

Maintenance of Public Rights of Way in Neath Port Talbot

Staff Resources

Public Rights of Way (PROW) are maintained by the Council's Countryside and Wildlife team. The 469 miles / 755 km of PROW within NPTCBC are maintained by a 2 man team, whilst the administration of the network is undertaken by the equivalent of 1.5 office based staff.

Definition of PROW

PROW are exactly that, the Public have a Right of Way across a section of private or public land;

- a. It is our responsibility to ensure the PROW is passable. Whilst they are, in the main, highways maintainable at public expense, they are not maintained to the same level as adopted highways.
- b. They are usually across fields, woodlands, or moorlands and of a natural state. It is not often practical to tarmac, stone dust, or boardwalk them, nor are there the resources to do so. It is worth remembering that the Authority has a power, not a duty, to carry out these types of 'improvement' works.
- c. During periods of heavy rainfall, these countryside paths are often muddy and waterlogged. It is imperative that users wear the appropriate footwear when walking these countryside paths. If the path conditions have historically not changed then the conditions are simply the 'nature of the path'.

Maintenance of PROW

Vegetation:

- a. The team trashes natural vegetation such as grass, bracken, bramble and gorse that is encroaching or obstructing the PROW;
- b. We are not responsible for vegetation at the side of the PROW that merely looks untidy or un-kempt, as this does not affect the right of passage.
- c. Overhanging trees, hedgerows or crops are the responsibility of the landowner to cut back.
- d. If a footpath or bridleway is on a wide track with private vehicular rights, it is not our responsibility to cut back far enough so that a vehicle can pass, unless it is in accordance with the legal definitive width of the PROW. This is a private matter.

Walls and Fences

Walls and fences alongside the PROW are the responsibility of the landowner. This would only fall within our remit if the wall or hedge was posing a hazard to the users of the path, not if the wall or fence was unsightly.

Fallen Trees

Fallen trees are the responsibility of the landowner to remove. Should there be a difficulty in identifying the owner of the tree the team will arrange to remove the tree from the path.

Flytipping/Litter/Dog Fouling

Flytipping is the responsibility of the landowner. If the flytipping is obstructing the PROW, we will arrange removal of said material. If the fly tipping is to the side of the path, and not affecting the public right of passage, then this is not our responsibility. The team is not responsible for removing any litter or dog mess that may be either on the PROW, or to the side.

Reporting Issues on the PROW

E-mail countryside@npt.gov.uk, outlining the location and nature of the problem. We will deal with your e-mail within 10 working days.

- a. If the issue falls with the remit of the Countryside and Wildlife Team, we will respond, outlining the action that will be taken on the PROW. If the PROW is already on the maintenance schedule, you will be notified of this.
- b. If the issue is a Council matter, but not for the Countryside and Wildlife Team, your e-mail will be forwarded to the central e-mail system, environment@npt.gov.uk, to be passed to the relevant department.