

Footpath Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 25 June 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.*
- 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.*

1.2 Specific work

Footpath Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 25 June 2019

- 1 Litter - a number of litter picks have been held, concentrating on those paths most susceptible to litter, sadly mainly those close to schools, especially FPs 10 and 14.

A second area of litter beyond my/our capability is on land just off FP12 near its junction with FP13. With the assistance of Alison Webb, this was referred to BDC's contractor, but to no effect. (The litter is on presumably private land so not strictly their legal responsibility, but is an eyesore and intrusion on those walking past all the same.)

A much bigger problem affects the newly designated RB37, where it runs north of and parallel to the A47 from Greens Road Industrial Estate to the pedestrian overbridge. As well as a smattering of the usual litter, there are large amounts which I believe have come mainly from users of nearby the A47 layby; much of this is caught up in the bushes in the narrow band between the Byway and the A47. **I would ask for the support of the Town Council to press for a joint clearance effort from Highways England, Norfolk County Council and Breckland District Council.**

- 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

Footpath Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 25 June 2019

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

Work and monitoring per hour @ £ 20

From	20 April 2019		
To	27 May 2019		
Work done	2.35 hours,	value £	51.67
Monitoring	4.40 hours,	value £	93.33
Total	7.15 hours,	value £	145.00

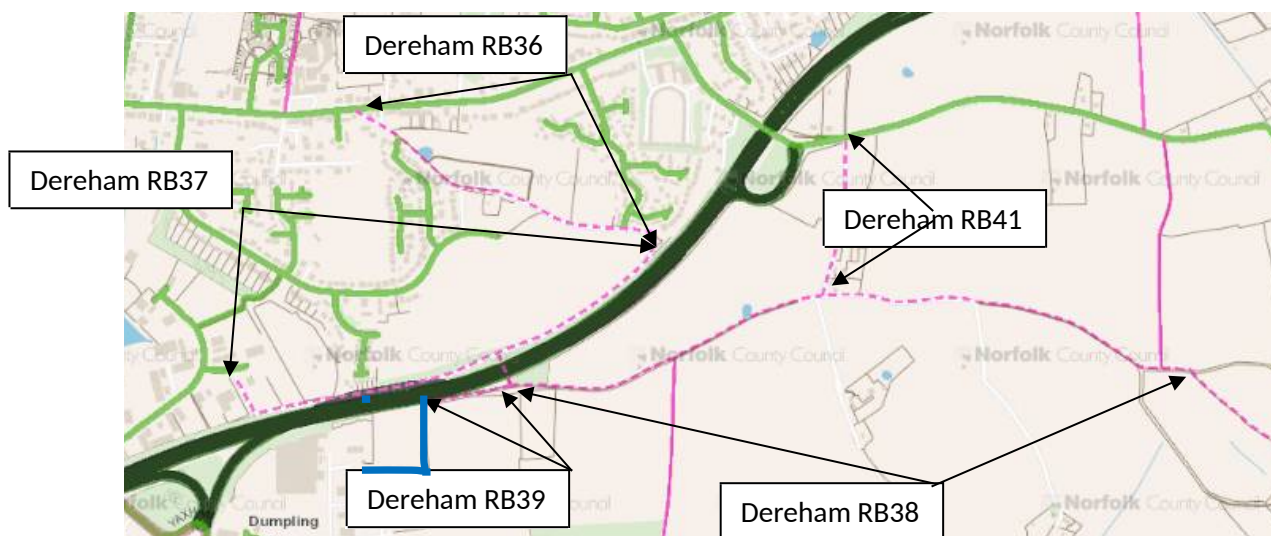
Monitoring is calculated as time spent, regardless of the number of people

Work is calculated as person-hours

The total value of work since recording began (February 2017) is £7916.67.

1.4 New routes

Signage, and any work needed, is still awaited for the recently designated Restricted Byways. Designation as a bridleway of the section of path from RB39 to the road network (shown blue) is also outstanding.



Footpath Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting 25 June 2019

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
- 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 have been 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. In the absence of other potential funders for the £6000 needed for this, we have made other arrangements. We have arranged with the library that it will keep a master set of guides for people to consult and (for the usual charge) photocopy or download.

Walkers are Welcome had placed all but 50 leaflet holders in shops and other locations in the town; not wanting to lose that support, we have been placing flyers in them detailing how to get walk packs. We are currently planning to make these a bit more detailed.

Whatever print arrangements we make, there has been a need to review and update the guides, so new versions, generally only slightly modified, are in preparation. **I would ask the Town Council's continuing support in (1) holding the copyright and including the town logo on the walks, and (2) permitting the use of its OS licence to support the mapping.**

At the same time, we have extended our 'offer' to those wanting shorter walks.

**Footpath Warden report
for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting
25 June 2019**

One of our members is now leading a monthly short (4 miles maximum) walk. We are also looking at producing a low cost pack of short self guided walks.

2.4 Town Council

The former Town Council website had reference and a link to the Walkers are Welcome website, which is missing from the new one. **We would ask the Town Council to reaffirm its support for Dereham Walkers are Welcome and to make an appropriate addition once more to its website.**

Ken Hawkins, Footpath Warden, Dereham Town Council

19 June 2019