TARPORLEY FOOTPATHS IN SPRING & SUMMER 2026
REPORT BY DAVID PRESS, CATHERINE HELM AND ALEX SAWKIW, PARISH COUNCIL FOOTPATH VOLUNTEERS

INTRODUCTION

During Spring and Summer 2026 we walked the Tarporley paths to audit the condition of our rights of way and identify changes since the last audit in 2025. Because of numerous family commitments and health issues, the walking took much longer than anticipated and three sections of path remain unwalked, these are FP6 between Tiverton FP13 and FP3, FP7 and FP8.

References to DL are Deborah Lack, CWaC footpaths officer.

This report:

- summarises the overall condition of paths and notes developments since the last annual report in 2025
- reports on the permissive path around the golf course
- records findings for each path
- Makes recommendations for decisions and actions

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

In March 2026 DL met the landowner's agent for FP13, to discuss the possibility of improving the surface of FP 13, the path between Park Road and Cobblers Cross. The landowner has declined to allow improvement to the surface of this footpath.

In a meeting with DL in 2025 we raised the issue reported in 2024 about the interactive map showing Tiverton FP25 and 26 ending behind the houses on Birch Heath: i.e. not linking to the highway. The Ramblers Don't Lose Your Way campaign has logged this and David P also reported it to CWaC. Because of this gap in the interactive map these routes are not signed from Birch Heath. DL discovered last year that the definitive statement describes the route as terminating at the Tiverton Parish boundary, which at the time ran along Birch Heath road. DL undertook to investigate whether the statement or map takes precedence. She also undertook to check whether the claim of a lost historic route has been logged. There has been no further update on this.

It is eight years since David P first reported that 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 the Parish Council asked CWaC to consider a diversion in the public interest. CWaC have suspended work on discretionary diversions.

Could the Parish Council exercise this power on behalf of CWaC?

Paths ploughed, planted and not reinstated are FP3 (north west of the Sandstone Trail) and FP23. FP7 has not been walked. FP8 has not been walked while a crop was growing, but in previous years this path has also been impassable.

Once again we're reminding the Parish Council that the landowner has said that when she applies for planning permission for development at Tiresford Farm, then she will consider formalising a route through the A49 underpass. The Parish Council might want to ensure that this is the case, and/or ask again if she'll do something sooner.

The Parish Council's request for us to write content on footpaths for the Parish Council website remains an undone task.

GOLF COURSE ACCESS

In January 2022 the Parish Council and Macdonald Portal Hotel Golf and Spa signed the agreement for a permissive route around the Portal golf course.

The Head Greenkeeper, Barry Robinson, initially acknowledged that the permissive route helped in keeping people to the perimeter of the course, but in the summer of 2025 he became extremely concerned by people who weren't complying with the route and who were being extremely abusive to his staff. David P met with him and suggested a number of ways the Parish Council could help: 1. Produce cards with PC letterhead explaining the permissive route for Barry's staff to hand to transgressors; 2. Place a notice in Tarporley Talk; 3. Put a message from the PC in the notice boards warning of possible closure of the route if people don't respect it. This material was drafted but not finalised.

REPORT ON EACH PATH

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

The leaning tree identified in 2025 that was obscuring traffic was cut back by Catherine Helm in 2025. The wobbly post at the top of the steps was reported to DL and has been repaired.

No issues with the path.

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

For the second year running the field behind the churchyard has not been flooded.

The hedge beside the path alongside the churchyard needed cutting back early in the year and has since been cut back.

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

The footpath sign on the Tarporley side of the bypass is totally obscured by tree growth, this is a big job that is best carried out by CWaC. Alternatively the sign could be moved away from the trees.

As is frequently the case, the path headed north west beyond the Sandstone Trail toward Iddinshall has been planted without any reinstatement. The footbridge is overgrown.

The gate next to the solar farm, not on a Tarporley path, appeared to be padlocked shut and was reported to DL.

DL carried out a site visit and confirmed that there was a hook to undo the gate next to the solar farm. She also noted the overgrown footbridge on FP3 and is looking into replacing the bridge as she feels it is damaged.

Previous discussions with DL about the need for waymarking to help people find this route appear not to have been addressed.

FP 4 from the 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 bypass.

Following complaints by residents of The Close in Summer 2025 and a site visit from DL, the village section of this path has been cleared and the surface improved.

Early in 2026 an electric fence was placed across the path at the western end of the first field closest to the village, right next to the bridge over the ditch. The location of the fence plus the presence of tall nettles made access at this point very difficult. This was reported to DL and the footpath was cleared and the electric fence position improved after her intervention with the landowner.

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

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 bypass.

The route is good apart from the gate beside Moss Lane close to FP4: in 2025 it was off it's hinge and leaning across the gate posts. This has not been checked in 2026.

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 section of route between FP18 and the A51 wasn't walked as there was a herd of interested calves on it, however from a distance it looked clear.

The section between Tiverton FP13 and the junction of FP6 with FP3 has not been walked.

The rest of the route is generally in good condition although the southern section gets horrendously muddy. The fallen tree noted in 2025 has been cleared and the route is clear.

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 has not been walked in 2026.

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

The route has not been walked in 2026.

In the winter, with the crop harvested, it was walkable, but it's not clear on the ground.

RB 9 From SE of roundabout on A51 following south side of bypass to Utkinton Road

The path has been, as in previous years, dug up to make humps, possibly for mountain bikes. Catherine Helm has reported this on several occasions but the humps keep reappearing. It's not been reported again in 2026.

The drainage alongside the path at the roundabout end continues to be much improved as a result of the work which the PRoW officer commissioned several of years ago.

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

At the time of inspection, June 2026, the hedge between Oswalds Way and The Blythings was badly in need of cutting back

Between Utkinton Road and the bungalow the path surface had weed growth, possibly a CWaC issue as it's in the path surface.

Otherwise the path as a whole is in good order.

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

The surface improvement funded by the Parish Council continues to do its work.

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

This path is in good order.

FP13 from Park Road to Cobblers Cross

This path is very well used and gets dangerously muddy in winter.

A fallen tree was reported to DL and rapidly cleared.

In March 2026 DL met the landowner's agent, who discussed with the landowner whether there was a possibility of improving the surface of this path. The landowner is not amenable to improving the path, citing urbanisation of the path and encroachment into the field as reasons.

FP 14 from High Street beside entrance to Poppy Lane car park to Oathills Close and then following roads (Oathill Drive/Churchill Drive) to Eaton Road

The PC has said it hopes to resurface the western end of this path.

The path is in good order.

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

Most of the path is in good condition.

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

Very muddy in places but the concrete sleepers in front of the cattle yard are still functional.

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

Over eight years ago we 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, although not this year.

Although we've been told that CWaC are no longer doing discretionary diversions we raised this with DL and asked her to see if anything could be done. There is no further information on this in 2026.

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

In good order at the time of walking, but often muddy and with running water all winter.

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.

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

The path is in good order and for the most part more clearly waymarked as a result of the waymarking we installed for the permissive route.

FP 22/Rushton FP31 from Cobblers Cross west of the hotel to the golf course and across the course to Saplings Lane

As previously reported the path that everyone uses across the golf course is not actually the right of way. However the route used which is partly right of way and part permissive is fine. The waymarking where the route joins Garden Cottage drive needs to be improved with a new waymark. This has not been addressed in 2026.

FP 23 & Tiverton FP14 from junction of FP1 (south of Birch Heath)/Tiverton FP24/26 to Nantwich Road south of the bypass 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.

At the bypass the path starts at an odd place, with no good pedestrian links. Crossing the bypass to access it is not great! This is why securing a permissive or right of way through the underpass at the south of Haddington Park would be so much better.

The FP sign next to the bypass is obscured by tree growth and the stile is difficult to access as it is rarely walked and very overgrown. Either the tree growth needs cutting back or ideally the sign moved to the other side of the stile.

From the bypass headed NW the field is planted and the route unclear until beyond the pond.

Where FP23 crosses Wettenhall Brook on a wooden footbridge the bridge is overgrown and impassable, as is the gate just to the north of this bridge.

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. For many years the right of way has been overplanted without reinstatement.

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

A waymark is needed at the the junction with FP1.

Over recent years the path has been cleared of Japanese knotweed leaving the path much more open for about half its length, however at its southeast end the path was impassable due to thick vegetation growth.

Drainage is very poor at the southeastern end and the path is frequently deeply flooded.

The CWaC interactive map does not show the path joining Birch Heath Road. The definitive statement suggests that it does. This needs to be raised with DL again as it has been raised in previous years but not addressed.

Utkinton FP9 A49 Luddington Hill onto golf course.

The defined route off the A49 has a slightly lower gap in the fence rather than a stile, but the route most people use directly off the A49 at the corner of the course is fine. The path is in good order and it's extension into Rushton FP22 was greatly improved by the clearance of scrub carried out by the golf course staff and this has been maintained this year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Parish Council:

1. Once again ask the landowner to dedicate a route through the underpass at the south of the Haddington Park development and at least ensure this is part of any development proposals for Tiresford Farm.
2. Ask CWaC/PRoW Officer to make good all the obstruction, signage and waymark issues recorded in this report.
3. Get the prepared materials printed and distributed to Macdonald Portal Golf and Spa's staff in an effort to gain public compliance with the permissive route.

4. Ask the Parish Council to write a letter of appreciation to DL for her efforts in supporting the maintenance of our footpath network.
5. Check the new Neighbourhood Plan for references to maintaining existing footpaths and forging new links across new developments. Consider making these new links and existing footpaths into ‘green roadways’, in keeping with the rural nature of the village, not barren urban-style walkways.

David Press, Catherine Helm and Alex Sawkiw, Tarporley Parish Council Footpath Volunteers October 2026