



ESSEX AREA HUB

EAHN NO 7 [Essex Area Hub Newsletter]

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Dates of Future Meetings*

10 Sept EC

24 Sept RoW Hub

16 Nov EC

10 Dec RoW Hub

14 Jan 2027 EC

6 Feb AGM

Meetings in red are open to all

Landowners vs Way Mark Posts.

Alan Goffee argues for a pragmatic approach to waymarkers

There is some confusion amongst Volunteers as to the use of Way Mark Posts (WMP) and the responsibility of Landowners on Footpaths.

The Landowners have a legal requirement to mark out Footpaths on their land. Please **do not** request a WMP on a non-marked out footpath. Put the onus on the Landowners to fulfil their responsibilities by making Essex Highways aware of the defect. **If a Footpath is not marked out it should be reported to Essex Highways.** They have the authority to speak to the Landowner to get this done.

As the installation of WMP's is not a priority it is likely nothing will happen, and the Footpath will remain unmarked.

WMP's, unlike Fingerposts are not a legal requirement. A Landowner can decide WMP's will not be installed on their land. In addition, any installation requires a data search to ensure there are no services, such as drains, electric cables, water mains and communication cables below the proposed site for the WMP. This results in some being refused. The positioning of the WMP near a vehicle path is another important factor in dealing with any installation. Farm vehicles are big and best kept away from WMP's.

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*A note about meetings.

Hub meetings at which we discuss Footpath/ ROW issues are held on Zoom on Thursdays and open to all. If you would like to attend, contact essexareahub@gmail.com for the current joining details.

The **Executive Committee meetings** are not open meetings but we would not exclude access to members wishing to raise or discuss important issues which cannot be discussed at the Hubs.

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Reporting unmarked Footpaths to Essex Highways is a quicker way to get action than asking for a WMP.

The vast majority of WMP's are installed by Work Parties and P3 Teams after discussions with the local Inspector, where the priority will be WMP's at the junction of footpaths. It is understandable that these installations take priority over requests to reset leaning WMP's while missing ones remain.

It would be really helpful if fallen WMP's were picked up and leant against a tree or fence. It may not be perfect but its more helpful to walkers than leaving them on the ground.

The number of reported WMP issues increases each year with many in the *Track It* system going back years. All the time there are unsafe bridges, gates and stiles, blockages and vegetation issues, WMP's will remain a low priority.

Please help us by not reporting leaning WMP's or ones on straight lengths of paths, and by picking up fallen posts to help other walkers. Give consideration to only those at path junction. This will be helpful and stop those involved in dealing with WMP's be overwhelmed..

Recent Working Party News

Bridge Clearance at Ashdon by Uttlesford WP



Before



After

Tendring WP erected and installed this bridge on the Coastal Path



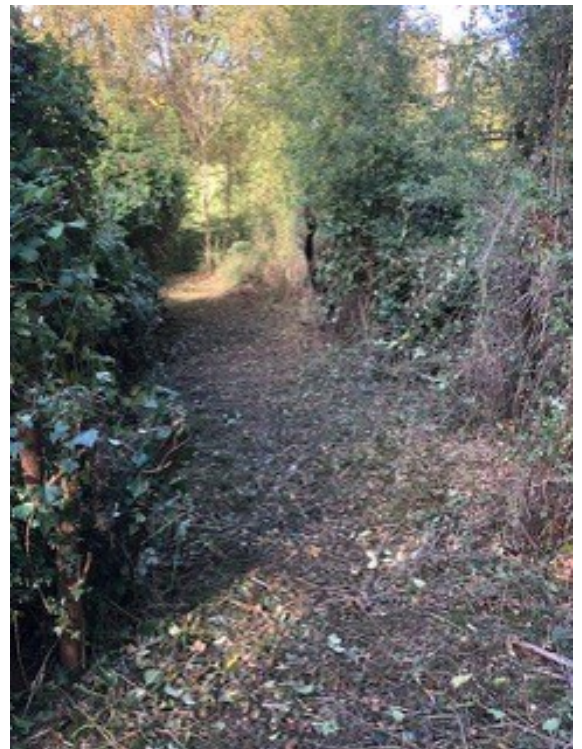
More Working Party News

Here we feature Brentwood's Cleance at Doddinghurst:

Before



After



**....and
How it
was
done**



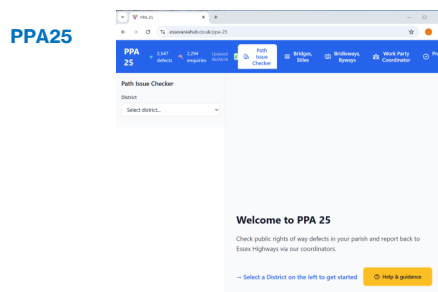
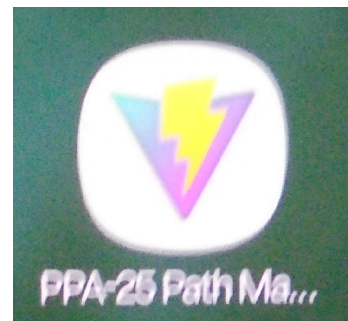
What is a Defect Report? As Alan Goffee explains below, Defects can remain on the Essex Highways data base for years, in many cases, long after they have been dealt with. These 'false defects' clog up the system and make it difficult for both Ramblers and Council workers to organise working parties. To clean up the system, the Hub has instituted the **Defect Check Reports** which enable our members to easily record whether or not a defect currently exists

PPA 25 Update June 2026.

Over the last 3 months, Volunteers in **Tendring, Brentwood, Chelmer and Blackwater, and Uttlesford** have surveyed and produced over 200 Defect Check Reports (DCR's).

Of these over 75% have been found to "No Longer Exist". In other words, the Defects have been cleared by Essex Highways, Group Work Parties, or are no longer needed.

It has been an eye opener to find, in some Parishes, the number of Defects that can be removed. This is noticeable in the number of bridges replaced, and the number of obstructions that can no longer be found.



Volunteers, through the Essex Hub will continue to work with Essex Highways to resolve Defects that remain open.

Essex Highways are looking to replace more than 100 Fingerposts across the County during the winter months and are responding rapidly to Defects raised by members on blocked cross field paths over the summer months.

Feedback from the **Cross Field Path Project 2026** is that many of the regular cropped fields are for the first time clear to walk. This reflects the joint operation between Essex Highways and our members over the last few years.

Area Officers were invited to give a presentation recently to the **West Essex Parish Adopters** on the use and operation of PPA 25 .The response was positive and if these volunteers could be added to the Groups already creating DCR's, many more Defects can be removed from Track It to the benefit of walkers.

So its a a big thank you to everyone involved with PPA 25, and the progress we have made.

Alan Goffee

Cross Field Paths

For many years the situation involving cross field path was dire. As crops started to emerge in the Spring, so, in many places the paths totally disappeared. Allan Goffee introduced his **CROSS FIELD PROJECT** about 4 years ago. People were encouraged to report paths which were overgrown or less than the legal width (If the path is a **public footpath**, it must be at least **1 metre** wide. If it is a **bridleway**, it must be at least **2 metres** wide). At first improvements were few and far between but, with each year there has been spectacular progress. All this is down to a large number of our members making a regular effort to change things for the better.

The pictures show that there is still much to be achieved

Tendring Ramblers struggle through an unreinstated crossfield path at Wormingford .



This rape-seed in Great Totham FP 18-247 and FP 31-247 will not only swallow you up, it may also undo your bootlaces

**Share your snaps with the HUB
and we will share them with members
across Essex**

Chelmer and Blackwater Group

PPA 25 Presentation.

Lynda Collins of the C & B Group put together a great presentation for the Walk leaders entitled Managing Defects and Enquiries.

Public Rights of Way

Managing Defects and Enquires for Ramblers Walk Leaders.

Chelmer and Blackwater
Ramblers

Walk Leaders Day
18/04/2026



The presentation covered **Essex Highways Definitive Map**, the purpose of the **Track It Map**, how to use the **Tell Us** reporting system, and the setting up of **PPA 25** and its operation.

Lynda also included the Essex Highways **Cutting Programme** and the **PROW Orders and Defects**.

Much was already known but a lot was not, with the result that it was well received and Lynda thanked for her efforts.

The next step is to recruit Volunteers for the surveying of local path, and reporting the findings.

Anyone interested in finding more should use essexareahub@gmail.com where the message will be passed to Lynda.

Alan Goffee