

CLEARING THE CORDITE WAY

After closure as a military railway, the old Cordite Factory railway route at Holton Heath was used for many years by the people of Sandford to glimpse the harbour, to fish, to walk and cycle. The link has been highlighted since 2003 as a potential key connection between Holton Heath and Hamworthy.

Obstructed in 2010, it has been a 13-year struggle to get the link recognised as a public right of way. Work on clearing the Cordite Way footpath between Holton Heath Trading Estate and Rockley Jetty finally commenced on Sunday 3 September 2023.

The first volunteer working party on Sunday 3 September was led by Beryl Ezzard (DC Cllr Wareham Ward), joined by Andy Hadley (BCP Cllr, Poole Town) and others, under the supervision of Dorset Council Ranger Katie Black. They commenced clearing years of undergrowth from the route of the former military line that connected the Royal Naval Cordite Factory to the pier at Rockley Jetty opposite Rockley Sands.

The members of the Friends of the Cordite Way Clearance group hope to complete the first section of the footpath to the viewpoint overlooking Poole Harbour and Arne peninsular by summer 2024. There was an Admiralty bridge over the main line, demolished months before the Footpath Appeal was won, which will need to be replaced to reach a second viewpoint on the harbour's edge opposite Rockley Sands.

Land on which the route lies is owned by the Lees Estate and leased by Jade-Aden Services, both of whom have supported the scheme. The path will, with the generous support and help from the landowners, become a permissive path for cycling giving access to green spaces for walkers and cyclists.

Cllr Beryl Ezzard said "The Cordite works is part of the heritage of Sandford which we should celebrate, and the track gives locals their only means to glimpse the harbour. This is a great step forward."

Cllr Andy Hadley, who is Chair of the Poole Harbour Trails group, added "Encouraging sustainable travel and tourism needs good quality routes. Reaching our future aims, the Cordite Way avoids busy roads and gives fantastic views onto the upper reaches of the harbour. It will provide a great link between communities."

About the Cordite Way

The Cordite Way was conceived in 2003, and a right of way application was originated in 2010. This one-mile route will form one of the walking and cycling routes around Poole harbour promoted by the Poole Harbour Trails community group (<http://www.pooleharbourtrails.org.uk>). The walking routes are in six sections around the harbour. A cycling route has also been created.

The group aims to link the Cordite Way to Hamworthy and Poole via a new bridge over the entrance to Lytchett Bay to form not only a significantly shorter route between Poole and the Purbecks but also to explore a future strategic walking and cycling link to the Castleman Trailway and the North Dorset Trailway. The Friends of the Cordite Way group welcome volunteers, and have three subgroups: Path Clearance, Flora & Fauna Studies and Information Signage.

Further details: Email pooleharbourtrails@gmail.com

Press Release Date: 14th September 2023