# Parish Paths Partnership
# Summer Newsletter 2019

Thank you to everyone for submitting the completed annual P3 surveys and grant requests; it is always very inspiring to see what has been achieved by volunteers in the last twelve months.
The annual grant allocations are complete and confirmation letters have been sent to Parish Clerks that have received a P3 grant from Devon County Council for the coming year.
As always finances are under pressure and the Rights of Way Department, like so many others, are experiencing a tightening of purse strings.
We have tried to meet the financial requests of P3 parishes but in some cases, unfortunately, this has not been possible. As you will be aware we are unable to award grants to those parishes that have not submitted finance and survey forms. If you have questions or require assistance setting up projects please do get in touch for advice or to arrange a site visit.

## Keeping in touch

We would be grateful if you could advise of any changes of Parish Clerk or P3 Co-ordinator contact details as soon as possible. The up to date information allows us to keep our records in order and to also pass on information regarding various aspects of rights of way that may be crucial for your parish. Likewise, please get in touch if parish/town council bank account details alter; this prevents grant payments being delayed.
I have attached a form to help with this exercise and would be grateful if you could complete and return this with any amendments that are required by 1st August 2019.

## Bird nesting and Rights of Way

The nesting season is well and truly with us, I watched a brood of Coal Tits, who had nested in a wall at home, take their first flights into the world recently. Now is an apt time to remind everyone about vegetation cutting and getting the balance right between access and the needs of the natural environment. There is information available in a separate attachment that can be printed and circulated to volunteers, landowners and contractors who are managing the vegetation in your parish. The information gives advice on what to do and how to comply with the current legislation. Please do get in touch if you have any additional queries.

**Contractors and Cutting paths in a parish**

Contractors are currently slightly behind schedule due to the 'jungle' of vegetation we are experiencing on rights of way.

Many of you will have noted a vast amount of up-growth on paths in your parish recently; the combination of the deluge of rain coupled with vaguely warm weather has caused excess growth of vegetation. Our rights of way wardens have issued DCC contractors with cutting programmes and the massive growth is being tackled. Don't worry if you have not heard from your contractor as yet, they are on their way but things are taking a little longer this year. If you want to make an impact yourself but don't want to wield a strimmer you might like to consider walking with secateurs and simply cutting round rights of way signs, as well as gate latches and catches. Thank you for all your time and patience as always and if a path becomes totally overgrowth do get in touch and we will see what we can do to help.

**Strimmer courses**

As usual we intend to hold a strimmer course shortly. The courses take a day to complete and are usually held in the village of Kennford near Exeter. The training provides an opportunity to gain a certificate in how to safely maintain and operate a brushcutter on rights of way and is essential for parish volunteer' insurance cover. Do check your Strimmer certificates to make sure yours is still in date, if it has expired do get in touch to arrange a new free course.

Currently we are collecting names of those who would like to join a course on 24th July 2019. There will be other courses later this year if you wish to add names to a list of potential delegates. Please email ros.davies@devon.gov.uk with volunteer contact details.

## Ash Dieback

You will be aware from the media and P3 training sessions that Ash Dieback is now a very real concern for those who own, work or enjoy being in our wooded landscape for the purposes of recreation.

For land managers there is a tricky balance to be reached; decaying standing timber provides valuable wildlife habitats for birds, bats and invertebrates but diseased trees pose a threat to the public. Landowners owe a duty of care to those who enjoy rights of way or invite the public onto their land. Dead or diseased trees need to be removed or made safe where they could fall across roads, popular paths, railway lines or buildings that are frequently inhabited.

Ash dieback leads to catastrophic failure of parts of the tree and visually it is not always possible to spot exactly where the tree is compromised. Care must be taken when undertaking work to remove a diseased tree to ensure personal safety and that of others is not at risk. For further information please follow the Devon County Council link https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/ash-dieback

As a member of the P3 scheme please keep an eye out whilst surveying paths for any dead or diseased ash trees and report them to the landowner concerned; it remains their responsibility to ensure the public stay safe whilst on their land.

## Parish Paths Partnership Survey

Every few years we undertake an annual survey of those parishes that are involved with the P3 scheme. The time has come to get in touch once more and collect new data from those involved with maintaining rights of way in the community. The P3 survey will be emailed to Parish Clerks and volunteers with the opportunity to return information by either email or post. Your reply will help us to support communities in the future and enable us to allocate budgets and time effectively. Please complete the short survey and let us know your views, naturally all responses and will comply with the current Data Protection legislation.

## P3 Walk and Talk Events 2019

Following the success of last year's P3 training walk and talk sessions we are aiming to do the same again this

Autumn. For those of you who have not joined us before there will be the opportunity to join fellow P3 volunteers and catch up with rights of way wardens plus members of our Definitive Map and Mapping teams who will be joining us to answer your questions. As before the events are free and will close at lunch time following a light buffet. We are aiming to organise the events in the early Autumn so do watch out for emails regarding these special days!

**Rights of Way, Police and rural crime**

Earlier this year the Devon and Cornwall Rural Crimes Officer and the Warden team discussed ways of working closer to help alleviate the problem of under reported rural crime. Despite financial constraints the Police are encouraging the reporting of crimes to help combat theft and inappropriate behaviour in the countryside. If you wish to report a suspected rural crime please call 101. Should you witness a dog attacking livestock or a wildlife crime that is happening whilst you are present please phone 999 and try to give an accurate description of the location. Please do not approach the individuals concerned on grounds of personal safety.

With insufficient reporting of cases the Police are unable to allocate appropriate resources to help deal with the problem of rural crime. It must be remembered that theft of machinery and livestock cost our rural businesses financially and contribute to mental health and anxiety issues for those living in the countryside.

**Definitive Map review and unrecorded Rights of Way**

Many of you will have recently watched the news and be aware that 2026 is the last date for adding unrecorded rights of way to the Definitive Map based on historical evidence. Currently there are a great many miles of rights of way across England that remain unrecorded and these routes could potentially be added to the Definitive Map. In Devon we carry out this process through a parish by parish definitive map review. Many of you will have experienced this process taking place in your parish. Please click on the link below for information on the review process.
https://www.devon.gov.uk/prow/the-definitive-map/definitive-map-review/

**A note from Senior Rights of Way Officer, Helen Clayton:**
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a cut-off date of 1 January 2026 for the recording of historic rights of way.

The cut-off date would have the effect of extinguishing certain routes not recorded on the Definitive Map by the deadline. The intention of the legislation is to prevent any claim being successfully made for the addition of a way to the Definitive Map after 1 January 2026 if the claim is solely based on documentary evidence that the rights existed before 1949 (when the requirement for surveying authorities to keep a Definitive Map of public rights of way was first introduced).

The provision has not yet been implemented however. The Government, as part of a wider package of rights of way legislation reforms, is intending to introduce Regulations to specify certain exceptions to the cut-off date to prevent some routes being lost unintentionally.

It is *likely* that exceptions from extinguishment will include routes which are shown on the Authority's 'List of Streets' (a record of highways maintainable at public expense), routes for which a valid application has been made to modify the Definitive Map of public rights of way (under Schedule 14 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) and routes which are still being used by the public. However, we are still waiting for the details.

As you're no doubt aware, Parliament has been very busy dealing with other matters recently and the rights of way legislation has been delayed. We will bring you further information when we have it.

**Ticks and walking in the countryside**
With the late Spring and Summer months comes a potential bite from creature that, despite its size, can leave a rather unpleasant legacy. Please follow the link to the Devon County Webpages for advice on what to do whilst walking in the countryside. https://www.devonnewscentre.info/be-tick-aware-when-out-and-about-in-the-countryside/

**Spotlight on Parish Path Projects**
This time it is the turn of Ivybridge to demonstrate how they maintain some key routes both in the urban and rural parts of the town. The photos are from late last

Summer and give you a taste of what they did to look after access in their community. The pictures and information were shared via Facebook.

Ivybridge Town Council's Parks Ranger, Andrew Price, was joined by two volunteers, David and Spencer, to help improve the surface of Footpath 6 in Longtimber Woods. The team also installed some post and rail fencing elsewhere on the path. Both tasks took place on a very warm day, but luckily all the work was carried out in the shade. They managed to infill a section of the path that had eroded with 3/4 of a ton of gravel, the erosion had taken place next to a cement drainage grip, the new gravel helped to level the path once more.

The new fencing lies to the south of the viaduct and between the two small footbridges, helping to steer walkers away from the edge of the path nearest the river. Both tasks were funded by the P3 grant that Cllr Sara Hladkij had applied for earlier in the year.

**Pound Lane, Ivybridge**

“Heatwave Hacking – A successful day spent clearing and tidying the rights of way at the northern end of Footpath 1 near Pound Farm. Ivybridge Town Council’s Parks Ranger, was joined on the day by volunteer P3 Co-ordinator Cllr Sara Hladkij, plus regular volunteers Roger and Dave. Working hard in the heat they cut back the vegetation, removed litter, soil and vegetation that covering the path. Soil that had gathered over a series of years was cleared to widen the route and make it more accessible for all to enjoy.

**And Finally…..**

Thank you as always for all your help maintaining the rights of way in and around local communities across Devon. The benefits of your commitment to public access helps support mental and physical health enormously by bringing local people together to share lives, get fitter and reduce loneliness.

A BIG thank you to you all from Devon County Council’s Rights of Way team.