

Initial Network Assessment

Revised November 2005

1 Introduction

The Cornwall public rights of way network is a historically under-used countryside access asset, part of a national network the value of which is becoming increasingly recognized. This report, prepared as part of the Cornwall Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) activity, assesses the condition of the wider linear access network from an officer viewpoint as input to consulting stakeholders, including users, about potential improvements. The completed ROWIP will be subject to a more formal public consultation later in the process specified by DEFRA guidelines. The 'flagship' paths within Cornwall are well-used and maintained to a high standard, but the inland path network more generally has acknowledged problems. Less well known is the wide range of access infrastructure from other providers. This report seeks to draw these disparate networks together into a better understood whole.

From feedback made to other authorities preparing their ROWIP reports, it is recognised that parts of this document may, despite best efforts, present to the lay reader as overly technical. Further background information is available on the Countryside Service website at <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/countryside>. Alternatively, please contact the Countryside Service using the details at the end of the report for further explanation.

To keep the report to manageable proportions, internet website references have been widely used to reference further information. Internet access is available at libraries in Cornwall (free for the first 30 minutes), but if problems are encountered accessing information, then please contact the Countryside Service.

2 The Cornish Context

Cornwall is a rural and maritime county with a population of 501,267 recorded in the 2001 census. It is part of the South West Region and has an area of 3549km². Cornwall is the second largest county in the region but has the lowest population density. The County has an estimated 697 km of coastline, the longest of any English county. The sea forms the northern, southern and western boundaries, with the Tamar to the east forming a physical and cultural divide for all but 18 km of the border with Devon, while the Isles of Scilly lie 45 km off Lands End. The distance between the north and south coasts varies from 72 km at the eastern boundary to as little as 8 km at the western end of the county. Cornwall measures 132 km between Lands End and Morwenstow.

Because of its relative isolation the County has maintained much of its own identity in traditions and culture, including the Cornish language. It also possesses distinctive physical features in its peninsular form, long indented coastline, granite moorlands and temperate climate. These characteristics have influenced both the natural and socio-economic development of the County.

Despite a past history of mining, the gradual development of tourism to the major industry it now is and some more recent development of manufacturing industry, Cornwall remains

essentially rural in character. Farming is still the mainstay of the economy over much of the county, and agriculture is the predominant land use. Much of the countryside and the varied coastline is of high landscape value with much designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Many towns and villages retain an attractive and relatively unspoilt appearance. The uplands and much of the coastline, due to the climate and location of the county, have considerable importance as wildlife habitats, and there are also a large number of relatively undisturbed sites of great interest to the archaeologist and historian with 12,200 listed buildings and 23 Areas of Great Historic Value totalling 56 km².

Administration centres on six Districts (Caradon, Carrick, Kerrier, North Cornwall, Penwith and Restormel) and 210 parishes. The Isles of Scilly form a unitary authority administered separately from Cornwall County Council.

The County contains a wide scatter of small towns and villages, reflecting an economy hitherto largely dependent on farming, fishing and widespread metalliferous mining, and difficulties of terrain and communications which did not favour the growth of urban centres. Only 31% of the population live in towns of over 10,000 inhabitants, compared with 80% in England and Wales. There are nine such towns: Penzance, Camborne, Redruth (Camborne, Redruth and Pool jointly comprise the largest urbanised area in Cornwall), Falmouth, Truro, Newquay, St.Austell, Bodmin and Saltash.

The population density ranges from 200/km² in Kerrier to less than 70/km² in North Cornwall. Although there is no single centre that dominates in terms of population, Truro has developed as a sub-regional centre. Distance and the cost of travel mean that Exeter and Plymouth have less influence than might otherwise be the case. 20% of the population live in rural areas and smaller settlements of less than 1000. A further 20% live in villages of between 1000 and 2000 and just over 25% live in the larger villages and smaller towns with populations between 2000 and 10000.

Following a considerable decline in traditional farming, fishing and mining employment, Cornwall has benefited from assisted area status. Agricultural income and employment in Cornwall has fallen significantly and most of Cornwall's farm holdings now fail to generate enough income to support even one person. As Cornish agriculture is heavily concentrated in livestock, the BSE crisis and other factors have affected Cornwall even more severely than many other agricultural regions. Fortunately, the effect of foot and mouth was less traumatic than in Devon. Tourism employment has grown but is predominantly a seasonal employer and provides relatively low rates of pay. This latter point also characterises other significant sectors of the local economy; average earnings in Cornwall consistently come at or near to the bottom of the table of counties, and when coupled to high house prices present a significant issue for local people. Further information on the Cornish economy can be found at <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9470>.

Significant improvements to the transport system have been achieved in recent years, although the effects of distance cannot be overcome entirely. As well as the 266 km of Highways Agency Trunk Roads, there are 7173 km of roads for which the County Council is the highway authority. Of this total, 476 km are principal (A) roads which link the trunk road network with the main towns. Of the remaining 3215 km of classified roads, 577 km are B roads and 3482 km are unclassified. Bus services are largely operated by First Western National (120 routes) and Truronian (18 routes). There are a further 84 generally less intensive routes run by 26 smaller operators. Regular coach services are operated by National

Express between Cornwall and the rest of the country. At the last count, there were 13 community buses and at least 21 voluntary car schemes. Through rail services are operated by Great Western Trains and Virgin Trains. Gunnislake, Looe, Newquay, Falmouth and St Ives are linked by branch services operated by Wessex Trains. There is a steam railway from the main line to Bodmin with several smaller tourist steam railways operating in the summer.

Ferry services operate from Plymouth to Roscoff and Santander. Eight year-round ferry crossings also operate providing important links across the County's rivers for vehicles and pedestrians. An increasing number of air services operate from Newquay airport, with additional sea and air services to the Isles of Scilly.

Cornwall is a major holiday area with five million visitors attracted annually to the spectacular coastal scenery and fine beaches. At the peak of the season there are over 270,000 visitors in the county, adding 50% to the population. This justifies the provision of many services which would not otherwise be viable, but the extra people cause traffic congestion, pressure on services and environmental damage. The growth of festivals, the increasing popularity of visits to historic sites and gardens and the success of major attractions such as Eden, Tate St Ives and the National Maritime Museum at Falmouth offers Cornwall the opportunity to extend its season and offer more highly paid permanent jobs, based on an average visitor spend of over £200.

Further information on Cornwall is available at www.cornwall.gov.uk.

3 Countryside Access in Cornwall

Cornwall is fortunate to have a wide range of countryside access available. This is provided by a wide range of players including landowners, the County Council, District Councils, parishes, government agencies, charities and trusts. The Cornwall Local Access Forum has been established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 to provide an advisory function for countryside access, balanced between users, landowners and other interested organisations. Historically, provision and information from different suppliers has arguably not been as well coordinated as the user might want; the ROWIP activity aims to address this issue.

3.1 Area access

This report concentrates on linear access, but considers also area access where this includes paths within areas (e.g. paths in a wood) which may themselves be a destination or may link to wider networks (e.g. routes across Open Access Land which link into path networks) and also areas which need paths to access them, e.g. remoter beaches.

3.2 Linear Access Networks – CCC Provision

Countryside access managed in whole or in partnership by Cornwall County Council includes routes managed by the Highways Divisions, public rights of way, the South West Coast Path, country parks, trails, access to some County Farms land and management of Open Access Land. This section reviews current provision, with a following section describing planned potential future provision.

3.2.1 Roads

Trunk roads managed by the Highways Agency in Cornwall include the A30 and A38 (<http://www.highways.gov.uk>). While there are no motorways in Cornwall, and these roads are generally available to all users, levels of traffic are such that they are seldom attractive for

countryside access. Issues with lack of safe pavements/verges and difficult / dangerous crossings of Agency roads are discussed below. Previous road improvements often did not properly consider the effect on the rights of way network, and have in places caused effective network severance. The Agency is now seeking to address crossing issues, but given available resources, progress is slower than users would prefer.

Other public roads in Cornwall are maintained by the County. Again, busier roads are seldom attractive for countryside access and may be difficult to cross at times. Pavements are often provided in urban areas, but are frequently not available in rural areas. Verges are often available in rural areas, but maintenance regimes, design of drainage structures and the siting of signage can often reduce their value.

Cornwall has an attractive network of country lanes which do provide a valuable countryside access resource. While some are ‘rat runs’ at peak times, others have been designated as ‘Quiet Lanes’, with a presumption towards non-motorised use.

While most adopted roads are surfaced, some Unclassified County Roads (UCRs) are unsurfaced, and look like byways on the ground. Such routes are sometimes identified by the ‘other access’ symbol on Ordnance Survey maps. However, maintenance of UCRs is not a high priority for highway divisions.

Many other ‘white roads’ on Ordnance Survey maps have no recorded public access rights. In many cases public access to such roads is tolerated, but many are private.

3.2.2 Public Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way are highways that allow the public a right of passage over usually private land. Common Law states that you can pass and re-pass along highways at all times. Footpaths, bridleways and byways are all highways, differing from other forms of highways, such as roads, only by the type of traffic entitled to use them and the variety of surface types. Like Highways, maintenance is a Highway Authority responsibility, except where the landowner is responsible for barrier crossings (e.g. stiles), crops or (some) bridges. Once a public right of way has been registered on the Definitive Map it will remain until there is a legal event to either close, divert or extinguish it as a PRow. Lack of use has no effect on the legal existence of a Right of Way.



Public Footpaths provide you with the right to walk with any ‘normal accompaniment’ (e.g. dog, pram or a wheelchair). However, you do not have the right to ride or wheel a bicycle, nor to ride or lead a horse.



Public Bridleways allow you the right to walk, ride or lead a horse. Cyclists may use bridleways, though technically ‘not as of right’. You do not have the right to take a horse drawn vehicle along a bridleway.



BOATs (Byway Open to All Traffic) provide rights to walk, ride a horse, cycle and drive any vehicle (motorised or horse drawn).

- RUPPs (Road Used as a Public Path) are highways that are used by the public mainly for the purpose for which footpaths or bridleways are used. Former Cornish RUPPs have now been reclassified as footpaths, bridleways or byways.

- Restricted Byways are a new category of Right of Way that can replace RUPPs. Restricted Byways will have rights for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and horse drawn carriage vehicles but not mechanically propelled vehicles.
- Rights can be limited by Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), though these are currently seldom used on Rights of Way in Cornwall.
- Private Rights may also exist over a route which has public access rights, but these are not subject to Highway Law.

3.2.2.1 Definitive Map and Statement

The Definitive Map records the position and status of rights of way whilst the Definitive Statement lists all rights of way shown on the Definitive Map and gives a description and (sometimes) a width for each path. The recording of a route on the Definitive Map and Statement is conclusive evidence, in law, of position and existence of minimum public rights, and together form a legal document that is maintained by Cornwall County Council as the Surveying Authority.

The first Definitive Maps and Statements for Cornwall were drawn up in the early 1950s using information collected through a series of surveys carried out within individual parishes. Since then they have been republished in order to incorporate legal changes that have occurred. The six current maps are dated as follows:

- Penwith 1998
- Kerrier 1995
- Carrick 2000
- Restormel 1966/68 (due to be republished in 2005)
- North Cornwall 1996
- Caradon 2001

Definitive data are recorded using a Geographical Information System (GIS); paper copies generated from GIS constitute the legal documents. A copy of the GIS ‘working copy’ showing latest changes to the network can be accessed through www.cornwall.gov.uk/countryside. This complements commercially available paper maps such as those produced by the Ordnance Survey, which inevitably date after issue, and have limitations due to conventional representation at a small scale.

Current statistics for the Rights of Way network in Cornwall are as follows:

- Total length of Public Footpaths = 3601 km or 81%
- Total length of Public Bridleways = 616 km or 14%
- Total length of Public Byways = 204 km or 5%
- Total Length of Public Rights of Ways = 4421 km
- South West Coast Path in Cornwall (much of it included in above figure) = 491 km.

When lengths are compared to the area and population of the county, the Cornish rights of way network is not untypical of English counties. The proportion of the network accessible to equestrians is lower than in some other counties, but that effect is smaller than the imbalance in bridleway provision across the county.

3.2.2.2 Lost Highways

It is considered that many routes with public rights which can be demonstrated based on historical evidence are not currently recorded on the Definitive Map (so-called 'Lost Highways'). CROW 2000 has set a cutoff of 2026 for the recording such routes. The Lost Highways Trust plans to conduct research in Cornwall from 2007, early in the national programme. Based on national figures, it is likely that additional routes totalling 10% of the existing network will be identified before the 2026 deadline. It is likely that a prioritisation scheme will be required to consider the comparative advantages of such routes.

3.2.2.3 Anomalies

Most authorities recognise that there are many anomalies on Definitive Maps. Anomalies include some dead-end and island paths, changes in status at parish, district and county boundaries, and routes severed by roads, railways, aerodromes, army bases and reservoirs, and blocked by development. There are other paths where the route is continuous, but where the status changes along the route, even away from boundaries. For example, there are paths that change from bridleways into footpaths. This is an inconvenience for people who want to use the bridleway network and generally makes little sense on the ground. It should be recognised that there are 'legitimate' dead ends, such as access to former mining sites, which may still be useful at least to those with an interest in industrial archaeology.

A particular issue in Cornwall is where paths have been recorded across fields, but not across the farmyards or access tracks which connect to the public highway. While the intention at the time of survey was clearly to record a continuous route for the public, the result was to produce an anomaly in the legal record which can present a problem today.

Cornwall County Council has previously undertaken a systematic desktop survey of definitive map anomalies. 3558 such anomalies were identified.

3.2.3 South West Coast Path

The South West Coast Path is one of only fifteen national trails. As Britain's most popular national trail, the South West Coast path contributes an estimated £96m to the Cornish economy. With almost half the length in Cornwall, the Countryside Agency financially supports the County Council's ranger service in maintaining and improving the route. A pilot survey has shown that due to issues including diversions due to changes in the coastal landscape, much of the route does not currently follow a route recorded on the Definitive Map. Given that the route has been asserted by 1.5m users this is not seen as a significant issue, and the current national coastal access initiative may provide a new framework for managing the Coast Path in the longer term.

<http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk>

<http://www.southwestcoastpath.com>

3.2.4 Other recognised long distance paths

The County Council promotes two long distance paths.

- The **Saints Way** in the East runs from Tintagel to Fowey (<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5788>)
- **St Michaels Way** in the West runs from St Ives to St Michaels Mount. (<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5787>)

As these both link to pilgrim routes, the paths are being considered for European Cultural trail status. North Cornwall DC is driving this application. In the longer term, it is planned that these routes should be improved to multi-user status.

In the Lizard, the String of Pearls project developed loops off the Coast Path. Other areas where this concept has been considered include the 'Coastal Band' in North Cornwall and the 'Ring of Steel' at Saltash.

Significant promoted routes are identified on the County Council's Right of Way database and the information is used to help set maintenance priorities. However, not all path proposals can be endorsed by county council support.

3.2.5 Trails and Other County Provision

Cornwall has developed a range of multi-user trails, aimed particularly at cyclists and horse riders, using old railway lines where possible.

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=10269>

3.2.5.1 Camel Trail

A well-established, very popular route up the Camel estuary from Padstow to Bodmin, with a branch to the north, the Camel Trail generates significant income for local businesses.

<http://www.cameltrail.com>

3.2.5.2 Mineral Tramways

The Mineral Tramways network links mining heritage sites around Camborne, with routes currently including the Great Flat Lode, Coast to Coast and Tresavean Trails.

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5789>

3.2.5.2 New Developments

New plans include an expanding network of trails in the Claylands around St Austell. Connecting with the existing mineral tramways, part of the £6m funding approved in the Spring of 2005 will create another four new multi-use trails totalling 18 miles.

- Redruth and Chacewater Railway Trail
- Portreath Branchline Trail
- Tolgus Trail
- Tehidy Trail

3.2.5.3 Cornish Way

The national cycle network traverses Cornwall; the Sustrans interactive website usefully maps this and other local cycling provision <http://www.sustrans.org.uk>. 200 miles have been completed to date. Gaps such as that between Bodmin and Torpoint and the Bude to border link are the subject of current routing and funding discussions.

3.2.5.4 Newham Trail

This old railway alignment links into central Truro from near Hightown. It is partly National Cycle Network, partly pedestrian only. Recent significant maintenance work on a vital bridge at Calenick has ensured longer term access to this useful route.

3.2.6 Lesser Mobility Routes

A range of easy access routes for people with mobility problems have been identified through partnership between Cornwall County Council and access groups.

3.2.7 County Farms

By contrast to some other counties, Cornwall County Farms estate's landholdings are generally small, and have limited potential for improved countryside access. However, as an example of good practice, access is provided where possible through the DEFRA Countryside Stewardship scheme.

3.2.8 Fal River Links

The extensive range of tidal waterways reaching from Falmouth as far inland as Truro, offer a range of countryside access opportunities taking pressure off road transport. Together with a range of partners, Cornwall County Council has encouraged the development of a range of ferries which link to paths and access areas, including a new pier at the National Trust property at Trelassick and access to the National Maritime Museum. There is potential for similar development in other areas, including the Tamar.

<http://www.falriverlinks.co.uk>

3.2.9 Country Parks

Cornwall County Council directly manages country parks at Tehidy and Kit Hill, and works in partnership with a wide range of bodies to manage other areas, including the Mount Edgcumbe Park across the Tamar from Plymouth.

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5790>

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5791>

<http://www.mountedgcumbe.gov.uk/>

3.2.10 CROW Open Land

From 28th August 2005, 21000 hectares of Open Access land was made available for pedestrian access in Cornwall. Though much has enjoyed de facto access or previous permissive arrangements, this represents a significant new access opportunity. Mapping and access arrangements can be found on the Countryside Agency website at <http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk>

3.2.11 Other

In common with other areas, Cornwall suffers from illegal use of motor cycles on public access land and routes, raising concerns among landowners. This is distinct to the legitimate use of road-legal bikes on byways. The motor cycle awareness project seeks to provide alternative legitimate facilities to reduce the damage to the countryside and to countryside access.

3.3 Examples of new projects with possible County involvement

3.3.1 New trails

As described above, building on the success of the existing Mineral Tramways network, £5.5m has been awarded for further development of mining heritage and access improvements. Detailed routes are still the subject of negotiation, but the existing network should be significantly extended. Further Mining Heritage trails are envisaged in South East Cornwall, together with new routes linking trails in Cornwall and Devon.

3.3.2 Ride UK

The Ride UK project plans a national bridleway network, with a Cornish link (H30 Kernow Way) from Land's End to the Devon border. Funding permitting (a multi-million pound bid is currently in preparation), this substantial project is planned to link and extend existing

provision, with benefit to the local economy. The route is broadly similar to that of a previously proposed Lands End Long Distance Footpath.

<http://www.ride-uk.org.uk>

<http://www.celticway.org/landsendtrail.htm>

3.3.3 Urban Regeneration

Cornwall County Council is heavily committed to regenerating deprived communities associated with mining and quarrying. Significant funding is available for this work from various agencies, and given current health agendas, including particular concerns about diabetes in the Cambourne/Pool/Redruth area, improved countryside access is an integral part of development plans. Walk and cycle to work plans also involve improvements to access infrastructure.

3.3.4 Goss Moor

The Highways Agency plans to improve the A30 bottleneck at Goss Moor adjacent to the National Nature Reserve. This opens an opportunity for broader environmental improvements by the County Council, including countryside access, which is currently being progressed by the 'RIO' project under Objective One funding.

<http://www.objectiveone.com/client/media/Release-107.html>.

3.4 Linear Access Networks – Other Provision

There is significant countryside access provision by other organisations. This section seeks to summarise the more significant facilities, but may not include all players. No significance is intended by the order of presentation.

3.4.1 Beaches

The quintessential image of Cornwall is of buckets and spades and surfing. Beach guides such as that at <http://www.cornishlight.co.uk/beach.htm> emphasise the popular appeal of the Cornish coast. Beaches are both destinations, and (tides permitting) coastal routes complementing the coast path and coastal Open Access Land. However, tides can be dangerous and lifeguards patrol popular beaches to improve public safety. Indeed, some beaches can only be accessed by boat. Water quality is a key issue for those engaged in water recreation.

3.4.2 National Trust

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>

Since Project Neptune first started to acquire coastal land in 1965, the National Trust has taken responsibility for preserving much of the wilder Cornish coast. Coastal estates include include Carnewas, Godrevy, St Antony Head, Lizard and Kynance Cove. The Penrose Estate includes Loe Pool while Trelissick includes trails alongside the Fal river estuary. Inland properties with significant countryside access include Lanhydrock, Roughtor and the Godolphin Estate. While parking and access to gardens generally is charged for, access to waymarked trails is often free. Given that NT properties generally include parking, toilets and catering, a proposal for 'Tea House Trails' has previously been discussed, with a particular emphasis on low mobility users.

3.4.3 Forestry Commission

www.forestry.gov.uk

Accessible Forestry Commission properties in Cornwall include Roughtor, Idless, Herodsfoot and Cardinham, with facilities ranging from car parks to waymarked routes and holiday

accommodation. As these are often in upland areas, there is significant opportunity for linking with other access opportunities. The FC Roughtor carpark is already the main access point for the popular NT owned Roughtor on Bodmin Moor. The Forestry Commission is dedicating its estate as Open Access Land, though this may not apply to land they rent rather than own. Forestry land can be subject to temporary access restrictions due to forestry works. For forestry access land, the Commission has responsibilities to administer, publicise and notify restrictions.

3.4.4 Southwest Lakes Trust

www.swlakestrust.org.uk

The Southwest Lakes Trust offer access opportunities at reservoirs in Cornwall including those at Stithians, Argal, Siblyback, Crowdy and Colliford. There is a current programme to improve accessibility at Porth, whereas Boscathnoe and Bussoe are mainly used for fishing. Again, there are opportunities to link with other upland access provision.

3.4.5 Woodland Trust

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

The Woodland Trust has a wide range of woods in Cornwall. Those over 10 hectares in size offer more opportunity for countryside access:

- Crowhill Valley – Grampound 11 Ha
- Kings Wood - London Apprentice near St. Austell 59 Ha
- Millook Valley Woods - Millook Valley, Poundstock near Bude 61 Ha
- Milltown & Lantyan Woods - Milltown near Lostwithiel 33 Ha
- Sanctuary Wood - Gorran Churchtown, near Mevagissey 14 Ha
- Trenant Wood - Trenant Cross near Looe 90 Ha

Further details of each are available on the website. Kings Wood is known to be well used as it is adjacent to several holiday parks and near St Austell. Indeed, unauthorised use by mountain bikes is seen as an issue, and control measures are considered in the management plan. <http://www.wt-woods.org.uk/kingswood>

3.4.6 National Nature Reserves

<http://www.english-nature.org.uk>

While English Nature exists primarily to protect nature conservation, three National Nature Reserves in Cornwall offer significant access opportunities:

- Golitha Falls 18 Ha
- Goss Moor 482 Ha
- The Lizard 1662 Ha

Maps showing access facilities are available on the website.

3.4.7 Cornwall Wildlife Trust

<http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk>

The Cornwall Wildlife Trust has a wide variety of important habitats in its care, owning or managing sites under a variety of agreements. The Trust is keen for people to visit these reserves provided the wildlife value of the sites can be protected. There are currently over 50 sites throughout the county, mostly with free access. Facilities such as nature trails, interpretation boards, information leaflets and reserve signs are provided, where possible, to increase visitor enjoyment and understanding of the importance of the site. The website includes an overall map and access information for each reserve.

Geological walks are promoted by the Cornwall RIGS (Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites) Group, with organised field trips and a downloadable walk from Porthgwarra to Nanjizal, Lands's End, with another at Trebarwith strand near Tintagel.

<http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/rigs/walks.php>

3.4.8 RSPB

The Royal Society for the protection of Birds has two reserves in Cornwall:

- Hayle Estuary Reserve
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/h/hayleestuary/index.asp>
- Marazion Marsh Reserve
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/m/marazionmarsh/index.asp>

Access details are available on the website.

There are currently no Wildfowl and Wetland Trust reserves in Cornwall

3.4.9 DEFRA Countryside Stewardship

In August 2005, there were in Cornwall 95 farm sites managed partly for improved access under the Countryside Stewardship scheme. While some offer limited new access, there are significant new opportunities in places such as the permissive bridleway at Philleigh. Current schemes will continue for the balance of ten year agreements. The Environmental Stewardship scheme will take over for future schemes from 2006.

www.magic.gov.uk (interactive map showing both conservation and access schemes)

<http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx> (provides maps of walks)

3.4.10 Churches

The church is involved in promoting church trails, such as the 'Church Trails in Cornwall' packs produced by North Cornwall Heritage Coast & Countryside. Churches are often in remote countryside, and by providing the focus to an outing benefit both the user and the community, when donations are made to help with the upkeep of churches. The Churches Conservation Trust (looking after St Anthony in Roseland church) and like bodies have similar interests. Pilgrimages still link older churches, and are once again growing in popularity. Most Cornish churches are dedicated to saints in the ancient Celtic church, providing especial interest to those from other Celtic countries, including France.

<http://www.visitchurches.org.uk>

3.4.11 Duchy of Cornwall.

http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/about/duc_index.html

The Duchy of Cornwall has extensive land holdings in Cornwall. Where possible it seeks to provide a good example in land management, including countryside access. Examples include the popular St Clement to Malpas permissive footpath near Truro and woodland access near Ladock.

3.4.12 English Heritage and other heritage sites

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>

<http://www.cornwallheritage.nildram.co.uk>

English Heritage has eighteen properties in Cornwall, mostly in the countryside. Many of these have useful facilities and can link to wider countryside access. Chargeable properties include Chysauster Ancient Village, Launceston, Pendennis, Restormel and St Mawes Castles. Properties free of charge include Ballowall Barrow, Carn Euny Ancient Village, Dupath Well, Halliggye Fogou, Hurlers Stone Circles, King Donierts Stone, Penhallam, St

Breoack Downs Monolith, St Catherine's Castle, Tregiffian Burial Chamber, and Trethevy Quoit. Trusts such as the Cornwall Heritage Trust offer further opportunities such as the extensive Castle an Dinas hill fort site. From more modern times, industrial archaeology is increasingly represented in Cornwall, with many mining sites being conserved, interpreted and made accessible. The Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network provides an umbrella for such activity.

3.4.13 Defence Estates

When not being used for military training, controlled access is available to two significant Ministry of Defence properties:

- Penhale (a dune system on the north coast)
http://www.defence-estates.mod.uk/access/walks/accopplocations/accopp_penhale.htm
- Tregantle (opposite Plymouth)
http://www.defence-estates.mod.uk/access/walks/accopplocations/accopp_antonytrainingarea.htm

3.4.14 Rivers and Estuaries

Cornwall has few large rivers, but many tidal creeks. Some have paths along them, some have paths to points on them, but many have few paths available. Exploration by canoe or other water craft is popular, with commercial canoe safaris being organised from a number of centres.

3.4.15 Bude Canal

Cornwall's one canal not subsequently converted into a railway was the 35 mile Bude Canal, built from Bude to Holsworthy and on to near Launceston in the early 1820's to carry calcium-rich sea sand used as fertiliser for the poorer soils to be found further inland. Inclined planes carried wheeled tub-boats to a height of 430 feet above sea level within six miles of the coast. The coming of the railways ended commercial operation and it finally closed in 1891. The first two miles of the canal from Bude to Helebridge remain in water and are used by residents and visitors for fishing, walking and boating. Much of the remainder of the canal is neglected and overgrown, though local groups are opening up pathways along parts of the route of the old canal. A leaflet "The Bude Canal" is available from the Bude Visitor Information Centre.

<http://www.bude.co.uk/Tourism/Bude-Canal.htm>

3.4.16 Railway Promotions

<http://www.looevalleywalking.com>

<http://www.bodminandwenfordrailway.co.uk>

With rail privatisation, more effort has been made to promote use of the surviving Cornish railway branch lines. As these are often in attractive countryside, walking is an obvious attraction. For instance, walks are published on the internet from the Looe Valley branch line, while a walking festival is promoted in September. Tourist railways such as that at Bodmin also try to link to countryside access, the 6.5 mile Bodmin Steam Railway making a particular effort to encourage cycling linked to train travel. Many linear walks can be more attractive if linked to buses, both timetabled (including postbuses) and responsive services.

3.4.17 Private Enterprise

There are various private farmland walks throughout Cornwall where farmers have diversified into tourism, making money from accommodation and catering. Other commercial outdoor

activity uses of private land in the countryside include paint-balling (especially in woodland), golf, equestrian cross-country courses and archery.

3.4.18 Capital Tax Exemption

www.visitukheritage.gov.uk

The Inland Revenue lists six properties in Cornwall which have received tax exemption on the basis of providing some public access. The website includes maps, but opening times are generally limited. Some provision overlaps with that now provided by other schemes.

- Mount Edgcumbe Estate – path network
- Pencarrow House– garden only
- Land at Penpol, Crantock – open access to 3.6Ha calcareous grassland
- Prideaux Place– house and park open to tours
- Tregrehan Garden– garden only
- Trewithen House and Gardens– includes walks on 30 days per year.

3.4.19 Toll rides

There are currently no known toll rides in Cornwall, though permissive riding arrangements are in place in several places. There are proposals to extend the TROT toll ride scheme, currently active in the South East of England, to the South West.

<http://www.tollrides.org.uk/>

3.4.20 Trails Promoted by Third Parties

There is a wide range of more locally promoted paths not promoted by various bodies, ranging from parish walks to longer, multi-day expeditions. In addition to those promoted by the County Council described above, those which are shown by the Ordnance Survey on Explorer Maps as Recreational Paths include:

- Inny-Valleys walk
- Moorland Walk
- Watermill Walk
- Camelford Way
- Two Valleys Way

These happen to be concentrated in the north-east of the County. In the same area, a recent development is the Copper Trail, a six-stage, 60 mile route around the edge of Bodmin Moor. This had been devised and published by a local business association to encourage more ambitious walkers to spread their spending away from the well-used Coast Path.

http://www.coppertrail.co.uk/html/copper_trail.htm#

3.4.21 Climbing

<http://www.climbers-club.co.uk/guidebooks/westcornwall.html>

Sea cliff climbing is well developed in Cornwall, and generally needs access to the cliff top. Tors and old quarries also provide climbing opportunities on some moors. Open Access rights specifically include rock climbing, provided that a quarry is not still being used for mineral extraction.

3.4.22 Orienteering and Running

<http://www.btinternet.com/~kerno.orienteeing/>

There is a range of permanent orienteering courses, in woods owned by various bodies, in Cornwall, while the Kerno Orienteering club organises more competitive events through the year. While most running club organised events are on roads, many include sections of

country running, with terrain ranging from parkland and meadows through woods and beaches to the high moors.

3.4.23 Mine and Cave Exploration

Cornwall is well known for its extensive mining heritage. Underground mine exploration generally needs permission and specialised equipment. Some old mining sites can only be reached by public right of way. While there are many sea-caves around the coast, there are no limestone caves in Cornwall.

3.4.24 Ferries

With the incised coast, ferries provide important links in the Cornish countryside access network. Services vary, and range from continuous vehicular provision to seasonal foot services. These include:

- Torpoint - Plymouth: Daily frequent service
- Mount Edgcumbe - Plymouth: Daily service every 30 minutes (Foot only)
- Fowey - Polruan: Daily continuous service service, (Foot only)
- Fowey - Bodinnick: Daily frequent service
- Padstow - Rock: Summer daily continuous service (Foot only)
- Falmouth - St Mawes: approximately every 30 mins (Foot only)
- Falmouth - Flushing: approximately every 30 mins (Foot only)
- Feock - Philleigh (King Harry Ferry): every 20 minutes
- St Mawes - Place: every 30 mins (Foot only)
- Helford - Helford Passage: hourly service. (Foot only)
- Calstock - Cotehele Quay/Calstock - Ferry Farm (Bere Alston): (Foot only)
- Mevagissey - Fowey: 3 to 6 return trips.
- Smugglers' Cottage Tolverne - Falmouth: Daily trips
- Truro - Falmouth: 5 return trips daily (depending on tides).

3.4.25 Commercial Enterprises

Many companies benefit from countryside access provision. These include riding businesses, walking guides, cycle hire, organised 'green laning' guides and boat hire, as well as accommodation and catering businesses which benefit from independent travellers and publishing houses.

3.4.26 Offroad 4x4 Driving Centres in Cornwall

In addition to byways available to road-legal vehicles, recreational off-road vehicle enthusiasts can use commercial facilities. In Cornwall these include:

- 'Off Road It' <http://www.offroadit.co.uk>
- 'Trax & Trails' <http://www.traxandtrails.co.uk>

These allow activities to be undertaken which might damage the surface of byways (e.g. wallows and winches) and which would therefore be illegal on a public highway.

3.4.27 Overlapping Provision

From the above survey, there is clearly a wide range of access provision from many different providers. It should be noted that several of these schemes can overlap. Examples include:

- Forestry Commission land may be dedicated as Open Access land.
- National Trust land may be entered in the Countryside Stewardship scheme.
- A public footpath may have permissive bridleway rights
- Tax credit access schemes may overlap with other schemes

- Public rights of way will always have access rights even when Open Access land they cross may be closed
- Linear access rights may co-exist with other open area provision, e.g. country parks and National Trust land, which may have access control bylaws
- Access even on rights of way can, however, be restricted by military bylaws (e.g. when firing on a rifle range) or in some cases by the tide.

4 Management of Rights of Way in Cornwall

4.1 Management teams

The management and maintenance of Rights of Way and associated access provision are delivered through the Countryside Service based within the Environment and Heritage Service at Old County Hall, Truro. Legal Services deliver Definitive Map Modification Orders and provide a more general legal support service. The Countryside Service currently has three delivery teams:

- Access team – managing the Rights of Way network.
- Countryside Projects – developing new facilities including countryside access
- Recreational Sites and Trails – managing promoted trails and other sites

The three teams work together to promote countryside access opportunities within other council activities, such as planning. Many other council services contribute to Rights of Way including Highways (urban paths), Structures (larger bridges) and Streetworks (utility licenses, temporary closures and temporary diversions). GIS computer mapping and database tools are used to automate record keeping. A public interface is provided by the Cornwall Information Centre (CIC) on 01872 222000. CIC staff are able to resolve many issues directly. More complicated issues are referred either to Countryside Officers, who can progress maintenance and enforcement issues, or to Definitive Map officers, to address issues relating to the legal status of rights of way. More detail on the Countryside Service is available on the web site.

The County Structure Plan provides a policy framework for service delivery, with more detail in documents such as the Local Transport Plan. The team's work is guided by a number of local policies that set out detailed operational standards and procedures.

Building on previous experience with the Parish Path Partnership (P3), Cornwall has developed the Local Maintenance Project (LMP), which supports and empowers parish councils to maintain local rights of way. The County Council delegates powers and currently provides 90% of the cost of cutting surface vegetation and undertaking minor works (generally minor surface issues and waymarking). This example is being followed by the County Council in providing a wider range of services at a local level. Although most parishes do participate in LMP, there are significant gaps, including a cluster of parishes around Bodmin Moor. In Penwith, the Penwith Access and Rights of Way Forum (PAROW) in turn supports parishes in delivering works on the ground.

More significant works on the ground are generally delivered through Cormac, the County Council's Direct Labour Organisation, which periodically tenders for highways work in open competition. Voluntary work on the network is also greatly valued.

The Countryside Agency previously supported Rights of Way improvements through the Milestones project, now completed. The Agency still provides financial support for maintenance, wardening and improvement of the Coast Path. Agency sponsorship of an officer to look at commercial sponsorship of rights of way was interrupted by the foot and mouth disease crisis, but current commercial sponsorship of local rights of way has included Friar Tuck (sponsoring a parish) and the Eden Project (contributing to the improvement of rights of way leading to the Eden site).

Known issues with the Definitive Map have in the past been addressed by a ‘farmers package’ programme, aiming to resolve anomalies to the benefit of both users and landowners, and by a ‘Target Parish’ programme, now terminated.

The Cornwall Local Access Forum (LAF) has been established under the terms of the CROW Act 2000 to guide and challenge the County Council’s work. The Countryside Agency supports a part time officer to coordinate LAF work across the South West region.

4.2 Surveying Network Condition

4.2.1 Volunteer Surveys

Cornwall County Council is grateful to volunteers who have previously undertaken condition surveys on the Cornish Rights of Way network. This activity has been superseded by professional surveys.

4.2.2 BVPI 178 Survey

The National Audit Office has established a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 178) for the total number of paths which are easy to use. The BVPI methodology, standardised across most Highway Authorities to enable comparisons to be made, entails sampling 5% of paths each year (2.5% in May and another 2.5% in November). Such small samples inevitably lead to statistical variations between years.

Using officers for the survey generally provides more consistent data than using volunteers. Since the Foot and Mouth crisis, a significant fraction of the inland network has been affected by vegetation growth and illegal blockages. Added to historical issues such as paths originally established for long-closed mines, this has led to the survey reflecting a poor overall network condition.

At 31% path availability by length in 2003, BVPI 178 data currently put Cornwall in the bottom quartile of Highway Authorities in England. Data for 2004 were extrapolated from the 100% survey (below), and indicated 47% availability. Whether this difference is fully reflected in user experience on the ground is not clear.

4.2.3 Full Network Survey

The BVPI survey samples only 5% of paths each year. In order to manage an improvement programme, a 100% survey was required. Exegesis Ltd was contracted to survey the inland network and enter the results onto an updated management database (CAMS 5). The survey was conducted through 2004 using surveyors equipped with computer mapping equipment.

The path condition survey found over 16,000 problems; 6,800 of these are “severe”. These include:

- 4,410 problems due to vegetation growth (brambles etc)
- 3,986 obstructions (unlawful and deliberate blockages)

- 3,671 missing signs
- 2,956 broken stiles and unusable gates

Users can expect to find around 5 serious problems on a typical short walk of 2 miles. Four out of every ten of Cornwall's paths are unusable – you can only walk an average of 250 yards before encountering a problem and you cannot walk more than 600 yards without encountering a serious problem, probably having to turn back.

The cost of putting all this right has been calculated as £5.8m, while the cost per year of maintaining Cornwall's network in good order has been calculated as £1.3m.

4.3 Public Path Improvement Programme

The County Council has agreed a new Strategy for managing Cornwall's public paths network which will see more than £2 million spent on improving and maintaining inland paths over the next three years. The strategy details a radical new way of improving the network which will lead to 1,500 miles of Cornwall's paths being brought up to a high standard by 2008. The intensive injection of capital investment will see paths prioritised according to those having the greatest value to local people and visitors. The works programme began in October 2005 after an extensive consultation with Parish Councils and organisations.

Many paths form an important means of accessing the Countryside, although it is recognised that other paths may have rather less value. A more measured, strategic approach has therefore been advocated based on "Priority Paths".

The concept of this is simple - Paths will be classified Gold, Silver or Bronze. "Gold" paths are usually well used, and cover more than 90% of the public use of the inland network. "Silver" paths are used on a less frequent basis, usually by specialist groups. "Bronze" paths are paths with little or no use – usually being "dead ends" or paths with legal issues. Full consultation has been carried out with Town and Parish Councils and other bodies and organisations regarding the classification of Cornwall's network. By borrowing a capital sum of £2m, a significant improvement to Cornwall's Public Path network has been shown to be achievable in a 3 year period to protect and sustain the annual £1.6 billion annual tourism income, as well as for the other benefits that better condition public paths will yield.

The original strategy document is available on the internet at:

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9763>

5 Issues affecting Users on the Ground

There is a wide range of different types of issue which we are aware of on the ground. The following sections provide a local perspective on issues, many of which are encountered across the country.

5.1 Coastal Erosion

Loss of path alignments due to cliff falls is a particular issue in Cornwall. Given that it is usually the Coast Path which is affected, there is a strong motivation to replace the route. Physical works are not always mirrored by legal changes. A national initiative which may resolve this issue is discussed under the South West Coast National Trail.

5.2 Steep River Valley Floods

An associated problem, albeit thankfully less common, is damage to paths through flooding and scouring in steep river valleys. The Boscastle floods were an extreme example. Remedial works to the paths and bridges in the valleys above the well-publicised village have continued for more than a year. Such major flooding events can have a disproportionate effect on maintenance budgets unless special provision can be made.

5.3 Cropping

By national standards, a small proportion of the Cornwall rights of way network runs over arable farmland. However, potato crop management can present an especial problem. Landowners generally have a right to cultivate cross-field paths. Ploughing can make the surface hard to walk along and crops make it hard to see where to go which is why users like them to be reinstated quickly. Legally the landowner has a duty to reinstate the path 14 days after the first cultivation and within 24 hours of any operation thereafter. Increasing use of agricultural contractors is tending to exacerbate the problem. Field edge paths should not be ploughed, but sadly insufficient headland is often left for path users.

5.4 Clearing Vegetation

The Highway Authority is responsible for the clearing of vegetation other than crops growing from the surface of a PRow. Surface vegetation cutting is generally undertaken by parishes cutting their own paths under LMP. Hay and silage crops can blur the responsibility between landowner and highway authority responsibility, as can land being managed under 'set aside' schemes. Similarly, on a neglected path it can be difficult to distinguish between upgrowth and sidegrowth. Scrub should generally be cut in the winter months to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.

The landowner has a duty to clear any vegetation that is growing on their land but overhangs the path; this includes the cutting of trees and hedges that obstruct a path. Clearance to a sufficient height is a regular issue for equestrians on bridleways. It can be difficult to establish the ownership of fallen trees on Rights of Way.

5.5 Barriers

Permission can be granted for new barriers, with gaps, gates or stiles to allow the user to pass:

- When the Definitive Map and Statement records the previous presence of a structure
- If a fence or wall is used to control livestock
- When there is a public safety issue.

The cost of installing and maintaining structures is generally the responsibility of the landowner, with a highway authority contribution available for maintenance. It is the County Council's duty to enforce this. There are however, many gates and stiles that have been put up without being properly authorised. The County Council welcomes the removal of stiles and gates where they are no longer needed for controlling livestock.

5.6 Disability Access

With the increasing concerns about wheelchair accessibility and the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act, gaps or gates are now preferred to stiles to admit wheelchairs and people with reduced mobility. The increasing size of powered mobility vehicles presents a potential issue for the future. There is a potential conflict between improving access and maintaining historic Cornish hedges and stiles.

5.7 Road Safety

When the right of way network was recorded, road traffic was slower and less intense. Roads could be crossed more safely, and there was little issue using lanes to connect paths. More and faster traffic means that the path network has become effectively fragmented. Significant path improvements are now subject to safety audits, but it is not practical to retrospectively assess and address all path/road interactions, and the larger part of the network still presents significant issues in places.

5.8 Byway and UCR Maintenance Standards

Byways generally have vehicular access rights, but are maintained principally for pedestrians and equestrians. Where there are houses with access from byways, whether or not they have private access rights, householders can have inappropriate expectations that byways will be maintained to road standards. This causes especial problems where development gradually overtakes rural byways without the route being adopted as a road. The planning process still does not take this issue fully into account. Unclassified County Roads (UCRs) which do not provide significant links for the road network, but which are useful for non-motorised users may not be maintained to the level expected by all users. Some recorded UCRs show little evidence of ever having existed on the ground, and would present significant issues to re-assert.

5.9 Fly tipping

Fly tipping is having an increasing effect on the countryside as the cost of landfill rises. Rights of Way, particularly byways, are vulnerable due to their relative ease of access. In extreme cases tipping can block paths, but more often it presents a safety hazard or deters use of paths. The County liaises with the Districts and Environmental Agency to remove waste, but is responsible for paying the associated landfill tax. While substantial rubbish is removed through this joint approach, residual waste is often unsightly and can damage grass cutting equipment. A secondary issue is the understandable pressure from landowners to erect barriers to prevent future land access by the fly-tippers. Such barriers restrict access to legitimate path users. The Environment Agency has developed an internet based system to record information on fly-tipping incidents across England and Wales. The Flycapture database, launched in April 2004, allows for the identification of hotspots, comparisons between different Authorities, provides information on the severity of fly-tipping incidents and helps improve the manner in which the Environment Agency and Local Authorities work together to catch and prosecute fly-tippers.

5.10 Travellers

When travellers set up illegal encampments on Rights of Way, Cornwall County Council works through the District Council Traveller Liaison Officers to secure their removal. On occasion, remedial works after removal have been expensive. In order to prevent access to land by travellers, an increasing amount of private land is now blocked off. This can cause increased pressure on Rights of Way, especially byways, from traveller encampments, and in turn can lead to an increasing demand for barriers on rights of way to keep travellers out. This is difficult to accommodate within existing legislation. However, by comparison with other authorities, issues relating to travellers and rights of way are generally at a lower level in Cornwall.

5.11 Signs

Signs are legally required where paths leave roads and should show the path status and direction. New or replacement Rights of Way statutory signposting is generally provided by

vandal-resistant short plastic fingers on wooden posts. A small number of older finger-posts advise the path destination and distance. Destination signs cost more than standard signs to produce and take longer to plan, order and administer, but have been identified as desirable for the Public Path Strategy improvements discussed below. Waymarking has historically been limited to specific routes, and to areas supported by voluntary groups and parishes, with materials provided by Countryside Services. Newly diverted paths are generally waymarked.

- Signs and waymarks with a yellow arrow mark public footpaths.
- Signs and waymarks with a blue arrow public mark public bridleways
- Signs and waymarks with a red arrow mark public byways
- Signs and waymarks with a black or green arrow mark permissive paths.

5.12 Road Verges

Although not strictly Rights of Way, road verges often provide links between paths. Verge maintenance needs to balance motorised road use (signage, gullies etc) with soft users and conservation management in sensitive areas.

5.13 Cross-Border Provision

By comparison with land-locked counties, the Cornish land border with Devon is very short (most follows the Tamar, with short ‘salients’ in the upper reaches), and there do not appear to be any significant anomalies where paths stop or change status at the county border. There are, however, few bridges, and a Devon bridleway does appear to stop at the river at Tamatown near Boyton, with the continuation into Cornwall where once there might have been a ford is a UCR not marked on the OS Explorer map. Indeed, in the parish of North Tamerton, there are no public rights of way recorded. There is an equivalent Cornish footpath ending at the Tamar at Wishworthy, near Launceston, with no apparent continuation on the Devon side, but by this point the river was once navigable, and it is more likely that the route linked to a riverine connection than that there was once a ford. Connections will be maintained with Devon as the ROWIP is developed.

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/transport/public_rights_of_way/rights_of_way_plan.htm

5.14 Development and transport

The workings of the Town and Country Planning Act have often been unkind to the network, with many post-war developments still blocking the line of definitive routes. Communication between planning and highway authorities is improving, but more still needs to be done to retain and improve key links in the path network.

Past County and Highways Agency (HA) road construction has significantly compromised Rights of Way network connectivity, as have railway level crossing closures justified by safety but not replaced by bridges (e.g. at Holmbush near St Austell). Recent County road improvements have given better consideration to Rights of Way and soft user requirements.

5.15 China Clay Extraction

In the St Austell area, the china clay industry has long had a significant effect on the landscape. As quarries and spoil heaps owned by successive companies (now Imerys), have expanded, they have encroached upon the rights of way network. This should have been accommodated in the planning process, but in some cases was not. Problems were compounded by the previous agency arrangement, whereby the District were responsible in the last century for rights of way as well as planning, and did not always have the resources for the enforcement required. As landscape restoration is undertaken, opportunities are

available to improve access. The china clay museum complex at Wheal Martyn provides an example of what can be done.

<http://www.chycor.co.uk/tourism/cata-guest/wheal-martyn/wheal-martyn.htm>

5.16 Open Access Land

While the mapping of Open Access land and Common Land has opened up a wide range of new access opportunities, some of the new areas of access land are not connected to the wider public access network. New paths may be required to access and connect such areas, but deciding which areas have sufficient demand to justify what can be considerable expense at a time when the wider network is not in a good condition is likely to prove a difficult task.

5.17 Military Land Use

During the Second War, many new airfields were constructed in Cornwall, as in the rest of the country. Rights of Way that were extinguished when bases were operational have often not been restored after the land has been restored to non-military use, leading to gaps in the overall network. While some military land uses can restrict land access (e.g. the rifle range on open access land at Cardinham Moor), other military land such as that at Penhale discussed above is often available for public use.

5.18 Path usage

While some information is available on levels of usage for the Coast Path and for some of the promoted trails, much less data is available on the use of the inland network. This can make it hard to justify investment. Compared to honeypots such as the Camel Trail on a summer Sunday afternoon, the attraction of many of individual paths on the 4700km rights of way network is the solitude they can offer. A sample survey on a weekday might be lucky to record any users at all during working hours – even though the local network may be well used if averaged over the year.

5.19 Diversity, Language and Socio-Economics

Despite a long maritime tradition, Cornwall has a very low ethnic diversity by national standards. Ethnic minorities have a larger, but still small representation among visitors. Indeed, the proportion of overseas visitors can present a greater requirement for multi-language interpretation. The revived Cornish language is currently spoken by a very small minority with differing versions currently being promoted, but given increased government support, there may come a time when more material will be expected in Kernewek/Kernowek/Curnoack.

Users of countryside access provision also tend to come from a limited part of the socio-economic spectrum. Though the absence of larger towns and cities in Cornwall reduces this issue compared to more heavily populated areas of England, the Camborne/Pool/Redruth conurbation is recognised as showing some of the problems suffered by larger cities ‘up country’. The proximity of the City of Plymouth across the Tamar from south-east Cornwall also presents an opportunity to improve cross-border provision. To gain the maximum benefit from investment in countryside access, a greater proportion of the population should be encouraged to consider the benefits of countryside access.

5.20 Concerns for land occupiers

Landowners and tenants can have problems with the historical routes of Rights of Way as farming practices change. The time and cost of processing diversions can be an issue, especially if they are contested.

Some footpaths are wrongly used by horses and cycles, which when coupled with inappropriate 4x4 access can prejudice land occupiers against legitimate users. Other concerns relating to public access include crime, traveller encampments, dog mess and stock worrying. Such concerns can lead to perceived and real reduction of land value due to new route creation, an issue to be addressed by the ROWIP. There can also be conflict between access and conservation interests.

5.21 Conflicts

It should be noted that where there is an issue with countryside access, there is often no single simple answer as different interests can have different requirements. Examples to illustrate this issue include:

- Accessibility vs heritage stiles
- Accessibility vs illegal use (e.g. motorcycles or fly tipping)
- Need for more safe riding routes vs horses unpopular with some walkers and landowners
- Encouraging more people to use paths can conflict with nature conservation priorities
- Statutory obligations vs available resources and funding
- Big new capital projects vs funding for maintenance of existing networks
- Land management requirements vs access opportunities
- Coordinated programmes vs demand for individual path resolutions
- Historic paths vs new network requirements
- Effective signposting vs concerns about countryside clutter
- Clearing encroaching vegetation vs nature conservation perceptions
- Urgent safety work requirements vs longer timescales to obtain permissions
- Correcting past development on paths vs rights of occupiers
- Maximising access while not increasing landowner liability

6 Other Issues

6.1 Landscape Designations

Cornwall has a range of landscape designations which potentially affect countryside access provision and use. While additional funding is available through some of these, designation can also increase the standard of provision which may be required and expected. Designations include the following:

6.1.1 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

<http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/>

958 square kilometres of Cornwall has AONB status, conferring a higher degree of planning protection, and a requirement to consider landscape issues in plans for the areas, including the ROWIP. Generally the aims of the AONB and ROWIP are well aligned. Paths in the AONB could incur extra costs for furniture such as gates, stiles and signage specified to a higher standard and an expectation of maintenance to a higher standard. Though funding may be available from the AONB to support capital works, the cost of corresponding maintenance generally still falls on the Highway Authority.

6.1.2 Heritage Coast

http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/DL/heritage_coasts/Cornwallhc.asp

32% of the English Coast has Heritage Coast status. Heritage Coasts are a non-statutory landscape definition, unlike the formally designated National Parks and AONBs, and are

defined by agreement between the relevant maritime local authorities and the Countryside Agency. The effect of the designation on the ROWIP is likely to be similar to that of the AONB. The forthcoming Marine Bill may also interact with ROWIP objectives. Aspects which might be relevant include Marine Spatial Planning, Marine Nature Conservation and Coastal and Estuary Management.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/policy/marine-bill/index.htm>

6.1.3 National Trail

The South West Coast Path is the one national trail in Cornwall. This route is described in more detail above.

6.1.4 World Heritage Site

A bid has been submitted for World Heritage Site status for mining heritage within Cornwall (<http://www.cornish-mining.org.uk>). Should this be successful, then the ROWIP should be aligned with WHS objectives, as many mining remains are often better accessed by paths than by motor vehicle.

6.1.5 National Park and Managed Commons

There are no National Parks in Cornwall. A proposal for changes to moorland management on Bodmin Moor to parallel the Dartmoor Commons Act of 1995 was debated in Parliament but that bill was not passed. The current Commons Bill may progress commons management issues.

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/Newsdesk/ns2-2005/ns05-328.htm>

6.1.6 Nature Conservation

A significant area of Cornwall has Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or higher nature conservation protection status, including 18 internationally designated Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Proposals for new or improved countryside access will have to be shown not to damage such areas. Open Access Land management is formally required to consider SSSIs, and there is a current project to assess the impact of Open Access on Bodmin Moor.

6.1.7 Forestry

While there are no Community Forests, Forest Parks or extensive areas of woodland in Cornwall, woodland does form a distinctive part of the Cornish landscape in the form of steep wooded valleys and wooded scarps fringing the drowned river valleys of Carrick Roads and the Tamar. Where these woodlands have particular value for nature conservation or landscape, then other designations (SSSI, AONB) often offer protection.

6.2 Economic Value

The economic value of Rights of Way and countryside access more generally became clear nationally during closures caused by the Foot & Mouth epidemic in 2001. In Cornwall, economic impacts were demonstrated by the large number of telephone calls recorded during the emergency, including many businesses distressed by loss of trade due to path closures. While the economic value of the Coast Path has been studied, no recent systematic appraisal of the economic value of the Cornwall rights of way network has been conducted. Third party assessments (e.g. those by the Ramblers Association and the Countryside Agency) make it clear that relatively modest investments in countryside access can have significant benefits.

Walking can be shown to be very cost effective way to encourage exercise compared to other publicly supported activities. For instance, swimming pools require a public subsidy of £2 per visit, while the cost of a walk is less than a penny. Improved health obtained through exercise has a demonstrable economic value by saving the cost of potentially expensive subsequent healthcare interventions for those who are unhealthy.

However, the relative cost per km for maintaining and improving the rights of way network is proportionately higher for a county such as Cornwall where the population is small and the income low compared to the total rights of way network mileage, as the following table shows:

County	Population	Rights of Way (km)	GVA† (£bn)	GVA*popln/km
Cambridgeshire	552,665	3210	9.1	1560
Cornwall	496,961	4238	4.8	560
Cumbria	487,607	3560	5.5	753
Devon	704,493	4900	13.1	1880
Dorset	390,980	4749	8.9	733
Gloucestershire	564,559	5390	9.0	943
Somerset	498,093	6038	6.3	520
Surrey	1,059,015	3300	21.9	7028

†GVA = Gross Value Added, a measure of economic activity

While this does not remove the legal obligation for the maintenance of the public rights of way network, it goes some way to explain the prioritisation pressures within which the Service has to operate.

6.3 Events Involving Countryside Access

A wide range of events use countryside access facilities in Cornwall. These include:

- Group outings
- Walking festivals
- Sponsored walks
- Running races
- Navigation events
- Guided walks
- Off-road cycling events
- Organised recreational motoring events (as distinct from competitions organised on private land)

6.4 Information on Countryside Access

Many people do not have the confidence or knowledge to use the network on their own. Maps, leaflets, guidebooks, events or guided walks can help to engage and encourage people to use local access facilities for a range of purposes including walking, cycling, visiting places or to address health issues. Local routes are promoted by and with the support of a number of agencies, national, regional and local. Currently, the process of preparing and publishing promoted material is not co-ordinated and there are no policies to guide which routes are promoted and to whom.

A map of the Cornwall Rights of Way network is available in interactive form on the internet. Permissive path information can be more difficult for the user to locate, although DEFRA publishes details of their supported schemes on the internet.

Organisations involved in promoting routes include national agencies such as the Countryside Agency, British Horse Society (BHS) and the Ramblers Association (RA). Much of this promotion is carried out through jointly funded projects.

Cornwall County Council publishes and distributes a wide range of countryside access information ranging from walks leaflets to books about industrial archaeology. These are available by post. A list can be found on the website. Further information is available on the website, but at present, down-loadable pdfs of leaflets are not generally available.

A very wide range of books has been published on routes in Cornwall. A flavour can be gained by listing those advertised at <http://www.bestwalks.com/cornwallbooks.htm> (no endorsement intended).

- Walking in Cornwall, John Earle, Cicerone
- AA 100 Walks in South West England
- 100 Walks in Devon and Cornwall
- Cornwall Coast path, Edith Schofield
- Cornwall walks, John Brooks
- Cornwall Short walk, Jarrold
- A View from Trencombe, Bob Acton
- Discovery Walks in Cornwall, Alexandra Pratt
- Coastal Walks in Cornwall, Eleanor Smith
- Pub Walks in South West Cornwall, Trisha & David Rowe
- 50 Walks in Cornwall, AA Publishing
- Pub Walks Along the Cornwall Coast Path, Eleanor Smith
- Pub Walks in Cornwall, David Hancock
- South-West Coast Path, Roland Tarr
- Exploring Cornwall's Tramway Trails, Bob Acton.
- Around Padstow, Bob Acton
- Around the Fal, Bob Acton
- Around Looe, Polperro & Liskeard, Bob Acton.
- Around Land's End, 12 Walks in Penwith, Bob Acton
- Around St Agnes and Perranporth, Bob Acton
- Around Newquay, Bob Acton
- Around Helford, Bob Acton
- Around the River Fowey, Bob Acton
- From the Roseland to St Austell Bay, Bob Acton
- Twelve Walks on the Lizard, Bob Acton
- Padstow to Falmouth, John Macadam
- Walks on Bodmin Moor, EV Thompson
- Six Walks on or around Bodmin Moor, Mark Camp
- 20 short walks around St Ives, Margaret Sharp
- Walk the Cornish Coastal Path, JHN Mason
- Land's End, The Coastal Footpath from St. Ives to St. Michael's Mount, Oliver Hawker
- Cornwall Walks to Churches, Diana Marjorie Pe
- Classic Walks Cornwall 2
- Penwith Land's End: The South West Coast Path, Dayrell Elphinstone

Further routes are published on a regular basis by magazines and, through websites, by individuals. While most of these are walking routes, details of off-road cycling, riding and

off-road motoring routes are also published, though the legal status of some publicised routes may be disputed.

7 Conclusions

Overall, while there are many aspects of countryside access in Cornwall which would benefit from improvements on the ground, there is a substantial network of linear routes and area access opportunities for countryside recreation and sustainable travel more generally. Feedback from the ROWIP consultation should be used to prioritise improvements to access coordination, facilitation and information as well as physical improvements.

8 Contact us

Cornwall County Council is currently engaging in a wide consultation on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and would value your feedback to this report. Further information on the ROWIP process will be posted on the Countryside Service website at <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/countryside>.

We can be contacted at

- The Countryside Service, Cornwall County Council, County Hall, Truro, TR1 3AY
- When visiting, we are located in the St Clements Building, Old County Hall, Station Rd
- 01872 222000
- accessteam@cornwall.gov.uk.

9 Acknowledgements

This report, prepared by the Countryside Service, builds on input from a wide range of contributors as well as from independent research. The structure has been based on that of the Cambridgeshire ROWIP Network Assessment, for which the primary author was previously responsible.

‘The Cornish Context’ was adapted from ‘Cornwall a Brief Description’.