

Footpaths - Responsibilities

Highways Responsibilities

As the Highway Authority, we are responsible for;

- Maintaining the surfaces of Public Rights of Way including the control of natural vegetation
- Assisting farmers and landowners with the maintenance of approved structures
- Signposting Public Rights of Way where they leave a road (note that some tarmac PROW in urban areas may not be signed). We may also arrange for additional waymarking after consultation with landowners
- Maintaining most bridges crossed by Public Rights of Way over natural watercourses including farm ditches (as long as the ditch was there when the path was first recorded)

Landowner Responsibilities

- Keep Public Rights of Way clear of obstructions and overhanging vegetation including hedges and fallen trees. Hedges should be cleared high enough along bridleways, restricted byways and Byways Open to All Traffic to allow for horses and riders
- Maintain stiles and gates across footpaths and gates across bridleways in a good state of repair (with the assistance of maintenance authorities)
- Not place new structures across Public Rights of Way without prior consent of Norfolk County Council
- Provide new bridges or culverts over new or widened drainage ditches following consultation with Norfolk County Council
- Restore the surface of any cross field footpath or bridleway which has been ploughed or disturbed to at least the minimum width so that it is reasonably convenient to use and apparent on the ground, within 14 days (or 24 hours of any subsequent disturbance). The minimum width for a footpath is 1m across the field or 1.5m on the field edge; for a bridleway it is 2m across the field or 3m on the field edge. These widths only apply to the law on ploughing and cropping and do not affect other aspects of the law on Public Rights of way
- Not plough any footpath or bridleway which constitutes a headland, i.e. field edge
- Not plough any Byway Open to All Traffic or Restricted Byway, these Public Rights of Way will have a minimum width of 3m
- Ensure crops (other than grass), are not grown on or overhang a right of way at any time, so as to obstruct or otherwise inconvenience the public or prevent the line of the Public Right of Way from being apparent on the ground
- Not allow any prohibited bull in a field through which a Public Right of Way passes. (See 'what about bulls' section)
- Not erect misleading signs likely to deter use of Public Rights of Way
- Not remove or alter the direction of rights of way signs and waymarks
- Not allow barbed or electrified wire to cross through stiles or run too close to adjacent Public Rights of Way
- Contact Norfolk County Council before erecting fencing adjacent to Public Rights of Way to ensure that the highway is not encroached upon
- Ensure that Public Rights of Way are restored following drainage schemes
- Not plough or disturb the surface of cross field footpaths and bridleways where it can conveniently be avoided