

Permissive Footpaths-Bid for money to repair

Background

The Parish has two interconnecting permissive paths (excluding the “Old School” path leased to the Parish by the Quicke Estate). The principal path extends for about a mile from Bakers, a farmhouse located at the end of the adopted roadway of Marsh Lane in West Town, along the valley of the Shutterbrook to emerge onto the forestry roadway that crosses the old ford at Ashford just below Venny Cleave. These paths are a very important part of the local community’s access to the countryside and are very well used. They interconnect with the local network of PROW.

The Path passes through beautiful countryside across four fields and along the lower edge of Coombland Wood. Given its location in the valley and its topography, the path quickly becomes muddy in winter particularly in the four hundred yard section of path that passes through the wood.

Parts of the path have been used for forestry work by the Quicke Estate in the past and have been reinforced with compacted stone and brick. This has helped to overcome the problem of mud along some of the path. However the path has not been cleared or maintained for some time.

1. A drainage system situated by the main access gate to the woodland path has become blocked allowing for a build up of mud and water.
2. Specific sections of the path through the wood have become sunken and fill readily with deep mud and water.
3. A 200 yard section of the path through the wood has been significantly narrowed by overgrowth of brambles. It has consequently become very muddy and dangerously slippery.

Photos taken a week ago are attached.

Funding repair work

The land and path are owned by the Quicke Estate.

It is not known whether the Estate receive payment under the Governments Countryside Stewardship scheme for maintaining the path. <https://www.gov.uk/find-funding-for-land-or-farms/cpac4-footpath-access>. This information is confidential to the landowner and Government Agencies concerned.

However the paperwork and conditions attached to this scheme coupled with the low levels of payment suggest that it is unlikely the Quicke Estate has applied for this scheme. The PC may wish to seek clarification on this matter with John Quicke.

It is considered unlikely by members of the Parish Footpaths Team that the landowner will wish to contribute to the cost of this work.

Apart from possible financial help from the Parish Council the Parish Footpaths Team are not aware of any other sources of funding available for the repair and maintenance of our permissive paths.

Work Required

To maintain accessibility along its length the path requires:-

1. Clearance of bramble along those parts of the path that have become narrowed.
2. Reinforcing with compacted stone those places and along the lengths affected by deep winter mud.
3. The clearance of blocked drainage systems and channels.

This work requires access over fields by men using a mini tractor, trailer, brushwood cutter and industrial shredder. They will need to load , carry and spread stone which will then require compaction.

John Quicke's prior consent to the work will obviously be necessary. He will doubtless be interested to know who we want to carry out the work, their credentials and how the work will be paid for.

Cost

I walked the path with Nick Gillon last weekend . The work required is beyond the capabilities of the Road Warden Team

It is important that the Parish hire reputable contractors who have the expertise and equipment required to carry out work on footpaths . These contractors will need to have correct insurance cover. The Parish Footpaths team has asked for but only very recently received the list of DCC approved PROW (Public Rights of Way) Contractors.

We intend to obtain two quotations from contractors on the DCC list for approval by the PC before work can commence. However the Footpaths Team need to have a budget before seeking quotations.

At this stage I am asking for a sum of £2000 to be allocated for this work. The work can be phased over two years. I am keen to make a start in the spring as the land dries and becomes firmer.

The final bill may be more but it may be less. No work will be undertaken without the prior approval of the Parish Council based on the submission of quotations from reputable contractors and with the consent of the landowner.

Graeme Barnell

Footpaths Warden

27th November 2025