

Case Study

Bramber Walk for All

Background

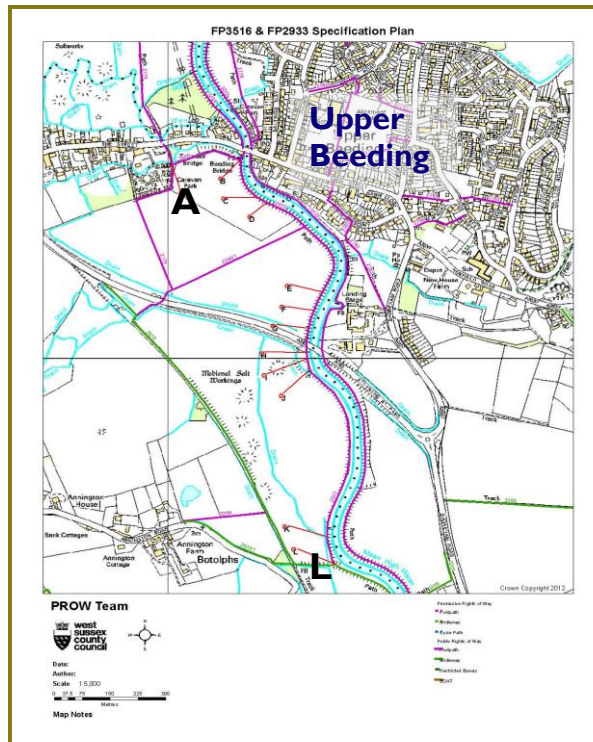
The Steyning & District Community Partnership (SDCP) proposed a major upgrade to a 1.5km section of public footpath alongside the river Adur. The idea was for a path linking with village facilities that would allow all, including disabled users, to take a scenic walk along the river.

From the outset SDCP collaboratively sought the views of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) on the viability of the project.

The continuing support, advice, and guidance from SDNPA and WSSCC officers was instrumental in attracting funding, determining practical design elements, and obtaining various necessary consents.

SDNPA also recognised the synergy between this scheme and the Downs Link path extension, in particular the opportunities presented for cost savings if the funding gap (for the proposed path) could be closed and the works started whilst contractors were still on the Downs Link path site.

The scheme was also endorsed by West Sussex Local Access Forum and South Downs Local Access Forum.



“Bramber Walk for All route A to L” – follow the purple line from A to the right and along the riverside to L.

The project

SDCP led on this project, Martin Leigh-Pollitt, Chairman Visitor & Tourism Group, SDCP, was a tremendous driving force who consulted widely with the local community and successfully negotiated with landowners. The majority of the path improvements required consent from the Environment Agency and WSSCC agreed to manage the construction.

Costs were estimated as £50,000 and in demonstration of real partnership working;

- WSSCC committed £25,000
- Bramber Parish Council provided £7,500
- Other sources provided £2,000 from other sources
- SDNPA committed £15,500 (in the spirit of the Joint Access and Rights of Way Accord)

The path was partially constructed in autumn 2014 and completed in spring 2015. It links with the South Downs Way at its southern end and with the new Downs Link safe off-road crossing which passes under the road bridge over the river via a detour from the existing busy A283 road crossing.

The Downs Link path extension was also a joint project between SDNPA and WSSCC, funded through Cycling Ambition (a project funded by the Department for Transport).

“The project has been well received by the local community and there has been a noticeable increase in usage. We are delighted that this scheme has been made possible through the efforts of so many organisations and individuals and that young families and those with impaired mobility can now access this beautiful area of the countryside.”

Martin Leigh-Pollitt, Chairman Visitor & Tourism Group SDCP

The outcome

The route was launched on 25 July 2015 at a ceremony where it was enthusiastically received by a variety of users. The new route will provide benefits to a wide range of people; local residents, walkers, visitors from wider afield, and those with a pushchairs, wheelchairs, or mobility difficulties.

The improved route, within the SDNP, will provide an additional recreational facility helping to improve the health and wellbeing of all those who use it and it will also encourage visitors to the area, using local facilities thereby supporting the local economy. Since its opening there has already been interest from officers in a neighbouring local authority who intend to promote the path as one of their accessible days out by bus.

From participating in this project we have seen the importance of, and benefitted from good partnership working, marrying local knowledge, passion and enthusiasm with sector expertise; the project management role is a constraining factor for the realisation of such schemes as community groups alone do not have the resources to commission and project manage schemes of this nature.

We also learnt of the benefits of ‘complementing’ with related schemes, with good co-ordination there can be significant cost and efficiency savings.



‘Enjoying a riverside ramble’

The future

This project is a great example of the way that SDNPA can support schemes which bring added value to the ‘rights of way and access network’ and meet the Purposes and Duty.

It ‘showcases’ what can be achieved when there is strong local enthusiasm and leadership, supported by officers with expertise and experience in the ‘field.’

‘Public rights of way and access’ refers to the public right to access some land for walking or certain other leisure activities.

You can:

- use public roads and pavements or public rights of way, e.g. footpaths or bridleways
- use your right to roam on open access land including mountains, moors, heaths, downs, common land and some land around the England Coast Path

If neither of these apply, you may still be able to access private land if either:

- the landowner has given permission (‘permissive access’)
- there’s a local tradition, or right, of access.

<https://www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land>

For further information please contact:

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