

Gates and Access Issues.

Even the most accessible gates are not accessible to a significant number of disabled people.

Therefore it is very important we keep to the requirements of the legislation and guidance given by the relevant organisations. For example BS5709 also known as the principle of least restrictive. In essence if an obstruction (gate, stile etc.) is thought to be required then the least obstructive furniture that and fulfils the (legitimate) goals of the land manager should be used.

Two gates on North cliffs have been removed but this is because they were not on the definitive map.

Not anything to do with access. Which might well have set a precedent.

A group of us have been negotiating with the National Trust over the last 18 months or so. This has been at local level, county level and is currently working at national level.

In fact we have been working on a new policy for the National Trust for the last 18 months plus . We thought we had negotiated a tolerable agreement but at the final hurdle they have just said they will not give final approval and they haven't given us any reason why.

BS5709 does give livestock as a valid reason for having an obstruction provided it is the least restrictive but it also states that if livestock are only present for part of the year then the gates should be chained open when not used for retaining livestock.

It is my argument that if there isn't a valid reason for having the gates in place then they are wilfully closing that byway to a number of disabled people clearly in contradiction of the various disability discrimination legislation.

My understanding is that the council are required to keep PROWs open.

I would like CLAF as a whole to decide on this matter so as to advise the council.

The working group is not working as there are only 3 members, myself, a fairly senior National Trust ranger and a member of the South-West Coast Path Association.

I would also like to know how much of the coast path is considered accessible and how much of the coast path is currently being investigated as being capable of becoming accessible.

For the last 2 years I have been involved with arranging rambles for the

SWCPA. And very few of them have actually been on the south-west coast path (They don't exist).

To be clear, I would expect that the majority of the coast path will never be capable of being made accessible due to geography/geology and that is fine but it does make it even more important that the bit of coast path that can be made accessible should be.

I realise that it cannot be taken to reductio ad absurdum but some level of compromise must be found.

I would like this to be discussed by the entire forum and some sensible recommendations made as to how this discrimination can be stopped.