



P4C News

The Paths for Communities e-newsletter

Winter 2014

P4C enters its busiest period!

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Paths for Communities (P4C) newsletter!

You'll be reading this newsletter against a background of fevered activity. Ten projects are fully completed. The remaining 33 are finishing works on the ground, pulling paperwork together and submitting final claims; Natural England staff are processing claims and carrying out site visits. The 'wettest winter on record' has clearly had an impact on site work, but we're still on track to outturn our budget and as you'll see from this newsletter, we've got plenty to celebrate already.

There's still a lot of work to do, but we know the results for local communities, local businesses and users of the countryside, will be well worth it. Thanks to all of you who've invested so much time and effort already. Enjoy reading about some of our projects below, and we look forward to sharing more good news with you in future.

Martin Shaw, P4C Project Manager

In this issue

Project News

Access for All
A Little going a long way
Penrose
Stoke by Nayland
Blandford Forum
Case story example
Grants panel perspective
Projects in the press

Useful contacts

P4C Central team
Tel : 0300 060 1238
p4c@naturalengland.org.uk

Useful links

P4C webpages
Frequently asked questions
Applicants handbook

Project News

“Access for all” to the moor

A small community-led scheme at Buckland Monachorum, Dartmoor, was opened by the Mayor for West Devon on 6th January. A new 130 metre footpath avoids a traditional Dartmoor stone stile, enabling an easy access route from the village centre to the National Park. Over 20 people including local volunteers, Councillors, LAF members and the contractor turned up for the opening ceremony on a day in early January when gale force winds and torrential rain raged in the South West.



“I have over- engineered the drainage for such a small scheme but the reality is that with such current severe weather, I’m glad I did!”, Richard, the contractor commented. The new dry surface was walked by all, followed by tasty refreshments at Buckland Chapel.

A little goes a long way

It may be only 60 metres long, but the new Kilmersdon Link bridleway in the Mendips provides vital access from a bridleway to the Colliers Way national cycle route which crosses countryside north of the village. Until now, the only way to get from one to the other was a lengthy detour and those using the national cycle route could not easily make use of the local pub for refreshments or visit the village of Kilmersdon, associated with the nursery rhyme “Jack and Jill went up the hill.” Mendip Bridleways and Byways Association worked with Sustrans as land owner, the Parish Council and the British Horse Society to convert a muddy strip with no status to an all-weather bridleway.

Hot mince pies and mulled wine were served to the many supporters who were welcomed at the opening ceremony. Ginnie Jones, project leader



reported, “The new bridleway is already receiving a lot of use and we are delighted that this project is giving so much pleasure”. The bridleway was declared open as MBBBA members on horses, Zodiac and Mars, cantered up the hill with Jane Yates from Natural England in hot pursuit on her mountain bike!

Penrose

An important part of the Penrose P4C project is helping people enjoy Penrose, and helping local businesses benefit from all the access improvements being completed. The P4C project is supporting the creation of 2 new leaflets to help do just this.

Firstly, a pocket size fold out Map guide will be available for visitors to pick up within Helston, Porthleven and surrounding locations. This has been designed to showcase Penrose both as a beautiful place to visit and also the variety of routes and activities on offer.

The 5 Trails Booklet will soon be going off to print

Linked to this is a more in-depth ‘5 Trails’ booklet – 20 pages of guided routes packed with local history, wildlife and practical access details to help people get the most from their visits to the area. This will be available for sale at Penrose and other key locations in the surrounding area, and will encourage people to visit, come back, tell their friends and really show what Helston, Porthleven and Penrose has to offer.



Local National Trust Penrose volunteers install the 1st new P4C waymarker

The P4C scheme is also funding a completely new and integrated set of waymarkers around the newly created bridleway network at Penrose, helping people to navigate the routes, and linking the routes on the ground to the maps in the Guide and 5 Trails booklet.



The structures themselves are designed to be simple and effective, long lasting and low maintenance and fit comfortably within the important Cornwall AONB landscape. The timber posts are all made from sweet chestnut, sourced and milled locally in Cornwall. Thanks to our local volunteer team, the plan to install the 60 waymarkers is now underway, and old signs and infrastructure are being removed at the same time.

Stoke by Nayland safer village path

Local schoolchildren cut the ribbon on their new path, giving local residents of Stoke by Nayland village a safe, easy-access route to shops, school, church and all other amenities. Thanks to a P4C grant, the new path replaces an unofficial, narrow and overgrown route which had little use.



The alternative for those unable to tackle the old path was a dangerous road - with no pavement – and an increasing volume of fast-moving traffic. But thanks to a superb team including a generous local landowner, plenty of community support and an excellent contractor, applicant Vivienne Klimowicz drove the project through some challenging obstacles to get the path in

place. Representatives from the whole team enjoyed refreshments at the opening ceremony (courtesy of the local school friends group), including Suffolk County Council who ensured the route was already signposted and on the Definitive Map and Statement.

“If I were to start again, I would get advice about planning requirements,” says Vivienne. And arrangements with the bank to cover the Parish Council’s shortfall whilst waiting to receive their P4C grant was not without incident, either.

But lots of positive comments about the safety and look of the path have come from locals. “It has been worthwhile – we could never have afforded this path otherwise,” says Vivienne.

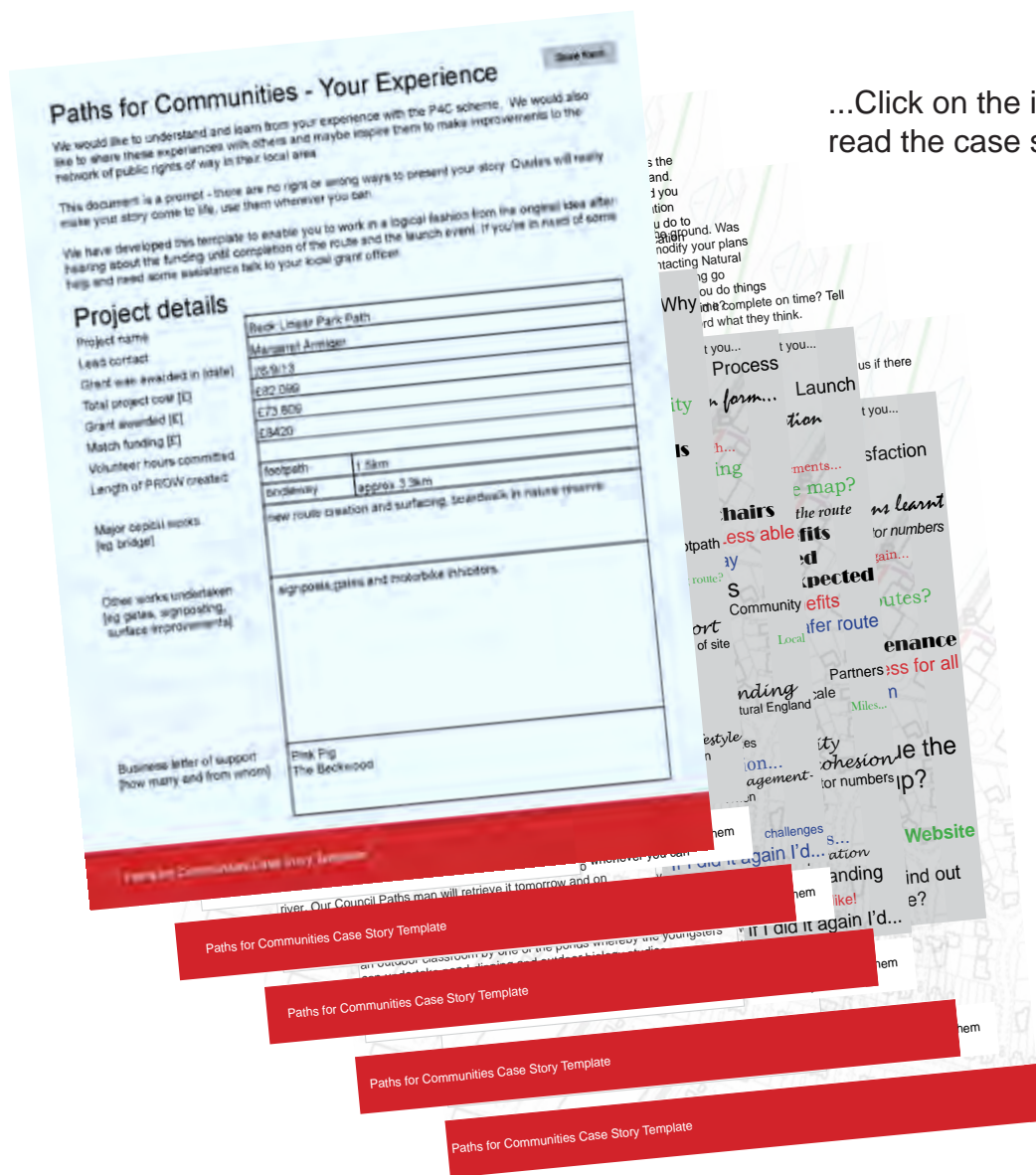


Stoke by Nayland Safer Village path, links to the Stour Valley path and links the school to their local community woodland, Rowley Wood. Still looking good after all the rain!

Case story from Beck Linear Park

In the last newsletter we invited P4C projects to share their stories and we provided information about how you could do that. For a fantastic funding scheme like P4C, there are so many opportunities to write great case stories about the variety of projects which have benefitted from the scheme.

Take a look at Beck Linear Park case story to see how it's done



Access for all: Disability ramp and all weather path at Blandford Forum

A mobility scooter ridden by Anthony Lees marked the opening of the new disability ramp and all weather path at Marsh and Ham Meadow, Blandford Forum, Dorset. The path was opened by the Mayor of Blandford, Councillor Brannigan, who said, "It is very pleasing to see community groups making things happen for others in the whole community of Blandford Forum. It is an example of what is achievable by working together." Paths on the meadows are now designated as Public Rights of Way and will be maintained by the local authority.

“Those with prams, mobility scooters, wheelchairs, and bicycles can now access this beautiful meadow without having to negotiate through a busy car park”, said John Smith, a local resident. The meadow, owned by North Dorset District Council is subject to frequent flooding by the River Stour, as was illustrated during recent events when the river burst its banks. In addition to the ramp, P4C funding has enabled the improvement of existing routes and the creation of a new section.

Local residents and visitors from further afield can now picnic, watch the resident otters, and use the improved path network to connect to the North Dorset Trailway.



The project has been led by ‘Nic’ Nicol from Blandford Rotary. However, a range of organisations have been actively involved, including: Dorset Countryside, Youth Aid, the Blandford Environmental Trust, and the Disability Action Group (DAG) North Dorset. Volunteers from these organisations began preparatory work in

November before the contractors moved in and since then have produced publicity material, designed leaflets, banners and a Facebook page, scraped paths and designed the interpretation board. Following the opening event, the paths were ‘christened’ by DAG members - more commonly known as the ‘DAG Arrows’.



Grants panel member perspective of the programme

Mike Ogden, Access and Rights of Way Team Leader, Durham County Council, represented Adept on the P4C Grants Panel. He has compiled this document about his experience as a Panel member which makes interesting reading.

My role on the Paths for Communities (P4C) Grants Panel was as a representative of ADEPT. This may not mean much to many of you, but ADEPT is the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Development, and it has a Rights of Way Managers' Working Group. I was therefore representing the Public Rights of Way teams in Local Authorities across the country. I was motivated by a desire to ensure that the voice of local authority rights of way teams was listened to, but also a curiosity as to the projects that would be considered.

The panel met 10 times between November 2012 and September 2013, either face-to-face or by teleconference, and I was able to participate in all the meetings. The panel worked well together, and brought a wide range of experience of access, rural and tourism issues. We generally agreed, but there was some healthy debate and we shared the objective of achieving the best public access possible with the funding available.

The demand for funding far outstripped supply; this wasn't surprising, and it was obvious that the P4C funding was seen as the pot of gold that lots of projects had been waiting for. The P4C criteria were quite restrictive, and the panel only got to see the applications that appeared to meet those criteria. Even so, the panel declined to support some projects which we felt were distorting their objectives in order to try and satisfy the requirements of P4C. It was frustrating at times when we could see the benefits of projects but they just didn't meet the criteria.

I was struck by the wide range of creative approaches to creating new access around the country. Some were clearly projects which had been 'in development' for many years, while others had been prompted by the availability of the new funding. Relatively few met the idealised 'model' of a private landowner working with a local community to dedicate new access; most were on local authority or charity owned land, so there were very few payments to landowners.

One aspect that particularly struck me as being a common theme was the desire of communities to either re-establish access links that had been severed by road schemes or development, or the wish to link new residential developments to existing villages. Although some of these were addressing the legacy of mistakes from many years ago, others seemed much more recent. There are clear messages there for the planning of residential development and transport infrastructure that non-motorised users still aren't always being properly considered. Certainly within many rural communities crucial links had been lost, and P4C was being asked to repair the damage!

The range of creative and exciting access projects was very impressive, and the panel would have loved to have been able to fund many more. A final report on the scheme will be produced by Defra, but as yet there is no indication of any future funding.

I found being a member of the panel to be a very rewarding experience, and it was fascinating to be 'guided' by the Natural England staff on 'virtual' tours of parts of the country that were totally new to me, though one site was somewhere I knew from childhood (many years ago!). It has reminded me of just how much can be achieved when local communities really want something, but also how underfunded access is at a national and local level.

Mike Ogden
Access and Rights of Way Team Leader
Durham County Council

In The Press.....

Helston Packet 22nd January 2014

Grant covers cost of paths upgrade

The first in a series of projects improving access to the Penrose Estate at Helston has been completed using new grant funding. Walkers around Carminowe Creek may have noticed a new, improved boardwalk and bridge that has been installed, replacing the old boardwalk that was in need of repair after being badly damaged by floods last winter. Its replacement is built to a high specification to make it last longer and has an anti-slip finish to reduce maintenance. The work, funded by a Paths for Communities grant managed by Natural England, was carried out by staff and volunteers from The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and the National Trust.

Rossendale Free Press 24th January 2014

New path will help to link towns

Work to create a new path for walkers, horses and cyclists is under way. The £143,500 one kilometre multi-user pathway will link up with a new path at Stackstead Riverside Park. The pathway is part of a 20km Valley of Stone Greenway, an off-road route between Rawtenstall and Rochdale. The three-metre wide Stackstead path is being funded by Natural England's Paths for Communities scheme, with £30,000 provided by the Lancashire Environmental Fund.

This is the West Country 24th January 2014

First stage of Penrose Estate footpath project completed

The first in a series of projects improving access to the Penrose Estate at Helston has been completed using new grant funding. Walkers around Carminowe Creek may have noticed a new, improved boardwalk and bridge that has been installed, replacing the old boardwalk that was in need of repair after being badly damaged by floods last winter. Its replacement is built to a high specification to make it last longer and has an anti-slip finish to reduce maintenance and make it safer for visitors. The work, funded by a Paths for Communities grant managed by Natural England, was carried out by staff and volunteers from The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and the National Trust.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas



This project has been funded under the Rural Development Programme for England