

Top Story

Dogs



© Thorncombe Beacon by Chris Allcorn

Dogs are featuring much in the news. The DCAF has recently responded to a Natural England consultation on dog walking advice and awaits the outcome. District Councils have been introducing a range of dog control measures and West Devon is the latest district to implement a Dog Fouling Order to cover all land to which the public have access, with the exception of land under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Commission.

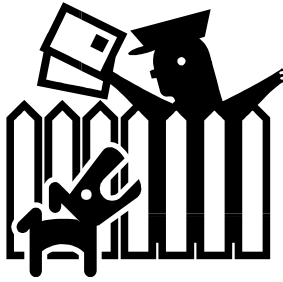
Here in the South West the South West Coast Path team recently asked Stephen Jenkinson, Kennel Club Access Adviser, to produce some tips for dog walkers using the coast path. Steve has produced a video which can be viewed on <http://www.southwestcoastpath.com/faq/dogs-coastpath/>

Steve' top tips for walking on the coast path are below:

- Always keep your dog in sight; use a lead if you don't have a reliable recall.
- Carry water for your dog – they can easily get dehydrated in summer. Collapsible travel bowls are available, but I use a clean poo bag!
- Keep your dog away from cliff edges – they are often loose and home to rabbits.
- Clip on a short lead around sheep, cows and horses, irrespective of how well trained your dog is. It's safer for everyone.
- If you feel threatened by cattle, unclip the lead so you can get away separately.
- Don't let your dog run up to other people uninvited – not everyone likes dogs. People have stepped out of the way of dogs on cliffs with fatal consequences.
- Always bag it and bin it wherever you are. Otherwise you give all dog owners a bad name and can pass on diseases to people and farm animals.
- Ensure your dog has a name tag and is micro-chipped so you can be easily reunited if your dog gets lost. If on holiday, have a temporary tag with your contact on it.
- Dogs die in hot cars, especially as the sea breeze makes you think it's cooler than it really is.

It's also an opportunity to vote for your Top Dog Walk, a competition backed by Your Dog magazine. The South West Coast Path site has a list of popular dog walks featuring beaches, cliff tops and other scenic coast path attractions. One lucky voter will receive a complimentary stay, with their dog, in one of Toad Hall Cottages' 300 cottages. The closing date is January 30 2015. Details on www.southwestcoastpath.com/dogs

Dog attacks



New legal powers were introduced this month to help stop thousands of dog attacks each year. Now, for the first time, local authorities and police will be able to insist that dog owners deal with their dog or risk a fine of up to £20,000. Owners may be required to:

- Attend dog training classes
- Muzzle the dog or require it to be on a lead in public
- Require the dog to be micro-chipped and/or neutered
- Repair fencing to prevent the dog leaving the property

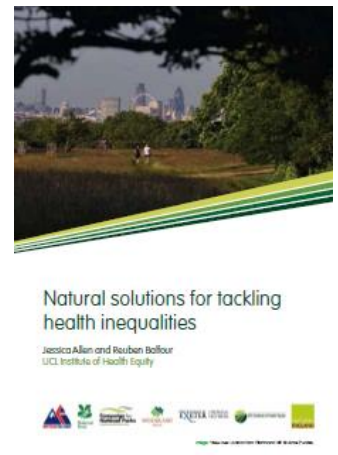
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dangerous-dogs-tough-new-law-to-help-prevent-attacks>

National News

Health Inequalities

Natural England recently funded a study by the Institute of Health Equality (IHE). The report highlights the benefits to health of access to green space and the corresponding health inequalities resulting from differences in access to natural environments. Headlines from the report are that:

- older people live longer in areas where there is more green space close to their homes
- children who live close to green spaces have higher levels of physical activity and are less likely to experience an increase in body mass index over time
- people living in the most deprived areas are 10 times less likely to live in the greenest areas
- the most affluent 20% of wards in England have 5 times the amount of parks or general green space compared with the most deprived 10% of wards



Dr Jessica Allen, Deputy Director at the IHE, University College London and lead author for the report, said: "Overall, better health is related to access to green space regardless of socio-economic status, and income-related inequality in health is moderated by exposure to green space. So, increasing the amount and quality of green space can be part of a low cost package to address health inequalities, improve health outcomes and deliver other benefits."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/natural-solutions-for-tackling-health-inequalities-conference-report>

Department for Transport



The Dft has recently put its draft Cycling Delivery Plan out for consultation. The Plan sets ambitious targets to double cycling activity by 2025 and increase the percentage of children aged 5 – 10 who usually walk to school from 48% in 2013 to 55%. The final Plan should be published before the end of the year.

The Government has also just announced a Modeshift STARS award scheme to encourage schools to persuade pupils to choose to walk or cycle to school.



A Value for Money Assessment of Cycling Grants concludes that the grants offer high value for money. Dartmoor, one of the recent recipients of cycling money, came out very well in the report which showed that for every £1 of grant there was a £13.2 benefit, the highest benefit to cost ratio of the four National Parks which received funding. Improved physical fitness levels were the main benefit.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/348943/vfm-assessment-of-cycling-grants.pdf

The Dangers of Country Roads



The Department of Transport has launched a new campaign to publicise the dangers of driving on country roads.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/country-roads-deadlier-than-you-think>

60% of deaths on Britain's roads are on rural roads. 25% of drivers said they had "had a near miss on a country road and a further 40% had been "surprised by an unexpected hazard, such as an animal." A third also said they had taken "a bend too fast."

Part of the THINK! campaign advice states "if passing more vulnerable road users such as horse riders, cyclists and walkers, pass wide and slow."

Devon News

Countryside Mobility South West

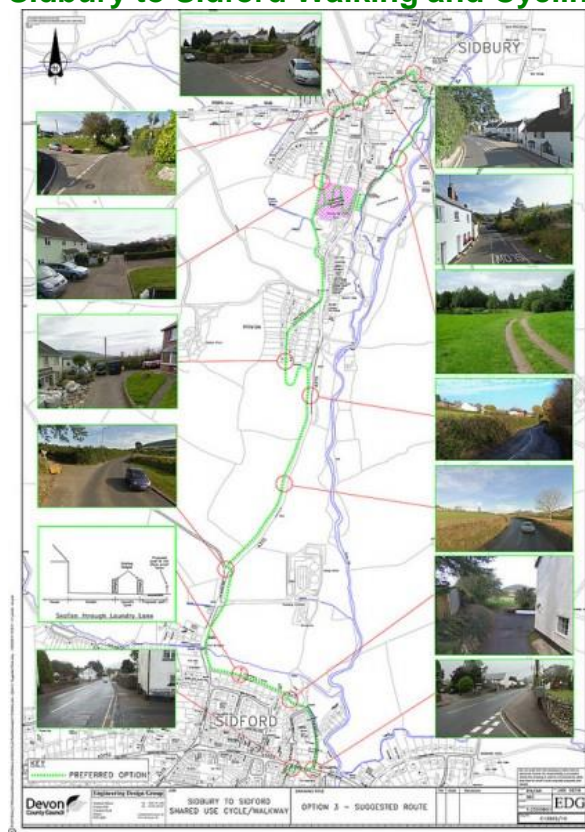


Countryside Mobility South West has launched a new tramper buggy route along the Drake's Trail between Plymouth and the Shaugh Tunnel (near Clearbrook). Plymouth Cycle Hire has taken on the tramper buggy as part of its range. CMSW hope to extend the 6 mile route beyond the Tunnel in 2015.

In a recent survey by the Research Institute of Consumer Affairs on Mobility Scooters, 72.5% of those who started to use a mobility scooter did so to go further afield to visit the countryside or have day trips. Hence range of the scooter and that it could go in a car boot were the top two factors influencing the choice of scooter. 84% of users used their scooter to go to parks or the countryside. With an estimated 300,000 -350,000 mobility scooter users in the UK it's a sector that is growing and an important way of accessing the countryside. Countryside Mobility SW offers that facility for those who do not have their own scooter or wish to use on an occasional basis.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/362989/Rica_Mobility_scooter_market_study_final.pdf

Sidbury to Sidford Walking and Cycling Trail



Following public consultation work is progressing on the development of the proposed walking and cycling trail linking Sidbury and Sidford. 80% of those who went to the public exhibition 'strongly supported' the scheme. Further work is being done on the route to see if accessibility can be improved as that was felt to be an important factor. Councillor Stuart Hughes, Devon County Council Cabinet Member for Highway Management and local County Councillor for Sidmouth and Sidford, said: "The exhibition has provided us with some useful feedback which is informing ongoing work on the proposals. Local people have made it clear that accessibility is important for this project and that's what we want to deliver. We are making initial approaches to landowners regarding the availability of land for the trail with the aim of designing a preferred route. As well as providing a link between Sidbury and Sidford, the scheme will also aim to enhance safety as well as improving access for people with disabilities."

When a "preferred route" has been developed, through negotiations with landowners, it will be presented to Devon County Council's Cabinet for approval in Spring 2015.

Tough Choices

Tough Choices is the DCC Highway Management Consultation on options to reduce budget spending in the forthcoming financial year.

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/highwaysbudget/feedback-form-highway>

There are eight areas for consultation.

1. Gritting & snow clearing
2. Gritting & snow clearing routes
3. Grit bins
4. Picnic sites on the A361/A39
5. Grass cutting (verges)
6. Weed treatment
7. Parish Lengthsmen
8. Neighbourhood Highway Team staffing

And finally...

Apps on the go



If you don't know your lime from your rowan, the Forestry Commission has launched a new app to help identify tree seedlings under a year old.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/036C8CE2FE8271BF80257D56004CA9CC>

And the Ordnance Survey has produced OS Ride the Tour app, a chance to cycle the Tour of Britain routes. You can plan your route, check on height elevation and

check your progress. <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/resources/cycling/os-ride.html>

