

# Customer Charter: Countryside Access Team

The Countryside Access Team places a high priority on customer care and is committed to providing the highest quality service every time you make contact with us and visit one of our facilities. Our Customer Charter outlines the quality of service that you can expect from us.

## Our Staff

- Will be friendly, helpful, informative assist visitors in understanding the countryside and behave professionally and politely at all times
- Will treat everyone fairly, equally and with respect, ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made for customers who may have special needs and disabilities
- Will wear an appropriate uniform and name badge in a visible position
- Will be suitably trained
- Will listen and be responsive and empowered to deal with customer comments, complaints and suggestions, or pass the customer onto the correct person

## Our Nature Reserves, Picnic Sites, Country Parks, and disused Railway Lines

You should expect to find nature reserves, picnic sites and country parks maintained to a good standard, where you can enjoy your visit in safety, and feel close to the natural environment.

- Information about the sites will be made available in hard copy and via the countryside access web site
- It will be clearly displayed at the site if you have to pay for car parking
- Where provided entrance noticeboards, signage around the site and interpretative features will be clear, up to date and accessible
- We will meet the accessibility standards as set out by Natural England in the 'By All Reasonable Means' publication
- We will produce and follow a management plan for each Nature Reserve and disused railway line explaining how the site is managed for people and wildlife.
- The site will be clear of excessive amounts of litter and dog fouling
- We will repair minor defects within one month. More complex repairs will be reported and followed up via the internal property repair process.

## Our Countryside Events programme

You should expect to attend a countryside event with full confidence that the event will provide an enjoyable experience, in safety, with qualified and experienced leaders.

- Information about the events programme will be published either in hard copy or via the countryside access website
- Prices and times will be clearly displayed in the brochure and on the website
- Staff will be available 15 minutes prior to the start of every event
- If an event is cancelled we will take appropriate measures to contact participants including telephone and email

## Using the Public Rights of Way Network

You should expect to find Public Rights of Way open and available at all times and maintained to a standard commensurate with its use where you can enjoy your visit in safety.

- Routes will be signposted where they leave a metalled road
- Routes will be waymarked along their route where it is difficult to follow the path
- Gates, stiles steps, bridges and other structures should be easy to use, safe and properly maintained
- We will clear vegetation where it is affecting the access along a right of way, or ask the landowner to do so, if it is their responsibility
- When defects are reported we will give an indication of how long it will take to resolve, according to the priority of the route and nature of the defect

### **Open Countryside and Registered Common Land (Access Land)**

You should expect to find that you can wander freely over ‘access land’ away from paths and find that structures and signs are maintained to a high standard so that you can enjoy your visit

- Information about Access Land will be made available in hard copy and via the countryside access web site
- Access will normally be through a gate and will be accompanied by an information board and map
- If you tell us there is a minor defect on a parcel of access land then we will aim to repair the appropriate item or structure within three months
- Should repairs, or improvements be more complex, or have a significant cost then these will be submitted via a grant bid to Natural England or other appropriate funding body.
- Horseriders should be able to enjoy Urban Commons and other areas of land where rights exist

### **Our Service to You**

- Publish up-to-date and accurate customer information for all activities, which is jargon free ensuring plain English is used
- Information will be made available in alternative formats and offer access to translation services
- Answer incoming telephone calls within 7 rings and identify ourselves by name and service when answering the telephone
- Take ownership of the call ensuring that all reasonable care is taken to ensure the customer is dealt with wherever practicable at the first point of call
- Respond to letters and emails within 10 working days
- Meet personal callers within 5 minutes
- Respond to complaints in accordance with the Council’s Corporate Complaints procedure
- Consult with our customers to ensure that we continue to meet their aspirations and stated priorities, taking action where practicable

### **How You Can Help Us**

- Please behave in a considerate and polite way so that we can give you and other customers the standard of service you would expect
- Follow the countryside code at all times
- Let us know what you think about the service you receive and the standard of our countryside sites so we can keep improving in the future
- Please treat the countryside sites with respect and report any faults to staff immediately

If you have any comments or suggestions about our Customer Charter or service delivery, please contact the appropriate Public Rights of Way Officer, Local Nature Reserve Officer, or Countryside Access Manager.