

FOOTPATHS 10, 11 & 503 INSPECTIONS – SIMON LUCAS – SEPTEMBER 2019

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. It is a well-used roadway, as there are various businesses operating up Shelley Lane which have occasional traffic. Any walkers would need to take care.

At Hammond's Farm, the path becomes a wooded path which, as with last year's inspection, is overgrown although someone has done some clearing on the left side. The path is clearly defined by a signpost set alongside the farmyard, albeit this is now semi- overgrown with weeds and creeper. The path runs downhill through the area adjacent to the fence of the farmyard and outbuildings and then runs to the Parish boundary, which is marked by a stream with a small bridge. 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. (Interestingly, the path levels out on the other side, is wider and appears to be well maintained).

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 farmyard. 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. As reported last year, it would benefit from some light clearance of overhanging branches and bushes – which is now slightly worse than it was last year.

Overall, an easy walk.

One of the issues for this walk (as for Path 11) is the lack of appropriate parking for any walkers intending to access it. The only available areas are related to business operations and premises and could not be used. The main road is very busy and the only layby is further north on the opposite side to Shelley Lane. There is no public footway visible along this stretch of the A36 Salisbury Road (albeit it is understood that at some point in the past, a footway alongside the road existed).



Path is overgrown but navigable

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 quite boggy where there are gates to fields.

One major issue (as with Path 10) is that being a long path, at the A36 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 (further up on the same side) has no pathway access alongside the road – overall, quite an unsafe access point. At Home Farm, along Brickly Lane, there is some previous evidence that people have driven up the Lane and parked by the farm. This is, however, a private road. This does not happen often, but is an issue.

The walk from (the eastern end of the path) 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 a less well defined route on Half Moon Common leading to Blackhill Road. The path then becomes open land. This means that it is possible to veer off track if the walker is not careful. Nearer to Blackhill Road (approx. 1000 metres), the path becomes a lot clearer again and leads to one or other of the two gravel parking areas.

At the Blackhill Road (western) 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.

No discernible overgrown areas apart from some side bushes which lean over the central path at Coppers Lane alongside Cooper's Copse. Noted that, after the stile into Coopers Copse there was an area where someone has at some point built a 'den' and there are signs of a bonfire having been lit some period ago

Overall, however, a pleasant long walk – good for dog walkers. But note must be taken of the difficulty of parking at the Salisbury Road end.



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

PATH 503 – Byway A36 to Whinwhistle Road

The Byway is in very good order and appears to be well used

The path runs alongside house gardens and cuts the corner from just on Lodge Vale off Whinwistle Road through to the A 36 immediately opposite Blackhill Road.

The footpath is gravel. There are a few overhanging branches, but generally the path is very clear.

The only issue is the A36 end, where the path emerges opposite Blackhill Road. There is a metal barrier to prevent pedestrians walking into what is a very busy road. Crossing the road to the open forest via Blackhill Road needs to be done with caution.



Lodge Vale entry via Whinwhistle Road – very clear



Access to path from A 36 – metal barriers in place