

Ansty Footpath Maintenance Report

November 2018 – November 2019

Once again we can report that our entire 6 mile (9.6 km) footpath system remains in fine fettle, thanks to regular vegetation clearing and trimming by the Ansty Volunteer Footpath Maintenance Group (AVFMG).

Year on year, in this last decade particularly, shrub and weed growth has been absolutely phenomenal. There is no doubt that this year was yet another warm and humid year: rainfall has not been excessive but when it does arrive it can often be intense – as we have seen from the end of September through to the middle of October. Anyway – conditions have conspired to make all forms of plant life grow thick and fast, which has meant that many footpaths have to be visited 3 or even four times to be cleared to allow ready access. If a ‘close eye’ is not kept on the state of vegetation growth footpaths can be very quickly consumed and they rapidly become impossible to walk.

The AVFMG notched up 82 man hours clearing footpaths and working on upgrading projects. It was pleasing to note that other interested people in the parish have also helped to keep our footpaths ‘in good trim’. Many thanks to the following for helping maintain our parish footpaths throughout 2019 so far: Tim Martin, Jon Gooding, Rob Wilkinson (AVFMG members) Rob Beale, Oliver Simm, George Smith, Mathew Feltham, Clive Jack of Squalls, Matt Fry of Totterdale and the Daltons of Horwood. All have played their part in ensuring our footpaths remain in a good state of maintenance and accessibility.

A very good turnout of Ansty villagers and friends of Ansty gathered together on a Sunday afternoon (January 13th 2019) to witness the official opening of a new footbridge in the parish and its dedication to the memory of much loved parishioner Aileen Fisher-Rowe who died exactly a year ago to the day of the official opening, aged 95.

It was noted at this dedication event how several (mainly older parishioners) who attended the opening found great difficulty in accessing the stiles

approaching the bridge from Kings Lane. In September, we were lucky in that we were able to replace these offending stiles with two kissing gates to improve accessibility and safety with the help of Wiltshire Council (under the direction of Alex Howson and Derek New) along with members from the South Wiltshire Ramblers Heavy gang (SWRHG) under the leadership of Graham Read and Norman Martin. The long term aim is to try and create improved accessibility for all along this very ancient footpath from Ansty Coombe Lane (via the footbridge) to Kings Lane and then on to Squalls Lane – making a lovely walk for local Ansty people. It is not a footpath likely to attract vast numbers of ramblers because it is not on a long route to anywhere.

Before attempting any of these installations, permissions were obtained and we have thanked all who were involved in any of these upgrades.

There is plenty of visual evidence that indicates most of our footpaths have seen a steady ‘footfall’ this year. Even FP14 (Ansty Coombe) saw a few more locals walking it – admiring those lovely rural views no doubt. Some people continue to be wary of the frisky horses encountered for part of the year on FP 7 across the large open field to New Barn.

Our more challenging walk (FP5) traversing Ansty Down to Whitesheet Hill from Shave Lane seems to have attracted more back packers and of course our section of the byway along the top of the Downs is a good draw – again with fantastic views. What is disappointing is how so few youngsters seem to enjoy any form of ‘hiking’. Once considered a healthy (and free) pastime for kids has now given way to organised (and expensive) events at some theme park or in an airless unit on some industrial estate.

Lastly, the old milestone opposite Ansty PYO has continued to receive TLC and has been kept clear of nettles, brambles and bracken, thanks to RW and Ansty PYO. Happy walking in 2020!

Scroll down for pictures and statistics.

R. Wilkinson on behalf of AVFMG

Footpath from Horwood to
Ansty Coombe



New access gate on to
Kings Lane

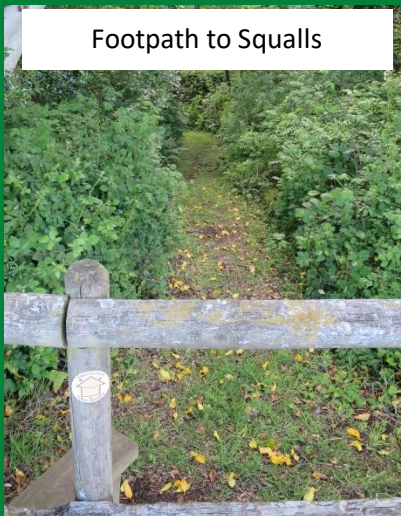


New access gate to Aileen's
Footbridge



More of Ansty's delightful footpaths 2019

Footpath to Squalls



Access to Fields below
12 Acre Copse



Stile to Turners Copse



Footpath through the
woods of Turners Copse



Footpath from Coombe
Lane to Aileen's Footbridge





Woodland footpath
through Denham Copses

Volunteer Work completed by Ansty Footpath Maintenance Group

Report, Year ended 30th September 2019

Person hours, excluding travel time, spent on:	Hours:
Way-marking	1
Path clearing	79
Stiles	0
Replacement Gates	2
TOTAL HOURS	82
Additional Information:	
Length of paths cleared over course of year	6.75 km (out of 9km)
No. of stiles removed	2
No. of gates erected	2
Extra: PYO Milestone cleared once by RW and once by Ansty PYO.	Not counted

Total Hours for Ansty: 82 Statistics supplied by R Wilkinson

Volunteer Work completed by Ramblers Footpath Working Parties

South Wilts Group

Year ended 30th September 2019

Person hours, excluding travel time, spent on:	Hours:
Way-marking	105
Path clearing	645
Stiles	0
Gates	225
Bridges	35
Steps	36
Other (please specify) Shoring up/surfacing	20
And roadside fingerposts	60
TOTAL HOURS	1126
Additional Information:	
Length of paths way-marked	19 kilometres
Length of paths cleared	14.26 kilometres
No. of stiles removed	14
No. of gates erected	14
No. of bridges built	2
Add anything else here:- 45 Roadside Finger Posts replaced.	

Total Hours for South Wilts: 1126. (Ansty's contribution 7%) Statistics supplied by Norman Martin SWG – Ramblers

ANSTY FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE 2019

FP	Dist km	PROBLEM	SOLUTION	DATE COMPLETED	TIME TAKEN (MAN HOURS)	VOLUNTEER LABOUR
1	0.3	Vegetation growth encroaching on access of High St	Strim and trim vegetation back and tidy up	18-04-2019	0.5	TM RW
		Vegetation growth encroaching on access of High St	Strim and trim vegetation back and tidy up	16-05-2019	0.5	TM JG
		Vegetation growth encroaching on access of High St	Strim and trim vegetation back and tidy up/defined step down	05-08-2019	0.5	TM RW
2	0.5	Fallen debris on steep footpath. Needs a general tidy up and cut back	Cleared all debris and neatly compacted along hedge lines; lightly raked FP from top of green lane to road access; cut back overhanging vegetation and removed to edge; tidied up access entrance from High Street	11-03-2019	5.0	JG RW
		Fallen debris and vegetation growth on lower section. Tidy up access point with High Street and along wall section.	Cleared debris and strimmed off vegetation along footpath line. Tidied up access and along wall line; raked debris clear and deposited along fence line of path	24-04-2019	2.0	TM RW
		Section from boundary gate (Swallowcliffe) to top of slope needs clearing	Strim cleared around gates and along edges; Ollie cleared the main grass section with topper	16-05-2019	2.5	TM JG OS
		Tree overgrowth obscures entrance sign; some vegetation growth lower FP	Cleared/Strimmed and tidied as appropriate	25-06-2019	0.3	RW
		Grass Path section needs topping Waterloo Fm approach	Topped twice by Oliver Simms	May/June	2.0	OS
3	0.5	Overgrown vegetation around gate area to bridleway	Strimmed cleared access off road (A30); strimmed gateway and access to Downs to allow gate to open smoothly	24-04-2019	0.5	TM RW
		Overgrown vegetation around gate area to bridleway	As above	16-05-2019	0.5	TM JG
		Overgrown vegetation around gate area to bridleway	Strimmed cleared access off road (A30); strimmed gateway to improve access	06-08-2019	0.5	TM RW
4	0.28	Hole shot through strap FP sign top of scarp. Alvediston Road				
		Hole shot through strap FP sign top of scarp. Alvediston Road Clear area around top stile	Grass cleared from top stile to Alvediston Road	06-08-2019	0.2	TM RW

		Vegetation growth and brambles on lower steps and access to scarp slope foot of Downs	Cleared all vegetation and redefined access above stile on to slopes.	06-08-2019	0.6	TM RW
5	1.02	Tree and Ivy blocking stile on to Horwood FM land	Removed overhanging branches/ivy and cut back to fence line (there was a lot of debris!). Removed debris from area and placed along hedge line.	22-03-2019	6.0	TM RW
		Need to install couple of Markers	Installed two short post way markers to guide walkers onto scarp slope rise	22-03-2019		TM RW
		Long grass Shave Lane access to field access; Bramble patches need clearing on slopes	Strim from Shave Lane access to field access; Clear bramble patches on slopes	18-04-2019	2.5	TM RW
		Clear excessive (grass) growth along footpath line from Shave Lane End to half way up slope; clear all stiles	Strim from Shave Lane access to field access; Clear bramble patches on slopes; cleared all stiles in process. (Drive shaft went on RW strimmer!)	29-05-2019	4.0	TM RW
		Need to define pathway and clear vegetation as needed (remarkable growth wet June!)	Strim clear stiles, sign posts and pathway from Byway to foot of Ansty Down	13-06-2019	4.0	TM RW
		Need to redefine pathway and clear vegetation as needed (remarkable growth wet June!)	Strim from Shave Lane access to field access; Clear bramble patches on slopes; cleared all stiles in process. (Drive shaft went on RW strimmer!). Also cleared entrance to FP 6 off Shave Lane and part cleared Shave Lane byway up to FP5 stile.	23-07-2019	6.0	TM RW
		Need to define pathway and clear vegetation as needed (remarkable growth wet June!)	Strim clear stiles, sign posts and pathway from Byway to foot of Ansty Down	05-09-2017	3.0	JG RW
6	0.7	Vegetation needs clearing Shave Lane Gate access; FP area needs defining.	Clear vegetation growth from Shave Lane Access; trimmed FP way clear from Gate to 'new' FP track through woodland	18-04-2019	2.0	TM RW
		Vegetation needs clearing Copse Side end from access to bluebell track	Strimmed FP section to define 'way'; checked bluebell wood section.	24-04-2019	1.5	TM RW
		Vegetation needs clearing Shave Lane Gate access; FP area needs defining.	Clear vegetation growth from Shave Lane Access; trimmed FP way clear from Gate to gate 'new' FP track across grass section. (Heavy Growth)	29-05-2015	1.0	TM RW
		Vegetation needs clearing Shave Lane Gate access; FP area needs defining.	Clear vegetation growth from Shave Lane Access; trimmed/ cut back FP way clear from Gate to 'new' FP track through woodland	06-08-2016	0.9	TM RW
		Maintaining bluebell wood section	Rob Beale oversees main section by mowing/topping this section on regular basis	various	4.0	RB

		Vegetation needs clearing Shave Lane Gate access; FP area needs defining.	Clear vegetation growth from Shave Lane Access; trimmed FP way clear from Gate to 'new' FP track through woodland	05-09-2019	1.0	JG RW
7	0.96	Debris needs clearing from top stile down to below gate	Cut back overhanging branches; cleared debris/small branches; and redefined footpath; some minor strimming	28-03-2019	3.8	TM RW JG
		Stile access near Newbarn needs clearing	Stile access trimmed cleared both sides	13-05-2019	0.3	RW
		Stile access to Keepers House/ ACL off Jockey field needs clearing and FP stretch below	Stile and footpath section into the wooded part cleared	13-05-2019	1.2	RW
		Stile access near Newbarn needs clearing	Stile access trimmed cleared both sides. Hand cut zone around the FP sign. Field difficult to cross - very long grass	27-06-2019	0.4	RW
		Very overgrown between jockey field stile and hooped gate	Strim cleared and tidied as appropriate. It was hard going! Other parts along length cleared of debris and some strimming needed too	09-07-2019	2.0	RW
8	0.52	Access to copse needs strimming; debris removed; stile from field to copse cleared	Strimmed cleared and debris removed by rake	09-05-2019	0.3	RW
		clear access stile off Kings Lane to AC lane; clear stile access to FB; strim clear FB; define pathway to field line (Chris Smith's field); clear two stiles and brdwk	Mainly strimming as appropriate	09-05-2019	1.1	RW
		Vegetation needs clearing from Jct with TISB64 Squalls to copses stile; Kings Lane stile; field, access to FB field stile and footbridge and Stiles below Chris Smith's field	Strim cleared and tidied the lot as appropriate. Also strimmed 'way' across the field. (Farmer asked me to ensure that people follow FP line!)	27-06-2019	2.5	RW
		To Replace two stiles with gates; one off Kings Lane and one via access to Aileen's Bridge. Permission obtained	Under direction of Alex Howson (Wiltshire Council) and volunteers including several from S Wiltshire Ramblers; old stiles removed and stock proof gates installed.	16-09-2019	2	RW – on home turf!
9	0.09	Clear access stile from FP15 to FP9	Strimmed cleared and hand removed debris	09-05-2019	0.2	RW
10	0.57	Winter Debris along length of path	Cleared winter debris from path to junction with TISB64	28-03-2019	1.0	TM RW JG
		Debris & Veg needs cutting back	Stile cleared - debris from path to junction; access path widened by strimming	09-05-2019	0.2	RW
		Check B/walk and Gate Access off Ansty C lane	Strimmed off brambles and alongside Bwalk and around pedstrn gate	10-05-2019	0.2	RW
		Check B/walk and Gate Access off Ansty C lane	Strimmed off brambles and alongside Bwalk and around pedestrian gate	26-06-2019	0.3	RW

		Clear stile and access area to Turner's Copse	Strimmed clear as appropriate; checked path to TISB64 for overhanging stuff and clipped as appropriate	27-06-2019	0.3	RW
11	0.33	Redefine FP down slope from TISB77; clear encroaching brambles down to access stile	Cleared winter debris (Turners Copse) from stile to to TISB77. Strimmed back encroaching brambles	28-03-2019	1.0	TM RW JG
		Maintain FP line down slope from TISB77	Strimmed back new bramble growth; cleared winter debris	09-05-2019	0.3	RW
		Clear Turner's Copse stile and access area (debris)	Strimmed and cleared area as appropriate	09-05-2019	0.2	RW
		Maintain FP line down slope from TISB77	Strimmed back new bramble growth and bracken; to TISB77; define FP line and cleared stile to AC line	26-06-2019	0.5	RW
12	0.35	Access gate off Ansty Coombe Lane needs strim clearance	Strimmed hooped gate area	09-05-2019	0.2	RW
		Debris around stile to 12 Acre Copse	Hand cleared debris	09-05-2019	0.1	RW
		Vegetation around AC stile (12Copse)needs clearing	Strimmed gate and surround clear; also cleared entrance to top stile into 12 Acre Copse	26-06-2019	0.4	RW
13	0.89	Stile access off Ansty Coombe Lane needs clearing and FP defined (permissive section)	Area strimmed cleared and FP re defined.	13-05-2019	0.2	RW
		Pathway needs defining from stile to track stile - permissive section	Area strimmed cleared and FP re defined.	27-06-2019	0.3	
14	0.43	Check gate access and debris under tree	Checked gate access (Keepers Cott.) Cleared fallen debris and some minor strim clearance	28-03-2019	0.8	TM RW JG
		Very overgrown at Keepers Cottage End: weeds and very tough grass!	Strimmed gate access and surrounding area clear at Basils Cott; cleared the 'way' up to Keepers cott.; cleared gate area; redefined footpath all the way down to track stile	30-06-2019	1.5	RW
15	0.11	Clear access stile down past Thatchers Cott	Strimmed gate access and surrounding area clear	09-05-2019	0.2	RW
		Clear access stile down past Thatchers Cott	Strimmed gate access and surrounding area clear	26-06-2019	0.2	RW
		Actual FP section very overgrown	Strimmed FP length and cut back shrubs and bushes	30-06-2009	1.5	MF
16	0.62	No work needed Byway				
17	0.82	No work needed Byway				
18	0.01	No work needed Byway				

Outside Parish		Gate TISB53/54 TISB 53 Gates and FP def; Footbridge made safe with chicken wire. TISB55JNCTN down to Spilsbury Cottage	Vegetation clearance; assisted by Clive Jack	22-08-2019	7.5	JG TM RW
		Total length of all our parish footpaths = 5.9 miles or 9 km.	Many thanks to the following for helping maintain our parish footpaths throughout 2019 so far: Tim Martin, Jon Gooding, Rob Wilkinson; Rob Beale, Oliver Simm, George Smith, Mathew Feltham, Clive Jack, Squalls, Matt Fry of Totterdale and the Daltons of Horwood. All have played their part in ensuring our footpaths remain in a good state of maintenance and accessibility. Thank you all.	TOTAL MAN HOURS	82.0	Up to September 30th 2019
		Milestone opposite Ansty PYO	Cleared by RW (twice) Ansty PYO (many thanks).			