

North Crawley Footpaths

North Crawley has a wonderful network of historic numbered footpaths and bridleways that link with other parishes. All footpaths have a purpose and lead to a connection with another right of way. The only exception in North Crawley is the ancient carriageway into Broadmead from the Grange which is a dead end.

Public footpaths are highways protected by the Highways Act 1980 and form part of the King's Highway. Landowners are responsible for keeping them free from obstructions and encroaching vegetation, while the highway authority has powers to enforce compliance.

Landowners also have duties to restore the passage through crops when sown, also rewilding thistle crops and must keep stiles in good order.

Milton Keynes City Council has a dedicated Rights of Way team with 3 members who work very hard on improvements, and it is the local authority who have the responsibility to maintain bridges over ditches and watercourses. They have recently surveyed all bridges over ditches and watercourses and numbered them and placed them in priority order for renewal.

Stiles and gates are not always necessary where there are no cattle or livestock. In fact, there are principles of least restrictive access which set out a preference for the least restrictive access solutions wherever practicable. In order of hierarchy, they are: -

1. An open space or gap
2. A Gate
3. A Kissing Gate
4. A Stile

Our Parish Council has a dedicated Footpath Officer Terry Smith who tries to keep an eye on things in the Parish and attends quarterly meetings of the Milton Keynes Local Access Forum with the Rights of Way team at their offices. However, Terry is in his mid-80s now and does not walk all the paths like he used to, but he does have a comprehensive list of landowners for quick and easy contact if there is a problem.

It is also important that there are visible way markers on junctions of paths and Terry has a variety of Bridleway and Footpath signs, some with the old-fashioned ones nailed to wooden posts or stiles and others with stickers to attach to metal surfaces.

So please footpath walkers tell Terry direct at terrysmith@northcrawley-pc.gov.uk if you find a problem, preferably with a photograph and he will quickly take action either by contacting the landowner or the Rights of Way team at Milton Keynes Council.