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Paths for Communities - Project summary sheet:

Weald Country Park

Location:	Essex
Right of Way Created:	Bridleway 6.8 km Footpath
Improved existing rights:	100 m

Supporting local businesses:	13
Volunteer hours contributed:	761
Cost of project:	£97,821
Grant rate:	91%

The aim at Weald was to create a safe, accessible, circular route through the Country Park. Existing routes were permissive and linear, forcing users wanting a circular route to leave the park and use a busy, dangerous road.

The P4C grant has enabled:

- all existing permissive bridleway routes to be

- dedicated as permanent PROW;
- the creation of additional bridleways and footpaths through the Country Park;
- new routes linking to the existing PROW network;
- the provision of a sustainable transport link for rural residents to neighbouring Brentwood;
- improved accessibility by surfacing the new



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section of bridleway so that users can enjoy the routes on disability scooters, available for free hire from the visitor centre;

- the use of high quality surfacing materials to ensure longevity of works;
- improved understanding between user groups through multi-user volunteer days.

The new and improved routes have benefited the rural economy particularly local riding schools, livery yards, local feed and saddlery merchants, public houses, vets, an equine physiotherapist as well as increased revenue for the Country Park itself from the use of their car parks

As well as the surface works the project provided more accurate signage to promote safe use of routes and publicity to promote new routes.



The strong partnership was put to the test when initial concerns about the proposal led to a public meeting. "There was a room full of people against the project," explains Helen. "I reassured people that the routes, through P4C, would be open to all because we could improve the surface. But most importantly, people could enjoy them: as of right - permanently. By the end of the meeting, there was a roomful of people in favour. That was a fantastic feeling!"

Helen Chester, EBA

The project was achieved through strong partnership working which included:

- Skilled and experienced volunteers who handled the bid, funding and implementation of project
- Strong landowner/Highway Authority/ Country Park (Essex County Council) support
- Strong local community support
- Essex LAF,
- Essex Bridleways Association,
- Friends of Weald Group (multi-user fully constituted group).

Links

Essex County Council
Essex Bridleways Association
Essex Country Parks

