

Why no policy on Footpaths or Rights of Way ?

When we asked people about footpaths in the survey that we carried out in 2014, there were some interesting results. A lot of you thought it was important to preserve and maintain our footpaths, but not very many of you used them regularly. There were also a number of comments about the poor state of some footpaths, and the lack of clear marking.

The parish council has been trying to do something about this in recent months, and has been talking to Cornwall Council about organising work to improve the maintenance of the paths in our parish. This is not quite as straightforward as it might seem at first glance, because the footpaths in open countryside pass through privately owned land, and any work carried out on them, such as felling tree branches, must not cause damage. It is also very important that any work carried out does not cause any risk of injury to members of the public, and that anyone doing this work is properly insured. The Council are now about to appoint a contractor who will maintain the footpaths.

It has been suggested that our NDP could contain a policy on footpaths and rights of way. Although footpaths are very well protected by other legislation, including Policy25: Green Infrastructure, in the Cornwall Local Plan, some other NDP areas have included such policies. We have looked at some of these, but do not believe they have any real relevance to a predominantly rural area such as ours. Neighbourhood Planning is about development, and its policies have to relate to development. We believe that because of the small scale of any anticipated developments in our area, there would not be any significant impact on footpaths or rights of way.

The information about footpaths, and people's views about them, that we obtained from our survey will continue to inform and guide the parish council in the future. You can obtain more information about our footpaths, and see a definitive map of them, on the South Hill Parish Council table in the main part of the hall.