

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Rights of Way Committee** held remotely on 25th January 2021.

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs J Cole, J Dykstra, Ms L A Gifford, S J Green, J A Parker, P S Potts, Mrs S J Wilcox and Dr S C Withams

Ms K Simpson

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs M H Harlock, Mrs J E Tavener and Mrs A R Wyatt.

01/20 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Upon being moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Ms Gifford, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor P S Potts be elected Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

Councillor Potts, Chairman, in the Chair

02/20 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Upon being moved by Councillor Potts and seconded by Councillor Dr Withams, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs S C Wilcox be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

03/20 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Dr Withams and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilcox, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27th January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

04/20 MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs Cole declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in that part of Minute No. 06/20 relating to footpath 4 as she owned land which was crossed by it.

Councillor Mrs Wilcox declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of bridleways 17 and 18 as she and her husband rented adjoining land.

05/20 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted that there were no matters arising from the Minutes of its meeting held on 27th January 2020 that would not dealt with in Minute No. 06/20 ante.

06/20 MAINTENANCE OF FOOTPATHS

With the aid of the County Council's online map showing rights of way in Warboys, the Committee proceeded to review the situation with regard to the footpath and bridleway network in the Parish and the need for any maintenance work to be undertaken.

Footpath No. 1

Members noted that footpath 1 had been superseded by the development of the Humberdale Way area of the village. However a closer inspection of the on line map available on the County Council's website showed the line of the footpath crossing through houses and gardens. As there were a number of issues that would need to be raised with the County Council's Rights of Way Team as a result of the meeting, the Clerk reported that he would ask whether the path could be diverted as part of a comprehensive order to link footpaths 3 and 4 required by the David Wilson Homes development at Mahaddie Way.

Footpath No. 2

The route followed George Lane and Third Avenue before crossing open countryside to join Station Road near Humbrills Farm. However the Clerk pointed out that few people crossed diagonally over the field adjoining the farm preferring instead to follow footpath 12 before joining Station Road.

Reference was made to the fact that many people also walked from the junction of footpaths 2 and 12 in a north easterly direction to access Coronation Avenue. In order to claim this as a public right of way, the Clerk explained that it would be necessary for members of the public to complete evidence forms to the effect that the route had been used for a minimum of 20 years without obstruction.

Footpath Nos. 3 and 4

(Having declared an interest in respect of footpath 4, Councillor Mrs Cole took no part in the discussion on this item.)

The Clerk reported that a number of complaints had been made by members of the public that David Wilson Homes had closed footpaths while their development of the Mahaddie Way estate was under construction. However the company had obtained the necessary permission from the County Council. An order already had been made by the County Council diverting footpath 3 on phase I of the development which had been renamed as footpath 20. The company had also permitted a temporary access from the estate south of the phase II development to link with footpath 4.

The Section 106 Agreement for Phase I required the creation of a footpath link between footpaths 3 and 4 which were not previously connected. The Agreement provided for a scheme to be approved before development commenced but although this had yet to be agreed, the Clerk reported that he continued to liaise with the County Council's Asset Information Definitive Map Officer on the matter.

The Clerk reported that a separate Section 106 Agreement for phase II of the development made provision for a contribution from the developer for the improvement of footpath 4 between the development and Flaxen Walk where it crossed land in private ownership. As work was nearing completion on the phase II development, the Clerk indicated that he would also seek to progress this with the County Council.

Footpath No. 5

The Clerk pointed out that the official line of the public footpath predated the development of the land as an airfield in the Second World War and bore little resemblance to the existing land use. As a result, walkers tended to follow the hard surfaced tracks remaining from the airfield rather than the official path.

The only work normally required was the cutting back of overhanging vegetation where a bridge crossed Broughton Brook. In reply to a question, the Clerk reported that this had not been necessary when he had walked the route last in November.

Footpath No. 6

The footpath crossed the A141 leaving the village via Wilthorne and linking with the footpaths in Pidley-cum-Fenton Parish and provided a number of circular routes.

Footpath No. 7

The Committee noted that footpath 7 was particularly well used following its diversion around Pingle Wood and providing access to Pingle Cutting nature reserve which was open to the public.

Councillor Green reported that a number of slats and a handrail on a small bridge on the route required repair and the Clerk undertook to arrange for the work to be undertaken by the Handymen.

Footpath No. 8

Members were informed that the footpath often became overgrown where it passed Woolvey Farm and had been cleared again by the Handymen in the autumn. As the path ended at the A141, the Clerk explained that it was little used as a route as this involved walking on the A141 verge for some distance before connecting with any of the other footpaths east of the road.

Footpath No. 9

Footpath 9 also linked Fenside Road with the A141 but provided access to footpath 10 and the Pidley-cum-Fenton footpath network. The path followed the field edge and no work

was required by the Parish Council. However the Clerk reported that the path had been ploughed close to the field hedgerow when he had walked it last.

Footpath No. 10

No action required as the footpath had a hard surface.

Footpath No. 11

The Committee was informed that this footpath which linked Wistow Toll and Wistow Fen Lane was little used.

Footpath No. 12

The line of footpath 12 crossed paddocks that had been erected at the rear of Humbrills Farm but walkers had used a permissive path that had been signposted by the Walking Group around the perimeter of the paddock fencing. Clearance of the permissive path was undertaken by the Walking Group each spring but this quickly became overgrown again and it had not been possible for any work to be undertaken in 2020 due to the pandemic restrictions. However walkers tended to walk along the adjoining field boundary and a track alongside the paddocks which was an acceptable alternative.

Footpath No. 13

This footpath extended from the A141 to the footpaths in Pidley-cum-Fenton and consequently also was little used as it involved walking along the A141 verge.

Bridleways 14 - 19

(Councillor Mrs Cole declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in 17 and 18 as she owned land in their vicinity. She remained in the meeting as her interest was not affected by the discussion.

Councillor Mrs Wilcox left the meeting for the duration of the discussion on bridleways 17 and 18 where they ended near New Barn Drove.)

The Chairman reported that bridleways 15 and 16 were in a particularly poor condition and were virtually impassable for horse riders and walkers when he had walked the route on the weekend prior to the meeting. Although the bridleways normally became very wet during the winter, the Chairman advised that farmers tended to ensure that their vehicles followed tracks in the centre of the droves which enabled riders and walkers to still use the routes. However the whole width of the droves on bridleways 15 and 16 had been turned into mud by vehicles in recent months.

The Clerk reported that he had drawn this to the attention of one of the County Council's Rights of Way Officers earlier in the day and the situation was being investigated.

The Clerk reported that he had yet to receive a reply from the County Farms Estate with regard to the possibility of linking bridleways 17 and 18 along New Barn Drove to provide a circular route. The matter had been raised with them in February after the last meeting of the Committee but due to changes in personnel and staffing shortages, it had not been

possible to progress the matter. In the event of a reply not being received in the near future, the Clerk indicated that he would pursue the matter direct with the Rights of Way team.

Members were informed that a letter of objection had been received to the idea from a resident of New Barn Drove but explained that there would be an opportunity to consider the views of interested parties at a later date once a reply had been received from the County Farms Estate as the landowner.

07/20 WALKERS PROGRAMME

(The Clerk pointed out that he was the co-ordinator of the Warboys Walking Group.)

A copy of the draft programme prepared by the Warboys Walking Group for 2021/22 was circulated for Members' information, containing over 40 walks on Saturdays and Sundays and on Friday evenings in the summer months.

Unfortunately the pandemic restrictions had meant that it had not been possible for any of the organised walks on the 2020/21 programme to be undertaken and these had therefore been carried forward to the following year. As a result, the grant to the Walking Group approved by the Committee in 2020 had not been paid.

Although it had not been possible for any organised walks to take place, it was reported that the pandemic had resulted in many more people walking locally for exercise.

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to make a grant of £150 to the Warboys Walking Group in 2021/22.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

Chairman.