# RIGHTS OF WAY WORKING GROUP

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| **Meeting Type:** | DoO Governance Group Meeting |
| **Date:** | 2nd September 2025 |
| **Venue:** | MS Teams |
| **Meeting Chair:** | Andrew Woodin (SCC) |
| **Attendees:** | **SZC –** Richard Bull (RB), Jen Mills (JM) – Observer, John Pelham (JP) – Observer, Daniel Piercy (DP) – Observer, Michelle Emmerson-Grey (MEG) – Observer<br>**Transport Coordinator** - Rebecca Quigg (RQ)<br>**ESC –** Sarah Potter (SP)<br>**SCC –** Andrew Woodin (AW), Annette Robinson (DAR), David Falk (DF) – Observer, Steve Merry (SM) – Observer, Benjiman Grapes (BG) – Observer |
| **Apologies:** | |
| **Meeting Record produced by:** | Caitlin Murphy (SZC) |
| **Next Meeting Date:** | 2nd December 2025 |

## Summary / Key Discussion

### Meeting Notes:

### Actions raised during the previous meeting:

| Date Raised | Ref. | Description | Lead | Date Due |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13/08/2024 | 1 | SZC to come up with draft comms plan outlining core principles, technology to be utilised, and methods to keep the general public informed to ensure transparency accuracy | SZC | Closed |
| 13/08/2024 | 2 | DAR to engage with Paul Lennon and Daniel Piercy on practicalities of signage and strategies for its optimisation. Paul Lennon is the SZC Senior Comms Manager | SCC | Closed |
| 13/08/2024 | 3 | SZC to report technical solution for continuously updating the status of public rights of way and the functionality of this system. Additionally, they are to explain how this system will interface with the project's road closures and whether a combined approach is feasible | SZC | Closed |
| 04/12/2024 | 4 | RQ and DP to discuss communications plan on regional and wider levels, as well as how to ensure | SZC | Closed |

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| | | information is easily accessible for visitors. Additionally, need to decide if the plan should stand alone or be part of a larger package on road network and disruptions | | |
| 12/03/2025 | 5 | SZC to scope the key objectives, work through the details and document the next steps of the Communications Plan, including creating an interim status update to maintain a live record of the status of public rights of way. SZC to provide an update on Communications Plan strategy within the next month | SZC | Closed |
| 12/03/2025 | 6 | SCC to review the suggestion regarding the PRoW network extension along Fen Lodge Road. | SCC | Closed |
| 12/03/2025 | 7 | SCC to keep SP informed on key PRoW works they are aware of, that they believe would be likely to generate queries from members of the public | SCC | Closed |
| 04/06/2025 | 8 | JP, BG, and MEG will collaborate to refine the technical platform and identify their areas of focus moving forward | JP, GB, MEG | Closed |
| 04/06/2025 | 9 | BG to be kept informed about SZC's plans and activities as they advance with the GIS system | SZC | Closed |
| 04/06/2025 | 10 | SZC to keep SCC informed on key stages in the SLR project, including proposed diversions and any temporary measures | SZC | Closed |
| 04/06/2025 | 11 | A draft of the communications plan will be circulated before the next meeting for discussion. This draft will outline the structure, technical inputs for public communication, and any proposed solutions | ROWWG | Next meeting |
| 04/06/2025 | 12 | BG will investigate opportunities for collaboration between the RoWWG and ESC regarding the tourism fund | BG | Closed |

**Review of Previous Actions**

- **Action 1:** closed. Covered in this agenda
- **Action 2:** closed.
- **Action 3:** closed. Updates is the 'now' or 'will be' managed via the SZC Works Tracker for PRoW.
- **Action 4:** closed
- **Action 5:** closed
- **Action 6:** closed
- **Action 7:** closed
- **Action 8:** closed
- **Action 9:** closed. Covered in this agenda.
- **Action 10:** closed
- **Action 11:** ongoing.
- **Action 12:** closed. Covered in meeting

**Presentation from SZC Green Access Delivery Manager**

- BG visited all 27 sites, carried out costings, and identified additional opportunities.

- Initial estimates of the PRoW fund exceeded the budget, leading to a review of project scope and priorities.
- A full list of revised and additional projects has been compiled.
- Projects have been categorised as to proceed, to reassess or put on hold, or no longer applicable.
- BG proposed a long-term vegetation management programme to improve path corridors through an additional annual cut.
- The group reviewed the Amenity Route project. BG suggested renaming it to Multi-User Trail to better reflect its purpose beyond tourism. A working title will be considered.
- BG clarified that the budget does not allow for a consistent 3m-wide surface along the entire route. The initial focus should therefore be on securing the corridor and developing a strategic delivery plan. This plan would outline standards, costs, and priorities, enabling future delivery as funding becomes available.
- SM emphasised the importance of maintaining tourism benefits on the route while also considering transport and commuting potential. BG reiterated the aim to create a route with long-term commuter and tourism value. Even if full delivery is not possible now, securing the route and producing a costed strategy ensures a legacy for future investment.
- AW noted the trail was primarily recreational but other sources of funding can be considered to upgrade sections of it where appropriate. He also noted there are options for the route of the trail north of Aldeburgh, including the former railway line, and the initial destinations, eg Minsmere and Dunwich.
- RB felt the discussion on this trail was exactly what the RoWWG should be looking at and was encouraged by BG's scoping exercise.BG states that next steps include mapping project timelines, aligning with other works, and scheduling vegetation management, potentially starting next year.
- JP asked if some routes could be prioritised to be cut this autumn. AW noted an internal review meeting where this could be discussed further. DAR added that budget constraints limit cutting to two cycles per year but suggested exploring opportunities with the Rights of Way Manager for an additional autumn cut, prioritising the worst routes to show early progress.
- SP asked BG to share route information so it can be compared to existing ESC cycling, walking and wheeling strategies, identifying opportunities for joint projects between ESC and SCC where SZC funding is not currently available.
- BG requested confirmation from members to proceed with the presented approach and will compile the information into a document for the RoWWG's approval.

**Action – BG to summarise the PRoW Fund improvement proposals, including variations and delivery sequencing, and circulate to the group for agreement.**

- The group agreed to take forward the PRoW Fund implementation strategy under the review of the RoWWG.

**<u>Progress on liaison between PRoW and Tourism Funds leads</u>**

- National Landscapes hosted a Tourism Fund meeting for those with SZC funding pots. It provided a networking opportunity for each fund to present its focus areas and explore collaboration, and some overlap between the PRoW and Tourism Funds was identified. There will be further meetings.
- AW highlighted the need to coordinate delivery so the Tourism Fund can complement PRoW schemes, helping achieve shared objectives and add value.
- DF clarified the division of roles: PRoW Fund to focus on physical works (paths, surfacing), and the Tourism Fund to provide enhancements (such as benches, information boards, interpretation panels, or QR codes) adding value for users.

- The meeting generated initial ideas and priorities. The next step is to develop concrete proposals that fit within budgets, and to approach relevant areas for collaboration.
- Community engagement will begin soon to ensure routes and enhancements reflect local needs and gain support.
- AW also noted the importance of aligning with other additional funding streams to avoid duplication.

**King Charles III England Coast Path management through the SZC estate**

- DAR raised concerns about the installation of the Marine Bulk Import Facility (MBIF). Clarity is needed on whether the coastal path will need to be closed, as this would be a significant communications issue. DAR requested that updates on MBIF be expedited and that any potential closures be brought to this group's attention.
- SM noted the coast path diversionary route is unlikely to be completed before the end of next year. He also mentioned October's transport forum will probably look at the matter.
- RB agreed to escalate the issue and provide an update as soon as possible.

**Action – SZC to provide an update on coastal works as a result of installation of MBIF, and communicate the agreed approach.**

**Communications Plan**

- RB highlighted that a key action is to get the works tracker up and running with OS maps, providing a clear way to communicate information.

**Action – JP to share the skeleton version of the PRoW works tracker with the group.**

- JP outlined signage plans:
  - Standard notices and templates that can be easily modified.
  - Waymark discs indicating 'alternative path' where footpaths are diverted (e.g., SLR and TVB), including discussion on which posts to use and potential purchase of waymark posts.
  - Information boards at Kenton Hills, Sizewell Beach, National Trust sites etc, to inform people of alternative routes.
  - Finger posts may also be required.
- JP stated that SZC produces a monthly newsletter, which can include relevant PROW updates, and raised that temporary closure information is being discussed with Ordnance Survey for inclusion on their app for impacted roads.
- JP agreed to liaise with DF and BG to share tourism-related information on relevant websites about closures and works.
- JP highlighted the need to inform Local parish councils of works; agreeing to attend meetings or forums to communicate updates.
- MEG agreed to integrate tourism marketing communications with JP's plan, covering external stakeholders (DMO, tourism boards) and internal communication to site staff.

**Action – SZC to present the final communications plan and the proposed technological solution for the works tracker at the next ROWWG meeting.**

**Communications Plan – Promoting Good news**

- RB noted that as BG's work is delivered, it will provide a useful opportunity to share PROW progress at forums.

**Action – SZC to create a visual summary of PROW Fund spending, key deliverables, and progress to date for presentation at a forum next year (long-term action)**

- MEG highlighted that the path and bridleway brochure for Leiston has been well received.

**SZC Funds' Logos**

- JM noted that some working groups have requested guidance on branding projects funded through DoO, and confirmed that if logos are desired by this group, the SZC design team can provide support and guidance. SZC can support projects by providing identifiers linking works to the fund if required.

**Actions agreed in meeting:**

| Date Raised | Ref. | Description | Lead | Date Due |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02/09/2025 | 1 | BG to summarise the PRoW Fund improvement proposals, including variations and delivery sequencing, and circulate to the group for agreement. | BG | Next meeting |
| 02/09/2025 | 2 | SZC to provide an update on coastal works as a result of installation of MBIF, and communicate the agreed approach. | SZC | Next meeting |
| 02/09/2025 | 3 | JP to share the skeleton version of the PRoW works tracker with the group. | JP | Next meeting |
| 02/09/2025 | 4 | SZC to present the final communications plan and the proposed technological solution for the works tracker at the next ROWWG meeting. | SZC | Next meeting |
| 02/09/2025 | 5 | SZC to create a visual summary of PROW Fund spending, key deliverables, and progress to date for presentation at a forum next year (long-term action) | SZC | Next meeting |