

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

Footpaths update and specific path issues

1 General report - activity

This has been a period of lockdown, so no walks: we are planning for an April restart. It has also been impossible to undertake maintenance work, partly because of covid, but another significant actor has been the extensive flooding and waterlogging of many of our paths.

2 General report - path issues

Current issues of concern are:

- 1 FP2 - the repeated failure to establish the path along the headland of the northern part of this field edge path **remains**.
- 2 RB3 - the long standing unavailability of this route, which was ploughed out many years ago; the NCC Countryside Access Officer for the area has advised that this is **not being given priority** while they are responding to flooding issues. I have argued that the very longstanding nature of this issue warrants greater priority.
- 3 FP14a - the boardwalk is damaged and dangerous; NCC is aware and says it plans to repair it. It also says it is considering my request that the boardwalk be extended a few metres south to cover a patch that gets very muddy in wet weather. There has been **no progress** on either of these.
- 4 FP26 - the flooding on this gets worse, exacerbated by the presumed landowner driving his tractor down it and creating deep ruts that fill with water; there has in the past been space on one side or the other to enable walkers to avoid the worst, but the tractor driver has also driven over these and wiped them out. This **problem remains**.
- 5 RB32/3 - a heavy vehicle has driven along the stretch near the back of the football ground, totally cutting up the path, making it tricky for walkers, impossible for cyclists. This **problem remains**, though is not as acute - at least it has got no worse.
- 6 FP34 - boardwalk is damaged and dangerous; in addition, the path across the water meadow was flooded for a long period of time. NCC has now put up **closure notices** at the sewage works, and at the junction with the unregistered path that runs along below the edge of the Humbletoft estate. It was recently possible to walk the closed route - the flooding had reduced to muddiness, and the boardwalk could be navigated with care. There is an alternative informal route turning up the hill and along the unregistered path.
- 7 RB36 Cherry Lane - at the last meeting, the Town Clerk offered to think about **what could be done**; that would be welcome. (The minute from 26 January was 'The Town Clerk responded that the problem was trying to find a cost effective solution to maintaining the lane.')
- 8 RB37 - previously reported: the issues are the heavy littering (see below) and the need to widen and clear this path to Restricted Byway dimensions; there has been **no change**.

3 Specific work - litter

The litter on land just off FP12 near its junction with FP13 remains and has been supplemented recently; the Diocese some time ago said it would take action on this, but has **yet to reply** to a request for an update.

I have made **no progress** in seeking to establish a joint clearance effort along RB37 from Highways England, Norfolk County Council and Breckland District Council. I have again sought action from NCC.

4 Walk packs

Dereham Walkers are Welcome has updated the 14 walks starting from Dereham, and are ready for uploading to the WaW website. Work has continued on the leaflet that will give information about walking in Dereham, and about Dereham Walkers are Welcome, to be issued when lockdown restrictions enable people once more to get out and about. In the meantime, they will be refreshed and put onto our website. DWaW is also working on a pack of short walks (mainly 3-4 miles) for general distribution, but also to be offered to FP surgeries for use with appropriate patients. **DWaW is contemplating applying for a grant** from Dereham Town Council to assist publication and dissemination.

Ken Hawkins, Footpath Warden, Dereham Town Council

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