

Community Access Warden report for the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee meeting on 25 November 2025



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; PPP - Parish Paths Partnership; PRoW - Public Rights of Way; WaW - Walkers are Welcome

	<i>Suggested action</i>
1 <u>General report</u> - led walks have continued and will do so for the rest of the year and through 2026. There is a programme of monthly short (up to 4 miles) and easy (no more than 2 miles on good surfaces) walks, supplemented by additional walks of up to 6 or 7 miles, mainly during the summer months.	<i>to note</i>
2 <u>Path issues</u>	
1 FP1a - The path across the field has (again) not been established. For most of the route, this isn't too big a problem as the previous maize has gone and the current crop is winter wheat or similar. I am informed that NCC appointed contractors to cut a way through the final 30m at the south (road) end, which has been done, though this has left quite a bit of 6-9 inch stubble (walkable but not ideal).	<i>monitor - await further NCC action</i>
2 FP2 - Going south from Mattishall Road, the first section is again one without a path as the crop is planted right up to the hedge. Where the path changes to the east side of the hedge, there is an acceptable path (apart from a couple of metres at the end), where the path starts the cross field section. This has been well cleared throughout its full length to RB38. The waymark post at this point is broken and lying in the undergrowth.	<i>monitor - await further NCC action</i>
3 RB3 - RB3 crosses the field currently growing winter wheat or barley. Although a restricted byway cannot lawfully be ploughed out (even with subsequent replacement), no path has been made across the crop. At the far end, where it joins FP26, there is a gap in the hedge, though there is no signage. I have reported all of this (again). A gap has now been made in the hedge where the path leaves RB38, though entry is via steep (if short) slope down to the field - ok for walkers, not for cyclists etc.	<i>monitor - await further NCC action</i>
4 FP14 - The Countryside Access Officer has arranged for a contractor to visit the site to assess the clearance work required and was waiting on their quote. The works will be carried out during this Autumn/Winter.	<i>monitor - await further NCC action</i>
5 FP14a - NCC has been in evidence at the south end working to replace the damaged boardwalk, though I don't know the exact plan and cannot access the path until it has finished.	<i>monitor - await further NCC action</i>
6 FP26 (Dumpling Green) - The return of rain has brought this path to its usual state - muddy in places and	<i>DTC to consider possible</i>

	with flooded ruts in some sections. My previous comments are still apposite. Along quite a bit of the track, there are narrow 'paths' made along the banks edging the main track, which could serve as useful ways to avoid navigating the flooded track itself, but these suffer two problems. One is that they tend to slope towards the track, so if they're wet, it would be easy to slide into the flooded track. The other is that drivers of the tractors and/or 4x4s which I assume have private rights to use the track sometimes drive up onto the walking routes and degrade or obliterate them. I would like to see if some sort of plan to improve the usability of this otherwise very pleasant and lengthy path can be formulated.	<i>remedial action</i>
7	RB32 (Shillings Lane) - The issue with the westward continuation of the byway onto The Neatherd, which becomes very waterlogged after wet weather, remains. (This is not NCC responsibility as the byway ends where the path emerges onto open ground.)	<i>DTC to consider possible remedial action</i>
8	FP34 - There have been no changes to this path, which means I expect that the section of this path running alongside the stream will again become extremely muddy after wet weather, though I have not been there recently. NCC is aware of the issue but reported some time ago that it had no resources to take any steps to deal with it (and would require a number of permissions to do so).	<i>monitor during winter</i>
9	RB36 (Cherry Lane) - Small potholes continue to appear once more.	<i>to note and monitor</i>
3	<u>NCC</u> The Countryside Access Officer has responded directly to a number of issues I have reported, which has been most helpful. I have invited further comment in light of recent reports. I have made (on behalf of Dereham Walkers are Welcome) suggestions regarding the NCC reporting system. My initial respondent welcomed them but is no longer involved directly in that work and I have had no response from the team which is responsible. I am still awaiting confirmation that the NCC interactive map correctly indicates the paths in the cutting programme.	<i>to note</i>
4	<u>Trods</u> I was disappointed that my suggestion for a trod linking the new cemetery to the point where FP5 and FP6 cross Etling Green was not taken forward. I have also proposed a trod to continue the newly built footway along Swanton Road from the housing development there to the point where RBs 30 and 31 cross the road. I remain unclear as to how to get these suggestions into the process for considering them.	<i>DTC to advise on process and timescales</i>

Ken Hawkins, Community Access Warden, Dereham Town Council

13 November 2025

