**Parish Footpath Officers Report April 2025**

1. Gates

I am pleased to report that Bob Mason has now installed two self-closing gates on the footpath LB 19 (The Herefordshire Way) where the path comes out of the Athelstans Wood and crosses his property. I have forwarded pictures of these to Council to show proof of them being installed.

Some questions have been raised about the way these gates have been installed, being 4”and 6” higher than the manufacture recommends, I think this can be rectified by building the path up with soil. In hindsight it may have been useful to give some instructions but didn’t feel it necessary for someone with Bob’s experience. I have now found a YouTube video that is very helpful which I will share with Bob before any more are installed.

1. Footpath Clearance

There has been two more trees come down on a footpath in Aconbury Wood, these are large trees and both of them completely blocked footpath AC8. I have managed to clear all the small branches so it’s now possible to walk down the path although you have to step over a tree trunk and duck under another. I’ve reported this to the Duchy and they have said that they will clear them when their contractors next in the wood.

1. Noticeboard

I assume we are still waiting to hear if we have been successful in our grant application for a noticeboard. If our grant application proves to be unsuccessful, would the Parish Council be prepared to purchase a noticeboard? I have found one on Amazon not as good as the one I was thinking of but the cost is only about £200.

1. Parish Footpath Map

We have had a meeting to discuss the footpath map of Aconbury, Little Birch and Much Birch with David Irwin and Peter Rymill. As well as the map with places of interest we are now considering using QR codes that people could scan with their phones to give more information on local walks and local history. As I understand it the QR codes would need to be linked to an accessible website. Would it be possible for this information to be linked to the Parish Council website?

1. Countryside Code

Unfortunately, the article I sent to the editor of the Newsletter about the Countryside Code was not printed. I don’t understand why this was but she did also find it impossible to copy the poster that I sent as a word document. I’m quite disappointed about this as I thought it was important to demonstrate our concern for the recent problems. I will send it again and hopefully she’ll put it in the May edition.

1. Parish Walks

David Irwin Much Birch footpath officer lead a walk on the 16th March we had about 10 people join us for a very enjoyable walk.

Our annual Dawn Chorus Walk is taking place on the 6th April. It will be led by Gervase Mangwana and Bob Mason. This year we are starting from Merrivale Farm and walking into Athelstans Wood and then back to the farm where the Masons will serve breakfast for donation to charity.

Chris Fowler

Little Birch Footpath Officer