

# Footpath Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting on 22 February 2022



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

	<b><i>Requested action</i></b>
<p>1 <u>General report</u> - led walks</p> <p>Since November 2021, short walks have continued on the first Friday of every month, and are planned to do so through 2022. We also held longer walks on 3 December and our usual New Year's Day walk to start the year.</p>	<p><i>to note</i></p>
<p>2 <u>Path issues</u></p> <p>I am pleased to see the proposal to invite Frances Salway, the local Countryside Access Officer, to this meeting, and hope that she will be invited and able to attend.</p> <p>Current issues of concern or interest are listed; councillors will be familiar with many of these from past meetings.</p>	
<p>1 <b>FP2</b> - the repeated failure to establish the path along the headland of the northern part of this field edge path remains.</p>	<p><i>to support requests to NCC for action</i></p>
<p>2 <b>RB3</b> - the long standing unavailability of this route, which was ploughed out many years ago continues with no change.</p>	<p><i>to support requests to NCC for action</i></p>
<p>3 <b>FP10</b> and <b>FP29</b> - Tony contacted me to ask if I had concerns about converting these paths into cycle paths or bridle paths. I responded that I had no concerns regarding FP10, though noting that there are barriers at the north end, which, if removed, might allow motorbikes to use the path; in addition, I am not sure if it would meet the criteria for a bridleway. For FP29, I noted that there is a gate across the path towards the west end, which is not recorded on the Definitive Map nor Statement; I have to conclude that it was erected without authority and is now an unlawful obstruction. In both cases, although upgrading to bridleway would be fine, making them cycle routes would mean they would cease being rights of way and lose the legal protection that comes with that status.</p>	<p><i>depends on what is planned</i></p>
<p>4 <b>FP14 (Rolling Pin Lane)</b> - Adam Hinchliffe of NCC has sought assistance in filling potholes along this path, at the end nearest to St Withburga Lane. This presents little</p>	

problem to walkers, more so to local residents using it as vehicle access. He notes, however, that he is “still looking to procure materials though this is difficult to do in such small quantities. Crushed asphalt would need to be tipped and therefore we will need to have volunteers on hand at the time. In the past we would have got a trailer and driven down, adding material from the trailer into the potholes as we went. We have recently been advised against using trailers unless urgent so that is making this issue harder to resolve. ... It would be useful to find a method that may work longer term and I am happy for us and the town council to look at this as these issues are likely to arise again.” See also RB36 below.

*to agree joint action with NCC*

- 5 **FP14a** - the boardwalk is damaged and dangerous; NCC is aware and has said it plans to repair it. It also said that 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. I was advised that work here was being scheduled for 2021, but none has taken place to date.

*to support requests to NCC for action*

- 6 **FP34** - I understand that NCC’s closure notices have been removed, replaced by notices advising use of the path is at the walker’s own risk. I believe this to be acceptable pending proper repair, which I believe to be scheduled for 2022. I am aware that this work will not be easy as there is a substantial length of boardwalk to repair, and access for plant is not easy at either end.

*to support requests to NCC for action*

- 7 **RB30** - I am aware that Dereham U3A has submitted a report of concern to NCC about the section of this path immediately north of Swanton Road. Although a Restricted Byway, there has been significant encroachment on the width of the path which would totally preclude the legal use of the byway by a carriage driver; cycling would be possible, but difficult. Even walking is difficult through the section reported: there is an unfriendly hedge on one side, and a deep and steep sided ditch on the other, for about 25 metres. In addition, vegetation can grow up in the ditch, masking its existence. Finally, the path itself slopes toward the ditch, making it dangerous when muddy and slippery. Dereham Walkers are Welcome and The Conservation Volunteers worked a couple of years ago to cut back the hedge, which did improve it, but more thoroughgoing work is needed.

*to support requests to NCC for action*

- 8 **RB36 (Cherry Lane)** - As with FP14, this track suffers from potholing. As a track it is used as access to the allotments, and it is the vehicles using it that cause the damage: the public right of access here is as a footpath only. Tony arranged for this to be scraped flat some time ago, but the holes are once again developing, noticeable particularly after significant rain.

*to agree joint action with NCC*

9 **RB37** - The heavy littering remains, as does the need to widen and clear this path to Restricted Byway dimensions. I am interested to hear of any result from the meeting of Councillor Duigan with the Countryside Access Officer.

*to agree to seek agreement between NCC, DTC, BDC, NCC and National Highways to clear the byway of litter and vegetation, and take steps to prevent the accumulation of further litter*

10 **New path to be dedicated to link RB39 with Hurn Road** - I would be interested in any outcome from the decision that the Town Council would write to Breckland Planning regarding the path and push for it to be added to the Definitive Map and to a maintenance schedule.

*to contact BDC as previously agreed and take any steps possible to require the landowner to dedicate the path*

### 3 Specific work

3.1 **Litter by FP13/14** I contacted the landowner (Diocese of Norwich) after observing more litter at this site. I was informed that they would clear this, and review the suggestion of erecting fencing. They also asked if there was assistance from the Town Council, a request I forwarded to Tony.

*to assist the Diocese as far as possible*

3.2 **Litter by FP24 (Safari Way)** I have seen reports that the landowner had been identified and had agreed to monitor the area for litter and keep it clear. If this does indeed transpire, it is good news.

*to note*

3.3 **Wendling Beck Exemplar Project** The project tells me that it is in the very early stages of planning to commission an artist to develop creative wayfinding along a newly developed cycle path to be called the Wendling Way; it will connect Dereham with Gressenhall and a new environment hub there. I have responded to express interest and to suggest that, if at all possible, new connections should be open to walkers as well as cyclists.

*to monitor and provide further information if any is available*

3.4 **Dereham LCWIP (Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan)** Norfolk County Council's website says "Norfolk County Council are working in partnership with local authorities to produce Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for towns and cities across the region." - one is planned for Dereham. I have been enquiring about progress for at least the last year, but without any information being available.

*to provide further information if any is available*

3.5 **Maintenance** There has been no further work since November, but most paths have been regularly walked and checked. Cumulative time spent in monitoring and clearance is summarised below. The conversion to monetary value is based on Norfolk County Council's rate of £20 per hour value of volunteer time.

*to note*

year	hours				£value			
	work	monitoring	total	cum	work	monitoring	total	cum
2016-17	81.30	31.45	<b>113.15</b>	<b>113.15</b>	1630.00	635.00	<b>2265.00</b>	<b>2265.00</b>
2017-18	111.55	43.40	<b>155.35</b>	<b>268.50</b>	2238.33	873.33	<b>3111.67</b>	<b>5376.67</b>
2018-19	74.15	45.30	<b>119.45</b>	<b>388.35</b>	1485.00	910.00	<b>2395.00</b>	<b>7771.67</b>
2019-20	17.50	12.45	<b>30.35</b>	<b>419.10</b>	356.67	255.00	<b>611.67</b>	<b>8383.33</b>
2020-21	3.30	48.45	<b>52.15</b>	<b>471.25</b>	70.00	975.00	<b>1045.00</b>	<b>9428.33</b>
2021-22	88.30	52.30	<b>141.00</b>	<b>612.25</b>	1770.00	1050.00	<b>2820.00</b>	<b>12248.33</b>
<b>total</b>	<b>377.30</b>	<b>234.55</b>			<b>7550.00</b>	<b>4698.33</b>		

4 Walk packs

Our Walks booklets are held in the Library, and the Partea Hut (at the Windmill) has taken and given out a substantial supply. We still have plenty to supply the Assembly Rooms as soon as it is once again easily accessed by the public.

*to advise plans to open the Assembly Rooms to the public*

5 Rights of way in Dereham

I appreciate that not everyone will be familiar with the path numbers of rights of way in the town, so am also sending a map which identifies them. These names and numbers also appear on the NCC interactive map at <https://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/> - zoom in to the desired area, when the rights of way will appear. (For some reason, the link won't work when clicked, so has to be pasted into the browser.)

*to note*