

Meeting with DCC PROW managers 2nd October 2025-summary of main points

Attended Richard Walton, DCC Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager
Debbie Ebsary Area DCC PROW Warden (South), Jon Boyd DCC Public Rights of Way Officer - Partnerships and Projects , Richard Ward Chair Sandford PC., Graeme Barnell Footpath Warden Newton St Cyres.

Repairs to Footpath “Furniture” and infrastructure

Depending on circumstances, this might be the landowner, the P3 partner or DCC (using a local contractor via a Framework).

Gates and Stiles. DCC have a policy of not authorising new or replacement stiles; however a landowner can continue to maintain a stile if pre-existing/lawful and needed for livestock management. Gaps or Gates are much preferred as these are easier to maintain and provide much better access to paths for people with a range of ages and abilities. DCC view the installation of new gates to replace inadequate stiles as an improvement and will consider P3 applications to grant fund.

Repairs to gates and stiles are usually the responsibility of the Landowner. However Landowners can potentially reclaim part of the cost of repairing damaged footpath “furniture” (e.g. gates) from DCC. At a practicable level, the landowner may be provided with the materials or DCC may instruct a contractor.

DCC may consider a P3 grant bid for improvement to existing stiles (e.g. an additional bottom step) if the landowner will not agree to a gap or gate and the stiles are otherwise in good repair.

Grant Bids should be submitted to the P3 Mailbox prow@devon.gov.uk

Reporting of faults should be via the online system (ref. [Report a problem with a public right of way - Roads and transport](#))

If helpful, P3 groups can choose to use the same local contractors as available to DCC via the framework agreement. Details will be shared (action for Richard / Debbie).

Bridges. Bridges across /part of public rights of way are inspected by DCC either by a public rights of way warden or an engineer from the bridges and structures team. For smaller bridges (less than 6 metres span) there is a 3 yearly cycle of checks by DCC wardens. Depending on the structure, larger (more than 6 metres span) bridges are subject to a general inspection every couple of years, and a more detailed principle inspection on a 6 to 18 year cycle. Damage to bridges should be reported ASAP via the details at [Report a problem with a public right of way - Roads and transport](#).

Mud and drainage

Serious mud that requires drainage improvement work should be reported to DCC via [Report a problem with a public right of way - Roads and transport](#). Where ownership details are known, the P3 reps may want to engage first with the landowner about the problem.

Lesser mud problems, that might be fixed quite easily, can also be discussed and potentially resolved with the landowner. When reported, DCC will inspect and assess the situation and the work required. Surface improvements may be suitable for a P3 grant.

DCC PROW Contractors

DCC has a “framework agreement “ with approx. 50 approved contractors across Devon that can carry out repairs and improvement works usually on an agreed hourly rate. Locally James Ayre is one such.

This agreement has three categories of provider:-

1. Basic maintenance and repair work including strimming, basic chainsaw work involving up to two workpeople.
2. Work requiring a work gang and/or machinery, including drainage and resurfacing work.
3. Work requiring special technical advice

Uppgrowth and Strimming

The clearing of upgrowth and strimming is predominantly done by DCC contractors, with paper maps based on historical need but updated when known changes are required (e.g., a previously grazed field no longer subject to grazing). P3 Parishes can and do report work that needs doing, although it may be the case that cuts will have been planned but the contractor has not yet got to that particular path yet. P3 Parishes can enter into agreement to organise cutting direct e.g., using volunteers or a local contact, or make direct contact with approved contractors to commission work at DCC agreed prices using their own budget or by bidding for P3 Grant money.

ACTION:-Richard / Debbie / Jon will provide P3 Parishes with a list of contractors together with contact details.

Proposals for arranging path cuts arranged by the P3 Parish should be submitted via the P3 Mailbox prow@devon.gov.uk

Reporting of overgrown paths (not maintained by the P3 Parish) should be reported via [Report a problem with a public right of way - Roads and transport](#)

New PROWS and diverting existing PROWS

Consideration to add a new PROW if there is historic evidence, or established, uninterrupted public use over a 20 year period requires an application under schedule 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. DCC has also been relatively proactive by carrying out a parish-by-parish review in liaison with respective parish and town councils, and identifying suitable paths. If a landowner of a proposed new PROW is in agreement, the process for designation may be easier and more likely to be successful. If a landowner is willing, public rights can also be created by agreement (creation / dedication). The process is more complex, and likelihood of success lower, if the landowner is not in agreement.

Path changes such as diversion and extinguishment can also be made under the Highways Act 1980 (and Town and Country Planning Act 1990 if required as part of an approved development). Again, these are more likely to be successful if the landowner agrees.

There is a waiting list for Definitive Map changes of this sort but suggestions on potential new paths (such as missing links) are welcome.

The process for applications is set out on the DCC Website.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/prow/prow-maps/making-changes-to-the-definitive-map/>

Bids for P3 Grants

New Grant application forms are being sent to all participating PCs. Forms are also available on the DCC P3 Webpage. This information is currently being updated ready for next year. Graeme is happy to proof read the draft docs. If helpful.

[Parish Paths Partnership scheme - Public rights of way](https://www.devon.gov.uk/prow/parish-paths-partnership-scheme/)

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It was noted that projects can potentially be bid for at any time but early in the financial year is most common (with allocation in part depending on budget availability).

It was suggested that as Parishes set precepts in December, DCC may wish to review P3 timetables to better fit with this.