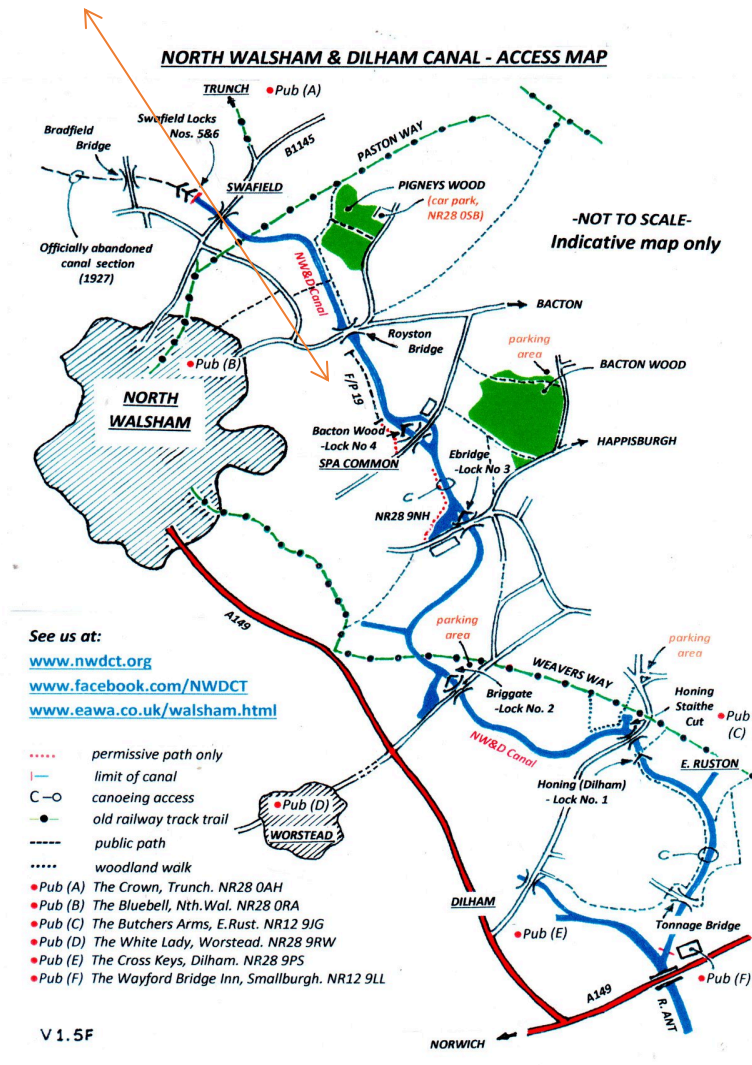


SOS - favourite canal walk threatened!

Canal-lovers, we need your help to keep one of your favourite walks open.

Hundreds of you enjoy strolling beside the canal from Bacton Wood Lock to Pigneys Wood. But later this year you won't be able to do that anymore. You will be stuck on the western bank below Royston Bridge, and will have to turn round and retrace your steps - unless we can all put pressure on Norfolk County Council to take action.

A vital part of the route is an official public footpath called Footpath 19 (marked on this map as "F/P 19").



It stretches from the plank bridge over the side stream below Bacton Wood Lock, to the Royston spillway, near to the old Wherry Pub, and it's the responsibility of Norfolk County Council.

But to get to either end of the footpath, walkers have to cross private land.

For several years now our officers have been asking the county council to sort out access to the path, but so far nothing has been done.

At present walkers from Bacton Wood Lock reaching the end of the footpath, below Royston Bridge, are able to cross the canal via an earth bank owned by a friendly canal owner. Walkers can then cross the road and pick up the canal path towards Pigneys Wood.

But later this year that section of the canal will be permanently re-watered. As a result, that earth bank will disappear - and so will your lovely long rambles.

We want the council to talk to the farmer whose land borders the canal at Royston Bridge and arrange for a permissive path, from the end of Footpath 19, across his field and up to the road.

The council also needs to speak to the canal owner at the Bacton Wood Lock end of Footpath 19 and agree a permissive path across his property to the start of the footpath. At the moment everyone reaches the official footpath by walking across his land, thanks to his goodwill - it needs to be made legal.

We think Norfolk County Council might sort out the problem if dozens, scores - preferably hundreds of you - emailed the officer in charge of footpaths and told him, very politely: how much walking beside the canal means to you, how beneficial it is to your health, how much you would miss it, and how you want access at either end of Footpath 19 to be sorted out as a matter of urgency.

His name is Andy Hutcheson and his email address is: andrew.hutcheson@norfolk.gov.uk

Thank you - and fingers crossed. If you hear back, please let us know!