

**West Sussex County Council Public Rights of Way Service
Annual Report 2019**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report contains an annual progress report for the Public Rights of Way team within Countryside Services setting out our achievements on the network and customer service data during the 2019 calendar year. With over 4,000km of Public Rights of Way (PROW) to maintain across West Sussex the PROW team provide an important service to the residents and visitors of West Sussex. Our responsibilities include maintaining the path surface, negotiating improvements with landowners and working closely with key stakeholders to help support key corporate objectives. The service is supported by considerable input from volunteers who both assist with path inspections and practical tasks across the network.

2. Customer Service

- 2.1 A major element of our service is handling a high volume of enquiries from path users and other parties with 1,120 calls received through the contact centre in relation to PROW.
- 2.2 Along with other reports from the public and other stakeholders, as well as issues identified during routine inspections, this has generated 4,375 issues that were logged onto our database in 2019, which is a similar number to the previous year. 4,217 issues were resolved in the same period, which was an increase of just under 5% on 2018.

3. Routine Maintenance

- 3.1 We continued to deliver our 15-month inspection and maintenance programme. In 2019 our contractor, County Tree Surgeons, amongst other works delivered:
- 1,433 signs;
 - 174 bridges;
 - 12 boardwalks;
 - 39 flights of steps;
 - Just under 41km of surface vegetation clearance.
- 3.2 We also undertook our annual summer clearance programme, separately from the routine maintenance programme, where 339km of surface vegetation was cleared.

4. Volunteers

- 4.1 Our inspections continue to be greatly assisted by volunteers, working with our local Access Rangers to ensure we keep to the 15-month programme and helping with issues arising. Volunteers also get their hands dirty with a

variety of practical works to supplement our maintenance programme and add extra value across the county. On practical task days alone, of which there were 93, they delivered, amongst other things:

- 12 bridges;
- 14 signs;
- 10 flights of steps;
- 602m of surface improvement;
- Over 15km of side and surface vegetation clearance.

4.2 We are again grateful for the continued support of many individuals who give their time free of charge to the PROW service.

5. Gates for Stiles

5.1 The PROW team are continuing our efforts at improving access across the rights of way network by offering gates to replace existing stiles across the network, due to the restrictive nature of stiles for some users.

5.2 During 2019 we provided 48 gates to landowners, with the agreement that they install the structure and maintain it in the future as they would with any structure that exists on their land.

6. Capital Works Programme

6.1 As part of the annual capital programme during 2019 we replaced 6 bridges and associated works including bank stabilisation and drainage improvements.

6.2 Further to this a capital surface programme was undertaken totalling over 4.5km of improvements on the network. Details are shown in the table below. The standout improvements are surfacing and drainage works in West Chiltington on Public Bridleways 2344 and 2410 and also on G-Class Highway 46. This has provided a key north south off-road link between local communities connecting to the surrounding bridleway network. The second being on Public Bridleway 2758 in Upper Beeding that included heavy vegetation clearance and surface improvements. This route is now much easier and safer to use by the public and carries The Monarchs Way long-distance path, so is very well used.

6.3 The table below shows schemes delivered between 1 April 2019 to 1 January 2020.

PARISH	PATH	CAPITAL/ REVENUE £	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS
Burgess Hill	FP2C	S106 contribution £9,500	Surfacing and drainage works along a 160m length of path.
Crawley	FP1510	Capital £5,000	Bridge repair works.

PARISH	PATH	CAPITAL/ REVENUE £	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS
Fernhurst	RB3330	Capital £41,000	Re-grading and drainage works along a 750m length of path.
Heyshott	FP962/2	Capital £7,000	Bridge replacement works.
Itchingfield	BW1604	Capital £8,000	Surfacing works along a 230m length of path.
Rogate	BY1180	Capital £45,000	Surfacing works along a 400m length of path.
Shipley	BW3217	Capital £7,000	Bridge improvements, surfacing and drainage works.
Slinfold	BW1463	Capital £9,000	Bridge replacement works.
Upper Beeding	BW2758	S106 contribution £34,000	Surfacing works along a 900m length of path.
West Chiltington	G46	Capital £32,000	Surfacing and drainage works along a 475m length of path.
West Chiltington	BW2410	Capital £17,000	Surfacing works along a 300m length of path.
West Chiltington	BW2344	Capital £58,000	Surfacing and drainage works along a 1500m length of path.

6.4 The table below shows schemes to be carried over and delivered in 2020/21

PARISH	PATH	CAPITAL/ REVENUE £	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS
<i>Crawley</i>	<i>FP1511</i>	<i>Capita £12,000</i>	<i>Bridge replacement and bank stabilisation works, part delivered, remainder carried over to 2020/21.</i>
<i>Kirdford</i>	<i>FP3250</i>	<i>Capital £13,000</i>	<i>Bridge replacement and bank stabilisation works, part completed, remainder carried over to 2020/21.</i>

Nick Scott, Principal Rights of Way Officer and Jane Noble, Senior Access Officer
October 2020