

## **P3 Report for Newton Poppleford Parish Council Annual Meeting (2017)**

The work of maintaining the parish footpaths is an ongoing one throughout the year, though the spring/early summer months are often the most busy. This year has been no exception as rampant undergrowth on path 28 (the north/south footpath through the orchard) has already necessitated attention and at least two other strimmer sessions on this path will probably be needed as the season progresses. Step repair has also been completed on footpath 17 (the path heading north from the Pavilion in Back Lane) as well as work to stabilise the path edge where it clings to the side of a steep slope.

Our newest Parish Right of Way, Bridleway number 37 at Venn Ottery Hill has had flooding issues since its inception a few years ago. The quarry owners of this path have carried out improvement work to pipe in the stream crossing point and restoration work on the eroded surface.

The large tree that had been obstructing footpath 12 in Harford Woods for about 18 months has finally been removed. This path is part of the East Devon Way and though it was possible to get round the blockage, it has been a source of concern due to the popularity of this local long distance path.

Also in Harford Woods, path number 11 that follows the small stream to the Bowd pub has been improved. This route has been a problem for several years as stream flooding had unearthed several trees making progress difficult. A good half day session back in the winter has seen the path brought back to a reasonable condition and it is now possible to walk along it without too much impediment.

I reported last year on the worsening condition of footpath 16 where it crosses the river Otter at the Red Bridge. Despite lobbying some of the agencies concerned we are no nearer a solution to the serious erosion problems on the eastern (Harford) side of the bridge. We have been lucky this year as the dry winter has meant minimal flooding of the Otter, so the situation has not deteriorated to any great extent for some months now. The problem remains however, and lack of action will inevitably mean that the bridge will be unusable should flooding erode any more of the path.

Apart from Rights of Way, the paths in Webbers Meadow need clearing from time to time, usually from nettles and brambles but also more recently from hemlock which is an extremely poisonous plant that is increasingly found on many waterways in East Devon.

While I try to get around the 12.5 miles of footpath in the parish on a regular basis, I am not able to monitor the whole network as often as I would like. I would be most grateful if you could report any issues that you find while walking around the area so that they can be attended to with minimal delay.

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