

Footpath Warden report - Town Council meeting 28 February 2017

1 Footpaths update and specific path issues

1.1 Work undertaken

Since the November 2016 meeting, I have again walked all of the rights of way in the town, on many occasions with Catherine Hawkins. The major actions we have undertaken are:

- limited trimming of nettles and brambles, and pruning back bush and tree growth
- FP1/1a - to address concerns about the state of the steps taking the path across the A47, Tony raised the ownership of the land with Highways England, and “as a good will gesture without prejudice until the owner of the asset can be properly identified”, Highways England cleared the land which we think is theirs, and rebuilt the steps to an excellent standard
- RB3 - I have been pressing NCC for action on this, but without progress to date*
- FP6 and FP7 - NCC has agreed to put in waymarks at Etling Green on FP6, and erected a fingerpost on RB28 where FP7 leaves it, but this has been challenged by the landowner as the lay of the land prevents the finger from pointing accurately along the path*
- FP14 - NCC’s contractor has cleared the legal line of the path along the school fence to a good standard, though it awaits better signing
- FP14a - in association with The Ramblers, Catherine and I renewed some 50m of wire netting along the boardwalk, where the previous mesh had disintegrated
- FP14a - work had started on getting permission from Natural England to extend the boardwalk (it’s in a SSSI), but this has been halted as the ground concerned seems less susceptible to muddiness than previously; plans are instead being developed to fill the scouring of the path near to Stone Road, where floodwater from the road has eroded the ground
- RB28 - following contact with Mark Webster of The Conservation Volunteers, plans are in hand to dig out the stumps that present a tripping hazard in the byway early in May
- RB30 - I am also exploring with Mark Webster plans to cut back the hedge along the path near to Swanton Road, which currently leaves very little space for the path (there is deep and steep sided ditch on the other side)
- FP34 - Mark Webster has also offered The Conservation Volunteers’ support to clear some of this path from time to time
- unnamed track - the track from which we reported the clearance of a tree last time has been cleared of a further tree again

A summary of outstanding issues is given below (my classifications).

footpath issues	current number and %		November 2016	
1 legal minimum not met	8	13.8%	8	11.0%
2 significant improvement needed	10	17.2%	10	16.4%
3 improvement welcome	15	25.9%	17	27.4%
4 for future action	5	8.6%	5	6.8%
5 no action needed	20	34.5%	26	38.4%
total	58	100.0%	66	100.0%

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Using the NCC formula for assessing the value of work undertaken by volunteers (£20 per hour), the value of work done from 18 November 2016 to 14 February 2017 was £625 - details below. Monitoring is calculated as time spent, regardless of the number of people; work done is calculated as person-hours.

Work and monitoring per hour @ £ 20

From	18 November 2016		
To	14 February 2017		
Work done	12.40	hours,	value £ 253.33
Monitoring	18.35	hours,	value £ 371.67
Total	31.15	hours,	value £ 625.00

1.2 Fingerposts and waymarkers

I still plan to prepare a full report on the state of signage on all of our paths, with a view to seeking discussion with NCC on action needed, and will aim to present this to a future meeting.

Signage	current number	Nov 16
fingerpost absent	2	2
disk needed	2	3
fingerpost dislodged or obscured	3	1
disk, should be fingerpost	5	5
disk on tree, needs post	0	0
disk would be helpful	3	3
fingerpost ok	25	25
disk(s) ok	15	15
path obstructed	3	3
no signage needed	18	19
total	76	76

2 NCC Path cutting and clearance

There has been no change regarding the cutting programme over the winter, but I am expecting (via The Ramblers) to be involved in the preparation of the 2017 programme, so will be monitoring the plans for Dereham when they emerge.

3 Claims for paths not currently recognised as rights of way

There has been no change in the claims for Cherry Lane, Hall Lane and connecting tracks (nor would that be expected for some time yet).

The group comprising The Ramblers, the British Horse Society and Open Spaces Society, which is trying to co-ordinate a county wide approach to claims to beat the 2026 cut off, is still working to attract volunteers to this work; a second workshop has been arranged for 18 March.

On behalf of The Ramblers, I have developed contacts with UEA (which is looking to support this work) and Norfolk Record Office (which has agreed to provide a familiarity session for people unsure about using the records).

Once the process for confirming/reviewing byelaws regarding Neatherd Moor and Etling Green is agreed with/by Breckland District Council and being implemented, there will be need to consider whether RBs 28, 32 and 33 should be promoted as

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restricted byways (they are currently suitable only for walkers, cyclists and horse riders).

4 Badley Moor

I await news of the installation of the access gate, as agreed between Natural England, DTC and the landowner.

5 Walkers are Welcome

Kate Millbank has had difficulties attending meetings recently, and I gather that Linda Goreham has agreed to step in; she is your 'official' representative here, so I will mention only a couple of items. (Minutes of meetings are sent to Tony and can be obtained from him or me.)

- We have produced an Annual Report, to be presented to a public meeting on 8 June - all councillors invited and welcome.
- There was a successful New Year's Day (Bolo Rei) Walk, which attracted 30 bookings.
- Plans are in hand for a Simnel Cake Walk on 15 April (Easter Saturday) and a family event (Walking in Wonderland) on 17 April.
- We are working on extending the pack of 4 initial walks (plus the two linked to the Mid-Norfolk Railway) with 4 or 5 further walks starting in Dereham but crossing the boundary (!), and 2 or 3 using Konect buses on a 'bus out, walk back' basis.
- Full information about WaW is on our website, which has been much developed and extended - <http://www.DerehamWaW.org.uk>.

6 Longer term projects

No developments

**Ken Hawkins, Footpath Warden, Dereham Town Council
22 February 2017**