

## Report for AGM November 2017 on the past year's works carried out by ECR Footpath Projects Team.

By Brian Richardson 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2017

This year's project work has been carried out on tasks in Bollington, Poynton-with-Worth and Prestbury. Projects are generally carried out in phases and are interspersed to provide variety and interest to the team members.

**At Poynton:** A major footpath refurbishment project has concentrated on the mining area ringed by Norbury Brook, Middlewood, Davenport Golf Club and Poynton Park, where dense gorse, brambles, saplings and even trees, have been removed to clear the paths. For some paths this has enabled us to re-establish the route of FPs 9, 12, 17, 54, 60, 62, and 85. Gorse had established itself on the old, raised (and better drained) mining tracks, forcing walkers onto the muddier cattle-kneaded adjacent fields and meadows.

Very significant clearances have allowed corrections to some path alignments of FPs 9, 60 and 62. A new finger post is erected at the freshly cleared intersection of FPs 9/54/60/62, and two finger posts were re-positioned on FP12 to correct its alignment by twenty metres, whilst conveniently avoiding a very wet area. A new finger post is placed at FPs 18/19/11 intersection, eight new way-marker posts have been erected, and way-marker disks have been added to these, and in several other locations, for clarity.

Stile steps have been added or replaced in two locations on FPs 85 and 54. A dangerous vertical drop into a culvert has been isolated from the adjacent path, FP62, with a posts and two-level rail structure. And some posts and railings have been replaced on FP13 steps from the road down to the river in Norbury Hollow. The erection of two foot bridges linked with a new boardwalk is expected by November to cross a 'sinks' area on footpath 54 – just south of the clearance for the aforementioned intersection. This construction is funded entirely by our ECR Group.

Two fallen trees were cleared from paths during our most recent works

**At Prestbury:** FP 33A follows the very attractive Dunbah Hollow, neighbouring The Silk Road, from Flash Lane roundabout, to a point further south where it crosses the stream and continues as Bollington FP 6. On route, it is crossed by FP 3 which descends a flight of steps and crosses the stream to Bollington FP 5. Dunbah Hollow has been re-visited after ECR PT's major clearance work there in winter 2013/4. At the south end, a new post and handrail structure replaces the collapsed original over the brook, to link with Bollington FP 6. At the mid path crossing Prestbury FP3, new posts, handrails and footboards replace rotted and collapsing sections of rail structures on the steps and boardwalk down to Bollington FP5 and at the kissing gate east of the stream there. The steps here have been cleared of vegetation and new pegs have been driven at step faces to supplement the rotting stobs supporting these wooden steps. New handrails, posts and step stobs have been similarly erected to

refurbish the steps on FP33a near the north end. Many low-slung tree branches obstructing this north end of the path have been cut down to a line inside the fenceline of the bordering Silk Road copses.

**Bollington FP22 steps:** In October 2015 CEC PROW Officer, Evan Pedley, in conjunction with Bollington Town Council approached me to ask if our Projects Team could refurbish the steep and badly rainstorm-eroded FP 22 steps off Shrigley Rise, (off Shrigley Road). Overflow rainwater runoff from Shrigley Road, floods across Shrigley Rise and drains entirely down this footpath. Consequently, it has a central 400mm deep eroded channel in places and one or two steps of 400mm. Most of the steps were wooden, but were to be replaced by precast concrete kerb steps, each weighing over 70kg.

We were offered a contribution of £500, (plus vat, if Bollington TC payed the relevant bills directly). I accepted this very challenging task for the Project Team, and programmed the project for June – running into July and August, this summer 2017. To restore the path, it was necessary to fill the hollows and bed the steps with a very coarse porous stone (13.5 tonnes of 40mm limestone) set at a much shallower, more rainwater resistant, surface slope than that which existed before. This was achieved by adding additional steps; all with a more negotiable lower step height. This is a well-used path by local residents and walkers. Tools suitable for lifting and transporting the kerbs were purchased. Initially, we repaired the existing, and added an additional wooden step in the bottom field. Subsequently we repositioned four concrete steps and erected 50 new concrete steps, with faces restrained by steel driven pins. We cleared vegetation including several ash and sycamore trees, and grubbed up several related stumps beforehand.

Our Projects Team of men and women has served 322 man-hours labour here, excluding lunch stops (and preparation work off site). 14 Persons have attended for a total of 74 volunteer-site-days, with up to 6 members present on a day. I have posted an article describing the Project Team's work for Bollington Steps on ECR 's Website. Bollington Town Council and many residents have thanked us for this reconstruction of their steps. The project cost £1792 of which Bollington TC contributed £558. For 62 volunteer attendance days 296 manhours work was carried out (excluding lunch breaks).

**This year**, so far (21/10/17), over 39 site days, 22 volunteers have attended 124 volunteer-site-days, and contributed 569 volunteer hours of work excluding lunch breaks. Organising and preparing for this work has taken me many more hours and site visits.

I am currently preparing articles for our website concerning the projects ECR Projects Team has achieved since its inauguration in 2013. The team members' extensive contributions to our walking environment deserve this recognition.

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