

## **Minutes of the Footpath and Amenities Group of ARPC held on 16/July/2018.**

**Present:** Peter Hetherington in the chair, Di Eaton, Mike Eaton, Lynn French, Graham French Peter Gibbons, Jan Gooders, Tony Hughes and Tracy Lambourne (Parish Clerk).

We also welcomed newcomer Pat Isherwood who may become involved in the future.

**Apologies:** Steven Sowerby

**Minutes of the last meeting held on 23/October/2017:** Agreed and signed.

### **Matters Arising:**

The condition of the footpath alongside the B4009 at Chinnor Road in Aston Rowant was discussed. In some places the grass has grown over the path, narrowing it to no more than 9 inches and making it difficult to walk along with a push chair or buggy. Additionally, the footpath next to the wall on Aston Rowant green has too many overhanging branches. PH to discuss with landowner regarding the green, and George Stevens regarding the B4009 footpath.

**Moors Footpath Update:** Successful opening event on Friday November 3rd attended by parishioners, school children and local press. Since then, the surface has hardened well but the hedge and weeds have grown in the Spring. PH to speak to ARCC Chairman to remind them of obligation to keep the growth down and deal with the stinging nettles and brambles.

**Horses and Cycling on Footpaths:** Less horse riders seen on Moors Footpath now the position has clarified regarding permission required from local landowners to use path (not granted for local stables/stud with exception of Kingston Estate). Cannot stop the odd horse-rider, despite a couple of challenges - which were ignored. A complaint received following a group of "lycra-louts" using the path but appears to have been a one-off and the PC made a conscious decision not to specifically ban cyclists in view of the number of children who cycle to the school.

**Fiveways:** Mike reported that the area was overgrown but has now been cleared and cut-back. New species of plants are appearing (Wild Scabious) and the Knapweed, Stitchwort and Bluebells have all done well. Wildlife is also flourishing with recent sightings of Hares.

Signage is progressing - Tony has produced sketches with an initial layout and explanatory dialogue, but the layout needs finalising, the design confirmed (at a 45° angle and fairly low to the ground for children and wheelchair users), vandal-proof (as far as possible) and quote(s) obtained for the work. PH to speak to Shelley Signs plus an alternative for comparison.

**Snowdrop Sunday & Duck Race:** The event took place on Sunday 11th February, and was a great success but parking was an issue. Following appeals, there were plenty of helpers on the day and we intend to make it an annual event as it is proving popular with villagers and more from far and wide following local radio advertising. Next years' event is scheduled for Sunday 10th February 2019.

**Historical & Nature Walks for Aston Rowant School & Chinnor U3A:** Two walks arranged with U3A this year, but nothing for the school. The last one was now a while ago and a date suggested by the school was not possible. Mike and Di to make contact and try to arrange something for Spring 2019.

**Improving Church Lane Bridleway & Paths:** Church Lane is now badly pot-holed, and the ditch needs digging-out to avoid water spill onto the Bridleway. This is partly caused by large farm vehicles pushing the sides of the ditch down but ultimately the landowner needs to be reminded of the obligation and do the work, or be advised that we will arrange for OCC to do so and charge accordingly. A discussion was had regarding the quality of planings required for the Bridleway surface and a combination of hardcore, graded planings and the same surface used on the Moors Footpath appear to be the ideal solution for the holes to be filled and bed-down properly without coming loose again.

Materials have now been purchased to replace the last four stiles with gates on the footpath between Aston Rowant and Kingston Stert. The grant from TOE has been received to cover this and work is scheduled for this Autumn.

**Parish Walks** The next walk is on Sunday 11th January 2019 at 10.00 AM - 5½ miles, starting from the National Trust car park at the top of Watlington Hill and held jointly with Thame and Wheatley Ramblers. Details to go on the Parish web-site/KBAR. An observation was made that there appear to be less people coming to these from our parish and more from Chinnor, Thame or Wheatley. Two other walks have been held since the last meeting, one in May starting at The Lambert Hotel and another from The Leathern Bottel in August.

**Village Flower Tubs:** Continued thanks go to Simon Coulon, and it was noted that this summers tubs are looking spectacular.

**Litter Picking Update:** Main "Spring Clean" in March hampered by snow but eventually yielded 26 bags of rubbish from the verge up Kingston Hill and along the A40. Many thanks to all the volunteers who assisted. Currently any litter is hidden by Spring/Summer vegetation, but a suggestion was made that as our village litter picker is restricted to non-main roads, we could employ an adult contractor to cover these areas so there is not such an accumulation. PH to approach Roger Quartermaine to see if he is interested and report to the main PC meeting on 12 September.

#### **New Projects:**

1. Tree Planting – PH has met Jamie Clarke to discuss planting, possibly Rowan/Mountain Ash trees, along the Stert Road or the Lower Icknield Way between Fiveways and Kingston Stert. JC preferred option is the latter due to concerns over visibility and moving farm machinery from fields along that stretch of road. Mike to investigate placement options, costs and numbers of trees required.
2. Footpath to Crowell – After harvest, Alan Hill has agreed to prepare the surface on a 1 metre wide stretch of the field, just inside the hedgerow, so that grass seed can be planted this Autumn. Solicitors have been consulted to draw up a formal agreement to lease this strip for a nominal sum of £1 P.A. PH has obtained a quote of c.£4,000 for the mesh surface through which the grass will grow, and confirms T.O.E are willing to fund this again. A question was asked as to whether the Shepherds Crook pub would contribute as they will benefit if more people feel able to walk to the pub. PH to investigate & report back.

**Next meeting:** 8:00pm on Monday 26th November 2018, at Brookside, Brook Street, KB.