

FOOTPATH INSPECTION REPORT

Inspected by Simon Lucas

PATH 6 – ST MARY’S CHURCH TO POUND LANE

This path is in good order at the St Mary’s Church end with a clear entrance and a well-trodden area which branches to move round the church to the right and to the left for the main pathway.

The ground is firm and there are a few obstructions – overgrown areas of bushes etc. but in the main it is clear.

However, there are some issues at the Pound Lane end. On the day of the walk, the area by the gate at the end of the path was where the cows in the field had gathered in large numbers.

While it was possible to negotiate a way through, this could be rather intimidating to other walkers, when confronted with such a large bovine group.

In addition, as there had not been much rain, the area where the cows were standing was still relatively firm. But were it to be later in a wet winter, it is clear that the area by the main gate would be a sea of mud, making transition difficult.

PATH 10 – SHELLEY LANE

This path is effectively a metalled private road up as far as Hammond's Farm and is therefore, in excellent order.

At Hammond's Farm, the path becomes a wooded path which, while somewhat overgrown at the moment, is clearly defined by a signpost set alongside the farm yard and which runs to the Parish boundary. There is a gate at the boundary which is in good order and this gives access to the bridge and path continuation on the other side of the stream.

The farmer stated that the path is quite well used , albeit some people miss the gap in the fence off the road and try to go through the farm yard. The finger post is very obscured by branches etc. and there would be a benefit to a small clean-up of undergrowth at the entrance.

The route to the bridge (boundary of the Parish) is all downhill alongside the farmyard fence and is very wet – even after the dry weather. It would benefit from some light clearance of overhanging branches and bushes.

Overall, an easy walk.



Finger Post is overgrown and in need of some TLC



Path is overgrown but navigable

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PATH 11 – BLACKHILL ROAD TO SALISBURY ROAD

This is a long path – some 3.5 kilometres with some of the path over open forest, some on a marked track and some on a semi-established private unmade road. Generally, the walk is clear and in good condition albeit some areas are boggy where there are gates to fields.

One major issue is that being a long path, at the Salisbury Road end, the path leads immediately onto the main A road at a point where speed limits are 50mph. There is no layby adjacent to the path and the nearest one has no pathway access alongside the road – overall, quite an unsafe access point. At home Farm, (Salisbury Road end), the owner told me that people often drive up the private road and park on the private road to access the path. This does not happen often, but is an issue.

The walk from Salisbury Road is firstly on a tarmac road, then a gravel path through the woods beyond the gate and finally on National Trust gravel path which is fenced on either side. This takes a walker roughly to the middle of the walk along what is called Coopers Lane. The path then shifts to NPS land on Half Moon Common leading to Blackhill Road. The path then becomes open land.

At the Blackhill Road end, the first 1,000 metres are over open forest prior to getting to a clearly marked track. Between the road and the marked pathway, it is unclear where the path goes and thus, easy to get lost. A compass solves the problem, but the signage at the car pull in on Blackhill Road is now non-existent and the finger post is ineligible.

No discernible overgrown areas apart from some side bushes which lean over the central path at Coopers Lane alongside Cooper's Copse.

Overall, however, a pleasant long walk – good for dog walkers.



Some very boggy areas on Half Moon Common, but mostly OK



Sign at Blackhill Road are missing – easy to lose your way! You need a Compass