

## Annual Parish Meeting - Footpath Warden's Report, March 2026

The Footpath Wardens, on behalf of the Parish Council, monitor the condition of footpaths around the parish. We report any problems encountered, such as overgrown or blocked paths, broken signs etc to Suffolk County Council Rights of Way Dept. We also act as a point of contact for any general queries from parishioners and members of the public regarding the parish footpath network.

We have a small band of volunteers who are available to carry out emergency clearance work to footpaths on occasions should the need arise. We always welcome additions to our footpath volunteers – anyone interested can register with the Parish Council at the AGM in May so that their name can be minuted for insurance purposes.

There have been improvements to two paths within the parish recently: Footpath 1A through the churchyard and behind the school has been resurfaced in part and a low retaining wall was installed along a short section behind the school to prevent further bank slippage across the footpath. Footpath 18 leading from The Street near the road bridge over the River Fynn had a quantity of hardcore spread over the surface and rolled following completion of work to the new sewage pumping station by Anglian Water. This has improved a section of the path which previously often became badly rutted and waterlogged during the winter.

Problems with Footpath 3, the crossfield path from the bottom of Holly Close towards Playford Mount, have been reported by some residents over the past year. The path was partly obstructed by a growing crop during the summer, while the ongoing cabling work across the field next to Holly Lane meant that a temporary closure has been in place for some months. At the time of writing, the cabling work appears to be nearing completion, and the temporary access road is being removed before the field is reinstated. The wardens will keep watch to ensure that this well used path is properly reinstated and kept in usable condition in the future.

Although just outside the Parish Boundary, Footpath 12 in Great Bealings remains officially closed awaiting replacement of an unsafe footbridge where the path crosses the River Lark. This connects to Footpath 8 in Little Bealings and is a popular and well used path heading from Little Bealings towards Martlesham, Woodbridge and Cherry Tree Farm. The latest news from Suffolk County Council Rights of Way Dept is that the necessary permit from the Environment Agency has now been obtained and that they hope to carry out the footbridge replacement work in April/May once ground conditions permit.

The Fynn Valley Walks Group, supported by All Saints Church, continues to hold weekly guided walks around the area throughout the year, with around 15 to 20 walkers, both from within and outside the parish, joining us on most weeks. The Group has also held occasional themed walks, including a Dawn Chorus Walk in early May, wild plant themed walks in spring and autumn and a Historic Churches Walk in September. The group also has an active Facebook page, which gives walkers the opportunity to post photographs and comments on the walks, and gives those unable to participate an opportunity to follow the walks.

Francis Mutimer & John Wittgreffe.