



Rights of Way Survey
Langton Matravers
2016

Rights of Way (RoW) Survey – Langton Matravers

Background

1. The consequences of savings required in local government have meant that resources allocated to RoW have been severely reduced. Whereas in the past routine repairs and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways was readily accepted by Dorset County Council (DCC), they are no longer able to carry out this work. This has meant a radical re-think of how best to maintain RoW in the parish
2. A number of measures to maintain footpaths, on a voluntary basis, have been proposed including 'Adopt a Footpath'; none have been successfully implemented due to a basic lack of support within the parish.
3. The parish of Langton Matravers is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is criss-crossed with public RoW and its shoreline is part of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site. It is an important destination for tourism, particularly outdoor activities including walking. Located within the parish boundary are the very popular Holiday Property Bond and Leeson House, field studies centre run by DCC, as well as a number of campsites. RoW are therefore an important asset to the village and local businesses and, as such, must be regularly maintained for the pleasure of both residents and visitors.

The survey

4. It was therefore decided at the Parish Council Meeting of October 2015, to carry out a survey of the RoW in Langton Matravers with the overall aim of making recommendations which will improve the management of RoW with the assistance of other public organisations including DCC and the National Trust (NT).
5. Parish Council approved Terms of Reference for the Survey are attached.

Conduct of the Survey.

6. An open meeting was held in the village hall, on 26th October 2015, to launch the survey and to solicit help conducting the survey. Fourteen parishioners attended the meeting and a number of those volunteered to survey various RoW.
7. Parishioners raised two issues specifically, during the open meeting, which they wanted addressed by the survey. These were:

- Where possible stiles should be made 'dog friendly' to allow dogs to negotiate them with the use of a dog latch.
 - For ease of reference, path furniture should be sequentially numbered.
8. Thanks are due to Martin & Lynda Kirby, Chris and Sue Spilling, Juliet Greves, Sue Hutchings and Alastair Goldsmith for the excellent work they did in completing the detailed survey of RoW in the parish. I also wish to acknowledge and thank Jonathan Kershaw and Jonathan Leyland of the NT and Katie Black of DCC for their help and Mary Sparkes and Lynn Francis for their support.

Scope.

9. There are approximately 21 miles of RoW in the parish. All of these were included in the survey apart from the South West Coastal Path which, being a path with national status, has its own 'umbrella' organisation, and the Priest's Way (PW) which passes through both Swanage and Worth Matravers. The survey does not cover Permissive paths.

Categories of Public RoW.

10. Footpath: This is a path for walkers. If the physical conditions permit a pram, pushchair, wheelchair or mobility scooter may be used on a footpath. **It is a statutory offence to drive or ride a mechanical propelled vehicle along a bridleway or footpath without lawful authority.**
11. Bridleway: This is a way which may be used by horse-riders or walkers and, if the existing surface is fit, by pedal cyclists.
12. Permissive Paths: These are paths which a landowner has granted specific agreement for the public to use. They are not recognised as public RoW and are not recorded on the Definitive Map.

Signposting and Waymarking

13. DCC has a duty to signpost where a public RoW leaves a metalled road. DCC has power to waymark paths where the route is not obvious and may delegate this power to responsible persons, including parish RoW officers.
14. The erection of any unauthorised sign on a public RoW is not permitted.

Dog Control.

15. Source of concern in the parish has been the indiscriminate fouling by dogs on or just off public RoW. Faeces left by dogs can be hazardous to livestock and humans and are unpleasant to users of the RoW. Over time the Parish Council has conducted a campaign to educate dog owners to act responsibly, by taking home faeces in a plastic bag which can then be disposed of with normal house-hold rubbish. The practise of disposing of used plastic bags in the countryside is to be abhorred.
16. There is no statutory right to take a dog on public RoW, but it is generally accepted, by the Parish Council, that dogs are companions to many people walking in the countryside. There is no right to allow a dog to stray off a RoW. Nor is there a right to expect stiles to accommodate dogs although, where funds permit, every effort will be made to include a dog latch or to replace the stile with a gate.

Stiles and Gates.

17. Any stile, gate or other similar structure, including footbridges, across a public RoW, must be maintained by the owner of the land in a safe condition and to the standard of repair required to prevent unreasonable interference with people using the RoW. DCC is required to contribute not less than a quarter of any expenses incurred by the land owner in the maintenance or installation of stiles and gate
18. British Standard BS 5709 prescribes the dimensions of gaps, gates and stiles and should be adhered to when replacing or repairing path 'furniture'.

Land Matters

19. The 1990 Rights of Way Act requires that if a path transits a field or enclosure, the surface must not be ploughed or disturbed. However, a path may be diverted provided that the diversion is adjacent to original and is properly defined.
20. Land ownership within the parish has, as far as possible, been established. This is illustrated in the attached map. It is important to identify who owns the land through which a RoW passes to help determine who has responsibility for maintaining path furniture.

21. Where it has not been possible to establish ownership for the purposes of this study, this could only be resolved by making a formal enquiry to Land Registry UK for which there would be a search fee.
22. As can be seen, the NT owns the majority of land in the parish, with smaller elements being owned by Scott Estate and DCC.

The National Trust.

23. Despite having only limited funds available for the maintenance of RoW, the NT does its level best to maintain paths and associated furniture in good repair. The links between the parish RoW Officer and the NT Senior Ranger are strong. Maintenance work identified by this survey will be carried out by the NT as funds and manpower permit.

Service Level Agreements (SLA)

The procedure for agreeing to establish a SLA is:

24. The Parish submits a list of the paths for which they wish to receive a higher level of management.
This is agreed, including costs, between the Parish and DCC Countryside Ranger.
The Ranger agrees to maintain these routes routinely 2-3 times a year including a major cut of foliage during the winter.
The RoWLO or an assigned member of the PC notifies the ranger of any unforeseen problems on the agreed paths during the year.
The arrangement is flexible and needs a common sense approach. The Parish will report problems as they arise.
The PC will be invoiced for their share - 21p per metre - at the end of the financial year.

Conclusions

25. In general the parish are fortunate to have so many attractive RoW in their jurisdiction. But this brings with it responsibility and every effort should be made to maintain them in good condition as the paths are a valuable asset to both parishioners and visitors. In this regard it is to be hoped that some sort of self-help scheme could be introduced whereby residents volunteer to look after a footpath.
26. Public RoW in the parish total 21,115 metres (15.75 miles), not including the Priest's Way or the SW Coastal Path. There are approximately 110 pieces of path furniture in the parish of which 78 (86%) are located on land owned by the NT. Maintenance work identified by NT survey will be carried

out by them as funds and manpower permit. Of the total 21 pieces of path furniture requiring attention 8 need replacing. Those on land owned by the NT are their sole responsibility. This survey should be considered in conjunction with the Stile and Gate Survey completed by the NT in May 2014, a copy of which is held in the parish office.

27. The middle part of the PW, measuring 2.7 kms, passes through the parish. The Parish has duty of care, together with the NT, for the PW, a major refurbishment of which took place finishing in January 2014. This survey does not address on-going maintenance issues with the PW as these are subject to separate arrangements with DCC and the NT.

28. The survey identified elements of two paths in the parish which are considered important enough to warrant 'Priority Status'. These are:

- Path 16/13 – 400m. This path links Windmill Hill and New Barn. It is well used and runs through a small wooded area.
- Path 16/44 – 200m. This path is well used and affords the only safe foot access from the village to Harman's Cross and the garage on the A351.

The cost to the PC of entering into a SLA with DCC for these two RoW to be regularly maintained for 12 months would be £0.21x600= £126. The SLA would be initially for 12 months to be reviewed annually.

29. Although perhaps desirable, I do not believe that it would either be cost-effective or helpful to number all pieces of path furniture in the parish. To do so would take both time and money and would be hard to justify.

30. The matter of making stiles dog friendly is covered by paragraph 16.

31. This survey cannot be considered to be a definitive record of each footpath in the Parish. It will require amendment from time to time.

Recommendations:

That:

32. The two paths identified in paragraph 28 are entered into a SLA with DCC for regular maintenance.

33. As funds become available those pieces of path furniture identified in the Footpath Summary are repaired or replaced.

34. A volunteer scheme is created to look after elements of the RoW in the parish

35. The recommendations in this report are reviewed annually and progress reported to the Parish Council.

Ian Vaughan-Arbuckle
RoW Liaison Officer Langton Matravers

28th April 2016.

Attachments:

- Terms of reference
- Map – RoW Langton Matravers
- Map – Land Ownership Langton Matravers
- Summary of Survey Recommendations

Terms of Reference for a Survey of Footpaths
In the parish of Langton Matravers.

Purpose:

To carry out a detailed survey of the public footpaths and bridleways in the parish of Langton Matravers and to make recommendations which will improve the management of the Rights of Way (RoW) with the assistance of other public organisations including Dorset County Council (DCC) and the National Trust (NT).

Scope:

Consider the usage of the RoW in Langton Matravers with a view to 'grading' each footpath/bridleway in relation to their importance to the general public.

Identify the responsibilities for and the annual assets available for the maintenance of RoW within the DCC and the NT.

Carry out a survey of RoW 'furniture' including stiles and gates with a view to identifying which need repair and in what priority.

Consider a numbering system for RoW furniture, including any cost involved.

Consider a voluntary self-help system within the parish to assist in the routine maintenance of RoW.

Timing:

The aim should be to complete the survey by early in 2016.

Process:

- Publish the ToR after formal approval by the Parish Council.
- Hold a public consultation after announcing the survey locally
- Hold an initial meeting of relevant organisations & individuals involved with the management of RoW in the parish including DCC and the NT.
- Establish a plan to carry out the survey including a timescale.
- Carry out the survey.
- Write report, make recommendations and submit to the Parish Council.

Governance:

The survey is to be led by the Langton Matravers RoW Officer (Ian Vaughan-Arbuckle) who may enlist the help of any organisation or individual whom he considers has a genuine interest in or responsibility for RoW in the parish.

Signed:

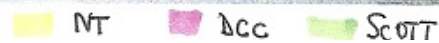
Dated

On behalf of the Langton Matravers Parish Council

Airwood Down



Asiwood Town



LANGTON MATRAVERS SUMMARY OF FOOTPATH SURVEYS

Ser	Path No	Ownership	Furniture	Path Cond	Wk req to Furniture	Status	Distance	Comment
1	16/15	PVT/SE	None	Good	None	Normal	718m	
2	16/14	PVT	1xS	Good	Stabilise	Normal	117m	
3	16/17	NT	1xS, 1xG	Good	None	Normal	277m	
4	16/19	NT	1xS	Good	Req repair	Normal	243m/ 196	Photo
5	Part 16/25	PVT	None	Good	NA	Normal	919m	
6	16/45	PVT	1XS	Good	1xS req repair	Normal	145m	Photo
7	16/35	NT	1xMG, 1xS	Fair	None	Normal	686m	Metal gate sometimes locked
8	16/32	PVT	1xMG, 1xG	Good	None	Normal	239m	Part of PW
9	16/33	NT	3XS	Good	Replace 1xS with gate	Normal	133m	
10	16/31	NT	Fence, 1xMS	Poor	Replace 1xMS with gate	Normal	250m	Replace fence with stile.Re-estab path. See report
11	16/08	DCC ?	1xG, 1xMG	Good/Fair	None	Normal	1167m	
12	16/12	DCC ?	1xMG	Good	None	Normal	192m	
13	16/27	NT	4xG, 1xKG,1xS	Good	Adjust 2, replace 1	Normal	1911m	
14	16/44	NT/PVT	9xS,2xMG,1xB	Good/Fair	1xS needs repair	Priority	1432m	Reg maint N of Rly line. Photo
15	16/41	PVT	2xS, 1xMG/S	Good	None	Normal	150m	
16	16/42	NT	1xMG	Good	None	Normal	637m	
17	16/03	NT	3xS,1xKG,1xG	Good	1XS needs replacing	Normal	1189m	Photo
18	16/07	DCC	2xMG	Good	None	Normal	217m	
19	16/50	SE	1xS,1xB,1xMG	Good/Fair	None	Normal	16m	Some reg wk req to path
20	16/51	SE	2xMG,1xS	Poor/fair	1gate reqs adjustment	Normal	1140m	Urgent ground work req to north end of path
21	16/52	SE	None	Good	NA	Normal	120m	

22	16/13	PVT/SE ?	1xS	Poor/ Good	Replace stile	Priority	521m	The upper path is the RoW not the lower
23	16/06	PVT	3xMG, 2xS	Good/Fair	Replace 1 S, repair 1 S	Normal	1042m	Needs re- signing in area of Knitson Farm
24	16/02	PVT	1xG, 1xMG	Good	None	Normal	144m	
25	16/04	NT	1xG, 1xMG	Good	None	Normal	195m	
26	16/05	NT	1xG,2xS	Good	2xs need replacing	Normal	665m	
27	16/01	NT	1xG	Good	None	Normal	475m	
28	16/09	DCC ?	1xMG	Good	None	Normal	574m	
29	16/10	NT/DCC ?	1G	Good	None	Normal	1173m	
30	16/21	SE/DCC/ NT	4xS,1xG,1xKG	Good	1 stile needs repair	Normal	984m	Photo Serial 438
31	16/18	PVT		Good	None	Normal	506m	
32	16/22	NT/SE		Good/Fair	None	Normal	1857m	
33	16/28	NT	1xS	Good	None	Normal	192m	
34	16/48	NT	1xS	Good	Replace stile	Normal	588m	
35	16/29	NT/PVT	1XG	Good	None	Normal	228m	
36	16/39	NT	1xG	Good	None	Normal	697m	
37	16/40	NT	1xG	Good	Repair/replace gate	Normal	350m	Photo Serial 286
38	16/36	NT		Good	None	Normal	265m	
39	16/47	NT	1xG, 1xS	Good	None	NormL	185m	
40	16/26	NT		Good	None	Normal	143m	
41	16/23	NT	1xKG,3xS	Good	1xS needs repair/ replac	Normal	750m	Photo
					21 need work or replace	TOTAL	21,115m	15.75 miles not including the PW or SWCP
	NOTES :							
	PVT	Private		DCC	Dorset County Council		B	Bridge
	SE	Scott Est		G	Gate		S	Stile
	NT	Nat Trust		MG	Metal Gate		KG	Kissing Gate
	Report	Survey Rep					Photo	Photo of damaged path furniture

