

Annual Report on the footpaths of Wingham Parish for 2023/2024

From the **Wingham Foot Path Group** (WFPG) acting as Parish Footpath Warden

Introduction This is the seventh annual report since WFPG was appointed as the collective warden for the Parish.

Activities There are 30 footpaths lying wholly in or crossing the Parish boundaries. All the paths have been walked at least twice during the year and records maintained. We have responded to concerns raised by members of the public and/or passed on by the Parish Clerk. Where necessary, reports have been made to the Kent County Council (KCC) Public Rights of Way (PROW) team about blocked paths etc.

We try to attend the annual FP meetings organised by The Ramblers, sharing experiences and with relevant talks. This year the speaker laid out the legal responsibilities falling on landowners, local authorities and indeed FP users. With regard to maintenance, the law is very clear. However, it is one thing to state the legal position and quite another to find the resources to manage the network.

Results As usual all our footpaths have been much used this year, but KCC PROW teams seem to have been overwhelmed at times. By a process of prioritisation, they do of course respond to health and safety issues, and most other problems are eventually dealt with. Pedestrians have been seen using the very short EE 58 beside Sessions House (previously almost impassable due to rubbish dumping). The finger posts at both ends of EE 167 by the Wildlife Park are broken – reported with photos.

Applications to amend the Definitive Map The Parish Council was invited by KCC to comment on two applications, based on historical records, for re-opening or upgrading 'routes' which border Wingham and Goodnestone Parishes. The Parish Clerk passed the consultation documents to the Wingham Footpath Group which has responded to KCC in favour of the claims.

Comments Wingham is fortunate to have such an excellent network of generally well-maintained footpaths. It is particularly useful that the Parish Clerk has a good relationship with the East Kent leader of the PROW team and can and does apply extra pressure when urgent.

Members of the Wingham Foot Path Group who have covered the Wingham footpaths:

Kevin Fletcher, Marcus and Michelle Benton, Dennis Liman, Mike and Vivien Leeming, Cally and Mike Vaile. .

NB. WFPG members might well carry small secateurs with them, and cloths or marker pens to clarify signage, but we do not conduct any other repairs or clearances.