**P3 Report for Newton Poppleford Parish Council Annual Meeting**

The parish has about 20 kilometres of public rights of way (12.5 miles) all of which need frequent checking to ensure that they are in a reasonably walkable condition. The main problems we have are undergrowth which needs trimming back, especially in the spring and summer months and fallen trees and branches, more often in winter when windy periods often bring down these impediments.

This year has also seen repairs needed to steps and this has been carried out on footpath 12 at the eastern edge of Harpford Woods and footpath 16 which ascends a long flight of steps into the orchard at the north side of the village. Both of these paths form our local part of the East Devon Way, arguably the most important and widely used part of our local footpath network.

Our biggest problem however is again on the East Devon Way and that is footpath 16 which crosses the river Otter near Harpford. The situation here is caused by the volatility of the river which in recent years has altered its course extensively to the east towards Harpford and is undermining the riverbank on that side. Many feet of bank have been lost and it is only a matter of time before the remaining land there will be eroded and the bridge will not be accessible from the Harpford side.

The bridge is an important route over the river and a recent survey by engineers from Devon County Council found that major structural repairs were needed which compounds the problems that already exist there. Talks with the landowner, Devon County Council and the Environment Agency have been ongoing for years now, but we seem to be no nearer a solution to this ever more urgent problem.

I would be most grateful for any information on problems with our local footpaths. While I get out as often as I can I am unable to keep a check all of the time on issues so would welcome any feedback from people as they walk around the parish.

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