



Countryside Service

PLOUGHING

CROPS & PATHS

A practical guide
for **landowners** and
tenants

www.hants.gov.uk



Hampshire
County Council

What you Need to Know

PLEASE REMEMBER: UNMARKED PATHS WILL CAUSE FRUSTRATION AND MAY LEAD TO UNINTENTIONAL TRESPASS AND CROP DAMAGE.

- Reinstatement after the first ploughing of the new crop cycle **within 14 days**.
- After subsequent cultivation reinstatement must be carried out **within 24 hours**.

Overhanging Crops

It is **your** responsibility to ensure that crops are not allowed to overhang the widths below or cause inconvenience to users or obscure the route of the path. For example, pay particular attention to rape and maize: a 3m (or wider) strip may need to be cleared so that if the crop falls inwards, the path will not become obstructed.

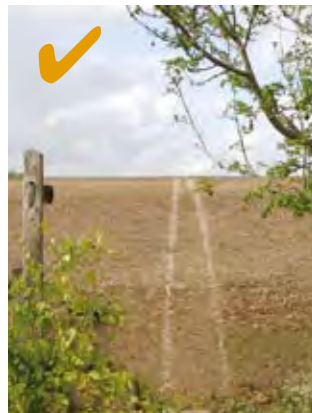


TYPE	LOCATION	MIN WIDTH	CULTIVATION LIMITATIONS
Public footpath	Cross-field	1 metre	Can be ploughed if it is not possible to AND crops must never obstruct the l surface or reduce the width by encroa
Public footpath	Field-edge	1.5 metres	Must never be ploughed.
Public bridleway	Cross-field	2 metres	Can be ploughed if it is not possible to AND crops must never obstruct the l surface or reduce the width by encroa
Public bridleway	Field-edge	3 metres	Must never be ploughed.

At Ploughing and Sowing Time

Crossfield Paths

If you can conveniently avoid ploughing or disturbing the surface of footpaths and bridleways, you must do so. If you cannot avoid ploughing a crossfield footpath or bridleway, they must be reinstated – this does not take long, if done immediately after ploughing and before leaving the field – after cultivation and drilling too. Field edge paths must not be ploughed.



How to Mark

Using tractor tramlines is the easiest method – and, if repeated when you are on the field, will last until the crop gets away.

If this is not possible, then you can use canes or stakes at sufficient intervals, so that the path's route is obvious to users.

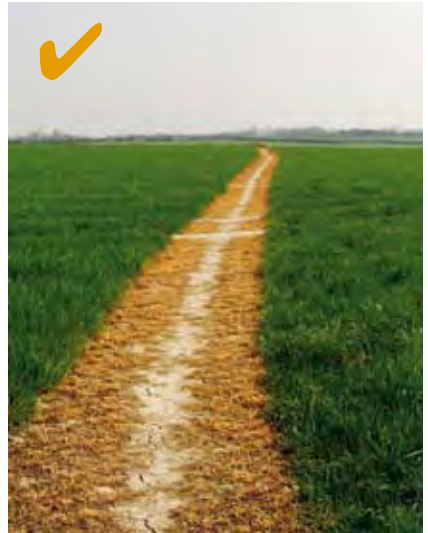
The path must be left reasonably level and easy to use. Please note that field edge paths must not be ploughed.

	ACTION
to avoid doing so ine by growing from the aching from the side.	If ploughed, line and minimum width must be clearly reinstated within 14 days of first disturbance, and within 24 hours for all subsequent disturbances. Paint-tipped canes may help with this. The surface must be made walkable, i.e. compact and firm.
	N/A
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	N/A

During the Growing Season

How to Maintain the Path

Remove the crop to keep the line of the path visible before it reaches six inches (150mm) high. Some crops will require removal during the season. Rape and beans etc, may need to be cleared to a wider width to allow for overhanging which could obstruct the minimum width.



Field-edge/Headland Paths

Field-edge/headland paths should be kept clear throughout the growing season.

Any side growth, overhanging hedges or trees which obstruct paths must be kept clear to allow unhindered passage along level ground to at least the required minimum width.

Please note that minimum widths must always be retained throughout the growing period.



The Single Payment Scheme and Public Rights of Way

Working with Farmers

The Single Payment Scheme (SPS) reinforces the requirement upon farmers to ensure public paths are kept clear. This includes ensuring paths remain open, unobstructed to their full width and any authorised structures including stiles and gates are maintained in a safe and usable condition.

Helping to reduce problems

Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC 8) of the Single Payment Scheme requires that Public Rights of Way are kept open and unobstructed to their full width and on their legal line. The County Council, as a relevant enforcement body, is encouraged to report GAEC breaches to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), particularly those which breach GAEC 8 – Public Rights of Way. The RPA will then consider a reduction in the SPS payment.

The County Council would rather work **with** farmers to help ensure that such breaches and payment reductions are avoided and officers would be happy to help provide advice to ensure that all paths are correctly provided for across cultivated land.



Help and Advice

Here to Help You



If you require further help and advice on any of the points raised in this leaflet, or on any other agricultural operations in fields with public rights of way, please telephone **0845 603 5636**.

Calls will cost up to 4p per minute for BT customers. Calls made using other service providers or mobiles may cost more. Alternatively call 01329 225398 - standard and local call rates apply to this number.

The information in these guidance notes is based on the law at the date of printing, but is not a definitive statement of the law. every care has been taken in the preparation of these notes, but no responsibility can be taken for the consequence of any errors or omissions.