to be accessible, clear, informative and pertinent - however - it also needs to seize attention, stimulate the senses and be careful not to give everything away but leave something to the imagination and entice people back for more!

5.3.5

Duplication

There is a plethora of information available concerning PROW and Access Sites. Many organisations produce material in different styles covering various access issues. This has resulted in much duplication of similar information, in some cases “biased” towards the aims of the issuing organisation. This can overwhelm and confuse people and may be a waste of resources.

5.3.6

However this material is also an important means for individual organisations to promote their existence and the work they do in engaging public support and membership. Subsequently the “style” of the material may be integral to the identity of that organisation.

5.3.7

The Forum would recommend that an audit of all available information is carried out by a partnership of Access organisations to establish:

- What exists?
- What works, what doesn't and why?
- What is needed and in what form?
- Which organisation will be responsible for producing which information?
- The most effective means of making sure that information reaches people.
- A role for the private sector.

5.3.8

Agreement should be reached regarding the “identity” of the information. It may be most practical to produce an “umbrella” envelope or wallet that clearly communicates this coherent, partnership approach, recognising all the partners' involved and full breadth of information available and how to access it. This would enable information “packs” to be compiled meeting specific needs whilst maintaining public interest and organisation identity through the variety of material enclosed.

“That teaches me - and the people who visit - about the place in which I live”

5.3.9

Distribution

There is little point investing time and energy producing interesting and stimulating information if it does not reach its intended audience. An effective distribution network needs to be in place.

5.3.10

Strong links should be made between the right people in all the landowner/user-group organisations to enable communication networks through mailings, publications, events and information centres to be used most effectively.

5.3.11

However, as with promotion of the PROW/Access network, serious creative thinking must be given regarding how to reach the wider public, including both local people and visitors to Dorset.

5.3.12

For example eye-catching/interactive information distribution points could be established at “everyday” public places - supermarkets, libraries, cinemas, banks etc and/or at public places which arguably have a closer link to PROW/Access - leisure centres, pubs, health establishments, outdoor shops, village shops and post offices.

5.3.13

Information relating to specific routes/sites should be readily distributed and available in their vicinity - for example on parish information boards, on associated public transport, in the local shop or pub. This has been shown to be popular in some Dorset villages and elsewhere in the South West.

5.3.14

Inexpensive PROW/Access Parish maps that can be easily amended and/or replaced should be installed in a publicly accessible area enabling people to appreciate the full extent of the wider strategic network.

5.3.15

The members of the Local Access Forum can also play an invaluable role in assisting to disseminate information through their communication networks.

5.3.16

Attention shouldn't just focus on distribution within the county but aim to reach people further afield - for example working with the train, airline and ferry companies to get route/site information to passengers. Transport organisations can play an important part in helping people access and enjoy countryside recreation opportunities.

5.3.17

Good links with Tourist Information Centres should be developed in effectively distributing access information and promoting the Rights of Way network and access opportunities to both local people and visitors to Dorset.



“Where people - walkers cyclists, equestrians and vehicle drivers feel confident in the countryside and landowners needs are understood and respected”

5.3.18

Accommodation providers should be encouraged to display a map of the PROW/Access network in their locality. They could be supplied with a pack that details the walks/sites in that area, highlights local produce and advocates the Country Code.

5.3.19

It is important to be aware of and have access to the full range of available methods to reach and communicate with all who live in or visit Dorset.

5.4

Information for landowners and public

5.4.1

Information plays a key role in helping to ensure that all who have a role to play in the care and maintenance of the public rights of way network play their part and that people use and enjoy the network responsibly.

5.5

Information for landowners/managers

5.5.1

Information for landowners/occupiers needs to be current and clearly state what their responsibilities are in maintaining and facilitating public access in the countryside. This information also needs to draw attention to the penalties that may be incurred through not meeting legal obligations.

5.5.2

It is not overstating the case to say that landowners/occupiers play an absolutely critical role in the provision and maintenance of an effective Rights of Way and Access network. A close and constructive relationship between them and the County Councils Access Team will underpin the Forums aims for access in Dorset.

5.5.3

Some landowners/occupiers maintain PROW access to a high standard but many do not! Good information and the way it is delivered is therefore vital and information that clearly communicates and encourages “good practice” should be developed as a priority.

5.5.4

There is a strong demand for access to the great outdoors. Furthermore, people especially want to be able to visit, explore and enjoy rural landscapes and more natural environments. This recognised need is not going to go away - but is increasing. Landowners and farmers could clearly turn this to their advantage.

5.5.5

Dorset’s wonderful varied landscapes already attract many local people and visitors. Only last year a national walking magazine voted Dorset its favourite AONB for walking. The Rights of Way and Access Sites network is a major economic asset.

5.5.6

Dorset’s landowners and farmers are major players in freeing up the potential of this asset and in doing so could

reap substantial gains both for themselves and for their communities. Many who positively manage the PROW access network are already doing so, and indeed know their customers through operating, for example, farm holidays, accommodation, recreational and educational activities.

5.5.7

The inextricable link between land management and tourism/recreation in creating prosperous local economies was brought home only too clearly by the horrendous outbreak of foot and mouth. Landowners/occupiers should be encouraged and helped to capitalise on this link and proactively carry out their duties towards maintaining a PROW access network that is of a high standard and meets its full potential in achieving economic, environmental and social benefits.

5.5.8

What better public relations representatives are there for the land management industry - agriculture, forestry and conservation - than the landowners and farmers themselves?

“Where landowners can capitalise on opportunities generated from a successful network and build support for their work and custom for their produce”

5.5.9

By providing high quality access that people want and are entitled to, landowners could help provide a network that will:

- Welcome and encourage local people and visitors to explore Dorset.
- Enable landowners and farmers to play a major role in promoting their industry by drawing peoples attention to good agricultural practice - living, working farms, Dorset produce and the value of conservation landscapes.
- Increase the market to farm shops - farmers markets - farm products - farm accommodation etc through publicity, local and passing trade.
- Generate further opportunities to diversify for farmers, foresters and conservation bodies to capitalise upon.
- Facilitate “people management” and allow any problems to be attended to efficiently.

5.5.10

Efforts to welcome people to the Countryside can not only improve the landowners/farmers quality of life - but also help further rural diversification and assist in the creation of prosperous and vibrant communities.

5.5.11

To achieve this appropriately and sustainably it is crucial that good contact and communication is established between all the main players and that a positive working relationship is cultivated between landowners/occupiers and Countryside Access Officers and Countryside Rangers of the County Council. This will help to minimise distraction caused by unnecessary misunderstandings and create a PROW/Access network from which everyone benefits.

5.5.12

The Dorset County Council Farm Estate is in a good position to demonstrate high quality PROW/Access provision and re-enforce “best practice” on agricultural land.

5.5.13

With full co-operation of the Dorset landowner community, all examples of best practice and responsible landowner/occupiers should be identified, recorded, promoted and filed as part of the PROW/Access Site information base open to all.

5.5.14

Together, where appropriate, both county and private farms should receive “flagship” status and where possible be utilised for demonstration/workshop training days and publicity purposes.

5.5.15

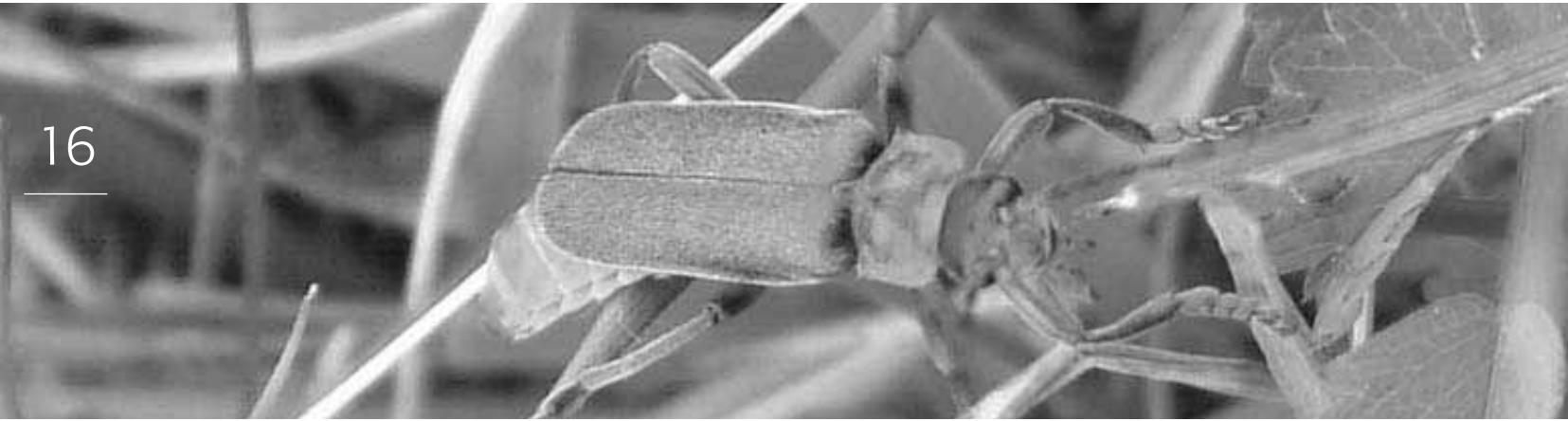
Similarly representatives of forestry and conservation land should be encouraged to highlight examples of best practice in their management of public access.

5.5.16

Workshop/Training days should be organised by the County Councils Countryside Access Officers and Countryside Rangers together with responsible landowner/occupiers and representatives from agricultural, forestry and conservation organisations in jointly delivering training and therefore demonstrating a unanimous, co-ordinated approach.

5.5.17

Training days, in addition to clarifying specific landowner/occupier responsibilities, should also draw attention to the social, economic and environmental benefits of an improved, integrated access network and



“Where good relationships between providers and users of access is encouraged through a clear understanding of each others rights and responsibilities”

include representatives from local community groups and specialist organisations.

5.5.18

Active encouragement should be given to ensure that good PROW/Access provision as an integral part of land management is on the agenda at events/meetings attended by Dorset's land managers.

5.5.19

Regular articles covering all aspects of PROW/Access eg: detailing and clarifying landowners/occupiers legal responsibilities, examples of high quality furniture, highlighting flagship farms/landowners and access projects and discussing the social, economic and environmental benefits of PROW/Access should be distributed to appropriate organisations and printed in publications read by landowners/occupiers.

5.5.20

Information highlighting the resources (grants, appropriate furniture etc) available to landowner/occupiers in achieving best practice should be available.

5.5.21

Where there is identified need, “handy” information such as “cab-cards” should be produced for quick reference for landowners.

5.5.22

All information and guidance detailing the roles and responsibilities of landowners/occupiers should form an integral part of the Dorset Countryside Access display and

where possible be included in other access providers displays and information!

5.6

Information for the public

5.6.1

Public information regarding the Countryside Access network should be designed and used to its full potential for meeting its practical, promotional and educational roles.

5.6.2

Good information increases public awareness proactively encouraging responsible and enjoyable usage of the network by existing and potential users.

5.6.3

To achieve this, information needs to embrace a broad range of issues both specific to the PROW/Access network and the landscape it crosses.

5.6.4

To provide clarity and an appreciation as to the full extent of the network, all trails, PROW, circular walks, sites etc need to be collectively identified in relation to one another on a single leaflet. This will enable local people and visitors to appreciate the strategic nature of the network and see the access opportunities available to them.

5.6.5

Information promoting and detailing specific routes, round walks and sites needs to be up to date, clearly describe

their character and location and engage and enthuse the reader (see also content 5.3.4).

5.6.6

People need to understand the integrated access network - what it is, the different types of PROW, the various access sites, their responsibilities when using them, what they can/can't do, their responsibilities to landowners and other users, the contribution they can make to the local economy, how to deal with problems and to know the country code!

5.6.7

The use of maps should be strongly advocated by information that explains how to read maps along with where to purchase OS maps and which maps cover which areas.

“That enables local people and visitors to experience and understand Dorset's living, working landscape”

5.6.8

Information should be careful not to create a “Theme Park” or allude to an idyllic perception but reveal the real, living, working landscape. It should tell Dorset's story and explain how this landscape evolved, its context now and its needs in securing a sustainable future.

5.6.9

By drawing upon Dorset's cultural and natural heritage information can help people:

- Explore Dorset's earth science and understand how the Dorset landscape evolved.
- Unravel Dorset's history by unearthing its archaeology, industrial and built heritage and landscape patterns.
- Be amazed by Dorset's biodiversity and get to know its wealth of wildlife.
- See Dorset through the eyes of the many Artists - painters, poets, writers, and sculptors - that have been inspired by this landscape.
- Take delight in Dorset's folklore, which reveals a deep-rooted relationship between local people and their landscape.
- Understand agricultural practice today and recognise the different breeds of livestock, crop species and farming methods etc.

- Provide opportunities for people to sample and purchase Dorset's local produce.
- Take a parish circular walk from the village shop to the pub, village hall and church and be aware of local goods, activities and events.

5.6.10

Careful marketing should target various groups and accommodate different ages and interests.

5.6.11

Information packs should be developed - for example - a school pack that incorporates PROW/Access Sites into the National Curriculum developed in partnership and consultation with educational advisors/establishments ensuring that it is practical and useful. Subjects might cover the Country Code, Map Reading skills, Tourism, Local Economy, Local Industries - agriculture/local produce, earth games, Design technology - furniture, signage ... the opportunities are endless!

5.6.12

A clever and pertinent use of information can therefore bring the countryside access network to life enhancing the “walkers” experience of the network and therefore of Dorset!



“From wheelchair users to pushchair users, the elderly to toddlers - provides reasonable access for all needs and abilities so that everyone can enjoy the network together”

6. Access for All

6.1

Access for all is totally inclusive, meaning that everyone should be able to access the Dorset landscape confidently and safely in accordance with their individual needs and abilities.

6.2

Our abilities and needs vary throughout our lives. Some peoples needs may seem more specialised than those of others - but when it comes to rights of way/countryside access often an improvement specific to one persons and/or group of peoples needs goes much further by improving the network and meeting the needs for many others.

6.3

Of course it is unrealistic for this landscape, an inappropriate use of resources and unnecessary to apply this approach to the entire network. By completing an audit of the whole network, and listening to and working with local people/groups and national organisations existing provision can be established and current needs identified to ascertain where “improvement” works could take place and to what degree.

6.4

This audit process will secure first-hand and current information and guidance with the aim of achieving effective results that really do make a positive difference.

6.5

Improvements may range from minor to major works - for example ...

- Replacing a stile with a gate that is easy to open - wide enough to pass through and self closing.
- Sympathetic surfacing that is stable and even.
- Signage/interpretation that is creative and far-reaching and carefully positioned at the correct height and angle.
- The provision of facilities such as wide car parking spaces, toilets and seating around a route or on a site. Seating may open up interesting “arts” opportunities, with a brief to consider the diverse needs & abilities of people.
- Integration of the network with appropriate public transport.

6.6

In addition all information highlighting specific routes and locations should not dictate or differentiate but allow freedom of choice. By utilising a language - eg text, symbols etc - that is widely “readable” and providing information that clearly informs people about the nature of the route/area people will be enabled to decide for themselves where they would like to go and what they would like to do.

6.7

Wherever possible and appropriate alternative methods of communication and information provision will be available or utilised eg Braille, sensory, audio, audio-visual etc

6.8

Training should be available to all staff working for organisations that can provide access for all, and information on best practice made widely available.

“That improves the quality of life for the people who live, work and play in Dorset”

7. Economic, Environmental and Social Benefits

7.1

An integrated access network meeting its full potential is one that can be managed and developed so that it is relevant and beneficial to our current and future way of life. Not only is the network a valuable cultural and recreational resource - today it is additionally recognised as playing an important part in the economic, environmental and social well being of Dorset.

7.2

Dorset is fortunate in having an extensive rights of way/ and access site network. However, whilst it is necessary to manage and maintain the overall network to a high standard - it is necessary to work strategically and sustainably in developing an integrated access network that meets the specific challenges we face today.

7.3

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW 2000) places a duty upon Local Authorities to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan within 5 years of commencement of the act and then at 10 yearly intervals.

7.4

The overriding objective of the plan is to thoroughly assess and ascertain how the existing network meets our current and likely future needs.

7.5

The plan will consider the different needs of walkers, cyclists, equestrians and legitimate vehicular users and evaluate opportunities for exercise, recreation and enjoyment of the area. In addition it will give specific consideration to improving the network for people with vision and mobility impairments. Quite simply it embraces everyone who uses the network from everyday to specific interest use.

7.6

This opportunity supports the more strategic approach to Rights of Way management and development in Dorset. It is a means of establishing the invaluable role of PROW/Access and acknowledging its economic, environmental and social value.

7.7

Dorset’s right of way/access site resource has the potential to make a great contribution to Dorset County Council’s corporate aims. It can help to safeguard Dorset’s unique environment, make communities safer, help to create vibrant and sustainable communities, support personal achievement, strive for improved accessibility and inclusion, improve health and well-being - and - contribute towards a well managed council.

“That enables people to move freely and safely throughout Dorset”

7.8

Planning and Transport

England has become a car dependant country. Roads today are dominated by vehicular use. The sheer volume and speed of vehicles on many of our roads either prevents or makes it unpleasant and unsafe for people to walk or ride along them. Consequently public access is severely compromised.

7.9

New roads often bisect existing access pathways. This often results in road crossings dangerous to negotiate by parents with toddlers, children on their bikes, elderly people - any walker, cyclist, equestrian - rendering the route at best difficult and at worst useless.

7.10

Housing developments are often designed more for ease of car access than people access making it unsafe for children to play and communities to socialise on the street. Often existing access routes are altered resulting in unattractive and unwelcoming pathways - “alleyways” - again limiting their use!

7.11

Despite the many benefits motorised transport has brought our “car dependency” also negatively impacts upon our overall quality of life. The emphasis needs to be shifted - attitudes need to be changed - and a balance reached. Everyone should have the choice of not having to use a car or not be compromised by not owning one but have the opportunity to be able to safely walk, cycle and/or ride as part of his or her everyday way of life.



“That connects people with places - and - people with people”

7.12

Social exclusion

Social exclusion tends to be prevalent amongst rural communities. Here, through the closure of local facilities, subsequent loss of local services and lack of access to private/public transport, people can find themselves physically isolated. This can encourage an imbalance in community structure and induce a loss of community spirit intensifying isolation and exclusion.

7.13

Similarly due to various reasons - low-income, disability - people in urban areas can feel socially excluded too.

7.14

Rights of way/access sites provides numerous direct and indirect opportunities to assist in reversing social inclusion and improving peoples quality of life.

7.15

Through careful consideration an integrated access network can help to reconnect people with places and people with people. Existing access can be developed so that - in addition to its recreational role - it can meet a practical need. It can provide attractive, efficient and effective key access routes taking people of all abilities and ages to the places they need to get to, use the facilities they need to use and to meet up with and make new friends. Routes that can take people straight from their homes - by foot/bike/horse - to their local school, place of employment, local shops, post office, pub, Doctors surgery, village hall, green open spaces, nature reserves, public transport stops and further afield to neighbouring villages and towns.

7.16

All this can be achieved by identifying and developing routes that could be more appropriate to peoples needs if only certain measures were in place. Improvements such as installing appropriate signage, surfacing and furniture and creating new routes - “links” where there are gaps should all be considered.

“That enables people to keep fit, have fun, access local facilities, relax and unwind”

7.17

Health

Increased levels of obesity, coronary heart disease and stressful lifestyles are reported regularly. More could be done to actively improve our health today and the health of that of future generations.

7.18

Such health problems today are not exclusive to adults - increasingly they apply to the younger members of our society too. It is our responsibility to advocate healthier lifestyles and re-establish physical activity as part of our everyday way of life.

7.19

Key access routes can play a major role in benefiting our physical and mental health today and for people in the future.

7.20

For many people the gym and other formal sporting activities are not the answer. They may prefer to spend their leisure time pursuing other interests.

7.21

New or adapted access routes could provide opportunities and enable and encourage people with sedentary lifestyles to be more active and incorporate informal exercise into their day-to-day activities.

7.22

It is recommended that adults are physically active for at least 30 minutes a day and young people for approximately one hour a day.

7.23

“Half an hours walking per day cuts the risk of heart disease by up to half, as well as reducing risk of cancers, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and helps to improve mental health” - Countryside Agency

7.24

However such activity can still be effective if only taken in 10-15 minute stints throughout the day.

7.25

Readily accessible, safe and a pleasure to use - key access routes make it easier and provide an incentive for people to save money and leave the car at home, get outside and enjoy the walk, bike ride and even horse ride to the local shop, school or pub. However at the same time this allows people to build exercise into their daily lives!

7.26

This in turn may encourage more people to take up walking - cycling and/or horse-riding as part of a more formal exercise routine!

7.27

Further more - by simply having the opportunity to get outdoors, take some time out alone or interact with people, explore and get to know your surroundings, experience our wildlife and absorb our amazing landscapes - helps us to relax and unwind and improves our mental health and overall sense of well-being.

7.28

Just consider the potential impact this could have on saving and redirecting money within our health service!

“That sometimes takes me where I want or need to go...and at other times on a new adventure”

7.29

Recreation

Paths and access sites are outdoor open space for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy.

By assessing the whole network we can improve upon its capabilities as a recreational facility.

7.30

With large maps of the county, it is now possible to record the existing PROW network together with publicly accessible sites - country parks, picnic areas, nature reserves, RSPB/Woodland and National Trust land, Forestry Commission public Woodland etc, green spaces, permissive access routes/sites, access initiatives and projects and CROW Access Land etc and see and understand how the network in its entirety “works” today!

7.31

Such information should be available on a single website. The Dorset Countryside website, which already displays the Rights of Way network, should probably be selected to display this material and be linked to other websites.

7.32

A Dorset map detailing the integrated access network would make it easier to appreciate how the network can achieve its “wider” role and identify areas that need improving, locations for small car parks or lay-bys to help walkers, cyclists, equestrians and vehicular drivers access the network and gaps in the network that need linking, strategic paths and popular routes for high quality trails.

7.33

This will assist in working to developing a better-integrated access network that provides a much-improved recreational facility. It would provide local networks interconnected with the long distance trail network that together service the wider economic, environmental and social structures of the county.

“That brings us in touch with Dorset’s wonderful wildlife”

7.34

A safer and healthier environment

Creating “attractive” key access routes and therefore the opportunity for people to leave their cars at home could contribute towards safer and healthier surroundings and the protection of Dorset’s stunning natural environment. This would improve the quality of life for all its inhabitants - that is both people and wildlife!



“That respects the sensitivity and vulnerability of our natural habitats and wildlife”

7.35 Encouraging people to walk, cycle and ride as opposed to taking the car for short journeys can help towards reducing the noise, visual and air pollution associated with the ever-increasing traffic on our roads.

7.36 Less traffic on our roads, road schemes mindful of other modes of transport/levels of highway and car free off road routes enable safer walking, cycling and riding with the potential of reducing road accidents.

7.37 Travelling by foot, bike or horse for local journeys enables people to see the places in which they live with fresh eyes from different, new viewpoints. In addition they may be lucky enough to experience first hand some of Dorset’s amazing plants and animals.

7.38 All this can help to increase environmental curiosity, awareness and appreciation and cultivate respect and a duty of care towards our cultural and natural heritage.

7.39 Public access must be carefully managed so not to disturb and harm wildlife and erode and litter landscapes. Monitoring and research mechanisms should be in place to inform and guide the management of a balanced, working access network which provides “doorstep access”, can manage people numbers and relieve people pressure on over-used routes and sites, can restrict access to sensitive areas as and when necessary and can inform and educate people as to why such management is necessary.

“That encourages people to work together in enhancing their locality”

7.40 **Vibrant communities**
Integral to the successful development and sustainable management of key access routes is the assurance that the right improvements have been made on the right routes and sites.

7.41 This can only be achieved by working with local people of all ages, abilities and interests.

7.42 Access network planning and “doing” can make an important contribution to the vitality and health of a community.

7.43 Local people together involved in designing, creating and maintaining “key access routes” can help strengthen communities; Sharing expertise, skills, knowledge and experience in developing and realising ideas to improve their local access network. This contributes positively to the community not only today but also in the future.

7.44 This process cultivates local support for the routes and the routes themselves are a testament to what was achieved when the community pooled its ideas.

7.45 Improved, sustainable high quality access within and between populated areas can link people with people, and people with places. It releases the potential for numerous unrealised benefits and opportunities.

7.46 With potentially fewer cars on our roads, better environmental conditions and more people actively enjoying the outdoors using an improved and more useful rights of way and access network people may have a new opportunity to explore their locality, get to know their neighbours and create more vibrant communities with a stronger local identity.

“That brings us in touch with Dorset’s wonderful wildlife, allows us to travel far across Dorset’s amazing landscapes, enables us to experience Dorset’s rich, cultural heritage and...”

7.47 **Tourism - local and visiting**
Local path networks and recreational trails are not only enjoyed and valued by local people but also appeal to visitors.

7.48 Visitors, both local or from further afield, are invaluable to Dorset where tourism plays such an important part in the rural economy. The income they generate support existing facilities and enables new opportunities that benefit both local people and the environment.

7.49 Visitors can also bring social and environmental pressures. Careful and sensitive people management should aim to ensure that people enjoy their visit and contribute positively to Dorset’s economy but not to the detriment of its local way of life and natural environment.

...provides opportunities for us to sample Dorset’s local produce”

7.50 **Economic value**
An effective, integrated access network providing both a recreational and practical role can do much to generate income and boost our local economy.

7.51 Improved access which enables local people and visitors to walk or ride along safe and attractive routes exploring and enjoying Dorset at a steady pace are more likely to use local shops, pubs, accommodation, tea rooms etc

7.52 This increased custom may bring further opportunities for new ventures; businesses specialising in recreational/educational activities, local produce outlets, diversification schemes...and help to protect those services possibly at risk from closure, post offices for example.

7.53 Easier access can reduce seasonality maintain customer numbers throughout the year, and get people to come back time and time again!

7.54 Specific economic studies should be carried out on selected sections of Dorset’s PROW/Access Sites network to further inform our understanding of the economic impact of the network and guide its management and development.

7.55 An improved Public Rights of Way and Access Sites network therefore brings both financial gains together with benefits that money just can’t buy!

“That develops friendships from which great ideas can grow”

8. Partnership

8.1 Dorset County Council as highway authority, is the main body responsible for, and has a wide range of statutory duties and discretionary powers to assist in, protecting and maintaining the PROW/Access Sites network. Together both the Countryside Access Officers and Countryside Rangers work to manage Dorset’s PROW Network, Trails and many Access Sites for the enjoyment and benefit of both local people and visitors.

8.2 In achieving this both Countryside Access Officers and Rangers work closely with the various people connected with the access network.



8.3

This includes the many landowners and farmers legally required to respect and facilitate the public's passage along these subtle highways.

8.4

Also this includes the great numbers of the general public and numerous organisations that have an interest in and enjoy using the network. They need to understand the needs of the Dorset Landscape and the needs of the people who manage it so that they can practice responsible usage of the Public Rights of Way.

8.5

In addition there are many organisations and individuals that own and/or manage additional access - paths and sites - building upon the various categories of public access and creating the wider network.

8.6

And there is the Local Access Forum (LAF) and the role it has to play.

8.7

Collectively all these councils, organisations and individuals present a vast range of resources - expertise, manpower, money and effective communication networks. Strong working relationships need to be cultivated in harnessing & channelling this capability to good effect!

8.8

Dorset has a good record for close partnership working, but as ever there is a need to work more closely together to develop a structured approach, ensure clarity in communication and understanding, minimal confusion, and an efficient and effective use of resources.

8.9

Together we need to clearly identify our independent roles and responsibilities whilst working coherently in achieving our common aims and the aims of this strategy.

8.10

These aims dovetail closely with other projects and initiatives such as Safe Routes to Schools, The National Cycling Network, GP Referral schemes and Health Walks and will soon re-enforce new AONB management plans for example.

8.11

Improved lines of communication and greater co-operation need to be established interdepartmentally within Dorset County Council, between County, District, Town and Parish Councils and with neighbouring authorities. This is already happening as part of the Community Planning process. As established within this strategy, PROW and Access plays a major role in so many issues relating to today's way of life that it is imperative that productive links are made between the appropriate departments, for example with people who work in Economic Development, Transport, Planning, Health, Sport & Recreation, Environmental Conservation & Biodiversity Action Planning, Agenda 21, Tourism, Education, Social Care, Heritage and Culture/Arts. These people in turn must consider and work with ideas and initiatives flowing from grass roots individuals and bodies.

8.12

Effective partnership working is vital in achieving a first-class integrated PROW and wider Access network.

9. Resources

9.1

Additional Opportunities & Resources

Achieving the aims, ideas and projects, which might flow from this draft strategy and its consultation process, will obviously demand energy and resources. If the demand is there to improve and develop the existing Rights of Way and Access network enabling it to fulfil its contemporary role there will need to be convincing arguments, commitment to act by many bodies, much work put in and financial resources allocated from a wide range of sources. This reinforces the need for close partnership working to skillfully target and pool resources so that together we can meet objectives.

9.2

Grants System

Rather than being led by it, the full breadth of the grants system needs to be carefully tapped into and capitalised upon whenever possible. It is therefore necessary to know what's available, when it's available and how to get at it!

9.3

Knowing this means that the appropriate people and projects can effectively target the right grants - increasing the chances of a successful bid!

9.4

At the same time all "improvement" project ideas should be ready and waiting to go - able to grasp grant opportunities as and when they arise.

9.5

Volunteers

People who volunteer their time, energy and expertise are much appreciated as a major resource and for all the good work they can do in the future development of the PROW/Access Site network. Local volunteers in particular have the knowledge, contacts and commitment to make a real difference on their "patch".

9.6

Local people in community groups and/or as individuals may have a specific interest in their access network - eg: Rights of Way Liaison Officers - or it may be that volunteers can help out more informally as part of their day to day activities - eg responsible dog walkers as the "eyes and ears" of certain routes.

9.7

Sponsorship

Wherever appropriate sponsorship from developers/businesses for both capital and revenue costs should be sought and/or built into new projects. Similarly where businesses directly benefit from the PROW/Access network they should be encouraged to sponsor its maintenance and management.

9.8

Agri-environment Payment Schemes

Agri-environment payment schemes should be thoroughly investigated and carefully considered where they might be able to deliver access improvements that fit agreed priorities. Landowners play a crucial role not only in maintaining the current network and making it work, but in any future developments to better meet their and wider community and economic needs.

9.9

And lastly any additionally secured resources should not be to the detriment of existing allocations for PROW/Access management, maintenance, promotion and improvement

"That is reliable to use - but able to respond quickly and positively to new demands and needs"

10. Monitoring

10.1

This draft strategy is designed to guide the direction of access to the countryside in Dorset over the coming 3-5 years. It forms part of an evolutionary process in developing an integrated access network and therefore needs to be monitored and reviewed in the light of people's needs, ideas, opportunities and learning.

10.2

This strategy is by no means set in stone - it is a working document that should be adapted according to a change in priorities, legislative change and unforeseen events.

10.3

In informing and steering this process monitoring systems should be determined and followed for all aspects of PROW/Access management, maintenance, promotion & improvements. How successful are improvements? What is the effectiveness of information and promotion? How well are local needs being met? Economic impact? Environmental impact? Strategic and popular routes?

10.4

The Forum would be pleased to receive your ideas and ways in which we can work together in securing such information.



“...to make Dorset the finest County for walking in Southern England”

11. and Finally

11.1

This is an exciting time for Countryside Access development and management.

11.2

This consultation document is only just the beginning in encouraging new thinking about what we all want from our Countryside Access Network in Dorset today and in the future.

11.3

There is much work to be done for what will be a progressive and forward thinking process. In determining appropriate actions in achieving this vision it is important that your views and ideas are built into this thinking now.

11.4

We look forward to working with you.

Appendix 1

Relevant Strategies/Plans

It is imperative that this strategy is not viewed in isolation. The quality and effectiveness and role of access to the countryside is now acknowledged as impacting upon many other economic, environmental and social issues and is integral to mainstream policy development for the Rural Dorset.

Joined up policy development and decision making, ensuring an effective and efficient use of resources in delivering “best value” for the people of Dorset is essential, and the ideas and recommendations which result from this consultation will influence and be influenced by a range of Local Authority and other strategies and plans, some of which are listed below.

Please draw the Forums attention to any others, which may have relevance.

- AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Management Plans
- Community Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Dorset Biodiversity Strategy
- Regeneration Strategy
- Health Improvement Plan
- Heathland Strategy
- Heritage Strategy
- Local Agenda 21
- Local Community Plans
- Local Transport Plan
- Corporate Development Strategy
- Rural Development Strategy

Appendix 2

Glossary of Terms

AONB

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A designation relating to landscape quality introduced under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Dorset contains one large AONB, and part of another one (Cranborne Chase).

55% of Dorset is designated as AONB.

Management plans for both AONB's are currently being prepared and will shortly be consulted on, as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW).

DDA

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Signposts

A system of signing rights of way using posts, often with wooden, plastic or metal fingers, or stone markers. Usually needed to sign a path off a road, but also where paths cross or the way is unclear in the countryside.

Waymarkers

A system, usually using plastic discs with coloured arrows (yellow for footpath/blue for bridleway/red for byway) to indicate the route of a path in the countryside. Often fixed to path furniture - stiles, gateposts, bridges, fingerposts or short posts. Certain waymarkers detail the name and identify the route of a promoted trail or round walk.

Signboard

An information board found, for example, in towns, villages or access site carparks to show information, including walking routes.

Organisations Glossary

NFU	National Farmers Union
CLA	County Land and Business Association
RA	Ramblers Association
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
WT	Woodland Trust
EN	English Nature
NT	National Trust
DWT	Dorset Wildlife Trust
CA	Countryside Agency
DC	Dorset Countryside (Access & Ranger service)



Glossary of Access Terms

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Access land	<p>Land defined under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as being land to which the public will (in due course) normally have a right of access on foot. It includes open country, registered common land and other land dedicated for the purpose by its owner (see dedicated land). See also legislation references.</p> <p>(Note: The term 'access land' may also be used, for example by Ordnance Survey, to describe other land to which there is open public access, though not necessarily as of right.) An abbreviation used for a byway open to all traffic.</p>	<p>The new rights will normally be for open-air recreation on foot. They are not yet in force, but the government plans to make them operate by 2005. Before then maps will be prepared by the Countryside Agency, showing open country and registered common land. The new rights will not apply on 'excepted land' (eg developed or cropped land) even where it appears on the maps within an area of open country or common land. There will also be some local restrictions of access, eg for land management, safety or conservation reasons.</p>	<p>At present only draft maps of open country and registered common land have been prepared for some areas - all should be published by October 2003 - and no rights of access have been created by the Act over that land. When the rights become effective, it is likely that some Ordnance Survey maps will show access land under the Act as well as the access land already shown.</p> <p>In Dorset the most common areas of Access land will be small areas of downland, areas of heathland, and registered common land.</p>
BOAT	An abbreviation used for a byway open to all traffic.		
Bridleway	<p>A public right of way for walkers and those on horseback or leading a horse, but not a way at the side of a road (see highway verge). Pedal cyclists also have a right of way, but must give way to walkers and horse-riders. A bridleway can run along a way where certain individuals have a right to drive other vehicles, such as a farm access drive. See also legislation references.</p>	<p>On foot and on horseback or leading a horse. Pedal cyclists also have a right of way, but must give way to walkers and horse-riders.</p>	<p>Bridleways should be recorded by surveying authorities on definitive maps. But many are not yet recorded. Information from definitive maps is used to show bridleways on some Ordnance Survey maps. Highway authorities have a duty to signpost bridleways where they leave metalled roads.</p>

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Byway open to all traffic	<p>A particular type of way shown on a definitive map. Although motorists are entitled to use them, the predominant use of byways open to all traffic is normally by walkers, horse-riders and cyclists. A carriageway has to be used, or be likely to be used, mainly by walkers and horse-riders to be eligible to be added to the definitive map as a byway open to all traffic. See also legislation references.</p>	<p>To walk, to ride a horse or cycle, to drive a mechanically-propelled vehicle (provided it is fit and licensed for road use) or to drive a horse-drawn carriage. Byways open to all traffic do not have to be improved in order to make their surface suitable for mechanically-propelled vehicles.</p>	<p>Byways open to all traffic should be recorded by surveying authorities on definitive maps. But many are not yet recorded. Information from definitive maps is used to show byways open to all traffic on some Ordnance Survey maps. Highway authorities have a duty to signpost byways where they leave metalled roads.</p>
Carriageway	<p>A public right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic. A carriageway is the legal term for what people normally call a road, ie a route you can drive your car along. See also legislation references.</p>	<p>To walk, to ride a horse or cycle, to drive a mechanically-propelled vehicle (provided it is fit and licensed for road use) or to drive a horse-drawn carriage.</p>	<p>There is no comprehensive list of carriageways. Certain carriageways are recorded on definitive maps as byways open to all traffic. These are normally carriageways used mainly by people not in cars, so you may not think them suitable for driving along. Most carriageways are identified by road signs and by road numbering on site and on maps. Highway authorities must also keep a list of all highways (including carriageways) in their area, but these lists do not have to identify which ones are carriageways. They must also keep a list of streets which are highways which they have a duty to maintain. See also legislation references.</p>
Common land	<p>Land over which people other than the owner have (or had) rights, such as rights to graze animals. Common land (both urban and rural) has been registered on maps held by commons registration authorities.</p>	<p>On most rural common land there is currently no public right of access, although this will change as rights granted under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 are implemented, expected to be by 2005. There is a public right of access on foot, and sometimes also on horseback, to urban commons and to some rural commons.</p>	<p>If in doubt about which land is common and what rights of access exist over it, check with the commons registration authority DCC.</p>

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Countryside Stewardship	A scheme administered by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under which farmers are paid to manage their land in environmentally-friendly ways, and may also be paid to provide additional public access.	Access provided under Countryside Stewardship schemes is normally of fixed duration. It may be along linear routes or may be area-wide access.	The Department can supply information about access provision under Countryside Stewardship in a particular area (www.defra.gov.uk).
Cycle lane	A highway created on the carriageway for use by cyclists.	There are two types of cycle lanes on the carriageway. Mandatory cycle lanes are for exclusive use by cyclists during their hours of operation and are created by way of a traffic regulation order. Advisory lanes are not for exclusive use by cyclists and are provided where there is insufficient width for a mandatory lane.	Both types of cycle lane are signed to indicate their status. Details will be available from local highway authorities and cycle lanes may be shown on maps of local cycle networks.
Cycle route	A term used to describe a continuous route being promoted for cyclists. Such a route is likely to be made up of different types of way, such as roads, cycle tracks, cycle lanes and shared-use routes.	There are no special rights attached to the designation of a route as a cycle route. The public's rights will be those that apply to the individual component parts of the route.	Some cycle routes are shown on some Ordnance Survey maps. Information can also be obtained from local authorities and Tourist Information Centres, and from cycling organisations such as the CTC and Sustrans.
Cycle track	A public right of way on pedal cycles with or without a right of way on foot. A cycle track may be alongside a carriageway or it may be off-road. See also legislation references.	On a pedal cycle and normally also on foot.	There are no requirements to record cycle tracks (whether on definitive maps or otherwise), but the highway authority may have a record. Some cycle tracks are shown on some Ordnance Survey maps.
Dedicated land	Land over which the landowner has voluntarily granted access rights over and above those granted by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (see access land). Land of any type may be dedicated in this way.	The rights will depend on the terms of the dedication. In some cases they will be on foot only: in others they may allow wider access, eg on horseback.	The availability of information about dedicated land and the timing of access rights over it will depend on regulations which have yet to be made by the government. But it is likely that some Ordnance Survey maps will show dedicated land as access land.

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Definitive map	The legal record of public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, roads used as public paths and byways open to all traffic). Restricted byways will be shown on definitive maps in due course. Warning - not all rights of way are yet shown on definitive maps, so a way not on the definitive map may still be a right of way. Also a way which is shown on the definitive map may not have all the public's rights yet recorded, eg a way shown on the map as a footpath may really be a bridleway. See also legislation references.		The definitive map is the responsibility of the surveying authority DCC. It has to keep it up to date by making modification orders as and when necessary. A copy of the relevant part of the map and any relevant orders must be available for public inspection in each district in the county. Information from definitive maps is used to show rights of way on some Ordnance Survey maps.
Definitive statement	A statement which accompanies the definitive map. Where it contains specific information about a route shown on the map, such as its position or width, that information is conclusive evidence as to, for example, the position or width of the right of way. The statement does not have priority over the definitive map, nor does the map have priority over the statement.		The definitive statement has to be available for public inspection alongside the definitive map.
Drove road	A descriptive term for routes which were used by drovers to drive cattle across country. The elements of the routes may today be of any type of route.	The public's rights will be those that apply to the individual component parts of the route.	Drove roads are described in some historical books.
Footpath	A public right of way for walkers but not at the side of a carriageway (see footway). A footpath can run along a way where certain individuals have a right to drive vehicles, such as a farm access drive. See also legislation references.	On foot only.	Footpaths should be recorded by surveying authorities on definitive maps. But many are not yet recorded. Information from definitive maps is used to show footpaths on some Ordnance Survey maps. Highway authorities have a duty to signpost footpaths where they leave metalled roads.

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Footway	The legal term for what is usually referred to as a pavement - a right of way on foot at the side of a road or carriageway. See also legislation references.	On foot only.	There are no requirements to record footways (whether on definitive maps or otherwise), but the highway authority may have a record, for example of where a rural road has a footway.
Green lane	A descriptive term for a way. It is normally used where the way is bounded by hedges or stone walls, and where the surface is not, or does not appear to be, metalled or otherwise surfaced (sometimes there is an old surface under the grass or mud).	What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway.	There is no legal definition of a 'green lane' and no requirement to record. The Countryside Agency is promoting greenways - further information on the Greenways website at www.greenways.gov.uk
Greenway Higher rights	A descriptive term for a network of largely car-free off-road routes connecting people to facilities and open spaces in and around towns, cities and to the countryside.	A greenway is intended for shared use by people of all abilities on foot, bike, or horseback, for commuting, play or leisure. There are no special rights attached to the designation of a route as a greenway and the precise rights on any element of a greenway will depend on its status as a highway.	There are several being developed in Dorset in the East of the County.
Highway	A term used to describe the alleged or claimed existence of additional rights over a way shown in a definitive map. An example would be where it is claimed that a way shown on the map as a footpath is really a bridleway - it is claimed that 'higher rights' exist over the way.		
Highway verge	Any way over which the public have a right to pass and re-pass.	Highways are classified in different categories, depending on the extent of the public's rights. See bridleway, carriageway, cycle track, footpath, footway as examples of different types of highway.	See the information for each of the different types of highway.

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Holloway	A descriptive term for a route which has, through erosion by water and/or use over time, become lower than the adjoining land.	What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway.	There is no legal definition of a 'holloway' and no requirements to record.
List of streets	A list which a highway authority is required to maintain, and keep up to date, recording all the highways in its area (including footpaths, bridleways, etc) which it is liable to maintain at public expense.	The rights will depend on the status of any individual highway in the list. The list itself does not provide conclusive evidence of the status of a way listed in it.	The list has to be available for public inspection free of charge at all reasonable hours at the highway authority's offices. Where the highway authority is a county containing districts, the list for a particular district must also be available at the offices of the district council.
Long-distance path/route (see National Trail)			
Lost way	An historic public right of way which has not been recorded on the Definitive map.		Some parts of the Network are shown on some Ordnance Survey maps. Information can also be obtained from local authorities and Tourist Information Centres, and from Sustrans (www.sustrans.org.uk).
National Cycle Network	A network of continuous routes for cyclists being developed by Sustrans. The Network is made up of different types of way, such as roads, cycle lanes, towpaths, cycle tracks and shared-use routes.	There are no special rights attached to the designation of a route as part of the National Cycle Network. The public's rights will be those that apply to the individual component parts of the route.	National Trails are shown on some Ordnance Survey maps. Information can also be obtained from the Countryside Agency (link to website). In Dorset the Coast Path is part of the South West Coast Path, the country's longest National Trail, 630 miles.
National Trail	A long-distance walking or riding route approved by the Government and developed and supported by the Countryside Agency in conjunction with the local authorities through which the route passes. See also legislation references.	There are no special rights attached to the designation of a route as part of a National Trail. The public's rights will be those that apply to the individual component parts of the route.	

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Open country	<p>1. A term used in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to describe land which will be mapped, and to which rights of access on foot will (subject to some exceptions) be provided in due course. The term includes mountain, moor, heath and down.</p> <p>2. A term used in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as extended by the Countryside Act 1968, to describe land types over which access agreements could be made. Here the term includes not only mountain, moor, heath and down, but also coastal land, water and watersides, and woodland.</p>	1. See access land.	
Path across access land	A defined linear route across access land.	The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway. But otherwise the only rights will be those that apply to the surrounding land.	Some Ordnance Survey maps show access land and rights of way information from definitive maps. They may also show linear routes as physical features (black dashes).
Path across common land	A defined linear route across common land.	The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway. But otherwise the only rights will be those that apply to the surrounding land.	See common land. Some Ordnance Survey maps show rights of way information from definitive maps. They may also show linear routes as physical features (black dashes).
Path across National Trust land	A defined linear route across land owned by the National Trust, a charity independent of government.	The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway. But otherwise the only rights will be those that apply to the surrounding land. In general, there is no right of access as such to National Trust land, but the Trust makes much land freely available for walking.	Some Ordnance Survey maps show National Trust land. They also show rights of way information from definitive maps, and may show linear routes as physical features (black dashes).

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Path across open country	A defined linear route across open country.	The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway. But otherwise the only rights will be those that apply to the surrounding land.	Some Ordnance Survey maps show access land which is open country and rights of way information from definitive maps. They may also show linear routes as physical features (black dashes).
Path across open space	A defined linear route across land which is used by the public as open space.	The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway. But otherwise the only rights will be those that apply to the surrounding land.	There is no record of open space as such, although local authorities may have records, especially where they own or manage the land. Some Ordnance Survey maps show rights of way information from definitive maps. They may also show linear routes as physical features (black dashes).
Path across village green	A defined linear route across a village green. A village green is an area of land that has customarily been used by local residents 'as of right' for recreation and enjoyment.	The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway. But otherwise the only rights will be those that apply to the village green.	Village greens have been registered by commons registration authorities. Some Ordnance Survey maps may show linear routes as physical features (black dashes).
Path alongside a river	A defined linear route alongside a river.	There is no general right of access to river banks. The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway, but it may be a private path, for example for the use of anglers.	Some Ordnance Survey maps show rights of way information from definitive maps.
Path through a park	A defined linear route across parkland.	The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway. But otherwise the only rights will be those that apply to the surrounding land.	There is no record of parkland as such, although local authorities may have records, especially where they own or manage the land. Some Ordnance Survey maps show access land and rights of way information from definitive maps. They may also show linear routes as physical features (black dashes).

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Path through woodland	A defined linear route through woodland.	The route may have its own rights, for example it may be recorded on the definitive map as a footpath or bridleway. But otherwise the only rights will be those that apply to the surrounding land. Forest Enterprise, the National Trust and Woodland Trust all have policies of encouraging public access to the woodlands they own or manage.	Some Ordnance Survey maps show woodland owned or managed by Forest Enterprise, the national Trust and Woodland Trust and to which there is public access. The maps also show rights of way information from definitive maps. They may also show linear routes as physical features (black dashes).
Pavement	A right of way on foot at the side of a road or carriageway. The usual word for what is legally a footway.	On foot only.	There are no requirements to record where pavements exist (whether on definitive maps or otherwise), but the highway authority may have a record, for example of where a rural road has a pavement.
Pedestrianised street	An urban carriageway on which motor traffic is restricted so as to give greater priority to people on foot.	The rights will depend on the content of the traffic regulation order or other order made to restrict motor traffic. An order may allow motor traffic at certain times or for certain purposes, such as delivery, and may also allow access by cyclists. Restrictions should be displayed on signs in the street.	The traffic authority has to keep records of traffic regulation orders it has made. Street maps of urban areas often show pedestrianised streets.
Permissive path	A route that is not a public right of way but where the landowner has granted permission to use the way (or does not object to its use). In some cases the permission is the subject of an agreement with a local authority or government department, for example where it has been granted in return for payment.	The nature of the permission - who may use the way, what restrictions apply, and whether the route is closed at certain times - is likely to be displayed on site.	
Private path	A route that is not a public right of way. If use by the public is permitted or tolerated, it is described as a permissive path.		

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Public bridleway	See bridleway.		
Public footpath	See footpath.		
Public right of way	Legally the same as highway, with the main difference in use being that highway is used to refer to the physical feature and right of way to the right to walk, ride or drive over it. But in many cases public right of way is used to refer to those highways shown on definitive maps (footpaths, bridleways, roads used as public paths and byways open to all traffic).	See highway.	
Quiet lane	Section 268 of the Transport Act 2000 makes provision for quiet lanes. This enables local traffic authorities to designate roads for which they are responsible as Quiet Lanes. In October 2001 the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions issued a consultation paper to help determine the regulations for Quiet Lanes. The paper considers the idea of introducing use and Speed orders.	Designation as a quiet lane will, in itself, make no difference to the roads in question. Any future precise rights or restrictions will be determined by the regulations which are currently being developed.	The Countryside Agency is testing and developing the concept of Quiet Lanes - further information can be found on the Quiet Lanes and Greenways website at: www.greenways.gov.uk
Quiet road	The term now used is quiet lane.		
Recreational path/route	A term used to describe a continuous route promoted for walkers or horse-riders. Such a route is likely to be made up of different types of way.	There are no special rights attached to the designation of a route as a recreation path or route. The public's rights will be those that apply to the individual component parts of the route.	Some recreational routes are shown on some Ordnance Survey maps. Information can also be obtained from local authorities and Tourist Information Centres, and from organisations such as the Ramblers' Association and British Horse Society. There are a number of trails or recreational routes in Dorset.

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Restricted byway	A public right of way for walkers, horse-riders and carriage-drivers and pedal cyclists. Restricted byways do not yet exist, but will be created when provisions in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 are brought into operation by the government (see road used as public path). See also legislation references.	On foot, on horseback or leading a horse, or driving a carriage, and on a pedal cycle. A right to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle may also exist, either for the public or for private individuals such as owners of the land crossed by the way.	Restricted byways will be recorded by surveying authorities on definitive maps. Information from definitive maps will be used to show restricted byways on some Ordnance Survey maps.
Ride	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A term used to describe a route for horse-riders. 2. A term used to describe a track or cutting in a wood or forest. 		
Rights of Way Improvement Plan	A plan which a highway authority will be required to draw up once provisions in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 are brought into effect. It will enable highway authorities to plan the whole network for non-motorised users. Guidance will be given by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (www.defra.gov.uk)	What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway.	There is no legal definition of a 'ride' and no requirement to record. The draft plan will be the subject of public consultation and, once adopted, will be available for public inspection and purchase at the authority's offices.
Road	The legal definition of road (see legislation references) encompasses all highways and rights of way and also some other places where motorists and others have access. Normally, though, the term is used to refer to ways which are, in legal terms, carriageways.	What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway.	Ordnance Survey maps and street maps show roads. See also the information about carriageways.
RUPP	An abbreviation used for a road used as a public path.		

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
Shared-use route	A descriptive term for any route where use is shared between different types of user. Bridleways, byways open to all traffic and roads used as public paths are examples of shared-use routes. In practice, though, the term has been used most often to describe a route which has been created or adapted for shared use by cyclists and walkers, whether or not it is a public right of way. A shared-use route may be signed to indicate segregation between users or it may be unsegregated.	What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway.	There are no requirements to record shared-use routes as such, but the highway authority may have a record, and those which are bridleways, byways open to all traffic and roads used as public paths are mostly shown on definitive maps. Some Ordnance Survey maps show these routes, and also, as cycle routes, some shared-use routes for cyclists and walkers.
Sunken lane	A descriptive term for a route which has, through erosion by water and/or use over time, become lower than the adjoining land.	What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway.	There is no legal definition of a 'sunken lane' and no requirement to record.
Traffic regulation order (TRO)	An order made by a traffic authority to restrict or regulate traffic on a road. TROs are most commonly used to regulate or restrict motor traffic, for example through speed limits or waiting restrictions, but can be used to regulate cyclists, horse-riders and walkers. A TRO may be permanent, temporary or experimental.		The traffic authority has to keep records of traffic regulation order it has made, and there have to be signs on the road to notify users of the restrictions.
Traffic-calmed road	A carriageway or other road on which physical measures, such as speed humps, have been placed to reduce and control vehicle speeds.		The highway authority should know which of its road have been traffic-calmed. Roads on land to which the public have access by permission (for example some National Trust land) may also be traffic-calmed.
Trail	A term used to describe a route. See also National Trail.	What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway.	There is no legal definition of a 'trail' and no requirement to record.

Term	What Is It?	What are my rights?	How do I find out about them?
TRO	An abbreviation used for a traffic regulation order.		
UCR Unclassified road	See unclassified road. Roads named 'A', 'B' or 'C' by the highway authority are regarded as classified roads - others are regarded as unclassified, and are sometimes given a reference beginning with 'U'. The term 'unclassified county road' (UCR) meant an unclassified road that the County Council was liable to maintain.	The classification of a road as classified or unclassified makes no difference to the rights that exist over it.	Ordnance Survey maps show roads classified as 'A' or 'B' using information from the highway authority. The highway authority also has to keep available for public inspection a list of the highways it maintains, and is likely to use the classification of the road in that list (normally accompanied by a map).
Verge (see highway verge)			
Way	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A general term used to describe a route, which may be public or private and may be for any class of user. 2. Forms part of the name of some recreational routes and National Trails, for example Pennine Way. 	What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway.	
White road	A term used to describe a way shown as a track (double lines) on an Ordnance Survey map but without the infill colouring used by OS to show either 'A' or 'B' roads or roads of a certain width and surface, and where it is not recorded on the definitive map as a right of way.	A white road may be public or it may be private. What rights the public has (if any) depend on its status as a highway. OS maps now show many of the public white roads as other routes with public access (ORPAs).	Ordnance Survey maps.

Notes

The local authorities which are commons registration authorities, highway authorities, surveying authorities and traffic authorities

The same local authorities or councils have been given the roles of commons registration authorities, highway authorities, surveying authorities and traffic authorities.

In Dorset this is the County Council. Bournemouth and Poole Councils are responsible for their roads and rights of way networks. Christchurch and Weymouth and Portland Councils act as 'agents' for DCC.

The relevant duties of the authority can be summarised as follows:

- to record public rights of way on definitive maps and statements and keep those maps and statements available for public inspection
- to maintain those highways which are maintainable at public expense
- to signpost and waymark public rights of way
- to protect and assert the public's rights of passage over all highways and to keep them free from obstruction, made good and defined after ploughing or other disturbance and kept free from crops which encroach on them
- to register and map common land and keep those registers and maps available for public inspection
- to make traffic regulation orders to regulate traffic (including cyclists, horse-riders and walkers) on highways and other roads

Ordnance Survey maps (www.ordsvy.gov.uk)

The Ordnance Survey (OS) shows information useful to walkers, riders and cyclists on its maps at 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 scale. There is coverage of the whole of England at both these scales. The 1:25,000 maps (brand names Explorer and Outdoor Leisure) are the more detailed, and show field boundaries, a great help in finding your way around the countryside. The 1:50,000 maps (brand name Landranger) cover a wider area. The information shown on these maps includes:

- rights of way information taken from definitive maps supplied to OS by surveying authorities together with additional information which OS obtains from orders made by surveying authorities, other local authorities and the government to record rights of way or to change them, for example by diversion

- other routes with public access (ORPAs) using information obtained from the records of highway authorities
- National Trails, the National Cycle Network and some recreational routes and cycle routes
- land open to public access, including access land and woodland owned by Forest Enterprise, the National Trust and Woodland Trust
- some permissive paths and other features for visitors to an area, such as car parks and rural pubs.

In some cases the information will not be shown until the map is next revised.

More Information

Countryside Agency - www.countryside.gov.uk

Ramblers' Association 'Basics of Footpath Law' - www.ramblers.org.uk/info/factsheets/footpathlaw.html

Trail Riders Fellowship glossary of trail riding and rights of way - www.trf.org.uk

Legislation references

Definitions of terms

access land	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 section 1
bridleway	definition: Highways Act 1980 section 329 right to cycle: Countryside Act 1968 section 30
byway open to all traffic	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 66
carriageway	Highways Act 1980 section 329
cycle track	Highways Act 1980 section 329
footpath	Highways Act 1980 section 329
footway	Highways Act 1980 section 329
open country	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 section 1
quiet lane	Transport Act 2000 section 268
registered common land	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 section 1
restricted byway	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 section 48
road	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 section 142
street	New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 section 48
walkway	Highways Act 1980 section 35
Definitive maps and statements	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 sections 53 to 58
Keeping highways free from obstruction	Highways Act 1980 section 130
List of streets (highways maintainable at public expense)	Highways Act 1980 section 36
Maintaining highways which are highways maintainable at public expense	Highways Act 1980 section 41
National Trails (long-distance routes)	National parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 sections 51 to 55
Register of streets	New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 section 53 and the Street Works (Register, Notices, Directions and Designations) Regulations 1992 Statutory Instrument 1992 No. 2985.

How to find legislation

Acts of Parliament from 1987 onwards are available on the Internet www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts.htm, but note that this site simply gives you the text of the Act as passed. It does not tell you whether or when the Act was brought into force, or if it has been subsequently amended or even repealed.

The Encyclopedia of Highway Law and Practice, published by Sweet and Maxwell, (www.sweetandmaxwell.co.uk) is a loose-leaf volume containing the text of legislation as amended. It may be available in reference libraries.

The third edition of Rights of way: a guide to law and practice, published by the Open Spaces Society and Ramblers' Association contains the text of legislation as at 1 April 2001. Details available at www.ramblers.org.uk/info/publications/bluebook.html

The text of some sections of the Highways Act 1980 is available on the website of the Institute of Public Rights of Way Officers at www.iprow.co.uk/ha80/highways.htm