

Item from Horndean Parish Council website – Project works on the Staunton Way

Havant Thicket - new link path February 1, 2013

Havant Thicket - The Missing Link

There has always been a good network of gravel paths at Staunton Country Park in Leigh Park and at Havant Thicket near Rowlands Castle, but a good path to link the two sites was missing. Portsmouth Water have led a partnership project to provide a new linking path across their land at Havant Thicket, to open up a wider area of countryside for walking and cycling that can be used all year round.

The work has involved moving back fences to provide more space for the path, cutting back vegetation, clearing out an old ditch to improve water drainage, and constructing a 2.5m wide surfaced path. Additional work is planned by the Forestry Commission to further improve the surface of the path to the north. The work has been part funded by grants from Hampshire County Council, including grants from Councillors Sam Darragh and Ann Buckley. Cllr Buckley said; "I was delighted to support this project with a grant and would like to praise the team for all their work. This route on the edge of Leigh Park & Rowlands Castle will be well used by local residents and provides a great off road route for youngsters who are learning to cycle."

Tim Speller from the Hampshire County Council Countryside Service explained that they are planning to improve signage from Staunton Country Park to Havant Thicket, including way marking a new circular cycle route. The plan is to get the new signs in place by the spring. *Mike Ashton, a CTC cycle campaigner, emphasised that, "The Staunton Country Park and Havant Thicket link path project opens up 10km of all weather off road cycling through attractive woodland and grassland. Safe cycle access to the new route is available from Leigh Park, Cowplain and Rowlands Castle."*

Neville Smith the Managing Director for Portsmouth Water said; "We were very pleased to support and lead this project, which provides improved access to Havant Thicket. We hope that local residents will enjoy walking and cycling in the countryside using the new all weather path"

Further quote:

Simon James, Forestry Commission – Beat Forester , who is the manager of the Havant Thicket site; "The Forestry Commission were delighted to be involved in this project to link our woodland in with the Country Park to provide wider recreation opportunities for dog walkers, cyclists and users of mobility scooters. It shows what

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can be achieved when several organisations get together. We hope to carry out further improvements in Havant Thicket during the coming year.”

Project Costs: The total cost of the project to date to move back the fence line, clear the vegetation, dig out the ditch and provide a 300m length of 2.5m surfaced path is £13,908.25 (£14,000). This includes the value of 5 lorry loads of recycled aggregate worth about £900 donated by Clancy Dowcra, who were working on a nearby building project for Portsmouth water and kindly agreed to donate the stone for the sub-base of the path.

As indicated above the Forestry Commission will shortly complete some further work on the connecting path to the north, which will cost about another £1400 and HCC will be providing improved signage.



Photo 1: Path before works commenced

Photo 2: New link path from Staunton Country Park to Havant Thicket



Photo 3: Path opening ceremony 31 January 2013

