

NAYLAND WITH WISSINGTON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Footpath Warden's Annual Report – April 2022

The public rights of way network in the parish continues to be freely available and generally easy to use. Throughout the past year public footpaths across arable land were adequately reinstated, and the upgrowth of natural vegetation on other rights of way was cleared by Suffolk County Council when necessary. On occasions during the summer some permissive paths became a little overgrown but in general all remained passable. The permissive path to Stoke by Nayland, and 'new' permissive path to the north of Horkesley Road provided by the Nayland Land Company were mown and both continue to be a well-used additions to the local path network.

Very few reports of problems were received by the Parish Council in the last year which hopefully means that walkers usually find our paths in an acceptable condition. Exceptions include:

Footpath 28: The constant heavy usage of the path beside the river between A134 and the weir wears away the natural vegetation resulting in the surface becoming muddy and slippery during the winter. Little can be done to improve it other than giving it a permanent hard surface which isn't considered suitable at this location. Walkers are advised to wear appropriate footwear and to use walking poles/sticks when necessary.

Byway 18 (Dead Lane to south of Arger Fen): The public has the right to drive over this Byway between April and October and because of very poor drainage combined with the lack of maintenance of encroaching sidegrowth and heavy overhead tree canopy the surface had become heavily rutted and impossible to walk safely for much of the year. As a result of liaison between the Parish Council, Suffolk CC and landowners some work has recently been carried out which should improve conditions.

Footpath 14 (between Newlands Lane and Candy Lane). The Parish Council is liaising with Suffolk CC and the landowner regarding removing the steps near the allotments and replacing them with a surfaced ramp with handrails. This will mean wheelchairs, prams etc, and wheelbarrows can move between the two Lanes without deviating from the public right of way

Path adj to A134 opposite Water Lane: I recently reported the fallen fingerpost and overgrown steps adjacent to the to ECC.

GENERAL MATTERS: There is much evidence that our public rights of way network, the permissive paths, and the Open Access land in the parish are enjoyed by Nayland and Wiston residents and many walkers from elsewhere. Regular use is the best way to keep paths from becoming overgrown, and it helps to show people less familiar with the network where they are allowed to walk. To fully benefit from this, walkers should keep to the legal line of public footpaths and not to wander onto adjacent land. The legal width of most footpaths is either 1 or 1.5 metres. Not everyone is aware that it is trespass against the owner of the land if walkers, or their dogs, stray beyond the legal line of a path. Please note that FP28 and FP41 run along the top of the river bank immediately next to the Stour between the A134 and the weir. To help to protect wild flowers and other wildlife please always walk on the top of bank.

DOG FOULING: Unfortunately dog fouling still remains a problem so I'd like to remind dog owners to clear up after their dogs, and when they have done so to use the bins provided to dispose of the bags. If there are no bins nearby please carry the bags until you reach one.

PARKING: may I remind people who drive to various locations in the village before walking to park considerately at all times.

REPORTING PROBLEMS: The quickest and easiest way for the public to report problems is via Suffolk County Council's and Essex County Council's online reporting tools. These can be found on both County Councils' websites. They allow anyone finding a problem to indicate its precise location on an online map, and to add photos showing the problem.

Please note the current financial situation has resulted in large reductions of Public Rights of Way staff, and as maintenance budgets have also been slashed the level of service both County Councils can provide will be significantly reduced.

Sally Bartrum Footpath Warden for Nayland with Wissington
24 April 2022