Rights of Way Report February 2019

In January 2019 we held a small drinks party to which the Footpath Wardens, the landowners and the maintenance volunteers were invited, to thank them for their help and input over the past year, and to discuss ongoing issues and plans.  This was well attended and I believe enjoyed by all.

It is a great pleasure to welcome Tony Yeates to the team, as Warden for the “Shepherd’s Steps” bridleway.  Tony has started with great enthusiasm, removing a fallen tree almost before it had been reported, and I am sure he is going to be an excellent addition to the team.

We have already done a morning’s work on the top part of Shepherds Steps, cutting back the blackthorn where the track had become very overgrown.  As usual we had a very willing and enthusiastic team, and great progress was made.  My thanks to Tony, Cedric, Chris Elliott, Roger Tilbrook, Allan Archer, Lloyd, Paul Narizzano and Hew.

There are a couple of ongoing issues.  The kissing gate damaged by hedge trimming operations is still in need of repair.  Several of the volunteers who helped to install the gates have asked how the repair issue can be resolved.

A stile on footpath EROY 11, (from the top road, through Home Farm fields, and the Priory feed to the Byeway at the bottom of the village) has been replaced during a fence renewal operation.  The new stile is very well constructed but is higher than the previous one and is difficult to use for the less athletic or children.  I have some stile specifications from Stephen Leonard, Wiltshire’s Rights of Way Officer, which I will pass on to the landowner concerned.  My suggestion would be the addition of another step, which should make it safer and usable by all walkers of the footpath.

There has been some discussion about Insurance when we organise a working team.  It would appear that there is little or no insurance cover from Wiltshire Council in the event of an accident during one of these working parties.  I suggest we make it clear to the volunteers that they are working at their own risk, and that they must be prepared to accept this before joining the work party; this is for further discussion at the Parish Council meeting on 19 February 2019.

Parish Council meeting 19.2.19 BH