



ST. IPPOLYTS P3 NEWS

Parish Paths Partnership

Issue 3

November 2019

Welcome to the third annual newsletter of St Ippolyts Parish Paths Partnership

This year is the 25th anniversary of St Ippolyts P3 which began as a national scheme launched in 1992. The scheme was administered by the Countryside Management Service on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council.

The first meeting of St Ippolyts Footpath and Bridleway Group was held in October 1994

In the Parish of St Ippolyts we have 26 paths in total, numbered from 1 to 27 (there is no number 7)!

All the paths are currently in good condition and because of the very dry weather this summer little maintenance work has been necessary by P3 members other than trimming around most of the kissing gates and some cutting back of the nettles along path 14, which runs besides St Ippolyts Primary School.

Major maintenance has, however been undertaken on the Permissive path around Wymondley Sub-station - which is not the responsibility of either Herts County Council or P3. The path is the responsibility of the landowner (National Grid) who in the past has maintained it in excellent condition, but sadly in recent years this has not been the case. However, after a certain amount of lobbying by our Parish Clerk, a programme of work and

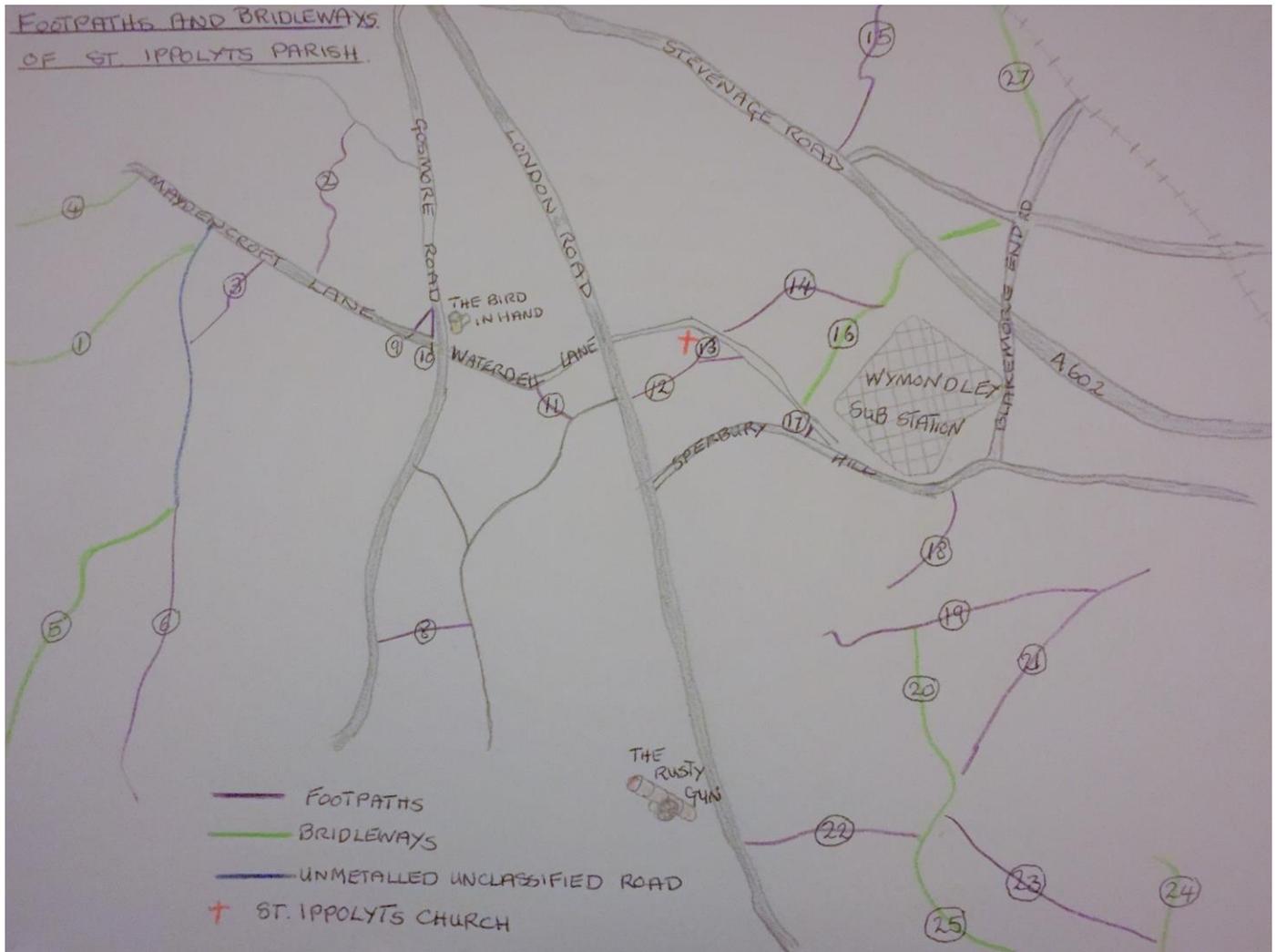
reinstatement of damaged fencing was undertaken by volunteers working alongside a group of graduate trainees from National Grid.



Wymondley substation permissive path in January 2019.



Wymondley substation permissive path in March 2019 after restoration and maintenance work carried out by a National Grid graduate group and volunteers from the TCV organisation - (The Conservation Volunteers).



The above map shows the location of all the St Ippolyts Parish paths.

The following paths are maintained by HCC contractors: - **Footpaths 2, 11,12,13,14 & 19.**

FP2 is probably one of the most popular paths in the Parish, used by dog walkers, joggers and ramblers. The path runs from Brick Kiln Lane (off of Gosmore Road) to Maydencroft Lane near to Maydencroft Manor. The path was resurfaced about 10 years ago and is still faultless underfoot, but the side growths of the path are quite rampant and need to be trimmed twice a year or it becomes very overgrown, reducing the usable width of the path to less than a metre. There are 3 kissing gates along the length of this path that are all trimmed by **P3** volunteers. The kissing gate at the end of the path onto Maydencroft Lane becomes particularly overgrown and there are steps down to the road where side hedges need to be trimmed back by **P3** at least twice each year.

FP11 (proposed site S11) runs from the sharp bend in Waterdell Lane to Half Handkerchief Lane. Although **HCC** trim the side growth of this path twice a year, **P3** volunteers regularly trim the hedge at the Half Handkerchief Lane end, where the fingerpost becomes overgrown and completely obscured within the foliage. As this path bisects 2 proposed new building developments, it may well be 'swallowed up' at some time in the future by a housing estate.

FP12 and FP13 both cross St Ibbs Park, running from London Road to St Ippolyts Church. The paths are now fully fenced, providing 2 separate grazing fields for Mr William's highland cattle and rare breed sheep. Both paths are cut by **HCC** contractors, but the now rampant brambles on part of FP12 (a highly recommended spot for blackberry picking), are trimmed back by **P3** volunteers when growing across the path. Three kissing gates replaced the aging wrought iron gates when the fences were erected some 7 or 8 years ago - these being cleared of nettles and weeds by **P3** volunteers at least once each year.

FP14 starts alongside St Ippolyts Primary school playground at the village green and continues across the fields in the direction of Wymondley. This path has only recently been added to the **HCC** cutting list following requests in past years to remove a fallen tree and also the trimming of a large bank of nettles that restricts use of the path usually in June or July each year.

FP19 starts beside The Red House, Little Almshoe and continues past Almshoebury Cottages. Parts of FP19 are cut once or twice each year and **P3** volunteers cut back the tall bushes around the finger post near to the cottages when necessary.

FP9 and FP10 both run across Gosmore Village Green. Although these paths are not part of the **HCC** cutting programme, they are cut regularly throughout the growing season as the contractors mow the grass on the Green.

Other work carried out by **P3** volunteers includes trimming within the 3 kissing gates on FP18, running from the side of the Farmhouse at Redcoats down to The Wych and tidying around the only remaining stile in the Parish, which is on FP14. We also walk along ALL the other parish paths during the growing season clipping or trimming any problem areas that we may find.

Further information about the Permissive Paths within the Parish.

A Permissive Path is over private land, where the landowner has agreed to public access and takes responsibility for the upkeep of the path. Until very recently, there were 2 Permissive paths within the Parish of St Ippolyts. One was on land owned by the late Mr Stan Murphy, the other (already mentioned on page 1) around the Wymondley sub station, owned by National Grid.

Since his death, access to the permissive path around Mr Stan Murphy's fields has been rescinded. The photo below, with a view towards St Ippolyts Church and Primary School, was taken in 2012 from the highest point of the path where Mr Murphy was considering giving his permission for the siting of a wooden bench as part of our Groundworks grant scheme. Mr Murphy eventually decided against having a bench at that location, fearing litter and vandalism on his property. Unfortunately, this view is no longer accessible to the general public, as the path is now closed and access to the land is a trespassing offence.



Similarly, there has been an on-going problem with the Wymondley substation permissive path on land belonging to National Grid. As mentioned on page 1, graduates and conservation volunteers worked on the path in January and February 2019, clearing brambles, trimming hedges, cutting overhanging branches and repairing/reinstating fences, all under the supervision of National Grid graduate David Devoy. The main problem causing the path to be overgrown has been the pulling down of National Grid fences and the illegal trespass across National Grid land. In spite of the graduates and conservation volunteers' hard work, some fences that they repaired were torn down within a few days and the illegal path was reinstated. (See map on page 5). This has led to a reduction of footfall on the official route and thus the path has become overgrown through lack of use.



Walks Around The Parish

A Walks Around the Parish Leaflet was produced by St. Ippolyts Parish Council using a grant from the P3 scheme and includes six walks which all start and finish within the parish.

The walk - **Substation Discovery** - starts and finishes at St Ippolyts Church, following FP14, FP16, The Substation permissive path, passing The Farmhouse at Redcoats, then using FP18 & FP19, returning to the Church on Ashbrook Lane. This excellent circular walk was included in the 2019 Parish Magazine (available on the Parish Council website www.stippolyts-parishcouncil.org.uk)

Herts County Council Right of Way Officer.

The HCC Countryside and Rights of Way Service has been reorganised and the responsible officers have been re-allocated to new areas. Nicholas Maddox is no longer the officer for this area. Our new officer is Andrew Burton. Many thanks to Nicholas for his years of efficient support and we look forward to the same working relationship with Andrew.

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