**ANNUAL 2023 FOOTPATH REPORT TO ALDERBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Maintenance work delivered**

130 hours. 100hrs by the footpath team, including Alex and Carys two half-days from Wilts Council, plus Mike Steadman (independent volunteer) 30 hrs.

**Developments made**

* Two footpath sections were improved with support from Wiltshire Council, and also a safety barrier installed.
* Further ‘Clean your dog mess’ signs were nailed to fencing.
* Updated footpath information leaflets were ordered and made available on the Rectory Road signpost.
* Witherington Farm and Longford Estate supported footpath management by topping two main sections and it’s hoped this arrangement will become an annual task owned by them.
* The section through the ‘orchid field’ seems to be permitted by Rectory Farm.
* Other areas were cleared by the school between Firs and Junction Roads and also some clearance in the woods between Avon Close and Firs Road.

**Possible future footpath improvements**

* Rectory Farm indicated that the (sometimes) boggy field on the rise up to Greenset House land is earmarked for improvement by Longford Estate and Rectory Farm, with no timescale offered.
* Damage to Greenset House kissing gate and stile on the permissive footpath on their land was repaired by the owner. The owner had previously been approached to consider Wiltshire Council’s offer of installing mobility gates in both locations, but the offer was refused.
* Improvement needed to one main muddy bit from Matrons College down the slope before the glade and the boardwalk.
* Reinstatement of use for the two kissing gates already in place on Rectory Farm – installation of adjacent gates will be needed beforehand.

**The future**

**Succession planning**

New volunteers are needed as two of the seven volunteers retired this year.

2024 is likely to be my final year (personal & health reasons) and two more current volunteers have indicated 2024 will be their last year’s involvement (health & moving area).

An initial advert for volunteers was included in the Fountain but no response was forthcoming.

**Budget 2024**

£1k is requested from the Parish Council

* Strimmer servicing will be needed at some stage – none have been serviced since their purchases – so this needs factoring in.
* The cost of formal training for new volunteers is £200 per person.
* Further materials provision and support from Wiltshire Council in remaining boggy sections – cost to be negotiated.

Many thanks are expressed to the Parish Council for their ongoing support with our local footpath

maintenance.

Phil Spooner

November 2023