

Thanks to local landowners Laurence J Betts Limited and a number of grants the public footpath MR271 leading from Fartherwell Road, West Malling to Church Road, Offham was recently upgraded to bridleway status.

There is a recent an application with Kent County Council for the proposed diversion of path MR286 at Offham & Mereworth to accommodate the development of the adjacent quarry and the Parish Council has engaged with the consultation. A link to the application reference TPROW/MR286/1606 is available via the Offham Parish Council website <http://www.offhampc.kentparishes.gov.uk/>

Our beautiful countryside is a working environment and many livelihoods rely on the production of salad crops and fruit and the coppicing and logging from the woodland.

The moorhens and mallards on our local ponds are likely to have young broods or be sitting on nests during the spring and summer. The young usually fledge at 7 weeks but many of them do not survive early infancy.

More unusually we have the magical presence of skylarks nesting on the ground in the grassy areas managed by the farm for their protection. In the UK, sky larks are on the Red List. The UK skylark population fell by 54 per cent between 1970 and 2001 and two to three successful broods between April and August are required to sustain the population. These small brown birds are inconspicuous on the ground but you can spot them high in the sky with their distinctive flight and song. The track through skylark nesting area is not a public footpath and has signs indicating this so please avoid it and keep dogs away from the area.

Can you spot the skylark in the picture below?



Members of the parish council regularly walk the footpaths. If you become aware of a problem relating to a footpath you can report it via the link below <https://www.kent.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/public-rights-of-way/report-a-problem-on-a-right-of-way>