

# Whitstone Footpaths

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## Report for Annual Parish Meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Our Parish footpaths are in a reasonable condition, but there are still several problems with blockages and encroachment which are being dealt with by Cornwall Council. They are corresponding with the landowners to get appropriate solutions so that our paths are open and safe to use. The responses from the Parish Plan suggest that the majority of people who use the paths think they are well maintained and we will continue to cut the surface vegetation in selected areas and make improvements where possible. For this year we have decided to include the historic milestones in the maintenance contract. We have three in the parish along the main road which are over 120 years old. The Highways authority are not obliged to maintain these and they may be damaged or disappear if we don't undertake this work.

Again this year the Cornwall Council budget is under severe pressure and resources will be stretched very thinly, although they have not had the extremely high workload that was caused by the storm damage of last year. The Parish Council will continue to press them to resolve the issues, to carry out their legal responsibilities and to share the budget more equally.

I have had meetings with the footpath coordinator for Week St Mary where we have discuss possibilities for joining up the footpath network a bit more so that there are longer distance, and more circular, walks in the area. As part of that process I have been having discussions with the Forestry Commission with the intention of clearing some of the old overgrown paths in Swannacott Wood to enable a route from Whitstone to Week St Mary. The negotiations to create a short section of required new path have temporarily stalled over concerns about the intended route, however alternatives have been suggested and are being discussed. Meawhile the intended work by The Forestry Commission is on hold until this is resolved.

The last comprehensive survey of our footpaths was carried out in 2012 and is available to read on the village website at <http://www.whitstonevillage.com/footpaths.htm> , This is due for an update and it is intended that a similar survey will be carried out later this year.

Most of the paths have now been way-marked where the route is unclear. If you think a way-mark would be helpful in any other place please let me know.

If you spot problems on the footpaths please inform the Parish Council or contact me directly, we can only try to resolve issues if we know about them.

Mike Sutton (WPC Portfolio Holder – Footpaths)

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