

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Rights of Way Committee** held on 6th February 2023 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillors R J Dykstra, D R A Fabb, Ms L A Gifford, Ms M L Morrow, A Ntuk, Mrs C L Sproats, P S Potts, Dr S C Withams and Mrs A R Wyatt.

Ms K Simpson

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor D W England.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs J Cole and J A Parker.

01/22 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Upon being moved by Councillor Dr Withams 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

02/22 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Upon being moved by Councillor Ntuk and seconded by Councillor Dykstra, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs A R Wyatt be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

03/22 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Dr Withams and seconded by Councillor Dykstra, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

(Councillor Ms Morrow arrived at the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

04/22 MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Fabb declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of public footpath 7 as he owned land adjoining the route of the footpath and a dispensation to speak but not vote was granted.

05/22 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted that there were no matters arising from the Minutes of its meeting held on 24th January 2022 that would not be dealt with in Minute No. 06/22 ante.

06/22 MAINTENANCE OF FOOTPATHS

The Committee reviewed 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 were reminded that the line of footpath no. 1 crossing through houses and gardens in Humberdale Way as the original route of the footpath had not been diverted when the estate had been built. As the area was now developed, walkers followed the footway network and the County Council's Rights of Way Team had advised that there was no requirement to divert the route unless the cost was met by a third party.

Councillor Ms Morrow drew attention to the absence of a footway in part of Woodlands which presented problems when parents were taking children to school but it was accepted that the design of the road network on the estate precluded any action to improve the situation.

Footpath No. 2

The route followed George Lane and Third Avenue before crossing open countryside to join Station Road near Humbrills Farm. The Clerk pointed out that few people crossed diagonally over the field adjoining the farmhouse preferring instead to follow footpath 12 before joining Station Road or walking along the line of the hedgerow adjoining the property.

Members were informed that many people also walked from the junction of footpaths 2 and 12 in a north easterly direction to access Coronation Avenue. The Rights of Way Team at the County Council had been asked if a new footpath could be created but unless a third party funded the cost of making an order or it was claimed as a public right of way with evidence forms showing that the route had been used for a minimum of 20 years without obstruction, the County Council would not take any action.

Footpath Nos. 3 and 4

The Clerk reported that an order had been made by the County Council to divert footpath 3 on phase I of the David Wilson Homes development which had been renamed as footpath

20. Footpath 4 had also been diverted to link with Coronation Avenue through the new development.

Members were reminded that the Section 106 Agreement for Phase II of the development had made provision for a contribution from the developer for the improvement of footpath 4 between the new development and Flaxen Walk where it crossed land in private ownership. Discussions had been ongoing for several years with the County Council and the landowner to improve the footpath surface as this was now used by residents of the estate to access the village and school to avoid the longer walk via Station Road. The Clerk reported that the path across the field and through the kissing gates was now very muddy but he had been advised by the County Council that they now had insufficient staffing resources to pursue the matter further at the present time.

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 occasional cutting back of overhanging vegetation where a bridge crossed Broughton Brook. However, the Clerk indicated that he would arrange for the Handymen to install additional waymark posts and signs as the route was unclear for those not familiar with it.

Footpath No. 6

The footpath crossed the A141 leaving the village via Wilthorne and linking with the footpaths in Pidley-cum-Fenton Parish and providing a number of circular routes. The Clerk reported that the direction posts and waymarks where the footpath crossed Onyetts Field had been replaced by the Handymen in the previous year.

A Local Highway Improvement bid had been approved by the County Council for improvements to the crossing of the highway and the work was expected to be undertaken in the near future.

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.

The Council had submitted a bid under the Local Highway Improvement scheme for the creation of a footpath alongside Puddock Hill for the return to the village for walkers and horse riders and Councillor Fabb reported that he had observed officers from the County Council measuring the route, presumably for the preparation of a draft feasibility plan for consideration.

Footpath No. 8

Members were informed that the footpath often became overgrown where it passed Woolvey Farm and was cleared from time to time by the Handymen. As the path ended at the A141, the Clerk explained that it was little used as an onwards route as this involved walking along the A141 verge for some distance before connecting with any of the other footpaths east of the road.

The Clerk reported that the landowner had erected double gates across the starting point of the footpath where it left Fenside Road and planted hedging up to the gate posts which would effectively block the access when the planting grew. This had been reported to the County Council's Rights of Way Team and the situation would be kept under review.

Footpath No. 9

Footpath 9 also linked Fenside Road with the A141 and provided access to footpath 10 and the Pidley-cum-Fenton footpath network. The path followed the field edge and a strip of uncultivated land had been left by the landowner which could be walked without difficulty.

Footpath No. 10

The footpath, which followed a metalled track, extended east of the A141 to link to a number of footpaths in Pidley-cum-Fenton and provided access to Rookery Waters.

Footpath No. 11

The Committee was informed that this footpath which linked Wistow Toll and Wistow Fen Lane was little used. Ms Simson reported that she had walked the footpath and found it extremely muddy as it passed alongside a farm before reaching the B1040.

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 had been undertaken by the Walking Group from time to time but this quickly became overgrown again. As a result the path alongside the paddocks had become impassable and 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 Rowey Farm and the footpaths in Pidley-cum-Fenton but was little used as access to the path involved walking along the A141 verge.

Bridleways 14 - 19

The Chairman reported the condition of bridleways 15 and 16 was better than in 2021 when they had become impassable in the winter due to the passage of vehicles.

Correspondence had continued with the County Council's Estates Team over the past year with regard to the possibility of linking bridleways 17 and 18 along New Barn Drove to provide a circular route for horse riders and walkers. Due to staff changes, little progress had been made and this was now being dealt with by the Rural Asset Manager. Ms Simson also reported that the British Horse Society had claimed to have found evidence of New Barn Drove having been a public right of way which they had submitted to the County Council. .

07/22 WALKERS PROGRAMME

A copy of the draft programme prepared by the Warboys Walking Group for 2023/24 was circulated for Members' information, containing over 40 walks on the first Saturday and third Sunday each month and alternate Friday evenings in the summer months.

Once the programme had been finalised, the Clerk reported that it would be available on the Council's website as well as that of the Friends of Warboys Library. Members were informed that articles were also included in the Warboys Diary from time to time advertising local walks which had attracted some new walkers in 2022.

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

Chairman.