

Footpath Report for Estates Committee meeting of 7th October 2021

Cutting of footpaths

In my previous report I complained about the poor standard of the first of the two annual cuts by the County Council contractor. The Clerk passed these comments on to the Footpaths Officer. I am not aware of any response or any remedial work being carried out. An inspection on 17th September confirmed that no work at all had been done on certain priority footpaths this season.

The footpaths surrounding the Playing Fields are in very good condition and this is the work of the new contractor but other paths in the same area e.g. the path between the cemetery and the playing fields, appear not to have been cut.

Landowners have varied in their willingness to clear paths through growing crops. Some paths e.g. the crossfield path from the playing field to the Duddery, have only been kept clear by regular walking whereas others have been cleared to the recommended width of 1 to 1.5 metres. Before next season we need to decide if reminders should be sent by the Parish Council and enforcement by the County Council or should the County Council be doing both?

Most falling fingerposts have now been replaced.

I have carried out gentle trimming on a few footpaths where the brambles and nettles are threatening to take over and have cleared the occasional fallen tree.

Slow Ways network

This national initiative to link villages and towns without using the road network is now active again after the Covid shut down. A national map of footpath links has now been completed and the organisers are asking for volunteers to walk the routes and check that they are accessible. If anyone fancies walking the suggested

route from Newmarket to Bury (as an example) the organisers would be very happy to be contacted.

Quiet Lanes

The required notices were put in place at the end of July and a check carried out in early September.

'Discover Suffolk' leaflets

The Wickhambrook version in this series (Walks in Wickhambrook) is available from the Memorial Social Centre, the 'Greyhound' and Village Stores. The leaflet gives directions for three circular routes of varying lengths, one north of the village, one to the south and a shorter central circuit. Suffolk County Council are about to approve a waymark specific to these walks ('Discover Suffolk' in text against an outline of the shape of Suffolk, in green) and will provide sufficient for each co-operating parish. I have offered to attach the waymarks to the appropriate fingerposts in Wickhambrook.

An oddity

I received an email from a local resident with the request that I do something about a dead muntjac on Footpath 24. I informed Suffolk County Council. The operator was not sure if the Council offered a clearing up service but the body had disappeared within a few hours, so presumably they do.

Roger Medley 22.9.21