

March 2022 Footpath Report

Following on from January's Parish Council meeting I have had quite a bit of response in identifying footpaths that could do with improved signage or access.

There was one email commenting on the unsightliness of metal kissing gates and stating a preference for wooden gates but it has to be pointed out that it is up to the landowner what type of gate he decides to install.

Comments from myself

Chut34 Chantry lane had been clear before the last storms. But there are now recent tree casualties and when this report was written it was not suitable for horse riders.

Also near the top of **Chut17** (footpath from Upper Chute) where it joins with **Chut3** (bridleway from Causeway to Mount Cowdown) there are large trees blocking it so you have to divert onto farm land.

Chut3 needs widening near the junction with the Causeway.

Chut26 (Hippenscombe to top of Conholt hill) and **Chut20**(from top of hill heading towards Vernham Dean) both have new metal kissing gate styles ensuring easy access to those walking with dogs or those who cannot climb stiles. Dogs should be kept on leads here as this land contains livestock (Sheep).

A big **thanks** to Huw Lovesey and Jean Belzar for walking and providing the following reports:

They decided to walk along all the Chute footpaths as shown in the design document and initially reported on Chut1 , Chut2 , Chut5, Chut7 and Chut21 on 24/02/2022 starting opposite the Cross Keys:-

We went out 24/02/2022) and stalled at the first stile as it were. The sign for the footpath is at the corner of the field but no stile. A gate is in place for field access but it was tied up with string. Not wanting to untie the gate in case it was holding it up we found an alternative route via bridleways **Chut7** and **Chut32** to get back to Chut1. There are stiles on either side of the path crossing **Chut32**. The path is supposed to cross straight across the field but there is a crop growing, walked around the edge of the field to the other end. No stile, no gate, just a fence. We walked back along the edge of the field across Chute Down and joined Chut5. Once we reached the junction with Chut2 we walked up the path towards the top of Bauks Hill. At the crossing with Chut 36 and Chut 1 once again just fencing, no access to the field and path. Therefore, Chut1 is not an accessible pathway.



Chut2 a bridleway on the other hand had usable gates all the way along to its end with the causeway.
Chut21 another bridleway is open both ends.

Some further observations from Huw and Jean walking Chut8, Chut10 and Chut32 Honey Bottom
26/02/2022 I've now walked 13 routes, access is generally good via gateways, many are field entrance gates and left open. Signage is the thing missing in many places. Few signs at either end of a route and few direction indicators at gate ways or stiles.

Chut8: Its first stile is in need of attention. Whereas the stile on the other side of the field is in good repair .
See photo



Below you will see **Chut10** is being treated in a similar fashion to **Chut1** which I highlighted in my first email. I couldn't find any gate or stile along the fence line. At the start of the path along the track from honey bottom .



On other side of the field along the tree line I couldn't find a stile or gate.
There was an opening but in the wrong position



On the other side of the wooded area I couldn't find a stile or gate. Obviously the fencing has been damaged by fallen trees.



The path is then obscured by crop planting .

Obviously you can walk along the edge of the field to reach the gate opening, where the path crosses the hedge line. The path being used by people would seem to be along the other side of the hedge line until you reach the wooded area, There, a way has been worn along its edge and then along the edge of the lower field to the track at honey bottom by passing through an old electric fence which now has only the metal post rods remaining

More observations from Huw and Jean walking Chut18, Chut17 and Chut34 Chantry Lane 27/02/2022

Chut 18 : has 4 stiles, photos below .

All the stiles are high , the last one is slightly better as it has two steps. The path behind the pub is more defined than it was last summer, so I think more people are walking it even though the area is a mess. Once over the second stile entering the orchard the pathway is immaculate.

An Ideal short path candidate for new gates.







Interestingly the first stile on Chut 17 has barbed wire running along the top ,fortunately it is next to an open gateway. The thing I did like about that stile was the direction discs .

More observations from Huw and Jean walking Chut13, Chut14 and Chut15 on 04/03/2022

On malthouse lane at the start of Chut 13 a new galvanised gate on great posts . And a Wiltshire footpath post . Looks great and should last a long time .



Chut 14 muddy but fine

Chut 15 is the re-routed permissive footpath by Standen farmhouse .The start of the path at Dummer lane has a yellow arrow direction disc on the wooden fence ,but would benefit from a proper sign .Further along are two new metal gates with direction discs



Again built to last .

Sadly at a junction in the field where you need to turn right there's no direction symbol .You could think you should go straight on .



At the next field corner a new stile with a dog gate to the side, brilliant. However the stile step over is too **high**, if only it had a lower step and the higher step raised up slightly it would be perfect. At the other end by the church a wooden gate, which is wearing well . So almost another good path for those less mobile.

