

South Lopham PROW Survey September 2016 Presentation to Parish Council

Footpath No. 1 (A1066 Garboldisham Road to Lower Drag Way Footpath No. 21)

Starts from A1066 and runs south south-eastwards, then west south-westwards to join the northern end of Footpath No. 2. The path then runs north north-westwards for a short distance, then turns west south-westwards again to enter the Lower Drag Way (Footpath No. 21).

Current condition:

- No finger post at Lower Drag end of footpath or at A1066 end.
- First section to junction with northern end of Footpath No. 2 is clearly defined and walkable.
- Last section of the path where the path turns north to join the A1066 is totally overgrown and unwalkable.
- Where path turns north to join the A1066 a new ditch crossing is needed.

Footpath No. 2 (Blo Norton Road to Footpath No. 1).

Starts from Blo Norton Road and runs northwards east of Noddle Farm and crossing Footpath No. 3 then bears north north-westwards to join Footpath No. 1.

Current condition:

- Accessible from the Blo Norton Road as far as the junction with Footpath No. 3, thereafter, the route is totally overgrown with a mixture of nettles and vegetation.
- No finger post at the northern end of this path where it meets Footpath No. 1.

Footpath No. 3 (Lower Drag Way to Blo Norton Road)

Starts from Lower Drag Way near Hangman's Barn and runs east north-eastwards crossing Footpath No. 2 to enter the Blo Norton Road opposite the former Council House properties.

Current condition:

- No finger post at either end of this cross field path.
- Footpath totally inaccessible, due to a crop growing in the field and overgrown vegetation at either end of the path.

Footpath No. 4 (A1066 Garboldisham Road to North Lopham Road)

Starts from the A1066 by a stile and runs northwards passing the south-western end of Footpath No. 6 and the north-western end of Footpath No. 5 then bears north north-westwards passing to the west of St Andrew's Church to enter North Lopham Road at the parish boundary.

Current condition:

- This footpath is totally inaccessible from either the northern or southern roadside access points as maize has been planted across the footpath.
- The only part of this route that is accessible is where it goes through the western edge of the parish church yard this section of the route is regularly cut as it forms part of the church yard extension.

Footpath No. 5 (Church Road to Footpath No. 4)

Starts by a stile from Church Road at its junction with Footpath No.6 and runs north-westwards to join Footpath No. 4.

Current condition:

- The access to this footpath from Church Road is clearly marked and well maintained by the people who live in the cottages alongside. Thereafter, the path is completely overgrown and inaccessible because the field it crosses is not being maintained and the route ends in a field of maize.
- A hedge has also been planted along the western edge of the field which blocks access to footpath No. 5 and No. 6.

Footpath No. 6 (Church Road to Footpath No. 4)

Starts by a stile from Church Road at its junction with Footpath No. 5 and runs west south-westwards to join Footpath No. 4.

Current condition:

- This footpath is also inaccessible from the A1066 and Church Road ends because the field it crosses is not being maintained and a recently planted hedgerow has been planted along the line of this path.

Footpath No. 7 (Blo Norton Road to Rectory Corner)

Starts from Blo Norton Road east of the school and runs southward then westwards for a short distance, and then turns southward again, then eastwards, to enter the B1113 Redgrave Road at Rectory Corner.

Current condition:

- No finger post at either end of this path.
- Access from the Redgrave Road end of the path difficult because of overhanging tree branches.
- The field edge section of this path is clearly defined and well used, there is some encroachment onto the path with nettles.
- The cross field section of this path is clearly marked and well used primarily by dog walkers.

Footpath No. 8 (Redgrave Road to Footpath No. 11)

Starts from Redgrave Road south of the north-eastern end of Footpath No. 8 and runs east south-eastwards to join Footpath No. 10.

Current condition:

- No finger posts at either end of this footpath.
- The field currently has wheat growing in it and is completely inaccessible.

Footpath No. 9 (Redgrave Road to Footpath No. 10)

Starts from Redgrave Road south of the north-eastern end of Footpath No. 8 and runs east south-eastwards to join Footpath No. 10.

Current condition:

- No finger posts at either end of this footpath.
- The field currently has wheat growing in it and is completely inaccessible.

Footpath No. 10 (Redgrave Road to Redgrave Road)

Starts from alongside Magdalen House (the former Parish Reading Room) and follows hedge line and drainage ditch and runs eastwards to enter Pantshorne Lane. The path then runs southwards along Pantshorne Lane, passing the western end of Footpath No. 12 and the north-western end of Footpath No. 19. It then turns south south-westwards passing the eastern end of Footpath No. 9, then bears westwards to enter Redgrave Road opposite the houses at Duttle Bridge.

Current condition:

- The top end of this footpath alongside Magdalen House is inaccessible due to encroachment by vegetation and tree branches.
- The field edge section of this path as far as Pantshorne Lane is completely overgrown and the only option is to walk through the current crop of sugar beet.
- The Pantshorne Lane section of this path is overgrown with vegetation and is difficult to walk.
- The field edge section from the junction with Footpath No. 12 as far as the junction with Footpath No. 19 is completely overgrown and inaccessible.
- The southern end of this footpath from its junction with Footpath No. 9 offers better walking as this is retained as meadow land.
- The southern end of this path where it emerges on the Redgrave Road at Duttle Bridge is overgrown and the stile cannot be negotiated.

Footpath No. 11 (Blo Norton Road to Redgrave Road)

Starts from Blo Norton Road by a field gate and runs south south-eastwards passing the south-western end of Footpath No. 8 then bears south-eastwards to enter Redgrave Road alongside the houses at Duttle Bridge.

Current condition:

- Good access from the Blo Norton Road end of this footpath.
- Wide field margin makes for good walking along this path until it reaches its junction with Footpath No. 8.
- Some encroachment by tree branches makes it difficult to negotiate the two stiles on this first section of the footpath.
- Access from the junction with Footpath No. 8 as far as the end of this path at Duttle Bridge is virtually impossible due to a combination of 1.5m high nettles and severe degrading of the route due to recent ditch clearance work.

Footpath No. 12 (Brick Kiln Lane to Footpath No. 10)

Starts from Brick Kiln Lane by a gap and runs westwards crossing Footpath No. 13, then bears west north-westwards over a cart bridge to Join Footpath No. 10 at a stile.

Current condition:

- The access to this field edge path from Brick Kiln Lane is totally overgrown with waist high nettles and vegetation. The hedgerow is also encroaching on this path where it crosses along land owned by Oxfootstone Barn. Beyond the western boundary of this property the field edge path is clearly marked and in good condition until it

reaches its junction with Footpath No. 13, at this point the path has been ploughed up and a crop planted for the next 200m. The next section of this path is walkable as it crosses a piece of pasture. The final 80m of the path is a field edge path until it joins Footpath No. 9. This section of field edge path has a crop growing right to the edge of the field and is difficult to walk.

Footpath No. 13 (Brick Kiln Lane to Low Common Road)

Starts from Brick Kiln Lane and runs south south-westwards to join the south western end of Footpath No. 14 then turns southwards crossing Footpath No. 12, then turns south south-westwards and then south east-wards to enter Low Common Road.

Current condition:

- No finger posts at either end of this footpath.
- The initial Low Common section of this path is well maintained where it runs behind the properties on Low Common. Property owners here have regularly cut the grass and maintained the path and ensured that the hedgerow is well cut back.
- The ditch crossing on this path remains in place but it is partially blocked by the encroaching hedgerow.
- Where this footpath meets Footpath No. 12 travelling north towards Brick Kiln Lane, this remaining section of the path has been ploughed up and a crop planted.

Footpath No. 14 (Brick Kiln Lane to Footpath No. 13).

Starts from Brick Kiln Lane and runs west south-wards to join Footpath No. 13.

Current condition:

- No finger posts at either end of this footpath.
- The route of this cross field path has been ploughed up and a crop planted and no evidence of the path remains.

Footpath No. 15 (A1066 Diss Road to Fersfield Road)

Starts from A1066 and runs northwards parallel with the parish council boundary, then turns north-westwards to enter Fersfield Road.

Current condition:

- First 500m northwards from A1066 in appalling condition with waist high vegetation and weeds, totally impossible to follow route alongside the Hundred River.
- The remaining 550m as the path continues northwards to join the Fersfield Road are a delight, they wide field margin is short grassland that is regularly mown by the adjacent small holder. The field side hedge is also well cut back and it is a delight to walk this section of the path and shows what can so easily be achieved.
- The finger post at the Fersfield Road end of the path needs to be replaced as does the wooden ditch crossing which is rotting away.

Footpath No. 16 (Brick Kiln Lane to Pooley Street)

Starts from Brick Kiln Lane and runs east south-eastwards along the track leading to Flint Farm. The path runs across the garden of Flint Farm and through a gap in the hedge and across the field to the north of Beech Tree Farm and Valley Farm until it meets Pooley Street.

Current condition:

- Good access to this footpath along the farm track that leads to Flint Farm. The path across Flint Farm is clearly well maintained and way markers are in position.
- Once the footpath leaves Flint Farm, the next 100m are across a field behind Beech Farm are inaccessible as a crop has been planted across the path. The following 100m immediately behind Beech Farm has a good footpath that is regularly being cut and this leads to a stile as the footpath continues across Valley Farm.
- The section across Valley Farm is extremely well maintained as far as the ditch crossing and stile as it exits Valley Farm.
- The eastern side of the ditch and subsequent stile are difficult to cross because of the overgrown hedgerow which virtually blocks the access. The final section of this path to Pooley Street is well maintained until it reaches the roadside stile crossing.

Footpath No. 17 (Pooley Street to Low Common)

Starts from Pooley Street north of its junction with Footpath No. 16 and travels eastwards to the parish boundary at Low Common.

Current condition:

- This path is totally inaccessible due to overhanging branches and high vegetation at the start of the path on Pooley Street.

Footpath No. 18 (Baptist Chapel to Parish Boundary with Bressingham)

Starts from the public highway opposite the Baptist Chapel and runs south south-westwards passing Langfen Farm, then turns southwards along the western boundary of Lang Fen to the north-eastern corner of Great Fen and then turns south south-eastwards again across Lang Fen to the parish boundary.

Current condition:

- This footpath begins on Silver Street and follows the length of the road southwards towards the Redgrave and Lopham Fen.
- The access across land which is managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust is 5m wide and is excellently maintained.
- Once the path reaches the Great Fen woodland it becomes part of the Great Fen Trail which is signposted across the Great Fen to the parish boundary with Redgrave.

Footpath No. 19 (Footpath No. 10 to Low Common Road)

Starts from Footpath No. 10 and runs south-eastwards to enter Low Common Road.

Current condition:

- No finger post at the Low Common end of this footpath.
- The Low Common end of this cross field path is difficult to identify as the field has been sprayed killing all the vegetation presumably prior to ploughing.
- The ditch crossing is still in place at the far end of this first field but it is not possible to go beyond this ditch crossing because of waist high stinging nettles that are growing on the next section of the footpath.

Footpath No.20 (Redgrave Road to Parish Boundary with Blo Norton)

Starts from Redgrave Road and runs west south-westwards passing through Grange farm buildings to the parish boundary where it joins Blo Norton Footpath No. 3. The route through Grange farm buildings has been the subject of an unofficial diversion around the perimeter of the farm buildings for several years on land that is owned by Poplar Tree Farm. This route is marked by posts that were supplied by NCC PROW officer.

Current condition:

- The Redgrave Road start of this cross field footpath has a crop growing across the path.
- At the western edge of this first field a rabbit fence has been installed that walkers have to climb over.
- The unofficial diversion markers are still in place around the Grange farm buildings but the field edge path has been ploughed up and the only alternative is to walk through the ploughed field.
- Beyond the Grange Farm buildings, the remaining 500m of this field edge path to the parish boundary with Blo Norton have been ploughed up by the landowner.

Footpath No. 21 (The Lower Drag Way)

Starts from the A1066 Garboldisham Road at the parish boundary and runs south south-eastwards, then southwards, passing the western ends of Footpaths No. 1 and No. 3 and Driftway Farm bearing south south-eastwards to enter Blo Norton Road.

Current condition:

- No finger post at Blo Norton end of this footpath.
- This footpath is in good condition throughout primarily because the southern end of the path provides access to Driftway Farm.
- The northern end of the path beyond Driftway Farm is not so well maintained and is deeply rutted in places and this causes water to be retained along the path even in the summer.

Footpath No. 22 (Pooley Street to A1066)

This footpath was designated in 2003 by NCC and formally acknowledges that whilst this right of way was originally part of Footpath No. 15, it is now bisected by the modified route of the A1066 and cut off from the rest of Footpath No. 15 and so this section has been designated Footpath No. 22. It runs from Pooley Street northwards to where it meets the A1066.

Current condition:

- This short path through a section of woodland is clearly signed and well maintained by the landowner.

Footpath No. 23 (A1066 to Fersfield Road)

This footpath was designated in 2003 by NCC and formally acknowledges that whilst this right of way was originally part of Footpath No. 13, it is now bisected by the modified route of the A1066 and cut off from the rest of Footpath No. 13 and so this section has been designated Footpath No. 23 by Norfolk County Council where it crosses the A1066 at Brick Kiln Lane going northwards until it meets the new route of Fersfield Road.

Current condition:

- No finger posts at either end of this footpath.
- The entire route of this path has been ploughed up by the landowner.

Primrose Lane (Church Road in South Lopham to St Andrew's School in North Lopham)

This lane is designated as UCR 33199 by NCC and runs northwards from Church Road for just over 1500 metres to connect the parishes of North and South Lopham.

Current condition:

- The path is cut on a regular basis and paid for by North and South Lopham parish councils.
- Encroaching trees and brambles need to be cut back annually to help maintain this important route.

National Farmers Union (NFU) Advice

- All field edge PROWs should be at least 1.5m wide and free from obstruction.
- All cross field PROWs should be at least 1.0m wide and free from obstruction.
- Where crops such as maize or oil seed rape are sown alongside a cross field path, it is necessary to leave a strip 1.8m wide to maintain public access.
- If a cross field path is disturbed for cultivation, the path should be re-instated within 14 days.
- Maintenance of gates and stiles is the responsibility of the land owner.
- NCC Rangers can be asked by the parish council to install finger posts at each end of a PROW where it meets the public highway.
- NCC is responsible for maintaining ditch and river crossings if they existed when the path was first recorded.
- Parish councils should aim to work with local landowners, explaining their public rights of way responsibilities and setting out what needs to be done to resolve the issue.
- Where issues cannot be resolved at a local level, NCC Highways should be contacted to pursue the matter.