

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

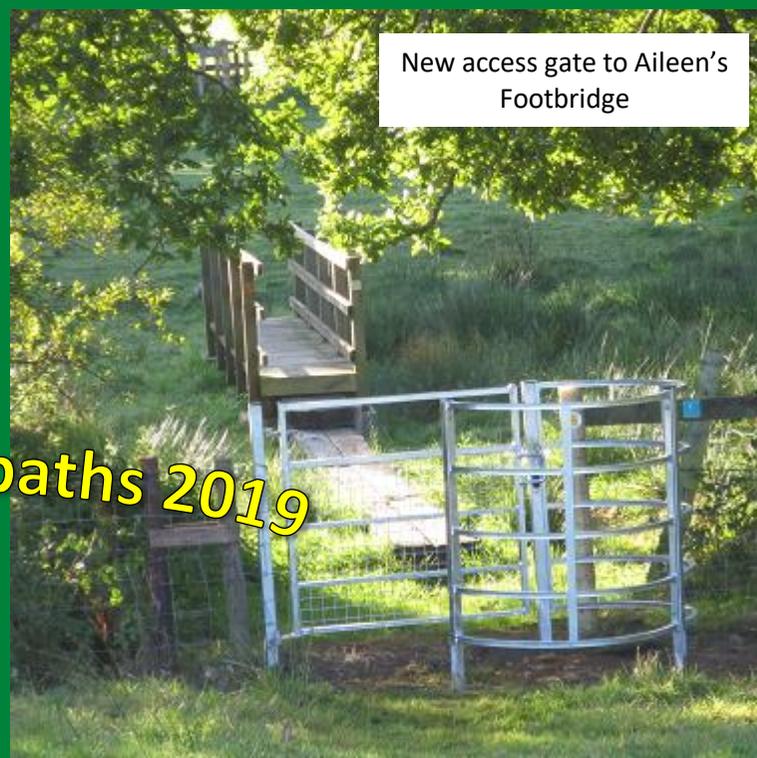
Footpath from Horwood to Ansty Coombe



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