



Get a Grip!

Issue 33 introduced the new Path Demonstration Site at Battleby, near Perth. Here we take a closer look at the techniques available to help reduce the slipperiness of timber boardwalks and bridges - many of which can be seen at Battleby. Until recently, timber was the favoured material for boardwalks, providing structures that blend sensitively with their surroundings. However, when timber is installed in continuously damp or shaded places, or gets covered by wet or decaying vegetation, the ideal conditions for algae growth are created and slippery surfaces can ensue!

Solutions for improving slip resistance include:

- Grooved decking boards - an economical answer. To facilitate draining, the boards should be installed with a slight fall and grooves running across the boardwalk. Grooves should be kept free of debris to maintain a free draining surface



- Bauxite chip impregnated glass reinforced plastic (GRP) resin anti-slip strips - offer durable and excellent slip resistant surface. Each anti-slip strip is simply screw fixed onto existing or new timber decking boards through pre-drilled holes



- Grooved or smooth timber decking board with coarse aggregate chip anti-slip strip insert set into centrally positioned routed channel to create a durable and effective non-slip surface

- Flexible bauxite impregnated GRP sheet which is fixed as a continuous surface with glue or screws to the existing or new timber decking boards
- Anti-slip paint / tar. The paint contains fragments of rubber, sand or grit. Epoxy tar spray is spread with grit after laying.



Chicken wire - that old chestnut

People have often stapled galvanised chicken wire or rabbit netting to the boards. Drawbacks include time-consuming installation, difficulty in replacing boards, and holes in the netting develop easily presenting a potential trip hazard. Care should be exercised in the use of this technique.



If renewing timber boardwalks, then consider replacement with recycled plastic. Recycled plastic is available as either grooved or rough finished decking boards. Plastic decking boards have a textured surface, do not support algae, and as a result provide a greater degree of slip-resistance. For more information contact: kevin.fairclough@pathsforall.org.uk