



Dear Lord Benyon

**CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL ACCESS FORUMS IN RELATION TO  
PAYMENT FOR PERMISSIVE ACCESS**

Rutland Countryside Access Forum (the Local Access Forum) is pleased to see that there is a possibility of funding for permissive access returning (reference Hansard - Lord Benyon 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021). We note that you have already implemented this in National Parks and AONB. From January 2023 you are also going to provide the opportunity for payment for allowing access to woodland.

We will be delighted to see funding for permissive access return to the County of Rutland and I am sure other LAFs will also welcome this.

However, we do have a number of concerns in relation to how funding was provided in the past through HLS and the Countryside Stewardship schemes. From surveys undertaken by the Leicestershire, Mid Lincolnshire, South Lincolnshire and Rutland LAFs between 2011 and 2013 it was apparent that:

- a. Local people in the vicinity of a number of the permissive routes were not aware of the routes, due to signage not in place.
- b. A number of routes were difficult to use due to the lack of maintenance.
- c. A number of routes which were deemed suitable for wheelchairs were not.
- d. There were a number of routes that had no value for walkers, cyclists or horse riders.

As Local Access Forums are advisory bodies, we feel we should be consulted in relation to the rules, processes and routes relating to funded permissive access.

We are concerned about allowing dogs on permissive access routes, as we believe that this will discourage farmers/landowners considering payment for permissive access schemes. We feel that the permissive access signage should state dogs only allowed on short leads and restricted to the permissive route. In relation to dog waste, included in the funding should be the cost of dog waste bins, where councils are prepared to dispose of the waste at no extra charge. The signage should include "All dog waste should be disposed of in the dog waste bin or taken home".

The original permissive access signs were too small. The future signs need to be easily recognised from the roadside. The signs should display the title of the scheme, the map of the route, items of interest such as wildlife, the type of user allowed, a contact number for any problems and the start and end date of the permissive access. Where there are a number of routes on the same site, it would be beneficial for users to see a site map displaying the other routes, as well as the one for the individual route.

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