

## Easton Royal Parish Council

Rights of Way Report for the Parish Council meeting of February 25<sup>th</sup> 2021

The Rights of Way are generally in reasonable order, despite some tracks being wet and muddy underfoot, owing to the fairly heavy rain over the winter months.

It appears that there has been no recent vehicle use on Harris Lane or EROY 22. Both tracks are being enthusiastically used by walkers, cyclists and horses.

EROY 22 remains wet and muddy and has not recovered from the Rough and Tumble race run by 600 runners in January 2020. It did dry out temporarily during the summer, but the mud returned with the autumn rain, and has remained.

A Zoom meeting with Stephen Leonard the Wiltshire Rights of Way Officer helped to clarify Wiltshire Council's position on vehicle use on bridleways. With current financial restrictions Wiltshire Council has limited options to repair and protect the local network. However, Stephen hopes to be able to provide some more planings to improve EROY22, and Graham Cooper has kindly agreed to help by storing the planings and transporting them to the site, when weather, time and ground conditions allow.

I have received two reports from villagers about stiles being impassable with larger dogs. A stile on footpath EROY 8 (Conygre Farm) has no suitable place for dog access and has barbed wire across the lower bars of the stile. The other, on EROY 1, (the western side of the Manor paddock), the rails are slightly too close for a larger dog to get through easily when the gate is locked. This would be easily remedied by lowering the rail by a few inches.

The legal requirement (BS5709:2006) is that it should always be possible to get a dog through a stile, and there should not be any barbed wire on a stile unless it is contained within a protective covering, or with the barbs removed.

A solution would be a letter from the Parish Clerk to the farmer/landowner concerned to request the stiles be modified to allow for dog access, and to remove any barbed wire in the stile to reduce the risk of injury to pedestrians and dogs.

The current Covid restrictions have made it impossible to hold any maintenance days on the tracks over the winter period, although this may change in the next few months. Meanwhile I am grateful to the Path Wardens who have continued to trim overhanging vegetation where necessary.

Beverley Helps  
Rights of Way Portfolio

February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021