



Community Rights Of Way Service

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2019 - 20 Annual Review

Our achievements this year

Our work mainly came from reported issues through our on-line system and Facebook. We also carried out improvements to routes used for published walks.

During the year we worked three days a week and had **148 work parties with just under 1000 volunteer days.**

Major achievements this year include:

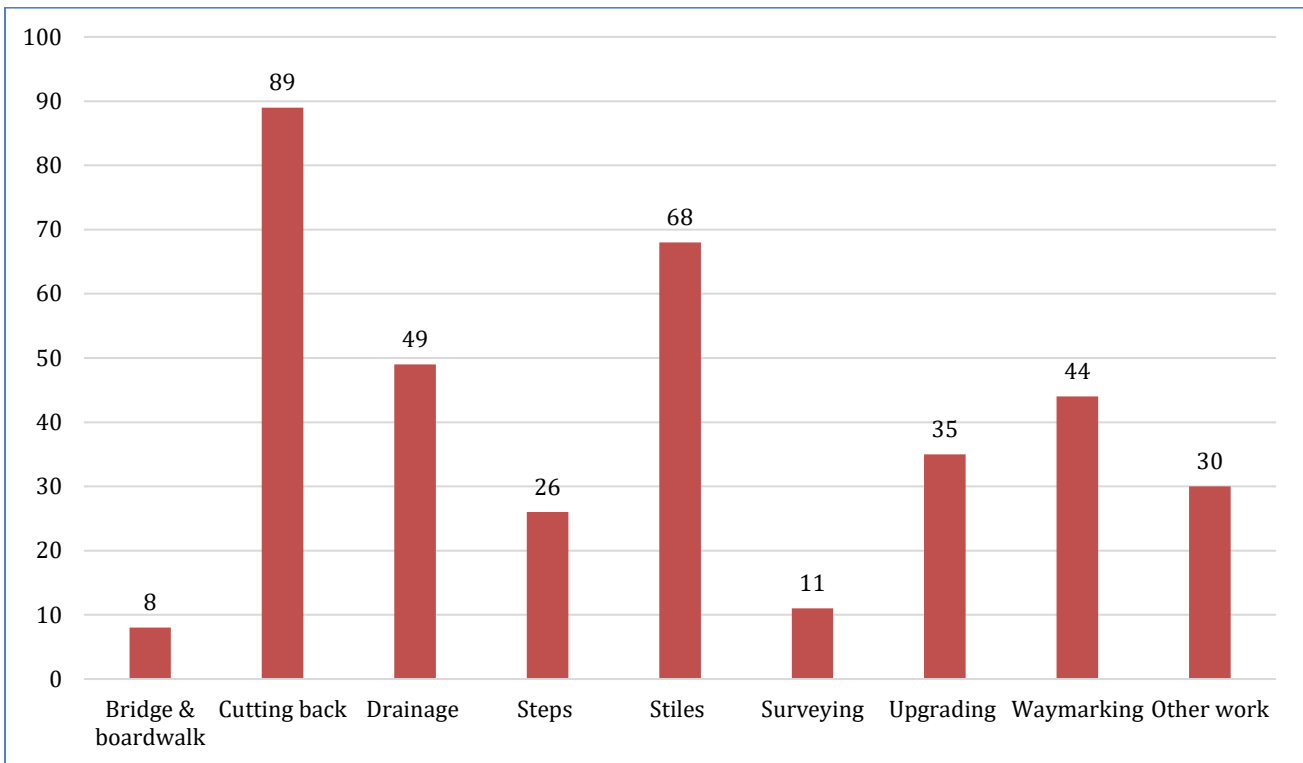
- Recruiting several new people to make a team of 28 (18 men and 10 women)
- Setting up draw-down funding with 2 Parish Councils and Calderdale Highways
- Being the Hebden Royd Mayor's charity, providing funding for work next year
- Working with Sowerby Residents' Association on neglected paths in their area
- Revamping all our IT systems which are essential to the organisation functioning effectively (thanks to Ian Whitehead of Calder Computers).

Some details about our work this year

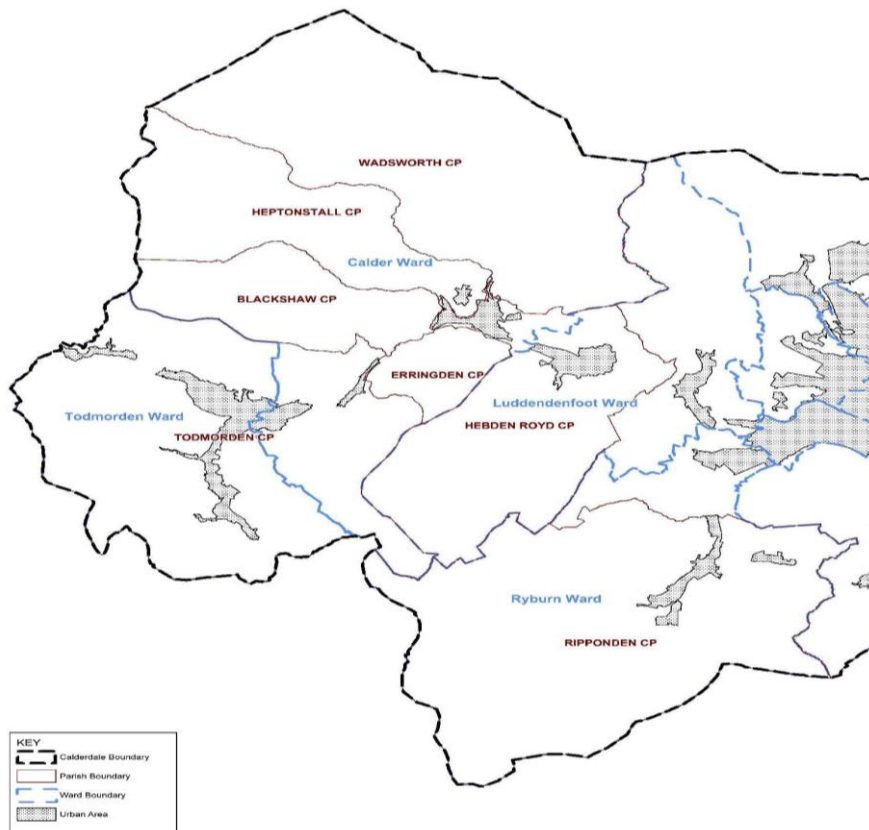
On the next few pages there is a more detailed breakdown of the types of jobs we have done, the places where we worked, some highlights from the year's work and other end of year information about CROWS.

Types of work

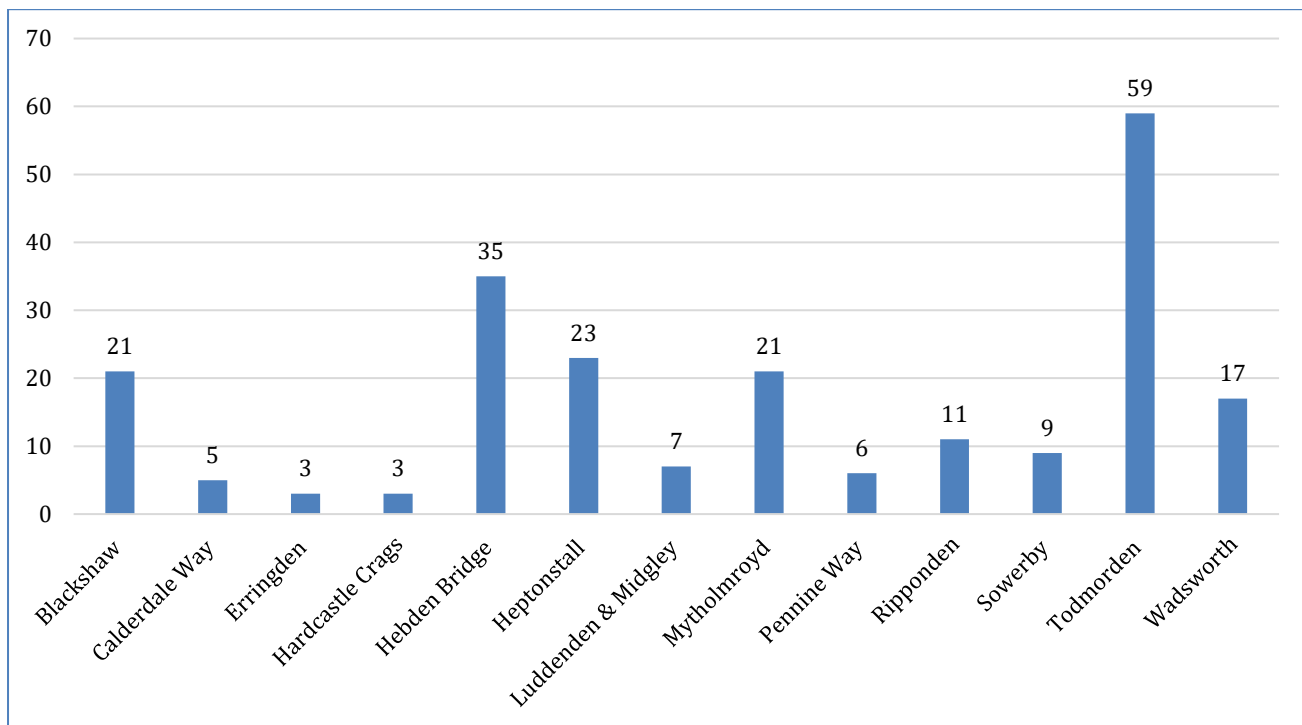
This gives an idea of the range of work we do; the figures represent the number of tasks completed.



Where we work



This bar chart shows the number of work parties in each part of our area.



Some significant completed projects

Much of our work is routine (cutting back vegetation, sorting out drainage problems, fixing wobbly stiles), but during the year we have taken on a number of larger projects, some of which are shown here.



We created a set of steps so that residents of **Dodd Naze estate** (above Hebden Bridge) could access the main road and the railway station.



In **Jumble Hole Clough** we cleared the vegetation off one of the finest set of stone steps around the area - more like archaeology!



We improved several routes above **Mytholmroyd** which were part of local children's walks and the newly published 'Discovering Ted Hughes trail'



Todmorden 'There and Back' routes were all refurbished – including cutting back and path widening (before and after photo)



In **Sowerby** this fine setted path at the back of Ryburn Valley High School was covered in mulch with encroaching brambles



We completed improvements on the paths that run down from the tops into **Hardcastle Crag** – cutting back, widening, drainage and stiles.

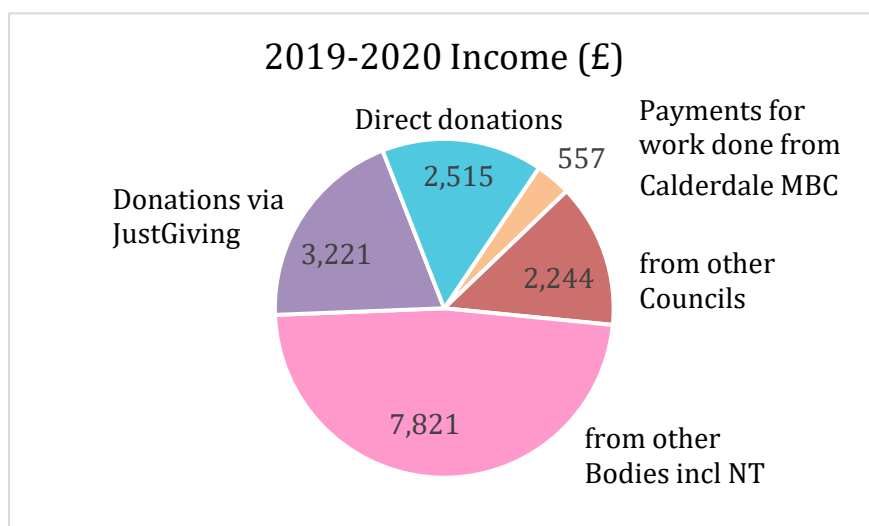
There are loads more photos on our blog where we record every work party. You can find out what we have been doing in your local area by using the Blog labels under 'Places Worked'.

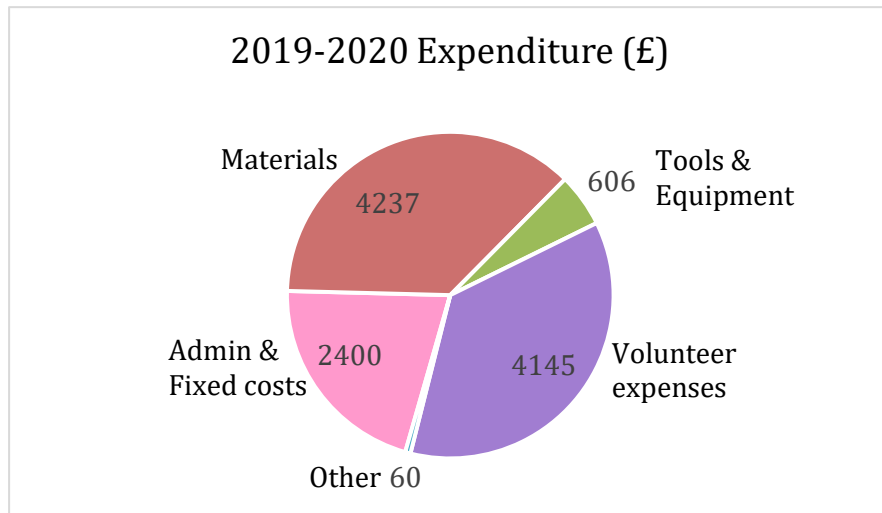
Funding and Finances

Although we receive no regular funding, organisations and individuals have again generously supported our work during the year.

We have had a dramatic increase in **individual donations**, including a successful JustGiving campaign for the Dodd Naze steps. These donations help us feel more secure and show that our work is appreciated. Organisations who funded us include:

- **Calderdale Highways** for several jobs that the public had reported to them
- **Calderdale Small Grants** for improving paths for walking to Gaddings
- **Cornholme Xmas wreath making group** for the repair of paths in Cornholme
- **Community Foundation for Calderdale** for post-flooded depot help
- **Halifax Sea Scouts** for working on the route of the 'Hebden' annual event
- **Heptonstall and Blackshaw Parish Councils** for work on their local paths
- **Hebden Bridge & Mytholmroyd Walkers Action** for repairing published routes
- **Hebden Royd Town Council** for work on several paths in Mytholmroyd and Hebden Bridge
- **Heptonstall Fell Race** for funding stile repairs
- **Huddersfield University** for repairs to the three 'Discovering Ted Hughes' trails
- **Luddenden Civic Trust** for work on paths around Luddenden
- **National Trust** for improving access paths to Hardcastle Crags
- **Ripponden Parish Council** for an initial survey of paths in the area
- **Ripponden Ward Forum** for several projects in the area
- **Sowerby Residents Association** for work on local paths
- **Todmorden Town Council** for repairs to 'There and Back' routes
- **Wadsworth Camera Club** for work on paths in Wadsworth





Other support

- We remain very grateful for the expertise and crucial guidance from Jan Gibson at **Calderdale Highways**. Without his advice and support, we would struggle.
- We continue to have use of the **White Ribbon** premises in Mytholmroyd which provides a great base for our work. Moving will present us with a real challenge.
- **CALVAG** continue to provide an excellent service, responding to all our requests, sometimes at very short notice and in remote locations.
- **Ian Whitehead from Calder Computers** who supports our website, blog and IT systems, and who has taken us through major changes this year.
- **Graham Ramsden** who keeps our Facebook page up to date.
- **Ian Vickridge** for being our treasurer and making sure our accounts all balance.
- **Calderdale Countryside Service** for making finger posts for us.
- **Ian Clarkson** for helping us deal with large trees across paths.
- **The Robin Hood**, Cragg Vale for hosting our meetings and providing great soup!
- **Frank H, Ken and Gerald** who have maintained our depot at White Ribbon
- **Runners and walkers** without whom we could not have managed to get the timbers to the site of the bridge at Noah Dale.
- **Karl's Kitbag**, based in Mytholmroyd provide us with badged work gear

Last, but not least, CROWS volunteers who come out every week – we love our work.



Our profile

- The website has had about 6000 visitors during the year.
- The Blog has been further developed during the year and forms a unique public record of all of our work. The blog was visited 1,000 times a month.
- The Facebook page had a reach of 15,000 people with over 250 regular followers. We have successfully used Facebook to rally help and support for specific projects.

Finances

We start 2020-2021 with a good balance of free reserves.

This will secure our base costs for twelve months and hopefully provide enough funding to move premises and absorb the extra costs for 2020.

Future plans

We will start this year with a backlog of work identified during the period of shutdown. We also have two large projects in the pipeline

- Work on **Hebden Royd** paths, thanks to mayor's fund
- **Pennine Way** refurbishment for Natural England
- Three major pieces of work in the **Todmorden** area

We will be working up three possible initiatives:

- Dealing with problems identified by surveys in the Ripponden, Barkisland and Stainland areas
- A comprehensive survey of the published woodland paths
- Our on-line system for reporting issues needs publicising to create greater traffic

In the last 5 years we have doubled in size and current structures and ways of working need to change. We have initiated a comprehensive **organisational review** to look at how we need to develop and sustain our organisation.

Our depot is in the basement of White Ribbon House in Mytholmroyd. Two floods and a change of use of the building means **we need to move in the coming year**. We aim to stay in Mytholmroyd, if possible as it is in the centre of our area. This will be a major challenge in the coming year, not only finding suitable premises, but testing our ability to absorb substantial increased costs.



Gerald King, one of the CROWS from Todmorden died in March.

Gerald joined us from the very start.

Gerald taught us lots of things including the need to stop and recite poetry when we had a break.

He was a fine man, an inspiration and will be sorely missed.