

Tree and Path Warden Report

Paths

Last year was a challenge for Carol and I! Shropshire County Council stepped us down from investigative duties due to Covid, but we were not expecting the increased number of local walkers. As Villagers were told to stay at home and gyms were shut, people were desperate to get some form of daily exercise, walking being almost the only option for most. This led to many "newbies" to the path network. People then wanted to know about existing routes, circular routes, quiet routes and dog and pushchair friendly routes etc. Several enquires found their way onto the Village Facebook page but in some instances, we really had no idea about the area described. This meant we had to have a few Socially Distanced meetings to check all was ok and that the routes described were Public footpaths. A few of these were in the Cherry Tree Lane area and it was quickly established that, apart from the bridleway to Phynson Hayes, none of the other routes people were using were Public Rights of Way. Adding to the confusion was the presence of several hunting wickets in the vicinity, which look like footpath gates but are private accesses to allow horses to cross farmland. Carol kindly provided three circular routes for the Parish Council website, which were designed to be 'Covid friendly' and where possible these avoided narrow enclosed paths and routes that pass through farmyards or along the edges of private gardens etc.

One of the most recent Covid casualties has been access up the lane bank on Gravenhunger lane to access the footpath from Gravenhunger to Northlands. Due to another really wet winter, and extra Lockdown footfall, the steep bank and stepping-stones down into Gravenhunger lane had become like a Bob-Sleigh run! Thanks to Chairman Councillor Cowey for contacting Shropshire Outdoor Partnership as a matter of urgency, there is now a substantial gravel stepped staircase up the bank, which hopefully is going to last many years to come. Additionally, there has been an ongoing issue with the path running alongside the Bowling club, where large stones were displaced, following damage caused when a tracked vehicle was taken onto the footpath. These have now been removed as they presented a trip hazard and thanks again to the Outdoor Partnership Team for their response to this.

Trees

We are pleased to report a new Tree Preservation Order has been attached to a Blue Atlas Cedar to the rear of Farcross, Irelands Cross. We are still keeping an eye on the development on Websters Field, with regards to our Ancient Beech tree opposite the Bakery.

Also, it is pleasing to note, at least two substantial lengths of new hedgerows have been planted this year, by landowners at Woore Hall Farm and in the fields between Gravenhunger and the old Shooting Ground on Stoneyford lane. Also, a well deserving a mention is the continued efforts of Mr Fradley at Pool Hall Farm, who is carrying out some fantastic hedgelaying.

Carol and I would like to thank everyone for respecting our paths during these strange times. We have received no complaints about walkers wandering off-piste, no dog attacks on livestock and no gates being left open, unlike in many neighbouring areas. Thank you all again.

Finally, we can be reached either, by contacting the Clerk, or on the Village Facebook page, or by simply stopping us in the Village, like many already do!

Please Stay Safe and thank you for respecting our beautiful countryside.

Sally and Carol