

## ASHTON KEYNES

### Footpaths Inventory 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021

#### 1. Footpath 1. (North End to Spine Road East).

Noted in last known inventory of 31/08/2011 as "closed some years ago by removing the stiles etc - although the legal formalities were not undertaken".

As of August 2021 no trace of the footpath can be found. Email sent to Stephen Leonard on 7th September 2021 asking how footpath can be reinstated to avoid having to walk along B4696 to get to spine road east.

#### 2. Footpath 1a. (North side of Spine Road East westerly to Cross Roads and then north to Whitefriars Lane).

Walked 15/11/2020. Clear sign on Whitefriars Lane but no signage from road to indicate there is a path on Whitefriars Lane. The path from Whitefriars Lane to the Spine Road was overgrown but has now been cleared by a volunteer. At the Spine Road exit/entrance there is no signage at all to indicate the footpath - this is important as walking the footpath from the spine road entrance means that one can avoid walking on the busy main road to reach Whitefriars lane and thus join up with AKEY 24 around Whitefriars lake and into Siddington/South Cerney. The footpath going along the side of the Spine Road East towards the Spine Road entrance to AKEY 24 was full of low hanging brambles. These have been cleared by a volunteer but the exit onto the spine road is almost impassable. And there is no sign indicating it from the Spine road. To an extent this doesn't matter as running alongside the footpath is the paved pedestrian walkway.

Request for signage (plus photos showing existing position) at the start of Spine Road East to indicate that the footpath to Whitefriars Lane exists sent to Stephen Leonard by email of 18th November 2020. At 7th September no response from Stephen Leonard so a reminder email has been sent.

#### 3. Footpath 2. (South side of Spine Road West, opposite entrance to Cotswold Community, to North End opposite Brickworks)

Entrance opposite Cotswold Community completely overgrown. WCC footpaths sign is completely hidden in the overgrown trees off the Spine Road West.

It is possible to access Footpath 2 by getting on to Footpath 6 off the Spine Road West and turning left at the gravel road. However there is no signage pointing to footpath 2 where the gravel road diverges into Footpaths 2 and 6. There is also no visible WCC footpath sign pointing to Footpath 6 (and thus Footpath 2) off the Spine Road West. There is a sign but it is aged and hidden in the overgrown trees off the spine road.

The footpath itself is overgrown in places but it has now been cut back where needed and is passable - the footfall has made the way clear.

The exit passage alongside the houses just up from and opposite The Brickworks onto the B4696 was very overgrown by hedging and brambles (which were at eye level) but has now been mainly cleared to make it at least passable. It is bordered on one side by a barbed wire fence.

The exit has no warning at all that one is about to step straight onto the very busy B4696 which is a wilts HGV route and no stile to slow progress onto the same. It is incredibly dangerous. From the B4696 there is no indication at all that there is a footpath and the entrance is almost invisible from the road.

Email sent to Stephen Leonard at Wilts CC on 13th November along with photographs asking for the footpath to be cleared where it exits onto the B4696, signage to be put up ( including warning signage about the danger of exiting onto the B4696 such as is in place where Footpath 9 (The Thames Path) exits onto the same road) and help in tracing the landowner responsible with Wilts for maintaining the footpath. Nothing has yet been done by Wilts so a walk with Stephen Leonard will be set up for October/November 2021.

#### 4. Footpath 3. (Spine Road West to Cotswold Community Buildings)

As noted in last inventory of 31/08/2011 "Sign needed off Spine Road West pointing towards Cotswold community buildings." Still no sign.

Entrance now has a threatening sign on the entrance gate stating "Guard dogs on patrol 24-7. Warning private property. Please stick to the public footpaths and refrain from entering the private properties on this site". Large steel chain around the steel gate. It looks as if the chain extends to the wooden footpath entrance but if you push it, it opens. On a visit on 8th November 2020, a security guard with dogs approached when trying to enter and indicated it was ok to follow the footpath but he said it was overgrown totally in places.

Since that visit Councillor Chuck Berry has visited and spoken to the security guards to make it clear that walkers must be allowed free and uninterrupted passage.

Although there is a sign at the end of AKEY 6 (south side of spine road west) stating that the path continues across the road, no one without a map would know that the pathway was there. From the gate there is no visible footpath which one would automatically follow and without a map one would not know there was a footpath. As you enter the property there are no signs indicating where to access footpaths 4 or 5.

Reported on 9th November to Stephen Leonard at Wilts CC. Second email sent on 13th November 2020. No reply so reminder sent 7th September 2021. Visit to walk will be set up October/November 2021

#### 5. Footpath 4 (Cotswold Community Buildings to Parish Boundary at bridge over Shire Brook just before Ann Edwards School in South Cerney)

Walked on 9th August 2021. The member of the footpaths group doing the walk had to ask the security guard where the footpath was as there are several right turns that could be taken. Once on path there are a number of posts indicating where to go until you reach the B road. A homeless man was met on the walk and he mentioned that he walks the path every day but he mentioned that the security guards actively try to discourage walkers going down the path by standing with aggressive dogs near the turning from footpath 3. The homeless man is convinced that the security guards are

trying to put walkers off so that the footpath will be scrapped. As this path connects the lakes with south Cerney if it was scrapped it would mean people having to walk the dangerous Spine Road West.

Reported to Stephen Leonard by email on 7th September 2021. A visit/walk will be arranged for October/November 2021.

#### 6. Footpath 5. (Cotswold Community Buildings northwards)

The path was walked by a member of the footpaths group on 9th August 2021. Had to walk past security man with barking dogs. No signage indicating there was a footpath until at the end of thick scrub there was a sign on a gate post. Not possible to walk beyond this point. On walkers way back two signs were spotted "Caution guard dogs" and "Please keep to the public footpath". It is clear that very few people use the path.

State of the path reported to Stephen Lawrence on 7th September with request for a visit October/November 2021.

#### 7. Footpath 6. (B4696 by Old Manor House to south side of Spine Road West, opposite entrance to old Manor House)

No stile at B4696 entrance but easy to access. Walked on 6th September 2021. On the whole easy to walk. Towards the end a few brambles growing over path. Walkers have simply walked a different way to avoid the brambles. Needs a trim. Easy to access/exit from Spine Road but signage is all overgrown and not noticeable from the Spine Road.

Signage issues notified to Stephen Leonard at Wilts CC on 9th November 2020. No reply. Reminder email sent on 7th September 2021.

#### 8. Footpath 7. (Culli's Bridge on Thames Path north westerly to Somerford Keynes border).

This footpath peels off from the Thames Path (AKEY9) after you cross the stone bridge on AKEY9 (Culli's Bridge) and goes round the lake to join AKEY6 on Moreton Cullimore's land further up from the Manor House. The growth around the sign to the path has now been cleared by a volunteer. Mr Cullimore only owns the first few hundred metres of footpath 7. Thereafter it appears to be owned by the Cirencester Ski Club.

The part of the footpath on Mr Cullimore's land is passable without much difficulty, although the start of the path is blocked by a fallen small tree. Dogs and walkers can clamber over although older walkers may have problems. Brambles have been cleared. The lower path (the path splits) is now clear all the way to the Spine Road (Ragmans Lane in Somerford Keynes) after a member of the footpaths group walked it on 6th September and cut all overhanging and ground level brambles and branches.

The higher path is overgrown and needs clearing.

At the end of the footpath leading on the Spine Road by the cycle centre at the start of Somerford Keynes is a steel gate which is padlocked, impassable and topped off with barbed wire. There is no other exit found to date.

Reported to Stephen Leonard at Wilts CC on 9th November 2020 No reply. Reminder sent by email on 7th September 2021.

9. Footpath 8. (Cox's Hill to Church Walk via pathway up to Holy Cross Church)

The pathway to the church has been fixed to an extent by Stephen Lawrence who attended and filled in the worst of the holes. However some big pot holes remain.

10. Footpath 9. (Thames Path)

Gate missing at the pumping station at the jct of AKEY 9 and 12. Gate is laid down in the grass. Stephen Leonard is aware. The first of the 2 stiles before Culli's bridge ( leading to AKEY 7) is broken (the one before the bridge if coming from the B4696). Still passable.

11. Footpath 11. (Top end of Church Walk to Gosditch)

Step on the stile between the 2 fields is slightly wobbly. Stinging nettles need cutting back round the stile at AKEY 11 and AKEY 9.

12. Footpath 12. (Thames Path to Gosditch via east side of Pumping Station fence)

Passable but lots of overhanging brambles. Brambles cut back by a member of the footpaths group on 6th September 2021.

There is no obvious footpath or sign after climbing the stile on AKEY 12 to AKEY 13 or AKEY 34.

It is impossible to get into the fields behind Dairy Farm from AKEY 11 or 12 if you have dogs with you as the stiles have been "built up" to keep sheep in.

Stephen Leonard informed on 7th September 2021.

13. Footpath 13. (From Thames Path southwards along west side of B4696 then across road and eastwards to Gosditch)

There is a footpath sign just before Dairy Farm houses on Gosditch which is no longer marked as such on the WCC rights of way map. During a visit by Stephen Lawrence in April 2021 permission was given to remove the footpaths sign. That has now been done

A further, poorly visible, sign is at the side of Drummond House a little further down Gosditch. This leads to the same place more or less as the old footpath 13. It is footpath 34. Footpath 34 is passable into the field by the school although has overhanging branches.

NB. Inventory of August 2011 notes that "the section on the east side of the B4696 seems to have fallen into desuetude and indeed does not seem to fulfil much of a purpose". A further note

indicates that at that time Wilts cc view was "once a footpath always a footpath" but nothing seems to have been done.

#### 14. Footpath 14. (From west end of the Derry to Gosditch)

OK except for 2 very narrow parts just before you reach the alpacas (coming from the Derry) due to hedge bulging into the footpath. After a walk by Stephen Leonard in April 2021, the owner of the hedge has been asked to try to pull it back. If that doesn't work, further discussions with the owner will be needed.

The "stiles" are big stones. Although built up a little on either side by smaller stones would be very difficult for elderly walkers to get over the "stiles".

#### 15. Footpath 15. (From High Road west side to Footpath 16 on the Derry (opposite the Piggery)

Clear to first stile. After the stile overhanging brambles and undergrowth has now been cleared. Second stile into footpath 16 has now been cleared of the brambles and growth that were making it impassable. This was done at the request of Stephen Leonard. The wooden stile beneath the overgrowth was rotten and has collapsed. Removed. Pictures and report sent to Stephen Leonard on 8th November 2020.

#### 16. Footpath 16. ( From opposite the Derry to footpath 15)

Broken stile reported to Wilts CC in October 2020. Stephen Leonard attended at end of October and completely removed the broken stile. Posted a note explaining the stile/obstruction had been removed by Rights of Way officer. Access now easy and path is passable although there is a lot of summer growth.

#### 17. Footpath 17/15A (From the Derry across footpath 15 to half way along footpath 14 at Tunbury)

17 starts where the stile has been removed on footpath 16 adjacent to the Derry (see above). No signpost to indicate where to go The stile to pass from the top of 16 to 17 is ok although there are signs warning people that they "enter at own risk " because of horses in the field. An electric fence has been erected but there are warning signs and the footpath is wide. Once one goes through the fence one has to walk through a field as the footpath itself seems completely overgrown. Obviously walkers do take this detour as footfall is clear. There is then a stile and the path joins with footpath 15A. 15A starts in The Derry down by the B4696 and is well maintained and had been mown when walked on 6th September.

#### 18. Footpath 18. (From the end of Mead across the Lotts to Park Place)

This is mostly clear – some of the hedges are a little overgrown at the Mead end but still passable.

#### 19. Footpath 19. (From corner of Happy land to Waterhay car park)

The path is signposted from the corner of Happy Land. The path through the centre of the field is kept clear by the farmer and is easily accessed and used regularly. Part of the stile at the Happy Land end was knocked down on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September by a combine harvester. The field is now easier to access!

The stile has been removed from the path (where path 19 meets 21 and 22) and has been missing for some time. It makes the path easier to access. Once on the path, parallel to Lake 8, it is overgrown for a short while. However, in some respects this doesn't matter, as people have by passed this by creating another way round.

The rest of the path is clear and someone clearly comes out to cut back branches and keep the nettles down etc.

In winter or at times of heavy rain, the path is impassable at the end towards Waterhay. This is a common occurrence every year.

#### 20. Footpath 20. (Connecting footpath 19 and Bridleway 38)

This path can be difficult to navigate both in the summer as it gets overgrown and in the winter when it becomes incredibly muddy. At times it is impassable. If this happens at the same time as flooding on footpath 19, it means you cannot get to Waterhay car park or vice versa. This happens at least a couple of times every year. The fences on either side of the path have barbed wire at the top which can make it difficult/not safe to use if the path is muddy and you need to use the fence as a handhold.

#### 21. Footpath 21. (Connecting footpath 19 to Friday's Ham Lane/Rixon Gate via Bradstone)

It is not clear if this footpath runs at the top of the cricket pitch or at the bottom. Either way the path is clear, easily accessed and used regularly.

#### 22. Footpath 22. (Connecting footpath 20 to Friday's ham lane/Rixon Gate via Guest Farm)

This path has no signpost from the road or from the bend in path 19 as it intersects with path 21 and 22.

It doesn't look like it has been used as a public footpath for some time. There is no discernible path from either one end or the other. When you approach the path through Guest Farm – there is a bolted farm gate at the end which you need to climb over. The path on the other side is overgrown and looks like it hasn't been disturbed for a while.

Am assuming that most people do not know the path is here or if they do, they choose to go through Bradstone as that is an easier path to take.

We need to decide what to do about this path.

#### 23. Footpath 24. (Little Kent End via Spine Road to lake encompassing Whitefriars sailing club.

Slightly overgrown from past Fox Cottage to the stile before the car park on spine road. Footpath before the stile to the car park is more overgrown.

Coming from Whitefriars across the Spine Road and walking directly ahead through the wooden chicane (not going through the car park) footpath is overgrown and rubbish has been dumped.

OK up to the spine road and at the junction with footpath 28A it is clear. When one gets to the Car Park off the Spine Road there is nothing to indicate that the footpath crosses the Spine Road and continues up towards Whitefriars Sailing Club. Off the Spine Road itself there is a Wilts CC footpath sign. Opposite this entrance on the Spine Road and over the road, there is a very small bridleway/footpath sign which takes you back onto the footpath/Bridleway leading to Friday's Ham Lane.

Email sent to Stephen Leonard on 13th November requesting better signage. No reply to date. Reminder email sent on 7th September 2021.

24. Footpath 25. ( Friday's Ham Lane in north Easterly direction to parish boundary)

Clear entrance and stile at parish boundary entrance.

Sign from Friday's Ham Lane and stile is now visible. However, 10m in footpath is completely blocked by vegetation. Not possible to pass. Needs clearing.

25. Footpath 26. (Friday's Ham lane/ Rixon gate to Kent End and to Little Kent End via E. Tidmarsh workshop)

Thames path - OK

Footpath to Kent End from Thames Path is narrow (due to garden hedges) between 29 and 39 Kent End.

26. Footpath 27. (From Three Bridges on B4696 to Old Green Lane running south from Pike Corner)

Entrance at Three bridges completely overgrown and waterlogged. Not passable at time of visit on 23rd November. Stephen Leonard notified for info on 9th December 2020.

Was walked again by a member of the footpaths group on 9th August 2021. Footpath signage is clear. However entrance covered in heavy scrub Walker beat the scrub down enough to get past but found that the entrance to the field is also blocked by a log which would be hard to get over and then by fencing used to keep animals in the field. No easy way of accessing the field.

Stephen Leonard notified on 7th September 2021.

27. Footpath 28A. (From wheatleys barn farm to Little Kent End)

Footpath from Wheatleys Barn Farm slightly overgrown then narrows between the 2 hedges which need cutting back.

28. Footpath 30. (From Park Place opposite junction with Fore Street to Park Place by houses in Thames View)

OK

29. Footpath 34. From Gosditch ( at side of Drummond House) to AKEY 9. Thames Path

See above Slightly overgrown from Gosditch between the 2 garden walls. Brambles and hawthorn need cutting back from the walls to the stile. Stile to field is missing a step making it awkward to climb.

30. Footpath 36. (From Fore Street via Park Place to closed end of The Lotts)

OK

BJL : 12/03/2022

Sent from my iPad