

Jo Cooper
Principal Access Officer
Warwickshire County Council
Countryside Access
Unit 11
Montague Road
Warwick
CV34 5LW

25th August 2010.

Dear Jo,

Draft Rights of Way and Recreational Highway Strategy
Warwickshire's second rights of way improvement plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft ROWIP. The Cotswolds Conservation Board has a particular interest in ROWIPs as they fall within the Board's second statutory purpose to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

The draft ROWIP is clear and easy to understand and the Board only has a few comments.

Comments on detail.

Section 3. in some instances, for example green lanes and headlands, the rights of way network has a value for connecting habitats and providing wildlife corridors.

Also, it would be useful for the ROWIP to include a paragraph on how Warwickshire and its rights of way network fitted into the bigger picture. Rights of way including 7 named routes cross the county boundary and these, sometimes strategic, connections are worth highlighting.

Paragraph 3.3.3. It may be useful to clarify the reference to free opportunities for walking etc. Strictly speaking it is free at the point of use as money is spent on protecting and managing the network as touched on in paragraph 3.3.5.

Paragraph 3.3.8. It is worth emphasising the asset to tourism, especially green tourism, provided by the rights of way network. It is also worth noting the importance of the associated infrastructure and services provided by car parks, cycle hire facilities, toilets etc. The ROWIP should also highlight the value of the rights of way network to the rural economy. This was demonstrated particularly well when all rights of way were closed during the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001.

Paragraph 4.1.4. second challenge. The Board would like to see local distinctiveness included alongside agriculture, plants etc.

Policies RW1b & RW1c. We are particularly pleased to see the recognition of local distinctiveness in these policies.

Conserving, enhancing, understanding and enjoying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Cotswolds Conservation Board Fosse Way Northleach Gloucestershire GL54 3JH

Tel: 01451 862000 Fax: 01451 862001 Email: info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk Website: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

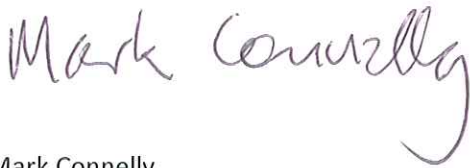
Policy RW2a – final paragraph. Where a gate is installed or gap created adjacent to a structure of historical or cultural significance such as a stone stile. Will that feature still be maintained ? Our concern is that the feature will be 'lost' as the priority for maintenance will switch to the adjacent gate or gap.

Policies RW3 & RW3a. The Board supports the policies on working with communities and volunteers but would like to the policy extended to include other non volunteer or community organisations. The Conservation Board's Establishment Order includes a series of concurrent functions, which includes signposting of footpaths and bridleways and the creation of footpath or bridleway by agreement. To date the Board has not taken up any of the concurrent functions, but may look to do so in the future. Working with volunteers and communities also chimes well with the coalition Governments agenda and the ROWIP should make more of this.

Policy RE5d. Is this for a cycle route established by the county council or by anyone? It would be useful to be clear on this point.

If you wish to clarify or discuss further any of the above comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Mark Connelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Mark Connelly

Land Management Officer