

HAMPSHIRE RAMBLERS FPAWE BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINE **NUMBER 3 - WAY-MARKING AND FINGERPOST ERECTION**

BACKGROUND

Best Practice Guidelines

1. The Hampshire Ramblers FPAWE Committee has produced a series of Best Practice Guidelines that it encourages Groups to adopt. However, Groups are free to adapt the Guidelines in order to meet local circumstances and restrictions. If any Group has suggestions to improve the Guidelines they should send them to the FPAWE Secretariat.

Way-marking and Fingerpost Erection

2. Ramblers' volunteers can help Hampshire County Council (HCC) to way-mark the Rights of Way (RoW) and also meet their legal requirement of ensuring there is some form of way-mark where a RoW meets a public road¹. This guide will describe the way-marking process and give an overview of erecting fingerposts and way-marker posts.

3. The need for way-marking can be identified by Ramblers' during their inspections (See Best Practice Guideline No 1) or be requested by HCC.

HAMPSHIRE RAMBLERS' ACTIONS

Way-marking

4. We should aim to ensure all routes can be easily navigated by an average walker who has a 1:25000 map but no compass/GPS. We act on behalf of HCC and any member who intends to way-mark must be registered with HCC and hold a license. The application form for Registering is shown at Annex A.

5. Way-markers and nails will be supplied by HCC. Way-marker disks can come in the form of screw/nail fixing or adhesive fixing. Any Group that prefers to use screws not nails will need to buy their own.

6. Any way-markers put up should be reported to the Community Engagement Ranger using the form illustrated at Annex B which is obtainable from the appropriate Community Engagement Rangers.

7. HCC have produced a comprehensive guide on way-marking; this is authoritative and should be consulted and is at Annex C. Ramblers' Central Office also have a toolkit to give guidance on way-marking (see Para 17 below).

8. In addition to Annex C, experience has shown the following points are important.

- a. Use the right colour disc (e.g. Yellow for footpaths, Blue for bridleways).

¹ Countryside Act 1968 27 (2)

- b. Do not over way-mark. It's easy to overdo it!
- c. Mark all paths at junctions where the way is not obvious (see Para b above).
- d. Accurately mark directions of paths where it's not easy to see (or judge from a map) where the path should go; e.g. across fields where the other end of the path is not visible. Sometimes it's best to ask HCC for a fingerpost in these situations.
- e. When placing a disc, stand back to check that the path direction has been made fairly obvious to an ordinary walker. This is especially important when inclining a disc to indicate a direction that is not straight ahead.

Fingerpost and Way-Marker Posts

9. On behalf of HCC we can also erect fingerposts and way-marker posts. HCC will supply the posts plus bags of postcrete. Before undertaking any work you should consult the Best Practice Guideline 2 on Insurance, ensuring safety is always paramount. Any member undertaking this work should be registered for insurance purposes. Where the post is to be erected away from a public road the landowner should be consulted before any action is taken

10. There are two methods of burying the posts. One is dig a hole, place the post in it and fill it with postcrete. The other is to hammer the shorter post into the ground.

11. Holes can be dug by hand using a spade and/or a post hole digger, and a 6' digging bar. Alternatively a powered auger can make the job much easier. If you are going to hammer the post in then it is advisable and safer to purchase a post hammer/driver. Generally posts should have a quarter of their length in the ground. Thus an 8' finger post should have 2' underground. Before digging a hole or hammering in a post you are advised to seek a line check for underground cables from the Community Engagement Ranger (CER). They may also offer to do a CAT scan on the site if they deem it necessary.

12. Once you have erected a post you should inform the CER and supply pictures of the erected post. You should also inform Ramblers Central Office so they can record the work as a 'success'.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR ROLES

Ramblers' Central Office

13. It is worth consulting the Ramblers' Path Maintenance Tool Kit on their web site (see below). Ramblers Central Office should be told of any successes. They provide insurance cover for volunteers (see Best Practice Guideline 2 on Insurance).

Hampshire County Council

14. HCC have ultimate responsibility for maintaining the way-marking and fingerposts. They have area teams that go out and do this practical work. They supply

the kit for way-marking and the fingerposts. They do not cover the insurance and Groups are responsible for buying their own tools.

Parish Councils

15. Some Parish Councils undertake way-marking (as do some landowners).~

REFERENCES AND CONTACTS

16. Contacting Ramblers Central Office. Ramblers email:
volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

17. Ramblers Tool Kits: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/volunteer-toolkits-alphabetically-sorted/volunteer-path-team-toolkit.aspx>

18. Countryside Engagement Rangers contacts:

- a. Emma Broadbent (North): emma.broadbent@hants.gov.uk
- b. Abby Sullivan (Central/East): abby.sullivan@hants.gov.uk
- c. Natalie Hands (South/West): natalie.hands@hants.gov.uk

CONCLUSION

19. The above Best Practice Guide is part of a series that attempts to show agreed best practice within the Hampshire Ramblers Area. It is aimed at Group Footpath Secretaries and Maintenance Team Leaders. It shows how way-marking and fingerpost/way-marker post erection should be organised, carried out and reported. It is not intended to be prescriptive and can be amended for local circumstances.

20. If any Group Member has any queries or observations on the guide they should raise them first with their Group Footpath Secretary. If Group Footpath Secretaries have any queries or observations they should forward them to the FPAWE Secretariat.

David Clark
FPAWE Secretariat
Version 2
Approved by FPAWE on 10 January 2017

ANNEX A TO
BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINE
NUMBER 3

Volunteer Agreement Form – Way-marking

By signing this agreement you agree to abide by all of the conditions set out in the way-marking guidance.

Please fill in your details below and return this form to Hampshire County Council. Once received by Hampshire County Council we will complete the lower section and return a completed copy to you for your records. Thank you for your assistance in this initiative.

Volunteer details

Name

Address *Tel*
..... *Mobile*
..... *email*
..... *Date*

Post Code *Parish to be*

Signed *waymarked*

Hampshire County Council

Member of Ramblers Association

Hampshire County Council's Countryside Service is pleased to have the opportunity to work more closely with volunteers. Hampshire County Council agrees to offer support and guidance for the volunteer named above who adheres to the guidance. Hampshire County Council reserves the right to amend or change any of the guidance and also cancel or withdraw the agreement if it sees fit.

For and on behalf of Hampshire County Council:

Name
(Countryside Access Development Officer)

Signed *Date*

Send to Community Engagement Rangers (See Para 18)

ANNEX B TO
BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINE
NUMBER 3


Countryside Service

Access Team – Countryside Service
Hampshire County Council
Castle Avenue,
Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UL

Tel 01962 8476091
Email: Emma.Broadbent@hants.gov.uk

Waymarking Record Sheet

Name			
Parish waymarked		Hours worked	

Please complete the table below and return it to Emma Broadbent (Hampshire County Council) as a record of your waymarking. Any reports of damaged or missing waymarking posts please include these below. Please report other problems at www.hants.gov.uk/row or call 0845 6035636. Thank you very much for your assistance.

RoW number and RoW type (FP/BW/RB/BOAT)	Action/Comments (location of installed waymarks, if possible using grid references)	Number of waymark discs used	Date of work

ANNEX C TO
BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINE
NUMBER 3

Guidance for volunteers – waymarking

This guidance has been developed to help volunteers improve waymarking along rights of way. In addition to this guidance, you will also be supplied with a map showing all the definitive rights of way (ROW) in your area, an ID card confirming that you are authorised to work on our behalf and sufficient waymark discs and screws to complete any waymarking you think is necessary.

It is important that rights of way are correctly waymarked. Clearly marked paths give people the confidence to explore their local area and assist those that get lost or stray off the legal route. Even the most experienced walker can lose their way sometimes!

How do I get started?

- Have a look at the map and decide what paths you are going to waymark first - don't try to complete too many paths at once.
- Talk to the local Parish Council in advance of any waymarking. They will be able to help inform local landowners what you will be doing (e.g. through their newsletter, at Parish Council meetings, or word of mouth). You can also use your own local contacts to inform landowners.
- You will need to take your record sheet, map, a pen, some waymark discs and screws, a screwdriver and hammer. It might also be useful to take secateurs and gloves with you to tackle overgrown vegetation that may hide waymarks.
- If you'll be walking alone take a mobile phone and make sure you let somebody know where you are going and when you'll be back. Don't forget to wear appropriate footwear and clothing, and take sun cream and water...you never know you might catch one of those elusive sunny days!

When do I use a waymark?

Below are the four different waymarks that we use on our ROW. They show the classification of the route and the direction to follow. Also shown below are some examples of the waymarks used for promoted routes (e.g. Solent Way, Test Way, etc.).



Examples of long distance route waymarks



Your copy of the map will be your guide to the legal route of a path, assisting you when you are installing waymarks. The only route to be waymarked is the definitive route as shown on the map and not any short cuts or alternative routes that people have made over time.

Generally waymarking discs are only required at path/track junctions e.g. where a ROW changes direction or joins another ROW; if a ROW leaves a more obvious track; or when a ROW meets with a choice of routes. Deciding when a waymark is appropriate depends on personal judgement and experience, as well as how well a path is used. For example if a well worn path shows clearly the route to be followed a waymark may not be necessary.

There are three different types of directional waymark, **forward**, **left** and **right** facing arrows (examples below). **Please use the appropriate discs for the route direction.** If you run out of a particular disc let us know and we can send you further supplies. If a route takes a diagonal direction, the discs can be slightly rotated to identify the correct line. If you need to install a waymark showing a path heading off at an angle it is a good idea to stand well back from the waymark, having positioned it temporarily, to judge whether the angle is correct.



Sometimes waymarks are faded or broken, and may need to be replaced (make sure you remove the old one and any screws/nails too – either knock them in or pull them out and dispose of them safely).

Always try to use the minimum amount of discs whilst ensuring that a path is clearly signed. It is important that we do not clutter the countryside with unnecessary signage.

Where can I fix a waymark?

Waymarks can be attached to:

- Stiles or the hanging post of any gate, but not to the gate itself (people could be sent in the wrong direction if the gate is left open).

- Fingerposts unless the arm of the post already shows the direction and classification of the path. Always remember to install a waymark on both sides of the post (stile, etc.) so people can follow the path from either direction.
- Most Telegraph/Service poles, please note however that the preservative used to protect these poles can leach through and stain the waymark. It is advised that you use a blank disc behind the waymark as a protective barrier. We can supply you with such discs.

Waymarks should not be attached to trees or historic structures/buildings (or any buildings), or to obviously private property.

Sometimes you will want to install a waymark, but there will be no suitable structures to use. Please make a note of this on your map, and if appropriate we will install a suitable post in its place.

Before attaching a new waymark check there isn't one hiding in overgrown vegetation. If you do find a waymark and have the necessary tools with you we would be grateful if you could clear this vegetation.

If you find a finger post that you consider to be dilapidated or damaged beyond repair please do not attach a waymark, but make a note of its location on the map and add it to your record sheet. If

you find a gate or stile that is loose or dangerous take care negotiating this structure and again make a note of its location. It would help if you could report any problem structures online at www.hants.gov.uk/rightsofway-reporting.

How do I fix a waymark?

To install a waymark you can use a crosshead screwdriver. On occasion you may need to use a hammer to initially knock in the screw before screwing in the rest of the way using a screwdriver. There should be no need to make a pilot hole in the post for the screw.

When installing a waymark you will need to remove the protective film on its face before screwing to the structure using the three predrilled holes.

Recording your work

To help us keep our records up to date it would be helpful if you could complete the waymarking record sheet and mark on the map where you install new waymarks (mark as 'WM') and any finger posts that need replacing (mark as 'FP'). If you are replacing multiple waymarks, for example at a junction, write the number of waymarks next to the 'WM'. When you have completed waymarking an area please return your annotated map and record sheet to us.

Issues with waymarking

We hope that most of the time you will encounter few problems whilst you are waymarking. If you are unsure where the legal route of the path goes it is best not to waymark, but contact us for advice. If a path is blocked do not waymark the route. Make a note of its location and report the obstruction online (www.hants.gov.uk/rightsofway-reporting).

Sometimes landowners may be concerned that people are working on their land. We have issued you with an ID card to reassure landowners that you are working in conjunction with the County Council (there are contact details on the card). If a

landowner is still concerned agree to stop waymarking and let us know. We can then contact the landowner.

As you will be volunteering with us and working for the County Council you will be covered by our insurance should the need arise.

Correct positioning of waymarks

Waymarks for promoted routes should be located above the standard waymark.

Waymarks should be positioned at a suitable level to be easily read.

When installing multiple waymarks in one location, use the width of your thumb as a guide for the distance between waymarks.



Waymarks correctly installed on a finger post. Waymarks should be positioned at a suitable level to be easily read.

Waymarks on both gate posts



Waymark pointing the wrong direction



Step of a stile



Waymark on a street sign

Hidden waymark on a gate rather than the post



Waymark on a mapboard or notice board

Waymark on a gate rather than the gate post



Good examples of waymarking

Waymark correctly installed on a gate post



Waymark correctly installed on a gate post using the 'straight on' waymark to show the direction of travel



Waymark correctly installed on a stile angled slightly to show the direction of travel

