

LONG STRATTON FOOTPATH WARDEN'S REPORT APRIL 2023

Apologies for lack of recent reports due to health problems.

The big news since my last report is that the ditch crossing halfway along FP 18 was replaced by Highways last autumn with a very nice 3 plank wide bridge covered with chicken wire, after intervention by the council last summer with Tom's video of rotting surface Huzzah!

FP1 (Hempnall Rd to A140)

FP2 North from Hempnall Rd.

FP3 (between Church Lane and Hempnall Rd) This path always has deep and extensive pools of water in the early part of the year or after heavy rain because of use by agricultural vehicles but is not impassable with a bit of ingenuity. I notice users have made a track using the edge of the field to bypass the puddle at the entrance. Apparently still not bad enough to warrant intervention by Highways who are "monitoring".

FP 4 (east from FP3) Grassy path leading over plank bridge to field path to Morningthorpe. All OK

FP5 (A short length between Church Lane and Norwich Road cutting off the corner). In good condition.

FP6 (from FP7 to St Michael's Church. All in good order.

FP7 (Churchfields estate to Rhees Green) . Good one metre wide path excellently replaced by farmer.

FP8 (A140 towards Picton Rd) Good grass path.

FP12 Tarmac between A140 and St Michael's Rd past car park.

FP13 (From Edge's Lane to Rhees Green) This is a new route ahead of the bypass. I mentioned the fingerpost had been moved 20 or 30 yards further along Rees Green in my July report. There is now a new wide plank bridge and path leading up to Churchfields and emerging at **exactly the same place** on Edges Lane. I can't explain the reasoning, but it's a good path anyway. The signpost is missing from the Edge's Lane end which I shall report but it's not a problem at the moment as the path is so clear

FP14 (Rhees Green eastwards towards Morningthorpe) . Good field edge path. There is now a lovely new plank bridge at the ditch separating Stratton from Morningthorpe although I had not noticed anything wrong with the old one. Surely not using up unspent money at year end??

FP15 (Star Lane to Hall Rd) Always well-used path, rather muddy now at Star Lane end. The farmer has replaced footpath through rape crop to an excellent 2 metres, the recommended width for this tall crop. Not many farmers comply with this, so my thanks. The finger post at the Hall Road end has disappeared and I have reported this.. This is not the first time it has gone AWOL in recent times.

FP16 (from FP15 to Mill Rd) Good field edge path. There is news on the leaning stile which I reported to Highways on June 26 2022 with photographic evidence: Highways informed me on the 2nd of February they have written to the landowner. I await developments.

FP17 (from Mill Lane going east) Good grass path along field edge, then rolled path through crop.

FP18 (right turn from FP17 to Mill Road) Nice walking across the grassy field, then the lovely new footbridge. The stile is showing signs of wear and tear on the crosser but is still firm. I test it every so often.

FP19 (Hall Rd to Wood Green)

FP20 (A140 opp. Parker's Lane to Haynton Lane). Excellent wide path, well used.

FP21 (Parker's Lane to Wood Green) The damaged fingerpost has been replaced with a fine new one. Good path to the hedge.

FP22 (Mill Rd to RB23 at Wood Green) Fingerpost still languishes in the hedge but is upright and gallantly points the way. The path has been replaced and landowner has helpfully put up a small post with a roundel repeater sign on it. The technical problem here is that the historical line of the path slants before going straight whereas it is more sensible for all concerned for it to run straight across.

RB23 (Wood Green to Mill Road past Mayfields Farm). Good path

FP24 (Wood Green to Morningthorpe). At the time of inspection the farmer had just cleared the ditch alongside the line of the path so was covered with debris. Plenty of room to walk alongside but will check situation when crops start to grow.

FP25 (part of Boudicca's Way from Parker's Lane through Tyrrel's Wood). Very muddy now. Have not investigated to the end because of this but will go along and trim back growth in April.

FP 26 (Parker's Lane winding through nearly to A140). The farmer has replaced and rolled the path to his boundary; it is now very easy to use. Beyond that the path has been indicated by wide tractor marks and it also fairly easy to the next boundary, followed by another good rolled path to the ditch bordering the kennels. Here the path stops and any wanderer must make his or her own unofficial way. This will all be solved in 2024 with the completion of the bypass and realignment of the path.

FP27 This path is in 3 sections. The field edge grassy path from Hayton's Lane is a grass field edge is still improving with more footfall. The second section is marked a track with a vehicle to the plank bridge. This happened last year but track was soon covered with rape. This year the crop is wheat so should work although really the path should be replaced like FP7. The third section to A140 is also well-marked by tramlines. The plank bridge is beginning to look old and worn and will soon need replacing.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN

1. Missing fingerpost at Hall Road end of FP15 reported last summer still not replaced
2. Damaged fingerpost at Parker's Lane replaced

Bonnie Wade, Long Stratton Footpath Warden