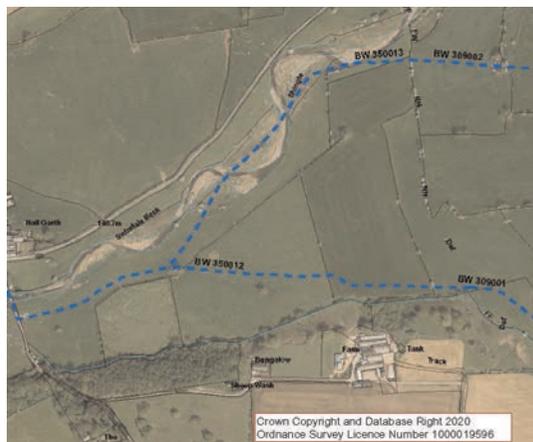


CALLAF meeting Great Musgrave 23 January 2020 - Informal Report

Following a formal morning meeting in Warcop Village Hall, LAF members visited a bridleway across fields, south of Hallgarth Farm, Great Musgrave. The line of the PROW has been severed by the Swindale Beck, a tributary of the River Eden, draining from Warcop Fell in the Pennines.

Measures to keep the Swindale Beck in its course, such as stone revetments, have been used in its westerly section to ensure the beck flows under the bridge at NY 773133 and guaranteeing any future floods don't threaten the integrity of the bridge. Some works that had been carried out using a soft defence [willow planting] circa 2015 had been washed out as they had not established before the flooding.

The Swindale Beck now meanders across its flood plain, and has washed away the definitive route of the bridleway leaving field edges overhanging high river cliffs on the outside of bends of the meanders. Both the fields and the bridleway are now being eroded away. This leads to walkers having to find another route across the fields, this is tolerated by the landowner on the condition that dogs are on leads.



The bridleway is shown on OS maps to lie south of a straightened course of the beck. The aerial photograph shows its current alignment. The issue of whether to apply to divert the bridleway led to much discussion among LAF members. It was felt that wherever the bridleway was diverted to, the beck would erode it away at some stage. The beck now exhibits a re-wilded state, meandering over a wide flood plain. This is good to slow the flow, and to reduce the height and rapid response of any flooding further downstream in the River Eden. However it is a loss to the farmer for the flood plain land to be washed away.



LAF members felt that farmers should receive some compensation for their land acting as flood protection for those living downstream; a possible example of Public Money for Public Goods. In the light of the Agriculture Bill, and other uncertainties, it was felt that to divert the bridleway was not the best option at present. Members thanked Charles Ecroyd, LAF Chair, for organising the visit to a site where the best options are not yet clear to see.

