

Community Access Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting on 25 October 2022



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; BDC - Breckland District Council
DTC - Dereham Town Council; PRoW - Public Rights of Way; WaW - Walkers are Welcome

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Requested action

1 General report - led walks

Since August, WaW short walks have continued on the first Friday of every month, and are planned to do so through 2022. We also held longer walks on 25 August (ending with a garden party kindly hosted by Cllr Morton) and 12 October (bus to North Elmham and walk back).

to note

We also completed our planned trio of town walks in association with Dereham Heritage Trust, started on 9 July, with a History theme. The next was on 20 August (Industrial Heritage), with a Georgian Dereham walk planned for Heritage Open Days week, to tie in with the Paston and Fenn events taking place throughout the year; the demand for the last was so great that we ran it twice, on 12 and 17 September, both times fully booked. We are considering reviewing the guide booklets for all of these town walks with a view to making them available for sale as self guided tours.

2 Path issues

In this update, reference is made where applicable to Frances Salway (NCC Countryside Access Officer) and Adam Hinchliffe (Norfolk Trails).

- 1 **FP2** - I have sought an update from Frances Salway who had agreed to follow up with the landowner the repeated failure to establish the path along the headland of the northern part of this field edge path.
- 2 **RB3** - I have sought an update from Frances Salway who had agreed to meet the landowner regarding the long standing unavailability of this route, which was ploughed out many years ago.
- 3 **FP14** - A recent visit showed no evidence of wasps, but also none of warning signs. It would appear soon to be safe to complete the clearance work started and halted. A tree

DTC to support requests to NCC for action

FS: I have not made contact with the landowner in regard to FP2 & RB3, and as discussed previously there is a need for a structure to be installed on RB3, before any direct action can be considered. KH to respond, seeking clarification - why no action on FP2? who initiates the 'structure' on RB3 and when?

to note

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has also fallen across the path which may require NCC action.

- 4 **FP14a** - the boardwalk is damaged and dangerous; NCC is aware and has plans to repair it. The preferred plan to replace it with a permanent hard surface has been rejected by Natural England; Adam Hinchliffe reports that NCC is again seeking the consents needed to enable the boardwalk to be repaired or replaced. I still hope that my request that the boardwalk be extended a few metres south to cover a patch that gets very muddy in wet weather will be included.

- 5 **RB32 (Shillings Lane)** - I understand that Tony has now been able to commission work to improve the surface and deal with flooding at a cost of around £30k, shared equally with NCC. I gather that work should be started around now.

I have asked Adam Hinchliffe for an update on the possible encroachment on to this byway by the developers, and the potential implications for flooding.

*There was a separate agenda items on this, which I missed. Tony's agenda note reads: **Update on the surfacing of Shillings Lane.** The work to improve the surface of Shillings Lane is due to start in the next week. This work is jointly funded by Dereham Town Council and Norfolk County Council and was designed to connect to the surfacing works to be carried out by Taylor Wimpey to connect their current site to the FP10 at the Neatherd car park. While the works to be carried out by Taylor Wimpey were requested by NCC who provided Breckland with a form of words to be included in the 106 agreement. Unfortunately Breckland Council neglected to include these works in the 106 agreement, so it is going to be difficult for Breckland Council to compel Taylor Wimpey to do the improvement works. Councillors are being made aware as it will appear odd that the muddiest part of Shillings lane has been left unsurfaced.*

- 6 **FP34** - I am awaiting response from Adam Hinchliffe as to the timing of the work to repair the boardwalk.

Requested action

none at present, await NCC

AH: I believe we had to re-submit the Habitat Regulations Assessment for FP14a and we are waiting on a reply. Natural England have a fairly long lead time for responses now. However, I have spoken to the Internal Drainage Board who have worked with NE quite a lot and they may be able to push through an assessment, possibly for an aggregate path which would be better for maintenance. KH: I have high regard for Adam, but this directly contradicts what Russell Wilson told me some time ago - that the aggregate option had been rejected, and NCC was looking at a replacement boardwalk.

to note

dependent on feedback from Adam

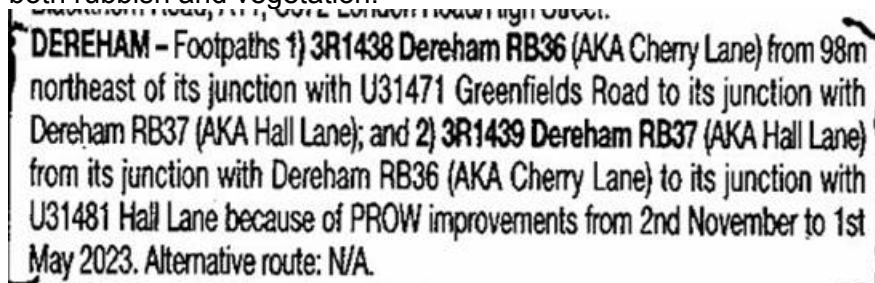
AH: RB32 – I have the map team research this path. It came back as 6m width which I thought would be quite wide, however on measuring it (from the oak tree and large ash located there) it seems the new bund does give about 6m width. It is hard to measure but I don't believe it is much of an encroachment if any. However, I do recognise that the vegetation growing from the north side is encroaching which does make it look narrower. In terms of the drain I am not sure how active it is as it may be filled with sediment over the years. However, we will review the situation, if the bund has caused flooding in the future then I can take this to the landowner and the planning authority. KH: happy to wait and see.

update awaited

AH: FP34 – The project started a couple of

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- 7 **RB36 (Cherry Lane) and RB37** - I undertook some relatively minor clearance along RB37 to make it more easily passable. NCC has recently published a Temporary Traffic Restriction Order (TTRO) from 2 November to 1 May 2023 (see below), though it does not quite make sense, as RB36 has no junction with Greenfields Road. If it is intended to mean Wheatcroft Way, it would indicate a closure that adds to the existing closure due to expire shortly, which diverted RB36 to allow for house building; the combination would then close the entire route from the windmill, past the bridge over the A47 (RB40) and on to Hall Lane. I am seeking to establish whether the 'PROW improvements' are to clear RB37 of both rubbish and vegetation.



DEREHAM - Footpaths 1) 3R1438 Dereham RB36 (AKA Cherry Lane) from 98m northeast of its junction with U31471 Greenfields Road to its junction with Dereham RB37 (AKA Hall Lane); and 2) 3R1439 Dereham RB37 (AKA Hall Lane) from its junction with Dereham RB36 (AKA Cherry Lane) to its junction with U31481 Hall Lane because of PROW improvements from 2nd November to 1st May 2023. Alternative route: N/A.

- 8 **New path to be dedicated to link RB39 with Hurn Road** - From correspondence which Tony has copied to me, my understanding of the position is as follows.
- A planning application for the storage units contained a condition that the informal path at the edge of the site would be dedicated as a bridleway; this would connect RB39 through to Hurn Road and be open to use by cyclists as well as walkers

Requested action

weeks ago now, so I hope the path will be re-opened in a couple of weeks time, the exact end date will depend on the contractors and weather but progress is going well. My colleague is visiting site soon so we will know more about the situation soon. I know the bridge that was moved has been replaced and the contractors have been working to build the timber structure. The contractor here is the Internal Drainage Board who specialise in wet areas and near rivers, which is why we are speaking to them about FP14a too. KH: good news will inspect.

awaiting advice from NCC

FS - My colleagues in our Streetworks Team have been processing the TTROs directly with Orbit Homes, so I will advise them of the errors. We funded the removal of the concrete filled tyres on RB37, as BDC did not consider this fly tipping, to facilitate the vegetation clearance work which should be carried out in December, and subsequent surfacing works. I am aware that Orbit Homes are staggering the works along sections of RB36 & RB37 so not all of the through route should be closed continuously. KH: sounds good though I'm not entirely clear exactly what is meant; will wait and see.

DTC to pursue discussions with the landowner at the earliest convenient opportunity

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- In the implementation of this condition, Breckland District Council specified a footpath rather than bridleway
- Along part of the path, encroaching vegetation from a hedge, and an uneven surface because of a small ditch in its centre, made the path awkward to use
- The vegetation was trimmed back 2 years ago, though is again growing
- New fencing has been erected along another section of the path, on the opposite side to the site, creating a very narrow corridor along which to walk; this section also includes two right angle turns, and part of it has a very rough stony surface
- A piece of fencing was erected blocking access from RB39, but this was pushed aside quite quickly; it was not known who had erected this fencing
- The storage site owner states that he left space for the path beyond his site boundary, but in the absence of boundary markers, this is not established clearly, and it seems that the adjacent landowner believes that his own land runs up to the site fence (ie including the space supposedly set aside for the path)
- The site landowner has been away and unable to progress matters
- BDC seems reluctant to deal with this (in May writing "if you are in contact with the adjacent land owner the resolution may be in your hands, without involving Planning Enforcement")

I believe that I lack the authority to resolve these issues.

3 Specific work

- 3.1 **Litter by FP13/14** The landowner (Diocese of Norwich) has removed litter from this site, but in the absence of fencing, it remains open to more being dumped. Having been informed that the Diocese would review the suggestion of erecting fencing, I have sought to follow this up, but am not getting any reply.
- 3.2 **Wending Beck Exemplar Project and FP20** Further information is awaited. Norfolk Wildlife Trust has a meeting at 7:30pm on 1 November, at The Meeting Point in Dereham about the Project (though I don't expect it to focus on FP20); open to non-members (£2.50) - <https://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on/all-events/2022-11-01-the-wending-beck-environment>.
- 3.3 **Potters Fen** - The bridge giving access to Potters Fen from Orchid Avenue has now been replaced. (My thanks to Kendra Cogman for this information and an excellent photograph.)

Requested action

DTC to approach BDC regarding enforcement of the planning obligation
KH: Tony said the storage landowner was going to put in boundary markers, and he will wait until then to make further contact.

DTC to consider making representations

KH: I will chase Diocese further. DTC offered to be involved if that didn't go further.

monitor as further information emerges

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3.4 **Maintenance** I have undertaken little clearance work recently, so am not reporting on this in detail.

4 Etling Green trod

To renew a past proposal that DTC supports a request to NCC to create a trod along the side of the road from the new cemetery to FP6 (with FP5 on the opposite side of the road), making a safe walking route connecting them.

6 Job role

As agreed, I am preparing a role description, risk assessment and proposed ID format for discussion and agreement with Tony, and am supplying him with details of two assistants - Catherine Hawkins and Joao Lourenco.

Requested action

to agree support WR - Please can NCC provide a price for installing a trod. The distance along the route is approximately 240 metres. I would be grateful if a price can be provided prior to next Tuesday evening as I believe the Town Council are considering proposals for the parish partnership scheme on the 25th of October.

KH: Will Richmond (WR) presented cost information from Norse, noting that the contractor for Shillings Lane might do it cheaper. In the event, DTC went for a number of bus shelters and deferred this to next year (which is a shame as it was suggested by me 2 or 3 years ago).

to note

accepted

Ken Hawkins, Community Access Warden, Dereham Town Council

17 October 2022

All agenda papers are available at <https://www.derehamtowncouncil.info/heritage-open-spaces-committee>.