

Report on Nettleton Parish Footpaths & Bridleways – April 2019

1. Introduction

This report provides a summary of the current state of the footpaths and bridleways in Nettleton Parish. It is the responsibility of the land owner to keep Public Rights of Way, which includes footpaths and bridleways, clear of encroaching vegetation and not obstructed. Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Officer for North Wiltshire, Stephen Leonard, is the official point of contact for complaints about obstruction of a path. Wiltshire Council have a responsibility to check that Public Rights of Way are free from obstructions, for signposting and way-marking.

In practice, by agreement with Wiltshire Council, the Cotswold Voluntary Footpath Wardens (CW's) patrol the paths on a regular basis to check that they are open and passable. The Cotswold Wardens operate as the volunteer arm of the Cotswold Conservation Board which is a statutory body charged with the conservation and enhancement of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Nettleton Parish is within the AONB. Where there are problems, the parish Cotswold Warden will normally deal with minor issues such as missing signs, vegetation clearance, etc. For more significant issues such as broken stiles or locked gates the CW's liaises with the land owner to get the matter resolved. Where a land owner is un-cooperative, then the CW will refer the matter to Wiltshire Council who have the necessary legal powers to resolve it.

2. Description of the Routes & Current Status

There are over 50 paths & bridleways in the Parish with a total length of almost 30 miles. Each path in the parish is identified by a reference number in the form NETTxx and there is a Wiltshire Council map showing path routes and reference numbers (attached as a separate document). All of the footpaths and bridleways are available for use at present, with the exception only of two short footpaths that have not been used for some years. However, there are plans to reinstate both of them. In the meantime there are alternative routes available nearby.

A few of the footpaths have kissing gates and therefore are suitable for the less able walkers and for those with pushchairs. However, this is a rural area and many of the footpaths have stiles and some become very wet and muddy in the winter, especially those that are also bridleways. Thus these paths are more suitable for reasonably fit walkers.

The majority of the paths are through or alongside fields. For footpaths, the land owner is required to provide a minimum width of 1.5m around field edges and 1.0m across a field. For bridleways, the minimum width is 3.0m around field edges and 2.0m across a field. Minor clearance is done either by the land owner or by the local CW.

3. Recent Improvements

Several broken stiles have been repaired in the past year, some by land owners and others by the CW's. Two stiles which had been unusable for some years have been re-built recently by a Cotswold Wardens work party (NETT21 in Nettleton & NETT32 in Burton). A stile in West Kington had a dog flap installed by the local CW (NETT15). Footpaths without reasonable access for dogs are a problem to the many walkers with dogs.

Waymarks are replaced regularly by CW's when they break or disappear.

4. Cotswold Voluntary Footpath Wardens

The Cotswold Footpath Wardens for the parish are:

- David Kerr – for Nettleton and Burton area - contact daviddkerr@hotmail.com
- Andrew Carrington – for West Kington area – contact ACarrington@BTinternet.com

Users of paths should let either of the two parish CW's know if they find a problem on a path such as the path is obstructed, has missing waymarks, a broken stile or unusable gate.