

Countryside Access Plan Action Plan and Annual Report 2005/06

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This document is the first Countryside Access Plan Action Plan and Annual Report to be produced for Hampshire.

It reports on the Countryside Access Plans for Hampshire and the strategic framework which they provide for the work of Hampshire County Council and other organisations involved in countryside access.

It also outlines the projects undertaken during the financial year 2004/2005 which are helping to deliver the Plans in the Forest of Bere and the Forest of Eversley, and the Actions which will be implemented over the coming year (2005/2006).

Foreword

This report represents a major stride forward towards improving the opportunities there are for people to enjoy Hampshire's wonderful countryside. Hampshire County Council has responded enthusiastically to its new responsibility to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan by trying to find out what are the real barriers which prevent people enjoying the countryside or local green areas as much as they would wish. The approach we have adopted takes account of the wide range of people's interests and their differing activities in the countryside. It is particularly important for the Plans to reflect the different needs and aspirations of people of all ages and mobility. Evidence suggests that, for many people, the main obstacles are often related to having access to the right information or being confident and comfortable about being in the 'right place' in the countryside. In our approach to this work we have tried to reflect the broad range of these issues and we have therefore called our plans Countryside Access Plans. Our approach also recognises the importance of people who own or manage land in the county and that their needs, concerns and ideas are a vital part making the process successful.

A tremendous amount of work has already been undertaken to reach this stage and County Council is extremely grateful to all those who have contributed to the process so far. This work is so much more valuable because we know it is built upon the views and ideas of people who know what the problems are. A special thank you must go to the members of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum who give up their time to provide informed, independent advice to the County Council and others and help ensure that we take a balanced, fair and, perhaps most importantly, inclusive approach.

This Report sets out our progress to date and takes forward actions to tackle the issues that have been identified for the areas of the county we have covered in the early part of the process. I am sure you will agree that we have not taken the easy option and that we have set some real challenges ahead for ourselves and our partners. To achieve these improvements we shall need to work hard, be creative and to try new ideas. Even more importantly, the County Council will be looking to build upon the partnerships that have been established in recent years with organisations across the county and with groups and volunteers at a more local level. To have real impact these plans depend upon the support, involvement and commitment of many organisations and groups and we do hope that you will feel able to participate in work that affects your part of Hampshire or area of interest.

John Tickle

Head of the Countryside Service
Hampshire County Council

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1. Countryside Access Plans: a wider approach to a new duty

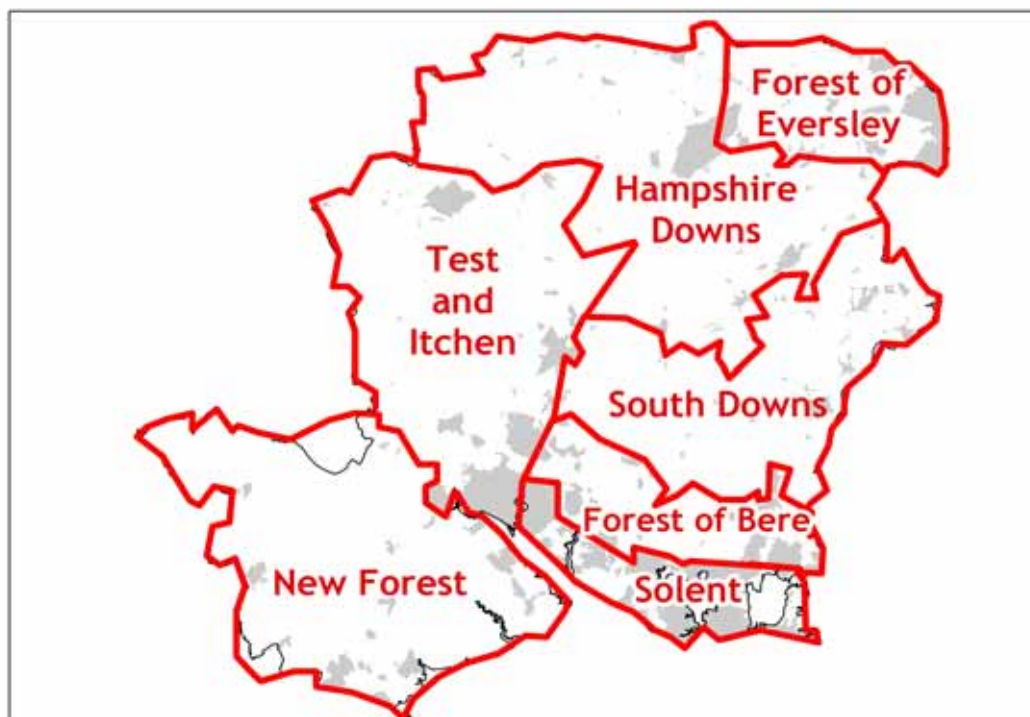
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires Highway Authorities to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) by November 2007. This must assess:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- The opportunities provided for exercise, open-air recreation and enjoyment of the local area
- The accessibility of the local network to blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems.

1.1 The national pilot programme

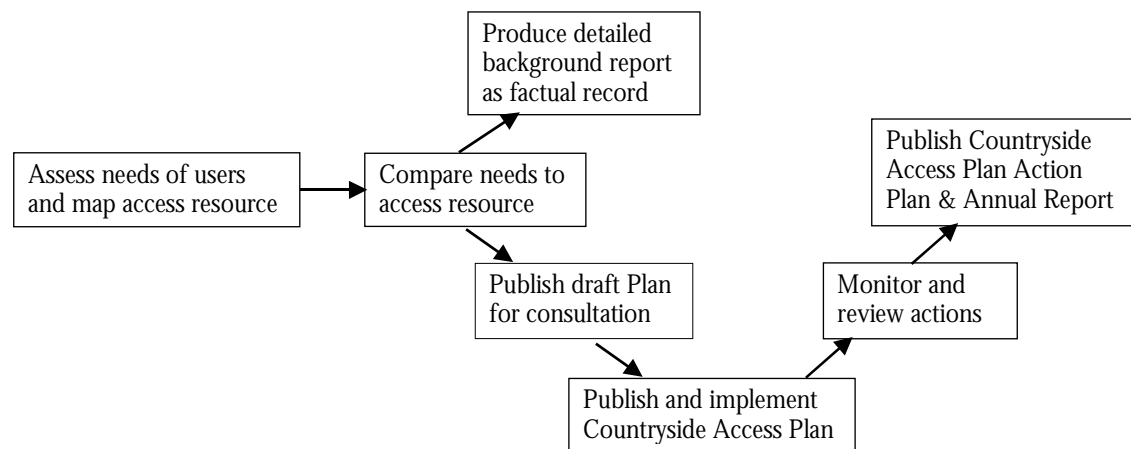
In 2002 Hampshire County Council joined the national ROWIP Demonstration Programme, bidding successfully for Countryside Agency funding to pilot a wider 'Countryside Access Plan' approach to this new responsibility. This includes in the assessment the whole range of countryside access, including country parks, open access areas, sites managed by organisations such as the Forestry Commission and Ministry of Defence and other permissive access areas or routes, as well as rights of way.

Two plan areas were chosen for the pilot, the Forest of Bere and the Forest of Eversley. These areas have different landscape characters and this was reflected in the different issues that emerged from each study. The Council has therefore agreed, with the support of Hampshire Countryside Access Forum, to produce plans for a total of seven areas in the county, based broadly on landscape character and soil type.



1.2 The Countryside Access Plan process

Through the pilots an effective and efficient process has been identified to produce the remaining plans, as follows:



Local knowledge is an essential part of this process, and for each plan a Working Group of local users and land managers will be established to guide the process and provide local information and contacts.

1.3 Hampshire Countryside Access Forum: advising and overseeing the process

Hampshire Countryside Access Forum has been closely involved in the pilot Plans, providing advice on strategic matters and process as well as contributing directly to the Plans.

This Local Access Forum for Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth consists of 18 local members of the public with an interest in countryside access. Membership is balanced between those who use the countryside for recreation and those who manage that land; other interests, such as tourism and conservation, are also included. The Forum's aim is to improve and promote opportunities to enjoy Hampshire's countryside and coast for a wide range of people while addressing the concerns of farmers, landowners and other land managers.

The Forum will continue to provide strategic advice and to participate in the monitoring and implementation of the Plans.

2. Progress with producing the Countryside Access Plans (to March 2005)

2.1 Publishing the pilots

In July 2004 a Countryside Access Development Officer was recruited to take over the process of production and publication of the Countryside Access Plans. By this stage early drafts of the two pilot Plans had been completed and these were circulated to council officers, external contributors and Hampshire Countryside Access Forum for comment. After editing, the drafts were published for consultation in September (Forest of Bere) and November (Forest of Eversley) 2004. Copies were circulated to libraries and information centres throughout the county and to a wide range of individuals and organisations including district councils, parish councils and county councillors with wards within or adjacent to each plan area, government agencies, user groups,

landowners and access managers. The plans were also available in .pdf format to download from the Hampshire County Council Countryside Service website.

The consultation period ended for the Forest of Bere Plan on 31 December 2004 and for the Forest of Eversley Plan on 28 February 2005. Outcomes of both consultations have been reported to Hampshire Countryside Access Forum and will be fed into the final versions of the two pilot plans.

2.2 Promoting the Plans

A leaflet has been produced to publicise the Countryside Access Plans. This includes a return card to enable people to request copies and has been circulated via information points and libraries, local supermarkets, user and landowner groups, parish councils and countryside sites throughout the county. News releases were distributed to local papers to announce the publication of the first consultation drafts and a notice was placed in the Basingstoke Gazette to announce the publication of the Forest of Eversley Plan.

2.3 Work on further Plans – New Forest and South Downs

The New Forest Access Forum was formally approached in October 2004 to provide local input to the New Forest Countryside Access Plan. In November a Working Group was convened for the South Downs which included the Hampshire-based members of the South Downs Access Forum and the East Hampshire AONB Recreation Panel. A literature search has been completed for both areas and a position statement incorporating a review of existing research literature and an outline proposal for further research was presented to each group in January (South Downs) and March (New Forest) 2005. Research for the South Downs Plan is now under way; work for the New Forest Plan is running to a later schedule in order to take account of studies being carried out by Progress (an international partnership project led by the Forestry Commission), early results of which should be available in April 2005.

2.3.1 Countryside Access Plan proposed production timetable

Area Plan	Publish Consultation Draft	Consultation ends
South Downs	August 05	end November 05
New Forest	November 05	end February 06
Solent	March 06	end June 06
Test & Itchen	July 06	end October 06
Hampshire Downs	November 06	end February 07

3. Making the Plans happen

Although we have just the two plans at the present time, the priorities for action which have been identified for these areas and the wider issues that are beginning to emerge are already influencing how access to the countryside is being managed and promoted by the County Council.

Links are being made to the funding available through the Local Transport Plan and through strategic initiatives such as the Government's Rural Pathfinder (which seeks to find new ways of delivering a whole range of rural services) in order to take forward the actions in the Plans.

The following illustrates the approach that the Countryside Service will be taking to implement the Countryside Access Plans in Hampshire:

- **The way we work** – the Countryside Service restructure has integrated the rights of way and site teams and established an Access Development Team.
- **Innovation and demonstration** – projects continue to be developed to assess different approaches to access improvements and explore funding streams.
- **Working better together** – greater partnership working and influencing the work of other organisations as well as producing plan information in geographical form to assist with data sharing.
- **Links with other plans & strategies** – the Countryside Access Plans will provide vital information for inclusion in other plans such as the Local Transport Plan.

More detail on each of these is given below.

3.1 The way we work

The County Council's Countryside Service manages elements of the rights of way network and access land as well as managing over 80 countryside sites for recreation, conservation and education. The developing Countryside Access Plans are beginning to guide the work of the Service. The wider issues are reflected in the countywide business plan for the Service for the year 2005/6 and more local priorities will also be incorporated into the Area Plans for the Service for the coming year.

The Access Plan priorities also have a bearing upon how the funding for the year's larger works programme will be allocated.

Partly in recognition of changes that the Countryside Access Plans would bring, the Countryside Service has been through a period of review and change in order to ensure that the Service is structured in the best way to be able to respond to these new challenges. The Service now has four area-based teams which include the ranger service, site based staff and officers and maintenance teams working to improve rights of way and access to the wider countryside. The traditional role of the Rights of Way Officer is changing in order to take on some of the actions in the Plans whilst support is being brought in to ensure that the condition of the rights of way network continues to be maintained to a very high standard.

The Plans are also influencing the way our work in ensuring the legal record of rights of way is correct and up to date. Rather than investigating challenges to the legal record simply in the order in which we receive them, the Map Review Team are currently consulting upon a proposal which would prioritise claims in accordance with the potential they would have to meet some of the issues identified in the Access Plans. The Team are also making good progress in publicising the maps of rights of way, particularly in an easily accessible way on the web - access to information about countryside access being key theme within the Countryside Access Plans.

3.1.1 Access Development Team

As part of the Countryside Service Review a new team was established to build on the work of the Integrated Access Demonstration Programme¹ and to continue the work of

¹ See Notes, page 34

Hampshire Paths Partnership² as well as taking the lead on the implementation of the relevant provisions under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The Access Development Team aims to provide a focus for new, innovative approaches to access to the countryside and to demonstrate the contribution that countryside access makes to wider issues such as health. The team is specifically responsible for:

- Administering the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum.
- Producing and monitoring the Countryside Access Plan for Hampshire (consisting of 7 plans).
- Delivering cycling, and other access, projects that are funded by the Local Transport Plan.
- Managing the Hampshire Paths Partnership project.
- Developing partnership projects that take an innovative approach to the implementation of access development priorities.
- Providing access advice, guidance and input on a number of strategic initiatives and projects.

3.2 Innovation and demonstration

The development and implementation of pilot projects assist in demonstrating new ways of working to improve countryside access. The Countryside Service completed a range of projects that:

- Worked with farmers, land managers and walkers to develop practical solutions to address the recognised issues surrounding managing countryside access around towns.
- Tried different approaches to sustainable transport into the countryside.
- Integrated information to promote the countryside.
- Researched the barriers to accessing the countryside experienced by young people in Hampshire.
- Established an Equestrian Forum to provide advice and guidance to the County Council in a South East Hampshire.
- Influencing plans and strategies to include countryside access improvements.

Appendix 1 provides examples of projects that are being developed by the Countryside Service.

3.3 Working better together

Countryside Access Plans identify the priorities for improving access to the countryside whether on rights of way, in country parks, by public transport or through the provision of information. Whilst highway authorities have the duty to prepare these plans, they do not have a duty to deliver the improvements identified and in some cases are not the responsible authorities.

For Countryside Access Plans to be successful they must be recognised by other organisations and bodies, such as Forestry Commission, National Trust, local authorities, involved in providing and managing countryside access. The Countryside Service will continue to work with these bodies to raise the profile of the Countryside Access Plans.

Hampshire Countryside Access Forum will be assisting in delivery of some actions identified in the Countryside Access Plans. Initially, the Forum will be holding a meeting of stakeholders to discuss the Forest of Bere Countryside Access Plan, to provide more detail for some of the issues and identify potential partners to take the work forward.

Hampshire County Council is proposing to translate the priorities and actions identified by each of the Countryside Access Plans into a geographical mapping system. This will enable us to quickly and easily share data and for others to see the actual locations where these improvements are required.

In this way a farmer, landowner or land manager will have a clear idea of what is needed in terms of access improvements on the land that they own or manage so that they could qualify for funding and therefore assist in the delivery of the Plan. For example, if a section of path is required to make an important link in the network this would be shown on a map that could be accessed by the landowner or land manager.

3.4 Links with other plans and strategies

Guidance on the production of the Local Transport Plan 2 issued by Government requires inclusion of the Countryside Access Plans (Rights of Way Improvement Plans). The Countryside Service has been working with Hampshire County Council's Transport Policy section to ensure that there is recognition of the Plan in this document and that there is funding forthcoming to assist with the delivery of actions.

The town and country planning process has undergone a number of changes with local planning authorities moving from producing local plans to local development frameworks. The Countryside Access Plans will be instrumental in providing information for inclusion in these frameworks.

The information and priorities identified in the Countryside Access Plans will form a valuable contribution to the wide number of plans and strategies developed by both the Hampshire County Council and other organisations.

4. Action Plan

The following tables set out progress in the financial year 2004/05 and potential action in 2005/06 to deliver the actions identified in the Countryside Action Plans for the Forest of Bere and the Forest of Eversley.

Abbreviations used in the tables below:

BHS – British Horse Society
 CAP – Countryside Access Plan
 CLA – Country Land & Business Association
 DEFRA – Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
 EN – English Nature
 FC – Forestry Commission
 FoB – Forest of Bere
 FoE – Forest of Eversley
 FWAG – Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group
 HCAF – Hampshire Countryside Access Forum

HCC – Hampshire County Council
 HCL – Hampshire Country Learning
 HWT – Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
 MOD – Ministry of Defence
 NFU – National Farmers Union
 NT – National Trust
 L&EP – Loddon & Eversley Partnership
 RPA – Rural Payments Agency (DEFRA)
 RDS – Rural Development Service (DEFRA)
 RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

NB: 'Rank' refers to the importance of the issues identified, ranked by Hampshire Countryside Access Forum and the Forest of Bere Equestrian Forum

Forest of Bere

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoB 1 - There are difficulties in getting to the Forest of Bere to enjoy the countryside Rank: High/High</p>	<p>FoB 1.1 Audit the existing car park provision and identify areas of need.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an audit on the location and use of existing car parks in the countryside. Identify areas of potential need and record any car park management issues. 	<p>HCC / district and borough councils</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoB 1.3 Develop and promote sustainable linear and circular walking and cycling routes from communities and from public transport links (e.g. railway stations) into the countryside. Work with the HCAF and local people to identify priority links.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC is supporting the Forest of Bere Project in developing circular walks of different lengths starting from Portsdown Hill – completion Autumn 2005. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the HCAF to identify the priority locations for promoted routes. • Encourage parish councils, district councils, local walkers and cyclists to suggest suitable circular or linear routes that could be promoted. • Present these suggestions to the HCAF to assist with prioritisation and resource allocation. • HCC supporting a joint project to improve access at West Walk including a new promotional leaflet. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / Forest of Bere Project / district, borough and parish councils / landowners / local (disability) access groups</p>
<p>Issue FoB 2 - There are insufficient off-road routes that link centres of population to each other and to countryside sites Rank: Medium/Medium</p>	<p>FoB 2.1 Identify the routes required to establish links between key centres of population e.g. Botley to Bishops Waltham. Work with the HCAF to prioritise and implement these links.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An investigation into a potential link between Bishops Waltham and Botley has been conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress with implementation of Bishops Waltham-Botley link – identify feasibility, costs, timescales of proposed link. • The HCAF, parish councils, district and borough councils, local (disability) access groups to suggest other links that may be required. • The HCAF to advise HCC on the priority and resource allocation for these links. • Stakeholder meeting to be held to identify links required. 	<p>HCC/ HCAF district, borough and parish councils / landowners / local (disability) access groups</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoB 2.2 Identify the routes required to establish links between key countryside sites e.g. Creech Wood and West Walk. Work with the HCAF to prioritise and implement these links.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All countryside site managers including Forestry Commission, English Nature, and Hampshire Wildlife Trust, district and borough councils and parish councils, local (disability) access groups to suggest key countryside sites that could be better linked and to work with HCC in developing these links. • Stakeholder meeting to be held to identify links required. • The HCAF to advise HCC on the priority and resource allocation for these links. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / FC / EN / HWT/ district, borough and parish councils / landowners</p>
	<p>FoB 2.3 Identify the routes required to establish links from urban areas to countryside sites</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder meeting to be held to identify links required • The HCAF to advise HCC on the priority and resource allocation for these links. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / local users</p>
	<p>FoB 2.4 Establish the principle for County farm estates, highway verges and other publicly owned land to make relevant links, where required.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC to ensure that if access developments are required on publicly owned land to achieve strategic links these are achieved quickly. 	<p>HCC</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoB 3 – There are limited resources for off-road cycling</p> <p>Rank: Low/Low</p>	<p>FoB 3.1 Develop cycle routes for all types of users within countryside sites that currently offer limited resources e.g. Staunton Country Park and Manor Farm Country Park.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staunton Country Park to establish new cycle routes and provide cycle. 	<p>HCC</p>
	<p>FoB 3.4 Identify requirements for other provision such as cycle racks and cycle hire.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit new cycling officer – spring 2005 	<p>HCC</p>
	<p>FoB 3.5 Increase the number of guided cycle rides.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage user groups to run cycle rides that will be included in county programme. • Staunton Country Park plan to encourage cycling use of the park and surrounding areas through guided cycle rides. 	<p>HCC / cycling groups</p>
	<p>FoB 3.6 Develop schemes to promote and provide safer cycling to school and places of work.</p>			<p>HCC / district and borough councils / schools</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoB 4 - There is an undersupply of access resource for horse riding and carriage driving</p> <p>Rank: High/High</p>	<p>FoB 4.1 Continue to implement the strategic links identified by the Forest of Bere Equestrian Forum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade of Hedge End 6 from footpath to bridleway – completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an action plan with Eastleigh Borough Council and the Equestrian Forum to implement the routes identified in the local plan – July 2005. • Prioritise bridleway claims in FoB in consultation with the Equestrian Forum. 	<p>HCC/ FoB Equestrian Forum / Eastleigh Borough Council / Local users / public and private landowners / district and borough councils.</p>
<p>Issue FoB 5 – Countryside users are forced to use, or cross, busy roads to link up off-road access</p> <p>Rank: High/High</p>	<p>FoB 5.1 Continue to develop and implement the pilot Whole Network Approach³ project that aims to improve the connectivity of routes in a specific area of Hampshire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Network Approach pilot project plan developed with commitment from HCC to deliver improvements in pilot area and apply lesson learnt to elsewhere in the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop the Whole Network Approach project and implement identified actions to improve access for cyclists, walkers and equestrians. Seek funding from the Local Transport Plan to assist with implementation costs. 	<p>HCC / HCAF CAP Implementation working group</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoB 5.2 Establish a better system to inform rights of way teams and users of new road schemes and more information on maintenance works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link between Rights of Way pages and Hampshire Highways pages now clear on HCC website. • Senior officers from both departments meeting regularly to integrate work relating to recreational use of highways. • Improved information on Rights of Way web pages detailing path closures and restrictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress Whole Network Approach pilot scheme. HCC Rights of Way and Highways officers working together to consider use of path and road network as a whole. Initially in Morestead Road area but to expand approach during and beyond 2005. • Establish clear responsibility for management of tarmac routes and unclassified roads to ensure that they are managed as a part of the recreational network. • Progress at a local level to improve links between Area RoW Officers and Area Highway teams. • Hampshire Highways to attend HCAF when requested. 	<p>HCC</p>
	<p>FoB 5.4 Identify verges that could be better managed to provide safer links in the access network and agree standard of maintenance required.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to Action 2.3. • Prioritise verges that provide strategic links in the access network and work with Hampshire Highway officers and landowners to improve the verge maintenance. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / local users</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoB 6 - There is a lack of awareness of users requirements when creating new, or managing existing, access and access facilities</p> <p>Rank: Medium/Low</p>	<p>FoB 6.2 Increase the use of community groups when creating, providing and maintaining access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of consultation for this CAP provided local information to inform future actions and established contacts for future consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with local user groups through local CAP working groups. • Invite major access providers to HCAF meetings (NT, FC, MoD). • Consult with community groups on minor access improvements. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / CAP working groups / district and borough councils / user groups / local (disability) access groups</p>
<p>Issue FoB 7 - There is a lack of consideration for other users on multi use routes</p> <p>Rank: Low/Medium</p>	<p>FoB 7.1 Investigate avenues for educating all users on the Country Code and how to behave when meeting other users e.g. web, print and signage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Education Coordinator recruited to develop further Life Long Learning opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop educational resources linked to rights of way, access and the Countryside Code. • Attend events to promote responsible use of access network. • HCC Guided Walks programme. 	<p>Countryside Agency / HCC / user groups / district and borough councils</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoB 7.3 Develop ways of engaging with young people to increase countryside literacy e.g. school visits, Trailblazer⁴.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Countryside Live’ event at Staunton Country Park: bringing the classroom into the countryside • Over 120 schools across the county take part in the Trailblazer scheme. • Trailblazer also provides training and information for teachers and outdoor leaders. A Rights of Way and Access information pack has been produced as part of the Trailblazer scheme. • Hampshire Country Learning⁵ arranges school visits to farms and estates across the county. In 2004, 7 farm days were held including one in the Forest of Bere area. Through these visits 1300 children experienced the countryside (150 in the Forest of Bere). • HCC Countryside Service recruited an Education Co-ordinator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop educational resources and encourage young people to visit and learn more about the countryside. 	<p>HCC / Hampshire Country Learning / schools</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoB 8 - Many farmers and landowners find that providing public access entails a work load and financial burden</p> <p>Rank: High/Medium</p>	<p>FoB 8.1 Ensure that HCC staff are kept informed of new funding opportunities available to farmers so that they may help promote funding for access improvements where appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCC consulted on the access objectives for inclusion in the Higher Level Scheme (HLS). This new agri-environment scheme comes into effect in 2005 and will provide funding for access improvements. The HLS objectives are related to the landscape character similar to the Countryside Access Plan areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCC and HCAF roadshow at meetings and events for land managers. Geographically represent the priority actions identified in the Countryside Access Plans for use by Defra to assist with HLS agreements. This information can also be made available direct to landowners and farmers. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / NFU / CLA DEFRA</p>
	<p>FoB 8.3 In areas of particular conflict, establish a close working relationship with land managers to seek resolution of issues on both sides.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCC Countryside Service staff have taken opportunities to participate in events attended by landowners and farmers – including addressing CLA meetings regarding the impact of Access Land in order to discuss HCC approach. Land managers attend liaison meetings organised by Area Rights of Way Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop closer links between Countryside Service and NFU/CLA. HCC to continue to develop relationship with farming and landowning organisations through contact at a county level. Local officers to seek cooperation at a more local level. Important for officers promote link between management of rights of way network and new Single Farm Payment Scheme. Continue regular meetings with Southwick Estate, Rights of Way Officers and users to implement the Southwick Estate Access Strategy. 	<p>HCC / Relevant land owners and land managers / NFU / CLA / members of HCAF / RPA</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoB 9 - Multi use routes in the Forest of Bere are in a worse condition than the rest of the county</p> <p>Rank: Medium/High</p>	<p>FoB 9.1 Produce information to raise awareness with those responsible for cutting overhanging vegetation of the minimum requirements.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a policy guidance note for use by HCC and landowners. Distribute widely including through offices of NFU and CLA, in the Forest of Bere area in particular. 	<p>HCC/NFU/ CLA</p>
	<p>FoB 9.2 Prioritise the maintenance of bridleways and re-distribute funding to take account of the increased cost of works caused by soil type.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of work to improve drainage and repair areas of poor surfacing on Emsworth Common Road – Havant to create a pleasant route comfortably used by all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognise this action in the Service Plan for the Southern and Eastern Area Teams within HCC Countryside Service. • To give increased weighting to bridleway work over and above priority suggested by current agreed Priority Guidance used by rights of way officers. • For this issue to be taken into account when HCC Countryside Service allocates capital for surface improvements 2005/6. 	<p>HCC</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	FoB 9.3 Research, test and get advice on most appropriate surfacing materials for all users.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome advice from user groups and in particular advice generated by members of HCAF. • Involvement in the best practice guidance for shared use routes surfacing by Countryside Agency. 	HCC / HCAF / User Groups / local (disability) access groups
	FoB 9.4 Build on existing local volunteer groups which assist in improving access provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampshire Paths Partnership involved over 200 volunteer days in projects to improve access across the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Hampshire Paths Partnership to take account of the priorities within the Countryside Access Plans. 	HCC
Issue FoB 10 - Uncontrolled dogs and fouling are a deterrent to countryside users and makes managing land for access both costly and hazardous Rank: High/Low	FoB 10.1 Seek to establish a common approach to minimising problems on publicly-maintained sites, through appropriate use of composting dog bins, byelaws, advice and enforcement, designated dog walks and pick-up areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research has been conducted into the issues involving dogs in the countryside and the current management practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up initial contact with the Access Advisor for the Kennel Club with the aim of developing a pilot project in Hampshire to address positively the issues raised in the research report. 	HCC / HCAF / FC / NT / HWT / RSPB / district and borough councils/dog owning groups

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoB 11 - Crime and misuse of the countryside is costly for those managing land with access and affects people's enjoyment</p> <p>Rank:Medium/Medium</p>	<p>FoB 11.3 Seek to increase public knowledge of appropriate behaviour – support the use of existing information, including codes of conduct and the new Country Code; where insufficient, provide information in a variety of formats for a variety of users; investigate locally-based information provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whenever opportunity has arisen HCC Countryside Service has included information to encourage responsible behaviour. This is current practice for the production of leaflets and display material and for the provision of information on the web. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCAF to develop a Code of Conduct for users 	<p>HCC / HCAF / user groups / landowners / Environment Agency / Committee for Rural Hampshire / schools</p>
<p>Issue FoB 12 - Public access to the countryside can have a negative impact on land management for conservation and the sustainability of vulnerable species and habitats</p> <p>Rank: Medium/Low</p>	<p>FoB 12.1 Adopt positive management of sites: identify sites where access has an unsustainable negative impact on conservation and investigate the provision of 'sanctuary areas' to rectify this;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure routes are well-signed to avoid inadvertent encroachment and creation of unwanted informal paths; - provide for specific needs in suitable areas eg BMX tracks in robust areas. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a visitor management plan for a specific site where access is thought to have a negative impact on the conservation value of the site. Carry out as a pilot project and closely monitor the results for use at other similar locations. HCAF and HCC Countryside site managers to assist with identifying appropriate locations. HCAF to provide advice on a Visitor Management Plan. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / HWT / FC / NT / RSPB</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoB 12.2 Promote good practice on managing for conservation on all HCC Sites (including on Rights of Way) and other public access land.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Service now re-structured into Area Teams including rights of way and site bases staff. Enables closer management of the balance between access and conservation and the exchange of skills and information between staff at an operational level. • Conservation training course held for RoW Teams. Teams now carry wildlife identification information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify opportunities to integrate conservation and access work – support joint working where possible. • Develop existing relations between HCC, English Nature, Forestry Commission and Hants & IoW Wildlife Trust to ensure consistency of approach towards the management of the balance between access and conservation. • HCAF to invite participation of major conservation bodies (HWT, FC, NT) in Forum. 	<p>HCC / HWT / FC / NT / others / HCAF</p>
<p>Issue FoB 13 - The information provided about the access resource for all users is inadequate</p> <p>Rank: Low/Low</p>	<p>FoB 13.1 Investigate a better system for providing information, auditing current print and looking at other avenues e.g. local newspapers, dedicated publications for each user group, Hampshire-wide information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2004/5 major improvements have been made to provision and presentation of information on the Countryside Service website. • Work undertaken with local parish councils and other community groups to produce information illustrating the local access and rights of way network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a Rights of Way newsletter aimed primarily at user groups and rights of way users. Digitised maps of rights of way to be provided via the web in an easy to use format • Investigate feasibility of a portal for events info etc. 	<p>HCC / Other access providers</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoB 13.2 Determine what additional information is required by all user groups as part of promoting access to the countryside.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC Guided Walks leaflet made available free of charge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User groups and members of HCAF to identify what additional information is needed through membership of the groups they represent 	<p>HCC / HCAF /User groups</p>
	<p>FoB 13.3 Develop an improved system for producing and distributing information.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC to work with partners including Forest of Bere project to provide information to landowners in a consistent way and to ensure adherence to FoB Countryside Access Plan. • Links to FoB website to be developed . 	<p>HCC /Other access providers/ RDS / FWAG / Forest of Bere Project</p>
<p>Issue FoB 14 – Poor communication between users and access providers leads to misunderstandings</p> <p>Rank: Low/Low</p>	<p>FoB 14.1 Encourage more joint working between access providers and users to assist in developing projects and identifying priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local CAP working groups established for South Downs and New Forest areas. • Area Rights of Way Liaison meetings have been held. • Countryside Service participation in user group meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop these initiatives. • Ensure attendance of a variety of access providers at HCAF. • Countryside Service to attend meetings, conferences and seminars as appropriate. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / Public and private land managers / local users and user groups</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoB 14.3 Improve communication between providers and people reporting problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved information on HCC web. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standard reporting feedback process for all problems with HCAF advice. • Priority Guidance information to be provided on web. • Ability for reports of problems to be tracked 'on-line'. • Develop countryside mapping on web to include other information relevant and of interest to enjoying the countryside. 	<p>HCC / HCAF Council Policies working group</p>
	<p>FoB 14.4 Promote rights and responsibilities associated with new 'open access' legislation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event for Parish Councils held November 2004 • Article for Parish Councils distributed Jan 2005. • HCC staff training given Jan 05. • Information made available for land managers. • HCC written to all Parish Councils to ensure accurate representation locally of new rights of access to access land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote through roadshow for land managers and booklet for Parish Councils. • Area Teams to monitor use of access land. HCC to make use of Access Management Grant Scheme if any problems arise that require land management measures. • Continue to include information on responsible use in all relevant display material. • HCAF to develop Code of Conduct. 	<p>HCAF / HCC / Land managers / land owners</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoB 14.5 (NB: new action) Develop opportunities for local people to learn about local land management.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage provision of info boards on routes and land management through HPP and other initiatives. • Monitor the success of the Food and Farming Trails. 	<p>FoB Project/HCAF/HPP</p>
<p>Issue FoB 15 - New legislation is imposing a cut off date for historical rights of way Rank: Low/Low</p>	<p>FoB 15.1 Prioritise order of investigation of claims by needs identified in the appropriate Countryside Access Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft policy being developed with benefit of advice from HCAF. Wider consultation underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policy with HCAF advice (using Council Policies working group) seek HCC elected member support and implement 2005. 	<p>HCC / HCAF</p>
	<p>FoB 15.3 Consider diversions where they meet needs identified in the appropriate Countryside Access Plan (current policy precludes processing of diversions unless significant public benefit).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add 'relevance to Countryside Access Plan' to list of criteria in policy against which all diversion applications are judged. Agree with HCC Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage 	<p>HCC</p>

Forest of Eversley

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoE 1 – Publicly-owned countryside sites and Ministry of Defence land provide a significant proportion of the access available</p> <p>Rank: Medium</p>	<p>FoE 1.1 Establish a strong working relationship with the MOD, aiming to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discuss management of existing Rights of Way, - resolve the uncertainty over permissive access to MOD land, - provide signage and information on permissive routes, - establish a policy of providing alternative routes when firing, etc take place. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC Countryside Service to establish relationship with senior MoD Estates manager. • MoD to be invited to attend HCAF. 	<p>HCC / HCAF / MOD / community and residents group representatives</p>
	<p>FoE 1.3 As the need arises, dedicate existing permissive access, or new access where a need can be demonstrated, on County farm estates.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC to ensure that if access developments are required on publicly owned land to achieve strategic links these are achieved quickly. 	<p>HCC / User groups / HCAF</p>
	<p>FoE 1.4 Encourage parish councils' active participation in management and improvement of access in their parishes.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage parish councils to identify routes across village greens and common land, to provide safe, off-road connections between other rights of way. 	<p>HCC / parish councils</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoE 2 – People have difficulty in finding information on local routes</p> <p>Rank: High</p>	<p>FoE 2.1 Identify locations for improved provision of information, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signing and mapping of permissive routes, - Using signs showing distance and destination for selected routes, - More detailed signs, for example map boards, at ‘entrance points’ to the countryside and fewer signs further away, to avoid urbanisation of the countryside, - Assess need for a visitors centre and promotion through Discovery Centres, libraries and community centres, B&Bs, cycle shops, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local map leaflets and boards produced by parishes within the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with L&EP and local users to determine priorities for establishing routes identified in ‘Links’ report that will give strategic and circular routes. • HCC and local users to liaise with the MOD and other public land managers to seek clarification and signing of access (where needed) to this land. • HPP to work with individual parish councils on local map board installation. • HCAF to consult with representatives at a local meeting. • L&EP to produce information leaflet. • Hampshire Food Festival event at local farm (Hartley Wintney). • Launch L&EP website. 	<p>HCC / L&EP / HPP/ MOD / HCAF / FC / HWT / private landowners / libraries / tourism bodies / parish councils / neighbouring councils</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoE 3 – There is an under-supply of access available to legitimate motorised vehicle users, but they are often not welcomed in the countryside</p> <p>Rank: Low</p>	<p>No Actions identified for 2005/06</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build contacts for joint working in 2006/07. 	<p>Motorised vehicle user groups / HCC / FC / MOD / district and borough councils / police / parish councils</p>
<p>Issue FoE 4 – There is a demand for more off-road and utility routes for cyclists</p> <p>Rank: High</p>	<p>FoE 4.1 Assess the current provision and legal status of cycle routes and produce a local cycle plan.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC cycling officer to work with district council colleagues and user groups to complete study and produce draft plan for consultation. 	<p>HCC / district and borough councils / cycling groups</p>
	<p>FoE 4.4 Identify requirements for other provision such as cycle parking, cycle hire and cycle loan schemes.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in local cycle plan. 	<p>HCC / district and borough councils, / cycling groups</p>
	<p>FoE 4.5 Improve information on cycling routes in the area.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise and reprint 'Cycling Discoveries' ride pack. • Include information provision in local cycle plan. 	<p>HCC</p>
<p>Issue FoE 5 - There is a need for greater connectivity of horse riding routes</p> <p>Rank: High</p>	<p>FoE 5.1 Work with local horse riders and other user groups to identify strategic links and improvements to the existing road and bridleway network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping exercise undertaken with a group of local riders to highlight problems with existing network and identify potential new links. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate output from mapping exercise and develop a local strategy for improvement. • Identify and progress 'easy wins'. 	<p>HCC / HWT / BHS / other user groups</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree permissive bridleway route across commons in Hook area. 	
Issue FoE 6 – Lack of confidence is affecting some people’s participation and enjoyment of the countryside Rank: Low	FoE 6.1 Provide information on the local area.			HCC/ HWT/ access providers/ user groups/ land managers
	FoE 6.2 Offer training (for example in map-reading and personal safety).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two 6-week “Your Hampshire” courses in Fleet offering training in map use and preparation for walks. • “Scary or Just Hairy?” training – familiarisation with cattle on publicly accessible sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop programme of training. 	HWT / HCC
	FoE 6.3 Offer opportunities to form/join local groups, or take part in guided walks.			HCC/ HWT/ district and borough councils / access providers/ user groups/ land managers
	FoE 6.4 Promote a range of well way-marked routes from short/easy to longer routes in the wider countryside.			HCC/ HWT/ access providers / district and borough councils / user groups/ land managers

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoE 6.6 Engage communities in cleaning up local 'entrances' to the countryside, such as areas next to car parks and paths from urban areas into the countryside, in order to promote knowledge of and respect for the local countryside.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with local people to open up Hook Common, Bartley Heath and North Warnborough Greens and Greywell Moors, creating 'safe'-feeling countryside access close to urban settlement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult and work with local community to manage and improve access to Hook Common 	<p>HCC / HWT /district and borough councils / FC / MOD / community and residents groups</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
	<p>FoE 6.8 Encourage people to enjoy and learn about landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage and local food through guided walks, school visits and events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 120 schools across the county take part in the Trailblazer scheme. Trailblazer also provides training and information for teachers and outdoor leaders. A Rights of Way and Access information pack has been produced as part of the Trailblazer scheme and made available on HCC website as an educational resource. • Hampshire Country Learning arranges school visits to farms and estates across the county. In 2004 7 farm days were held. Through these visits over 1300 children experienced the countryside. HCL also provides opportunities for teachers to learn how a farm visit can enrich the curriculum. • HCC Countryside Service recruited an Education Co-ordinator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two local farms have agreed to join HCL to develop a programme of farm visits to support schools curriculum. • Local farms to run events for Hampshire Food Festival. 	<p>HCC/ HCL/ L&EP / HWT / FC / user groups</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoE 7 – Many farmers and landowners find that providing more public access entails a workload and financial burden</p> <p>Rank: Medium</p>	<p>FoE 7.1 Encourage HCC staff to develop contacts with farmers and raise awareness of new funding opportunities available to them, so that they may help promote funding for access improvements where appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCC consulted on the access objectives for inclusion in the Higher Level Scheme (HLS). This new agri-environment scheme comes into effect in 2005 and will provide funding for access improvements. The HLS objectives are related to the landscape character similar to the Countryside Access Plan areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCC and HCAF roadshow at meetings and events for land managers. 	<p>HCC / L&EP / FWAG / NFU / CLA</p>
	<p>FoE 7.2 Ensure that the Loddon and Eversley Partnership are aware of access priorities and opportunities when engaging with landowners.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a network between organisations that have responsibility for managing land. 	<p>HCC and L&EP</p>
	<p>FoE 7.3 In areas of particular conflict, establish a close working relationship with land managers to seek resolution of issues on both sides.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop closer links between Countryside Service and NFU/CLA. HCC to continue to develop relationship with farming and landowning organisations through contact at a county level. Local officers to seek cooperation at a more local level. Important for officers promote link between management of rights of way network and new Single Farm Payment Scheme. 	<p>HCC / Relevant land owners and managers</p>

Issue	Action	Progress 2004/05	Proposed Action 2005/06	Lead Bodies and Partners
<p>Issue FoE 8 – Some members of the public lack an understanding of their responsibilities when using the countryside</p> <p>Rank: Medium</p>	<p>FoE 8.1 Promote responsible use of the countryside, particularly by families that own dogs, through an educational campaign and local events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 120 schools across the county take part in the Trailblazer scheme. Trailblazer also provides training and information for teachers and outdoor leaders. A Rights of Way and Access information pack has been produced as part of the Trailblazer scheme. • Hampshire Country Learning arranges school visits to farms across the county. In 2004 7 farm days were held enabling over 1300 children to experience the countryside first hand. HCL also provides opportunities for teachers to learn how a farm visit can enrich the curriculum. • HCC Countryside Service recruited an Education Co-ordinator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up initial contact with the Access Advisor for the Kennel Club with the aim of developing a pilot project in Hampshire to positively address issues of dogs in the countryside. • HCAF to consider developing Codes of Conduct for all users. 	<p>HCC / HCL / FC / HWT / NFU / HCAF / dog owning groups / KC / other user groups</p>