

Date: 29 June 2021

Title: Report Item 14 -- Correspondence

By: K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

Purpose: To report on correspondence received since the informal meeting on 03 June 2021

Recommendations: To note the report

Note: more items may be added to this schedule prior to the council meeting on 29th June 2021; a copy of the final version can be obtained by emailing the Clerk: clerk@edfparishcouncil.org.uk

The following items of correspondence have been received since the 03 June meeting:

- Footpath 5 (Friston Green northwards into Friston Forest) – a resident has recommended repairs to the signpost on this path; updated signage; and the repair of two flights of steps which have become unsafe. Full details are given in the Annex to this report.
- Footpath 33b (The Link to Jevington) – a resident has requested that this be trimmed as overgrowth has made it difficult to pass in a socially distanced manner.
- Friston Hill verge strimming – a resident has enquired when the verge will be trimmed for the safety of pedestrians whose view is obstructed when trying to cross the main road. ESCC's contractor will be working in East Dean and neighbouring parishes from 29th June onwards
- Micheldene W.I. has thanked the council for waiving the hire fee for their charitable fund raising event on 5th July 2021 at the recreation ground.
- Real-time bus signs – a resident has requested the parish council to lobby the bus company to provide signs (widely used at other bus stops) indicating what time the next buses are due. The resident says: 'Our bus stops are becoming very busy again with not only visitors but local people as well and I think it would be very helpful if we were to have 'live' signs indicating the length of time before the next bus arrives'.

ANNEX

Replacement of sign post

I hope the Parish Council's good offices can be brought to bear to replace the sign post at the beginning of Footpath 5, just inside the entry gate to Friston Forest across from Friston Church at Friston Green.

It had its bottom length replaced about 30 years ago, with the old top jointed in and secured by two carriage bolts. These rusted away ten years ago. I replaced them with two new ones. About five years ago the wood rotted in the top part so that the new bolts no longer hold the post securely vertical. I wired it together but passers-by often fretted the post, loosened the wiring and every year or so I had to rewire it. About six weeks ago I bought and installed an unattractive but effective (what I would call) radiator clamp which pleased me for its strength and security. Alas, on whatever grounds, some wandering member of the public came in with his or her spanner, undid the bolt and walked off with the clamp. The photos below show its current state.





Request for updated signage

Towards the western fork it says "Footpath" which leads parallel to the A259 to the Seven Sisters Country Park HQ at Exceat.



A new sign might well indicate some or all of that, especially as the South Downs N.P. Authority has just bought Seven Sisters CP from ESCC. On the northwestern fork facing it says Footpath Snap Hill. Snap Hill is not a commonly sought destination, but access to the South Downs Way, or to Jevington, might be desirable info for public pedestrians.

Many people use this footpath. The signpost is of some aid to them. Without it, there will be a lot of pauses while people try to remember the Robert Frost poem about two roads

diverging in a wood and which one to take. In its current damaged state it is an attractive nuisance. Someone will soon try to pull it over, break it and perhaps hurt him- or herself in the process.

Repair of steps

Here is another matter needing attention on Footpath 5. I hope the Parish Council can find the responsible party to address it.

About two hundred yards from the gate/stile at the start of Footpath 5 at Friston Green, and just below the reservoir which is next to the path, there are two flights of steps, about a dozen each. They are made of boards secured by iron reinforcing bar which hold back the dirt in the steep slope of the hill. In dry weather they are of no significance other than to make it easier to ascend and descend the hill. In wet weather they prevent people from falling on the slippery slope. They also reduce the erosion caused by many feet churning the mud in wet times.

This footpath receives a lot of use. On sunny summer weekend days there could be 500 people passing over it. Three or four times a year there are organised marathon style runs involving several hundred people. Even on rainy winter week days, two or three dozen people come through on it. It warrants attention.

The current steps were repaired/installed about 20 years ago by a group of men from the Society of Sussex Downsmen. [It has changed its name] Arguably the County is responsible for the surface of footpaths and perhaps that includes necessary stairs. The ultimate freeholder of the land is South East Water. However, the land in question is leased to the Forestry Commission which identifies the plot holding Footpath 5 as 8555 on its map of Friston Forest.

The photos [below] show steps that are broken or damaged. In places the iron reinforcing bar now has no wood behind it and stands proud, ready to trip or spike a pedestrian. Many of the steps remain sound. The few I show here need new wood to prevent accidents and erosion.







I hope the Parish Council can help see this done.