

Community Access Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting on 24 September 2024



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

I regret that I am unable to attend the meeting but hope you find this update of use.

Requested action

- 1 General report - led walks have continued and will do so for the rest of the year. We arranged two walks jointly with Dereham Heritage Trust during Heritage Open Days week, to fit the 2024 theme *Routes-Networks-Connections*. *to note*
- 2 Path issues
 - 1 **FP2** - A further report was made to Frances Salway when it was found that signage had been put in place, but the path itself was overgrown and hard to use. I plan to check again before chasing this up. *to note*
 - 2 **RB3** - Recent inspection showed that a culvert had now been installed and the path seemed to have been made at the south end (hard to be certain as there was a well grown crop of maize), but with no trace at the north end. I plan to check again before chasing this up. *to note*
 - 3 **FP6 and 7** - As a change to my usual complaints, I should record that the landowner here has invariably kept this path available through both ploughing and crops. *to note*
 - 4 **FP14** - I am still pursuing litter clearance with the Diocese, though with no response to recent emails. The damage to the fence has been repaired, but the path is overgrown and awaiting my attention. *to note*
 - 5 **FP14a** - I await progress on this by NCC to repair/replace the damaged boardwalk. *await NCC*
 - 6 **FP25** - The southern end of this path has dried in recent months, but I anticipate that the return of wet weather will also see the return of the flooding. *to note*
 - 7 **FP26 (Dumpling Green)** - As things stand, there appears to be no means of improving this public footpath, so it will remain difficult to walk some parts, especially after wet weather (and the water tends to remain for a long time after rain). *to note*
 - 8 **RB32 (Shillings Lane)** - Further work has improved the surface of the remainder of this byway. The main problem now is the westward continuation of the byway into The Neatherd, which becomes very waterlogged after wet weather. *DTC to consider possible remedial action*

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| <p>9 FP34 - This path has been perfectly usable through the dry weather, but there have been no changes, which means that the section of this path running alongside the stream will again become extremely muddy after wet weather; NCC is aware of this but has no resources as yet to take any steps to deal with it (and would require a number of permissions to do so). Following my request, the part of this path that leaves the boardwalk to run through the woods to meet FP18 has been added to NCC's contract for cutting as parts of it can easily get overgrown; it remains however that the single cut likely to be programmed will not keep pace with the growth affecting the path.</p> | <p><i>to note</i></p> |
| <p>10 RB36 (Cherry Lane) - No change. The extensive potholes along this byway, from Norwich Road to the windmill, are causing little problem in dry weather, but I expect that the muddiness and problems will re-emerge once the rain starts.</p> | <p><i>DTC to consider surface levelling works</i></p> |
| <p>11 RB37 - There has been less rubbish in evidence since the installation of the bin on the layby, though continued monitoring is required.</p> | <p><i>to note</i></p> |
| <p>12 Proposed trod along Etling Green - A meeting took place with Phillip Duigan, Will Richmond and Matt Lines to review the suggestion that a trod be constructed to continue the footway from the entrance to the new cemetery to FP6 (drive to Etling Green) on the north verge of the road. The NCC view was that this would be more expensive than previously thought, mainly because of an anticipated need to partly close the road to enable works to be done: it was suggested that if DTC could clear the vegetation for a metre or so from the road, this could considerably ease matters and reduce costs.</p> | <p><i>DTC to consider adding this to proposed PPP funding and to explore what it could do to assist</i></p> |
| <p>13 Path from Hurn Road to meet RB39 - I have continued to press for improvements to this path. It forms part of a walking route from the Orbit development (and existing housing in the same area) to Tesco and on into Dereham. An intention to make it a cycling route, which was, according to my understanding, confirmed during the granting of planning consent to StoreEasy, has not translated into dedication as a bridleway and its comfortable use even by walkers depends on the landowner meeting an agreement to clear vegetation and make good the surface. A planning condition requires it to be maintained for public use, but only as a walking route. Cycling is just about possible (for a skilled or determined cyclist) but made difficult by fencing having been erected on both sides of one stretch, making passage of two right angle bends awkward. As the southern fence marks the boundary of BDC, I have made approaches to see if it would agree to enabling a walking and cycling route to be made from Kingston Road, round the edge of the BDC car park and, via gate or gap in the fence, on to the path, thereby avoiding those bends. Simon Wood, Director of Planning and Building Control and BDC, met me to walk the path early in August, but I have heard nothing from him since.</p> | <p><i>DTC to consider what steps it might take to support getting this path into more user friendly condition</i></p> |

Ken Hawkins, Community Access Warden, Dereham Town Council

11 September 2024

The map which follows has been updated to provide more information, which I hope will prove useful.

