

- ✿ There should be a minimum of 1 metre of post/cane visible above ground level.
- ✿ To aid visibility, paint the top 100mm yellow for footpaths and light blue for bridleways.
- ✿ Consider installing waymarking posts at either end of the path indicating its direction. This will assist walkers and riders to be clear that the posts/canes are there to indicate the path. The County Council, on request, will provide appropriate waymarking discs.

The use of canes/posts across a firm seedbed has a number of advantages:

- ✿ It is not dependent on good weather or good ground conditions. Caning the line of the path can be done at any time.
- ✿ It is not labour intensive or costly and does not involve the use of machinery or contractors.
- ✿ Canes/posts, set at regular intervals can help to differentiate the path from the other tramlines across the field, thereby reducing the risk of walkers taking the wrong line and damaging the crop.
- ✿ Canes/posts can be left in situ as the crop emerges, still clearly indicating the line of the path, but don't forget that the crop *must* be removed from the path before it becomes inconvenient to path users.
- ✿ It may be possible to leave canes/posts in situ to allow other agricultural operations to take place.
- ✿ Canes/posts can be removed once the path has been cleared of the young crop, and can be re-used many times.

Clearance of Crops

You Must:

- ✿ Ensure that the crop is removed from the surface of the path, to at least the minimum width, **before** it becomes an inconvenience to path users. This will generally be regarded by the County Council as any crop over 150mm (approx. 6") in height.

However, a crop of **any** height will be regarded as an obstruction to the public's right, unless some other action (such as the erection of posts/canes) has been taken to identify the path clearly and accurately to the minimum width. In other words, a crop up to a maximum of 150mm in height accompanied by posts/canes may be tolerated, but a **live** crop up to 150mm in height **without** posts/canes will not.

Likewise a dead crop over 150mm in height may well render the path inconvenient to users and, as such, clearance of the crop from the path's surface could still be required. Always ensure that the crop is dealt with before it exceeds 150mm.

- ✿ Make sure that the minimum width is maintained clear of obstructing crops, both growing in the path's surface, and overhanging, throughout the remainder of the season, up to harvest. If using mechanical means of control, the crop will generally require more than one cut to achieve this.

Do not plant over a public right of way any crop that you cannot clear, such as potatoes, that are grown in ridges or raised beds.

Crops such as maize, beans and oil seed rape should initially be cleared to a width **greater** than the minimum. This will help to ensure that the path does not become obstructed as the crop matures.

How do I achieve this in the field?

- ✿ Always avoid planting/seeding the path if at all possible
- ✿ Build in the maintenance of the path as part of the routine management of the crop, and make sure the work required is made known to your staff or contractors.
- ✿ If you and adjoining landowners have a number of cross field paths to attend to, it may be worth investing in a suitable pedestrian rotary or flail mower, (or as an attachment to an ATV.) This could be as a joint purchase with neighbouring farmers.

Headland and field edge paths

The maintenance of naturally occurring surface vegetation on these paths is the responsibility of the County Council. Landowners must ensure that these paths are not cultivated and do not become obstructed by hedge growth or adjacent crops.

Headland maintenance payments may be made available to landowners to maintain these paths on behalf of the County Council. Contact your local Rights of Way Officer for further information.

Grass crops

There is no legal requirement to clear a grass crop, grown for hay, silage or grazing from the path is surface.

Set a-side

Where land is in set a-side, the responsibility for clearing vegetation from the path is as follows: If the vegetation is predominately made up of weed growth/natural vegetation, then the County Council will normally undertake the clearance of the path.

If the obstruction is mainly being caused by "volunteers" from the previous crop, then the path's is to be cleared by the landowner.

Weed growth on paths cleared of crop

Weed growth that obstructs a path, following clearance of the crop will be cleared by the County Council.

Please report to your local Rights of Way Officer, any paths that require clearance by the County Council.