

Villagers free to use footpath – without fear of trespassing

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Residents in a West Sussex village are celebrating after being able to legally walk along one of their footpaths – without fear of being labelled trespassers.

The footpath in Tillington, on land owned by Lord Egremont, runs south from the village towards the River Rother.

Its official opening was marked by residents on Thursday, May 5.

The last time this path was shown on the map was 1901 but significantly, it was not registered in 1949 for the Definite Map of Rights of Way, meaning the public technically did not have the right to walk on it.

Thanks to a community campaign, this has now been corrected.

Gerald Gresham Cooke, a resident of Tillington and the Tillington Parish Council public rights of way warden, was a driving force behind achieving the permissive footpath status.

He worked alongside the West Sussex County Council public rights of way team and the Leconfield Estate to formalise the use of the footpath to the benefit of local residents and visitors to the South Downs National Park alike.

To find the new footpath, from the A272 crossroads go south down Coxsland Lane, past Tillington Stables.

Then, instead of having to walk two sides of a triangle, the new path now goes straight for 1,000m between the reservoir and the sewage works towards the River Rother.

A permissive path is a legal agreement between landowners – in this case the Leconfield Estate - and the county council to allow the public to walk on the land.

The estate and Lord Egremont have given a 10 year agreement, at the end of which it can either be renewed or the land reverted back to its owners.

The only restriction is that one day a year – the first Monday of February – the path is out of bounds.

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Lord Egremont officially opens the path