

Ansty Footpath Maintenance Report

November 2019 – November 2020

Ansty Footpath Maintenance Report November 2019 – November 2020 Once again we can report that our entire 6 mile (9.6 km) footpath system remains in good shape, thanks to regular vegetation clearing and trimming by the Ansty Volunteer Footpath Maintenance Group (AVFMG).

This year we began on an optimistic note by clearing the steep FP 2 (Maypole to Swallowcliffe) although we noticed ominous cracks in an ash tree near the top of the slope. Unfortunately, the arrival of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic and the implementation of total lockdown put things on hold for the best part of 3 months. Meanwhile, part of the ash tree did crash down and the footpath was closed and another tree fell across FP 7 on the way through the Holloway to Newbarn. Wiltshire Council eventually removed the stricken ash tree branches whilst the land owner kindly removed the fallen tree on FP 7.

As I have mentioned before, in this last decade particularly, shrub and weed growth has been absolutely phenomenal. After the exceptionally wet autumn and winter right up until near the end of March 2020 there was much water in the ground. We then had an exceptionally sunny and dry spring and a warm sunny summer with a degree of rain and of course this inspired even greater growth!

With the ever changing rules from central government in their endeavours to keep us all safe the AVFMG decided that they could resume looking after our footpaths operating in two tiny bubbles of 2 operatives (socially distanced at all times) each looking after a designated section of our footpaths. It seemed to work very well indeed.

Once again those conditions which conspired to make all forms of plant life grow thick and fast, meant that many footpaths have to be visited 3 or even four times to be cleared to allow ready access to all walkers. 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 84 man hours clearing footpaths. There were no upgrading projects this year with difficulties in getting supplies and working together in larger groups.

It was again pleasing to note that other 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 2020: Tim Martin, Jon Gooding, Rob Wilkinson and new man Mark Morris (AVFMG members) Rob Beale (who kept the footpath on his land beautifully cleared) 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.

It is Wiltshire Council's long term aim (and ours too) is to try and create improved accessibility for all our very ancient footpaths in Ansty - in particular the footpath from Ansty Coombe Lane (via Aileen's bridge) to Kings Lane and then on to Squalls Lane – making a lovely walk for all local people. It is not a footpath likely to attract vast numbers of ramblers because it is not on a long route to anywhere.

Before we attempt any of these upgrades, permissions need to be obtained and we thank all those who see the 'bigger picture' and help us with these upgrades. It is not just about the 'here and now' it is about the future and ensuring that all our footpaths are readily accessible to all everybody – not just the very fit. The covid-19 pandemic and lockdown saw just how important it was that people were able to 'get out' and walk freely across the countryside and there was plenty of visual evidence that indicated most of our footpaths saw increased 'footfall' this year – mostly locals – but also some welcome visitors and even biking along some of the byways and bridleways.

Our more challenging walk (FP5) traversing Ansty Down to Whitesheet Hill from Shave Lane seems to have attracted even 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.

It still remains very disappointing to see 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. Perhaps the presence of Covid and the desire to avoid airless, crowded hotspots might rekindle an interest in rambling by our younger folk (just for the sheer exhilaration of it) and not just as part of an outward bound exercise or raising money – very laudable though that it is.

Here is to happy walking in 2021! Scroll down for pictures and statistics.
R. Wilkinson on behalf of AVFMG

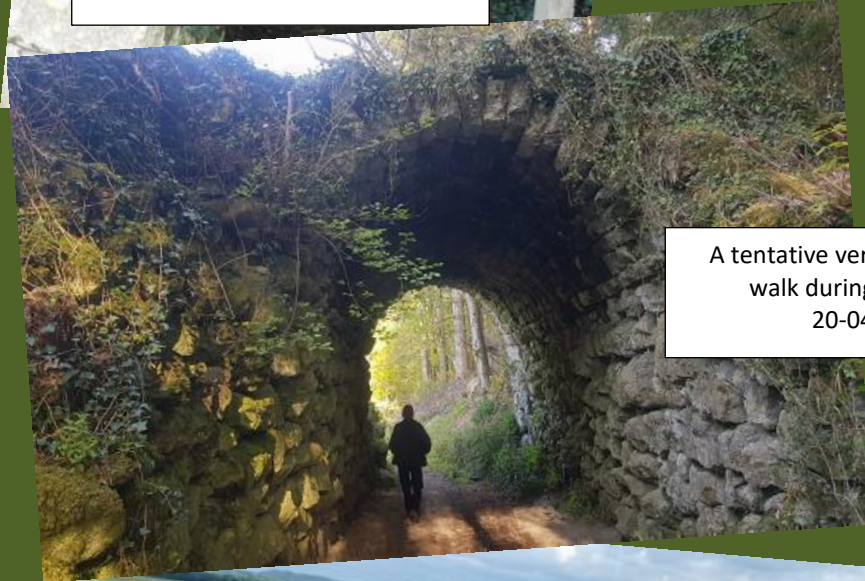
Ansty Footpaths Photo Selection



Footpath from the Maypole, Ansty to Swallowcliffe 01-03-2020



All footpaths in Ansty were absolutely soggy wet after a record breaking wet autumn and winter 01-03-2020



A tentative very early morning walk during 'lockdown' 20-04-2020



A fine view of the footpath ascending Ansty Down 05-06-2020



An exhilarating footpath to walk on Ansty Down 05-06-2020



Ansty's long boundary footpath – the by-way from Salisbury to Shaftesbury 05-06-2020

Aileen's Bridge on a local footpath
from Coombe Lane to Squalls Lane
06-05-2020



A well-kept footpath across a field
near Coombe Lane 11-05-2020



Another well-kept footpath at the
entrance to Denmead Copses 20-05-2020



A magnificent view of Shave Lane
11-05-2020

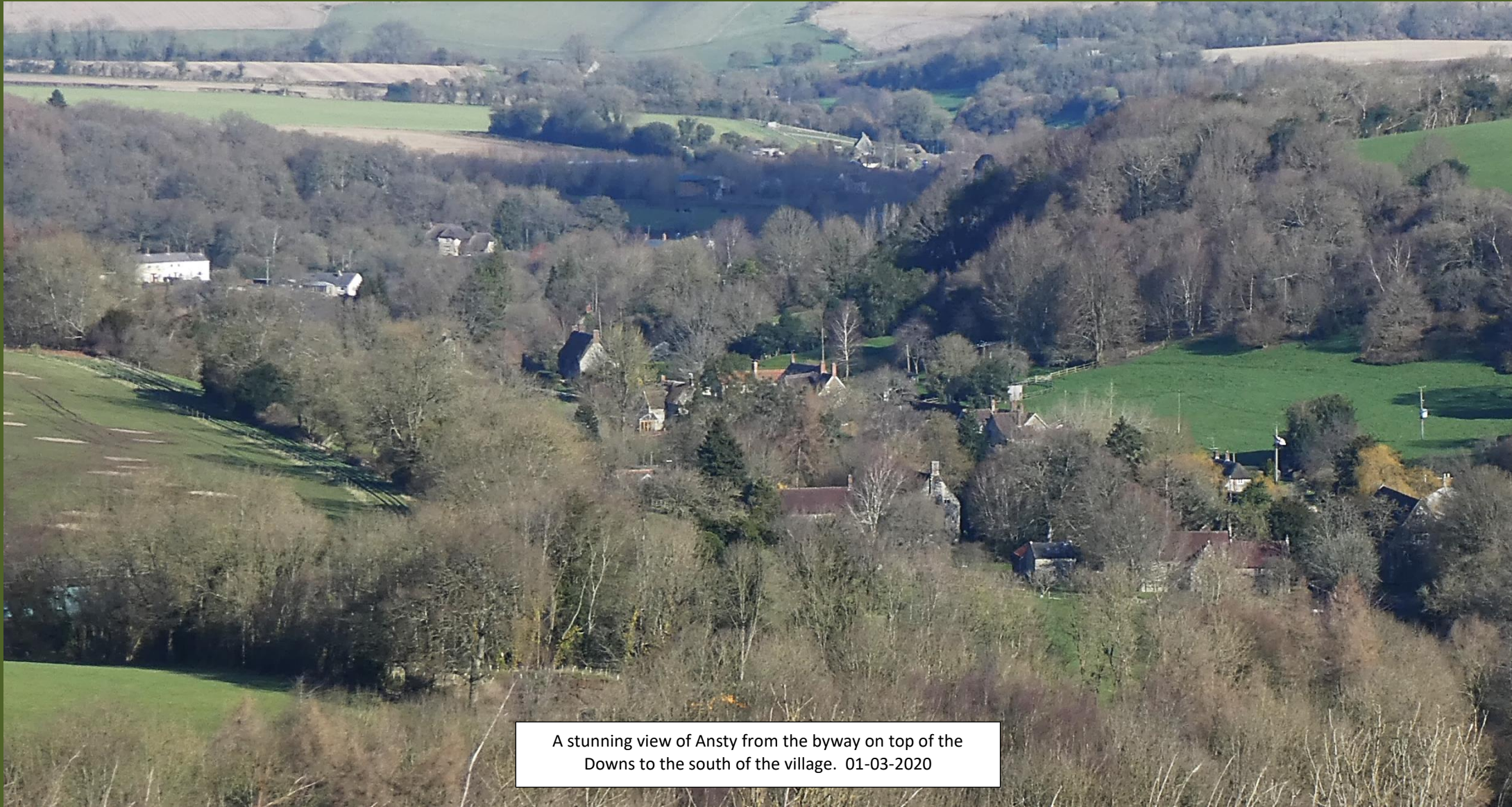


Big skies and the footpath to Horwood
13-05-2020



Footpath through Denmead Copses, Ansty
20-05-2020





A stunning view of Ansty from the byway on top of the Downs to the south of the village. 01-03-2020

Volunteer Work completed by Ansty Footpath Maintenance Group

Report, Year ending 31st October 2019

Volunteer Work completed by Ansty Footpath Maintenance Group

Report, Year ended 31st October 2020

Person hours, excluding travel time, spent on	Hours
Way-marking	1
Path clearing	83.5
Replacement Gates	0
TOTAL HOURS	84.5
Additional Information	
Length of paths cleared over course of a year	Approx. 7km (out of 9km)
No. of stiles removed	0
No. of gates erected	0

Total Hours for Ansty: 84.5 hours (14% of SWG total)
Statistics supplied by R Wilkinson

Volunteer Work completed by Ramblers Footpath Working Parties

South Wilts Group

Report, Year ending 30th September 2020

Work done by Ramblers Footpath Working Parties

South Wilts Group

Year ended 30 September 2020

Person hours, excluding travel time, spent on (please amend as appropriate):	
Way-marking	15
Path clearing	421
Stiles	12
Gates	20
Bridge Repairs	25
Steps	46
Other (please specify) Shoring up/surfacing	35
And roadside fingerposts	15
TOTAL HOURS	589
Length of paths way-marked	3.5 kilometres
Length of paths cleared	15.5 kilometres
No. of stiles removed	2
No. of stiles erected	1
No. of gates erected	2
No. of bridges built	0
Add anything else here:- 14 Roadside Finger Posts replaced	

Total Hours for South Wilts: 589 (1126 in 2019) Statistics compiled by Norman Martin

The lockdown and restrictions caused by the covid-19 coronavirus pandemic meant that the total 'man' hours worked this year was well down on previous years.

ANSTY FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE 2020

FP	Dist km	PROBLEM	SOLUTION	DATE COMPLETED	TIME TAKEN (MAN HOURS)	VOLUNTEER LABOUR
1	0.3	Step and rail entrance off High St. Overgrown	Strim cleared vegetation to clear access.	28-05-2020	1.0	TM JG
		Step and rail entrance off High St. Overgrown	Strim cleared vegetation to clear access.	24-07-2020	0.8	TM JG
			Strim cleared vegetation to clear access.	03-08-2020	0.5	TM
2	0.5	Winter debris and overhanging branches on steep slope. Green lane above OK.	Prune overhanging branches and clear debris to the side	27-02-2020	4.0	MN RW
		Gate needs clearing of vegetation	Gate strimmed clear of debris	28-05-2020	1.0	TM JG
3	0.5	Wood gate access off A30 overgrown vegetation	Gate and access both sides cleared	28-05-2020	1.0	TM JG
			Gate and access both sides cleared	20-08-2020	1.0	TM JG
4	0.3	Check access stiles - top and bottom and access on to downland slope	Cleared access stiles top and bottom - including overhanging hedging and brambles	11-05-2020	2.0	TM JG
			Cleared access stiles top and bottom - including overhanging hedging and brambles	20-08-2020	1.0	TM JG
5	1.0	All five stiles from Shave Lane to windbreak on Ansty Down have become slippery with constant wet weather	RW Supplies staples and chicken wire: all five stiles made 'non slip' with stapled chicken wire	25-11-2019 and 29-11-2019	10.0	TM RW
5		Overgrown vegetation needs clearing from stiles and footpath ways along entire length	7 stiles cleared; (one was a new one installed by landowner) - entire way cleared for summer walking	02-06-2020	5.5	TM RW
		Stile 5 support posts loose	Knocked in 2 wedge stakes. Much improved	11-06-2020	2.0	TM JG
		Overgrown vegetation needs clearing from stiles and footpath ways along foot of Ansty Down	5 Stiles cleared and way cleared thro' meadow (between stile 1 and 2)		3.2	TM JG
6	0.7	Access to FP6 off Shave Lane needs clearing; part of Shave Lane needs clearing from this access to access to FP5	Gate access and area off track cleared; Rob Beale has mowed clear the rest of the path	02-06-2020	0.6	RW
		Check access from Copseside Rd; check path	Strimmed access section from access to Rob Beales mowed section; some remedial lopping	11-06-2020	0.3	TM JG
		Access to FP6 off Shave Lane needs clearing; part of Shave Lane needs clearing from this access to access to FP5	Gate access cleared and Shave Lane FP partially cleared	20-07-2020	1.9	MN EW
			Entire footpath length mown by Rob Beale: Landowner	13-07-2020		
7	1.0	Clear FP from ACLane to fallen tree (Clive has been contacted)	Debris removed and vegetation growth cleared	27-05-2020	1	MN RW
		Stile access via ACLane at Newbarn needs clearing	Vegetation removed from stile area on to lane.	02-06-2020	0.4	RW

		Tree removed; top length and stile access to jockey field needs clearing.	Footpath and access stile strimmed cleared	08-06-2020	2	MN RW
		Overgrown vegetation near top access to large field (Hillfield/Tower Field)	Strim cleared stile access and path leading up to ot plus clearing brambles etc further down	06-07-2020	1.5	MN RW
		Stile access via ACLane at Newbarn needs clearing plus signpost in hedge. Check area from stile access on to holloway track	Cleared stile access area and cut hedge to reveal signpost. Cleared and tidied access on holloway side	20-07-2020	1.6	MN RW
		Storm debris on section above Keepers'cott. Section/access leading to stile into Polo Horse field needs clearing	Debris cleared; pathway and access cleared	08-09-2020	1.2	MN RW
8	0.5		Cleared fallen branches; removed a couple of dangerous ones; cleared off brambles and removed debris	09-03-2020	3.0	MN JG RW
		Vegetation needs strimming off and debris removed from footpath	Squalls - Kings Lane; overhead branches trimmed; path cleared/strimmed' stiles cleared; Kings -Lane to AC Lane Access gate off Kings lane trimmed; Access gate to Aileen's bridge cleared; Aileen's Bridge undergrowth cleared; path marked; stiles into Chris Smith's field strimmedcleared and hedging cut back.	27-05-2020	3.0	MN RW
		Late summer strim and cut	Squalls - Kings Lane; overhead branches trimmed; path cleared/strimmed' stiles cleared; Kings -Lane to AC Lane Access gate off Kings lane trimmed; Access gate to Aileen's bridge cleared; Aileen's Bridge undergrowth cleared; path marked; stiles into Chris Smith's field strimmedcleared and hedging cut back.	17-08-2020	1.5	MN RW
		Late summer strim and cut	Access gate to Aileen's bridge cleared; Aileen's Bridge undergrowth cleared; path marked; stiles into Chris Smith's field strimmedcleared and hedging cut back.	08-09-2020	0.7	MN RW
9	0.1	Stile access both ends need clearing; Thatchers Cott. end hedge stile access hedge boundry needs pruning	Pruning and strimming to clear stile access on both ends	08-06-2020	0.6	MN RW
10	0.6	Winter debris and fallen branches need clearing from stile start section of FP10 to TISB64	Removed large fallen pine branch; removed debris; trimmed off brambles etc	09-03-2020	3.0	MN JG RW
		Partial vegetation growth and blown debris needs clearing	Trimmed back a few brambles; raked off debris; clipped back overhang - especially over stile	23-06-2020	1.8	MN RW
		Late summer strim and cut	Access gate to Aileen's bridge cleared; Aileen's Bridge undergrowth cleared; path ma	17-08-2020	0.7	MN RW
11	0.3	Excessive vegetation growth along FP/bracken and brambles + winter debris	Trimmed back brambles and bracken; cleared stile areas at both ends	23-06-2020	2.0	MN RW
		Overhanging branches over boardwalk	Cut off offending branches and part cleared the way	06-07-2020	1.0	MN RW
		Late summer strim and cut		17-08-2020	0.7	MN RW
12	0.4	Gate access above the Hundred needs clearing	Gate Access strim cleared	02-06-2020	0.5	RW
		Late summer strim and cut	Gate and stile cleared plus access FP	17-08-2020	0.6	MN RW
13	0.9	Stile access needs clearing; footpath needs redefining	Stile cleared; footpath strimmed right to track gate (permissive section); Gate cleared so that it actually opens!	08-06-2020	1.0	RW
		Footpath needs redefining. Fix permissive footpath signs	Permissive footpath strimmed clear; fixed permissive signs up at stile and gate access to Horwood track	20-07-2020	1.6	MN RW

14	0.4	pathway needs defining from stile (Keepers Cott) to gate access	Strim cleared and cut back	23-06-2020	0.4	MN RW
		pathway needs defining from stile (Keepers Cott) to gate access	Strim cleared and cut back; branches removed	08-09-2020	1.3	MN RW
15	0.1	Short section from gate access to track massively overgrown	Pruned and then strimmed entire length. Will need doing again in 2 weeks!		1.4	MN RW
		Overgrown vegetation again!	Pruned and then strimmed entire length. Plus gate access to FP 9. Added post way marks on access gate post	06-07-2020	2.0	MN RW
		Late summer strim and cut	Light trim to maintain the way/ plus gate access cleared	17-08-2020	0.5	MN RW
16	0.6					
17	0.8					
18	0.0					
Last of this season's FP clearance sessions			FPS 7 (part),8,9,10,11,12,14 (part-Keepers Cott.) 15 all trimmed/cleared	26-10-2020	5.0	MN RW
			FPS 1 entrance), FP2, FP3 entrance, FP4 top and bottom, FP5 foot of downs. FP6 (end sections)	28-10-2020	4.0	TM JG
TISB54 JCTN TISB53	Additional		Gate acesses cleared (x2)		1.0	TM RW
TISB53 Pheasants Copse			2 Gate acesses cleared/ some cropping of overhangs; some strim clear areas; some pathways cleared. Land Owner Clive did most of the run.		3.0	
TISB77	Fallen tree branch		Removed branches by pruning saw.		0.8	MN RW
FP	km	9				
Total length	miles	5.6				
					TOTAL MAN HOURS	84.5