

Berrick and Roke Parish Path Wardens' Report – July 2016

The responsibility for maintaining a Right of Way (RoW) is shared between OCC (The Countryside Access Team) and the Landowner of a particular RoW (or part of one). OCC is responsible for the clearance of undergrowth and the Landowner for the clearance of overgrowth where it is causing an obstruction. In reality making this distinction can be difficult. OCC should clear undergrowth twice a year but cutbacks to funding which have occurred year upon year means that some RoWs are strimmed to a width of 3 feet while others (usually those difficult to access and less well used) are not. OCC will also clear fallen trees and branches when informed. Some Landowners in the parish keep their paths, stiles and gates well maintained while others are less assiduous.

Several parishioners have taken 'direct action' and mowed and strimmed various RoWs – 'Thank You' so much for that!

The Rights of Way below are numbered to match the Parish Definitive Map and Statement (both can be found on the RoW page on the village website) and the Parish prefix is 127.

- 1) **Roke towards Warborough (BR)** – At the end of 2014 the barbed wire fence was removed and OCC cleared the path right back to the ditch. This made a huge improvement to the safety aspect of using the path for both horse riders and walkers. Unfortunately OCC cannot maintain this improvement so we will be investigating the possibility of the parish bearing the cost. In addition the field will be used, in future, for livestock so will be re-fenced. But this time, we have been assured, the bridleway will be 12 feet wide along the entire length of the field and the new fence will only have two strands of barbed wire at the top. Volunteers have spread wood chippings on muddy areas (it was hard work!) and some left over chippings will be used in the autumn. **Added on 25/08 - an electric fence has been erected around the field but is well away from the bridleway however it is hoped that warning signs will be put up. Horse riders opinions will be sought.**
- 2) **Rokemarsh to Roke (FP)** – has been cleared twice this year.
- 3) **Roke to Berrick (FP around allotments)** – cleared by parishioners.
- 4) **Green Lane towards Warborough (BR)**– This narrows at the top of Green Lane but the rest of the bridleway is kept clear firstly by the sheep in the first field & then by the farmer in the second.
- 5) **N.W. from Parsonage Farm to meet 4 (FP)**– We cleaned the waymarkers & cut back the brambles just after Easter this year. This path is not much used & there are two stiles that are not dog friendly.
- 6) **Old Post Office to St. Helens(FP)** – Brambles were cut back to show the finger post opposite the church earlier this year. The cattle keep the grass down across the field but OCC had to be reminded about the first stretch behind the Old Post Office.
- 7) **Hollantide Bottom (BR)** – was mowed around Easter time by an unknown kind person!
- 8) **Top of Green Lane towards Lane End Farm (FP)** - We put up a new waymarker at the top of Green Lane to indicate that this path branches north from 4) to a footbridge on our parish boundary.
- 9) **Manor Farm towards Lonesome Farm (FP)** – This footpath is completely blocked by an impassable thicket on the Newington section. OCC have been informed of this starting in April 2003 & on 3 subsequent occasions – it has been given a low priority. Walkers get around it by diverting around the field to the Chalgrove road & so by-passing Manor Farm. It is on our to-do list!
- 10) **Rokemarsh to Benson (FP)** – OCC strimmed at least twice this year.

In addition: the paths through the allotments area other than 3) above are not Public Rights of Way and are owned by the Parish. There is a stretch of path that caused concern last winter as it became almost impassable. The brambles and blackthorn on either side have grown making the path narrower, in addition, it is clear that cyclists & horses have ridden through churning up the mud. During wet spells it is suggested that signs are put up directing walkers along the footpath & then right along the (secret!) path through the trees. Widening the path, putting down woodchips & discouraging horses could help.