



## Notices in Hampshire's Countryside

Our Countryside staff will be putting up notices on HCC-owned countryside sites and Country Parks in the middle weeks of October. The reason for the notices is that the County Council is, like many landowners, protecting its land from claims for new public rights of way or for village green status. The displaying of a notice on-site is a requirement of the legal process that we are following.

The notices tell people that the County Council recognises the existing public rights of way on their land, but does not intend to dedicate any new permanent access. This process does not have any impact on the way people already enjoy the countryside or prevent access to it, and it does not preclude the County Council dedicating additional access rights should we choose to do so. The reason for the County Council making the declaration now is to enable it to manage public access on countryside sites in the future.

Although there is an explanatory note with the legal notice, it is possible that the display of these notices will result in some members of the public contacting you in your capacity as their local councillor to ask questions about the process, or to ask for more information. The notices include information about how to contact the Countryside Access Team via the Contact Centre, which has been briefed appropriately. Staff working on the sites have also been given information in case they are approached by members of the public.

Similar notices have also recently been appearing in Hampshire's countryside as other landowners are protecting their land in the same way. When a landowner makes a declaration the County Council, acting as the highway authority, is required by law to put up notices advertising these declarations to the public, along with a map showing the land being protected. Information on all the declarations, including those on HCC owned land, has been placed on our website at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/row/land-ownership.htm>. This explains the law relating to the declarations, contains our register of them with linked scanned documents, and gives a contact number for enquiries.

Please contact us on 01962 846043 if you have any questions.