

NETTLETON PARISH

COTSWOLD FOOTPATH WARDENS' REPORT FOR MAY 2024 - MAY 2025

There are 52 Rights of Way (ROW) in Nettleton Parish with a total length of just over 30km. The Parish Warden duties are shared between Andrew Carrington (AC) (predominantly covering the Southern part of the parish) and David Kerr (DK) (focussing on the Northern areas) both of whom live in the Parish and hence walk many of the paths frequently – both are Cotswold Voluntary Wardens (CVW) in the Avon Valley district of the Cotswold National Landscape (CNL). The agreed division of the parish makes the monitoring task manageable. Andrew Carrington's responsibility covers 21 paths (5 bridleways and 15 footpaths & 1 permissive footpath) totalling just over 13.5 km. David Kerr's responsibility covers 31 paths (8 bridleways and 23 footpaths) totalling just over 17 km. All the ROW have been walked during the year, mostly at least twice, and some on a much more frequent basis. Generally, all routes are in good condition, with a few exceptions noted below. Remedial work, where necessary is carried out by DK & AC or larger work parties (WP) of other CVWs.

Works undertaken in the past year and current status are as follows:

- NETT1 – Generally no problems. This is a popular footpath, but the landowners have frequent problems with gates left open and walkers deviating from the right of way.
- NETT2 (BW) – No problems.
- NETT3 – New fences and gates have been installed by the farmer at the Southern end of this footpath. Bristol Gates make access for walkers easier than previously. Waymarks to clarify the route of both the right of way and the permissive path have been installed on the new furniture. One old wooden gate remains, and a request for replacement has been made to Wiltshire Council.
- NETT4 (BW) – The narrow sunken section of bridleway between Holloway Hill and Drifton Hill was again deliberately left overgrown in the summer of 2024, as the adjacent field had an uncultivated margin which could be used alternative. This resulted in an excellent display of wild flowers. Minor clearance of encroaching brambles was carried out as required.

The remainder of this bridleway has been in good condition throughout the year, the only work required was to clean the waymarkers after routine creosoting of the fences obscured some of them.

- NETT5 – Steps at the bottom end have been strimmed regularly by the landowner and AC. One of the wooden steps was noted to be rotten and replaced in January. The stiles on this path have both deteriorated and required remedial work. The top stile was repaired in October and the middle stile and surrounding fence was eventually rebuilt in April after timber was supplied by Wiltshire Council. The handrail beside the steps had a rotten post replaced at the same time.



- NETT6 (alongside the stream in West Kington) – Winter flooding, which makes the route impassable, was very frequent again last winter, making the route impassable for much of that time. There has been further erosion of the bank and the condition of the path surface has been reported to Wiltshire Council. The Landowners at both ends have continued regularly to trim the path, reducing the amount of brushcutting needed to be carried out by AC. This is greatly appreciated. Regular clearance of overhanging branches and brambles is carried out as required.



The ditch crossing towards the Eastern end of the path has deteriorated. Restorative work, and the addition of a handrail in April, will, it is hoped, make it safer for walkers.



- NETT7A - This path, which leads from West Kington up a steep hill to the church, can become very slippery in winter because it is steep, overhung by trees and seldom dries out. The drainage was improved by Wiltshire Council in 2018 and since then the condition has improved. This path is monitored by Wiltshire Council rather than the CW's.
- NETT7 – No problems reported.
- NETT8 – Waymarkers were replaced after a new field had been installed by the landowners.
- NETT9 – Stile access to road cleared when necessary.
- NETT10 – There is a stile as the path enters Home Woods which has had an additional handhold installed (April) to ease access, however the ownership of Home Woods has changed and the new Landowner appears to be leaving the adjacent gate open, so this is helpful for those who still find the stile difficult.

The stone stile behind the houses in Nettleton can get very slippery during winter and additional handrails have been added to improve safety for walkers.



- NETT10A – No problems reported.
- NETT11 (BW) – A narrow section of Smith Street bridleway has cleared of brambles by a CW workparty in December. Generally the right of way is in good condition, but does suffer from tractor usage in wet weather, becoming exceptionally muddy in places.



- NETT11A (BW) – Small trees fell across the section between Smith Street and the West Kington Wick lane on 3 occasions during the autumn. All were removed by AC when reported. The long bridleway through the Broadmead Valley, between Latimer Walk and the Fosse Way has seen considerable damage both from clearance of Ash Dieback affected trees and winter storms. The latter including a large tree which fell across the river and path near the stone bridge. This was quickly removed by the landowner. The machinery required to clear the tree created a lot of mud, but the landowner, in conjunction with the shoot who use the area, installed a substantial vehicle crossing of a persistently muddy section. This assistance is greatly appreciated.



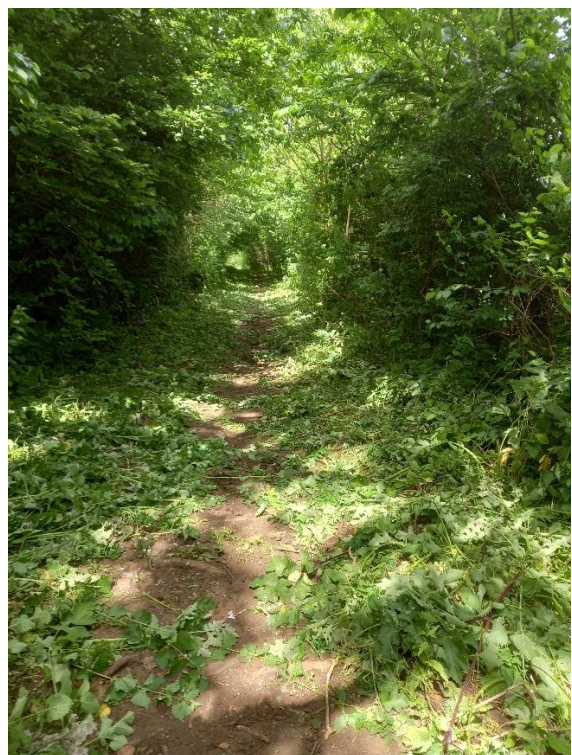
- NETT11B (BW) – Regular minor clearance of this bridleway is carried out. A small tree was brought down by Storm Darragh in December and was cleared, along with some other overhanging branches.
- NETT12 – The landowner has removed a lot of trees from the Southern end, which were affected by Ash Dieback. This created some mess at the time, but the area is quickly recovering and views have improved.
- NETT13 – The route across the field planted with crops has not been clearly marked by the farmer in 2024 and 2025. While not causing a particular problem for walkers, a considerable amount of crop damage has occurred as the footfall has spread over a wide area. The steps at the Nettleton end were eroded and the risers were causing trip hazards. Stone infilling by AC in September has, hopefully, improved safety and appearance.
- NETT14 – The middle gateway has again been heavily poached through the winter. The slamming post of this gate was rotten and wobbly. A new post was received from Wiltshire Council and installed by CWs in August.



- NETT15 – As mentioned in previous reports, the fence around the stile at the bottom end was a bit wobbly, the Landowner undertook repairs in July, for which he was duly thanked. Additional waymarks were added to ensure walkers follow the correct route. In October, one of the stiles into the small copse in the middle of

the path was also noted to be wobbly – repairs to improve stability were undertaken by AC. The other stile into the copse was found to have a rotten footplate and supports – this was replaced by AC in April.

- NETT16 – the path, running diagonally across a field of crops, has been clearly marked by the farmer, following a change of ownership. The farm manager has been thanked.
- NETT17 – No problems. Additional scything at the junction to NETT49 (twice) has been the only task required by AC.
- NETT18 – No reported problems.
- (NETT19 – number not used)
- NETT20 – No reported problems.
- NETT21 – No reported problems.
- NETT22 – This is a short FP between Manor Farm and farm cottages does not appear to be used and is not maintained.
- NETT23 – This FP crosses 2 large fields of crops and the farmer usually clears the route.
- NETT24 (BW) – Generally clear, although does get muddy in places. Minor clearance carried out by DK. 2 trees which fell across route were quickly removed by landowner as they were forcing walkers and riders into adjacent crops.
- NETT25 (BW) - Extensive clearance of route undertaken by a CW work party in June. 4 small trees brought down by winter storms were removed by DK in December.



- NETT26 – No problems reported. Stone stile at Southern end was cleared in August during a workparty to clear NETT41 (opposite) in August.
- NETT27 (BW) – The section of this BW on the steep hill down to Goulters Mill will still tend to become very muddy in winter due to the steepness of the hill and may need widening again this summer. A tree on a field margin near the Western end was removed by the farmer before the crops started growing. A fallen tree across a gateway approaching Lugbury Long Barrow was cleared. Another tree, near the barrow itself, came

down in winter storms and is still there, but it causes no problems and is left in situ for the benefit of riders who wish to jump it!

- NETT28 – No problems reported.
- NETT29 – No problems reported.
- NETT30 – A work party in March stabilised a rotten kissing gate cage. Additional waymarkers were also added to clarify route.



- NETT31 – See above re KG where NETT30 and NETT31 meet. The section of this path that descends towards the school is on tarmac. Additional drainage work has been undertaken to try to alleviate flooding of the property at the Northern end. The owners are keen to remind users that this is a FP not a BW, so the “No Cycling” sign by the house has been cleaned, and an additional sign added to the other end.



- NETT32 (N) – The FP waymarker sign and post indicating the route off The Street in Burton was noted to be missing shortly before last year’s report. This was replaced with a new post provided by Wiltshire Council, by a CW work party in June.
- NETT32 (S) – No problems reported. The sign off the road was cleared by DK in September, as it was getting obscured by the hedge.
- (NETT33 – Number not used.)
- NETT34 (BW) – Satisfactory as a FP. The heavily eroded rocky South part is difficult for horses, especially when wet. Local horse riders have complained, but there is no practical solution for this natural terrain.
- NETT35 – FP across a field to the Parish boundary with Littleton Drew. Route marking needed at the centre of the field, subject to landowner agreement.

- NETT36 – Marked as a BW on the map but it is too narrow for a BW and only leads to a FP, (NETT35) and to the M4 fence! Marking as a BW appears to be a relic from before the M4 was built. The landowner has now installed a bridlegate, ostensibly for the use of the few horses which are ridden on this route, however, in practice, all users prefer this option, so the narrow and overgrown route is being left in favour of the new alternative.
- NETT37 – The old bridleway waymark sign had rusted off some years ago and was temporarily tied to a tree. Wiltshire Council provided a new post and this was installed by a CW workparty in June. Minor clearance was carried out in August and October. Storm Darragh brought down a tree, which was promptly removed by the landowner, who was thanked for his prompt action.
- NETT38 (BW) – DK cut back encroaching brambles in December.
- NETT39 – No problems reported, except that it becomes very muddy in winter due to lack of drainage.
- NETT40 (BW) – Some overhanging branches were cut back by AC in December, following Storm Darragh.
- NETT41 – A CW workparty in August cleared and widened the full length of this path. A small tree was cleared by DK in December.
- NETT42 – Several trees have fallen across the path at times throughout the year. After initial clearance work to allow access in some cases, all have been promptly removed by the landowner, who has been thanked for their help.
- NETT43 (BW) – No problems reported.
- NETT44 – The upper section is regularly mown by the landowner. The lower section was brushcut by another West Kington resident in June, and has recently been mown. This assistance is greatly appreciated.
- (NETT45 - Number not used.)
- NETT46 – No problems reported.
- NETT47 – No problems reported.
- NETT48 – No problems reported. Additional WMs have been added to aid navigation with hidden kissing gate communicating with CCOM2
- NETT49 – During the year 3 sections of the retaining wall collapsed between the field through which the FP runs & the adjacent field (used as alternative by some walkers). CW working parties repaired the breaches.



Some landowners have kindly made donations, where work has been carried out on their land, which are greatly appreciated to fund our voluntary activities. Donations from the public are also gratefully received.

If you know of any defects on rights of way in the parish, please bring these to our attention.

Andrew Carrington & David Kerr - May 2025

Public Rights of Way in Nettleton.

