

# **SOMERSET LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

## **REMIT OF THE FORUM**

Government advice states that local access forums will provide a vital channel for local people to give their views and ideas on recreational potential in their areas. Owners and managers of land, people using the new right of access and rights of way and representatives of the local economy are encouraged to join together in the access forums where they all have a crucial role to play in supporting the principle of all-round improvement of access to the countryside.

Local Access forums have a statutory duty to advise local authorities on the improvement of public access to land for the purpose of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires forums to be consulted on;

1. Draft maps, prepared by the Countryside Agency, showing open country and registered common land;
2. Appointment of access wardens on land where the new right of access applies;
3. Byelaws affecting access land;
4. Long-term restrictions on, and exclusions from access;
5. Rights of Way Improvement Plans prepared by the local authority.

The Somerset forum will hold at least two meetings a year. It is expected that there may be additional meetings to deal with specific issues. These meetings will be open to the public, but it is the responsibility of the forum to decide on how the public may participate in the meetings. Agendas, reports and minutes for the meetings will be published and an Annual Report must be produced.

Somerset County Council have the responsibility to employ a secretary for the Somerset Local Access Forum.