

Kersey Parish Council Footpath Working Group Terms of Reference

May 2026

Introduction

In the 1980's Councillors and volunteers combined informally to establish a well-defined and usable footpath network in Kersey. Suffolk County Council has ultimate responsibility for highways, including footpaths and bridleways which are public rights of way. The Footpath Committee (now a Working Group) was then formed to put footpath work on a more formal basis. Since spring 2010 Suffolk County Council has paid the Parish Council, under contract, to carry out surface clearance of many of the paths in the Parish. The Footpath working group volunteers work together to ensure all paths in Kersey are well signed and remain walkable using robust mowers and strimmers. As a Working Group of the Parish Council all decisions need to be ratified by the Parish Council.

Local Council Power: Highways Act 1980 s43 and s50.

Footpath Working Group Responsibilities:

- To keep the path network walkable at all times by allotting paths to volunteers for checking, reporting problems, clearing and surface clearance (mowing) on a regular basis.
- To ensure signposting is in place and clear.
- To liaise with the Clerk or the County Rights of Way office where repairs or other work are beyond the scope, remit and capabilities of volunteers, ie bridges, steps, sign posts etc.
- To liaise with landowners where necessary for cutting of hedges, crops or other growth which is beyond the scope or legal remit of volunteers.
- To liaise with landowners, Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council when any path re-routing is required.
- To ensure the mowers and strimmer are appropriately maintained annually and inform the Clerk so a record of maintenance is kept.
- To give all volunteers who help with mowing and maintenance a copy of the risk assessment.
- To remind all volunteers that they are insured to help mow and maintain the footpath network using the Parish Council mowers and strimmer when they are appropriately dressed. They can be offered training as necessary.
- To get all decisions incurring expenditure ratified by the Parish Council.
- All expenditure must be accompanied by a VAT invoice for payment by the Parish Council or if necessary for reimbursement by the Parish Council after purchase, so long as expenditure has previously been approved by the Parish Council.
- To report to the Parish Council at each council meeting with a copy report for the Clerk.
- To give the Clerk a copy of the meeting notes of Footpath Working Group meetings and a list of volunteers who help with mowing and maintenance.
- To agree with the Clerk the annual budget requirements for the Footpath Working Group for ratification by the Parish Council at the budget meeting in November.

The Parish Council Responsibilities:

- Nominations of Councillors to the Working Group.
- To liaise with the County Rights of Way office regarding surface clearance arrangements.
- To arrange insurance cover for working group volunteers.
- To insure the mowers and strimmer and keep a register of assets.
- To keep a record of mower and strimmer maintenance.
- To maintain the Footpath Working Group financial accounts and budget.
- To raise invoices and receive payments.
- To review volunteer risk assessment regularly, a copy to be given to all volunteers.