

# FORUM FOCUS

## The Newsletter for Local Access Forums in the SW

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**Sustrans needs you to vote for Connect2, one of 4 projects competing in the Big Lottery Fund's 'The People's £50 Million' Contest on ITV on 4<sup>th</sup> December with voting over the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>. Competing against the Eden Project, Sherwood: the Living Legend and the Black Country Urban Park is a big challenge. You can vote online now. [www.thepeoples50million.org.uk](http://www.thepeoples50million.org.uk) and <http://www.sustransconnect2.org.uk/>**

Connect2 is the only UK-wide project in the competition and will transform local travel in 79 cities, towns and villages by creating new walking and cycling routes for everyday journeys. Crossings and bridges will be created over busy roads, railway lines and rivers, linking into new networks of paths. Of the Connect2 projects, 8 schemes and 2 reserves are in the SW.

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### Viewpoint

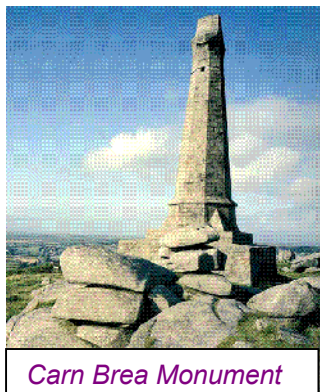
#### Robin Moore, Chairman of Cornwall Countryside Access Forum

As Chairman of Cornwall Countryside Access Forum I have been asked to pen a few notes for the newsletter and would stress that my comments are personal and not necessarily those of my members.

Why did any of us become involved? For myself I realised from the outset that if these forums were to work at all then we needed to understand and appreciate the needs and concerns of all users and interested parties.

I believe the CRoW Act gave us that chance to work together for the benefit of all. I think it can be safely said that we now have a greater understanding of the complexities that exist and that we have achieved good working relationships with all concerned.

It was inevitable that a structure would evolve bringing forms together for cross-fertilisation of opinion. Under the CRoW Act we are expected to liaise with other forums and it soon became clear that many of us were thinking along the same lines and that working together, especially on regional and national issues, we are more likely to succeed in getting our point across at the higher level.



*Carn Brea Monument*

I am personally very pleased that a co-ordinated national framework is gradually coming to fruition. It will be of enormous benefit when our recommendations have to be pressed home.

I'm not sure how forums have developed nationwide but we in the South West have been working together for some time. Thanks mainly to the efforts of Cumbria and Duncan Graham and the Regional Coordinators we are now on the verge of national recognition. Our strength is in our unity and there are a number of far reaching issues that need addressing.

I consider the Access to Water to be a minefield when it comes to legislation, - whilst the desirability or otherwise of complete coastal access is a concern to many.

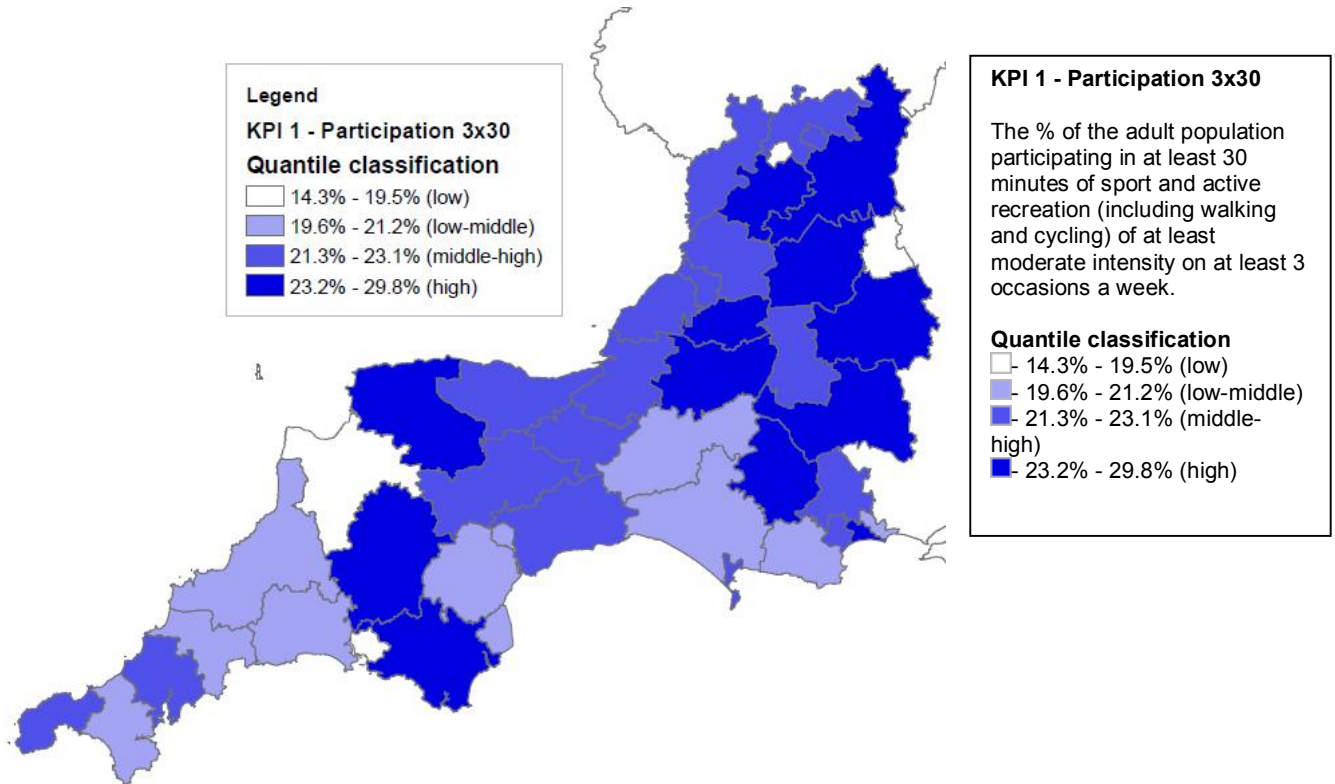
The recent consultation paper on the coastal access proposals led many of us to feel our views had not been fully considered. How else can Defra's reply be announced within fourteen days? This I sincerely hope will be a point hammered home at the first national LAF meeting with Natural England.

*Robin H T Moore, Chairman, CCAF*

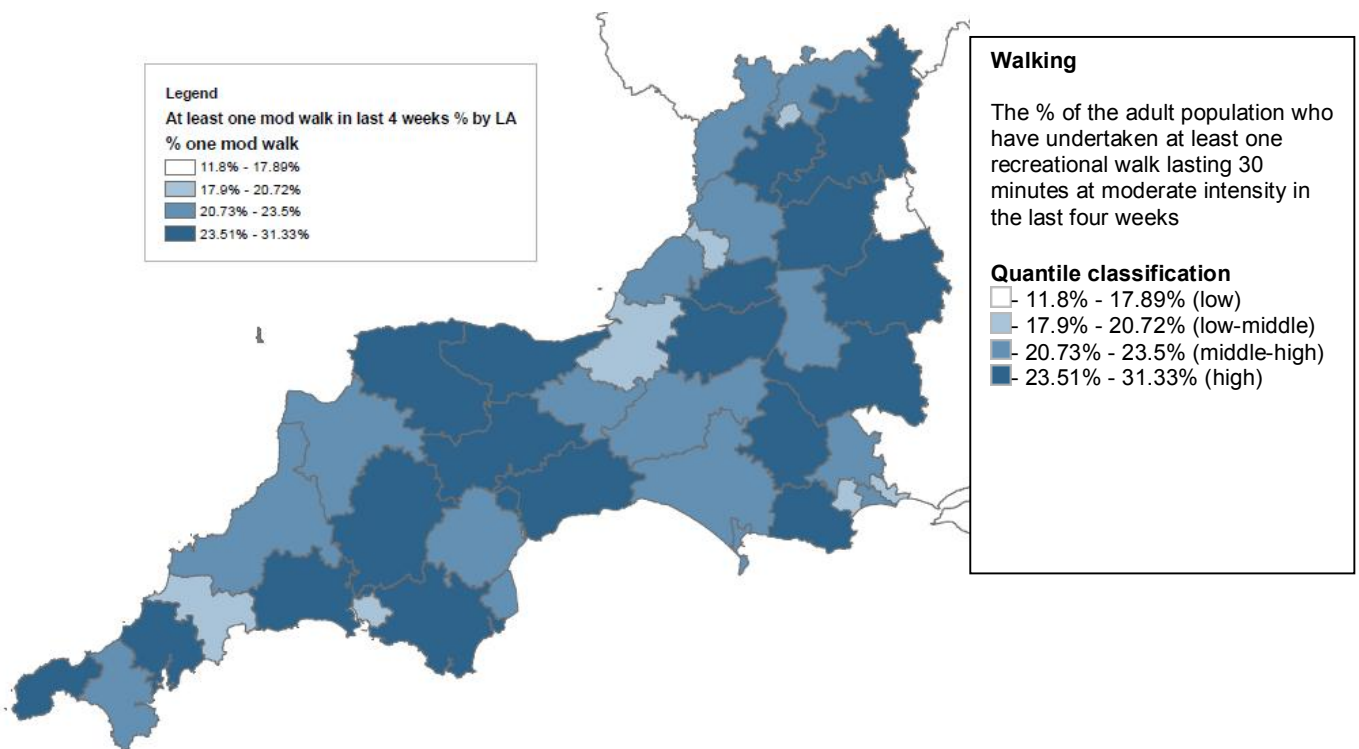
**News in brief**

**Activity levels**

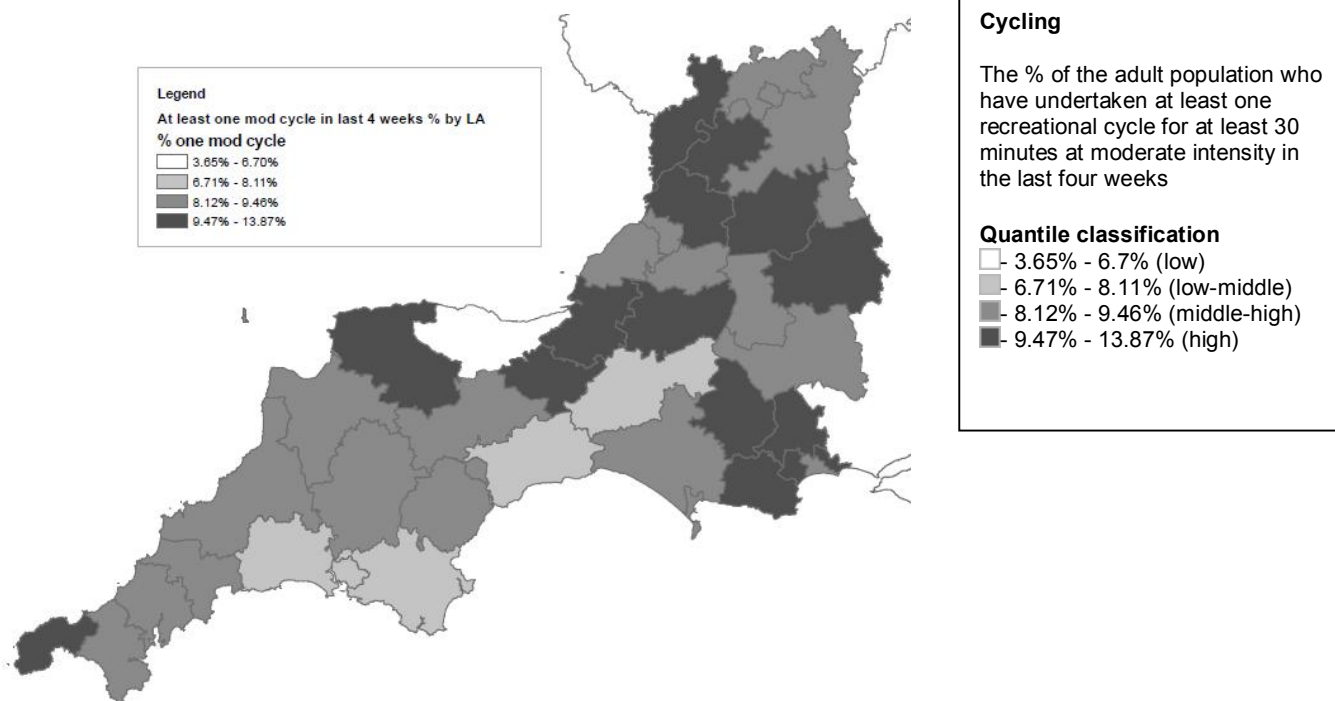
The Sport England Active People Survey has produced some interesting maps showing participation in different activities at a local authority level. Maps of particular interest to LAFs are reproduced below and may have implications for RoWIP priorities and LAF focus.



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Map Crown Copyright © produced by Sport England



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Further details on:

[http://www.sportengland.org/index/get\\_resources/research/active\\_people/active\\_people\\_1/active\\_people\\_maps.htm](http://www.sportengland.org/index/get_resources/research/active_people/active_people_1/active_people_maps.htm)

## Regional overview

The SW Observatory has pulled together details of rights of way and LAF related issues and put their links on the website, accessible through a clickable map for each county.

[http://swenvo.org.uk/environment/access\\_map\\_tool.asp](http://swenvo.org.uk/environment/access_map_tool.asp)

## Bearing the cost

The British Horse Society has been left with a legal bill of £30,000 following an unsuccessful challenge against BMW's plans to stop up a bridleway and short stretch of unclassified highway which stood in the way of its development proposals. Cyclists and walkers have been accommodated in replacement routes.

## Further horse news

The BHS has launched EMAGIN, a mapping system showing 'Where to Ride'. This allows members of the public to find their nearest off-road riding opportunities and was created in response to demand from the public.

'Where to Ride' is free and also tells people which Ordnance Survey maps they need for their area to further their investigations. For further information contact the BHS on 01926 707812 or [emagin@bhs.org.uk](mailto:emagin@bhs.org.uk) Developing the service to an on-line facility will be the next stage.



## Communities and Local Government

<http://www.communities.gov.uk>

The Communities and Local Government department website is worth glancing at from time to time. It sets UK policy on local government and housing and, in this context, some of its consultations refer to green space provision. For example, the recent green paper on '*Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable*', refers to improving the interface between the urban and rural environments by providing improved access for people and restoring areas of countryside to provide people with more opportunities to explore and experience their environment.

In a similar vein the influential Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution 'The Urban Environment', published in March 2007 drew attention to the need for a more strategic approach to 'increase the amount of green infrastructure, making the most of existing natural features and creating new ones, and tightening up legislation and planning policy to protect particular parts of the urban ecosystem such as the green belt, gardens and trees.'

LAF members should ensure these concerns and views are firmly embedded in Local Development Framework documents in their areas.

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## Easy Walks online

<http://www.southwestcoastpath.com/main/walks/index.cfm?fsa=dspWalkSearchShort>

"The South West Coast Path is the perfect place to get away from the crowds. Fresh air, stunning sea views, maybe even a quiet beach are on offer just a short stroll away from our busy coastal resorts and villages. But what about families with pushchairs, people with walking or breathing problems, or those in wheelchairs or mobility scooters?" To help with locating suitable walks a new feature on easy walks has been added to the SW Coast Path website. This includes details on gradients and path furniture and the wildlife and heritage visible on the walk.



The South West coast path also has a website with superb photo images

[www.southwestcoastpathimages.info](http://www.southwestcoastpathimages.info)

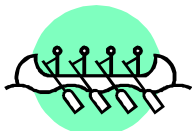
*Devon Countryside Access Forum member, Patrick Healy, on the coast path near Westward Ho!*

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## NERC

Version 5 of NERC guidance will be published early next year. Details will be on <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/nerc06.htm> and LAFs will also be notified through other channels.

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## WATER ACCESS

The Environment Agency is hoping to have a draft plan for the South West that will go out to public consultation in January and all LAFs will be notified when this is available. Anyone can keep an eye on progress and representations on the website at:-

<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation/index.htm>

Although the EA has taken into account some of the views expressed by a number of LAF representatives who attended regional workshops in May it would still be very happy to receive any views on issues or priorities for water-based recreation from any organisation.

Since the workshops all Governing Bodies for water-related sports have been asked to provide the EA with their priorities for the region. A full audit of the current use of all coastal and inland water has been completed and this will be analysed to help determine opportunities for improving provision.

Consultations will continue over the coming weeks with water companies, funding agencies, planners and others to help the EA consider how some of the high level priorities for the region may be delivered.

### SW LAF meeting dates until July 2008 (fixed as at November 2007)

JAN	7 <sup>th</sup> (Plymouth) 16 <sup>th</sup> (Wiltshire & Swindon) 22 <sup>nd</sup> (Cornwall) 22 <sup>nd</sup> (North Somerset)
FEB	7 <sup>th</sup> (Gloucestershire) 11 <sup>th</sup> (Devon) 20 <sup>th</sup> (Torbay) 27 <sup>th</sup> (Somerset) 29 <sup>th</sup> (Dorset)
MAR	7 <sup>th</sup> (JLAF) 10 <sup>th</sup> (Plymouth) 18 <sup>th</sup> (Cornwall)
APR	22 <sup>nd</sup> (Devon)
MAY	7 <sup>th</sup> (Somerset) 19 <sup>th</sup> (Plymouth) 20 <sup>th</sup> (Cornwall) 21 <sup>st</sup> (Torbay)
JUNE	12 <sup>th</sup> (Gloucestershire) 13 <sup>th</sup> (Dorset)
JULY	4 <sup>th</sup> (JLAF) 23 <sup>rd</sup> (Torbay) 29 <sup>th</sup> (Cornwall)

### Website

Contact details for all the SW LAFs are on the Natural England website [http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Access/LAF/s\\_west/south\\_west\\_lafs.asp](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Access/LAF/s_west/south_west_lafs.asp)  
Venue and meeting details are posted on the websites of each forum.

**Feedback** from the national LAF meeting and the SW RoWIP meeting will be circulated shortly.

Please send items and suggestions for the next issue to Hilary Winter, Regional Coordinator, SW Region LAFs, Lucombe House, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QW. Email: [hilary.winter@devon.gov.uk](mailto:hilary.winter@devon.gov.uk)