

Footpath Warden report

for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting

27 November 2018

Many of the activities described in this report have drawn extensively on the support of colleagues within Dereham Walkers are Welcome. The following abbreviations are used: FP - Footpath; BR - Bridleway; RB - Restricted Byway; NCC - Norfolk County Council; DTC - Dereham Town Council; PRoW - Public Rights of Way; WaW - Walkers are Welcome

1 Footpaths update and specific path issues

1.1 General report

There has been no change in the overall state of the town's public rights of way since my July report. A summary of issues is shown below.

footpath issues	current number and %		September 2018	
1 legal minimum not met	4	10.5%	4	10.5%
2 significant improvement needed	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3 improvement welcome	3	7.9%	3	7.9%
4 for future action	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
5 no action needed	31	81.6%	31	81.6%
total	38	100.0%	38	100.0%

The four cases where the legal minimum is not met are:

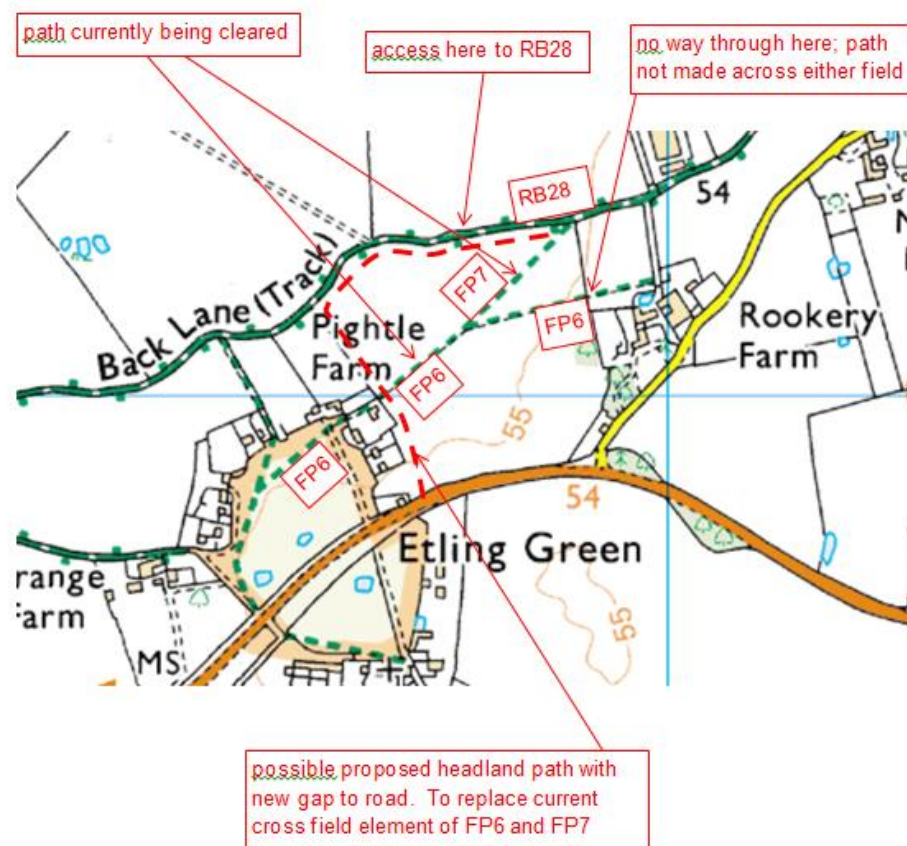
- 1 FP2 - a failure to establish the path along the headland of the northern part of this field edge path. *I continue to press for action from NCC to ensure this path is established and maintained; there have been improvements on the southern part of this path.*
- 2 RB3 - the long standing unavailability of this route, which was ploughed out many years ago. *NCC has resisted doing anything about this while the northern end joined a track which was not a right of way; that track has now been legally recognised as a Restricted Byway (one of those claimed by the Town Council), and I am pressing for consideration of a diversion or enforcement to bring a route back into use.*
- 3 FP6 - the long standing unavailability of the eastern segment of this route towards Rookery Farm. *The landowner here has taken steps to maintain the western part of this path across his field (including FP7 which then connects with RB28). It would be fairly easy to establish the eastern section as far as the edge of the field, but there is then a further field to cross, into which there is no gap in the hedge; that further field has been used for horses, and there is no exit from it for the path, and that exit is on to a track which is not recognised as a public right of way. See 1.2 below.*
- 4 FP9 - the long standing unavailability of this path, which is highly overgrown and ends at the parish boundary with Swanton Morley. *I have not sought to bring this path into use as (1) the continuation into Swanton Morley is in the same physical state and is not recognised as a public right of way, and (2) access to the southern end (in Dereham) is from Swanton Road along a*

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section which is sinuous, and has no speed restriction or footway.

1.2 Specific work

- 1 FP14 - In addition to a litter pick (the attention promised by the school did not materialise), half a day was spent by Tim Birt and myself in removing four branches of a tree which had sagged across the path and were prevented from further falling only by the school boundary fence.
- 2 FP6/7 - The landowner has sought views on a proposal to take FP6 and FP7 out of use where they cross his field, and in return he would (1) provide a route around the field headlands on the west and north sides, and (2) make a new path south along the west headland, exiting on to Norwich Road. Dereham Walkers are Welcome has reviewed this and has mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, there is sympathy with a landowner who wishes to simplify managing his land, and there is no doubt he is positive towards people walking across his land appropriately. On the other hand, (1) there is no guarantee that this positivity will continue from his successors, so there would be need for formal, legal, processes to establish any new routes, (2) along the northern edge, the diverted path would run in parallel with RB28 and likely come under pressure to be diverted onto RB28, and (3) accepting the diversion would effectively mean accepting that the very eastern end of FP6 would be lost. It should also be noted that the process of legal diversion or closure involves inviting public objections, and it is thought likely that the Open Spaces Society and possibly The Ramblers would object.



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1.3 Value of work

We have recorded time spent by all volunteers on the PRow. NCC values work undertaken on its Norfolk Trails network by volunteers at £20 per hour; using this basis, we calculate the value of this activity as £1423 so far this financial year.

Work and monitoring per hour @ £ 20

From	13 April 2018		
To	28 October 2018		
Work done	65.45 hours,	value £	1315.00
Monitoring	14.25 hours,	value £	288.33
Total	80.10 hours,	value £	1603.33

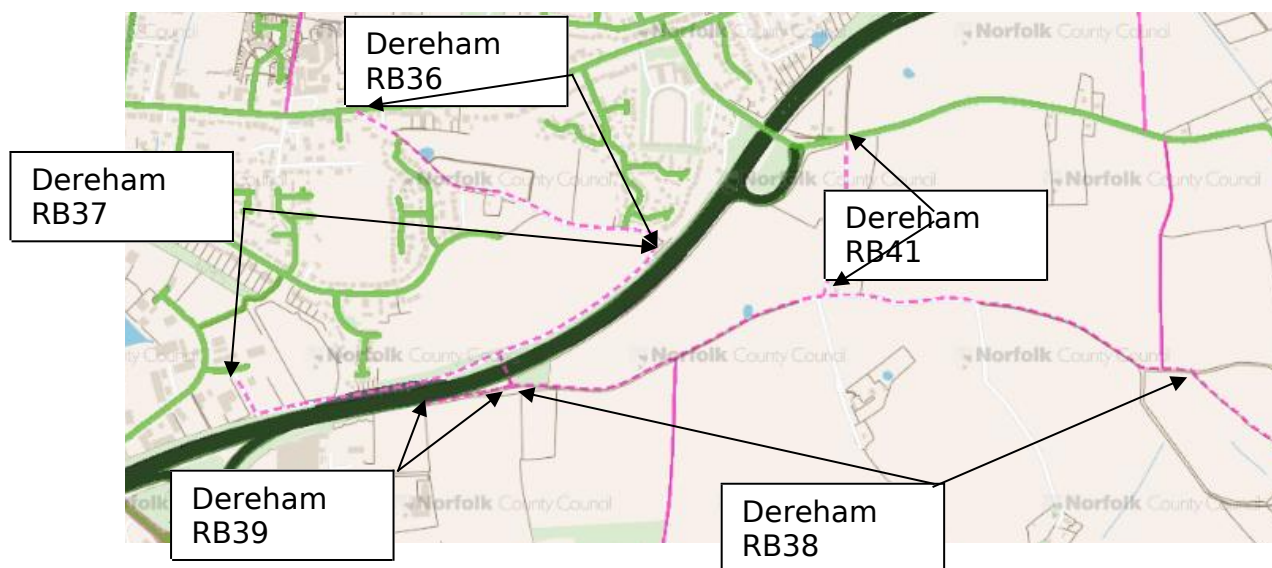
Monitoring is calculated as time spent, regardless of the number of people

Work is calculated as person-hours

The total value of work since recording began (February 2017) is £6980.

1.4 New routes

The claims for 6 RBs along Cherry Lane, Hall Lane and connecting tracks have now been confirmed, and the routes displayed both on the County's interactive map (<http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/>) and the relevant Definitive Maps. They are numbered RB36-41 as shown below; RB40 is the bridge, connecting RB37 to RB38/39. I am pressing NCC for dates as to when signage, and any other work needed, will be programmed.



2 **Walkers are Welcome**

2.1 Dereham Walkers are Welcome has been grateful for the continuing support of DTC in its work, and for the involvement of Linda Goreham at most of its meetings. Minutes of meetings are sent to Tony (and Linda) and can be obtained from him or me.

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2.2 Walks

We continue to arrange public walks as our main external activity. So far this year, we have arranged the following events

- 1 January: *New Year's Day Walk* - a walk taking in Dumpling Green, Dereham Windmill and Little Neatherd, ending at The George Hotel for refreshments
- 31 March: *A Potter round the Neatherd* - A treasure hunt for all the family, attracting a dozen hardy children and their families in spite of the atrocious weather
- 2 April: *Yaxham MNR Walk* - a train ride to Yaxham, walking back through the Tud Valley and past Badley Moor (also in poor weather), ending at the Railway Station for refreshments
- 28 May: *Fens & Meadows Walk* - taking in Scarning Water Meadows, Potter's Fen, Scarning Fen and Rush Meadow, concluding again at The George Hotel for refreshments
- 16 June: *Etling Green Walk* - a short walk to Etling Green, followed by our Annual Public Meeting (including refreshments, of course!)
- 29 July: *Town walk* - a tour of any of Dereham's historic sites, led by Dorothy Sneesby, a new venture which went well (we hope to repeat and develop this idea, possibly in conjunction with Dereham Antiquarian Society), finishing with a visit to the Mid-Norfolk Railway, which provided refreshments
- 27 August: *New Routes Walk* - covering all of the newly acknowledged Restricted Byways in the town, and ending at the Windmill for refreshments
- 30 September: *Hoe Rough Walk* - a walk to the north of the town, passing through Hoe and the edge of Beetley, ending with refreshments at Smile (formerly New Flavours)
- 22 October: *Gressenhall Walk* - starting (and ending with refreshments) at Gressenhall Museum, this walk entered the north of Dereham before circumnavigating Gressenhall village

Next to come ...

- 1 January 2019: *New Year's Day Walk* - a route in the Tud Valley, ending with seasonal refreshments at one of our members' house

2.3 Walk packs

The 3000 packs printed at the beginning of the year are now almost all gone, and we are starting to look for funding for a third (and perhaps final) print.

**Ken Hawkins, Footpath Warden, Dereham Town Council
23 November 2018**