

Byways & Bridleways Trust

Press Release

Electronic Delivery of Rights of Way Notices and Orders Would Save Thousands of Pounds.

The Byways and Bridleways Trust Calls for Urgent Action.

Every week local authorities across England and Wales send out dozens of consultations, notices and orders concerning the recording and management of public footpaths, bridleways and byways.

Most of this information is required by law (or government guidance) to be sent by all authorities to a list of 'prescribed organisations'. If each envelope costs a local authority just £1 to send out (and the total cost is probably considerably more than that) then the national bill for this essential service is at least £30,000, and that does not include anything for handling and onward distribution by the recipients.

These notices, orders and consultations are all produced on word processors, and so it is very simple to output each document as a 'PDF' file, with a small file size, for distribution by email.

Almost four years ago, in 2006, the Byways and Bridleways Trust asked defra to take steps to institute the necessary procedural changes to cause local authorities to swap from paper to PDF. defra's Countryside Division is the government department responsible for rights of way matters. defra shuffled the matter off to the Department for Communities and Local Government, and nothing happened.

In June 2010, after the Coalition Government had announced its intention to save taxpayers' money in all areas, the Trust again wrote to defra asking that this change be implemented. Again defra said 'not our problem' and pushed it across to DCLG. Two months later and absolutely nothing has happened.

The incredible network of public footpaths, bridleways and byways in England and Wales is a tremendous benefit to the nation's health and heritage. Just like the NHS, Armed Forces, and Education it costs money to run, but there is no excuse for this 'cannot be bothered' attitude from government departments, particularly when the remedy is so easy to deliver.

The Trust calls upon the Secretary of State to appoint a senior civil servant to make the change happen. No more excuses.

Enquiries on this to editor@bbtrust.org.uk

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Dave Tilbury - 18 August 2010.