

RUBY COUNTRY EQUINE INTERESTS GROUP

Notes of Meeting held at Cookworthy Centre 24th March 2011.

1. Present:	Steve Gardner (DCC)	SG
	Caroline Gatrell (DCC)	CG
	Mark Betson (Ruby Co-ordinator)	MB
	Chris Ingram	CI
	Philip Hackett	PH
	Sandra Boycott	SB
	Maggie Melville	MM
	Richard Leonard	RL
	Jane Pratt	JP
	Elaine Freestone	EF
	Lynne Hughes	LH
	Councillor Barry Parsons - attending during item 4	BP

2. Matters arising from last meeting (SG)

Russ Collins (Forestry) Following our recent site meeting, he will be regrading forest tracks in Cookworthy. Grader moving onto site within a couple of weeks.

DCC reorganisation – PROW team all kept their jobs. 27% budget cut for maintenance. Now also responsible for unclassified county roads (unsurfaced). New sign will be used “Public Way”. Legal status = Highway. There will be a 2 yr takeover period.

High viz tabards are available again. Make some available for April 9th (Ruby Day)

3. Big Society (MB)

Russ Collins only has £1,000 to spend on tracks. Forestry has no money, no-one has, therefore voluntary upkeep will be necessary.

RL – Already a voluntary group in existence. MB. Would not mind co-ordinating. ? Autumn. Will report back at a later date.

4. Rights of Way Improvement Updates

a. Cookworthy to Halwill BW creation.

SG - Coming along nicely.

MB - Thought it should be publicised so people could see the improvements to Ruby Country.

SG – Countered that they had already come up against complaints with other works in Devon. However, would be happy to publicise through Ruby Country.

b. Halwill BW 13/Beaworthy BW11.

SG – Upgraded existing BW. Footbridge to be installed with a few days and still some drainage works at the southern end.

JF – Pointed out that the public kept shutting the gates unnecessarily. SG will put signs similar to those on Pegasus Way, asking them not to.

c. The Ruby Way.

Simpson Barton – SG reported that he has been asked to start looking into Simpsons Barton horse riding issue. MB has offered to work in partnership with SG on that. SG needs to discuss with Graham Cornish before making approach to I/o.

Coles Mill – SG – Reported on e-mail he had received giving update on Ruby Way from Graham Cornish, Cycleway Project Manager - Planning is in. No horses “no assumption that the Ruby Way will be multi-use”. Most at meeting expressed disbelief !

MB – Bude to Holsworthy - Has been working with the Cornwall side bringing the trail to the border with the idea of joining up. Cornwall side are doing it as a multi-use track.

MB – People want multi-use.

At this point Barry Parsons c.c. joined the meeting briefly for discussion, was questioned on the issue of multi-use and also Colesmill Viaduct. Confirmed that he would look into this further.

d. Pegasus Way Phase 2 (Venn Down Gates to Halwill Junction)

Approx 8km off-road , 2 km using lanes.

Venn – Rectory Farm, mostly off-road.

SG – Has met most of the landowners. He needs to do maps (land agent been asking for them) negotiations, solicitors etc. to follow.

R. Hulls owns from Venn to end of Railway Cottages.

A route going around Coxwall in fields has been planned.

LH. Asked SG. When he thought it likely that the next section i.e. Venn – Castle Cross would be opened as this would open up the way to Roadford.

SG hopes by April 2012 .

MB – Championed this, something for him to sell, help him get more businesses on board.

5. Maintenance Matters

a. Verges & ditch clearance (LH)

LH – Produced photos (Bratton Rd) of the extensive damage caused to just once grass verge during hedge cutting, rendering it unusable. Narrow lane used by school run, and people leaving the village. Verge was used for getting out of the lane to allow traffic to pass.

SG – Suggested we report the problem to highways dept. on 0845 155 1004 or customer@devon.gov.uk giving location details and report of problem.

LH – Many banks and verges are being eroded by tractors, vehicles or ditching, dumping of debris collected from the road etc., Verges that were in the past used by horse riders no longer viable to use. Verge on CI land now so narrow unable to cut it with machinery. SG mentioned that S71 of the 1980s Highways Act sets out that “it is the duty of the highway authority to provide in or by the side of a highway maintainable at the public expense by them which consists of or comprises a made-up carriageway adequate grass or other margins as part of the highway in any case where they consider the provision of margins necessary or desirable for the safety or accommodation of ridden horses and driven livestock...”

6. Bratton Clovelly Tracks (CI/LH)

a. Breazle Farm

LH – Suggested a track that ran through the farm (farmyard is accessed by another BW leading from Roadford) might be utilised to make a direct link almost into Bratton Clovelly Village. Locals have sometimes used this in the past.

b. Ellacott/Fursdon

LH. – This used to be available to riders until sold. Property now for sale again. Steve Church had approached current owner some years ago with a view to stewardship.

c. Warren to Blackabroom

LH – This landowner had wanted to develop this track as the main entrance. ??Offer creation of a bridleway as a negotiation tool.

SG – Suggested SWR could approach landowners directly and ask them with his guidance if needed.

CG – No historic evidence to her knowledge.

(Jenny Parsons might have information ex Col Croysdale files)

LH – So many users in the past have gone.

Discussion followed how best to achieve this - research into ancient rights, ask landowners if they minded if rode through. Permissive BW.

CG – Better going for creation of BW as it lasts forever.

LH – What really had in mind was the creation of the above mentioned tracks into BW's as they would make excellent links in Ruby Country.

7. Future of Ruby Riders meetings (SG)

SG – Should we continue to meet quarterly, or have a drop in day as some people don't like coming to meetings. These meetings are open to anyone. Consensus seemed to be to continue as before.

RL – These meetings are invaluable

PH – Suggested implementing both methods i.e. drop in session in the morning followed by our usual afternoon meeting when anything arising from the morning session could be discussed.

SG At the next meeting SG will be available all day but with the 'formal' meeting beginning at 1pm (to be confirmed).

8. Recreation the Ruby Country Way event 9.04.2011

MB – Pony rides, accompanied walks. Several councillors attending. SWR to be indoors, various activities outside.

9. Any other business

SG – 1997 stats of horse ownership in Ruby Country. Equates to £8.9million injected into the Ruby Country economy every year simply down to the cost of horse ownership (the majority of which is spent within 20 miles of where the horse lives).

MM – Reported on an unclassified road used as a BW. The adjacent property now been diversified into clay shoot (5 days a week) in spite of numerous objections. (One from a parish councillor who had incurred shot when walking on said road.) Shooting towards UCR which is used by pony club etc. Now put in for permission to extend shooting times. Suggested they shoot in opposite direction, but this would mean firing towards other activities eg. go-carting on their property.

RL – BHS should be taking this up.

SB – Mark Weston (BHS) is now on the case

Next meeting – Thursday 21st July 2011 - 1pm - Ruby Country Hub at Cookworthy Forest Centre.