

Countryside Access Team - maintaining and improving the rights of way in Cambridgeshire for the use and enjoyment of everyone. Providing opportunities for sustainable transport and healthier enjoyable lifestyles through the public path network.

Countywide work

Path Condition Survey Completed

The team conducted the final part of the annual survey during November. Officers surveyed 104 randomly selected routes and the information and results will be added to the first half of the survey done in May. Information on bridges was also collected as part of the checks. The overall figures for the Best Value Performance Indicator BVPI 178 will be made available next year.

Map Consolidation Progress

The checking of the digital map is now past the halfway point with 52.3% of the network's paths checked so far. Officers have covered 30 parishes during the last three months and these checks of the digital map have highlighted 537 anomalies so far.

Biodiversity

Badgers under the bridleway

The team has safely removed badgers from two bridleways and a byway in the county. Officers obtained a licence and advice from Defra and their officer Peter Karner supervised the work on site. Officers worked on routes in Waterbeach, Swaffham Bulbeck and Hatley and used a variety of methods to remove or direct the badgers away from the rights of way. Repairs were then carried out to the surface to allow access to the route.

Access to biodiversity

The team continues to work on rights of way running through County Wildlife Sites and SSSIs and help to restore these areas and encourage biodiversity. Scrub clearance and re seeding is taking place on the Ashwell Street and the traffic regulation order and gates on sections of the Roman Road will help to protect the flora and archaeology of the site. See South Cambridgeshire section for further information on this work.

Devils Dyke improvements continue

Access officers are working with English Heritage and Natural England on the work required on the Dyke. They have gained permission from the Stetchworth Estate to clear scrub on the Devils Dyke at Woodditton, to prevent further deterioration of the SSSI (Scheduled Ancient Monument) and improve access and biodiversity in the area. Work will take place on 9 Jan and the team have arranged for woodland management work to be carried out by the Probation team volunteers.

Supporting Green Infrastructure Projects

The team has been working with partners from the National Trust, the Wildlife Trust, the RSPB and the Cambridge Preservation Society in the development of a number of green infrastructure projects across the county.

Health and Sustainable Travel

Route to school improved

Warboys Walkers informed the team of a missing bridge on footpath No 2 in Coveney, which has now been put in place to allow school children to use this popular route from Wardy Hill to Coveney.

Travel for Work maps

The team is working with the Travel to Work Partnership on travel plans. Definitive Map Consolidation Officer, Nick Jones has been using his map expertise and is developing maps and information for local businesses to map the potential journeys to work for their employees. Maps include the rights of way network and cycle way routes, plus bus stops and railway stations. This information will enable employers and employees to change their travel patterns and forms part of the LTP's (Local Transport Plan) longer-term objectives of reducing congestion and improving air quality as part of the transport function.

Publicity and Promotion

Countryside Events Leaflet

The team has produced the January – June 2007 edition of the Countryside Events Leaflet and it will be distributed to libraries and other locations before Christmas. The leaflet has a slightly different look having been redesigned in line with the County Council's new branding. A list of events and other useful groups and organisations will be also be available online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/countryside

Parish Paths Partnership News Bulletin

Officers have put together the annual Parish Paths Partnership (P3) News Bulletin that displays the work carried out and achievements made throughout the year by the parishes and local volunteers in the P3 scheme. The scheme allows parishes to use funding from the District Councils and with officer support and advice from the County Council they maintain, improve and promote their rights of way. The bulletin is sent to all parishes in Cambridgeshire, District Councils and other interested individuals and groups. This publication will also be made available online.

Press releases

- Access to the past provides route to a healthier future 6/11/06
- Major work needed to create new life for ancient route

Press releases are available on the council's website under news.

Huntingdonshire

Digital Map path check

The map consolidation team has checked the paths on the digital map in the following Huntingdonshire parishes during September, October and November.

Abbots Ripton, Broughton, Bury, Conington, Ellington, Glatton, Great Gidding, Hilton, Kimbolton, Kings Ripton, Little Gidding, Oldhurst, Spaldwick, Stow Longa, Toseland, Upwood and the Raveleys, Winwick, Wistow, Woodwalton and Yelling.

Definitive Map cases

The Map Modification Order to register a public footpath along Leading Drove in Yaxley has been confirmed and was published 6 December.

As part of a small route reorganisation package undertaken by Peterborough Unitary Authority the County Council have accepted the extinguishment of footpath No 10 and the creation agreement of the new line of footpath No 5 in Farcet.

Seasonal TROs (Traffic Regulation Orders)

Consultations have been completed on the Seasonal Traffic Regulations in the district and there were no objections. Seasonal Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are now in place on the following routes until the end of April.

- Waresley byway 3
- Hail Lane (Abbotsley byway 7 continuing as St Neots Rural byway 4, in moiety with Eynesbury Hardwick byway 2)
- Broad Lane Old Weston byway 7 and Winwick byway 9
- Upton and Coppingford byway 6 (part of the Bullock Road)

This action is taken in order to control the vehicular access to the byway and protect the surface of the byways during the winter months for the use of walkers and riders, and to ensure safe and continued access for all users.

Waresley court hearing

Officers were present at a High Court hearing on 1 December for an ongoing case in Waresley. A declaration confirming the status of the bridleway section has been given and the adjoining route that the Council believes is vehicular maintainable highway will go to trial spring 2007. In his judgment, the judge ruled that the bridleway be made accessible so that riders can use it pending the outcome of the final trial.

Gates replace stiles

Great Staughton and Perry are now free of stiles thanks to the P3 scheme and have approx 20 gates providing safe and easy access to their rights of way. On footpath No 7 in Graveley, eight stiles have been replaced by gates.

Ensuring safety on rights of way

Important safety improvements are being made on routes that cross over main roads. The team is currently working with Highways West Division on bridleway No 2 in Godmanchester where it crosses the A1198, and are removing trees either side of the bridleway to improve visibility at the crossing.

Surfacing footpaths in urban areas

Officers are to work on the surfacing of footpath No 21 in Sawtry, footpath No 14 in Stukeleys and footpath No 20 in Huntingdon as part of planned improvements to a selection of public footpaths that provide access in urban areas across the county.

South Cambridgeshire

Digital Map path check

The map consolidation team has checked the paths on the digital map in the following South Cambridgeshire parishes during September, October and November:

Bourn, Caldecote, Caxton, Childerley, Elsworth, Kingston, Knapwell, Orwell, Papworth Everard and Wimpole.

Major work on byway routes Winter 2007

A route of byways in South Cambridgeshire will be undergoing major work this winter to repair large ruts and improve the surface. The byways cross the ancient Aldreth Causeway, and stretch from Rampton, past the Belsar's Hill ancient Monument and into the village of Aldreth. Byways affected will be Rampton byway 1, Willingham byways 8 & 9, Cottenham byway 2 and Haddenham byway 22.

This route has suffered from severe rutting and will be closed to all vehicles between 14 December 2006 and 13 June 2007 to allow work to take place to improve some key areas, which are nearly impassable. Walkers and horse riders will be allowed through on most days, although there may be times, when for safety reasons, the route will be closed for public access.

Northstowe Rights of Way Project 2006 – 2008

Land agents have contacted landowners in the area on behalf of the council and officers welcome their views and the opportunity to discuss the opportunities that involve their land. The project manager has attended parish council meetings and consulted with local people and councilors on the project plans and the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the Country Land Association (CLA) have been involved. A press release has also been issued informing people of the project's aims, and what the improved path network will offer people in the area. It also makes reference to the history of the area and the Saxon 'Northstow' Hundred.

Braham Dock, Little Thetford

Work is due to start at Braham Dock in mid January when the new footbridge will be installed to provide a safe crossing over the dock for walkers on the Fen Rivers Way.

Surfacing footpaths in urban areas

Officers are planning to work on the surfacing of a selection of public footpaths that provide access in urban areas across the county. In the South Cambs district Balsham footpath 11 is being improved and the team have also arranged for their colleagues in the Highways Division to harden the surface of footpath 24 in Linton and footpath 1 in Waterbeach.

Gates installed in Ickleton & Horseheath

Two gates are being installed in Ickleton - one improves the access onto a road and the other is realigning a route onto the correct definitive line. Ten gates are also being installed in Horseheath on footpaths No 14 and 15 to provide easier access along the definitive line.

Ashwell Street County Wildlife Site and Byway with TRO

The County Council/P3 scheme have carried out a large amount of work on this route in the last few years with scrub being cleared on the whole length of the Street, to restore it to its former glory.

Clearance work was conducted on the section in Litlington, and the cleared area was reseeded with a chalk grassland wildflower mix. This section from Litlington to Steeple Morden is designated a County Wildlife Site (CWS) for its chalk grassland wild flowers and the team is working this winter to clear and reseed the rest of the county wildlife section of the route in Steeple Morden, and down to the County boundary.

The Ashwell Street runs from Ashwell (Herts) to Melbourn, It is part of the Icknield Way (a prehistoric track), and also thought to be a Roman road.

Roman Road (Byway with TRO)

In January the team will be installing heavy-duty gates and vehicle barriers to back up the bollards already on the Roman road, which runs from Stapleford to Horseheath.

A traffic regulation order is in place to prevent unauthorised vehicle access to the route from Stapleford to Hildersham designated as a SSSI and Scheduled Monument, for its chalk grassland and archaeology. The restrictions have been breached several times and the action will prevent further damage.

This is a collaborative project involving the Natural England, English Heritage, landowners and National Grid who have gas pipelines in the area.

Definitive Map cases

A Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990 diversion order was confirmed by South Cambridgeshire District Council for part of public footpath No19 in Castle Camps.

Diversion orders for footpaths Nos 14, 17, 18 and part of 23 in Great and Little Eversden were published on 21 November, and the deadline for representations is 2 Jan 2007.

Diversion orders for footpath No 22 in Dullingham and part of footpath No 19 in Burrough Green were confirmed on 5 December and were published on 13 December.

Development work taking place at Kimbolton Kart-track should bring about the future diversion of public footpath No 42, which is currently crossed by the track.

East Cambridgeshire

Digital Map path check

The map consolidation team has checked the paths on the digital map in the parishes of Mepal, Sutton and Haddenham.

Definitive Map cases

Decision made to produce a Map Modification Order to register a public footpath along Mill Lane in Stetchworth to meet public footpath No 2 in Dullingham.

An inquiry held by the Public Inspectorate on 22 November to determine a creation order upgrading a footpath to bridleway status near Harrison's Drove, Wicken, was adjourned until April 2007.

Access to footpath No 30 in Kirtling has been made available again thanks to the installation of bridges and kissing gates on the route.

Three more gates have been installed on the commons around Soham. Two on East Fen common and one on South Horse Fen. They are all on rights of way that lead onto Open Access land.

Fenland

Digital map path check in Fenland completed

All paths in Fenland have been checked on the digital map by the map consolidation team.

Surfacing footpaths in urban areas

Officers are to work on the surfacing of footpath No 5 in Whittlesey, as part of planned improvements to a selection of public footpaths that provide access in urban areas across the county.

Partnership working at Leverington

The team worked with the Environment Agency and Archaeology volunteers on clearance work on the Leverington Sea Bank, footpath No 22. People from the parish council kindly provided tea and biscuits and the rights of way officer brought along homemade mince pies and sausage rolls to feed the workers.

Definitive Map cases

Whittlesey public footpath No 20 confirmed on 5 December and published on 13 December. The team has a Section 106 planning agreement contribution, which will be spent on improving this path.

An application to make an existing route between Gordon Avenue and Princes Walk, in March a public footpath, was determined by the Director of Highways and Access on 14 December. An order will be made to register the route as a public footpath on the Definitive Map and Statement.

This brief update will be produced following Access Team meetings.

A copy of this bulletin will also be available online at

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/countryside

If you would like to discuss any item mentioned in the bulletin please contact the team on 01223 717445 or email us cst@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

If you would like a copy of the text in this bulletin in large print, Braille, audio tape or in another language please call 01223 717445



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