



Rights of Way Improvement Plan Funding Programme (RFP) 2008-11: **Casework examples of ROWIP work**

Please note that the information gathered here has come directly from the Local Authorities end of year reports over the last three years of RFP.

Projects aimed at: Walkers, Cyclists and Horse-riders. The majority of the projects have been aimed at walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. Here are some examples of work that have benefited those groups of users.

Bridgend County Borough Council: 1km Bridleway 53 Cefn Cribwr (2008-09).

Many complaints were received by the authority about this bridleway because of very wet and boggy conditions along the length of the route.

Works included consolidation of material to form a surface that was then rolled several times with heavy machinery. The result is a strong and durable path with a certain amount of resistance to hooves. The authority received many appreciative phone calls from local horse-riding schools/horse-riders to congratulate them on their good work.

Here are some photos of the works. (Photos: BCBC Rights of Way Section)



A section of Crib Cribwr Bridleway (before)



A section being worked on (during)



A section of the route (after)

Bridgend County Borough Council continued

Although BCBC Rights of Way staff are often thanked informally over the phone for their hard work it is rare for a formal “thank you” to be received. The following email (an excerpt of which is provided below) was sent from Cllr Huw David, Cabinet Member - Resources

Bridgend County Borough Council to the Rights of Way department.

“A constituent met with me this week and brought to my attention the following issues on footpaths in Cefn Cribwr:Footpath 21 –

Thank you for installing the stiles and carrying out works to improves access”.

Denbighshire County Council: Bodelwyddan Bridleway Project (2008-10)

For years, Public Bridleway 8 in the community of Bodelwyddan has been subject to drainage problems. These have made the path virtually inaccessible along some stretches especially during the winter and have also limited use during wet periods in the summer.

The bridleway is an important recreational facility not only to horse-riders and cyclists but also because it is within easy walking distance for the many workers from the St Asaph Business Park which lies alongside the bridleway.

The Council was approached by local horse riders as well as workers and companies from the business park asking whether the route could be improved to provide an opportunity for healthy exercise to the workers nearby.

Thus ensued a series of improvement works during 2009 (with much of the preparation done in the previous year) which resulted in a pleasant new surface for users to enjoy whatever the weather.

The improvements have added importance as they are in line with the Welsh Government’s Corporate Health Standard, a strategy to increase workplace health promotion in Wales. This project certainly paves the way for employees to be healthier in the workplace.



A section of the bridleway (before)



Another section which is impassable before the works commenced

Denbighshire County Borough Council – *continued*



A section of the path after the works



Another completed section that has blended in with the natural environment

(Photos: Denbighshire Rights of Way Section)

The following thank you email (excerpt) was sent to Denbighshire Rights of Way section about the Path.

*Bridleway at the St Asaph Business Park
Gwyn Davies to : Adrian Walls 16/12/09 20:23
History: This message has been replied to.*

*Dear Adrian,
I work in the St Asaph Business Park and on behalf of a number of fellow workers within the Park can I thank your Department on the works during the past few months on the Bridle Path within the Business Park as many of us walk down the path in our lunch break.*

*Kind regards,
Gwyn Davies.*

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority – Gludy Brecon, ancient bridleway (2009-10)

National Park Wardens have worked alongside Yscir Community Council and local residents to tackle significant drainage problems that have damaged the Y Gaer bridleway in Brecon to improve its accessibility for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. With extensive views in every direction the bridleway is thought to be the remains of an ancient Roman road some 2,000 years old.

The reopening of this bridleway has made it possible to ride a four day circular route taking in the stunning scenery of the National Park and Mid Wales. It is an important bridleway for the community because it provides a route from Cradoc into the town of Brecon that is scenic, enjoyable to use and completely free of traffic.

Without the RFP and the support of the local Yscir Community Council, major works on this special and ancient site could not have been completed. The bridleway is now accessible to horse riders, cyclists and walkers enabling them to enjoy more of the National Park.

(above excerpt has been adapted from the press release in April 2009)



(Photo: Peter Williams, Brecon and Radnor Express Newspaper Group).

Pictured from left to right – Jon Pimm, Western Area Warden (BBNPA), Eifion Jones, Rights of Way Officer (BBNPA), Lucienne Bennett, County Access and Bridleway Officer (BHS), Velvet (a rare Cumbrian fell pony), Lyn Williams, Chairman for Yscir Community Council and Richard Field, Vice Chairman for Yscir Community Council.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council:
Leg power raises money for charity (2010-2011)

Many people are unaware of the number of “green gems” right on their doorstep from parks, to walks to nature reserves. One way of enticing the public to get out and about in the great outdoors is to organise a charity cycle ride and walk combined with a family fun day and this is exactly what Merthyr Tydfil did to encourage more people up from their sofas and onto the Taff Trail to raise money for charity.

Their 2nd annual walking and cycling charity day was held on 8th August 2010. The 150 strong competitors made the event a huge success raising over £1,000 for the Alzheimer’s Society. Attractions such as cycling proficiency lessons and Nordic walking added to the enjoyment of the families who walked and cycled from Pontsticill to Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre.

Photos Top row: From L-R: The cyclists and walkers enjoying the event.

Photos: Middle row: From L-R: The Mayor and representative of the Alzheimer’s Society and members of the public who took part in the charity event.

Photo: Bottom row: Children learning some cycle proficiency skills



Resources used with RFP

As well as employing staff to undertake works, Local Authorities have also been able to involve volunteers in carrying out a variety of projects over the last three years. Some authorities have been able to build on their strong and reliable volunteer base, bringing social benefits into getting the work done. Other authorities have been able employ local contractors and consultants to carry out practical works and definitive map work.

Employment Opportunities with RFP

The RFP has employed the following number of staff on an FTA basis:

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
No of Staff on FTA basis	12.5	15	15

Such posts include:

- **Footpath Inspector** (Conwy CBC) – to develop a customer services recording system and development of a footpath maintenance scheme.
- **Rights of Way Development Officer** (Conwy CBC) – to develop Conwy’s bridleway strategy and to develop a strategic approach for volunteer work.
- **Definitive Map work** e.g. legal event modification orders, legal event orders (Flintshire CBC and Torfaen CBC respectively).
- **Legal Officer** (the post being fully funded by RFP, half through Neath Port Talbot and half through City and County of Swansea) – to assist in the production of and to assist with work to bring the definitive map up to date.
- **Dedicated staff** carrying out physical improvements on the ground.
- **Staff working with communities** in delivering local improvements

The RFP did not fund any permanent members of staff throughout the funding period.

It is not possible to report on how much of the funding was spent on staff as the Local Authorities were asked to report spend on a project basis rather than on posts. The dedicated staff involved in doing the physical improvements on the ground complemented some of the Local Authorities existing staff.

Please note that there were some posts that were funded from Year 1 into Year 2 e.g the Footpath Inspector, Rights of Way Development Officer and the Legal Officer. With continued funding, these posts will continue to make a significant difference to the implementation of ROWIP works.

Newport City Council (2009-10) and Denbighshire (2010-2011).

Both Newport City Council and Denbighshire County Council took advantage of the Future Jobs Fund to maximise their RFP allocation. It is a government initiative to help the long term unemployed (out of work for over a year) aged between 18-24 years old to gain the offer of a job, work experience or training for at least 6 months. Their Future Jobs Fund candidates have assisted and gained experience in all aspects of countryside management, which has also helped to better utilise the existing staff resource.



A group of volunteers from the Future Jobs Fund improving furniture and signage on a section of the network.

(photo credit: Denbighshire County Council, Rights of Way section)

Also the RFP has helped Newport City Council with the recruitment of a student to work as a seasonal warden (recently qualified in Countryside Management at Usk College). His role has been invaluable in covering the wider duties associated with a countryside warden's role e.g. supervising volunteers and assisting on guided walks.

Volunteering Opportunities with RFP

One type of resource that has been increasingly used is volunteers. Below is a table of the number of days volunteers have put in to help implement these actions.

Type of resources used/Financial Year	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Internal Resources Used (Staff)	3,471	3,380	3,062
Volunteer	362	1,022	1,111
Contractor	2,225	2,123	2,240
Consultant	194	84	193
Other staff related resources used	25	132	1
Grand total of days spent on ROWIP work	6,277	6,741	6,607

This increase in volunteer time used for ROWIP implementation reflects the fact that of those Local Authorities with a strong and loyal volunteer base, using RFP monies has helped them maximise their volunteer time. By paying for the lease of an extra vehicle (to drive volunteers to multiple sites) or by paying volunteer expenses, the outputs achieved far outweigh the initial costs.

The RFP has been instrumental in offering good quality work experience in Rights of Way, Countryside Management and the opportunity to learn and gain important new skills. There is no such thing as a typical volunteers and they have ranged from students to retired people. They do all have in common a strong sense of purpose and a determination to get the job done.

It is important to note that volunteers compliment the existing Local Authority staff in ensuring that public rights of way are maintained. Where community engagement has been important to raise the profile of a particular rights of way project, the community's involvement and willingness to actually use the routes that have been improved have been important in ensuring that such projects are successful in the long term.

Here follows a few examples of this at work.....

Carmarthenshire County Council – International Volunteer work Camps (2008-09).

The Council provided volunteering opportunities with The United Nations Association Exchange Programme. 19 countries were represented on international voluntary work camps through 73 participating individuals e.g. Canada (Quebec), China, Czech Republic and many more. Some of the volunteers at work (below).



(Photo: Carmarthenshire County Council Rights of Way Section)

Monmouthshire County Council – The Importance of Local Volunteers (2009-10)

For many years, the rights of way unit at Monmouthshire County Council has struggled to utilise the number of good, reliable volunteers they had because of the lack of transport to take them to multiple sites.

The RFP has provided the authority with the hire of an extra vehicle enabling the authority to get volunteers to different sites and improve more routes across the county. This has allowed two teams of volunteers to support the Council's two field wardens.

Volunteers have contributed approximately 200 days in 2009 towards maintaining the existing network. This has led to a 33% increase in such works e.g. installation of new gates, finger and way-mark posts and clearing vegetation from many paths to allow easier access.

Such a simple and cost effective idea has gone a long way to helping to maintain the rights of way in the county. The scheme has been so successful that a third team of volunteers has now been set up. Below are photos of a few of Monmouth's volunteers with the vehicle in the background.



(Photo: Monmouthshire County Council, Rights of Way Section)

Conwy County Borough Council – Branch Lines (2009-10)

This local authority has been using RFP funding to purchase raw materials needed for jobs to improve access and have called upon the services of Branch Lines (an organisation supported through Conwy's Rural Development Plan). Branch Lines offer an extensive training and development programme for people living in rural Conwy who wish to return to work.

The Council and Branch Lines have worked well together in raising awareness of this service amongst local people as well as improving access to routes. As a result of this successful partnership, many route improvements have taken place in Llanrwst and Bro Garmon such as footpath clearance, drainage works and installation of gates and stiles.



Participants of this valuable scheme

Photo: Branch Line

Wrexham County Borough Council and Bridgend County Borough Council (2010-2011)

Wrexham asked their Community Council volunteers to survey the paths and report any problems to the rights of way section. This survey resulted in 100 footpath signs being purchased bearing usefully, the community parish *and* footpath number. This means that a member of the public could alert the rights of way section with a footpath query leading to the path being more easily identified for easier maintenance.

Meanwhile at the other end of Wales, Bridgend's Town council volunteers asked whether it would be possible to number each right of way on site according to the numbering on the Definite Map and Statement. The answer was "yes" and as a result the volunteers spent 60 hours erecting 81 new signs around the local rights of way network.

By involving the local community good ideas can flourish into practical solutions which in turn lead to a well managed rights of network not just for the here and now but to improve management into the future

The projects described above highlight that when RFP funding is used effectively, there are multiple benefits not just for the local rights of way network but on a much wider level: offering the opportunity to the unemployed to (re) train and gain valuable work experience (especially within countryside management). The social benefits of RFP funding are invaluable to local communities.

Projects aimed at: Groups who make disproportionately low use of the countryside. These projects are aimed at people with disabilities, Community First Areas and people with mobility problems to mention but a few. Here are some examples of work that have benefited those groups of users.

Powys County Council: Phase 2 Montgomery Canal (2008-09)

A brand new section of traffic-free walking and cycling path has been constructed between Newtown, Llanllwchaearn and Aberbechan, and is already making a difference to the way local people travel.

Powys County Council and Sustrans have built the new 1.5km stretch of path on Route 81 of The National Cycle Network as part of the Montgomery Canal Walking and Cycling Project. The new section (built on land owned by Severn Trent Water) allows people to travel more easily and safely between local communities. It also allows better access to the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust's Pwll Penarth wetland nature reserve by bike or on foot removing the previous problem of negotiating traffic-filled roads. Wheelchair users and families with pushchairs who may otherwise find it difficult to cross the busy local roads will also benefit greatly. The majority of the new route runs alongside the River Severn making it a great location to try out cycling and stay active.



The Official Launch of the Montgomery Canal Launch opened by the Mayor of Newtown in April 2009.

(Photo: Powys County Council Rights of Way section.)



A section of the finished path

Gwynedd Council – Foel Ispri, Llanelltyd (2009-10)

A stunning mountain viewpoint has been made more accessible to wheelchair users thanks to the efforts of Gwynedd Council working closely with local contractors and following extensive consultation with the Snowdonia National Park, two Local Access Forums and the Community Council. Some of the physical works involved were:

- provision of a wheelchair accessible picnic table,
- continuous tapping rail (a rail that runs low on the ground and people with sight problems who use a long cane are able to “tap” their way along the rail so they know where the edge of a path is)
- provision of a new surface,
- provision of user friendly gates.



(Photos: Gwynedd Council)

Flintshire County Council – Public Footpath 50, Flint (2009-10)

This particular footpath has been cleared of vegetation and had drainage improved using RFP funding which has benefitted walkers in “Walkabout Flintshire” a project managed by Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire. The project is aimed at encouraging people from Community First Areas and rural areas to get involved in healthy walking activities. Below is an email of thanks and appreciation from Mrs Jones from Flint for Flintshire’s good works.

To Jon Hill/EnvironmentAndRegeneration/Flintshire/GB@Flintshire

RE: FL13

Date: 15/04/2010 14.43

Hi John,

Just a short message of thanks from a Mrs Jones from Flint. She now says the work you promised to do on the public footpath and stile on the path leading from Accra Vran to Northop Road has now been completed and it is a pleased not to have to wear her wellington boots along this stretch of beautiful countryside once again.

Many thanks

Raymond Jones

Customer Services Assistant

Mobile Office

Directorate of Corporate Strategy

Caerphilly County Council – Success on school strolls!
(2010-2011)

It could be said that there are plenty of parks and walks for children and young people to enjoy at weekends with their families and friends for leisure but what about walking to and from their school?

Caerphilly County Borough Council has used some of their RFP funding to provide safe and improved paths to and from a local school and the photo below shows the improved path is very much appreciated by the users. This is just one more step to encouraging more children (and their parents) to incorporate walking into their daily lives.



Left: Footpath no 92 in the community of Mynyddislwyn

(Photo credit: Caerphilly County Borough Council, RoW Section)

Projects showing Innovative Work and Good Practice: These projects reflect good working practices with other local authorities and external partners. They also demonstrate the different ways in which users of these improved routes can benefit from the works done on them.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council: “Community on Foot” Toolkit (2008-10)

This local authority has been working closely in partnership with Ramblers Cymru over the past two year on a community walking scheme called “Communities on Foot”. Neath Port Talbot have used their RFP funding to help support a Ramblers Field Officer to work with local communities and help them every step of the way.

The project aims to encourage everyone in the local community to take part in healthy walking exercises. The resulting collaboration is a “toolkit”, a guide designed to help Walk Leaders in their communities to start up their own walking projects.

The toolkit gives practical and useful advice on where to go, when to go, the do’s and don’ts of walking and checklists to help ensure the sustained success of walking projects for the community.

As a result, 700 toolkits have been produced for all the Community Councils in Wales so that they can further develop this work.

The toolkit can be found at: http://www.ramblers.org.uk/wales/toolkit/CoF_toolkit

Cardiff Council: Customer Satisfaction Survey (2009-10)

Cardiff Council have used some of their RFP funding to undertake a customer satisfaction questionnaire to give an overview of the perceived successes or failures of ROWIP implementation during it’s first 18 months within the county.

The survey has provided the Rights of Way Team with a useful amount of sample data and have highlighted the following:

- BME groups are enthusiastic about making use of the Public Rights of Way Network if suitable means can be identified for them to receive promotional information.
- Better sign-posting and promotional information remain the two major areas in need of continued improvement.
- In an era of sustainable transport, people indicated that they wanted better information about how they can use bus links to access public rights of way.
- The 2 man PROW maintenance team has extensively improved the condition of the PROW network – but there is still extensive improvement work to be done.

The information from this survey will be used to formulate better informed future ROWIP work plans. Further details can be obtained from Cardiff Council PROW page:

http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2870%2C3149%2C4130&parent_directory_id=2865

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and City and County of Swansea –

Collaborative Working (2008-10)

One example of collaborative working is the funding of a Definitive Map Officer post with RFP funding. This post has worked to both Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea over the past two years.

Due to historical reasons (the abolition of West Glamorgan Council in 1996 into the present day Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and City and County of Swansea), the legal department within City and County of Swansea has worked to resolve any Definitive Map anomalies for both of the counties as and when they arose. Whilst these issues rarely caused day to day problems, they still needed to be resolved alongside other pressing work commitments.

The post is based in City and County of Swansea's legal department and it's sole purpose is to resolve anomalies for both of the counties.

This arrangement has worked well over the past two years with regular contact between the two authorities to ensure the smooth running of the work. Without this post, the work would not have been possible.

Powys County Council: Horse – Friendly latches (2009-10).

The Countryside Services department has worked in partnership with the British Horse Society to develop stock proof high reach latches. The innovative design of these latches mean that they can be easily opened from horseback. They can also be fitted retrospectively to existing gate structures which will help with future installation. See examples below.



(Photo: Powys County Council Countryside Services)

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council: Provision of seating for people with mobility problems (2009-10)

Seating has been provided along some of the routes by Merthyr Tydfil. People who have used the benches have expressed their thanks and appreciation to the Council for installing them. Some examples of benches below:



(Photo: Merthyr Tydfil
County Borough Council)

Monmouthshire County Council - A Biodiversity Action Plan for Rights of Way (2010-2011)

Managing the rights of way in Wales is a huge undertaking that requires skilled, well informed and resourceful rights of way officers. These valuable attributes lead to good practice and a well managed rights of way network for all to use and enjoy.

Using a firm of consultants (via RFP funding), a Biodiversity Plan for Rights of Way and a Technical Manual have been produced ensuring that biodiversity issues in planning, maintenance, improvement schemes and other RoW matters are taken into account. As well as closer working links with their biodiversity colleagues and Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) has also been adapted so that it can monitor biodiversity issues and improvements. The Technical Manual provides a clear method of working for the RoW officers and a set of principles that can be imparted to the public to enhance their understanding of local biodiversity.

A reporting sheet for biodiversity officers is also available and will be put on to the Council's website and submitted to IPROW for inclusion in their Good Practice Guide.

Establishing a prioritisation system for maintenance and enforcement work (2010-2011)

Monmouth's Countryside Services sought ideas and views on how a prioritisation system for public rights of way should work. Local users, stakeholders and anyone else with an interest on Monmouth's PROW network were invited to give their views/ideas. A short paper on the findings of the consultation and the prioritisation method has been produced and will be available on the internet. It is hoped that a similar system can be taken up by other local authorities.

**.....And last but certainly not least some quick facts
about RFP for the past 3 years.**

From 2008-2011, the **type of users** who have benefited from RFP funds are:

- **Multi benefit – more than one user**
- **General benefit to all users**
- **Walkers**
- **Low use groups**
- **Horse Riders**
- **Cyclists**

8 different types of projects relating to the Welsh ROWIPs have been implemented across Wales and ...

Over 700 projects have been carried out for the benefit of the Welsh nation and it's visitors to enjoy at a cost of.....

£9.5 million has been spent on improving the PROW network in Wales from 2008 to 2011 which has taken.....

19,625 days worth of staff and volunteer time working on the Welsh PROW network resulting in.....

5,623 way mark posts being installed (to help users find their way) and nearly **300 stiles** have been removed to ensure that.....

Over 3,000 km of the network that is “easy to use” i.e well signposted, have gates and similar path furniture in good condition and are open for the public to enjoy.

The variety of projects have been wide ranging from **practical works** on the ground to ensuring that the **Definitive Map and Statement is up to date** to **public events** like charity walk and cycle ride, walking festivals and countryside fairs for the public to enjoy and participate in.