

TARPORLEY FOOTPATHS IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020

REPORT BY DAVID PRESS, PARISH COUNCIL FOOTPATH WARDEN

INTRODUCTION

In January and February this year I have walked all the Tarporley paths to audit the condition of our rights of way and identify changes since my last audit in January/February 2019.

This report:

- summarises the overall condition of paths and notes developments since my last annual report in January/February 2019
- records my findings for each path
- Makes recommendations for decisions and actions

SUMMARY OF OVERALL CONDITION AND ACTION DURING THE LAST YEAR

Most of our paths are signposted.

In the past year no more of the Parish Council gates have been installed, meaning that nine of the ten metal gates and the one wooden kissing gate which the Parish Council purchased have now been accounted for. There is one redundant kissing gate on the Sandstone Trail north of FP3 available for re-use. Therefore we have the opportunity to install two more kissing gates. This is in addition to the two we hope to relocate from FP17.

The diversion of footpath 17, to follow the route most people use to skirt the regularly flooded area, awaits action from CWaC. The landowner has agreed and CWAC has been asked to consider a diversion in the public interest.

The usual culprits for paths ploughed, planted and not reinstated are FP3 (north west of the Sandstone Trail) FP8 and FP23. Currently they are walkable, but the absence of a line on the ground may deter someone uncertain of the route.

The route from the A51/A49 roundabout following RB9/Delamere Loop/RB20 to Forest Road is often overgrown each year, but looks as if it has been well cut back and I'm hopeful that the route will be better this year.

The PROW Officer and I repeated our efforts for a third time in four years to improve drainage on FP18 and it does appear to have maintained the improvement throughout the year, apart from the day I walked in January when it was a running stream.

Led by Andrew Wallace volunteers have laid gravel on about half of fp12, with a very positive outcome. It would be good to complete the southern half.

Lisa Miller, prompted by members of the silver band, organised the laying of woodchip on FP4 between High Street and the band hut. The woodchip was donated by a local tree surgeon, Oliver Davies, and barrowed onto the path by band members. It is a significant improvement.

DWH development have improved a short length of FP1, which is now frustratingly almost, but not quite, good enough for walking in town shoes. Similarly FP10 from Utkinton Road to behind Heathfields has some lengths of very good surface interspersed by muddy sections. The PC might consider improving these two paths' surfaces.

The landowner has said that when she applies for planning permission for development at Tiresford farm then she will consider formalizing a route through the A49 underpass. The Parish Council might want to ensure that this is the case.

Last year the Parish Council agreed that the Parish Council website would become a host, or at least incorporate links to, the walks on my Tarporley Walks Facebook page. This remains to be done.

REPORT ON EACH PATH

FP 1 from Captains Walk to junction with Tiverton FP21 (south of Birch Heath and west of by-pass)

This path is in pretty good order from Nantwich Road to the David Wilson Homes site and DWH have improved the surface on a part of the path. This should be a popular route for residents on the new estate to access Nantwich Road, but it needs further improvement for it to be used as an urban path. On the far side of the by-pass the path continues in good order.

FP 2 from St Helen's churchyard to Birch Heath Road/Redhill (between Redhill cottages and Redhill farm)

The path is in good condition. The finger post on the wooden sign beside the lych gate has been renewed.

Where the path runs alongside the churchyard it gets very muddy and could be a candidate for investing in surface improvement. Woodchip might work well here. However, because of the alternative well surfaced routes through the churchyard, I wouldn't consider this a priority over FP1 and FP10.

The sign at the junction with Redhill has been re-installed.

FP 3 from car park behind Rising Sun to west of the Sandstone trail and junction with Iddinshall FP1/FP2

Most of the path is in good condition, apart from one section which in February was submerged by a newly formed pond – West of the bypass just before the dismantled tree stile.

We now have kissing gates on nearly the entire route. The stile on the far side of Moss Lane has been replaced with a gate. Stiles remain either side of the by-pass and there are two stiles on the last 20 metres to the Iddenshall boundary.

As always, the section of the path to the east of the Sandstone Trail was extremely wet and muddy in January.

As is frequently the case, during the year the path headed north west beyond the Sandstone Trail toward Iddinshall was planted without any reinstatement, but in January the crop was long harvested and ground perfectly ok to walk, although indistinct on the ground.

At the Iddenshall end of the path it is perilously narrow on a high bank beside the stream. One solution would be to ask the landowner to move the barbed wire fence.

FP 4 from High Street next to The Close to the junction with the branch of restricted bridleway 5 which loops around cottages on Back Lanes west of by pass.

This path is in good condition and the short length on the west of the bypass seems to have been kept clear of vegetation once again this year.

Once the open space which remains of the Daffodil field is handed to the Parish Council, I suggest that we create a route onto the footpath.

Band members have laid woodchip to successfully upgrade the surface of the path from the Silver band hut to High Street.

RB 5 Moss Lane from south east of roundabout on A51/A49 on SE side of by-pass to North of Moss Cottage and junction with FP3 (and also semi-circular loop of Back lanes NW side of by-pass)

This restricted bridleway has two routes: one directly from the roundabout to Moss Cottage and the other following back lanes and looping around Cromwell cottage on the north west side of the by-pass.

The route is good.

FP 6 A51 opposite Rode Street Farm following the Sandstone Trail route south to junction with Tiverton FP 13 (a few fields north of Crib Lane/Pudding Lane junction)

The route is generally in good condition.

The replacement of the one remaining stile with a gate has now been completed. This was part of the Sandstone Trail project and therefore didn't use a Parish Council gate.

More than two a years ago I obtained permission from the landowner, and asked CWAC, to put a litter bin beside the track near the A51. It has not yet been done. The Parish Council might consider making a written request.

The PROW Officer had proposed removing the redundant gate where the path emerges from the edge of the wood a hundred metres north of FP3 and using it elsewhere on our network. This remains to be done.

FP 7 from A51 next to Rode Street Farm following the Sandstone Trail route north to junction with Utkinton FP11

The route is in good order.

FP 8 from A51 NW of roundabout to Utkinton Road between bridge over By-pass and Heath Green

After a few years of the path being reinstated after planting, this path seems to have returned to previous bad practice.

At the A51/Rode Street the hedge had been cut back to provide adequate access to the path, but it's now starting to get overgrown again.

RB 9 From SE of roundabout on A51 following south side of By-pass to Utkinton Road

The path is currently in good order and has been maintained in terms of vegetation during the year. As reported last year, the sign at the A51 is leaning over.

The drainage alongside the path at the roundabout end could be improved, but it's not yet causing a problem for the path itself.

FP 10 from Utkinton Road between Rose Mount Farm and Newlands to Oswalds way, junction with FP 11 and on to Heath Green

The removal of the hedge and replacement with a fence has made the first section from Utkinton Road much easier. The owner of the concrete posts on the South side off the path objected to their removal, but the Clerk, nevertheless, asked for the leaning posts to be straightened. It's not happened.

A resident has written to the Clerk a couple of times complaining about the condition of the muddy surface, with photographs which appear to be of the section running behind Heathfields.

FP 11 from Forest Road opposite Woodlands Way to junction with FP 10 at north east end of Oswalds Way

The stone which the Parish Council laid two years ago has maintained an improvement to the path. It could still be further improved, but not before FP1 and FP10.

In summer the hedge either side of the path uncomfortably restricts the width. I believe the Parish Council should be very assertive with the Heatherways management company. I complained to them when they, in my view, quite unnecessarily planted the hedge, and they undertook to maintain it.

FP 12 from Forest Road (south of Forest House) to Park Road

Led by Andrew Wallace volunteers have done an excellent job laying gravel on the first half of the path off Forest Road. I believe Andrew plans to organise the second half.

FP13 from Park Road to Cobblers Cross

This is a very well used path and in good order, although it gets very muddy after rain. This could be a candidate for laying woodchip if we got the landowner's permission.

FP 14 from High Street beside entrance to British Legion to Oathills Close and then following roads (Oathill Drive/Churchill Drive) to Eaton Road

This path is in good order.

FP 15 from Tilstone Lane (the lane between Eaton Road and the A51) to Wettenhall brook where it becomes a Tilstone Fearnal path

Although muddy the path is distinct and unobstructed.

FP 16 from Birch Heath by Birch Heath Farm north to FP2

The route is very muddy near the farm yard. The stile at the Birch Heath end of the path is rotted and has been reported to CWaC.

FP 17 from junction with FP 2 behind St Helens to junction with FP 3/RB5 N of Moss Cottage

Over a year ago I secured the landowner's permission to divert the route so that it follows the line most people currently use and avoids the area that floods most winters. He has agreed that we can then use the gates to replace the first couple of stiles on FP2 walking away from the Church.

Very oddly, given how wet the winter has been this year, it's not flooded.

FP 18 from RB5 on Back Lane at west of By-pass to FP6 (Sandstone Trail)

Most of the year this path has been relatively well drained after a third year of effort from the PROW Officer and me. It was a fast flowing river in January.

The sign, for which the Parish Council paid and installed, at the junction with the Sandstone Trail remains mysteriously missing.

FP 19 from FP3 behind the Rising Sun to FP4 behind the Silver Band

This path is in good order.

Footway Utkinton Road to Heath Green

This is signposted for the Delamere loop but its status is as part of the highway rather than a right of way.

It is in good condition.

RB 20/Utkinton RB 10 from Heath Green to top of Forest Road /A49

In good order, but would benefit from early season maintenance to prevent it getting overgrown.

FP 21/ Rushton 30/32 from north end of Cobblers Cross through Portal Golf to Eaton Lane

The path is in good order.

FP 22/Rushton FP31 from Cobblers Cross west of the hotel to the golf course and across the course past the 18th hole and then to Saplings Lane

I and the PROW officer agreed with the landowner on the location for a sign which has recently been installed.

As previously reported the path that everyone uses across the golf course is not actually the right of way. For the time being, I've given up trying to get the hotel to regularise the situation.

The path we all use is in good order.

FP 23 & Tiverton FP14 from junction of FP1 (south of Birch Heath)/Tiverton FP24/26 to Nantwich Road south of the By-pass and north of Tiresford Farm

This route crosses two fields: one alongside the bypass (Tiverton FP14) and with a pond in its northerly corner; the second (Tarporley FP 23) beyond the pond toward Birch Heath up to the junction with FP1. In the second field, it's clear from the ground that most people walk around the perimeter of the field, whilst the right of way crosses the field. The right of way has been overplanted without reinstatement.

We should not forget our long term aspiration to gain the landowner's permission to allow a route from Nantwich road around the bottom of the DWH development and under the bypass.

FP 26 Tiverton from Birch Heath toward FP1 to Captains Walk.

The path has been well maintained.

I have made no progress on claiming the rights of way linking this route with Birch Heath road.

Utkinton FP9 A49 Luddington Hill onto golf course.

In good order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Parish Council:

1. Ask CWAC to rectify all the leaning and missing signs as detailed in this report.
2. Remain vigilant to ensure the landowner dedicates a route through the underpass at the south of the DWH development when she brings forward development proposals for Tiresford farm.
3. Complete the improvement to the surface of Captain's Walk FP1
4. Write to CWaC requesting a bin at the junction of FP6 (Sandstone Trail) and the A51
5. Improve the surface of FP10.
6. Write to the Heatherways management company asking for effective cutting back of the hedge alongside FP11
7. Ask the landowner to straighten the leaning concrete posts on FP10 where the path enters the narrow section leading to Utkinton Road.
8. Investigate possible source of woodchip and consider using to improve FP2 beside the churchyard and FP13 from Park Road to Cobblers Cross
9. Write to CWAC asking for a progress report on diversion of FP17.
10. Ask the PROW Officer to intervene with landowners to deal with issues identified on FP3, 8 and 23.
11. Incorporate the Tarporley Walks Facebook page routes onto the Parish Council website.

David Press, Tarporley Parish Council Footpath Warden, February 2020