

Dear Gill Pettitt,

Given the increased interest in and use of Public Rights of Way during the pandemic, we are contacting you to provide some information on how to work with the Rights of Way team at Somerset County Council. Where a parish has a Parish Path Liaison Officer (PPLO), you may already be aware of much of this information. If you would like more information on PPLO's please see below.

### **Reporting a problem on a Public Right of Way**

Responsibilities for Public Rights of Way are split between different parties, therefore when it comes to reporting a problem, emailing the Area Warden/landowner/council officer is not the best way to report issues. All issues on the network are best reported and tracked through our interactive online mapping, [Explore Somerset](#). This video shows how to report issues through the interactive map – [how to report an issue](#). It is very helpful if you can include a photo of the problem when you log the issue on Explore Somerset.

This video and map site are in the public domain and so members of the public, councillors, and anyone else can log issues in this way. More information on reporting problems on Rights of Way are available on our website - [Report a problem with a public right of way \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#).

### **Area Wardens**

Not only can you report issues through Explore Somerset, but the website also contains a huge amount of information about the Public Rights of Way network. If your parish has a PPLO, they will know who your Area Warden is. If you need to find the name of your Area Warden, you can turn the information layer on by clicking the "Layers" button (lined in red below) and turning the layer on by clicking it.

As contacting the Area Warden is not the best way of reporting issues, their contact details are not available on the map – however, knowing who they are may be of interest to the council. The areas have recently changed due to staff changes and are predicted to change soon as we recruit an additional temporary staff member to assist with managing the network.

### **Status and prioritisation of issues**

With the increased use and awareness of Public Rights of Way we continue to experience a much higher number of issues being reported than we have in the past. Where the issues are our responsibility to resolve, we continue to work to do so. With the higher number of issues, we are having to prioritise workloads and so low priority issues are likely to take longer to resolve.

By logging faults on the Explore Somerset Map, you can track their resolution and, if you enter your contact information when prompted, you will be updated automatically when the issue status changes.

### **Parish Path Liaison Officers and other volunteers**

We are fortunate to have a community of over 450 volunteers who support Rights of Way in Somerset, one of the roles that we support is the Parish Path Liaison Officer (PPLO). We currently have 188 registered with us and are keen to support those who may be fulfilling this role without our awareness. If you have a Parish Path Liaison Officer, you should be aware of them. If you are unsure, please contact our Volunteer and Trails Officer at [ROWVolunteers@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ROWVolunteers@somerset.gov.uk). Similarly, if you have anyone who has an interest in taking on this role, please ask them to contact us. More information on the role can be found here - [Rights of Way – Parish Path Liaison Officer | Somerset Volunteering](#). As you may be aware the PPLOs carry out a wide variety of activities on our behalf ranging from supporting us checking issues raised to surveying the network of Public Rights of Way and doing basic practical work.

If you would like more information on Rights of Way, please see our website - [Public Rights of Way \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#). If the parish council has an interest in supporting our work, please contact us and we will be happy to advise how the council can get involved.

Many thanks,

Rights of Way Team