

# **Tacolneston Parish Council**

## **Footpath Warden – The Role and Responsibilities**

### **Background**

The Parish Council aims to maximise the use of the public footpaths which are a resource for the community. Your help with this task is vital to the community and will encourage the use of the footpaths and by so doing promote greater enjoyment of this resource. We, like you, value your time and wish to use this in the most beneficial way. We have therefore listed the key tasks involved and provided you with some essential tools to help with the role, so that you can plan the use of your time in a way which will help you to use your time efficiently.

### **Equipment provided**

The Footpath Warden (FW) role is supported by maps, a copy of the countryside code and a toolkit to help look after the local parish path network. The toolkit comprises equipment including safety equipment. No other equipment should be used, without authorisation from the Parish Council. (Please refer to our risk assessment). Footwear is not provided and the FW is expected to wear suitably sturdy footwear.

The equipment and tools you will be provided with are:

- ✓ Map of the paths
- ✓ Log Book
- ✓ Secateurs
- ✓ Strimmer
- ✓ Safety Goggles
- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ Tabard or high-viz vest

### **Responsibilities**

#### **1. Walking the Public Footpaths**

The FW is expected to walk each of the footpaths monthly during the months of November to February and fortnightly from the beginning of March to the end of October. The FW should keep a log of your walks recording any problems which you encountered on your walk.

#### **2. Clearing Vegetation**

The FW is expected to clear vegetation regularly from around gaps, gates, stiles, signposts, bridges and at other points where paths might become difficult to use. If you have a particularly large area to monitor or you know of other people who want to be involved, you can share the role. For safety reasons (refer to the Risk Assessment attached), we encourage joint walking and working.

The FW also has to cut back hedges and brambles which may protrude along the footpath. Cutting back hedges must not be undertaken during the period 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> July – section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally damage or destroy a wild bird's nest while it is being built, or in use. It is therefore important to plan this clearance around this date.

Vegetation along the footpath is likely to have to be strimmed back (but this depends on the number of walkers using the route) This is a very active part of the FW role and you must be capable of carrying the strimmer and the goggles. (see the Risk Assessment attached).

## **Reporting**

The FW is asked to record the dates when the footpaths are walked, and any work undertaken on those walks. Tacolneston Parish Council should receive a written report from the FW twice a year. The report should summarise the walking rota, the work undertaken, and most importantly any additional work which might need to be planned for the route.

Norfolk County Council should be advised as soon as possible about:

- any routes found to be blocked or ploughed
- any footpath signs which are damaged, missing or misleading
- any fly-tipping, including the detail of the tipping and exact location
- dangerous or fallen trees or vegetation.

These should be reported using the 'Report a Problem' page on Norfolk County Council's website.

The public has a right of passage on foot only along public footpaths. Bridleways have a public right of passage for walkers and those riding or leading a horse. If anyone is found to be contravening this, then the matter should be reported to the Parish Council.

## **Data Protection**

You may be approached by people wishing to let you know details and concerns about various matters in the parish. Even if people freely give you their personal details (name and address or telephone number) you should pass this to the Parish Clerk and not use that information in any other way.

Please read the Risk Assessment for the role. We will update this from time to time.

## **Risk Assessment for the Footpath Warden of Tacolneston Parish Council**

### **Overall**

The Footpath Warden (FW) is responsible for walking the footpaths in the parish and for their routine maintenance.

### **To minimise risk**

While the risks for this role are considered to be low, it is important for the FW to take a mobile phone with them, which is charged. Some safety equipment is provided, and sturdy boots should be worn at all times. Tacolneston Parish Council asks the FW to keep a log of the walks on the paths and the work to be undertaken, and as well as the detail of the planned maintenance which may be needed on the footpaths. This must be reported to the Parish Council twice yearly.

Greater care should be taken at certain times of year – when the weather is wet, and the footpath may be muddy, or when there is heavy snow, and you may be unsure of your footing. Tacolneston Parish Council considers that your safety is more important than the monthly footpath inspection and the walk should be left until the conditions have improved.

### **What else should be done to reduce risk**

The FW should always carry a charged mobile phone. If, however, the FW is working on their own, and in an area where there is no signal the FW should advise someone where he / she is going and what time they expect to be back.

No equipment in addition to that provided, or outlined in the roles and responsibilities, should be used by the FW.

This risk assessment should be read in conjunction with the roles and responsibilities listed for the FW.

Fly-tipping, if found, should be reported to Norfolk County Council. It should be left as found.

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