

Footpath Secretary Report (2021-2022)



Chesterfield
& North East
Derbyshire

Despite our best efforts little progress has been made with respect to one of our current main objectives, i.e., the reintroduction of volunteering with respect to footpath maintenance and preservation.

Discussions with the new, now permanent, head of the County Council's Rights of Way Department, failed to yield any significant improvements, notwithstanding the fact that the department has been significantly increased with respect to manpower. However, initiatives and discussions continue with footpath problem reporting being used to emphasise our views with regards to this issue. Our latest initiative involved visiting and walking two footpaths with the Chesterfield MP present. The meeting, walk and discussions held were considered positive. We shall be following up on this initiative and currently await further development.

Footpath Problem Reporting

During the 12 months period 1st November 2021 to the 31st October 2022, 222 separate reports of rights of way problems were submitted. In the same period 240 problems have been resolved or have remedial actions agreed or marked as having been responded. As can be seen from the table below, the figure of 222 shows a decrease over the 319 submitted during 2021. Superficially this appears to indicate an improving situation. However, experience and problem recording may indicate an alternative problem. It is suggested that the introduction of a revised DCC reporting system may have deterred many people from reporting problems as this is proving difficult and time consuming for many.

The following table shows comparative submission numbers for the past seven years ;

2015/16	304
2016/17	426
2017/18	333
2018/19	306
2019/20	464
2020/21	319
2021/22	222

Footfall

Following last year's plea, record keeping, with respect to footfall, improved considerably during 2022 with some 22,552 actual miles being recorded.

The figures are skewed by the fact that complete records are only available for the Saturday and Wednesday Long Car Groups. In point of fact it is estimated that the total miles walked by all groups would be at least double the actual recorded figure of 22,552.

Diversions Orders and Modifications

During the year the group commented on and monitored aspects relating to ;

Modification Orders and Diversions as follows.

Type 2019 2020 2021 2022

Planning and Outline Applications 32 40 69 59

Consultations and Outline Applications 13 4 13 6

Confirmations 10 0 1

Orders Sealed 1 0 0

Creation Upgrade Orders 2 2 2 0

Stopping up Orders 2 2 1

Creations, Diversion Orders &
consultations

4 8 14

Appeals 1 0 0

Tree Preservation Orders 1 1

We responded to all of the submissions requesting preservation of existing footpaths and the inclusion of new access paths for major building developments. A total of 8 formal objections were raised. Once again significant help in dealing with planning applications was afforded by a number of members and footpath wardens. The committee offer sincere thanks for this help.

The Future

As ever I would like to record my sincere thanks, to all members of the committee for their efforts in supporting the footpath aspect of our meetings.

We wish you all the best for the coming year and please be assured that the Footpath Group will be doing as much as possible to ensure you enjoy your rambles without let or hindrance.

Mel Hardy
(Footpath Secretary)