

Cornwall Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Notes from Countryside Access Service Providers
Workshop

Tuesday, 17 January 2006 at CCC Scorrier

Attendees

Paul Walton	Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Al Collings	Caradon District Council
Donald Martin	Carrick District Council
Debbie Burrell	Cornwall Country Council (Note taking)
Dave Clarke	Cornwall County Council
Janine Cowl	Cornwall Country Council (Note taking)
Cheryl Cooper	Cornwall County Council
Peter Duthie	Cornwall County Council
Alex Thewlis	Cornwall County Council
Rachael Young	Cornwall County Council
Scott Sharples	Cornwall County Council
Callum Deveney	Cornwall Wildlife Trust
Stephen Warman	English Nature
Janine Sargent	Forestry Commission
Andrew Simmons	National Trust
Charlie David	North Cornwall District Council
Martin Clemo	Restormel Borough Council
Gerry Brain	Restormel Borough Council
Paul St Pierre	RSPB
Lee Hembrow	South West Lakes Trust
Malcolm Allen	Woodland Trust

Apologies

Rebecca Hughes	Caradon Hill (Caradon District Council)
Mike Eastwood	Cornwall County Council
Steve Crummay	Cornwall County Council
Divisional Surveyor Rep	Cornwall County Council
Chris Matthews	Duchy of Cornwall
Rolf Necker	Kerrier District Council
John Mitchell	Kerrier District Council
Karen Clowes	Penwith District Council
Lindley Owen	Sustrans

Summary

This meeting was held to give providers of countryside access networks the opportunity to make input to the Cornwall Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP - soon to be renamed). CCC described the ROWIP process and progress to date. Workshops were held with breakout groups considering :

- What is your vision for countryside access in Cornwall in 5 years time?
- Learning from local and up-country examples of good practice in joining up countryside access provision, what might work well in Cornwall?
- How are we going to make it happen?

Attendees engaged constructively with these topics, and many useful ideas were recorded. A plan for future work was agreed.

Introduction and Scope

This meeting was held to give providers of countryside access networks the opportunity to make input to the Cornwall Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP - soon to be renamed). CCC described the ROWIP process and progress to date.

“In particular, the County Council is looking for suggestions on how best to improve the customer experience of linking facilities provided by different suppliers to enjoy routes which better suit their personal aspirations, whether for low-mobility access, challenging routes, riding or cycling, healthy exercise, special interests ... or just a cup of tea after an invigorating afternoon in the Cornish Countryside.”

Finally, there are concerns with the name ROWIP - ideas for better suited names were discussed in the workshop. A workshop with the Cornwall Local Access Forum on 24th January will decide upon a new name.

A copy of the MS Powerpoint slides used was distributed at the meeting. We will endeavour to reflect progress with the renamed ROWIP linked from www.cornwall.gov.uk/countryside

Many thanks to Janine Cowl and Debbie Burrell for capturing these useful notes from what was an enthusiastic and wide ranging discussion.

All future comments and suggestions welcome, to Peter Duthie, pduthie@cornwall.gov.uk, 01872 322070

Workshop 1 – What is your vision for countryside access in Cornwall in 5 years time?

Group 1

- Sites owned and managed by CCC and others (public sites) should be linked by access network – Rights of Way, off-road trails, multi-use trails – these should be easy to access.
- 5 years, 6 pilots of where the above is happening, organise and well sign posted network (link).
- Who is responsible (promote – the public needs to know).
- PROW – issue with maintenance.
- Less paths, more effective – keep the best/most used paths. *Need to look at map together, look at all RoW, some are under repair, do we need all of them, some run parallel to each other, should some be decommissioned. Ramblers Association will not let paths be closed.*
- RSPB does have own land – maintained to safe standard. Biodiversity interest has been taken into account. *RSPB are looking at improving access to their sites, maybe with the help of local landowners.*
- Link more access to RSPB sites i.e. adjacent landowners.
- Open Access – take into account the birds.
- Not just linear routes – but still important - links between sites.
- Education and awareness - well signed information. *Signs should tell the public where they are and aren't allowed to go and what is there.*
- Better understanding of what users want.
- Contribute to local economy - circular providers, tea shops, links to accommodation. *Tourists are changing in Cornwall, need to adapt to this – World Heritage Site.*
- Opportunity in promotion to increase – understanding, themed walks etc.
- Well signed, maintained, promoted, define a standard for paths – could be different for different paths etc.
- Urban health and green space – linking green space.
- Link infrastructure to public transport.
- Need pilots on manageable scales. *Should be manageable size pilots. Its hard to be strategic over a large area (Cornwall) – resources/funding might be easier to get for smaller areas - districts? Economic growth needs to be explained to districts.*
- RSPB user groups set up. *RSPB have 'user groups' where only members of those groups can use certain areas (supervised). Could be an idea for off-road users, mountain bikers etc.*
- If seen as economic asset = more benefits.
- Linking promotion – TICs. *Information needs to be centralised, maybe at TICs.*
- Research into linking other things to do nearby.
- Look at strategic links – Camel Trail, Devon.
- Walking your way to health – link into these areas.
- Promotion – link into Ordinance Survey when paths are updated.
- Healthy, wealthy and wise.
- More bridleways – they don't link up.
- Multi-use sites – surfaces etc – needs to think about maintenance. *MTP – vehicles use trails in parts, those parts need to be resurfaced after 6 months which costs a lot of money. Different surface materials may need to be used in different parts.*
- Off-road mountain biking – create better areas for them.
- Opportunities to create better links to schools/residential areas.
- Hayle (example) – improve links from beach to towns/schools. *This would help the economic growth and success of the town.*
- Issue of maintenance – people suing if path not maintained and they have an accident.
- Manage wider corridor (HLS)
- Targeting HLS to manage the wider corridor.

- *Off-road biking, mountain biking etc – not enough area for these users to go, woodlands etc. Land owners could cash in on the use of their land.*
- *Need to be aware if CCC is advertising other sites for ‘adventurous’ sports there are no legal implications for people to sue if they have an accident.*
- *Can’t just ban people doing things that disturb the foot paths, they need to be given somewhere to go. CCC is discussing an action plan for off-road motorists.*
- *Loops could be brought off other paths for more adventurous riders.*
- *NCDC has a good case study working in their District which others could follow suit - don’t waste resources reinventing the wheel.*

Group 2

Cornwall OAB-

- Tamar Valley management plan shows the resources which channel into access as well as OAB.
- Need to conserve and enhance the areas which signage and car parks which supports the Access team. The key areas are as follows: Bodmin Moor, Penwith, SW Coast Path.

National Trust-

- They have done a lot and provided the car parks needed with the Access review which has evaluated all Access e.g. Mountain biking. Need to look at risks to other trusts and what property has to offer. The countryside properties include key routes in which have been worked on over the past 5 to 6 years.
- This should meet National Trust standard because it’s a useful model. It involves bringing the coast path managers.
- Work on DDA and think of ways for making Access easier- this is seen as a key point.
- Joint working- coast path manager and highways staff- focus on relationship building.

Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust-

- They don’t always have public access - close to CCC and district councils such as the Camel Trail. Social forestry is changing policies.
- Mountain biking and horse riding with permits also mountain biking is not to be off road. Opportunity with CC- off trails- should be adjacent to the woodland. This can be used as multi- purpose by creating forestry paths.
- There is an extreme activity issue with off road motor cycling need more sites for example Devon: ‘North Shore’ extreme motor biking – could have some potential for a local area to adopt this thought- however unsure if the public will support it. Devon is widely distributed and the track can be hard to find and to access.
- They have however encouraged cycling with good management but the topic concerns off road riding.
- Horse riding permits- there is a good method which should increase horse ownership. Road work is good i.e. Country lanes (quiet).
- There is 50% provisional diversion- farm diversification scheme involves farmers getting money back from funds. The arrangement of the provision needs to be paid for on a appropriate level.
- All ideas need to be fed to management, for example; paying when using the car park- this will let the public know where the money is going by direct payment this may make them more willing because there is a lack of connection between access and tourism. Need to find ways people paying for their usage.
- There is a problem with the Walk Cornwall website which is connected to the tourism board, the links don’t follow onto the CCC website because they are out of date- we need to tell them of changes.
- Discussion on the Access standard- they have 2Ha - 500m and is currently at 5.5% if woodland increases it would go up 45%.

Districts-

- They are limited to woodland and other parks but with the ones they have, they work on maintenance in which some organisation act on and some don't e.g. hedges blocked- the parishes are good at telling them of any problems.
- Work directly with World Heritage site and Caradon- they are introducing 'Healthy Living'. The question was asked on whether or not the county are going to sign up on this. This was inconclusive.
- Benefits include each public footpath that stay open which are used regularly- self policing by users. The woodland group allow users and events but when paying the estate people are reluctant whereas if it was for a charity it is a different attitude.
- There are concerns over facilities i.e. toilets and waste bins etc.
- Work on open spaces- such as the Green corridor- (maintaining paths), it's hard to be pro- active. Also work with the National Trust for future projects.
- LAA

CNT-

- Dogs ownership is a big issue

CCC-

- There are massive links to the health aspect, for instance; providing sites, trails and paths. If there are no facilities then health will decrease.
- Sustainable Transport which also links with health i.e. Camel tray with the community lines.

Feedback to plenary session

- PD - ROWIP process & progress to date – started in November 2002 with a 5 year deadline. Many already complete - Cornwall wants to have completed by the end of 2006. Will be reviewed in 2/5 years and renewed in 10 years. Cambridge have theirs in place, Devon was pilot for this region and they have theirs in place. PD & AT meeting with Devon shortly to discuss their experiences.
- PD gave the countryside's web address www.cornwall.gov.uk/countryside and asked for any comments on the Initial Network Assessment.
- There were 1300 ROWIP questionnaires that came back it show that people are engaged with it. There are over 2000 People's Panel with topics e.g. Access which are kept the same.
Tomorrow there is a discussion with:
Users
Land Management
Cornwall disability forum
=Need to get feedback from each panel.
Motorcycling was with Richard Walton but now he has left, David Clarke has been following it up- everyone is keen to resurrect the project. Need resources for short and long term, can't just say 'no' all the time.
- There needs to be a statement of action which needs to go into the plan.
- Is there a grading systems for existing paths? Yes, Gold, Silver and Bronze. To grade the routes they looked at location, usage, promotion etc. This information could be shared. Need to make sure that paths that are being promoted, by all organisations, are being improved.

Workshop 2 – Learning from local and up-country examples of good practice in joining up countryside access provision, what might work well in Cornwall?

Group 1

- SWCP – land owner/path managers brought together – improve CP.
- Purbeck Heritage Committee – trial set up – manage landscape at local levels – 5 year Strategy (access within) Forum promotes ideas, made up of landowners, District Councils, government/non-government agencies etc.
- Dorset has bus service up and down Jurassic coast – AONB.
- Camel Trail partnership – CCC, District, Parish/Town Councils, Chambers of Commerce and various statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- Clay Trails – multi-use sites, i.e. Eden, Sustrans, CCC, Borough Council, IMERYS and Community Reps.
- Mineral Tramways – similar to Camel Trail set up.
- Rio Plus 2 – CCC, Borough Council, English Nature, Highways Agency. Circular routes for settlements, link clay trails, national cycle networks. Routes overlap giving opportunities for short and longer routes.
- HLF Bids – projects big on access for all. *NCDC involved with 2 bids – Atlantic Coast and Valley Projects.*
- Bude Canal – Atlantic Coast and Valley Projects. Both run through partnerships.
- *Wildlife Trust are struggling to comply with LAA?*
- LAA – managing public open spaces – safer/cleaner – bidding and setting standards together.
- National Parks, e.g. Exmoor – well marked. *In America Nation Parks are signed posted well, with informative notices. So you know long the walk is, how long it will take, what level they are at and any interesting things that might be seen/visited on route.*
- National Trust – consistent across sites. Well geared up visitor centres, sign posting process.
- Getting most out of walk.
- Need confidence in Area. *The public are worried if they leave the RoW path an ‘angry farmer’ may yell at them etc - not sure if the whole route will be accessible/passable.*
- Publications
- Camborne Community Partnerships – linking green spaces in Camborne, good best practice.
- AONB – management plan – bring in all players, improving access in all areas of AONB.
- Need to know how many people use areas and for how long so attention can be focused. *Surveys show that most people only use the RoW for ½ - 1½ hour at a time. MTP use counters but this is mainly for cyclists. 2nd phase of the MTP is to open an extra 20 miles in the Camborne/Redruth area, to link RoW with trails. NCDC sell leaflets about their walks, the sales data helps show which paths are well used and popular.*
- *Don’t want to spend lots of money improving the Network if it doesn’t get used. Need to know which paths are most popular and start improving those first.*
- National Trust (Devon) have counters in place. *May have figures that they could share on numbers of users.*
- 99% of people don’t walk around lakes even though they are only 4/5miles long. (Quoted from South West Lakes Trust).
- Ruby Country – good promotion linking cycle paths etc.
- Standard for more co-ordinated approach- how linked and how promoted.
- Use access to overcome landownership issues (Lizard). *Should be advertising this area, link costal path to make a circular walk – get people there then think about opening up other paths.*
- String of Pearls – public transport.
- Environment begin core – access comes out of this.

- Scotland – website to promote tourism and past-times – people can share their experiences, linked to local facilities i.e. hotels. *Leaflets produced for specific interests and where they can be carried out as well as leaflets for specific areas and what can be done there/facilities etc.*

Group 2

- S/06- wide range plus bigger capital fund- distribute, e.g. Restormel £2K per house- now defining bids however it doesn't apply to affordable housing. Community are gaining - some examples more widely or all development.
- CABE/ Green spaces SW- local authorities (such as; Districts) joining in- LAA- Local and national standards: Cornwall pilot bid.
- Camel trail- big partnership. Districts are funding: FC link to CCC and DC Councils which helps the bidding.
- Cornish way- partnership- web map identifies other facilities.
- 'Farmers Package'- past programme could be resourced- funding partnership.
- Individual objective one projects have looked at access in wider programme
- Plymouth trails- co-operative SW funding- linked into woods and open space
- Mineral Tramways/ Towans Partnership/ Kit/ LNR's/ PCT- use existing partnerships as a advisory input- do not reinvent.
- Woods on doorsteps- worked with local communities (x5). Now = management partnership/
- PAROW- Penwith DC/ AONB/ PCs
- Car free leisure network- Fal river links wider access links
- Access surveys i.e. NT and WT- there is more out there?
- Working with local networks e.g. Bodmin Moor/ Open access
- SW forest (same= Cornwall)
- Ruby Country: NC/ Devon (post F and M money)
- Information on permissive access verses definitive. Examples of joining up information for user.

How do you tell people about it?

- CPO's may actually be easier than agreements i.e. Clay trails- has many landowners. Should be able to use and be available.
- Part of a wider toolkit
- Shared GIS on web
- Discovery centre info- but reliability?
- Local leaflets, picking up on wider leaflet distribution
- Boards have previously missed access need to work better with designers/ PCs
 - Opportunity for 'best practice' guidelines, cf. e.g. COAST
- Posters- for example: at railway stations, TIC's- (Cornish way). Cheaper, updatable, not vandalised.
- Web channels- Easy access promotion
- Avoid inappropriate signage
- Easy access promotion: CCC/ Tourism
- Accreditation for repeat visits- but of advert fees
- Tamar Valley tourism- packs included access, TAVATA.

Workshop 3 – How are we going to make it happen?

Group 1

- CCC act as a focus – website with links to others.
- Officers Access Forum – share information, invite people to advise the group. *It would be an advantage for the 'people on the ground' to meet and share information.*
- Integrate access with different issues e.g. tourism.
- Identification of existing partnerships.
- *Camel Trail a good example of partnership working and resourcing.*
- Common standards.
- Shared documents.
- Website needs to be linked with others to eliminate updating issues. *RSPB probably wouldn't help fund a central website as they have their own comprehensive site, they would have a link from something central to their own website.*
- *A central website could be categorised e.g. nature, cycling, climbing, adventurous etc. A central website should cover everyone's agenda – co-funding.*
- Posters and leaflets (at site).
- Links – what walk can I do in a certain area. Information about NT, EH, RSPB etc.
- Use existing resources wisely.
- Themed maps to make information more attractive.
- Market routes – Gold, Silver and Bronze. *Gold routes are the most used and important, Silver are less well used and Bronze are small paths often in cul-de-sacs. Market these standards so the public know what they are getting.*
- Meet expectations – consistency across sites. *Make sure that whatever is being advertised is being maintained – work on smaller areas at first to get a good working formula then expand to a larger area.*
- Well signed open access – not too overpowering.
- Knowledge and education – users may not know what certain symbols/colours etc on maps mean.
- *Access is responsibility not just rights, need to think about that, there are lots of things people can and can't do – need to be ready to deal with that. Need to let people know where they can't go just as much as where they can. Also what can be done on certain routes i.e. footpath – only walking, Byways – walking, cycling and horse riding etc*
- Catering for different types of users.
- Provide a framework to work from – best practice.
- Identify which activities should be mapped – cycling, 4x4s, climbing, water sports etc then identify which partnerships can be used.
- Access to waterways.
- Identify timescale.
- Establish network.
- Business opportunities – farmers etc *Farmers could create revenue by setting up scrambling areas on part of the land they don't use. Up to the farmer to then maintain that area. Look into legal implications if these areas are recommended by CCC*
- *Is it worse for a biker to burn fossil fuels scrambling than for someone to drive to a nature reserve to go for a walk?*
- Mapping process is a two way exercise. Users and strategic partners.
- Priority process – who do we help first? Can't discriminate. *Every activity should have somewhere they can go rather than banning the ones people don't like. RSPB have User Groups for activities so that they can be police, if the activities have something to lose they may work harder to keep what they have.*
- Codes of Practice (website/leaflets)
- Establish what money is available. *How big an area is sustainable with the finances available.*

- Link strategy with finance available. *Strategy should give guidance.*
- Long term finance is an issue. *The £2M for PPIP is only a loan and must be repaid. The Strategy should be linked with the length of the loan.*
- Risk assessment – climate change. *English Nature have assessed all of their properties and picked some that they will not maintain due to climate change.*

Group 2

1. Name change is supported. Example of ROWIP was handed out to the group (Devon). 'Countryside' not 'Rights of Way'
2. Other districts to be involved, there are elements that other organisations might want.
 - Identify partners for specific topics, e.g. NCDL might sign up for footpaths as vulnerable to economy.
 - Adds credibility e.g. District encloses chapter.
 - WT keen to endorse/ caution commitment and sign up.
 - FC involvement in developing new access links into woodland
3. Targets, e.g. BAPs, lead partners and others. Needs to be a model which can be followed and tick off achievements
4. Link into World Heritage
5. ROWIP needs to recognise other strategies e.g. AONB
6. ROWIP- delivery mechanism for other strategies e.g. AONB and local plans
7. Consider changing agenda for Natural England and Agency- Environment
8. Pilot projects
9. Need to be very clear about longer term maintenance provision, not just capital projects also we need to measure the success
10. Management in form, for instance; counters and surveys
11. Legal constraints especially Rights of Way

a. NERC	Gating, dog mess.
b. CAN	Restricted byways (Vs value as paths)- conflict?
c. Commons	
12. Sustainable/ locally sourced materials for furniture.
 - Standard product/ specifications
 - Joint signage/ interpretation but if local distinctiveness
 - Consistent information on difficulty of routes
 - a. Sharing information on guidelines and on standards
 - Consideration of e.g. Tramper, Slater provision
13. Sharing data- much already shared
 - But need to include e.g. closures
 - Some landowners are sensitive about publicity.
 - Sell by dates e.g. CSS
 - Pressure due to overdue of sensitive areas e.g. wildlife
 - Management issue and then need to encourage alternatives
14. Sustainable Transport- build on existing projects
 - Work on transport providers - RTP's
 - Pick and choose options
15. Education- what we can and can not do- this also includes the school aspect. This can be done by a poster campaign

Final Plenary Session

- PD following a meeting next week with the Local Access Forum, we will write up notes and circulate. Then in the long term will write a report (like the Peoples Panel Report) and circulate.
- SS would anyone be interested in the Officers Forum?
- General feeling from the group was that it would be a good idea if it has a clear mission/aim. It must be constructive. It may be more productive to have an email Forum rather than having meetings. Should other people be invited to join such as town councils, parishes etc.
- The people that could / should be involved could be Access groups only, such as; World Heritage sites and Towans Partnership- these already have the public and the police helping and informing the team of enquiries. Could use the main practitioners who are local to the area in question and which parish should be involved. The main proposal: 'sharing information and standards'- this could be introduced by e-mailing as well as presentations/ discussions.
- DC noted Partnership working was the best way to include everyone's ideas/views/information.
- SS need to understand how tourism is changing and what visitors want and how to adopt the Strategy to include those matters.

- PD thanked everyone for attending.