

# Countryside Access WARDENS

If you enjoy the countryside and want to get active, becoming a Countryside Access Warden could be an ideal opportunity for you.

## Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering your time to be a Countryside Access Warden [CAW]. With over 4,200 miles of Public Rights of Way (PROW) in Kent, your help will be invaluable to keep the countryside network clearly marked and accessible for residents and visitors alike.

Remember to record online all the activities that you complete as a Warden - this allows Kent County Council [KCC] to monitor the current state of the countryside network and target maintenance effectively.

We welcome any feedback or comments that you have about volunteering as a CAW and we hope to continually improve the scheme with your ideas, comments and suggestions.

If you need assistance with any aspect of your role please contact us for support, we can be reached at [CAS.Volunteer@kent.gov.uk](mailto:CAS.Volunteer@kent.gov.uk)

Remember to stay safe and have fun. If you encounter a problem you are not sure whether you should tackle – report it!

## Tasks a Countryside Access Warden does perform

A Countryside Access Warden may perform all of the following jobs:

- Fix waymarker discs where paths change direction
- Attach path-end number signs where paths leave the road
- Spot vegetation clearance around furniture and 'choke points'
- Maintain gate hinges to ensure proper closure



- Report more significant faults online or via the Kent Report Line 03000 414141
- Report work completed no less than 10 times per year
- Carry out basic inspections & photographing evidence [see crops and ploughing]

## Tasks a Country Access Warden does not perform

- Furniture repairs
- Resolve landowner issues
- Waymarker post installation
- Path surface maintenance
- Digging or excavating
- Advising on path routes
- Extensive vegetation clearance beyond the capability of their tools

## Issue and Fault Reporting

One of the most important roles of a CAW is to be the eyes and ears of KCC on PROW.

We prioritise, action and target resources based on reports from Wardens so please report everything that you do, no matter how big or small.

## How to report issues and work done

[Log in](#) with your user ID and password.

On the left hand side of the screen is an A-Z of all services from which to choose.

### To report work done

- Click the 'Activity Record' tab.
- Use the arrows on the top left hand corner of the map to move around it and the up and down arrows on the scale to zoom in and out as required.
- A box will appear containing various footpath numbers; select the one you wish to report activity on.
- Scroll down and the footpath number has been automatically added to a series of dropdown boxes. You can now edit the date and hours worked and let us know what work you did along the footpath.
- When complete click the 'Add Record' and 'Finish Log' tabs.

If you prefer you can also use the 'Search Map' tools located underneath the A-Z of all services menu. The Search Map function allows you to search the map by town, postcode, path number or grid reference.

### To report a fault

- Click the 'Report a Fault' tab.
- Find the location of the fault on the map in the same way as to record an activity.
- Scroll down and use the drop down boxes to select the nature of the fault.
- Type in any comments or particulars about the fault into the Additional Details box.
- Scroll down to check your contact details are correct. Here you can use the tick box to choose whether you want to receive updates about your reported fault.
- Click on the 'Submit Fault' tab

If you have any problems accessing the reporting site or need further training to be able to report online please contact us at [CAS.Volunteer@kent.gov.uk](mailto:CAS.Volunteer@kent.gov.uk)

## Issue resolution

Issues can be noted whilst you are on the move in your note book and then reported online, reporting online is more beneficial than using the Kent report line because:

- Results can be processed far more efficiently than telephone or written reports.
- Online reporters receive progress updates

Remember - If there is an issue that you are trained and able to safely resolve, please do so and simply report the work completed to us afterwards.

### Prioritising issues

When a new issue has been reported to KCC, the details are assessed and the issue is allocated a priority number from 1 - 9.

Top priority issues involving public safety with a high potential to lead to injury or loss of life are immediately allocated to an Officer for inspection within 24hrs. Non-priority issues are accepted into the system and remain there until they can be allocated to an Area Officer. To view the full list of priorities [click here](#).

Occasionally an issue will be 'rejected', this is usually when there is insufficient information provided or if it is not actually a PROW matter such as street lights, litter or 'pavements'.

Area PROW Officers operate individual caseloads, new issues are only allocated as and when they have the capacity to take on more. They are allocated according to their priority and date received. Other logged issues close by, whatever their priority, will also be picked up by the same Officer at the same time.

Whilst it is not possible to deal with every issue, all reports of problems on the network and service requests are recorded and help build an overall picture of how we can manage the PROW network more effectively.

## Training videos

We have produced 4 short training videos below which will show you how to safely and successfully complete the main tasks that a Countryside Access Warden carries out. You will learn how to identify the different types of Public Rights of Way, which issues you should tackle and which you should report as faults.

- [A guide to Waymarking](#)
- [A guide to Spot Vegetation Clearance](#)
- [A guide to Path-End Numbering](#)
- [A guide to Gate Adjustment](#)

## Further training

To learn map reading skills [click here](#).

## Seasonal campaigns

At different times of the year and locations throughout Kent, KCC has a number of seasonal campaigns which we may ask volunteers to take part in.

The annual Cropping and Ploughing Campaign is one area where Countryside Access Wardens can get involved by undertaking the following activities:

- Check farmers have reinstated their crops
- A site visit to check that the path has been cut through the crop and sprayed to a required width.
- We may ask Wardens to send us a digital photo [max 2MB] of the path through the crop as evidence of the path and its approximate width.

Farmers receive annual payment from the Rural Payments Agency for keeping paths clear. Every year we encounter farmers/landowners that fail to re-instate their crops.

We aim to target this group to promote a long term significant improvement and where necessary serve notices for legal action.

For further information about crops and ploughing, land occupier responsibilities and when to report non reinstatement of crops to KCC, please [click here](#).

## Annual clearance contracts

Wardens who volunteer to take part are asked to inspect work carried out by our contractors to remove heavy vegetation from paths.

Wardens can help KCC by:

- Walking the section of path identified by the contractors schedule of cut paths
- Ensuring the complete length has been cleared
- Submitting photographic evidence of areas where work has not been completed satisfactorily [photographs must be low-res and no larger than 2MB]

As vegetation grows at a very fast rate during the spring / summer we need to complete the inspections and return results within one week to fairly reflect the contractors work.

## Vegetation obstructing access furniture

Please report any stile, gate or other furniture that is obstructed by vegetation and is beyond the capability of the tools in your toolkit to clear.

## Trees and overhanging vegetation

Although the Countryside Access Service is responsible for clearing vegetation growing from the surface of a path (except in the case of a cross field path) adjoining land owners are responsible for cutting back any overhanging vegetation or vegetation encroaching from the sides, including trees and hedgerows.

Please report any trees that fall across a Public Right of Way and any paths that have become difficult to use or follow because they have become so overgrown with overhanging / encroaching vegetation.

Remember that bridleways should be cleared to a height that allows a horse and mounted rider to pass.





## Obstructions along the network

Wardens are able to resolve problems with obstructions by reporting them to us quickly.

Obstructions most commonly reported are:

- Locked and tied gates
- Dangerous or broken access furniture
- Hedgerows, buildings and structures
- Barbed wire and electric fences
- Crops
- Manure and slurry
- Aggressive dogs
- Animal / bird pens

## The Issue Adoption Pool

In addition to seasonal campaigns, Countryside Access Wardens can undertake additional tasks in their area via the Issue Adoption Pool [IAP]. The IAP holds additional tasks such as inspections work that a Warden could easily undertake and which is local to them.

When a task is uploaded onto the system an automated email is sent to all of the Wardens in the area where the task is located.

Wardens interested in taking on the task follow these simple steps:

- Log in to the IAP via a link located on the menu of the reporting system and find the task
- Check the details of the task and if agreeing to undertake the work – scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Adopt this issue' to claim the job
- Complete the task and report the results

Please only complete the task if you have logged in, claimed the job online and removed it from the pool. Adopting issues online prevents other volunteers from attending sites unnecessarily to tackle jobs which have already been completed.

## Safe working guidelines

Please study the Hazards and Precautions table which contains a summary of the hazards faced when carrying out waymarking and spot vegetation clearance work, along with practical measures to reduce risks and the likelihood of accidents occurring.

Should you require a copy of Kent County Council's Public Rights of Way Health and Safety Guidance Notes and Risk Assessment for Volunteers; please contact the Project Officer on [CAS.Volunteer@kent.gov.uk](mailto:CAS.Volunteer@kent.gov.uk)

## Volunteer Insurance Cover

Whilst out and about helping us to look after your local Rights of Way network and using the tools that we have provided, your activities will be covered by Kent County Council's own insurance cover.

There are three main types of insurance cover for all of our Countryside Access Wardens:

- 1) Public Liability Insurance
- 2) Employers' Liability Insurance
- 3) Personal Accident Insurance\*

\*Please read on for details of benefit restrictions'

## Public Liability Insurance

Put simply, our public liability insurance provides cover in the unlikely event that in the course of carrying out your duties, there is an accident, caused through negligence, which injures or harms a member of the public and/or damages their property.

At the time of writing our indemnity limit is £50,000,000 for any one event.

## Employers' Liability Insurance

This provides cover for any injuries suffered by volunteers assisting KCC in our business activities caused by our negligence.

## Personal Accident Insurance

By law, Kent County Council [KCC] and our partners are responsible for the health and safety of all their employees and volunteers. KCC takes its

responsibilities very seriously; by implementing a simple yet robust health and safety policy and procedure to minimise the likelihood of risk of harm/ injury whilst at work.

However, we are insured to cover any claims made by employees and volunteers where they have been injured as a result of their work.

Thankfully injuries are extremely rare, but under KCC'S Accident Insurance; if you were injured or harmed you would be entitled to make a claim.

There is no upper age limit for volunteers applicable to KCC'S Liability Insurance policies, as long as volunteers are considered fit, capable and competent enough to perform their duties. However, it is normal insurance industry practice for Personal Accident type policies to impose upper age limits. In the case of the Council's Personal Accident Benefits policy; volunteers will be covered under the policy until the expiration of the period of insurance (currently 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015) in which they attain the age of 75.

### Recording your work done

In your backpack you will find a notebook and pen, please use these items to record the following:

- The time you started work
- The area that you are working in, by nearest town/parish or village
- The path numbers of places where you have taken an action and the action taken, for example Path no. 1234 – 1 waymarker installed.
- Use a new line to submit each and every action.

Once you have access to a computer, you may then update your activity record by logging onto the reporting system.

The activities that you report help us in a number of ways:

1. We can calculate the hours worked by Wardens and convert them into an 'added value' which helps ensure the continued budget to support the scheme.
2. We can keep a record of the most common problems you encounter which helps us to make informed decisions about network management.
3. By recording which jobs are completed on which paths we can identify who to contact if we need further information about the work carried out.

### KCC Animals at Work Policy

Many Countryside Access Wardens coordinate their Warden activities with walking their animals. KCC has produced a policy for people who take their animals to work with them.

It reminds us that as ambassadors of KCC and whilst we are in the public eye, our actions will be representative of the Council. It states that whilst on duty:

"You must take responsibility for the control, care and hygiene of the animal at all times."

### How to contact us

For all general volunteer enquiries such as restocking and maintenance of tools and assistance with your role as a Countryside Access Warden, please contact the Project Officer:

Email: [CAS.Volunteer@kent.gov.uk](mailto:CAS.Volunteer@kent.gov.uk)

Postal Address:  
Public Rights of Way and Access Service  
Kent County Council  
Invicta House  
County Road  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME14 1XX.

General PROW enquiries & fault reports line  
03000 417171