

## WSLAF 20 April 2016 – Agenda Item 5

### West Sussex County Council Public Rights of Way Service Annual Report 2015/16

#### 1. Major Works

1.1 The County Council has many assets, mainly surfaces and structures, to maintain around its Public Rights of Way (PROW) network. A summary of the larger projects delivered in 2015/16 are listed in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3.

#### 1.2 Bridge Programme and Associated Works

PARISH	PATH	COST	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS
Aldingbourne	FP306	£8,587.20	Replacement of deck and fitting new parapets
Colgate	BW1590	£11,722.80	Installation of a new 5m bridlebridge
Graffham (SDNP)	FP1026	£21,110.40	Replacement 8m footbridge and associated plank bridges
Hurstpierpoint	FP7Hu	£7,443.20	Replacement 10m footbridge
Hurstpierpoint (SDNP)	FP72Hu	£14,028.24	Replacement 10.5m footbridge
Milland (SDNP)	FP1174/1	£11,003.00	Replacement 7m footbridge
Plaistow	BW600/1	£10,050.00	Replacement 5m bridlebridge and surfacing of approaches
Slaugham	FP18S	£19,696.80	Replacement 11m footbridge and associated plank bridges
Warnham	BW1414	£2,955.85	Completion of project delayed by poor weather – replacement 4.5m bridlebridge and surfacing of approaches
<b>TOTAL: £</b>		<b>106,597.49</b>	

### 1.3 Bridleway Surfacing Programme and Associated Works

PARISH	PATH	COST	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS
Ashurst	BW1871 & BW2370	£7,610.11	Laying 780m of surfacing in partnership with landowner
Billingshurst	BW1918	£3,625.00	Reinstatement of surface following winter weather impact
Bramber (SDNP)	FP2933/ Downs Link	£59,350.00	Completion of works on the Steyning Community Partnership 'Walk for All' and the alternative route of the Downs Link to avoid crossing the A283
Henfield	BW2587	£9,466.76	Laying 174m of surfacing
Lower Beeding	BW1735	£26,195.85	Improving 800m of path with surfacing, ditching, grips and culverts
Loxwood	BW637/1	£15,316.40	Laying 284m of surfacing
Pyecombe (SDNP)	BW4Py	£21,502.00	Laying 324m of surfacing
Stedham with Iping (SDNP)	BW3358	£12,897.00	Improving 225m of surfacing, clearance of ditches and installation of grips and culverts
Storrington & Sullington (SDNP)	BW2251	£10,074.45	Improving 357m of surface
Storrington & Sullington (SDNP)	BW2686	£4,862.50	Laying 108m of surfacing
West Hoathly	BW25WH	£13,544.45 (not yet completed)	Laying 428m of surfacing, clearance of various ditches and installation of grips
Woodmancote (SDNP)	BW3626	£14,949.20	Improving 362m of path by surfacing, clearance of ditches and installation of grips and culverts
Worthing	RB3733	£39,167.73 (part refund due)	Surfacing of a new Restricted Byway following successful DMMO
<b>TOTAL: £</b>		<b>238,561.45</b>	

## 2. Minor Works

- 2.1 In addition to the schemes above, and as with past years, a number of smaller scale projects were also delivered to aid access, safety and convenience around the PROW network, sometimes in response to arising situations. Examples include works to up-grade a footpath to bridleway in Horsham, secured as a planning condition; and formal enforcement to re-establish the legal line of a footpath in Ashurst (monies are to be recovered).
- 2.2 Volunteer Rangers – between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 there were 29 days of practical activities supported by volunteers donating 1306 hours of their time. Projects included:

- vegetation clearance (3.7km)
- surfacing (30m)
- installation of bridges (2 x 6m bridges),
- installation of new steps (187)
- installation of kissing gates (6), and;
- installation of handrails (59m).

A number of projects were delivered with the support of others, including the South Downs National Park Volunteers and corporate event days.

A new Volunteer Coordinator, Anthony Donithorn, has been appointed following the resignation of Tom Weedon; we thank both for their support, development and delivery of the volunteer programme.

- 2.3 Gaps and Gates for Stiles - PROW service continued its successful 'gates for stiles' programme in 2015/16, replacing 82 stiles with gates.
- 2.4 Summer Vegetation Clearance - A programme of summer vegetation clearance ran from mid-June to mid-August 2015. Paths were identified from historic problem reports and with input from Access Rangers (ARs). Excluding clearance undertaken through the cyclical parish maintenance visit, 303km of clearance was undertaken and cost £32,347.50.

### 3. Inspection and Maintenance Programme

- 3.1 The County Council continued to deliver its 15-month cyclical parish inspection and maintenance programme. The support of Volunteer Parish Path Inspectors (PPIs) remains invaluable to enable this programme to continue and deliver benefits for path users.
- 3.2 The annual maintenance contract, held by County Tree Surgeons (CTS), was extended, enabling it to continue to deliver repairs and renewals to signs, bridges and steps, and vegetation clearance. During the last year, the works delivered by CTS included repair or replacement of 1307 signs, 96 bridges and 6 boardwalks.

### 4. Changes to the PROW network

- 4.1 PROW Committee met twice in 2015/16. Most proposals to divert or extinguish paths were considered by officers using delegated authority powers, which were generally local diversions and had received no objections during the consultation period.
- 4.2 The effect of various changes to the network over recent years has increased the size of the network managed across the county as shown below:

	Footpath	Bridleway	Restricted Byway	BOAT	Cycleway	<b>Total (km)</b>
Public Right of Way	2763	1179	127	14	n/a	<b>4083</b>
Permissive Path	17	9	0	0	5	<b>31</b>
G-road (Public Way)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>45</b>

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## **5. Problem Reports and General Enquiries**

- 5.1 During 2015/16 problem reports continued to be received and considered by PROW service – in the period 4583 were logged into the service’s database, CAMS (Countryside Access Management System). Officers have been prioritising reports, as WSLAF has previously been advised, with issues of Health and Safety to PROW users given early attention over issues such as minor maintenance, e.g. damaged signage.
- 5.2 Site specific and strategic planning enquiries continued to be received in large numbers, with most responses made by ARs given the benefit of their local knowledge. The service has been consulted on a number of draft Neighbourhood Plans, when opportunity has been taken to encourage parishes to recognise the value of an accessible and convenient PROW network to the quality of life for their parishioners.
- 5.3 CAMS has continued to develop, both in functionality and population. Its use for maintenance work orders has now been fully adopted, as has logging problem reports received on-line and through the Council’s contact centre colleagues. Officer training has been on-going as has development for an on-line portal, due to be rolled out shortly for PPIs and our customers to enable them to log reports and track their progress.

## **6. Staffing**

- 6.1 2015/16 saw a couple of changes within PROW service – a replacement AR, Nigel Bird, was appointed following the departure of Mary-Ann Edwards; and Cathy Harrison-Woodhouse arrived as maternity cover for Lysiane Dallen.

## **7. Looking Forward**

- 7.1 For 2016/17 the PROW Revenue budget has been largely unchanged at £453k, whilst a programme of works, costed at £580k and funded by the Council’s Capital budget and S106 monies, has been approved as part of the wider Highways Infrastructure Works Programme.
- 7.2 The 15 month inspection and maintenance cycle will continue to be embedded and CAMS populated.
- 7.3 The Maintenance contract with CTS will expire at the end of April 2017. In May 2016 the Cabinet Member for Residents’ Services will be asked to approve the commencement of a procurement process to replace this contract.
- 7.4 The County Council will begin its review, as statutorily required, of its current Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Jon Perks  
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20 April 2016