



## **CORDITE WAY: FIRST SECTION OFFICIALLY OPEN**

On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the Poole Harbour Trails Community Group (PHTCG) was pleased to welcome local MP Vikki Slade, local Councillors and stakeholders to the official opening of the Cordite Way, Phase 1 footpath.

The Cordite Way route uses existing rights of way from Sandford, via Holton Heath station and the Holton Heath Trading Estate, and a newly-designated footpath towards the former Rockley Jetty opposite Rockley Sands.

The new footpath alongside Poole Harbour crosses lands owned by Jade-Aden and land leased from the Lees Estate. Due to a missing bridge across the mainline railway, only the Phase 1 section to the former bridge site is currently open until the mainline railway bridge is replaced during Phase 2.

Supervised by Dorset Council's Senior Ranger, development of the new footpath involved extensive clearance work by volunteers. Clearance of deep mulch and debris by the main ditch was sponsored by Jade-Aden. Drainage, information boards and benches were the subject of a grant from Wareham St Martin Solar Community Fund.

After 1200 hours of voluntary work since September 2023 by PHTCG and Friends of the Cordite Way (FoCW), the new Phase 1 footpath was officially opened by Vikki Slade. This was followed by a group walk through scenic woodlands to two new viewpoints overlooking Gull Islands with Arne Peninsular and Purbeck as backdrops.

Vikki Slade said 'This is a significant contribution to providing access to green spaces for wellbeing and health. I look forward to its continued development to support local active travel'.

Andy Hadley, PHTCG Chairman & BCP Councillor, added that 'Completion of this significant milestone has provided us with the impetus to start development of Phase 2 to Rockley Jetty. Once completed, we will progress Phase 3 that connects Purbeck via the Cordite Way with Hamworthy and onward links to other strategic active travel routes in SE Dorset. New volunteers are always welcome'.

Beryl Ezzard, stated 'It has taken 15 long arduous years to achieve with brilliant teamwork of the Poole Harbour Trails, Friends of the Cordite Way group and the Parish Council, not forgetting the Lees Estate and Jade-Aden. We would not have the Cordite Way to enjoy today without that commitment'.

Aden Gibson, Jade-Aden representative, noted that 'The Cordite Way has not only an interesting historical background but is a lovely walk and we at Jade-Aden are happy to support this important community project'.

Nick Ireland, Dorset Council's Leader, commented 'A new Right of Way is a rare occurrence these days. As a strong advocate of active travel, Dorset Council is proud to support the Cordite Way's ongoing development'.

### **About the Cordite Way**

The Cordite Way is named after the former Royal Naval Cordite Factory (RNCF) at Holton Heath and associated Admiralty railway line that linked it to Rockley Jetty.

The new footpath closely follows the former Admiralty railway line that took cordite, the propellant used in naval gun shells during both World Wars, for sea transfer to Chatham and Gosport to the shell filling factories. Sea transfer changed to rail transport in 1938 when threats from sea attack were foreseen. The RNCF began production in 1916 and closed in 1957.

Further details: website: <http://www.pooleharbourtrails.org.uk>; email: [pooleharbourtrails@gmail.com](mailto:pooleharbourtrails@gmail.com)

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