

Reporting bridleway problems using the Somerset County Council on line system

ABOUT THE SYSTEM

The system covers Somerset and Exmoor National Park. It will work in Devon only within the National Park boundary.

What the system does. The system gives you a map of the area showing recorded faults and faults which have been recorded but are now rectified. (There is not yet a mechanism for removing rectified faults after a certain period.) The system allows you to record new faults.

What can be reported. You can report any faults including deep mud and gates that cannot be opened from the back of a horse, but the Park will prioritise faults so the most urgent are rectified first. If something is really urgent, such as an unsafe bridge, telephone the responsible ranger or the Park Office, or Somerset County Council if the fault is outside the Park, so that action can be taken quickly.

HOW TO USE THE SYSTEM

The system uses pop-ups, so ensure that your computer does not have its pop-up blocker switched on. To do this, go to Tools, then turn off the pop-up blocker.

To get to the system, go to Somerset County Council Web site, click on transport and streets, then on rights of way, then on interactive mapping. (To be able to go straight to this site by double-clicking an icon on your desktop, go to File, Send, Shortcut to desktop.) Now click on acceptance of conditions of use to get into the map.

In order that you see only what you want on the map, click the layer icon, then tick paths and OS landline so they are visible. Untick everything else so they are not visible. Click on update map.

To find the place you want on the map - Either: use the icons on the top: click + to zoom in; click - to zoom out; click on the hand and then on the map to centre the map where you have clicked. Or: click on advanced search and enter the name of a place. If the place you have used does not work, try another name, e.g. if "Mounsey Hill Gate" does not work, try "Winsford Hill". Use the hand to centre the map where you want it.

The key to the map is on the left hand side. A red square is a fault, a blue square is a rectified fault, a blue circle is a feature such as a gate, and so on. Over 4,000 faults have been logged in Somerset. (Not all rectified faults have yet been changed to blue – the Park is working to update the map.)

To see what a red square represents, click on the information tool at the top (the i) and then on the red square. You will then get information about the fault.

To find out what a feature is, click on the information tool at the top (the i) and then on the feature, and you will get information about the feature, e.g signpost or gate.

To report a fault, click report a fault and click OK. Click on the place where the fault is, or click on a feature if this is the problem. You will get a fault report. Much information will be in the report when it

comes up, e.g. the grid reference, so those using the system will already know where it is. You should fill in the problem type, fault description and your contact details. An email address or telephone number is sufficient. **Then click save.**

You will receive a fault log number which you can use if you have a subsequent query. The Park hopes to introduce a system whereby when a fault is rectified and a red square changed to blue, the person who reported the fault is notified that it has been sorted out.

Glitches. Apparently the system has its off days. If it won't work for you, use the telephone instead or wait until the next day and try again.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR FAULT REPORT

The faults are saved on a database at County Hall. They will appear on someone's desk the following day and faults within the National Park will be sent that day to the relevant person at the National Park. The faults are prioritised. In the Park rectification work is normally carried out from a centre in Exford.

Rangers walk every right of way in their area at least once every two years. Reports from the public are viewed as extremely helpful. Parish Path Liaison Officers are also responsible for keeping rights of way in a usable condition.

You may wish to inform the landowner when you report a fault, but this is not necessary. The name of the person who reported a fault is not in the public domain, so the landowner will not know who has made the report. The Park takes care of repairs to gates, styles and signposts and deals with vegetation growing up from the ground. Vegetation growing from the sides of a path is the responsibility of the landowner.