

A BRIEF HISTORY OF P3 (PATHS PARTNERSHIP PROJECT) IN LEEDS

The Parish Paths Partnership (P3) was a Countryside Commission initiative set up in 1992 to help local authorities reach their Milestones Target which was... “to have the entire network of public rights of way legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised by the year 2000”.

The aim of P3 was for local authorities to involve local councils (Parish & Town Councils) and local voluntary groups in the day to day upkeep of their local path network.

Leeds was one of the first authorities to express an interest in joining the scheme and thus became one of a handful of local authorities to pilot it.

Government funding covered the cost of employing a P3 Liaison Officer and enough tools and equipment to run as many volunteer groups as possible.

The scheme proved to be so successful that as funding gradually dried up in the late 1990's Leeds chose to continue with a similar project.

Nationally, many other Authorities also chose to run similar projects as direct spin offs from the Original P3 project.

In Leeds the updated project would be available to Parish and Town Councils only and would raise awareness of fundamental Council policies and procedures including, health and safety, procurement rules and regulations, equality and diversity and human rights etc in its new Agreement.

P3 (PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP) TODAY.

With regard to how enquiries are dealt with concerning the clearance of vegetation from public rights of way, is that Leeds City Council (as Highway Authority) has the responsibility for keeping the surface free of vegetation, the neighbouring landowners and tenants have a responsibility to keep overhanging vegetation from trees and hedges on their land cut back, they will liaise with landowners and tenants to ensure this.

The City Council, as surveying authority, has a duty to record all Public Rights of Way on the Definitive Map and Statement in the categories of footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways or byways. The Definitive Map is the Council's legal record of public rights of way and the Council has a duty to review and maintain the definitive records to ensure that they are up to date. All recorded PROW's are highways and as such the Council has a duty to assert and protect the public's right to the use and enjoyment of such ways and keep them in a fit condition for their expected use.

A link to the online demonstration copy of the Definitive Map can be found here <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/parks-and-countryside/public-rights-of-way/definitive-map>

The PROW Section maintains to an adoptable standard and the recorded legal surface and width of many of the ways they are responsible for. Boundary features such as walls and fences, as well as hedges and trees etc are all the responsibility of neighbouring owners, unless the City Council own them, in which case it would be the vesting directorate. Public Rights of Way Officers have delegated enforcement powers to ensure that all public rights of way remain clear

and unobstructed. The Council can also contribute towards maintenance of authorised gates and stiles on public paths.

Although an annual survey of the public paths in the parish is not required it may be some years since a full survey was carried out. This type of work helps with planning for works or actions, identifying problems on the local network and checking on any paths that are subject to the grant for one cut of seasonal surface overgrowth.

Current Public Paths Partnership (P3) arrangements between Leeds City Council and Thorner Parish Council and Volunteering activities.

Thorner Parish Council signed up to the Paths Partnership Project and agreed to maintain footpaths, 7, 14 and 17 for seasonal grass cutting.

P3 Agreements are exclusively for an arrangement between the City Council and the Parish Council, it is not possible for a voluntary group to enter such an arrangement.

However, there is a local footpath Volunteer group who do undertake some work, having received permission from Leeds CC to do so.