

## WSLAF 26 April 2017 – Agenda Item 5

### West Sussex County Council Public Rights of Way Service Annual Report 2016/17

#### 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 2016/17 are listed in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3.

#### 1.2 Surfacing Programme and Associated Works

PARISH	PATH	COST	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS
Bolney & Slaugham	BW45Bo & BW36S	£19,449.63	Surfacing and drainage works along a 650m length of bridleway.
Bury (SDNP)	BW762	£1,200.00	Contribution to surfacing and drainage works undertaken by the landowner.
Horsted Keynes	BW34HK	£2,000.00	Contribution to landowner undertaking surfacing works on the bridleway.
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common	BW3Hu	£2,200.00	Surfacing works along 75m length of the bridleway.
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common	BW80Hu	£550.00	Surfacing work repairs along a short section of this bridleway at the southern end.
Selsey	FP125	£7,724.20	Infilling of a non-definitive path following an earlier error by the County Council.
Slaugham	BW19S & FP16S	£28,922.00	Surfacing and drainage works along nearly 1km of the bridleway and footpath.
Southwater	BW1662	£500.00	Contribution to surfacing and drainage improvements undertaken by the landowner.
Steyning (SDNP)	BW2714	£1,250.00	Contribution to surfacing improvement works on bridleway undertaken by Parish Council.
Twineham	BW4T	£27,870.00	Surfacing and drainage works of approximately 600m length.
West Dean (SDNP)	BW458	£2,650.00	Surfacing and re-grading works along a 70m length of the bridleway.
Worthing (SDNP)	BW3131	£10,290.66	Surfacing works along a 400m length of the bridleway.
<b>TOTAL: £</b>		<b>104,606.49</b>	

### 1.3 Bridge Programme and Associated Works

PARISH	PATH	COST	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS
Rogate (SDNP)	FP1148	£34,948.00	Replacement 16m footbridge spanning River Rother
Rudgwick / Slinfold	BW3569	£108,310.88	Repair to 'Double Bridge' across River Arun on Downs Link bridleway (works still in progress)
<b>TOTAL: £</b>		<b>143,258.88</b>	

## 2. Other Works

2.1 As with past years, WSCC PROW service supported a number of smaller scale projects to aid public access, safety and convenience. For example, repairs to a culvert, parapet and surface on a bridleway on the edge of Worth Forest.

2.2 Volunteer Rangers – between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 volunteer rangers supported 73 practical task days and donated 2998 hours of their time. Projects included:

- vegetation clearance (nearly 5km)
- installation of bridges (1 x 6m, 1 x 5m bridges),
- installation of new steps (178)
- installation of kissing gates (3), and;
- installation of boardwalks (67m).

Many projects were delivered with the support of others, including the South Downs National Park Volunteers, local school groups and the Army. There was a recruitment drive to expand the service – an article in West Sussex Connections attracted a lot of interest and a number of new volunteers are already supporting practical projects.

2.3 Gaps and Gates for Stiles – PROW service continued its 'gates for stiles' programme in 2016/17, replacing 54 stiles with gates.

2.4 Summer Vegetation Clearance – A programme of summer vegetation clearance ran from the end of June to mid-August 2016. Paths were identified from historic problem reports and with input from Access Rangers (ARs). Excluding clearance undertaken through the cyclical parish maintenance visit, over 300km of clearance was undertaken and cost nearly £30,000.00.

2.5 A number of projects were delivered as part of the 'Beautiful Outdoors' programme, a County Council initiative to encourage visitors to experience the West Sussex countryside. This included surfacing of paths in Bramber and Madehurst, also installing an extended boardwalk in Houghton.

## 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 remains invaluable to enable this programme to continue and deliver benefits for path users. Throughout the year, the programme kept largely to schedule.

3.2 The annual maintenance contract was re-procured and awarded to the incumbent contractor, County Tree Surgeons (CTS), of Crawley Down. The contract begins formally on 1 May 2017 and will run for 4 years. As with previous years, it will deliver works including repairs and renewals to signs, bridges and steps, and vegetation clearance. During the last year, CTS repaired or replaced over 1700 signs and over 130 bridges and boardwalks.

#### **4. Changes to the PROW network**

4.1 PROW Committee met twice in 2016/17. 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.

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

5.1 During 2016/17 problem reports continued to be received and considered by PROW service – in the period 4646 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.

#### **6. Staffing**

6.1 2016/17 saw a few changes within PROW service. Two ARs, Helen Chalk and Nick Scott, moved to opportunities elsewhere and have been replaced by Darryl Hobden and Kevin Dewitt; both have made a strong start in learning this new role and will be assets for the future. Lysiane Dallen has returned from maternity leave.

#### **7. Looking Forward**

7.1 For 2017/18 the PROW Revenue budget has been largely unchanged at £453k. Any capital funding not spent in 2016/17 has been slipped into 2017/18 and is complimented by an additional £200k of WSCC capital.

7.2 The 15 month inspection and maintenance cycle will continue to be embedded and CAMS populated.

7.3 The County Council has begun its review, as statutorily required, of its current Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Jon Perks  
Principal Rights of Way Officer  
26 April 2017