

Getting on the right track

Delivering rights of way improvements 2007/08





Derbyshire County Council looks after more than 3,000 miles of public rights of way across the county - footpaths, bridleways and byways. We also oversee many more miles of other paths, trails and multi user Greenways.

In 2007 we produced the first Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Derbyshire - a five year plan outlining our proposals for improving the county's network of paths and trails from **2007** to **2012**.

Our plan has five key aims to help people get out and about in Derbyshire either to enjoy exploring the local countryside or to get to work, school and the shops, without having to rely on the car:

- Existing access - to make sure the existing public rights of way network is open and available for people to use

- Finding the way - to provide an up to date Definitive Map and Statement showing the routes and to make it widely available for people who want to see it
- Safe and well connected - to provide a more connected, safe and accessible network suitable for all users
- Encouraging more users - to improve the promotion, understanding and responsible use of the network
- Getting involved - to encourage greater community involvement in managing local rights of way.

When we produced the plan we listened to what you told us were your most important issues and what our priorities should be. During the first year of the plan we've been working in partnership with others to deliver these improvements. Here are some of the highlights from the year.

TOP PRIORITY - TACKLING ILLEGAL USE

You told us you were concerned about vehicles using paths illegally. We've been working closely with the Police and other local authorities, particularly the Peak District National Park Authority, to tackle this issue. But we recognise that there are places where vehicle use is legal.

- Vehicle counters have been purchased to monitor routes being used illegally and to target Police operations
- In the north east of the county, joint operations with the Police have resulted in warning notices being issued. The bridleway across Topley Moss, an important site for wildlife, has had far fewer vehicles using it illegally (**75% less**)
- Operation Blackbrook was launched in **April 2007** to deal with complaints about illegal use in an area of the National Park to the east of Buxton. We've put up signs to let everyone



know where they may share the pathways with vehicles and signs to say where vehicles are not allowed.

PRIORITY 2 - MAKING YOUR WAY EASIER

You said we should focus on making our existing rights of way network easier to use.

- To help you on your way over **600 new signposts** have been put in where paths leave the road
- Over **500 miles** of the most popular paths were inspected during the year and path surveys carried out in **37 parishes** across the county
- We responded to more than **4,000 enquiries** from the public
- Volunteers worked for **1,562 days** on projects to help improve access to local paths
- More than **250 new gates** were installed to replace difficult stiles or gates that had past their best.



PRIORITY 3 - FORGING THE LINKS

You told us we should try and provide practical routes that link people's homes, local facilities, public transport and places of interest.

We improved **six routes** providing local people with safe off-road links to the shops, schools, nearby train station or into the surrounding countryside.

Our projects included:

- Improving a path between Whatstandwell village and the local railway station
- Surface improvements to provide better access to the college in Kirk Hallam
- Improved signage and surfacing to connect Ashbourne town centre with the Tissington Trail
- Walkers also have a fresh new path to tread as work is completed to resurface a well used footpath between Wirksworth and Bolehill. We've funded work to improve the footpath that runs from Cemetery Lane in Wirksworth to Bolehill (see front cover photo). It is a well used path that has become damaged over the years. It now provides an all weather link between the two communities and gives local people better access to the shops and schools on foot instead of by car.

Volunteers from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) did much of the work on the footpath and we'd like to thank them for their help.

PRIORITY 4 - A GREENER NETWORK FOR DERBYSHIRE

You said we should continue to develop a county-wide network of Greenways or multi user routes. We have consulted widely on proposals for a network of routes in the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales areas to complete coverage for the county.

- We've built **18 miles** of new cycle routes during the year
- The Silverhill Trail near Tibshelf was officially opened in **May 2007**
- Local people in Killamarsh have got a new walking and cycling trail which we hope will encourage them to leave their car at home. The 1.4 mile Greenway follows the route of the Chesterfield Canal through the village and cost **£103,000** to build. The photos to right show before and after the work.

It provides a traffic free walking and cycling route between residential areas and village amenities such as shops, schools, the sports centre and library which is also suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

The Greenway also provides a safe route to schools in the village and gives easy access to the wider countryside such as Rother Valley Country Park and the Trans Pennine Trail. We hope that the Greenway will eventually form part of the towpath of the restored canal through Killamarsh.



PRIORITY 5 - IT'S ALL MAPPED OUT

You said you wanted a better record of where routes are and who can use them.

- We've updated the information for **730 miles** of routes this year.
- We've added Bolsover to the other areas of the county for which the public rights of way information is now available in digital format on our website. These include North East Derbyshire and South Derbyshire and Erewash. If you don't have access to the internet at home why not call in at your local library and take a look.
- We've distributed **61,000 copies** of the new Cycle Derbyshire leaflet
- We've produced **7 new leaflets** to promote access to the countryside

Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan is available to view on the county council's website at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/Access_recreation/rights_of_way/improvements

If you would like a copy of the Plan or have any suggestions for paths that could be improved, then **Call Derbyshire on 08 456 058 058.**