

## Asset Survey - Its Purpose – and what it will deliver for the RoW Network

This summary has been prepared, and checked, in consultation with and by Cornwall Council. It focuses on bridleways but the principles apply to footpaths as well.

### The Survey

- The Asset Survey is a survey of condition of assets rather than a survey of path usability and quality.
- It is being conducted by a newly recruited team of inspectors.
- It is a survey of all Environmental Assets, including all Open Spaces, Mine buildings, Coastal Defences etc etc.
- RoW is just one part of the survey.
- The whole of the network should be completed by Late Spring – hopefully.
- This initial survey will be followed by on going inspections, the frequency of which is still to be determined and which will be dependent on the type of asset. Toby would like the same level as Devon (every 900 days minimum)

### What it will Record

- The survey will record the condition of Bridges, Gates and Stiles and path surface.
- It will also record any Side or Top Growth that falls short of the specified requirements for footpaths and bridleways.
- The survey will also record any other obstructions that prevent use of the path.
- The survey will only broadly survey the definitive line of paths and with wide tolerance. Tolerance is 5 metres either side of the digitised line
- The survey will be conducted using the GIS map not the definitive map. GIS Map is loaded onto a tablet used in the field
- Presence or absence and correctness of signage where path meets a road will be recorded, also waymarking at junction of paths, and other waymarks recorded along the route
- Cattle grids will be recorded. Where they are identified on a byway or bridleway they will be recorded as an enforcement issue
- Gates
  - Gate Widths are being recorded and gate widths below 1.5 metres on bridleways / byways are recorded as a defect
  - Gates must freely open on two hinges, and be easily opened and fastened otherwise recorded as a defect.
  - Whether bridleway gates are openable or not on horseback is NOT being recorded
- Bridges
  - Bridge widths will not be recorded and thus are not being checked that they meet the 1.5 metre width requirements for BW furniture.
  - Cornwall Council advises that: **There are currently no BS guidelines to the dimensions of bridleway bridges on PROW. There are however DoT guidelines in regard to equestrian bridges crossing roads. In line with these Cornwall Council adopts a 1.5 metre width for new bridleway bridges. There may be cases where this may not be achievable for a new structure - we would look to consult with the BHS in these instances (as per the BHS advisory note on bridges). There is nothing to enforce that historical structures below 1.5 metres in width should be replaced with a new structure to that width.**

- Therefore suitability of a bridleway bridges for equine use appears as not being recorded and presumably along with presence or absence of kick boards/parapets. It is hoped that weight bearing for a tonne of horse is being assessed.
- Toby Lowe advises that: **Again, these are not included within a BS. We would however consider these as part of the construction of a new bridge (in line with the DOT guideline). In regard to structural loading, this would require an inspection by a structural engineer (neither our inspectors or CORMAC Rangers are trained to that level). The inspectors will however be picking up obvious visible defects. Currently our larger bridge structures are part of a structural inspection regime carried out by our structures team.**  
**The asset survey will be used to:**
  1. Check that all larger structures are on structures inspection lists
  2. Assess what needs to be looked at in regard to issues surrounding smaller structures. I will include equestrian use as part of this discussion.

### What will be done with the results?

- The survey will broadly categorise issues as either Category 1 H&S issues or 'OTHER' –
- Category 1 H&S issues will be fixed with high priority and from a special separate budget.
- Other problems which may have H&S implications, eg Low branches on bridleways, or bridleways which are too narrow for a horse to pass safely because of side growth will not be attended to or flagged with any priority. – the results from the asset survey will allow CC to evidence the scale of these problems and the resource required to resolve these issues, this will also allow us to create a priority list based on existing resources. Toby would hope this will be balanced against other issues recorded across the Environment Service as a result of the asset survey
- Gates will be flagged if they are not on two hinges or not easily undone. There will not be assessed for ease of use or quality. In general gate issues will not be classed as Cat 1 H&S
- Other H&S issues such as barbed wire or electric fences next to paths will be flagged as enforcement issues
- With regard path surface deep mud/bog that a horse can sink to and get stuck will be flagged as Category 1 H&S, and ditto for walkers' boots. These will be referred to a ranger to look at.
- Any bridleway surface that is considered dangerous to use by horse will be flagged as Cat 1 H&S. eg badly washed out and gullied paths.
- The whole segment (defined by GIS) of a path will be recorded as being Good/Satisfactory/Poor or Unacceptable
- With regard to limitations, furniture etc. These will be recorded but not matched against statement and authorities given etc. – That is perceived as a massive piece of work – the intention at present is to evidence the overall state of the network and the financial liability.

It must be noted that currently there is no plan of action for looking at or prioritising and fixing any of the issues detected other than the Category 1 H&S issues specified above. – This aspect will be examined once the survey data is completed and therefore the true financial cost of the problems is understood. These include many issues that horse riders may find hazardous eg side and top growth etc – The survey data will be used to make a proper case in regard to all the hazards user encounter. The survey is working to a height of 3.5 metres and 2.5 metre width clearance on bridleways.

Adrian Bigg, BHS (and CCAF), December 2013

TABLE DEFINING PARAMETERS FOR SURFACE AND SIDE VEGETATION FOLLOWS ON NEXT PAGE

	Good Minimum meets <u>all</u> following:*	Satisfactory Minimum meets <u>all</u> following:*	Poor Minimum meets <u>all</u> following:*	Unacceptable Meets <u>any</u> of the following:*
Surface Vegetation	Entire width of path cleared edge to edge where edges of highway are identifiable  or  1.5 metres cleared footpath / 2.5 metres cleared bridleway byway if available.  Maximum vegetation height 20cm	Path width cleared below 1.5 metres footpath, below 2.5 metres. Maximum vegetation height 20cm	No clearance but path accessible with effort or vegetation above 20 cm.	Path inaccessible due to surface vegetation.
Side Growth Vegetation	GOOD  Entire width of path cleared edge to edge where edges of highway are identifiable  or  1.5 metres width cleared footpath / 2.5 metres width cleared bridleway / byway if available.  Minimum height for side growth vegetation across bridleway / byway 3.5 metres  Minimum height for side growth vegetation across footpath 2 metres	SATISFACTORY  Path width less than 1.5 metres cleared footpath / less than 2.5 metres width cleared bridleway / byway if available.  Minimum clearance height for side growth vegetation across bridleway / byway 3.5 metres  Minimum height for side growth vegetation across footpath 2 metres	POOR  Limited width due to side growth but path accessible with effort.  Note – a bridleway / byway will become inaccessible more easily than a footpath. Always consider the needs of equestrian users.	UNACCEPTABLE  Path inaccessible due to side growth vegetation.  Note – a bridleway / byway will become accessible more easily than a footpath. Always consider the needs of equestrian users.