

## **Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000:**

### **PROPOSAL FOR A LONG TERM DIRECTION BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY**

#### **SUMMARY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION Prepared by Forestry Commission**

#### **1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**Case Reference Number:** 2024030132  
**Name of site/land parcel:** Symonds Yat

**Access Authority:** Gloucestershire County Council  
**Relevant Authority:** Forestry Commission  
**Local Access Forum:** Gloucestershire Local Access Forum

The Forestry Commission has received an application under section 25 (1b) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the Act) for a direction to exclude the public from the site indicated on the attached map, in order to carry out timber harvesting operations.

Having considered the application, the Forestry Commission now proposes to give a direction on the site that would last for longer than 6 months continuously for 297 days between the 8/6/24 and 31/3/25. The Act requires us to consult publicly on all such proposals for 'long-term directions'.

This is a summary of our proposal, explaining the reasoning in support of our proposal. It is accompanied by a map of the site which can be seen on the Open Access website:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?publication\\_filter\\_option=consultations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?publication_filter_option=consultations)

To access the consultation enter "Open Access" into the free text box titled "Contains" and then filter by "Natural England" in the Department drop down. Other documents relating to the proposed direction may be inspected and copies obtained by contacting the Forestry Commission at Buller's Hill, Kennford, Nr Exeter, EX6 7XR; e-mail: [cca@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:cca@forestrycommission.gov.uk).

## **2. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY PROPOSAL**

### **i) Summary of proposed direction to restrict access**

Long term full restriction

### **ii) Why is a statutory restriction necessary?**

On public safety grounds

### **iii) What is lowest level of restriction required?**

Full exclusion of public access

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE APPLICATION FOR OUTLINE DIRECTION OF LONG TERM CLOSURE**

### **Symonds Yat rockfall: Access restriction and justification**

#### Background:

A large rockfall occurred between 08/08/23 and 09/08/23 from a section of Symonds Yat cliff above Royal Lodge Hotel. The technical rockfall barrier, originally installed to mitigate against rockfalls above the buildings below, was breached and unable to prevent further passage of material downwards with one large block coming to rest against the kitchen of the hotel. Areas of the rockface have also been deemed to be unsafe due to loose material and root jacking.

A CROW and PROW restriction were sought, and granted, to allow us to make emergency temporary repairs to the mitigation barrier and commission a rockfall risk assessment report and subsequently undertake the various recommendations.

A further restriction has been sought to implement the long term recommendations of the external report, whilst the risks remain high to those accessing the land and those residing downhill from it.



Reasons for further restriction of access:

The rockfall risk assessment compiled by Hydrock Consultants Ltd gave four distinct recommendations.

- Restriction of access along the PROW known as the “ambulance track”. This PROW is currently closed by an order and we are looking at a permanent diversion.
- Replacement of the current mitigation barrier with a larger, more substantial barrier.
- Scaling works to remove loose blocks in a controlled manner.
- Vegetation removal to prevent further “root jacking” caused by trees growing on the face and crest of the cliff.

A copy of the risk assessment can be made available to Natural England and Forest Services upon request.

Justification:

In order to undertake this large-scale project Forestry England must apply for capital funding, the work must be properly planned and process following public sector procurement regulations will need to take place. Works in this area can be further complicated by nesting peregrine falcons which require a large exclusion zone around the nest site and would preclude any disturbance

within an exclusion zone of 600 – 1000m during the nesting season.

It is paramount that Forestry England follows the advice of external consultants and the detailed Risk Assessment which was produced. The temporary restriction of access whilst Forestry England arranges for the long-term measures to be implemented as recommended.

Should progress be made within the CROW closure period, Forestry England will keep the closure under constant review.

### **3. SUBMITTING COMMENTS ON THE REVIEW:**

If you wish to comment on the review of this direction then you must do so before 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024 directly to the Forestry Commission at Buller's Hill, Kennford, Nr Exeter, EX6 7XR; e-mail: [cca@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:cca@forestrycommission.gov.uk).

A map accompanies this notice and can be seen on the Open Access website:

<https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations>

If, following consultation, we decide to give a long-term direction, we must formally review the decision, not more than 5 years after it is given. We may also revoke or vary the direction at any other time, if new evidence comes to light showing that the circumstances have changed.