

I have been a resident of South Petherton for just over ten years and walk regularly in and around the South Petherton Parish

I am a regular country walker and organise voluntarily the 'South Petherton Walking Group'. Part of this function is the maintenance of the 'South Petherton Walking Group' website which has a growing subscription of over one hundred and seventy people to its mailing list. The group was formed with the support and help of South Somerset District Council through the Community and Active Lifestyle Team. Hence we are badged as a WHI group (Walk for Health Initiative) and listed on the South Somerset District Council Website.

South Petherton Walking Group walk across or near 118 farms in the area and recently we have been asked by the Police to help set up Farm Watch in the area. This has created an immense amount of good will between local Farmers and ourselves. Because of this project, we are currently in contact with over one hundred individuals, and this we fully expect to rise to four or five hundred on completion of the project.

The objective of Farm Watch is a partnership, which on the one hand, enables the Police to 'Text' pertinent security information should problems arise in the area. On the other, to provide a facility where walkers may support both the local farmer and the police by reporting animals in distress, open gates and general husbandry matters to individual farmers, and more serious matters to the Police.

I have walked on the land now owned by Mr. & Mrs. Herrick for ten years when in their ownership and in the ownership of Mr. Crocker the previous resident.

Previous to Mr and Mrs Herrick taking residence, the footpaths on the property were in a sorry state, impassable in places. It was apparent that neither the landowner nor the council maintained the public right of ways on this land at all. The rights of way were littered with broken stiles, they were overgrown and many were impossible to negotiate.

When Mr & Mrs Herrick bought the land they set about renovating the property and putting the farmland back into good order, which included the footpath network. I walk daily and often meet other dog walkers, some of them farmers. I have listened to many complementary comments regarding these improvements made for the walking public by Mr & Mrs Herrick, all of which are significant.

Barcroft Lane, part of which, is a cutting and leads up a hill across Mr Herrick's property, was virtually impassable before Mr. & Mrs Herrick took over. They have reinstated the footpath, which is now properly drained and surfaced. We now can experience a perfectly dry and very pleasant walk rather than a muddy and impassable bog.

Barcroft Lane east of the bridge at North Mills Brook was never wider to walk

upon than the tarmac lane leading to the property which is the county road, that being only 2.5 to 3 metres wide. Mr. & Mrs Herrick cleared the area at which the gates stand for agricultural traffic. Before that the hedgerow, trees and drainage ditches to the stream limited the width to the same width as the rest of the lane around 2.5 to 3 metres. The lane upon which I walked was never wider than the gap that now exists between the Southern and central brick and stone pillars.

*Ian Greenfield 2008*