

Northamptonshire Area of the Ramblers Association

OUR FOOTPATH COMMITTEE NEED YOUR HELP!

As members of Ramblers I am sure you all enjoy walking. Do you think about why you are able to use the footpaths that are available? Whilst footpaths result from years, often centuries of use; making sure they are kept open and well maintained for us and for future generations, requires continued vigilance. A vital part of this work is carried out by the Footpath Committee.

The Footpath Committee is the main official point of contact between walkers and the Council organisations approving new developments and maintaining the rights of way. The continued development of housing and industry in the county together with the financial constraints that exist results in increasing risk of loss of footpaths. Due to these increasing demands on our work and the retirement of a number of long standing committee members we need your help with the work we do.

There are at present only 11 **Local Footpath Secretaries** to look after all our Northamptonshire Parishes. There are 268 parishes to be covered across the county. Each one of us looks after a block of Parishes and this work involves some of the following:-

- 1) From the Local Authorities we receive and review any planning matters that are near to the network of public paths. The Footpath Committee have a right to object if we feel the planning would adversely affect a path.
- 2) If landowners block or try to change a path we can challenge this through the Local Authority.
- 3) For each Parish we have copies of the Northamptonshire County Council Definitive Mapping, so path routes can be precisely checked and followed.
- 4) Sometimes a site visit is needed to view sites and potential problems. The travel costs for this can be reimbursed from Area funds.
- 5) Most of the work can be done individually at times to suit your own availability. However, Group members are encouraged to get together once a month to share experiences and help each other and to report problems, discuss our findings and make joint decisions about our objections.

This is not all we do, but you will see how vital this work is. **We very much need some assistance to continue our work. It is not onerous, but contributes greatly to maintaining our much valued path network for now and the future.**

If you think you could help please contact me. You would be most welcome to join with us at one of our monthly meetings to see what we do. These are generally held at Moulton Parish Church Centre

Andrew Pike (Local Footpath Secretary) or email:- footpaths@northantsramblers.org.uk or via the contact list on Assemble.