

## Devon Countryside Access Forum NEWSLETTER November/December 2011

### Top Stories

#### *Paths for Communities grant*

The Government Autumn Statement included a package of measures enabling local community partnerships to bid for central funds for community paths. The scheme, to be planned and developed by Natural England, is designed to:

- “encourage and enable communities to work with land owners to develop and enhance local public paths in ways that deliver wider benefit; and
- to offer a local rights of way network with more appeal to visitors and tourists, thereby contributing to the rural economy through better support for services such as shops, pubs, hotels, bed and breakfasts and equestrian businesses.”



The overall package for rural tourism is £25m with £2m specifically for rights of way. <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/economy/rural-economic-growth-review-111129.pdf>

#### *Independent Panel on Forestry – Interim Report*

The long-awaited Interim Report from the Independent Panel on Forestry is out.

Comments and press release: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/reports/>  
Report: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/files/Independent-Panel-on-Forestry-Progress-Report.pdf>

From the access point of view the main paragraph is:



#### **"A public forest enjoyed by the public**

We believe that at least the current level and quality of access to the public forest estate should be maintained, for the long term, and for the benefit and health of the nation. There is a challenge to make this more financially sustainable. We want to approach this topic with an open mind, recognising that access already comes at a cost, and that greater or enhanced access will inevitably cost more."

A recognition of the importance of access but also some challenges and debates ahead.

### *Other national news*

#### **National Trails**

Natural England is working on new delivery models for National Trails (including the South West Coast Path). An interim report on proposals is being discussed with Defra Ministers.

## National Nature Reserves



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The Natural England Board is considering a paper on the dedication of its National Nature Reserves under section 16 of the CRow Act 2000 over a four year programme. Only 2/3rds of NNRs are covered under open access. Natural England intends to look at sites on an individual basis.

[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/NEBPU2803\\_tcm6-28532.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/NEBPU2803_tcm6-28532.pdf)

The paper includes some discussion on additional access uses - "Optionally, a dedication may provide for other uses like riding or cycling to be included as a permanent right alongside public access on foot. We should consider site by site as part of the dedication programme whether there is any scope to formalise this type of provision over appropriate routes or areas."

A list of NNRs in the SW can be seen on

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/nnr/regions/southwest.aspx>

## Regional News

### South West Coast Path

The South West Coast Path has been nominated for a competition celebrating Britain's coastline and will be considered in Coast magazine's Best Coastal Path category, in the Coast Awards 2012. Mark Owen, National Trail Officer for the coast path team, said: "The sheer variety of scenery on the path is what impresses most, I think. This is the third time we have been nominated by Coast, so hopefully it will be third time lucky,." Votes should be cast online by 9 January.

[www.coastmagazine.co.uk/coastawards2012](http://www.coastmagazine.co.uk/coastawards2012)



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## Horse news

### Sustrans

Sustrans has produced a new technical guidance note on Horses on the National Cycle Network which includes information on potential design standards.

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/design%20and%20construction/Technical%20Note%2028%20-%20Horses%20on%20the%20NCN.pdf>

## BHS

The BHS has recently published a report on the health benefits of riding, in association with the University of Brighton and Plumpton College.

[http://www.bhs.org.uk/Riding/Health\\_Benefits\\_of\\_Riding.aspx](http://www.bhs.org.uk/Riding/Health_Benefits_of_Riding.aspx)



### Key findings:

- Horse riding and associated activities are classed as moderate intensity exercise.
- 39% of those in the survey had taken no other form of physical activity in the last four weeks, highlighting riding as important for people who might otherwise be sedentary.
- 93% of respondents were women and 49% of these were over 45 years of age.
- More than 2/3rds of respondents rode or were involved in associated activities for at least 30 minutes three times a week, the Government's minimum recommended level.

## Walking for Health



Natural England and the Department of Health have now invited tenders for the Walking for Health Scheme. There is now an option for any interested partner to enter into a funding agreement with Macmillan Cancer Support. Macmillan has become a partner in the WfH scheme, offering to provide £1.89m over three years to support WfH services. The cancer charity recognises

the benefits of walking for people living with, or recovering from cancer, and it would like to see WfH integrated into cancer care. Walking for Health will continue to be available to everybody.



## Devon News

### Exe Estuary Trail

Further improvements to the Exe Estuary Trail have been made with the opening of a new bridge over the River Clyst. In an excellent example of partnership working, Darts Farm and The Bridge Inn gifted land to make the project possible. The bridge provides a safe, alternative route for cyclists and walkers, avoiding the busy road bridge between Topsham and Clyst St George.

A new section of the route has also opened between Cockwood and Dawlish Warren, which incorporates 500m of cycle/footpath. In addition there is a new 1 km bridleway within fields parallel to the road.

## Economic Benefits from the Tour of Britain

An independent survey commissioned by the Tour of Britain reveals that an additional £3.1 million was spent in the County during the Devon stage of the event in September

## Royal Award for Devon Country Mile project

The Country Mile project has received the Prince Michael of Kent International Road Safety Award, organised by RoadSafe. The awards recognise “outstanding contributions to improving of road safety.”



The project was a partnership between Devon County Council and Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, the Devon and Cornwall Safety Camera Partnership, Devon Primary Care Trust and South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust. Focussing on the Exeter/Barnstaple area in between the A361, the A377 and the A396, the project secured a staggering reduction of 44% in the number of collisions (November 2008 to October 2009 compared with the average in years 2002-2006). A combination of publicity, training, safety and other measures achieved this success. Although the proposed sign warning of access users was not given approval, the general improvement in driving standards and reduction in speed levels will have been of benefit to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

## Recent compliment to Public Rights of Way

“I've just read the latest newsletter and just wanted to congratulate you on all that's been achieved so far. I know it's a combined effort but I'm staggered by what's being achieved here (especially compared to equally beautiful North Pennines where we used to live where most bridleways are actually impassable). So, on behalf of those who use the bridleways (I'm especially grateful for the new link into Cookworthy from Halwill) but haven't got involved in other ways, I just wanted to say thank you. Warm regards”