

Volunteer with the Rights of Way Team – The Parish Path Liaison Officer (PPLO) Role

Working Together

In the past, Somerset's Rights of Way Team have received a huge amount of help from people who have informally kept an eye on their local rights of way network and let us know about any problems such as missing signposts, paths obstructed by fallen trees or difficult to use gates and stiles. They've also been able to point us in the right direction if we've been unsure who owns a piece of land when we've needed to speak to the landowner to talk through a rights of way issue.

Local people know their rights of way network intimately and our Parish Paths Liaison Officers (PPLO) Scheme offers you an opportunity to get actively involved and work in partnership with us to help keep Somerset's some 6000km rights of way network easy to use for everyone to enjoy.

Our scheme's been designed to be flexible, but there is one important thing you need to remember. By being nominated by your parish or town council or parish meeting to take on the role of your local community's Parish Path Liaison Officer, you will need to actively support the policies and working practices of Somerset's Rights of Way Team and fairly represent the views of everyone that use the rights of way in your area. After all, you're going to be the main point of contact between the Rights of Way Team and your local community and vice versa so it's important that we're all seen as impartial, fair and consistent.

The Role of a Parish Path Liaison Officer

We appreciate you are volunteering to help us look after your local rights of way network and we understand that some PPLO's will be able to spare more time than others. Any help you can offer, with help from other local volunteers that may be willing to help you, will be greatly appreciated. However, it's important to highlight the tasks that will be the most valuable contribution to the scheme to enable you to make the most of your role.

As a *nominated volunteer from your Town or Parish Council* below is a summary of what we ask you to commit to:

- Carry out minor clearance of the paths and signposts/stiles/gates and bridges by cutting back vegetation.
- Regularly survey the paths in your Town or Parish
- Report any problems you encounter, such as broken stiles or missing signs, to Somerset County Council's Rights of Way team via Explore Somerset

- Report back to your Town or Parish Council at least once a year to update them about the state of the local path network as required
- Annually return the PPLO Activity Log to Somerset County Council's Rights of Way team detailing what activity has been carried out

If you have a particularly large area to monitor or you know of other people wishing to be involved, you can share the role amongst other volunteers. Other activities include installing way marker discs, promoting local paths in leaflets or leading local volunteer practical tasks, please contact the Volunteer and Trails Officer to discuss any of this.

Somerset County Council's Rights of Way team are very keen to support the work that PPLOs do. PPLOs receive a comprehensive PPLO handbook, with maps, and the offer of a basic toolkit that contains secateurs, loppers and a handsaw. They are covered by the Council's public liability and personal accident insurance up to the age of 75, as are assistant volunteers that sign a registration form. If you are over 75 public liability is provided only.

Martin Cooper
Volunteers and Trails Officer
☎ 01823 358250
✉ MDCooper@somerset.gov.uk
www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway