

THE VANGUARD WAY

66 miles from Croydon to Newhaven

ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2016

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www.vanguardway.org.uk

The Vanguard Way (VGW) was devised by the Vanguards Rambling Club, launched in 1981, and is managed on behalf of the Club by the Vanguard Way Working Party (VWWP).

Overview

The VWWP continues to function effectively by means of email and verbal communication rather than meetings. The main activities in 2016 were a special event to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the launch of the VGW, and a revision of the south-north version of the route description for a new edition to be published in Spring 2017.

The route

A short stretch of completely overgrown public footpath at [Farleigh Golf Club](#) was cleared, thanks to Surrey CC.

A permissive footpath on National Trust land now takes some of the [Oxted western link](#) off dangerous Chalkpit Lane. We are supporting the North Downs Way trail officer in investigating whether this can be extended.

Surrey CC agreed to keep a stretch of verge beside [Titsey Road](#) clear of vegetation to provide a safer route for walkers.

An unexpected problem occurred when it was discovered that part of the [Westerham link](#), shared with the Greensand Way, was not a right of way and had no permissive agreement. We understand that this has now been sorted and there will be a permissive bridleway here – thanks to Kent CC and the Squerryes estate for this.

A massive fallen tree that had completely blocked a public footpath on the link with the [Grasshopper Inn](#) for several months has now been removed – thanks to Surrey CC.

The application for a proposed [DPD distribution depot at Moorhouse](#) has been resubmitted and a decision is awaited. If this goes ahead, it would increase traffic in the area and we have asked for additional pedestrian protection at the point where the VGW crosses the A25.

The diversion between [Slines and High Hurstwood](#) is still in force. It is a pleasant route and we are considering whether it should be made permanent.

We responded to the Department for Transport's [consultation for the A27](#), on which at present the VGW must use an unprotected crossing into Berwick village. An improvement has been proposed that will benefit Berwick residents as well as VGW walkers.

The [new railway bridge at Newhaven](#) was opened in April and the temporary diversion is no longer necessary.

Completions and events

Following on the special crossing in 2015 by the Vanguard's Rambling Club to celebrate its golden jubilee, another special occasion, the [35th anniversary of the launch of the VGW](#), took place on 3 May 2016 with a walk across the Ashdown Forest to Gills Lap, where the original launch was performed in 1981 by Alan Mattingly, General Secretary of the Ramblers Association. On this occasion, the tape was cut by Ramblers' current president Kate Ashbrook, herself a member of the Vanguard's.

Fifteen individuals have so far applied for completion certificates for 2016, including three who tackled it as their Duke of Edinburgh Diamond Challenge. It takes some people a while to make a claim, so no doubt we'll hear of more over the coming months. And we know that many more walk all or part of the route but don't bother to let us know, including Ramblers' groups and walking clubs, and our website receives thousands of visits each year.

Three [running events](#) use parts of the VGW, though they have no connection with the Vanguard's Rambling Club. The annual Weald Challenge Trail Races took place on Sunday 29 May 2016, following parts of the VGW and the Wealdway from Chiddingly. The 21.1 km half marathon event was completed by 249 runners, while 152 completed the 50km ultra event. The Fourth Annual Vanguard Way Marathon took place on Sunday 7 August 2016, when 150 runners followed the 42.2 km course along the VGW from Lloyd Park to Limpsfield Chart and back. Sadly the 48 km Croydon Ultra along countryside trails within Croydon borough, including parts of the VGW, had to be cancelled in 2016 due to the serious illness of a relative of the organiser.

Website and blog

We regularly receive compliments about the high standard of our website www.vanguardway.org.uk and the quality of the route instructions and other information that can be downloaded there, so if you haven't done so, please take a look.

The blog shows comments and photos we receive from VGW walkers and can be found at <http://vanguardwayblog.blogspot.co.uk>. It's not only for those who walk the VGW – if you have any nice photos taken along the route please email vanguardwayblog@gmail.com.

Looking Forward

An **alternative route** is being investigated in the Edenbridge and Haxted area, to avoid several sections of road walking totalling about 3 km.

A **new version of the VGW south-north version** is to be published in Spring 2017. Check our website www.vanguardway.org.uk for further information.

The **British Walking Federation** has made the VGW one of their permanent long distance routes. This enables its members to walk the route at any time and claim 106 km towards the IVV distance awards – for an explanation see www.bwf-ivv.org.uk/about/About%20us.html.

The Weald Challenge Trail Races, organised by Trail Running Sussex, will take place again on Sunday 28 May 2017; further information from www.trailrunningsussex.co.uk/trailraces.html.

The Fifth Annual Vanguard Way Marathon, organised by 1m2go, will take place on Sunday 6 August 2017; further information from www.1m2go.co.uk/races/vanguard-way-marathon.

The Croydon Ultra will not place this year.

Vanguard Way Working Party

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For further information please email colin@vanguardway.org.uk or phone 020 8886 8285 or 07768 453159. Full details of the Vanguard Way can be found at www.vanguardway.org.uk.