

Annual Report on Worlingworth's Wonderful Footpaths October 2016

Congratulations and a big thank you to all our great Worlingworth volunteer walkers who have been busy helping us to complete the annual October inspection of all our village footpaths, stiles, footbridges and footpath signs. This year our "walk inspectors " have included Rosemary Ingate, Maggie Galpin, Jean Richardson, Meg Mitchell, Heather Brundle, Eugene O'Sullivan, Jo and Isabella Coghill, Peggy Roscoe, Ian Abbott, Sarah Clare (our Parish Clerk), Debbie Scaife and her brother Andy, John and Rita Ridgwell, and Juliet Pierce. Special thanks also go to Parish Council Chairman Brian Smallcombe for arranging the purchase of vital supplies so that after our walking we could all enjoy a delicious ploughman's lunch beautifully prepared and served by Judith Smallcombe, Val Swallow and Margaret Lewis. Also a thank you to Chris Goddard for his home made pickle! Over lunch we pooled our footpath feedback.

This is what we found:

Footpaths

Most of the footpaths are accessible and in good condition except for stretches across ploughed or recently seeded fields where the path has not been reinstated. These stretches are marked in red on the attached map.

One or two areas are badly overgrown, especially with nettles. These stretches really do need clearing. They are marked in green on the map.

Stiles

Stiles in general represent a problem as they are not easy for older residents to manage particularly when they are trying to get large elderly dogs over or under them. Ideally we would want all stiles replaced with kissing gates or some other method which would keep stock safe in the field but allow easier access. Stiles that need urgent attention are numbered as follows:

1. The stile at Paradise Farm meadow - stile between Pat and Graham Kench's garden and the back of Paul Tuckwell's works needs a lower step on it.
2. The stile on Pat and Graham Kench's Church meadow at end of path near the houses is impossible to get a large dog through without going into the adjacent house garden, causing great distress to the owners.

Footbridges

We are really pleased to see the new bridges installed since the last inspection. All bridges are now passable but several still remain dangerous and one is nearing collapse. Urgent work is needed at sites with the following numbers shown on the map:

3. The sleeper bridges either side of New Road on Alan Havers land near Valley Farm need handrails and netting as they are lethal in winter and on wet days. If Highways decide against handrails then netting is absolutely necessary as falls have been reported and newer bridges are being installed with rails and netting to meet today's safety standards.
4. The bridge on the footpath on Paul Tuckwell's land from Shop Street is very dangerous in winter as the netting is frayed. It definitely needs handrails as the pitch is too steep from road to cross safely when wet or icy. Highways may wish to consider realigning this bridge with 2 steps down into field at end of bridge.

5. The bridge off New Road almost opposite Fingal Street has been cleared of the undergrowth surrounding it now that the ditch has been cleared. It is netted but has no handrail and the fall distance to the bottom of the ditch is now dangerous.
6. The bridge on the path East off Water Lane, opposite the end of Fingal Street is very badly decayed and probably needs replacing.
7. The bridge on the path just North of Southolt Hall is very over grown with brambles
8. The bridge on the path North of White Hall Farm is overgrown
9. The bridge on the path West of Red House Farm is badly overgrown too
- 10 . The bridge on the path from New Road West as it enters Cole Street is overgrown and has a rotten plank.
11. The bridge on the path running due South from Shop Street towards Bedfield is overgrown with high nettles and has a dangerous hole on its Northern approach which needs to be filled.
12. The bridge on the path from Water Lane to the road to Redlingfield has a wobbly handrail.

Footpath signs

Again we are very pleased to have received some new signs since last year's report. Sadly some of these have been damaged by farm machinery already. In some places signs that were present in previous year's have disappeared altogether. We found that some dog walkers have been walking along Shop Street to exercise their dogs rather than using a safer footpath off Shop Street because the sign has been removed during building work so people do not know where to go.

The numbers S1- S11 as shown on the map indicate where new signs are needed or fallen signs need reinstating:

- S1. The sign in the hedge on Water Lane needs mending
- S2. A waymarker sign is needed.
- S3. There is a broken sign off the Redlingfield Road marking the way to Water Lane.
- S4. No clear sign to show where to go on the path to Water Lane Near Town Farm.
- S5. Signage is needed to find the path around New Town
- S6. New building has destroyed the footpath sign near the pond to show where the path goes North off Shop Street
- S7, S8 and S9. Three signs have been knocked over on New Road, one near Valley Farm, one opposite the road to Stanway Green and one near to Fingal Street. One of these was newly installed last year.
- S10. The sign in the middle of the large field West of Cole Street has disappeared.
- S11. The waymarker at the junction of pathways South West of the livery stables at Stanway Green is broken.