As the Highway Authority for Devon, the County Council is responsible for 3,200 miles of public rights of way.

To find out more about where to walk, ride and cycle in Devon please go to the County Council web site at: [http://www.devon.gov.uk/public_rights_of_way](http://www.devon.gov.uk/public_rights_of_way) and click on My Local Paths. This will take you to a map where you can obtain information on any path in the county. You can zoom in and out at various scales by following the instructions displayed underneath the map and by using the Legend and Layer buttons you can see all public rights of way, cycleways, access land and the Dartmoor Commons, and DEFRA Stewardship sites with public access.

You can also find out if there are any stiles, gates or bridges on the paths and how steep or level a route is.

Rights of way are paths and tracks which you, the public, can use. These routes cross private land, and we ask you to bear this in mind and be responsible when using them.

A public right of way is a right by which any member of the public can access the countryside. There are several kinds of 'way' over which there is a right to pass, and all of them are known collectively as 'highways'. The nature of the right depends on the status of the highway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access route</th>
<th>Legal Users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Footpath</td>
<td><img src="footpath.png" alt="Footpath" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle track</td>
<td><img src="cycle_track.png" alt="Cycle track" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridleway</td>
<td><img src="bridleway.png" alt="Bridleway" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Byway</td>
<td><img src="restricted_byway.png" alt="Restricted Byway" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byway Open to All Traffic &amp; Unsurfaced County Road (UCR)</td>
<td><img src="byway_UCR.png" alt="Byway Open to All Traffic &amp; Unsurfaced County Road (UCR)" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Rights of Way – Advice for Users and Landowners

- **FOOTPATH**
  A footpath is a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot only - waymarked in yellow.

- **BRIDLEWAY**
  A bridleway is a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot, horseback and on a pedal cycle (including mountain-bikes). There may also be a right to drive animals along a bridleway - waymarked in blue.

- **RESTRICTED BYWAY**
  A restricted byway is a highway over which the public is entitled to travel on foot, horseback and with non-mechanically propelled vehicles (such as pedal cycles and horse-drawn vehicles). There may also be a right to drive animals along a restricted byway - waymarked in purple.

- **BYWAY**
  A byway open to all traffic (BOAT) is a highway over which the public is entitled to travel on foot, horseback or pedal cycle and by wheeled vehicles of all kinds, including horse-drawn vehicles, but which is used by the public mainly for walking or for riding. Most of these highways do not have a surface suitable for ordinary motor traffic - waymarked in red.

- **PERMISSIVE PATH**
  A permissive path is not a public right of way, but the public is allowed to use it with the permission of the land owner. Various waymark symbols are used.

- **GREEN LANE**
  A green lane is an unsurfaced track or path, bounded by hedges or walls, and often of some antiquity. The term has no legal meaning, and, if there is a public right of way along such a track, it will usually be classified under one of the above headings.

- **UNSURFACED COUNTY ROAD**
  A minor road over which the public is entitled to travel on foot, horseback or pedal cycle and by wheeled vehicle of all kinds, including horse-drawn vehicles. Most of these routes do not have a surface suitable for ordinary motor traffic - often waymarked in black and shown on OS maps in a green or red dot notation.

**The Public’s Rights**

Your rights of way are:

- Footpaths - on foot only.
- Bridleways - on foot, horseback and pedal cycle.
- Restricted Byways – on foot, horseback, pedal cycle and horse drawn vehicles – (non mechanical)
- Byways Open to All Traffic - on foot, horseback and pedal cycle. They may also be used by vehicles, but don’t expect a metalled surface.
How you use a right of way is important. You may only make a bona fide journey with reasonable rest along the way. On rights of way you can:

- take a pram, pushchair, wheelchair, but expect to encounter stiles on footpaths;
- take a dog, preferably on a lead or under close control;
- take a short alternative route around an illegal obstruction;
- remove an illegal obstacle sufficiently to get past.

For Information

- There is an ancient Common Law right to pass and re-pass along the highways at all times. Footpaths, bridleways and byways are highways. They only differ from other forms of highway such as roads, by the type of traffic entitled to use them.
- Lack of use has no effect on the legal existence of a right of way.
- Widths of rights of way - the Definitive Map kept by the County Council sometimes specifies the width of a path, but where this is not so the assumption is that a footpath crossing open ground or fields should have a width sufficient for two walkers to pass in comfort. A bridleway across open land should allow one horse to pass another horse safely. On roads used as public paths or ‘byways’, the accepted width is normally the feature that exists on the ground.
- Ordnance Survey Explorer, Leisure and Landranger maps show most public rights of way but there may have been changes since the map was published. The Definitive Map is the most reliable guide.
- You must leave land to which you have no legal right of access if asked to do so by the owner or his representative.

The Duties of Highway Authorities and Landowners

Responsibilities of the County Council – the Highway Authority should:

- assert and protect the public’s rights to use public rights of way;
- maintain the surface of highways, and control vegetation (other than crops) on the surface of field-edge paths and those enclosed by hedges, fences or walls and on set-aside land;
- maintain bridges over natural water courses including farm ditches (if the ditch was there when the path was first recorded);
- provide signposts where rights of way leave metalled roads (Highway Authorities may also waymark rights of way, after consulting the landowner);
- secure the removal of obstructions including those due to damage to the surface;
- ensure that there are no intimidating notices that deter the public from using paths shown on the Definitive Map, and prosecute anyone who displays such notices;
- take action, in default where necessary, to ensure that the duties of others are carried out;
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- provide a minimum 25 per cent contribution towards any costs incurred by a landowner in maintaining stiles or gates on public rights of way. In Devon stiles and gates are supplied to landowners who are responsible for their upkeep.

Definitive Map

What is it?

The Definitive Map is the record of all public rights of way within the county. The County Council is legally required to keep the Definitive Map of public rights of way under continuous review and to make modifications where it appears that routes should be added, re-graded or deleted.

Devon County Council achieves this by carrying out a parish-by-parish review across the county.

If you would like to provide information about added, re-graded or deleted routes please use our standard User Evidence or Landowner Evidence Forms, which can be found on our Useful Forms page of our web site or you can contact us on 0345 155 1004.

This official record of public rights of way was first compiled from local knowledge often provided by Parish Councils. Each path on the Definitive Map is numbered and is specific to its Parish.

Ordnance Survey (OS) maps detailed enough to show public rights of way derive their information from the Definitive Map. The most useful OS maps for countryside recreation purposes are the 1:25,000 Explorer and Leisure series which shows public rights of way in green. The 1:50,000 Landranger maps show public rights of way in red. It is obvious that OS maps cannot show changes which occur after they have been published. The only up to date source of information is the Definitive Map itself, which is held in the County Solicitor’s Department at County Hall. Copies of the Definitive Map are also available for inspection at the public rights of way Service of the County Council. Parish Councils should also have a copy of their local network of paths which is usually kept by the Parish Clerk.

Landowners and Occupiers Should:

- keep rights of way clear of any obstructions, such as padlocked gates, rubbish, barbed wire, slurry, manure, electric fences, hedgerows and chained or loose dogs, and warn users of potential dangers (e.g. slurry lagoons, cliffs) near rights of way;
- cut back vegetation encroaching from the sides (but not the surface), and above, so that it does not inconvenience the public or prevent the line of the right of way being apparent on the ground. (On bridleways, horse-riders should be allowed 3 metres (10 feet) of headroom);
- keep paths clear of crops (other than hay and silage) to ensure that they do not inconvenience users;
- ensure that stiles and gates on rights of way are maintained in good order: a minimum contribution of 25 per cent of the cost of any works may be claimed by the occupier from the
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Highway Authority (in Devon materials are provided, for example gates, kissing gates and stiles) and others may carry out the work themselves;

- provide adequate bridges where, with the permission of the Highway Authority, new ditches are made or existing ones widened; ensure that cross-field footpaths and bridleways are cultivated (ie ploughed or disturbed) only when it is not convenient to avoid them;
- ensure that field-edge footpaths and bridleways and all byways open to all traffic, roads used as public paths and unsurfaced public roads are never cultivated;
- where the cultivation of a cross-field footpath or bridleway cannot be conveniently avoided, ensure that its surface is made good to at least the minimum width, so that it is reasonably convenient to use, within 14 days of first being cultivated for that crop, or within 24 hours of any subsequent cultivation (unless a longer period has been agreed in advance in writing by the Highway Authority);
- ensure that paths over cultivated land remain apparent on the ground, to at least the minimum width, at all times and are not obstructed by crops;
- the minimum widths (the full width must be kept clear and not just the wheel tracks) are:
  - 1.0 metre for a cross-field footpath
  - 2.0 metres for a cross-field bridleway
  - 1.5 metres for a headland path
  - 3.0 metres for a headland bridleway
- ensure that bulls are not kept in a field crossed by a path unless they do not exceed 10 months old or are both not of a recognised dairy breed and are accompanied by cows or heifers;
- ensure that any warning notices are displayed only when a bull is present in a field;
- never keep an animal known to be aggressive (including any bull of whatever breed) in a field to which the public has any access;
- waymark rights of way (where occupiers consider it necessary and desirable);
- ensure that no misleading signs are placed near rights of way that might discourage access: highway authorities have powers under Section 57 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to remove such signs

If you have a public path on your land in Devon, and you would like some advice regarding the management of the route please contact The Rights of Way Service to arrange for one of the wardens to visit you.

For Information

- It is illegal to put plain, barbed, or electrified wire across a right of way. It is not illegal to run wire along the side of a right of way unless it is dangerous or inconvenient to persons using the way.
- Byways may not be ploughed under any circumstances.
- Landowners and farmers may shoot on their land but not in such a way as to endanger the public using a right of way.
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Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Devon County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (known as the RoWIP) has been drawn up in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and takes account of guidance issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It includes sections by Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities.

The main objective of the RoWIP is to improve public rights of way and access for all.

10 Steps Guide

Our 10 Steps Guide provide further advice for those considering ideas for improving access in their communities.

Devon Countryside Access Forum

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a statutory body set up by the County Council under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The role of the Forum is to improve public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment. The Devon countryside is famous for its varied and beautiful landscape and the Forum will be helping to ensure that opportunities for access and exploration are fully considered.

The Forum is a voluntary body with fourteen members, appointed following advertising, to represent land managers and owners, users of land and those with other interests. The Forum will advise the local authority and other bodies on access issues and will also consider wider strategic issues such as the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Access Land

Walking on access land gives you the chance to enjoy vast areas of England's outdoors without the need to stick to paths. Commonly known as the 'right to roam' this right covers some of England's most wild and dramatic landscapes, heaths, moors, down and areas of registered common land. The Open Access symbol is used to mark the boundaries of land available for area-wide access.

Important

Please respect any local signs or requests by landowners to move to another area for your safety.

What you can do on access land

Most recreational activities that are carried out on foot, such as walking, bird-watching, climbing and running.
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What you can’t do on access land
Camping, cycling, horse riding, motor sports and the driving of any vehicle other than a mobility scooter or buggy.

Can I always walk on access land?
Not always, no. Farmers and landowners have the right to close their land sometimes, usually for reasons of nature conservation, land management or public safety. If access land is temporarily closed, it will have a ‘restriction’ placed on it so there is no public access. This will show on the online map in red and details about the restriction will be in a list below the map. Land that is marked with red hatching means there is limited public access and you should check the restrictions list below the map for more details. It could simply mean that you can’t take dogs on the land or that it is closed one day of the week.

Please note: Existing public rights of way are not affected by Open Access restrictions or exclusions under the CROW Act.

Can I take my dog?
You can normally enjoy walking with your dog on open access land. However, sometimes there may be a ban on taking your dog or you may need to keep it on a lead due to sensitive wildlife. Access land marked in yellow on the maps means you can take your dog but if it is marked in red hatching, you should check the details of the restriction to find out if you and your dog are affected.

• If you are a member of the public and wish to find out more about how to enjoy access land and view the access land walking maps, see the Countryside Access website.

• If you are a land owner or manager and want find out how the Act affects you and get advice on how to manage public access, go to the Open Access website.

Dog Bylaws
The Home Office has published a comprehensive guide on dog bylaws to help Parish Councils who are considering a ban on dogs in certain areas, a requirement to keep dogs on a lead or clear up their mess. There are also three free leaflets to educate dog owners on good behaviour. Contact your local District Council Dog Warden for advice.

Please remember that a dog can accompany a walker or rider along a public right of way. But this right extends only to the line of the path, not onto the land on either side. It is recommended that dogs be kept on a lead particularly when there is stock in a field and always under close control please. The NFU produces a useful leaflet called ‘Worrying of Livestock by Dogs’. Please contact your local National Farmers Union Office for advice.

Please follow current DEFRA advice and put your dog on a short lead where livestock are present. Please be a responsible dog owner and clean up after your dog and ensure that it is regularly wormed.
Parish Councils

Parish Councils have important rights and powers with regard to public rights of way, and can have a crucial role to play in safeguarding their local network of paths. The County council works in partnership with many Parish Councils through a partnership scheme:

The Parish Paths Partnership Scheme
A county-wide scheme for improving public rights of way

What it is and how it works

What is the parish paths partnership (P3)? The County Council was one of the first fifteen Highway Authorities to participate in this scheme, which encourages community involvement and enjoyment of public rights of way. Devon County Council is working in partnership with Parish/Town Councils, landowners and local voluntary groups. The main aim is to improve the condition of the local rights of way and keep them open and used properly.

How does it work? The P3 scheme work in two ways:

I. A parish grant

Parish/Town Councils in the scheme receive a grant to undertake rights of way work. The grant, paid by Devon County Council, covers three elements: mileage, based on the length of rights of way in your parish; special projects; and administrative costs.

- **Path condition survey and inspection** - Each year before the Parish/Town Council receives its annual grant it organises a survey. This is an assessment of the condition of the rights of way, in order to find out what work needs to be done, and also provides the information necessary for calculation of the grant payment.

- **Developments and improvements** - upgrading and re-opening paths by undertaking practical work such as vegetation clearance, repairing stiles and waymarking, in consultation with farmers and landowners;

- **Events** - helping people to feel confident about using the network by organising, for example, guided walks and rights of way days;

II. A partnership agreement

This is a simple agreement which is drawn up between the County Council and the recipients of the grant, usually the Parish Council, setting out how they will work together on improving the rights of way network.
The Countryside Code

There are six sections of The Countryside Code dedicated to helping members of the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.

- Be safe and plan ahead
- Follow advice and any local signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

There are 3 sections of the Countryside Code dedicated to land managers.

- Know your rights, responsibilities and liabilities
- Make it easy for visitors to act responsibly
- Identify possible threats to visitors’ safety

Tick bites and Lyme disease:

Come spring and summer we all want to get outside, enjoy the weather and explore beautiful places. But if you’re visiting woodland or heathland areas, it’s important to be aware of the risk of tick bites.

Reports show there has been a rise in the number of people infected by ticks carrying Lyme disease (Lyme borreliosis), particularly in Exmoor, the New Forest, the South Downs, parts of Wiltshire and Berkshire, the Lake District and the Yorkshire moors. Peak times for tick bites are late spring, early summer and autumn.

Be tick aware:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts (fastened at the cuffs) and trousers (with socks tucked into shoes) when walking through tall vegetation
- Light coloured fabrics are useful, as it is easier to see ticks against a light background. Consider using insect repellent on your clothes.
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- Inspect skin frequently and make sure that children’s head and neck areas, including scalps, are properly checked. At the end of the day, check again for ticks, especially in skin folds
- Check that ticks are not brought home on clothes and that pets do not bring unfed ticks into the home on their fur.
- If you do get bitten, remove any attached ticks carefully
- If you are concerned in any way or become unwell, see your doctor as soon as possible

**Come prepared:**

**What should I bring?**

- Comfortable footwear with sturdy soles… walking boots/shoes are the best option, but wear them around the house before venturing outdoors in them for the first time
- In hot sunny weather pack a hat, sun glasses, suncream and an extra large bottle of water.
- In cold weather, dress up warm… lots of layers, gloves and a scarf
- An OS Explorer Map 1:25,000 is recommended

**To Contact the Rights of Way Service:**

**Write to:**
Public Rights of Way
Devon County Council
County Hall
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD

**Phone:** 0345 155 1004

**Email:** prow@devon.gov.uk

**Or visit our web site:** [http://www.devon.gov.uk/prow](http://www.devon.gov.uk/prow)