

Signing Rights of Way

Countryside Service Design Standards (2024)

Rights of way are often not major features on the ground and so signing them is important to give the public confidence that they are using the correct route; they also help the landowner in that good signing prevents inadvertent trespass. Similarly, signing of other paths can be helpful for both the user and the landowner.

Responsibilities

The County Council signs rights of way where they leave a tarmac road and has discretion along the route to provide further signs to guide the public. In practice in Hampshire, fingerposts (tall wooden posts with a wooden sign pointing in the desired direction) are normally used where the right of way leaves the road. Waymarks (small plastic discs) are used at intermediate points where needed. Correct and consistent waymarking is obviously important and to achieve this the numbers of people carrying out signage is restricted, currently, to Council officers, trained volunteers and the nominees of Parish Councils.

Principles

- Signs should always point along the legal line of the right of way; even if 'used lines' have developed where the public have walked a slightly different route over time. Maps should be used to ensure the sign directs the public along the correct legal route.
- Minimal signage should be used.
- In urban area fingerposts may not be appropriate; waymarks or other signs may be used instead.

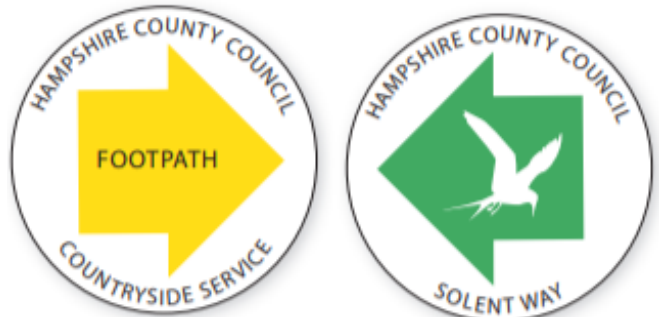
Fingerposts

In Hampshire 100mm x 100mm square posts are used, with signs routed to show the classification of the right of way (Footpath, Bridleway, Restricted Byway, Byway). Although it will depend on the location, posts should generally be sunk at least 600mm into the ground and the hole backfilled and tamped down. In some instances, it may be necessary to concrete the post in place. In urban areas smaller signs may be more appropriate.



Waymarks

These are plastic discs about 75mm in diameter showing the path classification (e.g. Footpath) and a coloured arrow. On promoted routes, there may be additional waymarks showing the name and logo of the route.



Waymarks should be:

- Used where it may not be obvious where the path goes, for example where the path leaves a bigger track, takes an unexpected turn or is about to cross an open area.
- Used in pairs, showing the route from either direction.
- Fixed with corrosion-resistant screws or nails.
- Fixed to gateposts (not the gates), stiles, fingerposts, telegraph poles or 1 metre high 100mm x 100mm square posts installed for the purpose.

Waymarks should not be:

- Attached to trees, buildings, street signs, notice boards or ancient monuments.

More detailed guidance is available through the Countryside Service's volunteer waymarking scheme.

This guidance is suitable for most situations in Hampshire; for further advice email pro@hants.gov.uk or call 0300 555 1391