

Otterton Footpath and Rights of Way Report for June 2020

General

1. Vegetation is starting to grow back quickly. There has been some strimming carried out by DCC.

Major Issues

2. Chockenhole Lane (track) 305 was badly flooded over the winter. Some remedial measures have been started but not completed. In particular the drainage grip has not been re-established resulting in the path being impassable when it rains. A water main leak along Ladram Road and just pass the Holiday Park also made the Lane impassable. The leak has been fixed. DCC will reinstate the drainage during the summer. They will also look at the rutting along Radway Lane (307) / Little Ckockenhole Lane (306)

Minor Issues

3. Along the Coastal Path, just to the east of Ladram, a tree has broken in the old woodland. The trunk is over the track, hooked over other trees. CDE will sort it out.
4. The top step and upper handrail to the view point at High Peak need some attention. This is not a right of way but the steps and information board were placed there as an ANOB initiative. CDE will address in due course.

Trees

5. Sadly all the Ash Trees in the triangle to the west of Otterton Road Bridge have been felled due to Ash Dieback. These trees were not adjacent to rights of way or the highway.
6. New guidance (June 2020) on Ash die-back can be found on <https://treecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Tree-Council-Ash-dieback-tree-owners-guide-FINAL.pdf>
7. In it the Tree Council say; The Tree Council, Defra and the Forestry Commission advocate that ash trees that do not pose a health and safety risk should be retained in the landscape wherever possible so they can continue to provide biodiversity benefits. We strongly encourage all tree owners to replace ash trees lost by replanting other species. We hope that resistant ash trees will also regenerate naturally from seed.
8. Ash Trees elsewhere are at risk. I note the Ash Trees at the top of Bars lane look very unhealthy.
9. The Parish Council is responsible for Stantyway playing field. There are over 40 Ash Trees there (half mature and the rest young). They look OK to me but expert advice would be appropriate. Removal would be very expensive.
10. In order to replace the trees the Parish Council should consider now a replanting programme and possibly a community nursery.

Iain Ure

June 2020