

Appendix 5

I have completed my survey of parish paths but won't be able to write it up in time for the next meeting, partly because I have injured my shoulder and prolonged typing is painful. I'll try to do it so that councillors have plenty of time to read it.

I request that the parish council takes action about one issue in the parish, at Rookery Farm. This need only be low-key at this stage, I think.

There are also two more serious issues with the bridleway at Brick Kiln Stud that I will raise with the county council.

There are other issues that I will deal with in my report, including two legal rights of way that are currently impassable. There are also some positives, especially at Grove Farm.

1: Rookery Farm:

Path SD65, from the track through Rookery Farm to the by-pass road, has been very boggy and this appears to be because of farmyard run-off that has overflowed from a holding pond at the top of the field. This means that people trying to follow the line of the path have to trudge through foul water. This is obviously a strong deterrent to using the path, which is, in any case, not signposted at the point where it crosses the track. On one visit I saw very-brown fluid overflowing from a ditch. There may be an environmental issue too, since the water can be seen running down the field to a watercourse.

I suggest the most appropriate course at this stage would be to contact the landowners to ask whether this is likely to be a temporary problem.

At the same time, it would be worth asking how they feel about people walking through the tunnel under the by-pass. This is not a public right of way, but I think a lot of people use it. Do the owners mind? Would they even prefer people to go this way?

2: Brick Kiln Stud

There are also two issues with the bridleway at Brick Kiln Stud (SD70/SS7), but one of these is at a point outside the parish. This bridleway is an important route between Ettington and the Pillertons.

a) Within the parish: I was unable to use the path after dark because a gate had been locked and there was no way past it. This is illegal. The electronic gates have a sign saying they can be opened between dawn and dusk, but in fact, they did open at 7pm, about an hour after nightfall. The problem was at the wooden gate just before the stables, which I found was locked from the other side (I approached from Ettington). I saw no signs indicating a bridleway at either gate, or at the point where the bridleway leaves the road. I accept that few people wish to go out running, walking or riding across country after dark, but it is a legal right.

b) Immediately outside the parish boundary: Manure from the stable has been dumped on an enclosed section of the right of way, reducing its useable width to below the minimum. I found this a strong deterrent to using the path. A villager has also pointed out that the liquid that has flooded the path at this point is actually urine. Apparently the parish council has contacted the owner about this in the past.