

MID COTSWOLD TRACKS AND TRAILS GROUP

NEWSLETTER February 2010

MEMBER OPEN MEETING WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY

Despite a disappointing turnout of only 10 members (of which 6 were committee members!) we had an instructive and helpful meeting with Alan Bently the Manager of Public Rights of Way and Traveller Services at Gloucestershire County Council. Alan informed us that he and his team of 14 Rights of Way officers look after some 3000 miles of PROW in GCC's area. They are responsible for the protection and maintenance of all forms of PROW and they keep the maps up to date.

GCC have responsibility for the surface of RsOW and for signposting. Landowners have responsibility for gates and stiles which should be safe and convenient and kept in good repair. Where paths are blocked GCC will try to do something about it. RsOW across cropped fields must be kept clear to a statutory width but where a landowner has ploughed over a ROW they have 14 days in which to restore the ROW to a reasonable condition. GCC is responsible for bridges over natural watercourses but not over ditches which are the landowners' responsibility.

Alan referred to the training of ROW officers who were taken out on a ride last year at Barton End to help them to understand the needs of horse riders. He welcomed any additional training or advice the MCTTG might offer especially in relation to horse friendly gates and latches.

GCC works with the Local Access Forum which comprises representatives of ROW users, landowners and farmers. They meet 3 times a year to discuss strategic issues affecting RsOW.

Alan referred to the budget cuts he was subject to (he was expecting a 9% cut in 2010/11) and welcomed any funding the Group could offer on specific projects such as that provided to support the improvement of Gypsy Lane. He would also welcome any information we can provide on what routes are used and where there are gaps where it might be possible to identify ways of linking routes by for example using highway verges (suitably maintained). He also mentioned the DEFRA supported High Stewardship Schemes under which farmers can seek funding for such things as providing additional routes for public use including riding.

Asked about GCC's attitude to multi use of the county's cycle track Alan advised that GCC Highways were not inclined to agree to a general policy but would consider such use on a case by case basis. One of their concerns was the quality of the surface and how it would stand up to horse use and another was potential conflict between different users. He suggested the Group comment on the draft Local Transport Plan "Talking Transport" citing other counties which support multi use to encourage GCC Highways to adopt a different approach.

The issue of the availability of parking for trailers and lorries was discussed. Alan noted that GCC owned 5 country parking sites although these are protected by barriers to prevent illegal use. He suggested that where there was a clear need for parking provision, for example, to enable a circular off road route GCC be

approached if they had potentially suitable facilities to see if provision could be made for horse vehicles.

Leni Rozee
Chair MCTTG
28.01.10
Leonora.rozee@media-maker.com