

Footpath Warden report April 2017 to March 2018 for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 24 July 2018

Many of the activities described in this report have drawn extensively on the support of colleagues within Dereham Walkers are Welcome. *Updates have been added to bring the report up to date to July.*

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

All of the PRoW in the town (except FP9 which is totally overgrown) have been walked regularly throughout the year. During the year, the following issues have arisen:

- the need for clearance (trimming nettles and brambles from the surface of paths, and pruning back bush and tree growth from the sides);
- trees fallen across the path;
- broken or missing signage; and
- litter.

Details of the impact of these can be given if required. They have been dealt with in a number of ways.

- Moderate clearance and fallen trees have been addressed by the Footpath Warden (and Catherine Hawkins), using equipment supplied by the Town Council - hedge trimmer, saws, long arm shears - plus the occasional use of a chain saw.
- Heavier duty clearance has been provided by The Ramblers, using their brush cutters.
- Two bigger jobs were tackled with the assistance of The Conservation Volunteers - the removal of numerous tree stumps from the surface of RB28, and the widening and levelling of a section of RB30 which runs between an unfriendly hedge and a steep ditch.
- Where waymark disks have been lost, or the need for new ones identified, I have used a supply from NCC to place them as needed; missing or damaged fingerposts have been referred to NCC as I have no authority to place these.



RB30 before and after

Footpath Warden report April 2017 to March 2018 for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 24 July 2018

- We mounted a litter picking day in November, concentrated on those paths found to be most affected. *Update - a second day was arranged in April.*

A summary of issues is shown below (*updated to July 2018*).

| footpath issues | | current number and % | | February 2017 | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | legal minimum not met | 4 | 10.5% | 8 | 13.8% |
| 2 | significant improvement needed | 0 | 0.0% | 10 | 17.2% |
| 3 | improvement welcome | 3 | 7.9% | 15 | 25.9% |
| 4 | for future action | 0 | 0.0% | 5 | 8.6% |
| 5 | no action needed | 31 | 81.6% | 20 | 34.5% |
| | total | 38 | 100.0% | 58 | 100.0% |

1.2 Specific issues

In addition to the fairly routine actions above, there are a few particular issues worthy of mention.

RB3 - this route has been unlawfully ploughed out for many years; NCC has refused to take any action on the grounds that it was not publically accessible at one end. This is about to change as it runs from FP26 to Cherry Lane, which is one of the routes being claimed as a Restricted Byway. I have pressed NCC to start action to restore or divert this route.

FP6 - the eastern end of this route is inaccessible; it joins a track which is not currently recognised as a PRow, so I have not pressed for restoration.

FP6 and FP7 - inaccessible until a couple of years ago, these paths have recently become usable, with some (but not all) signage introduced; I have established a good relationship with the landholder, who has taken extra care to ensure the route is available to walkers.

FP9 - this path starts from Swanton Road and ceases at the parish boundary (presumably as Swanton Morley did not act to record it on the Definitive Map); it is very overgrown, and as Swanton Road has no footway and the road is bendy and not subject to any speed limit, I have not sought to get the path restored.

FP14 - the line of this path was for a long time not available, with walkers using a more or less parallel route through the Water Meadows, but having been cleared by NCC, we (with The Conservation Volunteers on one occasion) have been keeping it clear and it is now in more regular use.

1.3 Value of work

We have recorded time spent by all volunteers on the PRow during the year. 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 £3105.

Footpath Warden report April 2017 to March 2018 for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 24 July 2018

Work and monitoring per hour @ £ 20

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
| From | 14 April 2017 | | |
| To | 30 March 2018 | | |
| Work done | 111.35 | hours, | value £ 2231.67 |
| Monitoring | 43.40 | hours, | value £ 873.33 |
| Total | 155.15 | hours, | value £ 3105.00 |

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

Work is calculated as person-hours

Update - figures to date from 1 April 2018 are

Work and monitoring per hour @ £ 20

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
| From | 13 April 2018 | | |
| To | 9 July 2018 | | |
| Work done | 48.15 | hours, | value £ 965.00 |
| Monitoring | 6.25 | hours, | value £ 128.33 |
| Total | 54.40 | hours, | value £ 1093.33 |

The total value of work since recording began (February 2017) is £5489.

1.4 New routes

The claims for 6 RBs along Cherry Lane, Hall Lane and connecting tracks attracted little opposition - the main objections being from The Ramblers and DTC regarding the limited widths proposed for some of them in the orders made by NCC. *Update - The Inspector agreed that the original widths were insufficient, though did not accept the full increases proposed. The revised widths were publicised for further consultation, which closed on 13 July. Assuming that the new widths will be confirmed, the next and final process will be for NCC to assume responsibility for signage and future maintenance.*

2 Walkers are Welcome

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. The operational year for WaW is January to December, so an Annual Return was completed in January for 2017. I am pleased to report that our Return was evaluated by the National WaW Secretary, whose feedback gave us top ratings on all 13 headings, and the comment "Excellent, covering all the criteria and some. Well done to everyone."

During the year covered by this report, we

- ran a number of public walks with various partners: on 15 April (Dereham Windmill), 29 May (Konect), 28 August (Yaxham Waters), 1 October (a garden party), 25 October (Mid-Norfolk Railway) and 1 January (The George Hotel). *Update - further events in 2018 have been walks on 2 April (Mid-Norfolk Railway), 28 May (The George Hotel) and 16 June (ending*

Footpath Warden report April 2017 to March 2018 for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 24 July 2018

with our Annual Public Meeting and home made cake).

- organised an event for children and their families on 31 March (a cold and wet day around The Neatherd).
- presented our Annual Report to a public meeting on 8 June 2017.
- completed and published our new walks packs, containing 7 circular walks from Dereham plus 7 'ride out, walk back' routes (3 using the Mid-Norfolk Railway and 4 using Konect buses). 3000 packs were produced, with the aid of £750 from DTC plus £1390 from a successful bid to Tesco's *Bags of Help* fund.
- began placing Dereham Walkers are Welcome logos with businesses in the town. *Update - there are now 27 locations displaying a logo, and 29 with walks packs: over 400 packs have now been distributed (not including the library which has taken several hundred).*
- brought into use our 'Improved for you' plaques, funded by DTC.
- built up our mailing list of supporters. *Update - now 74 receiving information by email and 4 more by phone.*

**Ken Hawkins, Footpath Warden, Dereham Town Council
16 July 2018**