

Overview

Surrey County Council is responsible for around 2164 miles (3482 km) of public rights of way. These paths are both in the countryside and urban areas. They are important for enjoying and exploring, for travelling to work or school and for health and wellbeing. They are part of what makes Surrey a special place to live, work and enjoy.

A public right of way is a path that anyone, by law, has the right to use. There are four types:

- Footpaths for walking, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
- Bridleways for walking, horse riding, cycling, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
- Restricted byways for walking, horse riding, cycling, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs and horse-drawn carriages
- Byways for all modes including motorised vehicles

Every council that is responsible for public rights of way must have a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This sets out how public rights of way meet the needs of the public, now and in the future. Our current Rights of Way Improvement Plan dates from 2014 and needs to be reviewed.

Why your views matter

Your council's views will help us to make sure that our new Rights of Way Improvement Plan meets the needs of everyone in Surrey.

Your feedback will help to develop the priorities and actions of the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which will be produced in 2024. Once the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been finalised and approved by the council it will be published on Surrey County Council's website.

Please complete our survey by 10 March 2024.

Please only submit one official response for your council.

If you wish to respond as an individual, please visit <https://www.surreysays.co.uk/environment-and-infrastructure/rowip-public> for our public survey. This also closes on 10 March 2024.

The process of producing the new ROWIP is being supported by an external consultant. If you need to discuss the process of preparing the new ROWIP please contact sccrowip@blackwoodbayne.co.uk. Alternatively, please contact Surrey County Council at sccrowip@surreycc.gov.uk or on 0300 200 1003.

This survey is to support the Improvement Plan only. If you want to report an issue on a public right of way please click on this link: Contact us or report an issue on a Right of Way - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk) <https://rightsofway.surreycc.gov.uk/> or call 0300 200 1003.

Section 1

Please enter the name of the town or parish council you are replying on behalf of:
(Required)

Buckland Parish Council

Please provide your name
(Required)

Sheena Boyce

Please provide your contact details in case we need to get in touch with you. This could be an email address or a phone number

parishcouncil@bucklandsurrey.org.uk 01737 448023

In what capacity are you representing the parish or town council (choose all that apply). Note – this should be the official response of the council
(Required)

Please select only one item

Parish clerk

If other selected, please specify below:

Does your parish have a public rights of way officer, warden or other representative?

(Required)

Please select only one item

No

If yes, please provide further details on the role of your public rights of way officer, warden or other parish council representative.

Each year, the Parish Council nominates a parish councillor to work with the Clerk on matters relating to rights of way.

Do you pay for any maintenance work on public rights of way in your parish?

(Required)

Please select only one item

No

If yes, please provide further details. On average, how much do you pay annually? Do you have an annual budget? What works do you pay for?

Not ongoing maintenance – adhoc amenity improvements are funded.

Do you have volunteers who help with the maintenance and improvement of public rights of way in your area?

(Required)

Please select only one item

No

If yes, please provide further details on what work your volunteers carry out. Please provide an estimate of how many work days volunteers contribute to works on public rights of way

Nothing official. Council is aware several local residents “prune as they walk”

Does your council promote any routes?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes

If yes, please provide further details or a link to your promoted routes.

A group of local residents created a book of 7 local walks (modestly priced at £2.50) that is sold through the local nursery, post office and village shop. Funds raised are used to help fund amenity improvements along rights of way.

Section 2

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of public rights of way in your parish?

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Vegetation clearance (paths are not overgrown) <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reinstatement and clearance of paths through crops <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waymarking of routes – the directional signing along routes <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fingerposts at the end of public rights of way where the route leaves the road <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The condition of stiles and gates <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Surface condition <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessibility for less mobile users <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paths being free from obstructions (not including crops) <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would your council be interested in exercising your powers as a Parish Council under Section 43 Highways Act 1980 to maintain public rights of way, or to increase your involvement in other ways?

Please select only one item

No

Please provide reasons for your answer below:

No financial capacity. National recognised routes / Long distance paths that run through the parish too much for our small parish to take on.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The public rights of way network in our parish is:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
An important asset for residents in our parish <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important to support the health and well-being of residents in our parish <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important for travelling to work and school <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important for enjoying and exploring nature <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important for tourism and the visitor economy <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way in your parish has:

Please select only one item

Stayed the same

Please provide reasons for your answer below.

Standard reflects a general lack of SCC funding. SCC remains reliant on prompt reporting by local residents and takes quite a while to address issues.

Section 3

Have you reported a public rights of way issue to Surrey County Council in the past 12 months?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes (go to Section 4)

Section 4

How would you rate the service of Surrey County Council when you reported an issue?

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	Not applicable
Ease of reporting the issue <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of tracking the progress of your report online <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall service you received <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How could we have improved your experience of reporting a problem on a public right of way?

Website is too slow and insufficiently mobile responsive. Impractical to report items via mobile devices as maps too slow to load. Tracking takes too long and, as timeline for work can be protracted it is simply too cumbersome to track reported issues.

Section 5

We aim to provide a public rights of way network that serves the needs of Surrey County residents. To do this, we may need to prioritise where we spend our available budget while delivering on our responsibilities under (within) the law. In your opinion how important are each of the following:

	Not at all important	Of little importance	Neither important or unimportant	Important	Very important
Maintaining the current public rights of way network <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Protecting and improving the public rights of way network through changes due to development and major infrastructure projects <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving access for those living with disabilities <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving access for people to improve their health and well-being <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving public rights of way for commuting, to work, school or other facilities <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there other areas which you think should be a priority?

Not all surfaces and topography can be adapted for all disabilities or made suitable for commuting. Investing to change routes to meet accessibility targets at the expense of general maintenance of the current network does not seem a sensible target in times of

financial constraint. A better option would be for your colleagues to improve the surface condition of the A25 roadside footways which are currently very challenging for anyone living with disability or even with mobility challenges. While commuters and school children may use the A25 roadside footways the local rights of way are not a practical option.

Options to improve cycling routes between Buckland and Reigate/Dorking have been suggested to the Active Travel team but, as the prioritisation has focused on larger settlements, nothing meaningful has yet to emerge for Buckland within a ten-year timeline.

Bridleway 467 connects to Reigate and Banstead BW11 and terminates at Ivy Cottage. At this point cyclists are supposed to dismount and walk their bicycles along FP 11 to join FP520 to reach Flanchford Road. Cyclists tend not to take this option as walking a bike across the golf course tends to attract verbal abuse from golfers and other non-cyclist users of the Heath.

In practice, some cyclists tend not to appreciate they are not allowed to ride their bicycles on the permissive ride and others turn right at Ivy Cottage and use the unmade track to reach Flanchford Road. Either of these options attracts verbal abuse from golfers and other non-cyclist users of the Heath.

Do you have any additional comments which will help us to draft the Rights of Way Improvement Plan?

Rather than be happy provided you have met the minimum legal requirements..... please can more thought go into alerting walkers to diversions. Please can diversions be published as a layer on the SCC interactive map in the same way road closures are to enable walkers to check their planned routes before they head out. On the ground please signpost the need to divert at the point a sensible alternate route is available to reduce the need for walkers to retrace their steps when they encounter a closure. Local experience is that many walkers are so frustrated they ignore the closure notice and proceed. This was recently the case on BW54 between Betchworth Golf Course and Brockham.

Can you please review the quality of the posts you are installing as recent installations in Buckland have fallen over within two years as the posts have rotted in the wet ground.

Please tell us of any specific public right of way issues or improvements in your parish. Please provide route numbers (if possible) and/or a precise description of the location of the route.

Continue separately if necessary and email to sccrowip@blackwoodbayne.co.uk or sccrowip@surreycc.gov.uk

The surface of Footpath 472, the cross field path in Bromley field, that connects Old Road to the cricket pitch has yet to recover from the installation of the SES Water main. The earth is compacted and water ponds. When the field is worked the footpath is not reinstated which results in a wide swathe as walkers pick different routes. Walkers divert to avoid wet areas, particularly in winter as boots get drawn down into the wet sand and become stuck. If residents have reported a lack of reinstatement to SCC the Estate is not aware of any report being relayed to them. Last summer a particularly vigorous strain of rape grew to an impressive height and totally obstructed the path. The definitive map does not define a width. Does this section of footpath need some focused work to improve the surface drainage? Would it benefit from a plough and reinstatement?

Footpath 471 runs along the edge of the field between the cricket pitch and A25 Reigate Road. The field has a margin of bramble which is impenetrable. The lack of reinstatement of a footpath forces walkers into the rutted surface of the field and crop. If the farmer wants to maintain the margin of brambles can SCC ask him to mark the route he wants walkers to follow and clear it to the required 1.5m width?