

Somerset County Council Press release

Growing need for Adopt a Path volunteers

With seasonal growth now appearing on paths across Somerset, volunteers are invited to help protect and maintain the county's public rights of way.

Anyone can help get involved when they are out and about on their favourite Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs).

All you need to do is sign up to 'Adopt a Path' and report back any issues such as overgrown stiles or gates, missing or overgrown signposts or waymarks and overgrown vegetation. You can also assist a step further by helping to keep pinch points, signposts, stiles and gates vegetation free. In return, Somerset County Council will provide help and advice, cover under our insurance policy, and provide secateurs and gloves to help volunteers keep paths in tip top condition for all to enjoy. A spokesman for Somerset County Council said: "We have more than 6,000km of paths in Somerset – ranging from short urban cut-throughs to long distance trails.

"This scheme is designed to be completely flexible and really is as easy as walking the dog – perfect for those who want to help the community but don't have the time to commit to a more time demanding role. "Volunteers are simply asked to adopt paths they will walk no less than four times a year, and most incorporate it into routes they walk on a more regular basis."

For those who have more spare time and want to get more practically involved in keeping the network open and clear, the Somerset Strimmer scheme is a great opportunity to learn a new skill that will keep you fit.

The Somerset Strimmer scheme is where volunteers help cut back summer and winter vegetation along public footpaths and bridleways using strimmers. It is the most active of the roles because you must be capable of walking with and carrying machinery, including the kit that goes with it, and personal safety equipment. The Strimmer Scheme is run working with parish councils, as they are asked to help fund the training.

For more information on these schemes, please email rowvolunteers@somerset.gov.uk or apply online at <https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/opportunities/rights-of-way-volunteer/>.

If you are not signed up as a volunteer and come across an overgrown path or any other issue on a path, you can report such problems online at www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway. You can find a video guide showing how to use this function at <https://youtu.be/ctuedEScXzs>.

To check out all Somerset County Council volunteering opportunities – from volunteer driving, helping in a library or supporting Somerset's outdoor activity centres – click <https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/>, or contact 0300 123 2224 for more information.

Somerset County Council's highways team will also be carrying out roadside grass cutting and verge maintenance this summer to help keep road users safe. To find out more about this work and report a problem, please visit www.travelsomerset.co.uk/grass-cutting.