

Natural England Commissioned Report NECR113
Higher Level Stewardship permissive access evaluation
Appendix 1 – Nodal Analysis

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Introduction

The survey methodology included detailed research in each of eight nodes. The nodes were defined at a county level, as this corresponds to the area of jurisdiction of the local highway authority (although some of the authorities' powers are delegated to national park authorities where these exist). The eight counties selected were:

- Cumbria
- Devon
- Hampshire
- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- Norfolk
- Northumberland
- Shropshire

In each node, telephone interviews were conducted with agreement holders (221 over the eight nodes) and eight or nine face to face interviews were also carried out with agreement holders and representatives of other stakeholder interests. Different survey instruments were used for the two different groups (agreement holders and stakeholder representatives), although there is a good degree of overlap between the subjects covered.

The next section of this Appendix provides some information about the telephone and face-to-face interview samples, and the following sections consist of detailed analyses of the findings from the interviews. The analysis has been undertaken in a way that juxtaposes responses to similar questions posed to the two groups.

Summary of sample data for telephone and face-to-face interviews

Agreement holder telephone survey

A total of 221 agreement holders from across the eight nodes were interviewed by telephone. They were divided between the nodes as shown in Table A1.1 below. The sample covered all possible access options with footpath access being the largest group, as shown in Table A1.2 below.

Table A1.1: Agreement holder telephone interviews in each node

Node	Number	%
Cumbria	27	12.2
Devon	27	12.2
Hampshire (West Sussex)	25	11.3
Leicestershire (Northamptonshire)	24	10.9
Lincolnshire	34	15.4
Norfolk	34	15.4
Northumberland	23	10.4
Shropshire (Staffordshire and West Midlands)	27	12.2
Total	221	100.0

Table A1.2: Telephone survey respondent's access options within agreements

(Permissive open access in hectares, all other access measures in metres)

Access Option	Interviewees with option selected in agreement (n=221)	Mean area/length	Median area/length	Total population (number)	Percent of total population
Total	221			1302	
HN2 – Permissive access	47 (21.27%)	11.50 ha	6 ha	294	22.6
HN3 – Permissive footpath	153 (69.23%)	1.79 km	1.35 km	901	69.2
HN4 – permissive bridleway/cycle path	70 (31.67%)	3.51 km	1.90 km	336	25.8
HN5 – access for people with reduced mobility	7 (3.17%)	0.72 km	0.23 km	52	4.0
HN6 – Upgrading CRoW access for cyclists/horses	4 (1.81%)	2383.50 ha	1082.50 ha	20	1.5
HN7 – Upgrading CRoW access for people with reduced mobility	3 (1.36%)	280.67 ha	150 ha	8	0.6

Face-to-face interviews

The project team identified clusters of agreement holders within each of the eight evaluation nodes. Difficulties of accessing agreement holders for face-to-face interviewing in a restricted time frame meant that cluster boundaries became quite large. Clusters were kept within the borders of a single county in all but two cases (Hampshire/West Sussex and Leicestershire/Northamptonshire). Relevant local stakeholders within each node were identified, mainly through the national stakeholder telephone survey, and invited to participate in in-depth discussions.

Thirty-three agreement holders were interviewed face-to-face. These were selected from agreement holders in the telephone survey sample that had agreed to a more in-depth discussion. Thirty-two of these were farmers, of whom ten were mainly arable (two growing energy crops), fifteen were mainly livestock and seven were classified as 'other', most of this group having a mixture of enterprises. The remaining agreement-holder interview was with the head ranger of a county council owned country park.

Face-to-face interviews were also carried out with thirty-two local stakeholder representatives in the evaluation areas. Table A1.3 shows the distribution of local stakeholders interviewed. It should be noted that several interviewees had more than one interest. For example, many of the local authority officers and LAF representatives were also users and one of the ramblers was also chair of the LAF but preferred to be interviewed as a Rambler. Only their main designation appears in the Table below.

Table A1.3: Sample characteristics – stakeholders

	NE officer	County Council	National Park	LAF	Wildlife trust	Ramblers/walkers	Horse riders	Cyclists
Cumbria	yes	Countryside ranger	yes	chair		yes		
Devon		RoW officer		member		yes		
Hampshire	yes	Countryside Access Officer			yes	yes		
Leicestershire	yes	RoW officer				yes	yes	
Lincolnshire	yes	Countryside access officer		chair	yes			
Norfolk		RoW officer		chair		yes	yes	
Northumberland	yes	RoW officer	yes	chair				Yes
Shropshire	yes	Access Development Officer				yes		

Table A1.4 below summarises information about the different samples of farmers and stakeholders in terms of location and sample size.

Several of the agreements held by respondents in the sample included more than one type of access. Where these were very different in character and type, they have been treated in the analysis as separate sites and given separate assessments. As a result, the analysis covers 38 sites, distributed as follows:

- 4 in Cumbria
- 4 in Devon
- 4 in Hampshire
- 4 in East Midlands (Leicestershire and Northamptonshire)
- 4 in Lincolnshire
- 4 in Norfolk
- 8 in Northumberland
- 6 in Shropshire

Table A1.4: Summary of sample data used in the study

Sample	Location	Number	Comment
– Current HLS agreement holders	Cumbria	27	Telephone survey: carried out Jan – March 2012
	Devon	27	
	Hampshire (+ West Sussex)	25	
	Leicestershire (+ Northamptonshire)	24	
	Lincolnshire	34	
	Norfolk	34	
	Northumberland	23	
	Shropshire (+Staffordshire)	27	
	Total	221	
Classic Scheme, ex-agreement holders		20	Telephone survey: carried out Late February – early March 2012
National Stakeholders		British Orienteering Federation Ramblers' Association British Mountaineering Council Cyclists' Touring Club British Horse Society Country Land and Business Association Institute of Public Rights of Way and Access Management Forestry Commission/Enterprise	Telephone survey: carried out December 2011 - January 2012 Contact was then made by telephone and a copy of the survey questionnaire was sent in advance of the interview.
Agreement holders in 8 'evaluation nodes'	Cumbria	4	Face-to-face interviews: carried out January – March 2012
	Devon	4	
	Hampshire (+ West Sussex)	4	
	Leicestershire (+ Northamptonshire)	4	
	Lincolnshire	4	

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	Norfolk	4	
	Northumberland	4	
	Shropshire (+Staffordshire)	5	
	Total	33	
Stakeholders in 8 'evaluation nodes'	Cumbria	4	Face-to-face interviews: carried out January – March 2012
	Devon	4	
	Hampshire (+ West Sussex)	4	
	Leicestershire (+ Northamptonshire)	4	
	Lincolnshire	4	
	Norfolk	4	
	Northumberland	4	
	Shropshire (+Staffordshire)	4	
	Total	32	
Site visits in 8 'evaluation nodes'	Cumbria	4	Site visits of HLS Permissive access provided by the 32 agreement holders interviewed face-to- face. Carried out January – March 2012
	Devon	4	
	Hampshire (+ West Sussex)	4	
	Leicestershire (+ Northamptonshire)	4	
	Lincolnshire	4	
	Norfolk	4	
	Northumberland	8	
	Shropshire (+Staffordshire)	6	
	Total	38	

A1 - Cumbria

Summary of Key Findings

- Agreement holders generally thought very highly of NE as helpers in the development of their agreements .
- Regional theme statements and ROWIPs were not key influences on agreement design.
- Countryside access for the public is seen as important.
- Demand for countryside access was said to be high and felt to be increasing.
- Permissive access has been of greater value outside the Lake District National Park, where access is relatively poor, than within it, where access provision is relatively good.
- Three of the four agreement holders said their access was used by the public prior to the permissive access agreement but usage has increased since entering the .
- Respondents recognised the benefits to agreement holders (in the form of payments received) and to users – mainly locals but also some visitors from further afield.
- Costs were small, generally below £300 per agreement holder.
- The introduction of permissive access has modified the attitudes of some farmers, but only slightly.
- Promotion was universally seen as being poor, although some agreement holders were happy with this.
- The stakeholders were rather pessimistic about the future of the permissive access after the end of the agreements whereas half the agreement holders were likely to keep it going.

Introduction

Cumbria was selected on the grounds that it:

- Is in the north west region
- Includes coastal areas
- Contains a national park
- Is a rural county

Interviews and site visits took place from late January to mid-February.

Sample Selection

In common with other nodes, the aim was to have 8 interviews with approximately half being agreement holder and half being the 'stakeholders'. Agreement holders were selected on the basis that they had:

- each completed a telephone interview and had agreed to have a site visit
- collectively covered a reasonable geographical spread
- contained as varied a mix of permissive access options as the sub-sample allowed.

The list of interviewees by type was:

- four agreement holders (one in NW Cumbria, one in central Lake District and two in SE Cumbria)
- access development officer for Lake District National Park Authority (NPA)
- Chair of Lake District LAF (also a land manager and Cumbria Bridleway Society member)
- Programme secretary of a local walking group
- Countryside ranger for Cumbria County Council (CCC)
- Natural England Adviser.

Of the stakeholders:

- four were access users;
- four worked with land managers; and
- three worked on access management.

Their roles, not unnaturally, were diverse, with the local authority officers having direct experience of working with landowners to negotiate new access provisions (one including HLS permissive access, one not including HLS access) and one had experience of working closely with NE (not including the NE adviser interviewed).

The four agreement holders all had farming businesses with the following key characteristics:

- Three entirely pastoral, with one a mixed livestock/arable unit
- Three owner-occupied and one tenanted
- Two lowland and two upland

Partnership Working

Experience of working with partners for the two subsets is set out below. Note that the comments below summarise the perceptions and understanding of those interviewed, and sometimes reflect only partial, incomplete or erroneous knowledge of the HLS scheme and how it operates.

Partners	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
NE	Agreement holders were generally very positive and complimentary about NE staff and their usefulness. One said “Absolutely fantastic”. No-one could suggest ways to improve the process. The only critical comment was that of frequent staff changes and difficulty of reaching individuals (who were usually very helpful when reached).	Only one (non-NE) of the stakeholders had experience of working with NE on access. This had worked well – partly due to good ‘personal chemistry’. This had led to the formation of a local Access Group (comprising the county council, NE, RSPB and National Trust) to develop access improvements in a specific area – St Bees Head. Another has had dealings with NE over HLS but these did not include any access options. Also, NE consulted Cumbria County Council over specific applications – process and outcomes improved over time.
Others	Only one comment – “this is not really a partnership thing”	The NE officer said she had been on the LAF and has worked closely with CCC. She also worked with Lake District NPA on the ELMS and the Miles Without Stiles initiatives.

Targeting

In response to the question about targeting, a variety of responses was received. The results are presented below.

HLS Target Area/Regional Theme Statements		Rights of Way Improvement Plans	
Agreement Holders	Stakeholders	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
No-one could recall any mention of target area or local/regional theme statements	Only the NE officer was aware of the target and theme statements	No-one had any recollection of a ROWIP being mentioned	Two of the respondents were aware of the use of ROWIPs to target, and one 'vaguely aware'

Perceived Demand for Access

Agreement holders only

All four agreement holders felt that it was very important or even essential for people to have access to the countryside. The suggested motivations included a desire to benefit their health and to better understand where their food and clothing comes from (one said “*it’s frightening how little people know...*”). “*People are interested in country ways and land management – things farmers take for granted*”. Most felt that the level of usage had increased and testified to seeing more people out than in the past, although one commented that there had been a drop-off in usage over the last 2 years. People from nearby towns (whether residents or holiday –makers) were said to be the main user type in two cases.

Asked if their access had been a contributor to this increased demand, there was a degree of uncertainty. Only one felt that this was a possibility. Another felt it was too early to tell and the others either didn’t know or thought it unlikely.

Importance of HLS Permissive Access

The stakeholders only

There seems to be a clear demarcation between the perceived importance of HLS permissive access within the Lake District National Park and outside it. The two respondents whose views were largely based on in-park experience said that HLS permissive access was of no significance at all. This may be due to:

- The high level of statutory access (both along public rights of way and open access land);
- The LDNPA’s policy of not using permissive arrangements to acquire new public access;
- Difficulty of recognising HLS permissive access as distinct from other forms of permissive access.

Outside the Park, views expressed suggested a higher level of importance. One felt the importance was patchy – good in places, poor in others – and two referred to the “potential” importance rather than actual. In one case, this potential being to allow access to otherwise inaccessible areas of open access land and in the other to allow land managers to give access “*a trial run*”.

Access Provision

This section looks at what the agreement holders have provided through their HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example.

Subject	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	5*
Mix of provisions - HN2 - HN3 - HN4 - HN5 - HN6 - HN7 - HN8/9	1 x 6.78ha 3 agreements = 1645m in total 1 agreement = 3615m - - - 1 (limited to 100 visits)	1 x 5.1 ha 5 agreements = 3.2km in total - - - -
Features of interest	Include: - Network of tracks for 'higher rights' - Mine/quarry - Fringe of town - Riverside	Include: - Riverside - Coast - Nature reserves - Promoted routes - Open access land
Infrastructure	Gates, stiles etc good in all cases but: - Maps missing but waymarks in place in one case - Nothing on-the-ground in another	Generally rated as good
Access quality	Most passed though an interesting landscape or provided views of one. Two out of the four contained water features, one contained an aquaduct and one contained old mine workings	Varied from offering very good experience (the group of three agreements) to 'too piecemeal'.

*The coverage includes one route in the central Lake District which also is one of the agreement holdings, one route in the Yorkshire Dales NP (YDNP) and a collection of provisions from three separate agreement holders and comprising both area-wide and linear access; this group of agreements was selected by two respondents.

Setting for the Access

Some questions were asked to help assess the context or setting for the HLS permissive access. The responses are tabulated below. Comments from agreement holders relate to their agreement whereas comments from the stakeholders relate to HLS permissive access generally (unless otherwise stated).

Topic	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Designations	2 in national parks (one each in LDNPA and YDNP)	Two in national parks, group of three on a stretch of Heritage Coast
Links to public rights of way	All felt that their access had fitted well with local access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three said it made a circular route feasible where none existed before - One said that it gave access to an interesting mine/quarry feature - In two cases, it provided access to open access land 	The general view was that they did link well, or certainly should do. However, just being linked to the PROW network did not mean it added value to it. With respect to the specific examples: four of the agreements had produced very useful links; one was of no consequence
Links to National Trails	No	National Trails are limited to a section of Hadrian's Wall, although the Coast to Coast walk is of national importance. HLS access was seen as being of marginal significance to the former but more significant for the latter.
Links to public transport	Three of the four were 400m – 1km from a bus stop. None was near a railway station.	Poor – partly because the routes/areas are not close to public transport or the public transport system is poor
Meeting special local needs	Although there was little evidence of use, visitors were seen on two of the sites	The only case mentioned was the St. Bees Head example, where local communities were involved in planning the agreements

Change from Access Situation prior to HLS Agreement

All respondents were asked to describe the access arrangements prior to the start of the HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their individual access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	5*
Was there existing use?	In three of the four cases, there was prior access	1 = no route selected 2 = Don't know 2 = Some was, some wasn't
Level of use	Comments received were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some use by walkers and picnickers - Lots of people asked permission to go to see the mine and quarry - Was used by all and sundry, including motor vehicles 	The land covered by the group of three agreements was heavily used – it's the start of the Coast to Coast path and the Cumbria Coastal way runs through it. Level of prior use on other routes was not known.
Additional value	In one case, the interviewee said None, and bizarrely, now that there is access to the mine/quarry, he's had to install a grill over the mine entrance and this <u>reduces</u> access	Examples quoted were <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allowed upgrading of furniture (stiles -> gates) - Spreading room rather than just linear route - Reduced friction between landowner and users - Adds value by providing better access to the adjoining open access land
Other comments	Not sought	Comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreements came into being in response to access demand - The HLS route has opened up the potential for good circular walks

*See note above

Current Usage of the Permissive Access

A series of questions explored the respondents' perceptions about current use of the permissive access. In some cases (especially agreement holders whose access was not visible from the farmhouse) responses were nothing more than educated guesses, based on occasional observations whilst out working in the fields.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	5*
User types (excluding educational access)	Walkers/dog walkers (all 4 cases) Cyclists – 1 case only Horse riders – 1 case only Ravers – 1 case only Mine explorers – 1 case only Runners – 1 case only Motorised users – 1 case only	All the agreements are for walkers
Level of use	In two cases, the agreement holder did not know because the access was out of his purview. Others commented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - guess at 1500 walkers per year - well-used by walkers - quite a lot (cyclists and horse riders) - 3-4 times (mine explorers) - some events (motorised) - once (ravers) 	Use of the group of three agreements by the coast are said to be 'heavy' Use of the other two were said to have no/little evidence of use
Timing of use	Most popular times mentioned were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summer (Easter onwards) - weekends - summer evenings 	Usage of the coastal routes was said to be every day and all year
Origins of users	Walkers comprised people living or staying locally, whereas horse riders tended to come from local liveryies. In one case people were said to come from 'all over England'	Users of the group of three coastal sites was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - locals - people staying locally - long-distance walkers
Value for money	Not asked	Assessment varied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lake District route – no - Coastal route – yes (both respondents) - Yorkshire Dales route – don't know

*See note above

Impacts of the Permissive Access

Positive

Agreement holders were asked to identify who/what had benefited from their provision of permissive access. Results were as follows:

Possible beneficiary	Number giving this response	Comments
Agreement holder	4	All recognised that they had gained through the payments received
Local users	3	The only exception was where the access is quite new so too early to say
Visitors	1	“Especially families” In other cases, it was “too early to say”, “very occasionally” and “No”
Environment	0	None thought the environment had benefited
Others	2	- interest in the mine and quarry - school groups (via Educational Access)

Agreement holders were asked about long-lasting benefits that might occur, and they generally answered this by saying that some access would probably continue after the agreement (also see below). However, one said she hoped that visitors to their farm would take an interesting and enjoyable experience away with them.

The ‘stakeholders’ were asked to list any positive impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. The results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Adds to access provided	5
Access provided to otherwise inaccessible areas/features (Open Access Land, historical points)	3
Created routes for use by disabled/mobility impaired	2
Potential to upgrade infrastructure	2
Reduces farmer-user conflict	2
Some agreements linked to liveries – economic benefits	2
Enables new routes to be created quickly	1
Provides income for farmer	1

Monetary benefits mentioned were:

- one route ‘feeds’ users in towards a tea shop operated by the agreement holder;
- the ability to use the permissive access as part of a package of offerings to visitors (in which educational access could also play a part);
- increased trade for local shops.

Negative

Agreement holders were asked to list the costs, if any, that they had incurred as a result of the provision of permissive access. Results are given below:

Cost	Number saying yes	Costs incurred	Comments
Fencing	0	None	None
Signage	1	“Quite costly”	Wooden signs made as part of a farm trail (that goes beyond the HLS access). Rest relied on signs provided by NE
Gates	3	£100; “over £149”, and 4 gates	These were usually installed early in the agreement. The consensus was that the grant (of £149) more than covered the cost of the gate but not if installation time was added
Access furniture	1	About £160	2 benches installed at the start of the agreement
Leaflets	1	“high”	Did their own leaflet to promote the farm and the farm trail (more than just the permissive access)
Public liability insurance (PLI)	1	Don’t know	All had PLI before the permissive access but premiums did not increase as a result, except in the one case
Other	2	About 2 hrs of their time Not able to say £300	In one case, costs of their time to clear up after a ‘rave’ party (unlikely to be a feature of permissive access) Another is the extra costs of having to change their grazing regime – can’t put the tup in access fields A grill to protect mine adit (an entrance into a mine, usually horizontal).

The ‘stakeholders’ were asked to list any negative impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. The results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Adverse effects of dogs, litter etc.	2
Opportunity cost of ‘bad agreements’ (i.e. the limited resource could have been spent on better agreements to generate more benefits for the same investment)	2
Offers landowners a ‘soft option’ for providing access	1
Difficulties when agreement ends	1
Car parking problems if provision is poor	1

Monetary costs mentioned were:

- opportunity cost of bad agreements

- cost of promoting the new access.

Unintended consequences (the stakeholders only)

The ‘stakeholders’ were unaware of any unintended consequences apart from one who mentioned possible impacts on tranquil areas (although this was a purely speculative suggestion).

Synergy with rest of HLS

Agreement holders only

The agreement holders felt that there was no synergy between the permissive access provision and the rest of their agreement. One said he regarded it “as a bolt-on” and another commented on the only synergy being with Educational Access.

Impacts on Activities and Attitudes

The stakeholders were asked whether the existence of HLS permissive access had changed the views of land managers in respect of different aspects of their operation and, in one case, in the stakeholder’s own activities. Results are as follows:

Aspect	Those suggesting a change, and type of change noted	Those suggesting no change
Concern over public liability	-	No change (n=4), of whom 2 had residual concerns; Don't know (n=1)
Land management activities	Impacts on grazing pattern/ management (n=4)	N=1
Landscape	People have better access to it (n=1)	N=4
Other	If heavily used desire lines develop (n=1)	N=4
Stakeholders' activities	Extra weapon in armoury for creating routes (n=1) Club will have this route on next year's walk programme (n=1)	N=3

The ‘stakeholders’ were also asked whether they thought the existence of HLS permissive access had changed farmer attitudes towards public access. They responded with the following comments:

- *“Danger in generalizing – he still has difficulty negotiating more access”*
- *“Some are anti and have just taken the cash, others were pro and remain pro”*
- *“No. Most farmers don't encourage access and are generally anti-access.”*

Promotion

Respondents were asked for their views about promotion of the new access. Responses are summarised in the table below.

Agreement Holders' Views	
How access could be better promoted	Three of the respondents had no changes to suggest, saying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Happy with it the way it is - Never given it much thought - We do it ourselves and don't expect NE to promote it The only positive suggestion was to have it published in leaflets distributed locally
Views of the stakeholders	
Level of Information	Unanimous view that promotion and publicity is inadequate (ranging from "could do better" to "poor" to "very poor" to "appalling"), meaning that most users do not know about the access
Type of publicity	Most made reference to the website but then said that it was hard to find and/or unlikely to be something users would come across. One commented on the mismatch between the name of the access on the website and the name used locally, making it hard to locate potentially a useful route.
Signage	There was recognition that on-site signage was better than other aspects of access promotion, although this was not perfect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a map board is not enough to help you find the rest of the route - waymarking is needed but is often lacking - fingerposts would be useful.
Other comments	NE poor at promoting permissive access and so routes poorly promoted

The future without access payments

A key question is what they think will happen after agreements come to an end, and whether permissive access will be allowed to continue. Because of the significance of this point, the responses to several related questions are given individually but as a summary. In the case of the agreement holders, this reflects their current thinking about their future intentions, whereas the stakeholders' responses are part speculation and part experience of agreements already ended.

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Without financial support, they would probably withdraw this (Note: Her initial answer on the phone was to say it would be allowed to continue but, having thought about it, she believes she should change her answer so that it will encourage NE/Defra to keep/re-instate the payments.)	Hard to say – some will, some won't. He hopes that if there'd been no difficulties then access would continue. More likely to stay if an institutional landowner (e.g. United Utilities, National Trust, Forestry Commission)
He may not be here in 8yrs time (he is probably in his late 60s), and too many uncertainties	There'll be a mix – some will volunteer, others won't. Their organisation will not fund an alternative .
Don't know – long way off. Probably just carry on with it. It would be hard to stop access even if he tried.	Many will end with it although little evidence as yet. In some cases, it may be difficult to stop it. Some - such as those with cafe/shops - will carry on.
Landlord doesn't want it to become permanent so will probably end. He wouldn't have thought about doing it voluntarily	Depends on how successful the route has been – if no hassle for the farmer, it is likely to continue
	They will probably withdraw permission

Interaction with the public

The stakeholders only

The stakeholders were asked whether the HLS access had led to more contact between the farmer and the public. The feeling was that theoretically it should but, in practice, any increased contact was small but any such contact that did take place would have positive outcomes.

Any other points of interest

Agreement holders had a few additional comments to make:

- *“The has worked for us – it's not been a problem”*
- *“We used to get a lot of people arriving by bus but not now that Stagecoach have stopped advertising the walk in their timetable booklet [we have less].”*
- *“It probably does not provide much value for public money but it needs to be promoted more effectively – make it easier to find through internet searches.”*

The stakeholders made quite a few additional comments and a selection of extracts from these is provided below where they add to earlier responses:

- *“Permissive access is piecemeal and no co-ordinating strategy.”*
- *“It's likely that it is only the farmer who benefits.”*
- *“Needs better targeting – geographically and by type of access.”*
- *“Overall, Cumbria has good provision of statutory access so permissive access less important.”*
- *“Has to be targeted better and for NE to work with access authority and others.”*

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- *“Permissive access was something of a ‘side-show’, so quality of access secured via HLS relied on the enthusiasm and interest of the NE officer.”*
- *“There’s still a lot of potential for gains/benefits from both educational and permissive access but more effort and resources are needed.”*
- *“When on permissive access, I tend to have more respect for the land than when on a PROW.”*
- *“There should be more of it [HLS access] so stopping payments won’t help.”*

A2 – Devon

Summary of Key Findings

- All agreement holders found NE staff to be helpful when setting up permissive access agreements.
- The statutory RoW network is patchy. Devon has a low density of RoW per square mile.
- There is a particular need for bridleways in the county; the opportunities for riding off road have actually diminished over the last 30 years or so.
- Permissive access agreements are not perceived to have fostered greater interactions between farmers and the general public.
- It is perceived that farmers are concerned about the public liability of their paths, but farmer interviews suggest that this is not the case, with public liability usually covered adequately under the main farm policy.
- The County Council were “*slightly unexpected*” that HLS permissive access was going to come to an end, so haven’t planned sufficiently for the general public asking them to re-negotiate with the landowner on their behalf.
- Permissive access agreements “*add a bit of variety*”, but the permissive access network has not been done in a strategic way so hasn’t made a great deal of difference.
- Permissive access agreements are described as “*a significant minority*” in the public access network of the county. They often enable walkers to get off roads, so providing an important safety function.
- Permissive access agreements are seen as inferior to public RoW, a useful tool where permanent access can’t be secured, a second choice. Strategically the preference is for permanent RoW.
- Most paths were deemed to offer an interesting experience and an important benefit was often safety, in getting walkers and horses off busy roads.
- All agreement holders recognised that they had gained financially from permissive access agreements.
- Permissive access agreements often helped the agreement holder increase the number of points in the HLS application and were deemed to be part of the overall HLS package.
- In some cases permissive access agreements have put more pressure on farmers to ensure that public RoW are open.
- There were mixed views as to whether routes would remain open following the expiry of the agreement. Two stakeholders felt that paths would be closed once funding ceased although two agreement holders reported that their paths would remain open.

Introduction

Devon was selected on the grounds that it:

- Is in the south west region
- Includes coastal areas
- Contains a national park
- Is a rural county
- Is important for rural tourism

Interviews and site visits took place in mid to late February

Sample Selection

In common with other nodes, the aim was to have 8 interviews with approximately half being agreement holder and half being 'stakeholders'. Agreement holders were selected on the basis that they had:

- each completed a telephone interview and had agreed to have a site visit
- collectively covered a reasonable geographical spread
- contained as varied a mix of permissive access options as the sub-sample allowed.

In Devon seven interviews were conducted: the list of interviewees by type was:

- four agreement holders
- Chair of the Devon Countryside Access Forum (CAF)
- Public Rights of Way Officer from Devon County Council
- An active member of the Ramblers Association

The four agreement holders were all livestock farmers, one located in South Devon, one in the north of the county and two in mid Devon.

Partnership Working

Experience of working with partners for the two subsets is set out below.

Partners	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
NE	All agreement holders had found NE staff to be very helpful. The only real criticism being the time it had taken to receive signage and way marking.	It was reported that an NE officer did attend the forum committee meetings as an invitee until the person lost his post due to spending cuts.
Others	One of the agreement holders had received help from an agent from FWAG, which had worked very well. In another case a private consultant worked with the NE officer, this was also very satisfactory to the agreement holder.	The County Council reports more partnerships with community groups and parish councils and some partnerships with the District authorities and AONBs (CC would do legal side of things, and DC would advise local people on sources of funding). Both would then advise a Parish Council on how to achieve a permissive access agreement. Sometimes there is more success where the first approach to a landowner is from a local resident or Parish Council, rather than if the first approach is from a Local Authority. If the first approach is from a local person then it is more likely to be successful as farmers like to maintain good relationships locally. This is the approach now being taken by Devon CC with new permissive access agreements.

Targeting

In response to the question about targeting, a variety of responses was received. The results are presented below.

HLS Target Area/Regional Theme Statements		Rights of Way Improvement Plans	
Agreement Holders	Stakeholders	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
No knowledge	When NE consults Devon CC that goes some way towards a strategic approach. I.e. if there is a particular need for horse riding then Devon CC will comment on that, using more local knowledge.	No knowledge	No comments made

Perceived demand for access

Agreement holders only

Only one of out of the four agreement holders (mid Devon) felt that there was a strong demand for public access in Devon, citing the high numbers moving to the region who ‘like to get out and do something. This agreement holder felt that regional routes such as the Tarka Trail had the most value, and that demand for horse riders and cyclists was on the increase. Another (in South Devon) perceived the demand for trails to be mainly on the coastline.

Importance of HLS permissive access

Stakeholders only

One stakeholder felt that permissive access wasn’t very important because “*they are few and far between*”. The main issue was felt to be the lack of bridleways, with this individual perceiving that the opportunities for off road riding had diminished over the last 30 years. Devon CC felt them to be “*fairly important in some circumstances*”, but the council’s preference is for permanent RoW. It was also noted that a fairly extensive network of permissive access routes exists outside of agri-environment agreements, so there is every chance that an access route could have been negotiated anyway, if there was sufficient demand for it. The Ramblers felt them to be quite important because “*there are places where you really need them. The more access to the countryside, the better*” and regarded permissive access routes to be a “*significant minority*” in the county. It was also noted that some routes stop people walking on the road, which is crucial for safety.

Access Provision

This section looks at what the agreement holders have provided through their HLS/Classic agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and, for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example(s).

Subject	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	6
Mix of provisions - HN2 - HN3 - HN4 - HN8/9	2* 0.5km 2*2.5km	3* 0.5 mile; 2* 300m; 1* 1 mile
Features of interest	Include: - ponds - woodland - archeological features	Include: - wildflower and meadows - disused railway and quarry - woodland - riverside
Infrastructure	All gates, fences, waymarks, signage in good condition.	Varied. Comments ranging from well signed and well maintained to a bit worn and non-existent.
Access quality	Good. Two sites had ponds with wildlife, one had views of the Salcombe estuary and one of the Quantocks	Most paths deemed to offer an interesting experience (depending on taste) and safety issue also noted (i.e. off road provision)

Setting for the Access

Some questions were asked to help assess the context or setting of the HLS permissive access. The responses are tabulated below. Comments from agreement holders relate to their agreement whereas comments from stakeholders relate to HLS permissive access generally (unless otherwise stated).

Topic	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Designations	1 in National Park, 1 in AONB	One in National park, 1 in AONB
Links to public rights of way	1 joined a public RoW	Four of the paths linked with public RoW, but with varying significance. In one case linking with the RoW enabled a circuit; and in two other cases linking with the RoW allowed the road to be avoided.
Links to National Trails	1 within a mile of the Tarka Trail	One path was part of the Tarka Trail until 2 years ago when the route was re-directed onto the road. Another ends on a coastal path, which is part of a national trail.
Links to public transport	Poor or non-existent	Two of the paths were within half a mile of a local bus service.
Meeting special local needs	One path provided a safe alternative to the road	Not especially.

Access Situation prior to HLS Agreement

All respondents were asked to describe the access arrangements prior to the start of the HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	6
Was there existing use?	Only one of the four was previously used; it was part of a 10 year old CSS .	Only one of the paths was deemed to exist and be in use prior to the agreement.
Level of use	Unknown	Level of use unknown but 3 of the routes were perceived to be busier at weekends.
Additional value	One farm had holiday homes and a box scheme for vegetables, so the agreement complemented these activities.	Four of the routes were deemed to provide value for money, adding variety to the walking offer, providing off road safety in some cases and enhancing the experience for more regular walkers.
Other comments	None	There was concern about what would happen to routes once the agreement ends, and that more value could have been gained had the routes been more strategically placed.

Current Usage of the Permissive Access

A series of questions explored the respondents' perceptions about current use of the permissive access. In some cases (especially agreement holders whose access was not visible from the farmhouse) responses were nothing more than educated guesses.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	6
User types (excluding educational access)	Walkers, cyclists, dog walkers, tourists and hackers were mentioned.	All the agreements are for walkers with one also used as a bridleway.
Level of use	Two of the routes were perceived to have between 150 and 200 users per annum, being a mixture of tourists and locals. Another 500 per annum, mainly locals and another deemed to have not many users at all.	Two were deemed to be fairly well used and the other four perceived to have relatively few users.
Timing of use	Most popular times mentioned were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summer - weekends - summer evenings 	Four deemed to be busier at weekends.
Origins of users	On the whole mainly local use of the four routes, more tourists using two of them, one because of holiday home provision on the farm.	A mixture of locals and tourists.
Value for money	Not asked	Four deemed to provide value for money.

*See note above

Impacts of the Permissive Access

Positive

Agreement holders were asked to identify who/what had benefited from their provision of permissive access. Results were as follows:

Possible beneficiary	Number giving this response	Comments
Agreement holder	4	All recognised they had gained financially through the payments received
Local users	3	Especially dog walkers and a very small number of locals use frequently.
Visitors	2	On farm holiday home visitors and tourists visiting the coast who stray inland.
Environment	1	As part of the HLS had also provided bird and bat boxes, and reclaimed a pond which was good for wildlife.
Others	1	School groups (via Educational Access)

Monetary benefits mentioned were:

- the ability to use the permissive access as part of a package of offerings to visitors (in which educational visits, box scheme for vegetables and on farm holiday accommodation also play a part);

Negative

Agreement holders were asked to list the costs, if any, that they had incurred as a result of the provision of permissive access. Results are given below:

Cost	Number saying yes	Costs incurred	Comments
Fencing	1	None	Provided by the National Park
Signage	1	Zero	All provided by NE
Gates	3	£149 each	Covered by grant in two cases, by the national park in third case
Bird boxes	1	£15 each	Part of HLS agreement
Public liability insurance	0	None	All were covered as part of wider farm policy, no issues raised.

The ‘stakeholders’ were asked to list any negative impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Can be withdrawn at landowners’ discretion and are likely to be withdrawn if funding ends.	2
Don’t seem to be strategically sited, are random in their distribution	1
Not that easy to find out about permissive access routes	1
Can lead to difficulties re-negotiating	1

No monetary costs were identified.

Unintended consequences

(stakeholders only)

It was “*slightly unexpected*” that HLS permissive access was going to come to an end, so Devon CC haven’t planned sufficiently for the general public coming to them and asking to re-negotiate with the landowner on their behalf. It becomes harder for them to sort out the longer a path has been closed. Some advance warning from NE would have helped with planning for these eventualities.

Synergy with rest of HLS

Agreement holders only

The permissive access agreements were described by one agreement holder as a win-win, for both the farm and NE. For the farm it helped to get into the HLS through increasing the number of points and was “*part of the overall package*”. Another had created a pond, which provided environmental value and interest for users of the path, especially school and other visiting groups. Similarly, another cited the field margins put in as part of the HLS, which was sown with a floristic mixture giving wildlife interest to walkers. Winter stubble also encouraged the birds, and it was felt that people on foot would see more than the farmer.

Impacts on Activities and Attitudes

Stakeholders were asked whether the existence of HLS permissive access had changed the views of land managers in respect of different aspects of their operation and, in one case, in the stakeholders’ own activities. Results are shown in the table below.

Aspect	Change	No change/effect
Concern over public liability	Nil	2 perceived that may be problem or deterrent to farmer, but this was not borne out by the interviews
Changes in land management activities	Maybe a bit but not more than public RoW.	N=1
Landscape	Only gates in hedgerows that weren't there before	N=1
Other	Able to alter the route in some cases if so desire	N=1
Stakeholders' activities	Means additional work for Devon CC Has meant that variety can be added to guided walks, welcome addition to the statutory network	N=1 N=1

The 'stakeholders' were also asked whether they thought the existence of HLS permissive access had changed farmer attitudes towards public access. They responded with the following comments:

- *"In some cases, it has put more pressure on farmer to ensure that other public RoW s are open. It has opened their eyes to that a bit. But in general most farmers are pretty good with their RoW in Devon, most are fairly open to the idea to having people on their land, compared to areas like Warwickshire for example. Farmers are a bit more relaxed down here".*
- *"I don't think so, probably not. Think most farmers and landowners are anti-access. The only way to make farmers change their attitude would be to offer them more money. And that is not likely to happen in the current climate. You would have to pay quite a lot for the hassle of having access".*
- *"I guess that as a result of the [permissive access] agreement farmers would now have a more positive approach to walkers and access".*

Promotion

Respondents were asked for their views about promotion of the new access. Responses are summarised in the table below.

Agreement Holders' Views	
How access could be better promoted	<p><i>"People in the village know it's there and word of mouth play its part."</i></p> <p><i>"Ideally it should be down to the National Park to promote the route, and to advise people about the railway incline, and other things happening locally"</i></p> <p><i>"Provision of signage would have helped"</i></p>
Views of the Stakeholders	
Level of Information	Stakeholders felt that only local people would get to know about routes, and promotion is largely by word of mouth.
Type of publicity	Most made reference to the website but then said that it was hard to find and/or unlikely to be something users would come across. One commented on the mismatch between the name of the access on the website and the name used locally, making it hard to locate potentially a useful route.
Signage	Two felt it to be adequate. But it was inadequate from CCs point of view because they like to use green signage to promote road safety and permissive access signage is wooden.

The future without access payments

A key question is what they think will happen after agreements come to an end, and whether permissive access will be allowed to continue. Because of the significance of this point, the responses to several related questions are given individually but as a summary. In the case of the agreement holders, this reflects their current thinking about their future intentions, whereas the stakeholders' responses are part speculation and part experience of agreements already ended.

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Will keep it open, and keep the fence. Would ask the national park with more help in signing and promoting it.	Will try to re-negotiate all of them as time allows.
Would want it to carry on, wouldn't change anything. We wouldn't suddenly shut it up and say <i>"you can't walk on it anymore"</i> . Holiday home visitors and local village people would still want to use it.	Would imagine they will just be closed, that has happened to two recently in Brixton (a small village in Devon).
Will close it unless paid. Not worth the hassle factor.	If they don't receive funding they won't offer access. You get the odd altruistic landowner but there aren't many who would continue to offer the access.
Will consult the younger members of the family as to what they want to do. Still have sons on the farm, and grandchildren coming through.	

Interaction with the public

Stakeholders only

Stakeholders were asked whether the HLS access had led to more contact between the farmer and the public. One felt that it had “*because of encouraging people to contact landowners in the first place – but mainly due to s coming to an end, prompting them to make contact with farmers*”. The two others felt it hadn’t, partly because so much agricultural work is now carried out by contractors.

Other views of the County Council

There is a public expectation that something will be done when an agreement is coming to an end. “*When agreements are coming to end someone needs to be there to pick up the pieces*”. Devon CC are trying to get ahead of the game and be proactive and anticipate closures, then speaking to landowners, to see if they want to enter into a new agreement.

A3 - Hampshire

Summary of Key Findings

- Agreement holders were generally positive about the help received from NE advisors
- Partnership working was generally limited to NE and the County Council, although agreement holders sometimes worked with their parish council
- There was little knowledge of national or local theme statements.
- Although most agreement holders had not heard of the ROWIP, the permissive access did contribute to its aims by providing circular walks and alternatives to dangerous roads.
- There was thought to be a high demand for access to the countryside in this part of Hampshire which created pressure on existing access, particularly those sites closest to urban areas. There was also thought to be a need for off road routes for horse riders.
- Agreement holders generally saw their access as a local resource for the nearest village(s) and were satisfied with the way it was promoted.
- The most common users were local dog walkers.
- Costs were low
- Stakeholders were split on whether agreements were likely to continue but agreement holders were more positive, although it may depend upon the future of HLS itself.

Introduction

Hampshire was chosen as a case study because:

- It is in the South East Region
- It contains a cluster of agreements (overlapping with West Sussex)
- It is quite an urbanised county, in that most of it is easily accessible from an urban area.

Within Hampshire the sites chosen were around the city of Winchester, on the edge of England's newest National Park, the South Downs. However, the existence of the park did not prove very significant with many agreement holders and stakeholders being unaware of whether a site was inside or outside the park. Interviews and site visits took place from late January to early March

Sample Selection

In common with other nodes, the aim was to carry out eight interviews, with approximately half being agreement holders and half being stakeholders. Agreement holders were selected on the basis that they had:

- each completed a telephone interview and had agreed to have a site visit
- were in the core area around Winchester on the fringes of the South Downs National Park
- contained as varied a mix of permissive access options as the sub-sample allowed.

The list of interviewees by type was:

- three farmers who held HLS agreements that included permissive access
- one other agreement holder – the head warden of a country park
- the Natural England advisor
- the Countryside Access Development Officer for Hampshire County Council
- Head of Conservation (South Hampshire) for Hampshire Wildlife Trust
- Access officer for Hampshire Ramblers (also a member and ex-chair of the LAF)

Partnership Working

Experience of working with partners for the two subsets is set out below.

Partners	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
NE	Agreement holders were generally positive about the help they received in designing their agreements, although this was not necessarily from Natural England. One, the park ranger, did not need advice but was grateful for the help given by NE in providing access gates, meaning they could fence the land for conservation grazing. One agreement holder mentioned working with the Parish Council.	The County Council officer explained the process: NE would send the initial documents which were circulated to area teams. The responses were collated in Winchester to highlight missing links that they wanted to get filled through HLS. It might be endorsing an idea or asking for a footpath to be a bridleway. The CC officer felt that NE were not putting a strong enough case for access, whilst stressing that was not meant to be critical. There appeared to be a constructive partnership between Natural England and Hampshire County Council, although the council eventually withdrew from detailed consultation due to the pressure on officer time. The Wildlife Trust and the Rambling Association were not consulted except through the LAF, which itself did not appear to be much involved.
Others	Two agreement holders had received advice from FWAG and one couldn't remember who the advice was from.	The NE representative felt that partnership working had been successful and that they worked with the local community through the land-owners.

Targeting

The stakeholder responses to the questions on targeting were rather different and are shown below. The Countryside Access Plan (CAP) is Hampshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

HLS Target Area/Regional Theme Statements		Rights of Way Improvement Plans	
Agreement Holders	Stakeholders	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
The agreement holders were unaware of target area or local/regional theme statement	The Natural England Officer listed the aims or themes as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - filling in missing links - avoiding dangerous roads - access to the RoW network from villages - holistic benefits 	Of the agreement holders, only the head ranger had heard of any targets or of the Countryside Access Plan (CAP) and the head ranger hadn't had time to study it in detail.	The County Council officer stressed the need to fill in gaps in the network and mentioned the CAP, which was taken into account in those agreements after it came into force. . The representative of the ramblers said that the CAP should have influenced the agreements but couldn't think of any examples where it had done so. The Wildlife Trust representative mentioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the CAP, although he felt that there wasn't much scope for them to input to it - South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Partnership - connects with the South Downs National Park such as the possible re-routing of the South Downs Way and other long-distance paths.

In spite of the lack of knowledge of both theme statements and the CAP, it did seem that the agreements contributed to the aims of the CAP by providing circular routes and alternative routes to main roads.

Perceived Demand for Access

All the stakeholders stressed the demand for access in Hampshire. The Wildlife Trust had identified a 5% increase in accessible green space while the population had increased by 20%, putting more pressure on nature reserves and other sensitive sites. The Wildlife Trust representative saw permissive access as very important to relieve the pressure on those sites.

Importance of HLS Permissive Access

Opinions differed as to the contribution made by permissive access agreements, but generally, in the opinion of the interviewees, it was not thought to be important except very locally. All agreement holders agreed that it was important for people to be able to access the countryside, although one qualified it by saying that there was a good network of rights of way in the area, continuing that access helped educate people about the countryside but had to be balanced against the needs of land managers. *'Telling people to get off is bad PR but it is finding a balance that everybody is comfortable with'*. They all felt that there was a high level of demand for access, although one qualified this by saying that there was a good rights of way network but demand for shorter routes. The head ranger of the country park felt, like the Wildlife Trust officer, that more access was needed to take pressure off sensitive sites, especially around the urban areas.

Agreement holders differed on whether more people are now accessing the countryside. One thought that in general, people were just walking in different places but that his circular routes had brought in a few more horse riders. Another thought that his route had encouraged people because it made a short circular route and yet another that there was no difference. The head ranger thought that there was a general increase and also a specific increase in the country park due to an adventure play area put in on neighbouring land by the Forestry Commission.

Access Provision

Of the eight access options discussed by stakeholders, four were open access, three were footpaths or networks of footpaths and one was a network of bridleways. The four agreement holders covered permissive footpaths, permissive bridleways, open access and disabled access, as shown below.

Subject	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	8
Mix of provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HN2 - HN3 - HN4 - HN5 - HN6 - HN7 - HN8/9 	1 – 3.3ha 1- 1455m 1 – 5847m 1	4 3 1
Features of interest	No particular features although the open access gave some river views.	Features mentioned were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wildlife - butterflies - good views of Winchester - river meadows - an historic water meadow - a lock
Infrastructure	Apart from the maps, most of which were in place, there was little infrastructure.	Infrastructure was generally described as pretty good (1 site), good (3 sites), very good (1 site) or basic (2 sites). However, at one of sites where infrastructure was described as basic, it was thought to be 'appropriate to the setting'. The quality of infrastructure at the eighth site was unknown.
Access quality	Access on the sites visited was generally easy and provided a pleasant (although not very exciting) experience.	Where stakeholders commented on the quality of the access, it was described as good or providing a good experience.

Setting for the Access

The setting of the access agreements discussed with agreement holders and stakeholders is described in the table below.

Topic	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Designations		
Links to public rights of way	All of the specific access options discussed by stakeholders and those held by agreement holders linked with rights of way, apart from a few sections that provided alternatives to the road – “ <i>other side of the hedge</i> ” paths. Most of the agreements provided local access to circular walks or open space.	When asked more generally about how permissive access fits in with other forms of access, stakeholders’ responses varied from “ <i>generally very well</i> ” through “ <i>pretty good links apart from some circular walks</i> ” and “ <i>links can depend on the driver for the agreement</i> ” to “ <i>integration is limited</i> ”. Links to national trails seemed to be good where there were any nearby.
Links to National Trails	Several linked with national or local long-distance paths.	
Links to public transport	Links to public transport were limited by the existence of public transport routes in the locality but, of the four agreements visited, three had public transport routes in close proximity, the exception being the country park. Only one was near a railway station, being 1.5 miles from a station. However, all three farmers saw their access as a local resource and it is doubtful if anyone actually travelled by bus to use it.	Stakeholders did not always know whether their sites had public transport links. However, five sites were said to be accessible by bus. When asked about links with public transport in general, stakeholders were split on how good access was, with one commenting that it should be given more consideration if permissive access was to be re-introduced.
Meeting special local needs	In terms of meeting local needs, access was seen to meet recreational needs rather than need for access from A to B, although in one place it was pointed out that a path offered off-road access from one end of the village to the other.	

Change from Access Situation Prior to HLS Agreement

The table below compares the situations of the access agreements discussed prior to HLS. As can be seen, that was not always clear.

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
4	8
<p>Of the agreement holders, one had previously been in CSS and didn't know if it had been used before that. One of the others said that part of his network had been used and another that some people had walked on the field margins but it was used much more now. The fourth was the country park that had been in open access for a long time.</p>	<p>In most cases stakeholders didn't know whether their examples were in public use prior to HLS, although at least two areas of open access and part of two others were used. Another bridleway was previously in CSS.</p>

Current Usage of the Permissive Access

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
4	8
<p>Agreement holders were often unsure how much their access was used. Typically, popular paths or open access areas seem to get about 10 users per day; this seems to be local dog walkers and other locals e.g. people walking for health. In the case of the bridle paths, they were used both by local walkers and by local horse riders.</p> <p>The country park was used by a wide variety of individuals and groups and was the only place that had any significant use by cyclists, although again dog walkers predominated. It was also the only one with significant use by schools and organised groups, the latter including the local athletics club, search and rescue dogs, a marathon, re-enactment groups and an agricultural college. It was well used with Sunday afternoon being the busiest time and catered mostly for people from Winchester. However, the usage of the DDA gates installed under HLS is harder to gauge.</p>	<p>Stakeholders tended to identify busy sites. The two open access areas identified by the representative of the Wildlife Trust both had high numbers of visitors, 5,000 to 10,000 events per year for one and low tens of thousands for the other. In both cases most were locals (within a mile radius) although one, a butterfly reserve, received visitors from all over the county. Another identified site consisting of a network of short footpaths over quite a large site, was thought to receive about 50 visitors a day. In all these cases the main users were walkers and dog walkers. The usage of the other sites identified by stakeholders was unknown.</p>

Impacts of the Permissive Access

Positive

Agreement holders were asked to identify who/what had benefited from their provision of permissive access. Results were as follows:

Possible beneficiary	Number giving this response	Comments
Agreement holder	2	One agreement holder said that his wife benefited through riding her horses on the bridleway and the ranger at the country park said that it would help management of the site in the long term.
Local users	4	All agreement holders identified local users as the biggest beneficiaries. These were mainly walkers, including dog walkers, but in one case included local stables and the hunt.
Visitors	3	There was also some mention of users from further afield, such as those walking a long-distance footpath, benefiting
Environment	3	Agreement holders were split as to whether there were environmental benefits. One thought that walking on the stewardship strips reduced their environmental benefits. However another farmer felt that his access kept people off the stewardship strips that they used before, and the third farmer pointed out that his open access kept people away from the water's edge and hence from disturbing ground nesting birds. The Country Park ranger was very positive, with the gates enabling fencing which allows grazing and also channeling people away from places that are getting eroded from overuse concluding: " <i>The wildlife benefits will be huge in the long-term</i> ".
Others	1	The only other beneficiaries to be mentioned were sporting rights owners, who benefited from the access being adjacent to but not over the water's edge.

One stakeholder, from the Ramblers, thought that permissive access had had no great impact. Stakeholders listed positive impacts as shown below.

Impact	Number giving this response
Enjoyment, especially for local people	1
Meeting local need	1
Giving people experience of open space	1
Health and well-being	1
Filling missing links in places where they are the only option	1

Two stakeholders mentioned possible financial benefits. The first talked of benefits to local businesses such as tea rooms and farm shops, and the second of more general benefits to the local economy by attracting people and businesses to the area.

Some stakeholders found it difficult to know if agreements were good value for money as they didn't know what they cost. Of those who did commit themselves all were positive. The most positive was the Wildlife Trust representative who had stressed the need for more open space to take pressure off sensitive sites and reduce conflicts, although he also mentioned that in judging value for money it is necessary to include the cost of hidden staff time.

Negative

Negative impacts identified by stakeholders are listed in the table below.

Impact	Number giving this response
The disturbance of sensitive habitats and species	1
The effect on wildlife, particularly from dogs that are not kept under control	1
Problems arising from the mixing of public and dogs with livestock farmers' worries about security	1
Litter	1
Maintenance	1
Lack of permanency	1
Difficulty in finding the access	1

Maintenance was thought to be a particular issue where paths were fenced on both sides and tended to get muddy and overgrown. Monetary costs mentioned were all to do with maintenance.

Agreement holders were asked about set up costs and several items were mentioned but all were mostly covered by capital grants. The only additional costs seemed to be a small amount of labour. Maintenance costs, including the replacement of damaged signs, were mentioned but were generally seen as part of the stewardship agreement. The checking of access was usually carried out when doing other tasks, such as checking livestock, in the area.

Unexpected consequences

Only one stakeholder identified an unexpected consequence, which was the scale of the need for open space revealed. He commented that the need was greater than could be met from permissive access and was a matter for planning policy.

Synergy with the rest of HLS

One agreement holder said that his open access kept dogs away from more sensitive areas and another that it should help keep people off his stewardship strips once he has mown the paths to differentiate them from the strips. However, another agreement holder thought that the paths encouraged walking on stewardship strips in

general – not just where access was provided. The park ranger thought it had complemented other HLS options by channelling people and enabling grazing.

Impacts on Activities and Attitudes

Three of the four stakeholders thought that permissive access had resulted in increased concern over risk and liabilities. Only one stakeholder thought it changed the way land was managed, in particular grazing regimes. Another thought it made permanent access more viable. Two stakeholders said that their own activities were affected. The Wildlife Trust officer said that the Trust, which was a land-owner, had to spend more time maintaining neighbouring land and infrastructure. The County Council had to spend time responding to the consultations, but this was regarded as part of the job. Impact on the landscape was thought to be minimal or non-existent. Other issues raised were:

- more controversy, for example over tree clearing for conservation purposes, as people see what is going on
- disturbance of wildlife, erosion and abrasion
- negative effect on grazing regimes

And positively,

- the big effect even a small length of path can have on the usability of the wider network.

Promotion

The level of information was thought to be low or medium by stakeholders, and was usually restricted to maps and markers on the ground. However, some thought that it was often good at the local level.

Agreement holders were generally satisfied with the promotion. The three farmers saw their paths as a local facility that was known about by local people. One specifically said that he did not want it promoted any more. Even the park ranger did not want any more promotion, as the park was already overused. The park does have a website, which refers to disabled access but its promotion was described as “*low key*”. This was due to the lack of suitability of the paths for wheelchairs, although the website pointed out which were most accessible. The site visit revealed that even the paths which had once been surfaced were now quite rough and overgrown.

The Future without Access Payments

When asked what would happen to permissive access after HLS if there is no further funding, stakeholders thought that some would continue but some not. However, they differed on the proportions they thought would continue. Responses were:

- most farmers will seek to maintain.
- farmers that are passionate will continue but those who have any difficulty or have done it for financial gain will go – probably more than 50% will go.
- some might continue if not having an impact on land management and because community spirited but where there are costs are likely to go.
- if there is money – if not some may continue but there may be conflict.

The agreement holders interviewed were quite positive about the access continuing. Two, both open access and including the country park, said it would definitely continue, the other two said that they would probably allow access as long as they were paid for stewardship strips – one commenting that it would be “*bad PR not*”

to". The other commented that it would also depend on crop prices, high prices meaning that they would cultivate as much land as possible, but adding "*it would be a pity to lose it*".

When asked whether they would have made access available without HLS, the farmer with open access said 'yes'. The other two farmers said 'no' and 'probably not'. The Country Park would have liked to have put in the DDA gates anyway but the capital grant allowed them to bring the project forward.

Interaction with the Public

Stakeholders did not agree on farmers' attitudes to the public, with one saying that permissive access had made no difference just confirmed their existing view that it was a mixed blessing, another saying "*it may have done*" and two saying that it had made farmers more positive:

- "*probably has helped. Can demonstrate positive benefits of having people on the land to report problems.*"
- "*yes, where it has been successful they have realised it is a good thing – they take pride in people's appreciation.*"

When asked whether permissive access has led to members of the public having more contact with farmers, one thought that it hadn't. Of the other three, one thought they probably didn't meet very often but it must have some affect on raising people's awareness, one thought that the contact would be not all positive and there would be confrontation and the last thought that people would show their appreciation and the contact would be positive.

Any Other Points of Interest

When asked for other comments, two stakeholders expressed regret that the permissive access option was no longer in operation, one stressing the difference it can make by filling in gaps in the network and providing "*over the hedge*" paths that enable people to avoid busy roads. Another stressed that HLS could only be "*part of the jigsaw*" and there needs to be planning policies and mechanisms to increase open space, such as country parks, that is not environmentally sensitive and where it doesn't matter if "*dogs and people run around*". He also thought that illegal access is potentially decreased by provision of formalised access because self-policing deters trespassing. The fourth stakeholder pointed out the need for public education, particularly with regard to dogs.

Only one of the three farmers interviewed had further comments. He said that he was generally happy and hadn't had any trouble, litter or fires. However, he was worried about the possible effect on his HLS of use of his stewardship strips. The farm of which he was a tenant belonged to the local estate and the land agent didn't like access. Land around the SSSI is rented to shooting and fishing interests and he was worried about vehicular use of his stewardship strips (which are not demarcated from his bridleways) by both game keepers and poachers.

The park ranger made a number of points, explaining that the gates had helped them manage access better and that the long-term benefits would be to wildlife particularly butterflies as they were one of the best butterfly sites in the county and hoped to become an SSSI. To do this they need to manage erosion, which means guiding the public away from some areas. Dogs are not a problem as the Highland cattle they use for grazing are not bothered by dogs. Most visitors come by car and this can present problems when the car parks fill up as the lanes are very narrow.

A4 – Leicestershire

Summary of Key Findings

- There was limited partnership work, partly due to personnel changes and budget cuts.
- The local authority was very active in rights of way work, focusing on near urban areas, but had limited involvement with HLS access.
- Agreement holders recognised the demand for access in the countryside
- Stakeholders indicated limited use (short and mostly suited to dog-walkers) and value of the majority of access, but indicated some HLS permissive access was important in terms of enabling circular walks.
- In three out of the four agreements visited there was not prior formal use of the access. In two cases the current level of use was very high, in one case it was medium, and in one case it was low. In three cases the use was mostly local.
- Agreement holders and stakeholders agreed the access was not well promoted, consisting of word of mouth and signs for the majority of access sites.
- In general agreement holders felt they would not offer access voluntarily, and stakeholders felt some informal local use might be retained but not much more.

Introduction

Leicestershire was selected on the grounds that it:

- Is largely lowland region
- Is a mix of urban and rural areas
- Contains a mix of arable and livestock agriculture

Interviews and site visits took place in late February 2012.

Sample selection

In common with other nodes, the aim was to have 8 interviews with approximately half being agreement holder and half being the 'stakeholders'. Agreement holders were selected on the basis that they had:

- each completed a telephone interview and had agreed to have a site visit
- collectively covered a reasonable geographical spread
- contained as varied a mix of permissive access options as the sub-sample allowed.

The list of interviewees by type was:

- four agreement holders (one near Loughborough, two in the south part of the county and one just over the border in Northhamptonshire) and the following 5 stakeholders:
- Rights of Way Officer for Leicestershire
- Secretary of Leicestershire Footpaths Association
- Chairman of the Ramblers Association
- Access officer for the British Horse Society
- NE project officer for the area

The four agreement holders were all farming businesses with the following key characteristics:

- One growing Miscanthus (as an energy crop)

- One an estate focusing on landscape conservation, one pastoral, one mixed beef and arable, and one entirely arable
- All four are in a lowland area.
- Two adjacent to urban areas and two in more remote rural areas.

Partnership Working

Experience of working with partners for the two subsets is set out below. In general agreement holders indicated that Natural England project officers had been helpful in setting up agreements. One claimed he had not used NE but only obtained advice from FWAG. The lack of NE input is unlikely given that the access was provided through an HLS agreement and may be due to forgetfulness or misunderstanding.

Stakeholders indicated that there had been more partnership work in the past but due to budget cuts and personnel changes it had declined. Two stakeholders (both user groups) indicated no involvement in partnership work.

Partners	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
NE	Very good, very helpful. We had a battle at the start to get access in the agreement. We have a long and close relationship with NE – they are involved in funding renovation of estate.(1)	We try to work with County Council rights of way officers, but some services are outsourced which makes it difficult. We would like to have better partnership work but lack of resources prevents it. One stakeholder alluded to clashes with part of NE in relation to access around Rutland Water.
FWAG	Very helpful (1)	
Independent adviser	Did not use NE – had an independent adviser – had very little contact then or since.(1)	
Other		We did more in the past – but it has died off recently. Very dependent on personalities of key persons in the organisations.

Targeting

In general the agreement holders were not aware of either local theme statements or Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPS).

Stakeholders varied greatly in their knowledge and understanding of access issues in the county. Representatives of user groups had little awareness of rights of way plans, though the Ramblers were very aware of developments in the National Forest where they were trying to link up footpaths through permissive access. The Ramblers indicated that one of their key aims was in creating links to enable people to join up paths. The horse rider representative indicated that the rights of way network was better in the eastern part of the county than in the west.

NE and local authority personnel involved with rights of way had a very high level of understanding and were involved in strategic decision making over access. The County Council indicated that the overarching issue for any site was the “*level of latent demand*” and the potential level of use. The issue was how any site linked with where people live and location of key visitor sites with parking. The results are presented below.

HLS Target Area/Regional Theme Statements		Rights of Way Improvement Plans	
Agreement Holders	Stakeholders	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Not aware (1) Had a previous based on membership (for horse riding) and raised money for charity. (1) No influence (2) We are next to a country park – already a lot of informal use (1) Heritage management plan to restore essential features preceded HLS (1)	None mentioned (3) Key issue is location of people and potential level of use. (1) Make the most of opportunities as they arise. (1) We would like to see access focused around urban areas. (1)	No – no influence (4)	No real reference to plans (5).

Perceived demand for access

Agreement holders only

Three out of four agreement holders felt there was a demand for access in the countryside. One agreement holder noted people were always looking for opportunities for something to do and access was important especially if there was something of interest such as an historical asset. One respondent indicated they had no feedback so had no idea whether there was a demand in the area, and two others indicated a huge demand from observations of living on the edge of a growing village and a large urban area. One respondent indicated that people need somewhere to go and as the taxpayer was funding HLS they should be seen to be providing something in return.

Importance of HLS permissive access

The stakeholders only

One user group indicated the importance of permissive access in enabling creation of shorter walks – as in the county it is easy to make linear paths or very long circular walks. One walking organisation indicated limited use as they tended to look for longer walks and suggested permissive access was most useful for dog walkers. The County Council view was that importance was mixed, with some sites providing a valuable contribution in the local area but the majority having little impact. The horse rider representative indicated that where there are good networks of rights of way then permissive access is of less importance but pointed out there were large areas of the county with few rights of way where some agreements were important and even more access was needed.

Access Provision

This section looks at what the agreement holders have provided through their HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example. Three of the stakeholders identified a range of permissive access sites across the county but two did not have any knowledge of specific HLS permissive access sites.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	4
Mix of provisions HN2 HN3 HN4	1 x 28.2ha 1 agreements = 510m; 2,340m; 5,080m; 1 agreement = 23,863m	A range of sites were identified including: A short 400m access that provided access to fantastic vantage points. A large area (thousands of metres) that created a large network. A 1 km route that links 2 RoW and enables links between villages. Two bits of bridleway that cut out a dangerous road
Features of interest	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - flat arable land – no particular features (1) - pond and stream (1) - landscape view (2) - historical interest (2) - fringe of town (1) - woodland (1) 	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - river views - fields - villages
Infrastructure	Gates, stiles etc good in all cases but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maps in place in 3 out of 4 cases; vandalised in one place – but farmer knew. - field entrances blocked with logs and cement blocks in one case – to deter vandalism. - limited infrastructure at most sites. 	Good, well signposted (1) Good surface and signs (1)
Access quality	Acceptable (1) Very good (2) Evidence of misuse (3) Limited interest (2)	Provides fantastic vantage points (1) Enables disabled access (1) Eliminated road walking (1) Enables links to village (1) Good views and birdlife, quiet (1)

Setting for the Access

Some questions were asked to help assess the context or setting of the HLS permissive access. The responses are tabulated below. Comments from agreement holders relate to their agreement whereas comments from the stakeholders relate to HLS permissive access generally (unless otherwise stated).

Topic	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Designations	None of the sites is in a designated area	None
Links to public rights of way	Light (1- 4 RoW in surrounding area) (3) Moderate (5-9 RoW in area) (1)	Unknown
Links to National Trails	None	No but creates links between public RoW network. (2) Yes – creates links (1)
Links to public transport	Close to bus route (2) No links (2)	No links (2) Bus route close by (1)
Meeting special local needs	A lot of local use from adjacent village (2) High level of use from nearby town (1)	Riders benefit (1)

Changes from access situation prior to HLS agreement

All respondents were asked to describe the access arrangements prior to the start of the HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their individual access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	4
Was there existing use?	In three cases there was no prior formal access. In two cases there was informal use (e.g. tobogganing; visiting historic site) In one case there was a membership riding mostly for local people and organized events.	2 = no route selected 2 = Don't know 1 = some dog walkers 1 = horse riders One area had a RoW through part of it before.
Level of use	Comments received were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership for horse riders - Irregular use in winter - Some informal walking 	Walkers (3) There's always been a right of way across one area – HLS agreement just opened up some fields (1) Possibly hundreds (1) Most stakeholders had no idea of use levels.
Additional value	In two cases out of four, landowners were building on previous experience of informal use. In one case the site was very remote with little interest (essentially a large open area) and few visitors. In one case a large number of walks were provided across a large area adding a lot of value.	Examples quoted were <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All three mentioned give good value - No – not at the moment as they are not promoted enough - No value for us as already a RoW there- but quite generous for dog walkers and horse riders.
Other comments		Comments included: No point in access if the public don't know about it. Walk organizers have some knowledge but general membership of walking association has no knowledge or access.

Current Usage of the Permissive Access

A series of questions explored the respondents' perceptions about current use of the permissive access. In some cases (especially agreement holders whose access was not visible from the farmhouse) responses were nothing more than educated guesses. In all cases the estimated numbers cannot be relied upon as they are general perceptions of the agreement holder and not reliable counts. In two cases level of use was very high in one case it was medium, and in one case it was low. In three cases the use was mostly local, in the fourth case (the low use site) visitors came from a wider area due to the historic interest.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	5
User types (excluding educational access)	Walkers/dog walkers (all cases) Cyclists – (2) Horse riders – (3) Runners – (2) School groups (1)	Very little awareness – some suggestion that walkers, dog walkers and riders use them but no real estimates.
Level of use	Dog walkers - A lot – daily (3) A lot – walkers, dog walkers, horse riders, occasional cyclists, school groups, runners – year round (1) Cyclists – a few (2)	No information
Timing of use	Most popular times mentioned were: - summer - daily – any time	No information
Origins of users	Dog walkers are local, whereas horse riders tended to come from local liveryes. In one case visitors come from wide area as site is advertised as a top attraction in the county	Limited information: From within 30 miles (1) Mostly local (1) Local village (1)

Impacts of the Permissive Access

Positive

Agreement holders were asked to identify who/what had benefited from their provision of permissive access. Results were as follows:

Possible beneficiary	Number giving this response	Comments
Agreement holder	3	Financially through HLS payment and through public relations. Secure in knowledge locals not having to use dangerous public highway. Only financially – more people have caused more crop damage. Increased control over previously informal access.
Local users	4	Lovely view across the valley – locals benefit. Improved safety through not using road. People in local village love it – they have gained tremendously. Greater access and understanding for locals.
Visitors	1	Some
Environment		
Other	1	A lot of the agreement is on existing margins so no change to environment.

Agreement holders were asked about long-lasting benefits that might occur. Few agreement holders could see any long lasting benefits. One commented that if the access disappears there will be no benefits. Another commented that they had decided to move into HLS as they were already in CSS and the access was using part of the farm that was not profitable or productive - they were not sure if they would continue to offer the access after the agreement ends as the main reason for entering was to get some funding without interfering with the productivity of the farm.

The stakeholders were asked to list any positive impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Provided a way for land owner to give something back	1
Public enjoyment – allows those who are aware of access to enjoy it.	1
Landowner gets money for it.	1
Visible use of money given to land owners	1
Getting people out into the countryside	1
Provides tangible return to the public – one of reasons landowners tolerate it.	1
Quality rides – nice off road riding on good surfaces, wide margins, nice gates that work, horse friendly	1
Encouraged farmers to provide access without problems	1

Monetary benefits mentioned were limited – only two stakeholders suggested that local businesses might benefit in some areas from increased visitor numbers, one was a stately home that was getting more visitors, and one was referring to a tea shop that gets more business. Two stakeholders pointed out that landowners benefitted from the money and in particular those that would have provided informal access are benefitting.

Negative

Agreement holders were asked to list the costs, if any, that they had incurred as a result of the provision of permissive access. One agreement holder indicated costs were low - related mostly to keeping the grass trimmed, but noted he did not make any profit from it; another indicated no extra costs. The respondent with open area access had no cost as there was one access point and the field is grazed as it was before. Results are given below:

Cost	Number saying yes	Costs incurred	Comments
Fencing	1		Still a net cost to me although large contribution from HLS
Signage	1		Some money spent here - still a weak area - trying to make a detailed map with Parish Council
Gates			none

Access furniture			none
Leaflets			none
Public liability insurance	1		No increase
Other	1	£250/ha £15,000	Clear up rubbish, keep grass trimmed. Land taken out of production Establishment costs of margins and land taken out of production (but this covers all HLS) Purchase of small equipment (for mowing)

The stakeholders were asked to list any negative impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Vandalism of furniture	1
Continually replacing stuff near urban areas - takes time and money	1
Lack of advertising	1
No real negatives	3
Agreements with no clear benefits - could be much better targeted. Should only get money for access if in an area with demand.	1
Occupiers not genuinely bought into the	1

Three stakeholders indicated no negative impacts. Monetary costs were mentioned only by one stakeholder who noted cost of replacing vandalised infrastructure.

Unintended consequences (the stakeholders only)

The stakeholders were unaware of any unintended consequences.

Synergy with rest of HLS

Agreement holders only

Two of the agreement holders felt there was no impact on other aspects of the HLS agreement or on farm/estate management.

One respondent indicated the area was already being used for informal public access since the development of an adjacent country park - people crossed the stream and went onto his land. The current access does not affect other aspects of the HLS agreement.

Two respondents suggested there were mild problems associated with people getting lost and off track which could compromise benefits of conservation margins (e.g. ground nesting birds). One also noted the need to

keep the access margins cut and had to put logs in front of gates and access points to stop people driving on to the land.

Impacts on Activities and Attitudes

The stakeholders were asked whether the existence of HLS permissive access had changed the views of land managers in respect of different aspects of their operation. Results are as follows:

Aspect	Change
Concern over public liability	No concern (5)
Changes in way land used	None (3) Probably kept a bit tidier (1) As part of HLS yes – creation of headlands and wide margins. (1)
Changes in activities undertaken	None (5)
Appearance of landscape	None (4) Hedges trimmed better (1)

The stakeholders were also asked whether they thought the existence of HLS permissive access had changed farmer attitudes towards public access. Four out of the five stakeholders indicated no change. They responded with the following comments:

- *No – it boils down to ‘£s’, nothing changed.*
- *Large multi-nationals run cereal farms – access payment has no impact at all.*
- *No complaints about the agreement – they have been pleased, gates left open are the main problem.*
- *Some were hostile initially when the was set up and they do come around to an extent.*
- *People don’t know it exists so cannot judge how it works if no-one uses it.*

Promotion

Respondents were asked for their views about promotion of the new access. Responses are summarised in the table below. Note that these are summaries of actual responses recorded and reflect the level of understanding and perception by agreement holders and stakeholders about the nature and operation of the HLS permissive access process. As the views of stakeholders indicates, understanding of the scheme is not widespread (for example, under signage, there is already a requirement for agreement holders to renew signs when they disappear – the stakeholder view indicates limited knowledge about this aspect of the scheme).

Agreement Holders' Views	
How access could be better promoted	<p>Lot of people seem to know about it from word of mouth. Several people said they had seen it on the internet. Parish council told at initiation of the access and there are signs at the entrance.</p> <p>It's only been two years and it's well used - if increase people too much it gets over used - a risk of over-promotion. It is sufficient - a lot is by word of mouth. Producing a map with all the access on one sheet would help.</p> <p>I only put the signs up - nothing else.</p> <p>It is not promoted, we are not likely to spend money promoting it - people will see the signs.</p>
Views of the stakeholders	
Level of Information	<p>Not well publicized – people don't know it exists.</p> <p>The balance is OK, letters go to Parish Council when agreement established, map boards go to farmers.</p> <p>Low.</p> <p>They should engage with local authorities</p>
Type of publicity	<p>Not enough advertising. Lots of riders work hard – don't spend time looking for places to ride – average horse rider has to have it handed to them on a plate</p> <p>Not publicized.</p> <p>People not aware except perhaps residents</p>
Signage	<p>Most have signs.</p> <p>Adequate in most cases</p> <p>There should be a requirement for renewal when signs disappear.</p>
Other comments	<p>This is a carried out through an agreement between a quango and private landowners – we have no power to influence – why aren't we an advisory body?</p>

The future without access payments

A key question is what they think will happen after agreements come to an end, and whether permissive access will be allowed to continue. Stakeholders were varied in their opinions but most thought that the majority of farmers would stop providing access.

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
We will carry on - absolutely sure - thrust is to increase access on the estate and we are fairly accessible anyway. Would only change if farm economics changed enough (1)	Those that remain will be those that previously provided access and those with social responsibility. Those done in a cynical way or with few users will revert.
Depends on the economics of crops vs. cereals - if we grow cereals again we will pull the access. (1)	Local access forum picked up on this issue and has written letters to communities. Most likely to be sites where heavy use or previous access that will continue.
Cannot say - might need to plough it back up to feed the world.(1)	Informal access between neighbours will continue.
We will wait and see at the time. (1)	They will just be closed. One owner told me he would stop riders. Some will put up barriers, others will let it run.
Voluntary provision - if they are going to knock your crop down - no - far too many people using it and causing damage, but I've not got anything against someone having a walk.(1)	Will not continue – farmers don't want people around the farm because of theft and vandalism.
Voluntary provision - land occupier should have more control and power to stop access if abused - why should we take abuse for no reason.	Some might turn a blind eye to local horse riders. Some riders will go on trying to ride them.
Voluntary provision - what's the point - nothing in it for me. I might consider a voluntary scheme that generated money for a worthy cause. (1)	Cannot generalize. Depends on farmer – those who only took access to get into will stop it. Those with livestock likely to stop.
We would have to carefully consider doing it voluntarily - son is taking over - he might say no - if 'straying' of people off path becomes more of a problem we might not take it on. (1)	Some will – if it links up access they may do it as a gesture of goodwill. Unless it links into cross-compliance or something a lot will not do it.

Interaction with the public

The stakeholders only

The stakeholders were asked whether the HLS access had led to more contact between the farmer and the public. In general stakeholders felt there might have been a small increase. One stakeholder indicated there had been some increased contact but it “*should not be overstated*”. Another indicated a small change and related it to a need for educating user groups about the fact that someone is trying to make a living off the land. One respondent noted you would rarely bump into a farmer on the land but noted that HLS access was something the farmer was giving back to the public.

Any other points of interest

Agreement holders had a few additional comments to make:

- *We want to encourage it as much as possible - we would like to do it but the liability issue stops things happening.*

- *A field with an abandoned village can only be used for grazing so having a few people walk on it makes no difference to us.*
- *Would not allow access if had a cereal crop - too much damage from dogs.*
- *Not affected operations that much but will not provide voluntarily - it has a cost.*
- *99% of the population is fine – it's just a few that cause problems - I had chickens killed by a dog and did not even get an apology.*
- *There's a lot of vandalism - gates get burned, signs torn down, margins become dog country, no environmental value, people walk through hedges and fences, I had 25 yards of new hedge pulled out.*

The stakeholders made quite a few additional comments and a selection of extracts from these is provided below where they add to additional content to earlier responses:

- *Should be seen as a social contract and targeted to usage.*
- *Landowners have got to want to do something to make it work.*
- *Mostly local people benefitting because no investment in parking, publicity, etc.*
- *Needs to be targeted at urban fringe and areas that lack rights of way.*
- *Should be done on a points basis – should be loaded more towards potential use.*
- *It will not help keen walkers, it will help local people, creating small walks near where people live.*

A5 - Lincolnshire

Summary of Key Findings

- Partnership working seems to be limited to a partnership between NE and the County Council access department.
- Other than the NE officer and the County Council officer, most of the interviewees were not aware of any national or local target statements. None of the agreement holders were aware of them but they all felt that their access met local needs for circular and/or off-road routes..
- Permissive access is generally seen as important and there is a move from the County Council and others to try and maintain access when the agreements end.
- Promotion appeared to be better than in some counties, with the County Council being more pro-active.
- Whilst some sites already had access, the agreements were generally thought to add value by improving and formalising access.
- Local users were seen as the main beneficiaries, although three agreement holders also thought that they themselves had benefited from improved public relations. However, there was concern that this last would be negated should the farmer decide not to continue with access.
- Two stakeholders mentioned farmers' increased concern about risk and liability following some high profile cases involving dogs and livestock.

Introduction

The original intention was to choose a cluster of agreements in each English region. However, it did not prove possible to identify a suitable cluster in Yorkshire and Humberside, so a cluster in adjoining north Lincolnshire was chosen instead. The agreement holders interviewed were around Lincoln and Louth on mainly flat arable land.

Lincolnshire was chosen as a case study because:

- It is adjacent to the Yorkshire and Humberside Region
- It contains a cluster of agreements
- It is a predominantly rural county with a sparse population

Within Lincolnshire the sites chosen were in the north of the county adjacent to Yorkshire and Humberside

Interviews and site visits took place from late January to early March

Sample selection

In common with other nodes, the aim was to carry out eight interviews, with approximately half being agreement holders and half being stakeholders. Agreement holders were selected on the basis that they had:

- each completed a telephone interview and had agreed to have a site visit
- were in the core area in North Lincolnshire
- contained as varied a mix of permissive access options as the sub-sample allowed.

The list of interviewees by type was:

- four farmers who held HLS agreements that included permissive access
- the Natural England advisor

- Senior Countryside Access Officer for Lincolnshire County Council
- Head of Nature Reserves for Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- The Chair of Mid-Lince Local Access Forum

Partnership Working

Experience of working with partners for the two subsets is set out below.

Partners	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
NE	One agreement holder described advice from Natural England as “ <i>alright</i> ”, a second found NE very good at the beginning but found it hard to find things out afterwards because of staff changes, and a third found that staff did their best but as an early starter (2006) he found the system “ <i>shambolic</i> ” and his start date was delayed, costing him money due to difficulty with cropping. However, the fourth agreement holder described the NE advisor as excellent, finding things that the independent advisor didn’t. Only two, including this last, had worked with NE on the design of the agreement.	The County Council worked with NE on the establishment of new permissive access agreements. The County Council officer thought it had worked well and some changes were made to agreements as a result. The LAF was not involved in the discussions and, as far as the interviewee knew, neither was the Wildlife Trust, although it was possible that his colleagues in the Conservation Department could have been consulted by Natural England. The NE officer only mentioned working with the County Council as CSS agreements expired.
Others	One of the others worked with a consultant the other designed it herself. Another thought that the support of the Parish Council had influenced NE to accept his permissive access proposal.	The Wildlife Trust officer had been involved in some discussions with farmers about their HLS agreements

Targeting

Of the stakeholders, only the County Council Officer identified any regional or local themes or targets that influenced the nature of access in the area. He cited the Rights of Way Improvement Plan which identified the need to fill in gaps in the network. When asked about its influence on permissive access he said that some elements were successful and some not.

None of the agreement holders were aware of such statements or of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, one adding that he didn’t even know his neighbour across the river was in HLS until he got talking to her. He thought that this might have influenced the decision to admit him to HLS and that the existence of a right of way across a field might have influenced the decision to accept that field as open access.

Perceived Demand for Access

Whilst all of the agreement holders thought that it was important for the public to be able to access the countryside, there was some ambivalence in some of the responses. One thought that the public wasn’t too bothered as a beautiful access site [an SSSI not HLS] near the village was little used. Another said “*for people who are interested yes, but not for those who just want to come and do destruction*”. Most agreement holders

thought that there was a need for more public access, one pointing out that most of the demand was for short circular walks. Another said: *“I would have said not until I put this [bridleways] in but it is well used.”*

When asked how their own permissive access fits in with other forms of access and whether it met any local needs, three agreement holders referred to the creation of circular routes. Two of these also mentioned the need for safe off-road routes, in one case a specific route from a caravan park into the village. The other farmer said that his open access provided a place where people could let their dogs off leads.

Importance of HLS permissive access

Most stakeholders were positive about the contribution of permissive access. The Natural England Officer said that they were very useful, *“creating linkages between public rights of way and circular routes. I think they are quite important. Ramblers do use our website and get their routes from that”*. The LAF chair said that, whilst he didn't have an overview, *“there are areas where permissive access is very important”*. He knows of one near where he lives where *“permissive access is a very important element”*. He added that all the ones he knew are providing access where there is none rather than filling gaps in the network. He thought that potentially they could be used for joining up but this was not the main purpose. The Wildlife Trust representative thought that *“what they are doing with permissive access with farmers is fantastic – it's not encroaching on the [wildlife] reserves”*. *“It has opened up the lower wold. It's very important”*. However, he added that farmers were having problems with people using field margins as paths. The Local Authority officer said that all permissive access was included on the county access map, which is accessible to the public on the internet. He mentioned that S. Lincs LAF [the fieldwork was in N. Lincs] were working with an interested individual, farmers and parish councils to try and keep the permissive access open when agreements expired.

Access Provision

Subject	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	7*
Mix of provisions - HN2 - HN3 - HN4	1 x 1.32ha 2 x 2000 – 3000m 1 x 3800m	5** 1 2
Features of interest	A willow coppice Views from a small hill River views	Wildlife reserve with lakes and birds Farmland being converted to fenland Views of farmland, water features and water birds River access A 'secret' valley in the Wolds
Infrastructure	Maps were all in place, although one was obscured. Otherwise, there was very little infrastructure as access was mostly open gateways. Where stiles or gates were present they were in good condition. A few more waymarkers would have been helpful in places.	In four cases the infrastructure was described as good. In the other four, the interviewee was non-committal or unsure.
Access quality	Generally good with a few isolated problems such as a section of path surfaced with large stones that were difficult to walk on.	The access quality was described as 'good' or 'delightful' in five cases. The remaining three cases the access was described as useful.

*One agreement was cited twice

**One agreement had a footpath and a bridleway

Of the agreements discussed with stakeholders, most were footpaths, with one being a footpath and bridleway and two being open access. Of the footpath agreements, the two cited by the Wildlife Trust manager were both on reserves managed by the Trust. In one case this was a single 2.3 km footpath providing access to an additional part of the site as well as in combination with another (non-HLS) permissive path providing access from the neighbouring suburb. This path allowed visitors to the nature reserve to spread out over the very popular site and took some of the pressure off the areas closer to the visitor centre and car park. The other was a network of footpaths on a new site – a former farm with no access being converted back to Fenland with public access. This allowed the public to see the process of reclaiming fenland from arable land. Both were said to be well-signed high-quality access giving an interesting experience. Both had car parks but poor or non-existent links to public transport.

Two of the other footpaths were said to provide circular routes, in one case (a site where the agreement holder had been interviewed) a circular route around a village and in the other case (which also involved a bridleway) a circular route and alternative routes adjoining the suburbs of Lincoln. It also makes the Viking Way, a long-distance path, accessible from the built-up area. Another footpath was cited by two different stakeholders. It consisted of 7.2 km of footpath in a “*really nice area*” at the edge of the Fens, with views of farmland, water features and water birds. It also joins with a cycle trail and connects a right of way to the River Witham. The two stakeholders differed as to whether there was public transport access.

Two open access areas were cited by the LAF chair. One of these was a valley in the Wolds which has no road access – “*very secret*” “*you feel you are away from traffic and the roads and can’t see any development*”. There are also archaeological landscape features if you know what to look for. It’s only links are to a green lane which is also a farm road. There is no parking but it is less than a mile from a bus route. It was described as a “*delightful experience*”. This was the only access in an area of special designation, being in the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB. The other open access is a small area near a suburb of Lincoln. This was described as “*a valuable and attractive place to walk*” and “*very great value for local access*” but the stakeholder who suggested it wasn’t sure that it needed to be open access as opposed to broad paths.

Setting for the Access

The agreements held by the agreement holders and the access discussed by the stakeholders is summarised below.

Topic	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Designations	None of the agreements was in a designated area, although one was adjacent to an SSSI.	One of the agreements was in the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB.
Links to public rights of way	Agreement holders felt that their access did fit in with local rights of way or else provide access where there was very little before.	Stakeholders differed on how well permissive access linked to rights of way. The Wildlife Trust officer thought that they linked well, encouraged people to get out and put pressure on the County Council to improve rights of way. The Natural England officer said that they were generally used to link to existing rights of way and make circular walks but that some may create completely new walks. The County Council officer said the situation was very mixed. And the LAF chair thought that they didn't link well but that it didn't matter as treating them all as one network would create problems when agreements end
Links to National Trails	There were no links to national trails	There were no national trails in the area. However, there were some links to regional trails such as the Viking Way.
Links to public transport	Most of the agreements were on bus routes although buses were not very frequent.	Stakeholders thought that links to public transport were not good because there was not much public transport.
Meeting special local needs	The only reference to providing a specific access route referred to the footpath providing access between a caravan site and the village	It was thought that while permissive access agreements did not generally meet specific access needs (ie from A to B), they did meet local needs for circular walks particularly for dog walking and health walks.

Change from Access Situation Prior to HLS Agreement

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
<p>Before joining HLS, two agreement holders allowed access to all or part of the site/footpath to specific people or groups. In the case of the open access, the farmer had allowed the local scouts to camp on the site and in the other case the farmer had allowed local people to use part of the path on request. The other two did not have any access prior to HLS.</p>	<p>Stakeholders often did not know about the access that was available on their example sites before the introduction of HLS. The only sites for which the stakeholders were sure of the situation were the two wildlife sites, one of which didn't have access in that particular place and the other having been farmland without any access until recently, and the remote valley in the Wolds which had de facto access for locals. Otherwise answers ranged from "probably", through "don't know" to "I shouldn't think so".</p>

Current Usage of the Permissive Access

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
<p>Agreement holders were often uncertain of how much their access was used.</p> <p>All were used mainly by local walkers and dog walkers and, in the case of the bridleway, horse riders.</p> <p>The only agreement holder to estimate numbers, thought that there were four or five walkers (most of them being dog walkers) on each of his three bridleways per day and at least some horse riders every day. His access was also used by the local school. Rambling groups used one of the footpath agreements occasionally and the owner of the open access allowed the scouts to camp, as he had done before the access came into force.</p> <p>Additionally, when discussing access by local groups to one of the footpaths, the wife of one interviewee, who was also present, came up with several ideas for encouraging local groups to use the footpaths.</p>	<p>Most stakeholders were unsure of the usage of the sites they discussed. The only one to be sure was the Wildlife Trust officer who was describing his own sites. He cited a figure of 150,000/year for the established site, although not all these used the permissive access path.</p> <p>The other site was in the process of being established and had not yet been widely promoted. At present it was used by only a few local people dog walking, a few people who were curious about fen restoration and some bird watchers.</p> <p>Of the other sites, two were described as well used by local walkers and dog walkers, on another there was usually someone there in suitable weather – mainly locals.</p> <p>The site that was cited twice was described as not particularly well used – "it looks like a weekend path" - by one stakeholder but the other said that there was usually some cars there. The use of the final site was unknown.</p>

Impacts of the Permissive Access

Positive

Agreement holders were asked to identify who/what had benefited from their provision of permissive access.

Possible beneficiary	Number giving this response	Comments
Agreement holder	3	In two cases the benefit was improved PR or improved relationships with walkers, one farmer making a point of getting out of his tractor to explain what he was doing. In the other case it was due to the grass maintaining its condition without fertilizer.
Local users	4	All agreement holders identified local users as the main beneficiaries.
Visitors	3	Three also identified benefits to users from further afield, in one case this was the people staying at the caravan site, in the other it was horse riders who boxed their horses in.
Environment	1	Paths were thought to help buffer hedgerows, but the main gains were thought to come from HLS as a whole rather than from permissive access.
Others	1	The only other beneficiary mentioned was a local caravan site.

When asked for positive impacts, stakeholders suggested:

Impact	Number giving this response
More choice	
Access to farmland allows people to see what is going on the farm	1
Meeting local need (which they were thought to do well in specific cases)	1
Encouraging people to value the countryside	1
Making farmers think about public access, possibly leading to better maintenance of PRoWs	1
Getting people out	1
Giving people more choice	1
Bridging gaps in the network (it was described as a cheap and cheerful way of doing this with minimal county council involvement)	1
Taking some pressure off nature reserves	1
People sending records to the wildlife trust – <i>“people have found some hidden gems”</i>	1

Financially, it was thought that they might impact positively on village shops and pubs and farmers who had diversified for example into farm shops. They were thought to be too local to affect tourism. They saved the council money in that they are cheaper than putting in a right of way.

All stakeholders thought the agreements they cited were good value for money. The most enthusiastic, the Wildlife Trust officer, said of the new site: *“superb, will be a key bit of habitat. It has increased Lincolnshire fenland by 200%.”*

Negative

Stakeholders mentioned the following negative impacts:

Impact	Number giving this response
Dogs, particularly with livestock	1
Litter	1
Fires	1
Fly tipping (although it was thought that this would probably happen anyway)	1
Not particularly good maintenance	1
Confusing public about their rights (only seen as a very small negative)	1
Lack of permanence (will impact on users and landowners who will have trouble stopping use or will have to maintain infrastructure)	2
They may overlook gardens	1

When asked about capital expenditure, agreement holders identified some small costs:

- A dog fouling sign
- A footbridge (2 cases)
- A bench
- Seed and labour for grassing paths
- The taking of land out of cultivation
- Printing copies of the map for the caravan site

Agreement holders often couldn't remember which capital costs were covered by grants. None of the agreement holders had had extra liability insurance costs as a result of their agreements.

Generally, agreement holders seem to check the route while doing other things in the vicinity. This tends to be more often in summer than in winter. However, one agreement holder said that his wife walked part of the route every day.

Unexpected Consequences

None of the stakeholders could think of any unexpected consequences.

Synergy with the rest of HLS

Three of the four agreement holders identified a synergy between their permissive access and the rest of their HLS. One said that the access kept people away from other areas, one thought that permissive access enables people to see what they are doing and one thought that it "*put farming in a better light*".

Impacts on Activities and Attitudes

Two stakeholders felt that concern over risks and liabilities amongst farmers had increased. One of them blamed the increased concern on a few high profile cases involving dogs and livestock and was worried that this might change farmers' attitudes to access as a whole.

Whilst one stakeholder thought that there had been no impact on the way that land is managed, the other three thought that there had been small impacts, for example on livestock management. Farmers were thought to be concerned about the public mistaking grass margins for paths and the effect this might have on their subsidies. The only stakeholder to have his own activities affected was the Wildlife Trust reserves manager, who was now more aware of “*passive education*” – signage etc – but remarked that boards get vandalised. The appearance of the landscape was generally not thought to be affected.

Promotion

Permissive access was publicised through the Country Walks website, the County Council website, word of mouth and signs on the ground. In addition, some were publicised in the Lincolnshire Walks series of leaflets and some in parish magazines. Only one stakeholder thought that the promotion of permissive paths away from the local area was adequate. Views on local promotion varied. One said it was fine, another that it was good as long as the maps were correct and the waymarkers had not been vandalised, one that maps can get weathered and worn and another that finger posts would be more obvious than the map boards. One stakeholder pointed out that the lack of permanency makes promotion difficult.

Agreement holders also varied in their views on promotion. One suggested greater promotion of the website and another thought it would be good to join up with other permissive paths and rights of way to form a long distance path. The other two were more concerned with local promotion which they thought was adequate with signs up, maps in the village notice boards and, in one case, their own promotion.

The Future without Access Payments

All the stakeholders thought that some access would continue when agreements ended but some would not, depending mostly on economic circumstances. The Wildlife Trust officer said that the Wildlife Trust would continue providing access but he expected most farmers to stop. The chair of the LAF thought that traditional landowners and big estates might continue especially if the land was not particularly valuable but that other farmers might stop completely. He thought that dogs might deter continuation, especially for sheep farmers if sheep prices rise. The Natural England and County Council officers both thought that most would not continue. The County Council officer pointed out that the denial of access would increase their enquiry workload.

The response from the agreement holders was a bit more positive. Of the four, one said it would probably stay for safety reasons as it did not cause too much trouble, two said they would be likely to keep part of their network open, in one case this was for safety reasons – to allow an alternative to the road – and the other felt it would be very unfair to remove it but he might take out part. The remaining two agreement holders thought that the paths would go if there was no payment, one saying “*we would have to review if funding was removed*”. and the other that his “*primary aim was to produce food for a hungry world*”. This last did not see any lasting benefits as the positive PR gained by introducing the access would be destroyed by removing it. Another felt that he would be left with a problem as people would be used to using it. However, one of the others felt that permissive access had led to greater awareness and better relations.

None of the agreement holders would have provided general access without the , although two would have provided access to specific groups or individuals on request.

Interaction with the Public

All the stakeholders thought that farmers' attitudes may have been changed by the , although they differed as to the nature of these changes. One thought that the standard of visitor may have made farmers more negative. Two thought that interaction was generally positive, one citing a landowner who was impressed by ramblers picking up other people's litter and the other suggesting that it may have increased farmers' feelings of responsibility for rights of way. The fourth stakeholder thought that it could go either way, with some farmers finding no problems and benefiting from an extra pair of eyes and ears and others being put off by a few unreasonable members of the public.

One stakeholder thought that there had been no increase in contact between the public and farmers as "*paths do not generally go through farmyards*". However, two thought that there had been a small amount of increased contact and that this contact had been positive, one commenting that farmers can be very isolated from the community. The third thought that there had been increased contact and that this had been positive in terms of public education – "*farmers can be quite forthright*".

Any Other Points of Interest

Three of the four stakeholders made additional comments. The Wildlife Officer said that unintentional disturbance meant that they had to always be out there patrolling and educating but that there were a lot of positives. The Natural England officer said that the footpaths are very valuable and there have been a lot of positive comments. She added that there will be "*a load of footpaths stopping each October and a lot of upset customers when they go*". The County Council officer said: "*It's a good idea and will be missed*".

One agreement holder stressed safety on the road and the creation of a circular route and also that the access meant that people could get round without coming through the farmyard where there are a lot of moving vehicles. Another said that it's important to let people enjoy the land as HLS is funded by public money. "*It sends the right message*". He added that it is better to be part of a than to just have informal access as people know what it is. He thought the should keep going. Another agreement holder said that his access had been very successful, the criterion for success being regular use. "*It's just a hit and that's the end of it*".

A6– Norfolk

Summary of key findings

- Agreement holders were not aware of either local theme statements or Rights of Way improvement Plans (RoWIPS). Stakeholders varied greatly in their knowledge and some of the users had little awareness of rights of way plans or even of HLS permissive access.
- All agreement holders felt there was a demand for countryside access, three indicated an increase in demand and one, in a more remote location, indicated demand was from local dog walkers.
- Stakeholders indicated the permissive access was vital in the county as it enabled links to be made to the RoW network. Norfolk was identified as a primarily arable county and permissive access was viewed as a key element in providing new access in a county with limited RoW. Short walks were indicated as being extremely important to the local population, and in coastal areas valuable for tourism.
- In three out of the four sites visited there had been no prior access, and only limited informal use at the fourth. In two cases current use was low but in one site use was very high with large numbers visiting from the nearby city.
- Two farmers did not want their access better promoted as they felt it should be local users that benefit, a third undertook a high level of publicity including a weekly radio show.
- Current use is unlikely to continue on three out of the four sites. One farmer indicated it would be difficult to stop use, and two indicated the decision would be taken by the next generation.

Introduction

Norfolk was selected on the grounds that it:

- Is in the eastern region
- Includes coastal areas
- Is a rural county
- Contains a large amount of arable agriculture

Interviews and site visits took place in mid-February.

Sample selection

In common with other nodes, the aim was to have 8 interviews with approximately half being agreement holder and half being the 'stakeholders'. Agreement holders were selected on the basis that they had:

- each completed a telephone interview and had agreed to have a site visit
- collectively covered a reasonable geographical spread
- contained as varied a mix of permissive access options as the sub-sample allowed.

The list of interviewees by type was:

- four agreement holders (one near Norwich, and three in south-western Norfolk)
- Rights of Way Officer for Norfolk
- Chair of Norfolk LAF (also a land manager)
- Programme secretary of the Ramblers Association
- Access Officer for the British Horse Society

Of the stakeholders, two were access users and two worked on access management. The four agreement holders were all farming businesses with the following key characteristics:

- One pastoral, one arable with a pig unit, and two entirely arable
- All four are in a lowland area.
- One was an estate with a focus on landscape and historical conservation
- One was an arable farm with a focus on biodiversity conservation and enhancement

Partnership Working

Experience of working with partners for the two subsets is set out below. In general agreement holders indicated that Natural England project officers had been very helpful but few had experience of ‘partnership’ working – it was mostly a case of getting advice from one or two different sources to create a suitable agreement.

Partners	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
NE	NE officer was very good (2) NE officer crucial in persuading landowners (1) NE not involved in setting up but they administer (1)	NE more flexible than it used to be
FWAG	FWAG were very helpful (2) FWAG involved (1)	
English Heritage	Did inventory of farm (1)	

Targeting

In response to the question about targeting, a variety of responses was received. In general the agreement holders were not aware of either local theme statements or Rights of Way improvement Plans (RoWIPs) – most of them had no understanding at all of RoWIPs. Stakeholders varied greatly in their knowledge and understanding of access issues in the county. Local authority personnel involved with rights of way had a very high level of understanding and were involved in strategic decision making over access, on the other hand some of the users had little awareness of rights of way plans or even of HLS permissive access (one stakeholder had no knowledge of permissive access. The results are presented below.

HLS Target Area/Regional Theme Statements		Rights of Way Improvement Plans	
Agreement Holders	Stakeholders	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Not aware (all 4) Not aware – but they wanted us to have a certain footfall. Not aware but it was purely my own idea. Not aware but ‘idea was to make circular walks for local people, the county council would not be interested in that’.	None mentioned (3) Aim is a network of routes close to where people live (1) One aim is local health walks which use permissive routes (1) County Council is focused on coastal areas and tends to be footpaths rather than riding. (1)	No – not aware (4)	No real reference to plans (3). Tried to take advantage of HLS to achieve wider aims – HLS is one mechanism among many to improve public access (1)

Perceived demand for access

Agreement holders only

All four agreement holders felt there was a need for public access to the countryside for recreation. The majority also felt that demand for access was higher now than it had been in the past and more people are getting out into the country. One indicated a 20 – 30% increase due to the coastal area becoming a tourist destination and people looking for something to do. One farmer – in a more remote location – felt that there was no increase in the number of people trying to access the countryside – it was just the same set of local dog walkers. Comments received include the following:

- *“They need somewhere to go, they demand it”*
- *“Yes but it’s always a difficult one, it’s nice for people to get out but wherever you have people you have some abuse...”*
- *“It helps that access is there and visible from main road – people see it.”*
- *“People have higher level of interest in exercise and health, plus retired people want to get out.”*
- *“Public footpath use was minimal before because there were no circular routes.”*

Importance of HLS permissive access

Stakeholders only

The representative of the Ramblers Association indicated HLS was ‘vital’ as it enabled them to link up gaps in the RoW network. Existence of Rights of Way was indicated as ‘patchy’ across the county. Norfolk was identified as a primarily arable county and intensification since the war resulted in loss of many hedgerows and associated footpaths. In addition reductions in local authority funding had reduced work on rights of way so permissive access was viewed as a key element in providing new access. The representative of horse riders indicated the lack of bridleways in the area but was unaware of the possibility of permissive access agreements. The LAF representative indicated that HLS access was very important due to the arable nature of the country and the lack of public rights of way. He suggested that reliance on permissive access was extremely important, particularly for people living in rural areas where demand for access for walking is high. The view from the County Council level is that permissive access is very important at the local level as it allows for local access while at the same time providing a structured way for landowners to provide access. Short walks around villages and market towns were indicated as being extremely important to the local population, and in coastal areas also valuable for tourism.

Access Provision

This section looks at what the agreement holders have provided through their HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example. In general the agreement holders provided a range of footpaths, bridleways and open area access. Two agreements were on flat arable land with no particular attractive features, one was in more rolling land with views, and one had an abandoned medieval village; two were more remote and two were close to population centres.

Three of the stakeholders identified a range of permissive access sites across the county (one was not aware of HLS permissive access). One of the key features of all paths mentioned was the role in linking up other

rights of way, and/or providing access for specific user groups such as schools, horse riders, and residents of an urban area.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	4
Mix of provisions - HN2 - HN3 - HN4	1 x 6.78ha 3 agreements = 1645m in total 1 agreement = 3615m	A range of sites were identified including: NT site where County supplied support money for a schools link. Site providing bridleways alongside every public road (15km length) Short permissive access route providing link to a whole set of paths in Broads.
Features of interest	Include: - Flat arable land – no particular features (3) - rolling land with viewpoints, high nature value, woods, stream and historical interest (1) - Historical interest (2) - Fringe of town (1)	Include: - River valley - Woodland - Historic assets - Coast - Broads - Villages
Infrastructure	Gates, stiles etc good in all cases but: - Maps in place in all cases - in two cases extra information boards provided - required infrastructure in place in all	Increasingly high quality – includes bridging, ditching, replacing stiles with gates (1) Good quality signage (1) Excellent (2)
Access quality	Acceptable (3) Very high – extra wide margins, good waymarking (1) Evidence of fly tipping and heavy machinery movements (1)	Creating links for school use (1) Increasingly high quality – targeted on an urban area with limited green infrastructure. (1) Provides improved safety environment for riders (1) Creates links between RoW network and paths along flood embankments (1)

Setting for the Access

Some questions were asked to help assess the context or setting of the HLS permissive access. The responses are tabulated below. Comments from agreement holders relate to their whereas comments from the stakeholders relate to HLS permissive access generally (unless otherwise stated).

Topic	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Designations	None of the sites designated	One site designated as a nature reserve, one on edge of a national park.
Public rights of way	Light (1- 4 RoW in surrounding area) (3) Moderate (5-9 RoW in area) (1)	Unknown
Links to National Trails	None	No but creates links between public RoW network. (2) Links up to a long distance trail (1) Provides circular path (1) No – but provides safety (1)
Links to public transport	Close to bus route (3) No links (1)	No but links to a car park which is a hub for the area (1) A bus route as it is close to Norwich (1) No links (2)
Meeting special local needs	A lot of local use from adjacent town (1) High level of use from nearby city (1) Local use only (1)	Targeted at local urban area (1) Meets needs of people in Norwich (1)

Changes from access situation prior to HLS agreement

All respondents were asked to describe the access arrangements prior to the start of the HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their individual access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	5
Was there existing use?	In three of the four cases, there was no prior access and no previous use. In one case there was some informal use but not much	1 = no route selected 1 = Don't know 1 = Not beyond public rights of way 2 = Started under CSS
Level of use	Comments received were: - in one case the situation was 'get off my land' prior to HLS - CSS grant previously but no access - In one case had some informal access in different part of farm but Ramblers forced it into RoW issue	Less people now than before. Widely used – different uses on different parts.
Additional value	In two cases very high.	Examples quoted were

	In one case medium level of additional value In one case, low level.	- Use is higher now by a factor of 10 or 15 - Opens up new opportunities
Other comments	Prior to HLS very limited access.	Comments included:

Current Usage of the Permissive Access

A series of questions explored the respondents' perceptions about current use of the permissive access. In some cases (especially agreement holders whose access was not visible from the farmhouse) responses were nothing more than educated guesses. In all cases the estimated numbers cannot be relied upon as they are general perceptions of the agreement holder and not reliable counts. In three cases level of use was high or relatively high, in one case it was low. In three cases the use was mostly local, in the fourth case visitors from a much wider area were attracted due to high levels of promotion.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4	5
User types (excluding educational access)	Walkers/dog walkers (all cases) Cyclists – Horse riders – (2) Runners – (3) Scouts (1)	No awareness
Level of use	In one cases, the agreement holder did not know. In 2 cases relatively low and local, in one case very high from surrounding area and city. Quite a lot – perhaps 30 dog walkers/day; runners 3 – 4 per day(1) 15-20 horses per week, other use is mostly dog walkers – a lot (1) Very high – 50+/day in summer, lot of local groups and visitors (1) Mostly retired couples with dog. Ramblers don't bother with it; Universities (once per yr) for historic interest (1) -	No information
Timing of use	Most popular times mentioned were: - Summer - Daily – any time - Before and after work	No information
Origins of users	Dog walkers are local, whereas horse riders tended to come from local liveryes. In one case visitors come from a wide area as the site is advertised as a top attraction in the county	No information

Impacts of the Permissive Access

Positive

Agreement holders were asked to identify who/what had benefited from their provision of permissive access. Results were as follows:

Possible beneficiary	Number giving this response	Comments
Agreement holder	3	Meeting other people. I am still in farming. This has enhanced value of the holding. I am not constantly looking for people walking where they should not be walking.
Local users	4	Yes – people tell me. Local people don't have to travel. Benefits local community Local dog walkers
Visitors	1	Place for tourists to visit
Environment		
Other	1 1 1	Local equestrian centre – she can access it from the back of her centre. Local economy; local pub picks up trade, they can advertise the access. Local school. Ramblers – creates long loop to next village.

Agreement holders were asked about long-lasting benefits that might occur. The answers were varied: one indicated they had hoped it would be renewed after 10 yrs but indicated that a lot of the path on field margins would go if there was no payment; two other agreement holders stated it would be an issue for their sons to decide and one indicated that his son had no interest in access and when he took over would be unlikely to continue to provide it. Two indicated they would close the access if payments were stopped.

The stakeholders were asked to list any positive impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Local provision of access	1
Enabled easier access – and informed by signs that guide you	1
Safer routes to school in some cases	1
More flexible than RoW legislation	1
Genuinely creates partnership with landowners – an important element of which makes it very different from RoW.	1
Changed attitudes of some landowners	1
Formalising of informal access	1
People can walk freely in the knowledge they are allowed to be there	1
Landowners get good will from public	1
Farmers become more amenable to walkers as they realize they can manage us	1

Monetary benefits mentioned were limited – only one stakeholder suggested that local businesses might benefit in some areas from increased visitor numbers.

Negative

Agreement holders were asked to list the costs, if any, that they had incurred as a result of the provision of permissive access. Three agreement holders indicated costs were virtually zero as all gateways around were open and they only needed to put signs up and top the path. One needed to put in 25% extra margins and check his insurance cover with NFU. One indicated some minor vandalism but stated it was not a problem. Only one farmer had significant costs due to the large scale of access provision in his agreement. Results are given below:

Cost	Number saying yes	Costs incurred	Comments
Fencing	1	Post and rail	I subsidized it by 25%
Signage	1	£500 above grant	Posts for signs plus time to erect
Gates	1	£3,500	Came under capital costs
Access furniture	1	time	Used fallen logs – made our own
Leaflets	1		
Public liability insurance	1	£2,100	With NFU
Other	1	£16,000	Bought a mower to maintain paths– not covered by

The stakeholders were asked to list any negative impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Littering, vandalism, theft	1
A farmer dropped out of but not removed signs	1
Wildlife disturbance (dogs)	1
No real negatives	1
Public understanding of this area is a real concern – it is very low.	1

Monetary costs were mentioned only by one stakeholder who suggested the cost of upkeep for landowners as a potential issue.

Unintended consequences (the stakeholders only)

The stakeholders were unaware of any unintended consequences apart from one who mentioned people being more aware of farming and creation of better relationships between landowner and local people.

Synergy with rest of HLS

Agreement holders only

Two of the agreement holders felt that there was little synergy with other aspects of their HLS. One indicated that it enabled him to guide people away from game strips. One indicated it was totally integrated with other aspects (e.g. overwintering wild birds; creation of extra wide margins; creation of successional woodland) and stated that access was the only part of the that gives anything back to those paying.

Impacts on Activities and Attitudes

The stakeholders were asked whether the existence of HLS permissive access had changed the views of land managers in respect of different aspects of their operation. Results are as follows:

Aspect	Change
Concern over public liability	Landowners concerned over risk. Always a concern – especially with loss of HLS permissive access. Not an issue.
Changes in way land used	It will influence land management practices as part of development of whole farm plan – has made landowners think differently about how they manage their land. One farmer has fit paths in with cropping to allow access to woodland where dogs can be let off lead.
Changes in activities undertaken	None
Appearance of landscape	None

The stakeholders were also asked whether they thought the existence of HLS permissive access had changed farmer attitudes towards public access. They responded with the following comments:

- *Farmers don't want to close people off the land but see no alternative.*
- *Farmers are more aware what the public want and are letting them share the land. Very sad government has changed its mind.*
- *Landowners should have to prove the access is wanted.*
- *Farmers more open to idea of permissive access.*
- *Lot of access provided – probably never used. We were never asked what local people wanted so local wishes ignored.*
- *No legal framework to protect property rights - legal agreement is the key – could have got a lot for nothing if kept it in HLS.*

Promotion

Respondents were asked for their views about promotion of the new access. Responses are summarised in the table below.

Agreement Holders' Views	
How access could be better promoted	<p>The farmer with the highest level of access and a very large HLS agreement promoted his agreement through a weekly radio show, calendars, a website, twitter and facebook. He <i>"wanted it to be successful"</i>.</p> <p>One farmer indicated that people only knew of his site through word of mouth and felt some publicity would <i>"do it good"</i>. He felt farmers should be <i>"encouraged to publicise"</i>.</p> <p>Two agreement holders did not want it better publicized: one only promotes it through the Parish Council and telling local horse riders. He felt more promotion was not needed as he felt the access was for locals more than the general public. He wanted to give locals access and pleasure but not visitors. The second indicated that those currently using it felt a <i>"sense of ownership and would not want it messed up"</i> by others coming in. He indicated it was mostly the same people using the access on a daily basis.</p>
Views of the stakeholders	
Level of Information	<p>Not well publicized – farmers don't go out of their way to promote access.</p> <p>Low. High</p> <p>County Council has website – a proportion of permissive access is promoted – could be better.</p>
Type of publicity	<p>All word of mouth and walkers associations.</p> <p>Local magazines have maps, some in walking books.</p> <p>Ramblers have put together information, provide guided walks.</p>
Signage	<p>Most have signs.</p> <p>Map boards everywhere.</p>
Other comments	<p>People know about it but don't know difference between permissive access and Rights of Way.</p> <p>Some have parking – official and unofficial.</p> <p>Tends to be local users because how else do they know?</p>

The future without access payments

A key question is what they think will happen after s come to an end, and whether permissive access will be allowed to continue.

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Will be difficult to stop people walking on it as people get in the habit and will take too much energy to stop them – we wouldn't gain. Don't know if would continue on a voluntary basis – the principle rankles – it's like a stealth way of creating public footpaths. We will probably just turn a blind eye.	An agreement provides comfort to the landowner – he is not on the slippery slope of allowing public access rights to develop over time. Landowner fears will remove access.
At moment no inconvenience – I would love to leave it but problem will be my son's. I would continue to provide voluntarily as still want the grass margins.	Voluntary access is an option – might occur in some locations but not on scale it is now. Most routes will not be accessible is most likely outcome.
No specific reason to do away with it – no financial advantage. But my son will take over – he has no interest and will not maintain it – it's a case of personalities.	A lot will close – the majority – because of liability issue. Most will close – some farmers will offer voluntarily out of goodness of their heart.
We would close it because it takes time, management, finance and risk. We would not provide permissive access for free.	It will fade away and create friction.

Interaction with the public

The stakeholders only

The stakeholders were asked whether the HLS access had led to more contact between the farmer and the public. The feeling was that it had increased for those involved in access issues; one stakeholder commented that he met farmers through the access forums, but for the general public there was no-one on farms other than contractors to meet.

One stakeholder felt there was a better awareness of each other (farmers and public) and little conflict. Another stakeholder felt that contact had increased at the local level and created positive relationships. One of the key benefits was felt to be the ability of users to inform landowners of potential problems.

Any other points of interest

Agreement holders had a few additional comments to make:

- *We are at halfway point and it has been hugely successful. We see more people all the time – but if it was not for the HLS agreement it would not be so successful – it is like walking around a nature reserve. HLS is integral to success. It has enhanced value of the countryside for the people of Norwich.*
- *I achieved somewhere for people to go and by and large they enjoy it.*
- *Perhaps more publicity would be a good thing.*
- *My main objective is to let people enjoy the countryside.*
- *No major negatives – but even if there was a small financial incentive that's the right way to go.*

The stakeholders made quite a few additional comments and a selection of extracts from these is provided below where they add to additional content to earlier responses:

- *A very good thing – especially where there are gaps in the continuity of RoW.*
- *There are two issues – the public want it, and the legal framework. It's a demand led approach that need not be expensive. NE are being very short sighted here – it provides value for money. Doesn't need to be a budget issue – HLS agreements could be structured differently to deliver access.*
- *It's a big issues here in rural areas where there is arable farming and lack of access.*

A7 – Northumberland

Summary of Key Findings

- Agreement holders thought very highly of NE as partners/helpers in the development of their agreements
- Regional theme statements and ROWIPs were not key influences on agreement design
- Demand was said to be high and felt to be increasing
- The access provisions covered in Northumberland were mostly used by the public prior to the permissive access agreement but usage has increased since entering the agreement
- Respondents recognised the benefits to agreement holders (in the form of payments received) and to users – both local and visitors from further afield
- Costs were small
- The introduction of permissive access has modified the attitudes of some farmers, but only slightly
- Promotion was universally seen as being poor, although some agreement holders were happy with this
- The stakeholders were rather pessimistic about the future of the permissive access after the end of the agreements but, with one exception, agreement holders were more optimistic and were more likely to keep access going in some form
- Agreement holders liked the permissive access element of the as it pays well for little cost.

Introduction

Northumberland was selected on the grounds that it:

- Is in the north east region
- Includes coastal areas
- Contains a national park and areas of outstanding natural beauty
- Is a rural county with a mix of arable and pastoral farming

Interviews and site visits took place during January 2012.

Sample selection

In common with other nodes, the aim was to have 8 interviews with approximately half being agreement holder and half being the 'stakeholders'. Agreement holders were selected on the basis that they had:

- each completed a telephone interview and had agreed to have a site visit
- collectively covered a reasonable geographical spread
- contained as varied a mix of permissive access options as the sub-sample allowed.

The list of interviewees by type was:

- Four agreement holders (two in Northumberland National Park, one in the southern part of the county, one on an urban fringe site in the north east)
- Access development officer for Northumberland NPA
- Chair of the joint LAF (also a land agent)
- A representative of the CTC and IMBA
- Rights of way officer for Northumberland County Council
- Natural England Project Officers.

Six stakeholders were engaged in interviews, although two sets of two gave combined views, meaning that there are four responses. Of the stakeholders, three were users, three involved in access management and three worked with land managers (in various combinations). Involvement with HLS varied:

- As a consultee over agreement design
- Developing agreements with farmers (both HLS and other s)
- Commenting on applications
- Responding to farmer queries.

The four agreement holders were all farming businesses with the following key characteristics:

- Three entirely pastoral, with one an arable unit
- Three were entirely tenanted, whilst one was part tenanted/part owner occupied
- One lowland, two upland and one with rolling countryside on the edge of the Cheviots

Partnership Working

Experience of working with partners for the two subsets is set out below.

Partners	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
NE	All saw NE as being of great help. One said they were the “best people we’ve ever worked with”. Three could not suggest any scope for improvement, although one said he found the Handbook too complicated.	General feeling seemed to be that early s were developed without sufficient consultation. Matters improved with later agreements – with liaison over detailed design working well, although still with difficulties over strategic matters. NE is seen by some as having been too passive.
Others	One had more or less left everything to his landlord and the NPA to prepare his application, and so he found them very helpful	One respondent mentioned MoD and National Trust has being valuable partners. NE officers had tried to be proactive with partners, especially Local Highway Authorities (LHAs) (as they are reliant on LHAs for expertise on access and for information on the applicant’s history on rights of way management).

Targeting

In response to the question about targeting, a variety of responses was received. The results are presented below.

HLS Target Area/Regional Theme Statements		Rights of Way Improvement Plans	
Agreement Holders	Stakeholders	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
One said that themes had featured in the discussions surrounding the preparation of the FEP, but this related to heather restoration. Three said no mention was made of theme statements.	None felt that theme statements had exerted any significant influence over agreement design, although one respondent had recognised one 'theme' being the need for more bridleways	One said the RoWIP had been "in the background", whereas the three others said it was not mentioned.	Only one stakeholder mentioned RoWIPs, saying that he'd found it to link theme statements with RoWIPs.

Perceived demand for access

Agreement holders only

All four agreement holders felt that it was either very important (n=3) or important (n=1) that members of the public had access to the countryside. All felt that local demand was high and increasing (one commented specifically about increases in runners and mountain bikers). One agreement holder farmed by the coast in an area he described as very popular with tourists. Others referred to a high local demand (for access to land on an urban fringe, to historic features and in the vicinity of National Trail in another).

One interviewee felt that the public "deserved" to have access to their own country, whilst others felt that as it did no harm "why not?" and it was good to project a positive image of farming and for the local economy.

Asked if their access had been a contributor to this increased demand, three were unable to answer. The fourth (farming on the urban fringe) believed strongly that the permissive access they'd provided had definitely contributed to generating and satisfying latent demand in their area.

Importance of HLS permissive access

The stakeholders only

Three of the four responses felt that HLS access was patchy – occasionally important at a local level (e.g. to give access to a feature of historic interest) but with very few strategically important routes. Some of the locally-important routes are linked to tourism offerings, and so are important for that enterprise. The fourth said HLS was of "minimal" importance.

Access Provision

This section looks at what the agreement holders have provided through their HLS/Classic agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	8	5
Mix of provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HN2 - HN3 - HN4 - HN5 - HN6 - HN7 - HN8/9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 125.47ha (3 agreements) 5.2km (3 agreements) 1.225km (1 agreement) 70m (1 agreement) - - 1 agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39.6 ha (2 agreements) 7.2km (3 agreements) - - - - -
Features of interest	Features include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to viewpoints - Access to historic features - Riverside walk - Views of geological features 	Features include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NNR - Battlefield site - Hadrian's Wall
Infrastructure	Good in three cases. In the other agreement (which had three components): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A footpath was still to be created - A section of disabled access was under construction - The area wide access was available but with no infrastructure in place (arguably none needed) 	There was an expectation that access infrastructure would be good (although in only one case – with two access provisions - did the respondent say that it definitely was “great”).
Access quality	Generally good. Good views, some features of interest and no deterrents apart from steepness of hills in one case.	The quality of access was said to be high (from “fantastic” to “good”). In one case, it was felt that more/better interpretation would have improved the users' experience

Setting for the Access

Some questions were asked to help assess the context or setting of the HLS permissive access. The responses are tabulated below. Comments from agreement holders relate to their agreement whereas comments from the stakeholders relate to HLS permissive access generally (unless otherwise stated).

Topic	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Designations	Two in National Parks One in AONB	4 access provisions in NNPA 1 provision gave access to a registered battlefield
Links to public rights of way	All felt that the permissive access linked in well to and complemented the existing PROW network, often creating circular walks or easier alternatives to routes on PROW	All felt that the HLS access was well tied in to the surrounding PROW network, especially in cases where there had been consultations between NE and others
Links to National Trails	One links with National Trail (Hadrian's Wall)	Hadrian's Wall NT has several examples of how HLS permissive access has linked with national trails
Links to public transport	One site had a bus stop about 500m away and two had bus stops about 1 km away	Links to public transport are poor, a reflection of the poor quality of public transport service in the county
Meeting special local needs	Unknown, but only one site was being used at the time of the visit.	Generally 'No', especially at strategic level, although targeting bridleway provision would help some communities.

Changes from access situation prior to HLS agreement

All respondents were asked to describe the access arrangements prior to the start of the HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	8	5
Was there existing use?	Yes in 7, no in 1 (the one exception is the footpath that is still to be created)	Limited access in all cases
Level of use	Generally low in 6 of the seven access provisions with prior access	Very light in 3 cases
Additional value	Usage appears to have increased in most cases, partly through better signage, partly through people having the 'comfort' of knowing they are allowed access.	Additional value provided is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to promote the access - Synergy with other routes to provide a circular alternative to an otherwise 'there-back' route - Legitimise 'de facto' access
Other comments	One commented that the HLS access had allowed them to manage access better.	Relevant comments were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buy-in from farmer was crucial - Partnership working – farmer, NNPA, NE and conservation body – a key to success - Important to spread footfall on valuable archaeological sites

Current Usage of the Permissive Access

A series of questions explored the respondents' perceptions about current use of the permissive access. In some cases (especially agreement holders whose access was not visible from the farmhouse) responses were nothing more than educated guesses. Results for the four agreement holders are given in the table below. Because some agreements provided several access components with differing attributes and usage patterns, the data are presented separately for each component.

Access component		BW	FP	FP	OAL	Dis-abled	OAL	OAL	FP
Walkers/ Dog walkers	Nos.	c 1/day	<20/day	None	Don't know	Don't know	20+/day	300/yr	300/yr
Walkers/ Dog walkers	Timing	More in summer	Dog walkers- early morning and later afternoon (every day)	None	Don't know	Don't know	Peak during weeken ds and holidays	Mainly at weekends	Mainly at weekends
Walkers/ Dog walkers	Origin	Regular /local people	Local town and caravan/ campsite	None	Don't know	Don't know	From within region	Linked to B&B	Linked to B&B
Cyclist	Nos.	Quite a few	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Very few	Occasion al	Occasional
Cyclist	Timing	More in summer	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Cyclist	Origin	Regular/ local people	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Horse riders	Nos.	c 1/day	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Occasio nal	None	None
Horse riders	Timing	More in summer	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	None	None
Horse riders	Origin	Regular/ local people	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Local people	None	None
School groups	Nos.	None	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	2 groups so far	8 groups - Ed Access	8 groups - Ed Access
School groups	Timing	None	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Mid- week	Mid-week	Mid-week
School groups	Origin	None	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Local schools	Local schools
Other groups	Nos.	None	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Occasio nal orientee rs	1/yr (local Brownies)	1/yr (local Brownies)

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Other groups	Timing	None	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Didn't say	Didn't say
Other groups	Origin	None	None	None	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Local schools	Local schools

Usage of the access provisions quoted as examples by the stakeholders is summarised below.

Question	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	5 (3 linear, 2 area-wide)
User types (excluding educational access)	Walkers (some with dogs, some without) in all cases Day trippers/tea shop users in one case only
Level of use	Usage ranged from 'light' to 'moderate' to 'very heavy'
Timing of use	At the heavily used site, usage will be every day of the year, but busier in summer. At other sites, usage peaks at weekends and in summer
Origins of users	The access provisions can be placed into three groups, with profile of user origins differing as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two linked sites: people from all over the world - <i>Two linked sites: people from the region and Scottish borders</i> - One site: locals from nearby town and a bit further afield
Value for money	All respondents felt that the access provisions they used as examples provided good value for money.

Impacts of the Permissive Access

Positive

Agreement holders were asked to identify who/what had benefited from their provision of permissive access. Results were as follows:

Possible beneficiary	Number giving this response	Comments
Agreement holder	3	2 said – “feel good factor” 1 said “ payments” 1 said ability to tell people about farming
Local users	3	Each were relatively close to towns
Visitors	4	All felt that the new access had benefited visitors
Environment	1	Bridleway corridor kept rougher – better for wildlife
Other	2	1 said – local B&Bs 1 said – NNPA take groups round

Agreement holders were asked about long-lasting benefits that might occur, and their responses were:

- Continuation of access provision
- Improved land management practices (not related to access)
- The raised profile of farming/countryside that remains in his visitors’ minds (benefits of educational access).

The stakeholders were asked to list any positive impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Adds to access network	2
Reduces farmer-user conflict	2
Some agreements linked to tourism enterprises – economic benefits	2
Farmers now aware that access is desired and is desirable	1
Created new circular routes that would not exist otherwise	1
Enables new routes to be created quickly	1
Provides income for farmer	1

Monetary benefits mentioned were:

- Payments to farmers
- Boosts to local businesses (mentioned 3 times)
- Savings to local highway authority (where funds are used to upgrade infrastructure).

Negative

Agreement holders were asked to list the costs, if any, that they had incurred as a result of the provision of permissive access. Results are given below:

Cost	Number saying yes	Costs incurred	Comments
Fencing	0	0	None had done any fencing as a result of the access
Signage	0	0	All provided by NE
Gates	1	£260	Received grants of £245
Access furniture	1	£125	Made 3 benches themselves
Leaflets	0	0	All done by others
Public liability insurance	1	Not known	3 already had enough PLI but one doubled his cover to £10m when entering the agreement
Other	1	c£240/yr	Topping of vegetation

The stakeholders were asked to list any negative impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Opportunity cost of agreements with poor value for money	3
Difficulties when agreement ends	2
Created uncertainty over what one can/cannot do	1
Tend to get stiles rather than gates	1
Insufficient provision of resources for long-term maintenance	1

Monetary costs mentioned were:

- Cost of maintaining the access infrastructure
- Opportunity cost
- HLS funding sometimes being used to fund projects that should have been funded privately (e.g. when linked to a tourism venture).

Unintended consequences (the stakeholders only)

The stakeholders were asked if there had been any consequences that they had not expected and were unintended. Answers were:

- Difficulty and cost of administering the agreement
- The farmer may actually provide more than he'd originally intended
- Anger and frustration when agreements end
- Creation of a market place and value for access, which may make negotiations with farmers over other forms of access provision difficult.

Synergy with rest of HLS

Agreement holders only

Three of the agreement holders felt that there was no synergy between the permissive access provision and the rest of their agreement. The fourth said he let people walk down the uncropped field margins.

Impacts on Activities and Attitudes

The stakeholders were asked whether the existence of HLS permissive access had changed the views of land managers in respect of different aspects of their operation and, in one case, in the stakeholder’s own activities. Results are as follows:

Aspect	Those suggesting a change, and type of change noted	Those suggesting no change
Concern over public liability	Reduced (n=2)	Used as an excuse and no change (n=1)
Land management activities		None/no significant effect (n=4)
Landscape	More infrastructure visible (n=1)	No (n=3)
Other	0	No (n=4)
Stakeholders’ activities	Able to do more PROW/other access work (n=1)	No significant change (n=3)

The stakeholders were also asked whether they thought the existence of HLS permissive access had changed farmer attitudes towards public access. They responded with the following comments:

- *“Improved the attitude of some – they realise that public access is not as awful as they feared (although this may be because of low level of use)”*
- *“Generally more positive, especially if information about farming practices given to users”*
- *“General improvement by being forced to think about it. There’ll be a mix but, on balance, it is better now”*
- *“Landowners were positive when money available but without it, will probably revert back to ‘as before’.”*

Promotion

Respondents were asked for their views about promotion of the new access. Responses are summarised in the table below.

Agreement Holders' Views	
How access could be better promoted	Two did not want to see any more promotion (because of a risk of 'over doing it'), although one offered a suggestions that locally-produced and distributed leaflets would be useful. Another felt there was too much promotion, and he would prefer there to be none. The fourth felt that his agreement could be promoted better, and referred to local B&Bs and parish notice boards; he also thought the NE website should be easier to find
Views of the stakeholders	
Level of Information	All agreed that level of information provision was not good enough, with comments ranging from "Desperate" to just "poor".
Type of publicity	One of the respondents was unaware of the website, whereas another referred to is as "the secret website". Other comments were that word of mouth worked in some cases but there was little active promotion.
Signage	Three of the four responses were that on-site signage was acceptable but there was a need to enhance the bare minimum with information about the wider area. The fourth response was that the signage was "meaningless".
Other comments	Other comments were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to do more with leaflets - Need better interpretation - Only regular users find out about the HLS permissive access - Suspect that farmers want the payments but not the users, so not in their interests to have the agreement promoted.

The future without access payments

A key question is what they think will happen after agreements come to an end, and whether permissive access will be allowed to continue. Because of the significance of this point, the responses to several related questions are given for each respondent but as a summary. In the case of the agreement holders, this reflects their current thinking about their future intentions, whereas the stakeholders' responses are part speculation and part experience of agreements already ended.

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Cannot imagine withdrawing it	Will generally be withdrawn, although some will no doubt continue (e.g. Wellington Hall – Nat Trust property) but likely to be in the minority
No need to change anything after the agreement ends – it's caused no problem for us and a lot of people seem to enjoy it	There will be some losses but also some will continue on an ad hoc basis. Where access has worked well, it will be renewed/continued
Would want access to stop and just be limited to statutory minimum	The majority will withdraw permission when payments stop, although some will allow it to continue.
He's found it to be a good experience and wants to bring people into the countryside but cannot say what will happen at the agreement end. He'll be 65 then and may have retired.	Very variable – big estates and institutions (NE, MOD, FC etc) will probably continue. Private landowners will generally withdraw unless they benefit (e.g. where linked to a tourism offering). Fear that doing so would establish a legal PRoW

Interaction with the public

The stakeholders only

The stakeholders were asked whether the HLS access had led to more contact between the farmer and the public. The feeling was polarised – with two saying that there would be no or no significant interaction because access was provided to take users away from farms and usage is not significant when compared with PROW usage. The two giving a more positive answer saw it as a consequence of people going into the countryside and chatting with farmers, although one noted that there is no objective research into this.

Any other points of interest

Agreement holders had a few additional comments to make:

- *Very good – they've been very comfortable with it and pleased to be able to give something back. Rather embarrassed at the amount of money they are getting overall.*
- *Wary of being over-promoted as this may be self-defeating. Too many users would spoil it for everyone else – 100s yes but not 1000s.*
- *He believes his access is well-used and represents good value for money.*

The stakeholders made quite a few additional comments and a selection of extracts from these is provided below where they add to additional content to earlier responses:

- *"Farmers run a business and so will want incentive to provide access and precedent now set. There are plenty of examples of where people pay for access (e.g. Chillingham)."*
- *"Promotion is the key. NE has been tentative because uncertain of route value. They need to be much smarter about where/how HLS access is used and resourced – go for fewer better agreements – and promote them strongly and confidently."*
- *"He's really pleased we're doing the research. There are still a lot of possible routes which are of great value and HLS could provide a way of realizing access. TL is raising money to try to provide funding in the place of HLS."*
- *"He had not seen website before; not good considering he's a professional in this area. Maps are not good – show a window on the permissive access out of local context. Not possible to see how it ties in with other routes. Can do better with mapping. Needs supporting leaflets, too."*

A8 - Shropshire

Summary of Key Findings

- Agreement holders thought very highly of NE as partners/helpers in the development of their agreements
- Regional theme statements and ROWIPs were not key influences on agreement design
- Countryside access for the public is seen as important
- Demand is said to be high and/or increasing
- The access provisions covered in Shropshire were not much used prior to the permissive access agreement and so most had seen a significant increase in use
- Respondents recognised the benefits to agreement holders (in the form of payments received) and local users
- Costs were relatively small
- The introduction of permissive access has modified the attitudes of some farmers, but only slightly
- Promotion was universally seen as being poor, although some agreement holders were happy with this
- The stakeholders were rather pessimistic about the future of the permissive access after the end of the agreements but agreement holders were more optimistic and were more likely to keep access going in some form (possibly limiting it to local users only).
-

Introduction

Shropshire was selected on the grounds that it:

- Is in the West Midlands region
- It has a mix of upland and lowland
- Is a rural county with a mix of arable and pastoral farming

Interviews and site visits took place during February 2012.

Sample selection

In common with other nodes, the aim was to have 8 interviews with approximately half being agreement holder and half being the 'stakeholders'. Agreement holders were selected on the basis that they had:

- each completed a telephone interview and had agreed to have a site visit
- collectively covered a reasonable geographical spread
- contained as varied a mix of permissive access options as the sub-sample allowed.

The list of interviewees by type was:

- five agreement holders (3 in the south west and 2 in the south east of the county)
- access development officer for Shropshire County Council
- a representative of the Ramblers' Association
- Natural England Project Officer.

Of the stakeholders, all three were users of countryside access, two had been involved in access management and had also worked with land managers to develop access. The Ramblers' representative had not had any involvement with HLS permissive access other than as a user. The other two had worked with farmers and

each other to develop permissive access as part of HLS agreements. No interview was conducted with the LAF chair as we were told she was new in post and would probably have little experience of HLS permissive access.

The five agreement holders were all farming businesses with the following key characteristics:

- A good mix of farm types - one estate with diversified enterprises; one commercial dairy farm; one large arable farm; a small family livestock farm; and a small 'hobby' farm;
- Four lowland and one (semi-upland) farm;
- Three owner-occupied holdings, one tenanted and one with a mixture.

Partnership Working

Experience of working with partners for the two subsets is set out below.

Partners	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
NE	All were effusive in their praise of NE officers, with two referring to the pro-active nature of NE's influence. All commented on the knowledge and helpfulness of the NE officers.	Only one valid response – he would walk proposed routes with the NE officer and advise on design of the access provisions and alert NE to any applicants with a bad track record of PROW management (e.g. history of blocking access).
Others	One commented on the receiving help from SCC, and two mentioned the help they received from private consultants	There were regular (monthly) meetings between NE and SCC to review actual/potential applications. This arrangement worked well. One respondent had also worked with Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the National Trust.

Targeting

In response to the question about targeting, a variety of responses was received. The results are presented below.

HLS Target Area/Regional Theme Statements		Rights of Way Improvement Plans	
Agreement Holders	Stakeholders	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Two made reference to clear themes in their discussions but not necessarily ones linked to Regional themes. Three had no recollection of themes being mentioned	One respondent was not aware of themes, whilst the other two had, in effect, developed their own themes – to develop circular routes and walks from villages.	None had any recollection of ROWIPs being an influence on their agreement's design	ROWIP was not mentioned as a key influence

Perceived importance of and demand for access

Agreement holders only

All five agreement holders felt that it was “important” or “very important” for the public to have access to the countryside. One commented on people’s wish to keep fit and another mentioned its value for tourism. Another commented that more people are now retiring to the countryside and wish to remain active users of access. All felt that access to the countryside was either very high or had been growing in their area.

Asked if their access had been a contributor to this increased demand, four of the five agreement holders felt that it had (although one of these farms an area close to a popular attraction and accepts that it is probably its increasing popularity that has caused the increased level of visitors to her area). One said that he had provided access in an area where public rights of way were sparse and another felt that his route had supported increased interest in mountain biking (adjacent to a large area of forestry land).

Importance of HLS permissive access

The stakeholders only

There was a marked difference between the views of the stakeholders. One said that the HLS permissive access was “not very important”, largely because it is difficult to find out about them. In contrast, the other two respondents said they were “very significant” and “absolutely vital”. One based the comment on complaints being received from users as agreements end; the other believes that HLS access ‘punches above its weight’ in terms of what benefits it provides for the lengths/areas involved.

Access Provision

This section looks at what the agreement holders have provided through their HLS/Classic agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example. One of the examples given was found not to be an HLS permissive access route so has not been included in the analysis.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	6	4*
Mix of provisions - HN2 - HN3 - HN4 - HN5 - HN6 - HN7 - HN8/9	- 2.07km (2 agreements) 8.8km (4 agreements) - - - 1	- 3.5km (2 agreements) 8.7km (2 agreements, one selected twice) - - - -
Features of interest	Features include: - Canter facility - Ponds - Woodland	Features of interest include: - Canal/riverside - Iron age earthworks - Open farm
Infrastructure	Good in all cases – well-waymarked and map boards in place. Gates in good order.	The respondents believed the infrastructure to be good in three of the examples, but with some items missing (stiles) in the fourth. Two respondents commented on the good quality of the waymarking in two of their examples.
Access quality	Varied. One with no intrinsic merit and is muddy. Another of interest only in so far as it provides a circular off road riding route.	The bridleway examples were said to provide an excellent opportunity for horse riders to ride off-road. From a walker's perspective, the quality was limited, given that most of the examples quoted just followed field edge paths in a farmed landscape.

*Two respondents picked the same example

Setting for the Access

Some questions were asked to help assess the context or setting of the HLS permissive access. The responses are tabulated below. Comments from agreement holders relate to their agreement whereas comments from the stakeholders relate to HLS permissive access generally (unless otherwise stated).

Topic	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Designations	One of the agreements is in an AONB	One of the selected routes is in the Shropshire Hills AONB.
Links to public rights of way	In two cases, the access provided was able to 'standalone'. In two others, the routes linked well with access to nature reserves. In the fifth case, the permissive access fitted well within a network of local PROW.	Respondents agreed that earlier agreements were not well linked to the PROW network, although two felt that later agreements are a lot better.
Links to National Trails	No	Not relevant, as only small sections of Offa's Dyke path are in Shropshire
Links to public transport	One about 750m from bus stop. Others unknown.	Not a feature, and rural services are poor
Meeting special local needs	One route gives access to Stiperstones, avoiding a section of main road.	All believed that this had occurred, although meeting different needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bridleways - Circular routes - Walks from villages

Changes from access situation prior to HLS agreement

All respondents were asked to describe the access arrangements prior to the start of the HLS agreement. For the agreement holders, this refers to their own access provision and for the stakeholders, it is their chosen example.

Question	Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	6	4*
Was there existing use?	In four cases, there was limited use by locals and in one case, no prior use.	No in all cases (as far as respondents knew)
Level of prior use	Light/very few	None
Additional value	Increased use of the routes	Now have permissive access were none existed before
Other comments	The educational access (initially provided via CSS) had generated interest and led to the agreement holder giving permission for access to a few local people	One respondent commented on the community benefits of increased use.

*See note above

Current Usage of the Permissive Access

A series of questions explored the respondents' perceptions about current use of the permissive access. In many cases (especially agreement holders whose access was not visible from the farmhouse) responses were nothing more than educated guesses.

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Access component		BW	BW	BW	FP	BW	FP
Walkers/Dog walkers	Nos.	Don't know	A lot	Light medium -	Light medium -	12/wk	Don't know
Walkers/Dog walkers	Timing	Daily	In summer	Locals are regular, tourists more seasonal (weekends and holidays)	Locals are regular, tourists more seasonal (weekends and holidays)	In summer at any time	Don't know
Walkers/Dog walkers	Origin	Don't know	Don't know	Locals and tourists	Locals and tourists	Mainly from Shrewsbury	Don't know
Cyclist	Nos.	Quite a lot	No answer	Light	None	None	Don't know
Cyclist	Timing	Mainly weekends but some in week and some at night	No answer	Daylight hours	None	None	Don't know
Cyclist	Origin	Don't know	No answer	Don't know	None	None	Don't know
Horse riders	Nos.	Don't know	Light	Daily usage	None	Around 10-15 per day, another 5-6 at weekends	A few
Horse riders	Timing	Mainly at weekends	Don't know	Morning and afternoon	None	Daily, all year but summer only for more distant users	Anytime
Horse riders	Origin	Don't know	Don't know	Local liveryes and stables	None	Many from Telford (with horses at his livery)	Neighbours
School groups	Nos.	None	None	None	None	None	23 groups last year (Educ Access)
School groups	Timing	None	None	None	None	None	Mid-week
School groups	Origin	None	None	None	None	None	Don't know

Others	Nos.	Runners - number not known	None	DoE type groups - 1 every 3-4 days	DoE type groups - 1 every 3-4 days	Carriage driver - 1	None
Others	Timing	Don't know	None	Spring to autumn	Spring to autumn	Infrequent	None
Others	Origin	Don't know	None	Don't know	Don't know	Telford	None

Usage of the routes chosen by the stakeholders is given below.

Question	Stakeholders
Number of access provisions	4*
User types (excluding educational access)	Walkers/Dog walkers (in all four cases) Horse riders/cyclists (in two cases)
Level of use	Respondents were unable to give much information about usage levels. Snippets provided are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A leaflet about one of the walks had been downloaded from SCC website 633 times and 'thousands' given away - Evidence of lack of wear on one permissive footpath suggested very light use. - The bridleways are thought to receive relatively heavy use by horse riders but little by cyclists
Timing of use	Again, information was sparse but usage of two of the access provisions was thought to be daily but with higher numbers at weekends and holidays
Origins of users	In three cases, the routes were thought to be used by locals and one of these was also used by visitors (often those visiting the open farm). In one case, the respondent had no knowledge of user origins
VFM	In three cases – yes, based variously on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of use - Boost to farmer's local standing - Enhancement of user enjoyment In the fourth case, low level of use and poor/missing infrastructure suggested that VFM had not been achieved.

Impacts of the Permissive Access

Positive

Agreement holders were asked to identify who/what had benefited from their provision of permissive access. Results were as follows:

Possible beneficiary	Number giving this response	Comments
Agreement holder	5	As well as payments, two commented on 'feel good factor' from seeing people enjoy themselves. Another said that the access had enabled him to better manage de facto access on his land

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Local users	4	The one exception was because the access was “too remote”
Visitors	3	The two who said no felt that their routes were only used by locals
Environment	1	Having visitors makes him keep his farm tidier
Other	0	-

Agreement holders were asked about long-lasting benefits that might occur, and most said that they would probably keep the access open after the agreement’s end. The experiences enjoyed by users, and the knowledge they gain about the countryside would be a lasting benefit (suggested one respondent).

The stakeholders were asked to list any positive impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Payments to agreement holders	1
Ability to create circular walks/links	1
Give access to interesting features	1
Provided access to people in towns	1
Allowed access to be developed for a wider range of user types/abilities	1

Monetary benefits mentioned were:

- Payments to landowners (sometimes with little associated cost)
- Increased spend in the local economy.

Negative

Agreement holders were asked to list the costs, if any, that they had incurred as a result of the provision of permissive access. Results are given below:

Cost	Number saying yes	Costs incurred	Comments
Fencing	3	200m; around £200-£300; around £70	All at the start of their agreements
Signage	0	Nil	All signage provided by NE
Gates	4	£460-£480; £150; £40; £80	
Access furniture	0	Nil	
Leaflets	0	Nil	SCC produced a leaflet covering one access provision but no cost to farmer
Public liability insurance	1	c£30	All had PLI prior to the HLS access and had notified their provider. In only one case had the premium been increased
Other	2	c£1000; nil	Both cases involved changes to shooting but in one case there were no cost implications

The stakeholders were asked to list any negative impacts, and to identify those which had monetary implications. Results are as follows:

Impact	Number giving this response
Opportunity cost of earlier (poor) agreements	1
Sometimes has turned farmer against access	1
Withdrawal of access at end of agreement	1

No monetary costs were identified

Unintended consequences (the stakeholders only)

The only comment about unintended consequences was that some farmers had found the granting of permissive access had complicated their farm management more than expected.

Synergy with rest of HLS

Agreement holders only

The agreement holders were asked about any synergy between the permissive access provision and the rest of their agreement. Three felt there had been mutual benefits:

- A wood that has had stock excluded from it is now full of bluebells in the spring, thus enhancing the enjoyment of users of the permissive access which passes close by
- Forces the agreement holder to look at his farm from an outsider's point of view
- Permissive access supports his educational access.
-

Impacts on Activities and Attitudes

The stakeholders were asked whether the existence of HLS permissive access had changed the views of land managers in respect of different aspects of their operation and, in one case, in the stakeholder's own activities. Results are as follows:

Aspect	Those suggesting a change, and type of change noted	Those suggesting no change
Concern over public liability	1 – “May have allayed their fears”	1 – no negative feedback 1 – don't know
Land management activities	2 – some effects on stock management 1 – might have had an effect (e.g. wider field margins)	
Landscape	1 – “possibly in one or two hotspots	2 – no change
Other	1 – people's perceptions of animals: they are now more wary	2 – no change
Stakeholders' activities	1 – allowed him to develop routes in specific targeted areas	2 – no change

The stakeholders were also asked whether they thought the existence of HLS permissive access had changed farmer attitudes towards public access. They responded with the following comments:

- *“Has changed it – they now realise that the troublesome users are a tiny minority and majority of users respect the countryside”*
- *“No – those against access will remain against it; those for it will probably stay in favour of it”*
- *“No – those pro are still pro, those anti are still anti.”*

Promotion

Respondents were asked for their views about promotion of the new access. Responses are summarised in the table below.

Agreement Holders' Views	
How access could be better promoted	Two agreement holders said they do not want it promoting any better, although one said that leaflets could be placed at the nearby tourist attraction. Another suggestion was to distribute more leaflets generally around the area. In another, where they benefit from tourist visitors, they have done a lot of promotion themselves.
Views of the stakeholders	
Level of Information	All agreed that the level of information was inadequate, using words such as "poor" and "shocking".
Type of publicity	All referred to the website but in disparaging terms. Two remarked that the only effective publicity was when a HLS permissive access was part of a larger scale promoted route
Signage	All were disparaging of signage as well. One commented about the lack of adequate waymarking, another said the map boards were "useless" as the routes they portray are not easy to follow, and the third said many people cannot read maps anyway.
Other comments	Respondents commented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publicity is geared towards promoted routes - They have tried to get permissive access as a GIS layer to overlay on their data but there were too many changes - Monitoring reports suggest that even surveyors got lost occasionally!

The future without access payments

A key question is what they think will happen after agreements come to an end, and whether permissive access will be allowed to continue. Because of the significance of this point, the responses to several related questions are given individually but as a summary. In the case of the agreement holders, this reflects their current about their future intentions, whereas the stakeholders' responses are part speculation and part experience of agreements already ended.

Agreement Holders	Stakeholders
He will let it continue as long as it goes on working as well as at present – he’s had no problems	Some will disappear; others might stay – it’s had little impact on land management so farmers could let it carry on where they’ve built up relationships with users
She will keep it open as now but close it for one day per year (at Xmas) to avoid it becoming a statutory RoW	Most will withdraw their permission, unless they can find a way of using it for commercial gain. Some may be concerned about creating legal RoW, so may prefer lease/contract access rather than give it free of charge.
Hard to say – it’s a way off yet and he’d need to discuss with family. There is one length they could continue to allow access to. Would not have provided the same access without HLS. It was an inducement to go further than would otherwise be the case	Majority will close and access will be lost. Some might provide access voluntarily if they’ve seen a monetary gain above and beyond the HLS payment. Otherwise, it’s not worth it to the farmer
He would withdraw it if not paid. He would try to find something which locals could use but would work some way of charging for use.	
Not sure! He will let the locals continue to use it by giving verbal permission (and making sure it’s not a statutory PRow). Were the access to continue, he would upgrade the route to a bridleway	

Interaction with the public

The stakeholders only

The stakeholders were asked whether the HLS access had led to more contact between the farmer and the public. Two respondents said “yes” but qualified this by saying it had perhaps led to a better understanding by the public of farming and countryside management. The third respondent expressed this differently by saying he thought there was more interaction with the land, not the farmer, as users do not generally see any farmers or farm workers.

Any other points of interest

Four of the agreement holders had additional comments to make:

- *“I’ve had no problems with the permissive access – no litter, no problem from dogs, gate left open only 3 times in 4 yrs.”*
- *“things like this help justify NE’s existence. It’s been a doddle for me – NE has done everything apart from a bit of fencing, and I get the money!”*
- *“We are developing another walk – based around the Open Farm.”*
- *“I feel I now have a better rapport with locals and they now ask me about my land management activities on the farm/wood, rather than just condemn me (as happened in the past) – they now tend to give me the benefit of the doubt.”*

The stakeholders made quite a few additional comments and a selection of extracts from these is provided below where they add to additional content to earlier responses:

- *“Initially, he was worried when HLS access withdrawn but, in truth, HLS access is very low on their list of concerns. These are:
 - o *Route quality (low BVPI)*
 - o *Unrecorded routes*
 - o *Routes that have been built over*
 - o *Replacing worn out stiles etc.”**
- *“Not much done for disabled. He (and LAF) thinks permissive access should provide some points towards the ELS target. It’s also crucial to have a good relationship between local NE and LHA officers.”*
- *“She knows they have some routes that are never used, although they are older ones. Farmers concerned may be content with this state of affairs. The key factor is the applicant – best access agreements are one where the applicant wants to see it being used to fullest potential.”*