

Parish



Public Rights of Way



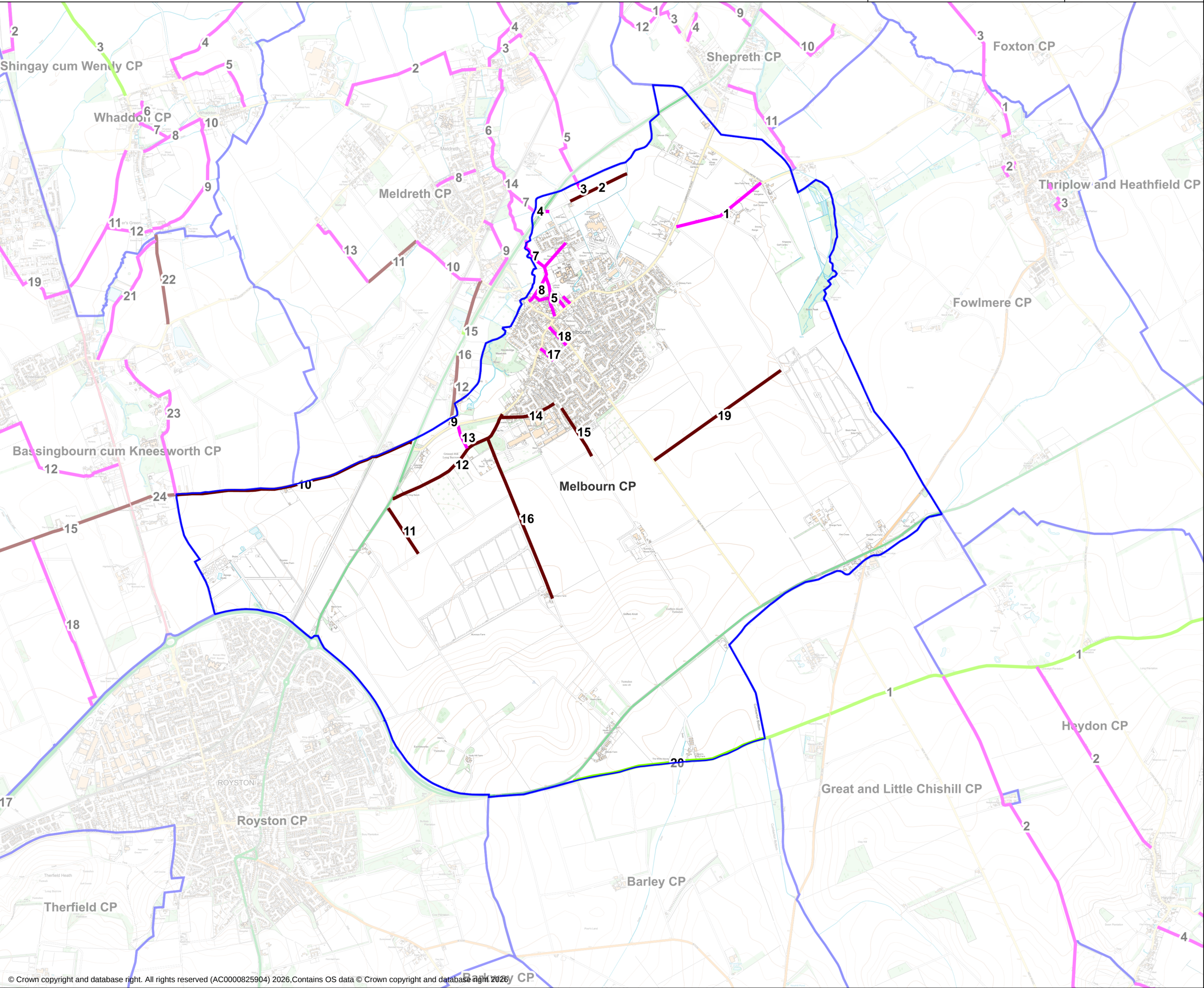
Bridleway



Byway



Footpath



Suggestion of some responses - please share responses with the Office.

Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Stakeholder Engagement Survey

Overview

Background

Cambridgeshire County Council is your local highway authority, and is responsible for managing over 3,200km of public rights of way. A public right of way is a legally protected route across land that the general public have a right to freely use. There are four classes of public right of way:

- Public Footpaths (open to use by people on foot or using mobility aids)
- Bridleways (open to use by people on foot, those using mobility aids, cyclists and horse riders)
- Byways Open to All Traffic (open to use by all types of user, including motor vehicles, but are generally unsurfaced)
- Restricted Byways (open to use by people on foot, those using mobility aids, cyclists, horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles)

You can view a map of public rights of way in the County using our My Cambridgeshire portal, [here](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/countryside-access/rights-of-way) <<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/countryside-access/rights-of-way>>

The **Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)** is a statutory document that every local highway authority has to produce. It sets out how the authority will manage and enhance its public rights of way and countryside access. The ROWIP must also consider cycle tracks in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Every ten years a local highway authority is required to review its ROWIP to assess:

- the extent to which the local network meets the present and future needs of the public;
- the opportunities the network presents for exercise and outdoor recreation;
- the accessibility of the network to people with mobility or sensory impairments.

This questionnaire is to help Cambridgeshire County Council understand the concerns and priorities of key stakeholders in our local public rights of way network, to support us in undertaking the above assessment.

This will allow us to develop an updated ROWIP that identifies the needs of our communities in relation to public access, so we can plan and publish our intended actions to meet those needs over the next ten years.

There will be a full public consultation further on in the process, during which the general public will have the chance to comment on a drafted Plan.

Completing the survey

Wherever possible, please answer the questions on behalf of the organisation that you are representing. When answering on behalf of an organisation, such as a parish council or a charity, please take care to ensure only one response is provided.

The survey is divided into sections and if you feel a section is not relevant to you/your organisation, you can move to the next section.

Whilst you are not required to answer every question, please answer as many as you can to enable us to gather a wide range of input. This will help our understanding of key issues to be as broad as possible.

If you have any questions about completing this form, or if you require a printed version, you can email rowip2026@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The deadline for completing the survey is Sunday 11th October 2026.

Data protection notice

You do not have to give us any personal information. We will not publish any personal details you do give us, but may publish your response, and include it in public reports, with personal details removed. Personal data will be held securely, in accordance with data protection legislation. We will only store it for 12 months after the results have been analysed and the report is published.

We may share your responses with our consultants, AtkinsRéalis, our partners in this work. Personal information such as your name or email address will not be shared.

For more information on how we collect and protect your data, please visit: [Privacy statement | Cambridgeshire County Council](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/data-protection-and-foi/information-and-data-sharing/privacy-statement)
<<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/data-protection-and-foi/information-and-data-sharing/privacy-statement>>

Why your views matter

By taking part you will help to shape the future of public rights of way and countryside access in Cambridgeshire for the coming years. We are grateful for your input into this process.

General

1 What organisation are you representing?

Melbourn Parish Council

2 Please provide your name

Abigail Williams

3 Please provide a contact email address

parishclerk@melbournparishcouncil.gov.uk

4 What category does your organisation represent?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- ☐ Government Body
- ☐ Local Authority
- ☒ Parish Council
- ☐ User Group
- ☐ Charitable Group
- ☐ Landowners / Land Managers
- ☐ Other

5 What level of geographic area is your organisation chiefly concerned with?

Please select only one item

- ☐ National
- ☐ Regional
- ☐ Cambridgeshire
- ☐ A single district
- ☒ A single parish
- ☐ Other / Multiple areas

6 In what way are the County's public rights of way currently used by the organisation, community or customers you represent?

Select all those that apply.

(Required)

Please select all that apply

- ☒ Walking
- ☒ Wheeling (e.g. wheelchairs, mobility scooters etc.)
- ☒ Cycling
- ☒ Horse riding
- ☐ Carriage driving
- ☐ Off road motorcycling
- ☐ Off road vehicles (e.g. 4x4s)
- ☒ Land management / Agricultural access
- ☒ Other
- ☐ Don't know / Not applicable

7 For what purpose are the existing rights of way primarily used by the organisation, community or customers you represent?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Recreational journeys (e.g. dog walking, rambling, cycling for pleasure, horse riding etc.)
- ☐ Journeys to access schools, work, shops, community services etc.
- ☒ Relatively equal use of the above
- ☐ Don't know / Not applicable

Public Rights of Way Network and Awareness

In this section we are asking about the general quality and awareness of Cambridgeshire's public rights of way.

8 How would you rate the Cambridgeshire public rights of way network for the following types of use?

	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Don't know / Not applicable
Users of wheelchairs, mobility vehicles or other mobility aids <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Accessing schools, work, shops and community services <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Walking, including dog walking <i>Please select only one item</i>	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Running <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cycling <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Horse riders <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Carriage drivers <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Off-road motorcyclists <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Off-road vehicles (4x4s etc.) <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

9 Overall, how would you rate the changes you have seen on Cambridgeshire's public rights of way over the last 10 years?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Significant improvements
- ☐ Moderate improvements
- ☒ No change
- ☐ Moderately worse
- ☐ Significantly worse
- ☐ Don't know

10 Is the current provision of signposting and wayfinding markers adequate to use public rights of way without a map?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
☒ No
☐ Don't Know

11 How aware do you feel local people are of the public rights of way in Cambridgeshire?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Very aware
☐ Aware
☒ Not aware
☐ Don't know

12 How aware do you feel visitors to Cambridgeshire are of the public rights of way in the county?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Very aware
☐ Aware
☒ Not aware
☐ Don't know

Service

This section asks about the service directly provided by Cambridgeshire County Council for the resolution of public rights of way issues and how information is shared.

13 Please rate the ease with which the public can report problems with public rights of way:

Please select only one item

- ☐ Very easy
☐ Easy
☒ Fair
☐ Poor
☐ Very poor
☐ Don't know / Have not tried to report a problem

14 On average, how would you rate the resolution of public rights of way problems that you have reported to CCC?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know / Not Applicable
Timeliness of response <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Quality of the response or the works carried out <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

15 How useful is the public rights of way information on the Cambridgeshire County Council website?

[Cambridgeshire County Council website front page](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/) <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/>

Please select only one item

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor
- ☒ Don't know / Have not tried to access information

16 If you answered fair, poor or very poor, can you please explain why.

Accessibility

Please consider the experiences of different users, including disabled people, older people, families with young children, people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters or pushchairs, people with sensory impairments, and those who may face other barriers to accessing the countryside.

17 What issues do you or your organisation's users experience with the accessibility, current condition, or maintenance of rights of way?

Many of the rights of way, along with our regular pavements, are in disrepair and make it hard for those with limited mobility to access them.

18 What should be the priorities for improving access to rights of way for everyone?

Please consider both physical improvements (such as surfaces, gates, steps, ramps and signage) and wider accessibility, including information, wayfinding, safety and inclusive design.

Safety - checks on the state of the rights of way to protect users.

- 19** Have you or your organisation any information or suggestions that can help the Council to understand the need to provide better opportunities for those who face challenges to access the countryside.

This could include barriers experienced by disabled people (including those with visual impairments), older people, families with young children, or others who may face challenges accessing the countryside.

Development and Public Rights of Way

Cambridgeshire is experiencing widespread development which affects public rights of way and public access land. These questions are to understand views on the impacts of these.

- 20** In what ways do you consider the impacts of development have led to negative outcomes for the public rights of way network?

- 21** In what ways do you consider the impacts of development have led to positive outcomes the public rights of way network?

Strategic green belt areas on developments have linked PROW to streets/housing.

- 22** What do you consider Cambridgeshire County Council could do reduce the harms, or maximise the benefits, for public rights of way that may arise as a result of development?

Environment and Wellbeing

Public rights of way and access to land can provide both challenges and positive benefits for wellbeing and environmental biodiversity. These questions are to understand organisations' views on this.

23 Please rate the adequacy of access to green spaces and the natural environment in Cambridgeshire.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Very good
- ☒ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Don't know

24 How could maintenance practices on public rights of way (e.g. mowing regimes, vegetation clearance etc.) be improved to support biodiversity?

Proper maintenance of hedging etc would allow you to spot issues before they are too far gone and require drastic action such as removal of cutting during the wrong season.

25 Do you have any ideas on how wildlife habitats could be enhanced along public rights of way corridors?

Education boards informing users of the habitats around them may lead to more care being taken.

Path Status and Surface

Path status designates which classes of users can use specific public rights of way.

Path surfaces can be natural, semi-sealed or sealed and can have a large impact on the usage and enjoyment of using public rights of way.

Surface type examples:

Natural (e.g. grass)

Semi-Sealed (e.g. hoggin)

Sealed (e.g. asphalt)

Hoggin

Hoggin is a natural, unprocessed mix of clay, sand and gravel. When compacted, it forms a firm, buff-coloured, and semi-permeable surface.

26 What is your opinion on changing the status of path to allow a wider range of users?

For example, a public footpath for pedestrians being changed in status to a bridleway, which would also allow cyclists and horse riders to use the route.

Proper assessment of the suitability of path would be needed. Signs in the middle of a path, adverse camber and the width of paths should deter the use unless improvements can be made.

27 What is your opinion on changing the paths from natural surfaces to either sealed (e.g. asphalt) or semi-sealed surfaces (e.g. hoggin)?

Concern over the impact on the natural environment and the maintenance of such paths.

Safety

Safety in this context covers the risk or incidence of accidents, injury or crime.

28 How safe is it to use the public rights of way in Cambridgeshire?

This could include safety risks arising from traffic, other persons, animals or the physical environment.

Please select only one item

- ☐ Very safe
- ☒ Fairly safe
- ☐ Unsafe
- ☐ Very unsafe
- ☐ Don't know / Not applicable

29 If you answered 'Unsafe' or 'Very unsafe' can you tell us why and what could help resolve this? If you answered 'fairly safe', what could be better?

30 Has your organisation or its members been impacted by rural crime in the county (e.g. hare coursing, fly tipping, trespass etc.)?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes, it has a large impact
- ☐ Yes, it has some impact
- ☒ Whilst it occurs, the impacts are minor
- ☐ Not directly affected, but aware it is a concern
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Looking Forward

The next set of questions are to gather input into what steps could be taken to improve public rights of way and countryside access in the coming years.

31 When considering countryside access and public rights of way in Cambridgeshire, what do you think could be done better or differently?

Better maintenance to encourage a wider section of the community to use the paths.
Clearer signage and wayfinding.
Lighting for safer use.

32 What do you think are the THREE most important improvements that would make using/visiting the Cambridgeshire countryside easier and more enjoyable?

Please select 3 options. If you change your mind you can deselect a choice by clicking it a second time, and then reselect.

There will be the opportunity to suggest improvements not listed here, in the following question.

Permissive paths

Permissive paths are those that the landowner grants permission to user categories (e.g. walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc.) that they wish. The permission can be withdrawn at any time, unless the landowner has entered into an agreement with terms attached to its closure.

	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3
Better road crossings <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐
Clear overgrown paths more frequently <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☒	☐
Improve access to green spaces from public rights of way <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐
Increase circular routes <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐
Increase network length <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐
Increase the number of permissive paths <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐
Increase the status of existing paths, to allow a wider range of users <i>Please select only one item</i>	☒	☐	☐
More signposting / waymarking <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☒
Provide information on accessible routes <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐
Removal of gates and stiles <i>Please select only one item</i>	☐	☐	☐

33 Is there anything else you would like to add which you think would benefit or improve people's use and enjoyment of the countryside in Cambridgeshire?

34 What do you think can be done to accommodate the widest range of people who use the public rights of way network?

Proper path maintenance - across ROW and public pavements.

35 How can your organisation support improvements to public rights of way?

e.g. volunteering, funding, land access, partnerships etc.

Communication and promotion of proper path us.
Encourage community ownership.

36 Are you aware of any national or local policies or initiatives that affect PROW and countryside access - please tell us about them here.

Whilst we are aware of many policies, guidelines and initiatives, we may still have gaps, which is why we are asking.

Landownership

37 Are you or your organisation a landowner or involved in land management?

This could include managing land or sites where people may wish to have access. For example: private estates, farms, tourist sites, nature reserves, watercourses, etc.

(Required)

Please select only one item



Yes



No

Landownership questions

38 What type of land is managed by your organisation or its members?

For example: managing private estates, farms, tourist sites, nature reserves, watercourses, etc

Public open space.
Nature Reserve.

39 Do you have any of the following on your organisation's land in Cambridgeshire?

Public rights of way include public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways to which the public have permanent rights of access.

Permissive paths are those that the landowner grants permission to user categories (e.g. walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc.) that they wish. The permission can be withdrawn at any time, unless the landowner has entered into an agreement with terms attached to its closure.

Permissive access land is similar, in that the landowner permits the public to access to part of their land and can withdraw that access if they wish.

Select all that apply.

Please select all that apply

- ☒ Public rights of way
- ☒ Public open spaces (e.g. village greens, common land, public parks etc.)
- ☐ Permissive paths
- ☐ Permissive land access
- ☐ None of the above / Don't know

40 Would your organisation be willing to consider having permissive paths across its land?

Please select only one item

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Yes, if the right incentives were available
- ☒ Not sure, I would need more information
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

41 Where public rights of way or other types of access currently impact land management practices, what improvements could better balance public access with your operations?

This could include measures such as preventing trespass or crime, or supporting stock management etc.