Chedworth Parish Council

Guidance for
Footpath Wardens

Introduction

In 2015, Chedworth Parish Council decided to create the voluntary role of Footpath Warden, in an effort to improve the management and maintenance of the parish's rights of way (RoW) network.

By setting up the Footpath Wardens we hope to gain a better picture of the network, and so be able to help to manage it more efficiently and effectively.

The Footpath Warden's role is to assist the Parish Council in its endeavours to keep rights of way clearly marked, accessible and safe for use. Being a Warden should not be onerous; indeed, ideally you've volunteered because you are already a regular user of the RoW network.

All we ask is that you aim to walk the routes allocated to you in your section at least once a month so that any problems can be dealt with swiftly. Some issues raised may need to be discussed and actioned at the Parish Council meeting (held on the second Monday of each month).

We are very grateful to the volunteers who have come forward as Wardens and hope these notes will help you to help us.

We have made them wide-ranging with the intention they can be made available to the whole village through the PC's website.

The Law

The Highway Authority (in our case, Gloucestershire County Council and its contractor Amey) is responsible for the SURFACE of the RoW and any bridges crossing a natural watercourse.

The landowner is responsible for gates, stiles, etc.

Footpaths and bridleways have a minimum width.

Footpaths should be at least 1m wide and 2m high, while bridleways should be at least 2m wide and 3m high. For field -edge routes, the width should be at least 1.5m and 3m respectively. The landowner is responsible for clearance of any overgrowth that impedes these minimum widths.

If the route of a path has been ploughed or cultivated, paths should be made good by the farmer within 14 days. This means clear, level and compacted. After subsequent cultivations, a farmer has 24 hours to reinstate the path.

Paths should also be kept clear of crop growth, and other obstructions such as temporary fences, etc.

Types of RoW

There are four types of Rights of Way, each accessible by different groups and marked with different coloured waymarks.

FOOTPATHS

The yellow arrows show routes for use by walkers only. They are shown on the OS map thus:

BRIDLEWAYS

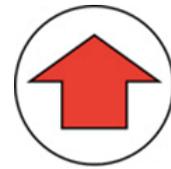Denoted by blue arrows, these are for use by walkers, horse-riders and cyclists.

They are shown on the OS map thus:

RESTRICTED BYWAYS

The plum-coloured arrow indicates usage for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and horse-drawn vehicles only. (Motor vehicles have occasional access rights on some routes).

They are shown on current OS maps thus:

BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC (BOAT)

The red arrows show that the route is for use by walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, horse-drawn vehicles and motor vehicles.

They are shown on current OS maps thus:

Your Role as a Warden

We'd like you to be the eyes and the ears of the Parish Council on the network

We'd like you to aim to walk your designated section at least once a month and to report to us any problems you find, such as:

- Encroaching vegetation, fallen trees and branches, etc

- Damaged or unsteady stiles

- Locked gates

- Animal-related problems (livestock, dogs, etc)

- Crops growing across paths

- Missing waymarks

- Broken signs

- Surface problems, flooding, etc

- And any other obstructions (barbed wire, electric fencing, etc) or difficulties in usage

If appropriate, a photograph of any problems you find, may help us resolve them and if you are able to provide an OS grid reference for a specific problem that would also be helpful.

You might want to carry secateurs, a pocket knife, etc, so that you can deal immediately with minor problems, for example brambles around a gate latch, an obscured waymark, etc.

We hope to arrange a single point of contact but currently if you find any problems on the ROW network then please report them to the Clerk, Elizabeth Broad on 01285 720313, or any councillor.