

FOOTPATHS 2019

Without a doubt, some of our footpaths are extremely well trodden. The ribbon development nature of our village along either side of The Street means that it's possible to be in the open countryside within just a few metres of our front doors. As a result, a high proportion of village inhabitants use the footpaths regularly and for a variety of purposes, although primarily for exercise, either for themselves or their animals.

Dog fouling of our paths continues to be an issue, although it should be said that the constant publicity, new signage and provision of poo bins has led to something of an improvement over the past 18 months or so.

Despite the recent period of austerity, some local footpaths have seen substantial investment. This has taken the form of raised walkways over marshy ground and the replacement of bridges over three of our streams. Significant numbers of rotting footpath sign uprights have been replaced by shorter posts which now carry the multi-coloured footpath arrows. However, in many cases the green, blue and red village circular route discs that were attached to the rotting posts have not been re-attached, therefore potentially impeding the progress of those who set out on such a walk without a circular-walk map.

In the recent past it has been difficult to persuade landowners to re-mark cross-field footpaths that had been ploughed-over each autumn. Thanks to the diligence of local walkers, our parish clerk and the local authority most of the footpaths were quickly reinstated this year. Some walkers may have noticed one particular cross-field stretch of footpath suddenly appear just south of the A143 which hadn't been visible or marked for many years.

The parish council has also been lobbying for appropriate pedestrian barriers to be placed at the foot of the steps leading down embankments to the A143 on both sides of the road, at the point where the footpath crosses it, towards the southern end of the bypass.

Finally, a plea from dog owners to local farmers and landowners. Crop spraying by its very nature means that whatever is being sprayed upon crops invariably gets onto the surrounding footpaths. A display of suitable warning signs (at footpath junctions) that crop spraying is in progress would ensure that owners kept their animals on leads thus preventing them from ingesting anything of a toxic nature.