

Northamptonshire Highways receive a vast amount of support from people who have informally kept an eye on their local rights of way network. The information they provide is invaluable and they let us know about any problems such as missing fingerposts / waymarks, paths obstructed by fallen trees, crops or difficult to use gates and stiles. They've also been able to point us in the right direction if we've been unsure about who owns a piece of land and we've needed to speak to the landowner to talk through a rights of way issue.

Many have an in depth knowledge of their local rights of way network and our Parish Path Partnership (PPP) Scheme offers an opportunity to formally get active to make sure Northamptonshire's 3,000 km rights of way network remains open and accessible for all users to enjoy.

Our scheme is flexible so you can get involved as little or as much as you like.

We would like you to actively support the policies and working practices of the Northamptonshire Highways Rights of Way Team and fairly represent the views of everyone that use the rights of way in your area.

The main purpose of the scheme is to involve local communities and Parish Councils in the management of their local Rights of Way network.

A Parish Path Warden supports the important work we already do on our Rights of Way to keep them accessible and safe for all. We cannot be everywhere and spot everything and your support would be so valuable.

The Role of a Parish Path Warden

Do you love walking and being out in the fresh air and exploring your local area? We are asking people to support the work we do by noting down any concerns you have that will affect others using Rights of Ways.

We are looking for people who have a keen eye and are able to consider differing needs as paths may be clear for some users but may be difficult to access for others.

Anyone who regularly walks in their local countryside and community can just note down things they find an issue or think may be a problem for others.

All you need to do is note the problem down and take a photo if possible, either with a camera or with your phone.

When you come across a path problem e.g. vegetation overgrowth, difficult stile, locked gate, collapsing footbridge, path not made good after ploughing, all you need to do is report it.

Reporting is easy and we have a great public reporting system that is easy to use.

Aims of the Parish Path Warden Scheme

1. The main purpose of the scheme is to involve local communities and parish and town councils in the management of their local rights of way network. This will help ensure that routes are not obstructed, are clearly defined, properly maintained and hopefully promoted to local people.
2. Any rights of way related issues or problems must be reported using Street Doctor, the public reporting system for both the west and north. This process ensures issues are recorded and dealt with appropriately. Once reported you will be issued with a unique reference number and be able to follow the progress of your enquiry;
3. Help us to make sure all public rights of way are properly signposted where they leave a public metalled road by letting us know about any missing fingerposts;
4. Report back to your Parish or Town Council meeting at least once a year to keep them up-to-date with your findings and reports sent in via Street Doctor. Provide information about the condition of the local network and the work being undertaken by the Rights of Way team to maintain and improve local rights of way in your area.

We would never expect you to -

1. Enter into correspondence with landowners, farmers or rights of way users.
2. Agree to changes to the route of a public right of way. All enquiries about diverting a public right of way, adding a right of way to the Definitive Map or removing a

public right of way from the Definitive Map should be passed to your local Rights of Way Area Team via Street Doctor.

3. Agree to the replacement of rights of way furniture such as gates, stiles and way marking.

4. Parish Path Wardens should be aware that they are not authorised to enforce Rights of Way legislation as this could jeopardise or undermine the Rights of Way enforcement procedure.

5. Undertake any practical work on the Rights of Way network **however minor**, including the repair of furniture or cutting back overhanging vegetation. Any repairs and all practical work required must be reported via Street Doctor, our online public reporting system.

What to do next?

If you feel that you, or someone you know, would like to become the Parish Path Warden for your local area, please send an email to ROWenquiriesNorth@kierwsp.co.uk or ROWenquiriesWEST@kierwsp.co.uk (depending on whether you are in North Northants or West Northants) and one of our officers will be in contact.

Please provide

- Full name

- Area in scope

- Telephone number

- Email address

- Are you a member of any professional body e.g. Ramblers

We realise you may already have a warden in place but please contact us to confirm their details.

Please nominate your wardens, or wardens, by [Wednesday 30 June](#).

Training

Once we have all the wardens in place, we will be in touch to arrange training sessions. We will support you all the way and initially organise a short induction and talk you through the [Street Doctor](#) system.

Submitting Parish Path Warden details – please do not reply to this email.

If you are in West Northamptonshire please email ROWenquiriesWEST@kierwsp.co.uk

If you are in North Northamptonshire please email ROWenquiriesNorth@kierwsp.co.uk

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to hearing from you by [Wednesday 30 June](#).

Please note – Northamptonshire Highways remains the public facing brand and is the organisation managing the highways services for both unitary authorities. We anticipate this will continue to March 31 2022 but we'll keep you updated if anything changes.

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