

WORCESTER RAMBLERS

FOOTPATH OFFICER REPORT 2026

Public Rights of Way (PROW).

The demise of the Worcestershire Area Committee has resulted in the Countywide network of volunteers who commented on planning applications, footpath diversions and any issues with the local PROW network has ceased to exist. As far as I'm aware I'm the last volunteer in the County to be commenting on such matters. My focus is on Worcester and those parts of the County immediately around the City. Specific examples include responding to proposed footpath diversions, the closure of two pedestrian crossings on the local rail network, reporting locked gates on a section of the Three Choirs Way and commenting on PROW matters as part of the Wychavon Town Stakeholder Group.

Local Access Forum (LAF) & Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

As the walking and cycling representative on the County Council's statutory body for Public Rights of Way I'm involved in scrutinising and commenting on the work undertaken by the County Council's PROW team. A major and growing concern is the difficulties the County has in recruiting and retaining staff. This has already had an impact on the County's ability to maintain and improve its PROW network, take enforcement action and support the Ramblers' Work Parties and volunteer Parish Footpath Wardens.

Progress on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) appears to have stalled with no clarity when a draft will be finalised for sign-off by the politicians before being made available for wider consultation.

Local Cycling & Walking Investment Plans (LCWIP).

I attend the Countywide Active Travel Stakeholder Group where I work closely with the national Chair of Disabled Ramblers to represent walking interests. With the exception of Bromsgrove all of the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans (LCWIP) have been completed and are available to view on the County Council's website. The main focus is on walking, cycling and wheeling in the County's urban areas. They do not include more rural routes which, from July 2026, has separate guidance and funding. Priority for delivery will be dependent upon the availability of funding and the impact any investment will deliver in terms of generating increased walking, cycling and wheeling. The

chance of securing Active Travel England (ATE) funding is dependent upon an Authority's Active Travel Capability Rating. Worcestershire has moved up from 0 to 1 a couple of years ago. The next self-assessment is planned for late 2027.

Walking Trails and Guidebooks

As a result of the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership taking on responsibility for the line to Hereford I have been asked to extend the trail and provide circular routes from Hereford and Ledbury stations. As a result, over 170 miles of routes from and between local stations will soon be available to download for free from the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership website.

Cicerone Press has recently published their new 'Walks in Worcestershire' and 'Gloucestershire Way' guidebooks. Work is also progressing on new guides for the 'Three Choirs Way' and 'Wysis Way'.

Worcester Ramblers' volunteers continue to act as wardens for three sections of the Monarch's Way in Worcestershire.

In May Worcester Ramblers organised and supported a 10-mile sponsored walk on the Rail Trail section between Malvern Link and Worcester for Maggs, our local homeless support charity. Over £7,000 was raised and there are early discussions about organising another walk for Maggs as part of the annual Malvern Walking Festival.

Lyndon Bracewell
11 October 2026