



Rights of Way Improvement Plan Funding Programme (RFP) 2016/17

Summary Report

This report about the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Funding Programme (RFP) 2016/17, has two main purposes. It summarises the key outputs and key learning points from the programme and details some of the types of work and exemplar projects undertaken during the ninth year of the RFP.

The summary accompanies the *Rights of Way Improvement Plan Funding Programme End of Year Outputs Report 2016/17*, and the *Rights of Way Improvement Plan Funding Programme Case Studies 2016-2017 Report*.

Background

Since 2008, Welsh Government has provided a major boost to the improvement of Rights of Way across Wales through the RFP. NRW administers this funding on behalf of Welsh Government.

In 2016/17 the programme was allocated £1million bringing the total allocation since 2008/09 to £11.9million

Key achievements of the funding in 2016/17



a) Practical improvements on the ground

a) Practical improvements on the ground

£756,883 was spent across Wales to improve existing access. This practical work contributed to increasing the proportion of the network that's easy to use. Actions included improving path furniture such as bridges and gates, and surface improvements, for example improving path drainage.

Photo: Glo-byllau Bridge, on the Ebbw Fach Trail
Abertillery (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council),

Actions to improve linear access included:



Surface improvement work to upgrade footpath to bridleways;

Photo: NRW Library Photo



Access improvements to footpaths including a new bridges and changing stiles for kissing gates;

Photo: [Cwmsychpant footpath](#), [Cerreddigion Council](#)



Removal of stiles and barriers that impeded access for users along both promoted routes and routes of local significance;

Photo: improved access to *Caethro Playing Fields*, *Gwynedd*



Installation of signage and way marking, and self-closing gates to replace stiles;

Photo: kissing gate has replaced a damaged stile, exiting onto a busy main road for the purpose of safety, Cardiff Council



Green Dog Walker - providing information to dog walkers using public access;

Photo: NRW Library Photo



Improving access to multi user routes allowing people with mobility issues to access routes more easily.

Photo: NRW Library Photo



b) Improvements that benefit more than one group

b) Improvements that benefit more than one user group - including walkers, cyclists and horse-riders

The trend to improve rights of way for more than one user type continued. Projects that had a “general benefit to all users” and projects that were “multi-benefit” (together accounted for **£468,319** of the total value of projects.

Photo: A Bridleway on the outskirts of the village of Llyswen, Powys.



The largest single user group likely to benefit from multi benefit actions are walkers;

Photo : Footpath improvements on a Wrexham Industrial Estate



12 Local Authorities delivered at least 1 action that benefited ‘Low Use’ groups defined as “groups that disproportionately make low use of the countryside”;

Photo: NRW Library Photo



Low use groups were also represented in other actions not specifically aimed at low use groups.

Photo: NRW Library Photo



c) Improvements to make outdoor access easier for people who find it difficult

c) Improvements to make outdoor access easier for people who find it difficult

Whilst there was no requirement to deliver a specific project for 'low use groups' the access authorities complied with the principles of least restrictive access. 23 specific projects were aimed at making access easier for groups that make disproportionately low use of the countryside, the funding for these specific projects totalled **£128,963**

Photo: Ty'r Ash Bridge, Bullpit Meadows, Crickhowel

Work undertaken to promote better access for those who make a disproportionately low use of the countryside included:



Across Wales more gates than styles were installed, promoting least restrictive access for as many people as possible.

Photo: A new gate and footbridge at Abemeurig, Ceredigion



Resurfacing of footpaths to facilitate least restrictive access

Photo: Park Slip Nature Reserve, Bridgend



Providing visual signage and confidence markers, and site route information boards.

Photo: Three Castles Walk, Monmouthshire



Installation of wheelchair accessible benches in Merthyr Tydfil.

Photo: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council



d) Status of routes and improved infrastructure

d) Status of routes and improved infrastructure:

786.8 Km of the rights of way network is now easier to use following improvements which the RFP and other funding sources contributed to in 2016-17.

The majority of the routes improved in 2016-2017 were either footpaths or bridleways but all types of routes saw some improvement.

Photo: Bridleway 39.R-Cly (Pontardawe), St.Illtud's Walk

Below shows the tength of Route the RFP helped make 'Easy to Use' during 2016-2017 (including contributions from other sources of funding):



545.4 Km of Footpath

Photo: NRW Library Photo



32.4 Km of Cycle track

Photo: NRW Library Photo



182.2 Km of Bridleway

Photo: NRW Library Photo



15.5 Km Restricted Byways

Photo: NRW Library Photo



11.4 Km of Byway Open to All Traffic

Photo: NRW Library Photo

Exemplar Project: Information and Promotion

Llangollen History Trail (Denbighshire County Council)

With the aid of RoWIP funding, the Countryside Service has been able to plan a review of its linear promoted routes throughout the county and start to carry updates and repairs to these routes. Rural Development Plan funding enabled the update and print of the Llangollen History Trail leaflet in 2015, which now features an OS map base for clearer navigation and route marking. It also added a loop to Castell Dinas Bran. The Llangollen History Trail is a 6 mile circular walk taking in a number of the key sites of interest in and around the town.



This year the RoWIP funding has added further value to this project and has enabled the update of the signage along the route through the purchase of fingerposts, way marker posts and way marker discs. Work to install the posts has been carried out with a keen group of volunteers from the Llangollen area.

1 Cerdwch i lawr Stryd y Castell yng nghanol tref Llangollen, croesi'r bont a dilynwch yr anwyddion i ffynyr bryn tuag at Gamlas Llangollen.
Walk down Castle Street, in Llangollen town centre, over the bridge and follow the waymarkers up the hill to the Llangollen Canal.

2 Bydd yr anwyddion yn eich tywysar hyd y llwybr tynnu am 1 3/4 milltir / 3km hyd at Raseadr y Bedol.
The waymarkers will lead you along the towpath for 1 3/4 miles / 3km to the Horseshoe Falls.

3 Cerdwch yn eich blaen am 1/2 milltir / 0.5km i Eglwys Llantysilio.
Continue for 1/2 mile / 0.5km to Llantysilio Church.

4 Cerdwch ymlaen am 1/2 milltir / 0.8km i Fryn Hyrddyn.
Walk on for 1/2 mile / 0.8km to Velvet Hill.

5 Ar ôl cerdded am 1/2 milltir / 1km arall fo gyhaeddwch Abaty Glyn y Groes.
Another 1/2 mile / 1km walk brings you to Valle Crucis Abbey.

6 O Abaty Glyn y Groes dilynwch yr anwyddion am 2 filltir / 3km at waelod Castell Dinas Bran. Mae'n worth dringo am 1/2 milltir i wold y castell ei hun.
From Valle Crucis, follow the waymarkers for 2 miles / 3km to the base of Castle Dinas Bran. It is well worth the 1/2 mile climb to visit the castle itself.

7 O Castell Dinas Bran, mae'r llwybr yn troi'n ôl am 1/2 milltir / 1km ac i lawr i Llangollen.
From Dinas Bran, the 1/2 mile / 1km route heads back downhill to Llangollen.

Llwybr Hanes Llangollen 6 milltir / 9.5 km
Llangollen History Trail 6 miles / 9.5 km

Dolen Castell 1.5 milltir / 2.5 km
Castle Loop 1.5 miles / 2.5 km

Exemplar Project: Volunteers

Countryside Services volunteers get to work on community footpaths - Powys County Council.



A team from Powys County Council's Countryside Volunteers have been busy maintaining two public footpaths and part of a National Trail to benefit the local communities of Abbeycwmhir and Bwlch-y-Sarnau. Additional waymarker posts have been installed on a section of the Abbeycwmhir Community Trail where it enters Coed Sarnau forestry above Abbeycwmhir village. On the other side of the valley the team have been clearing and waymarking an overgrown section of public footpath. The local community in Bwlch-y-Sarnau plans to include the path as part of a local circular walk linking in with the Glyndwr's Way National Trail. Several old Glyndwr's Way waymark posts have also been replaced as part of the work.

Cllr W. John T. Powell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, said "By actively helping to maintain the public rights of way network in Powys our volunteer teams, each led by an experienced team leader, are providing tangible benefits for both local people and visitors to the area."