

OSS



MINISTRY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

Footpaths and Access
to the Countryside

REPORT OF
THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
(ENGLAND AND WALES)

*Presented by the Minister of Town and Country Planning to Parliament
by Command of His Majesty
September 1947*

LONDON
HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

PRICE 1s. 3d. NET

Cmd. 7207

Conclusion

Mindful of our terms of reference, we have made our recommendations with "due regard to agriculture, forestry and other essential interests". We have assumed that goodwill and co-operation will be forthcoming both from town-people who frequent the countryside, and from those who live and work in the country or are concerned with the use of its land. A better understanding between town and country, which it is so important to establish, will not be achieved without this goodwill and co-operation. These relations, we recognise, need to be carefully and constantly fostered.

Much of the ill-feeling which has existed in the past has been due to ignorance or thoughtless behaviour on the part of some townsmen. This we believe could be considerably reduced by persistent educational efforts. We accordingly recommend that a simple Country Code should be prepared and issued. Its object should be to evoke a better all round standard of responsible behaviour in the countryside and to instil a greater appreciation of the ways and needs of rural life, and the inter-dependence of town and country. To this end religious bodies, school teachers, youth leaders and the open air organisations should be invited to co-operate in an educational campaign for which the widest publicity should be sought by means of leaflets and posters, and by co-operation with the press, the radio and the cinema.

If our proposals are accepted, and pass into law, they will confer upon the public a precious gift of greater rights and privileges. They will protect and preserve, more simply and yet more adequately than in the past, the footpaths engraved on the face of the land by the footsteps of our ancestors. They will provide long-distance footpaths which may be followed for many miles away from the din and danger of busy motor roads. In the wilder parts of the country our recommendations will provide for the greatest freedom of rambling access consistent with other claims on the land. They will enable active people of all ages to wander harmlessly over moor and mountain, over heath and down, and along cliffs and shores, and to discover for themselves the wild and lonely places, and the solace and inspiration they can give to men who have been "long in city pent". Thus we believe an effective contribution will be made to the health and well being of the nation, and an important step taken towards establishing the principle that the heritage of our beautiful countryside should be held in trust for the benefit of the people.

ARTHUR HOBHOUSE (*Chairman*).
LEONARD ELMHIRST (*Vice-chairman*).
EDWARD N. BUXTON.
JOHN DOWER.
ELWYN JONES.
MERTHYR.
FRANCIS RITCHIE.
L. DUDLEY STAMP.
TOM STEPHENSON.
G. ANDREW WHEATLEY.

PHILIP MAGNUS (*Secretary*).
22nd July, 1947.

Summary

Figures in brackets page

CHAPTER

A complete Survey should be put in

County Council authorities for

Borough and Councils should necessary particular

County District all relevant information

The central authority to act in default,

The Survey should public inspection representations a completed within cases (32-35).

Quarter Sessions

Each Court of establish a Right three to five Just should view the v Division in which

From Quarter points of law, by

A way used by should in all case single respect the being available for

CHAPTER

Highway authority and urban district and maintain all

Default powers

Certain liabilities

Highway authority way with the committees Sessions. Compete

The highway power, on Order lieu of a length to procedure analogous and 83. Compete