

Footpath Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 23 April 2019

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 last report. A summary of issues is shown below.

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

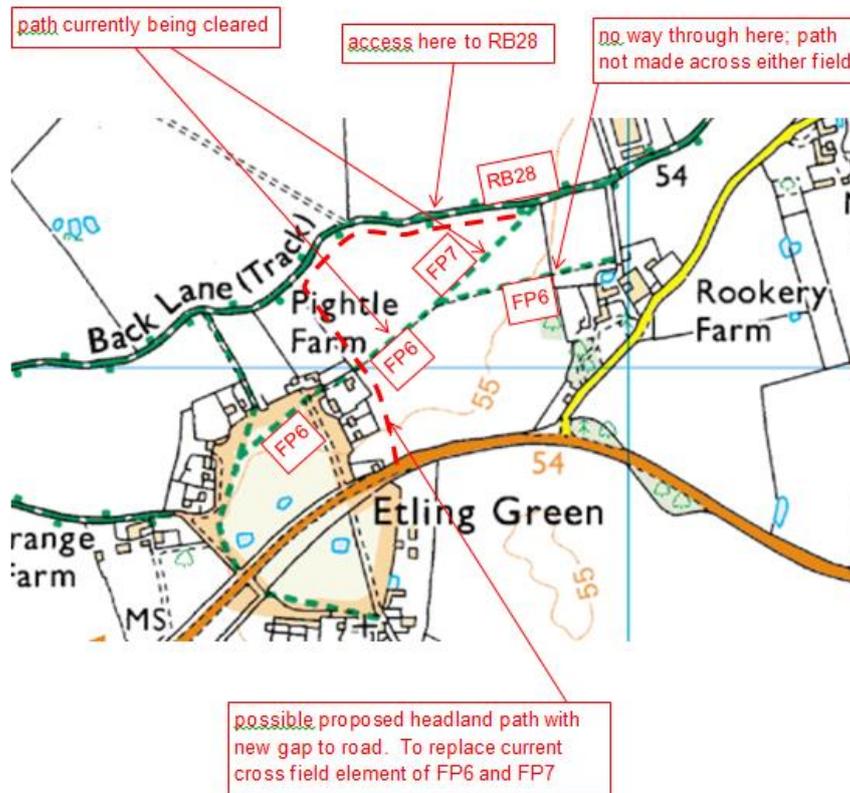
The four cases where the legal minimum is not met are:

- 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 (though at the last visit, the path had not been marked, albeit that there was no crop as yet).*
- 2 RB3 - the long standing unavailability of this route, which was ploughed out many years ago. *NCC had 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 continuing to press 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 the location of where that exit should be, 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 section which is sinuous, and has no speed restriction or footway.*

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1.2 Specific work

- 1 FP14 - In addition to two litter picks (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.



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

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basis, we calculate the value of this activity as £1835 so far this financial year.

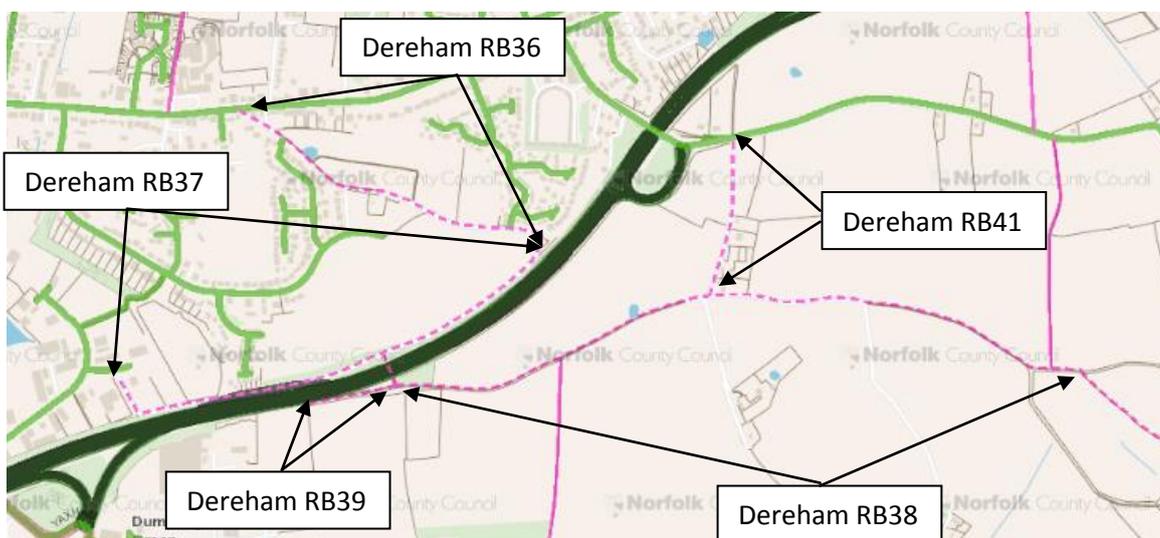
Work and monitoring per hour @ £ 20

From	13 April 2018		
To	30 March 2019		
Work done	74.15 hours,	value £	1485.00
Monitoring	45.30 hours,	value £	910.00
Total	119.45 hours,	value £	2395.00

The total value of work since recording began (February 2017) is £7771.67.

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.

2.2 Walks

Dereham Walkers are Welcome continues to arrange public walks as its main external activity. In 2018, we arranged 8 walks, plus a children's event on The Neatherd. Activity for 2019 includes

- 1 January: *Hogmanay Hike* - a walk taking in The Neatherd, the Windmill, over the A47 and eastwards, returning along Cherry Lane (now RB39) and ending with seasonal refreshments at a members' house
- 15 March (Fri) litter pick on selected footpaths
- 22 April (Mon) Two windmills walk

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- 6 May (Mon) Find the deer in Dereham
- 27 May (Mon) to be arranged
- 22 June (Sat) Annual Public Meeting with shortish walk
- 28 July (Sun) Town walk: a revised version of the 2018 walk
- 26 August (Mon) Suffolk walk in Clare (a colleague WaW town)
- 29 September (Sun) Garden Party walk
- 6 October (Sun) Walk to coincide with NCC Festival (if held), using MNR if possible
- 1 January 2020: *New Year's Day Walk* to be arranged

2.3 Walk packs

The 3000 packs printed at the beginning of 2018 are now all gone, and we are seeking funding for a third (and perhaps final) print, so are aiming for 10000 this time. Unfortunately two bids (to HLF *Awards for All* and Breckland District Council *Market Towns Initiative*) have both been unsuccessful. While the long term desire is still to secure the £6000 needed for this, we are taking steps to continue to make packs available as far as possible. The plan is

- to maintain availability via our website (<http://www.derehamwaw.org.uk/walks.html>)
- to divert all remaining packs to the Library
- to reach agreement with the Library for them to hold a master copy which people can photocopy (at a charge), or to download copies (also at a cost)
- to seek smaller amounts of funding to enable us to photocopy small numbers of packs, possibly in monochrome rather than colour; sources might include The Ramblers (Norfolk), local businesses that have displayed our logo (and held packs), and crowdfunding possibilities.

We would like to ask the Town Council to confirm (1) it is happy for us to produce the packs on the same basis as before, ie with copyright assigned to the Council, DWaW using the OS licence held by the Council, and (2) it would be open to consider a small grant if needed to facilitate publication.

We are also towards the end of reviewing (by re-walking) all of the walks in the guides, to bring them fully up to date.

2.4 Publicity

We continue to visit businesses in the town on a regular basis. Currently, 51 businesses are displaying the Walkers are Welcome logo, and 49 are holding a leaflet dispenser, through which some 1438 packs have been distributed.

2.5 Accreditation

All WaW towns and villages have to have accreditation renewed each year (as well as paying the, in our case £100, subscription). Our own Annual Return, and feedback (from the National WaW Secretary, no less) are attached to this report.