

DCAF 9.2.10 PAPER 3



Devon Countryside Access Forum

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Mr R Reid
Ruby Country Partnership Ltd
xxxxxxx
Xxxxxxxx
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xxxxxxx

17 November 2009

Dear Mr Reid

Ride the Ruby Country

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a statutory forum established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Its specific remit is to advise on “the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area..” The Forum has fifteen members who represent the interests of land management, access use and other interests.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is pleased to note the contents of your project outline, submitted for potential funding from the Local Action Group.

Through its deliberations and advisory function over the past few years the Devon Countryside Access Forum has become acutely aware of the lack of safe recreational access opportunities for horse-riders. The DCAF was therefore delighted when Devon County Council committed finance to develop equestrian and multi-use trails within the County, including some in the Ruby Country area. Developing links between access areas, such as Dartmoor, Cookworthy Forest and Roadford Reservoir, and creating associated circular routes is also a key aspiration of the DCAF.

The DCAF strongly supports initiatives which would encourage and maximise use of equestrian and multi-use trails and add value to the investment from DCC. The Ruby Country area is ideally placed to develop sustainable tourism opportunities and any stimulus to the economy would be welcome. This bid provides an excellent way of marketing and promoting equestrian and multi-use routes, focussing on the environmental assets and local produce of the area.

Torrige District Council area, in which the Ruby Country falls, has the lowest median household income in Devon (DCC Estimate of Household Income – May 2009) and includes some of the most deprived wards in the County. Much of its employment is in the agriculture/food and drink sector. Devon County Council and the Devon Economic Partnership have identified Torrige as a priority regeneration community (State of the Devon Economy Report, September 2008). This bid therefore offers the opportunity to deliver multiple benefits.

The DCAF is also increasingly aware of the health agenda and the need for people to become more physically active. Exercising and access to green space has been shown to bring about physical and mental health benefits. Creating and promoting the routes should maximise the potential health benefits for both local residents and tourists.

The DCAF is pleased to add its support to the bid by the Ruby Country Partnership Ltd.

It would be helpful if you could let me know whether the bid is successful so that I can report back to the Forum.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Winter
Forum Officer