

Community Access Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting on 28 March 2023



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

Requested action

1 General report - led walks

Since January, WaW short walks have continued on the first Friday of every month and are planned to do so through 2023. There have been no longer walks, but at the other end of the scale, we have identified a demand for very short walks (2 miles maximum) on even surfaces: these have appealed to people for whom 4 miles is too much or who find unsurfaced paths too difficult; we are planning a monthly programme of these too.

to note

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** - No change and none expected without further pressure: last report repeated here for context. *On 16 November 2022, Frances Salway told me "I have phoned and left a message for [the landowner] to contact me, and there has been no response, and on further attempts to phone, there has been no answer and no facility to leave a message. As you are aware, previous written correspondence has not received a response. I will try calling again next week." I enquired what action was possible if this continued, and Frances replied "Our only other option would be to take direct action to remove the crop, however there is a cost involved and no guarantee that we will be able to recover this costs. This is a material consideration given our limited budget."*

DTC to press NCC for action

- 2 **RB3** - No change and none expected without further pressure: last report repeated here for context. *I am not aware of any progress being made in regard to this path. I note that a year ago, Tony wrote to Phillip Duigan and Will Richmond, saying "You might want to mention to Norfolk County Council that the mood of the meeting last night was that the obstruction of RB3 has gone on for long enough and the County should not be acting reasonably towards the land owner, with reference to R v Surrey County Council ex parte*

DTC to press NCC for action

Requested action

Send parish Council.” On 16 November 2022, Frances Salway told me “[RB3] is required to cross the drain that bisects the route approximately 20m from FP26. There is a structure recorded on the 1905 OS map at this location so NCC would be responsible for its installation. ... [I]n installation of a culvert would be the most economical option, but that would require the landowner’s permission which is unlikely to be forthcoming. ... [T]he likely cost of installation of a structure to accommodate the designated use of the route [is] circa £8k to £10k, and both Members present were of the opinion that this would not be the best use of our limited budget. We would not be able to enforce the line of the RB currently, as the structure is required. That is why I was attempting to contact the landowner and establish some form of communication to try and progress this matter.”

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| 3 | FP14 - I have been unable as yet to clear the residual nettle growth and, if possible, the fallen tree on this path, but hope to do so soon. | <i>to note</i> |
| 4 | FP14a - I await progress on this by NCC to repair/replace the damaged boardwalk. | <i>await NCC</i> |
| 5 | FP19, 20 - These paths (and Hoe FP1 and FP6) are currently closed (the closure order runs to 11 April) for surfacing work in developing this route as a Jubilee Trail (also being promoted for cycling). I am informed that a launch event is planned to take place after the local elections in May. | <i>to note</i> |
| 6 | RB32 (Shillings Lane) - A new surface has been laid from Etling Green to the edge of the second phase of development (but not through to The Neatherd), though as of the middle of February much of it had loose stones on it, making it difficult, perhaps even dangerous, for cyclists and wheelers. I understand that the contractor has been requested to compact down the loose surfaces, while discussions continue to press the developer to fund work onwards to FP10. | <i>to note</i> |
| 7 | RB36, 37 - The closure order which runs to 1 May 2023 remains in force. I understand that Orbit does open the path from Wheatcroft Way from time to time, but have not been able to get an agreement to notify these times. | <i>to note</i> |
| 8 | New path to be dedicated to link RB39 with Hurn Road - No change since last meeting. | <i>DTC to pursue discussions with the landowner and BDC at the earliest opportunity</i> |

Requested action

- 3.1 The Wayfinding leaflet is now in print (copies distributed at the recent Parish Meeting).
- 3.2 We plan to update the pack of 14 longer walks (currently online only) and investigate the possibility of a print version. The pack uses OS mapping by permission of Dereham Town Council, whose licence is quoted as our authority. We seek permission to continue to do this.

DTC to authorise use of its OS licence

Ken Hawkins, Community Access Warden, Dereham Town Council

24 March 2023