

The Parish Paths Partnership Biddenham Footpaths

In 1992 the Countryside Commission as it then was launched the country wide Parish Paths Scheme (P3) and Biddenham Parish Council promptly became a member. The government and locally backed scheme was a way to establish local interest in public footpaths and their upkeep especially to be eyes and ears when paths were blocked. In the early 90's Biddenham had many miles of paths as the parish included what is now the parish of Great Denham. As I write in 2020 this has shrunk to the paths around Church End, Gold Lane, Days Lane and part of the Biddenham Turn footpaths. There is a FP map to go with this article

There have been many successes to report

- Mapping out marking and walking all the paths in the Biddenham loop before housing development started to ensure their survival as well as some relict hedge. I am indebted to those such as The Late Bill Fowler assisted by Peter Culverwell who marked out what were then unused field paths near Honey Hill, paths now in use across the golf course towards the now the Deep Spinney Estate
- New path creation as Rights of way off Manor Road and at Biddenham Turn
- Putting in new kissing gates at Church End and near the pond
- Having a new replica gate made and fitted at the pond
- involvement in planning matters and paths
- negotiations with the Biddenham Estate on path matters
- organizing paths in Cowslip meadow
- meeting as a regular forum group and walking paths

Over many years we have worked to keep paths open and walkable as well as taking an active interest in footpath matters something declining as Local Authorities amalgamate departments and cut environmental staff. When we started out the County Council had an extensive Rights Of way Team administered by a department of about 20 including those who just worked on legal matters relating to paths. In 2020 the department has been absorbed by highways and is down to one member of staff admittedly we are now only part of Beds Borough but all the expertise has gone.

Initially the project was a small team of volunteers in 1992 eventually becoming a working group where we met regularly and had the support of a local authority P3 officer such as Dave Perry and Ed Burnett.

Trainings were held and there were opportunities to get together each year with other village P3 groups

I thank the many volunteers and supporters over the years

once again the scheme fizzled out with the withdrawal of government and local authority support by the end of C20

Much was achieved in the time the project was running and a selection of articles and pictures attached shows how active the group was able to be

As I write it is still possible to walk all our paths and there is a contact at The Borough but funding, training and get togethers are no more

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