

## Wolston Footpaths Survey – September 2016

### General comments

1. Map supplied was very general and showed a number of paths on the wrong side of boundaries
2. One path was not navigable due to overgrown vegetation and lack of signage
3. Some stiles are in need of repair or would benefit from additional posts
4. Additional signs would be helpful especially to confirm which side of boundaries and the direction of the path ahead where it is not evident
5. Paths through growing crops seem generally okay but there was little attention when the field had been ploughed and nothing was growing
6. Some crops planted too close to the edge and consequently access very awkward and uneven
7. Normally I would always expect the beginning of a path to be signed from both ends but this was not the case
8. Some of the paths are also signed as Coventry Way, Centenary Way and Shakespeare's Avon Way – I think it might be useful to reference these on the village web site

Note: The following should be read in conjunction with viewing photos of the route which have been named appropriately to help identify locations mentioned.

This is an informal review and the suggestions to improve are my own ideas.

Path	Checked	Summary	General description	Other issues / comments	Definitely needs action
R138	07/09/2016	<p>Footpath temporarily closed due to Priory Manor Development</p> <p>Update 1 - 28/09/2016</p> <p>Re-routed path should be shortly available</p>	<p>Note on Rugby Road suggests that closure only applies to 21/08/2016 and indicates alternate route should be signed but it is not. A second note specifies the exact route of the new path and is dated 13/02/2014.</p> <p>Update 1 - Owain Williams from RBC has advised that the new footpath should be in place by Friday 7th October and I will review then.</p>	<p>From Priory Road the old access still remains but is unusable - Only the note re the new route of the path is displayed and is much more difficult to view.</p>	<p>Alternate route should be signed from both ends and updated notes should be in place to advise when the officially re-routed path will be available if still applicable.</p>
R140	08/09/2016	Not well signed	<p>It is not actually clear from the map what the exact extent of the footpath is. It is not signed from the corner of Priory Road by the Priory. The first sign is on the fence before you enter the alley at the back of houses on Abbots Walk - this is obscured by ivy. The alley itself is narrow because of all the bins normally located there so it is important that people are aware it is a right of way and not private access.</p>	<p>It is not clear where the path ends and there are no signs either at the end of the first alley by the car park, on Abbots Walk as you exit to Meadow Road or either of the exits onto Meadow Road. My inclination would be to carry on down the next alley but footpath R139 looks like it may join from the car park and this might be useful as the next direction.</p>	<p>Sign needed close to Priory (normally a requirement to sign footpaths from a main road), clear ivy from fence round sign and include a sign that indicates where the next footpath can be joined somewhere around the car park (perhaps the post with the dog bin).</p>
R139		Not clear where it ends	<p>This footpath is well signed from Main Street albeit most of the signs seem to be on movable objects (dog bin, grit-salt container). The next sign as you emerge onto Larchfields is partially obscured by a bush growing in the householder's garden. At the end of Larchfields a sign on the grit-salt container points down Meadow Road towards Priory Road.</p>	<p>Since Meadow Road is not on the footpaths map it is difficult to see what the route is meant to be - I am guessing you are meant to go along Abbots Walk through the car park to join with R140.</p>	<p>Need to clear bush from sign (presumably with agreement) and include a further sign highlighting how to connect with R140 if appropriate.</p>

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R141		No significant issues	The footpath is signed from Main Street on a waste bin. There is a Centenary Way marker on a bollard just before the School (pointing back to Main Street). At the alleyway down the side of the school there ought to be two signs - one pointing down the alley and the other along the drive to the church. At the kissing gate by the church there are public footpath and Centenary Way signs - the public footpath sign is damaged. There are then two gates which allow sheep etc to move from one field to another (not sure if to do with survey but there should be a courtesy sign to advise people to take care and ensure gates closed).	There is a further sign as you exit onto Main Street but not actually sure where this is directing you to but possibly the next footpath in Brandon.	Add signs at alleyway to show two footpaths, possibly replace damaged sign at church and maybe include courtesy signs warning about closing gates because of farm animals.
R279	10/09/2016	Stiles need repair but otherwise generally easy to follow	Pedestal under bottom step in field on first stile from Stretton Lane is loose. The route from the first to fourth stiles is not too clear as it does not seem to be much walked. You can actually see from the 2nd to 4th but the 2nd is initially obscured by a rise. There is quite a steep slope between the 2nd & 3rd down to an unprotected pond. The 4th stile has a broken top step and the plank over the ditch is at an angle which makes it awkward when wet. The path then continues through 2 crops and a path has been clearly made by the farmer - the entrance back into the potato crop is only slightly overgrown. When you exit the crop there is a sign to a farm track and then a sign at the end of that track which points you to walk alongside the hedge and in-between a fence. The next stile (the last but one before you reach the A45) is slightly overgrown and looks not to be in use as the gate is open (it is however in a good state of repair). The final stile onto the A45 has a rotten bottom step but the farm gate next to it is usable.	It might be useful to have a sign making sure you walk between the hedge and fence just before the A45 as there is a track leading into the field which might be misinterpreted. Unsure what to suggest about the undefined path to begin with at Stretton Lane but it is only a short distance and if you just follow the hedge you can eventually see the stile. Coming from the A45, it probably is advisable to have the entry into the crop clear to ensure people are not deterred from entering.	Three stiles need to be repaired and it might be a safety issue to level the plank over the ditch (not sure about the slope to the pond also).  I believe the safety issues are important as presumably this path is used to access the Wroth Silver Ceremony at the Knightlow Cross which is well attended.

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R137	12/09/2016	Generally extremely good, well waymarked in both directions apart from B4029 & no major repairs or maintenance	First signed just before railway bridge after walking to end of Priory Road. Another immediately after bridge (both have two public footpaths, Coventry Way & Shakespeare's Avon Way). The first cattle grid has a metal gate for access at the side (initially though it was locked but it is not). The next cattle grid has a similar gate. Sign on telegraph pole after house directs you through farm yard. There is another sign on a post as you exit yard. After next track there is a metal gate which is easy to open. The next track leads you to the right of a crop field (maize). The next sign is a Coventry Way only sign which leads you down a narrow track (not immediately obvious) at the side of the Avon with another crop field on your right. This track although short has two sets of waymarkers before reaching the kissing gate that allows access onto the B4029.	<p>There are a couple of things to be wary of - There is a sign warning about a bull (and indeed on the day I did the walk he was in the field but appeared very calm) and as you exit onto the B4029 there are two very excitable Alsatian / German Shepherd guard dogs.</p> <p>The path alongside the river is only marked as the Coventry Way. The kissing gate is slightly overgrown with ivy. Unfortunately the path is not waymarked at all as a public footpath from the B4029.</p>	The path needs to be signed from the B4029 as otherwise it just looks like a drive up to a house. The ivy could be removed from the kissing gate. The Coventry Way signs close to the river section ought to be accompanied by public footpath signs.

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R135		Albeit relatively well signed there is a general feeling that you are not being encouraged to walk the route (which I think is why the Coventry Way takes a different route).	Vegetation overgrown by kissing gate on B4029. The public footpath clearly points ahead with the Coventry Way to the left (the latter is also signed as a permissive route). The public footpath is marked by a post with a yellow top at the next two gates. The two gates after that have waymarkers - in between the field is partitioned by a flimsy fence with a horse in the second half. I had to limbo under the left hand side of the fence with the good natured horse standing over me and then following me to the next gate. After that there was a footbridge over a ditch but nothing in the field to indicate the exact route to take across it (the field had nothing growing in it) albeit the footpath sign indicated a general direction. I decided to walk around the edge (which probably constitutes trespass and was also not very good underfoot) but at the hedge into the next field there were three gaps but no footpath signs. The next field was similar and I walked around the edge until I came to a footbridge onto the A428.	The footbridge onto the A428 just says it is erected by the Coventry Way Association and has no public footpath sign.	Even if you accept a temporary fence in the field with the horse there should be an easier way to cross it. The direct path across the two open fields should be marked even if no crops growing (normally they seem to just roller it) and there should be a signpost in the appropriate gap. The footbridge at the A428 needs to have a public footpath sign.
R134		Signed as a public bridleway and needs some extra signing at the end close to B4029	Starting from A428 signed as a public bridleway (the post with the sign is falling over). It starts right next to the R135 footbridge which is not as suggested by the map. You walk down the track past a field of llamas and turn right (this section seems to be on the other side of a hedge to what the map indicates - now realise that the map shows a lot of the paths on the wrong side so is not that useful to walk with). There appears to be a split into two paths either side of a ditch but the left hand side appears correct. You carry on to the end and exit by a gate which has no path sign (I squeezed through a gap on the side and was not sure if the gate actually opened - would definitely be an issue if on horseback). Then a short track onto the B4029 where it is signed back in the direction I just came	As you exit onto the B4029 it definitely needs a sign at the gate as the track after it does look like private property and even seems to have its own guardian goat.	Signpost at A428 needs to be repaired. Footpath signs needed where it splits at ditch and at the gate where you exit to B4029 (possibly it should be checked that the gate can open).

<b>Path</b>	<b>Checked</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>General description</b>	<b>Other issues / comments</b>	<b>Definitely needs action</b>
R133	15/09/2016	Generally okay but last section to Coalpit Lane is awkward	Initial access from Dyers Lane at kissing gate. Then alongside fence containing horses. Next kissing gate is a bit overgrown - going in the opposite direction the footpath sign on the telegraph pole is almost fully broken off (okay this side). The path then goes up the side of a crop field to the top of Lammas Hill where there is a stile but no actual fence to make it useful. Shortly after that there is an old stile that is clearly no longer used. The next stile leads you onto the Fosse Way - it is okay from this side but it is hard to see from the Fosse and the footpath sign is overgrown. The stile on the other side of the Fosse is also obscured. There is no track to follow but if you set off as directed by the sign it is fairly easy to see the next stile. After this a good track has been established though the crop field - this has a slight issue just before the next stile when there is a fork but if you follow the major route it takes you the right way. After the next stile however the path is very awkward - the field has been ploughed nearly to the edge and even where it is not there is no easy path and it is very awkward underfoot. When you get to the gate onto Coalpit Lane, although it is not locked it will not open (or at least I could not open it and had to climb over it to get onto the lane).	At the second stile after the Fosse heading towards Coalpit Lane, it is a bit wobbly and would benefit from a post to both steady it and give you something to hold onto. Difficult to know what to do about the awkward path at side of ploughed field - can only suggest farmer needs to leave a wider margin and flatten the edge.	Footpath sign on telegraph pole should be replaced. Both stiles on Fosse need to be made more obvious by clearing vegetation. The gate onto Coalpit Lane needs to be made usable. The final access to Coalpit Lane needs to be made more accessible.

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R132A	18/09/2016	Generally good route but the end is a little unclear	Well signed initial stile from Coalpit Lane - would benefit from a pole to steady yourself. There is immediately a second stile which is a little overgrown. The path from here is marked diagonally across the field but is not too evident - a little clearer when looking back from the 3rd stile. The path is clearer across the next field but the 4th stile at the corner of two hedges is more obscure, a little overgrown and not signed. The 5th stile is quickly followed by a post with a sign pointing you forward to the 6th stile which has a plank over a ditch. There is then a reasonable walk alongside a hedge to the 7th stile - this is quite high, a little overgrown and has a bridge over another ditch - the sign in the other direction has almost disappeared. Not completely obvious where path now goes - there is nothing where the two routes intersect if you just follow the hedge. If you then walk to the left there is a signed metal gate at the corner of a bit of woodland - it is possible you should have taken a diagonal path across the previous field but there are no signs (I now believe this is what should be done). The path then carries on through a maize field - the path although defined is too narrow to make it very inviting - I did not try it as I could see it went as far as a farm house which looked like the end of the path anyway.	Unfortunately not clear where R132A and R132Y start / finish. I have included the description of the section that overlaps here.	The 4th stile ought to be signed. Where the path possibly intersects with R132Y should be clearly signed especially to identify that there is more than one path. The path through the maize field ought to be wider.  See also comments re R132y

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R132Y		<p>Not signed at all and consequently could not follow</p> <p>Update 1 - 20/09/2016</p> <p>Managed to find a sign from Coalpit Lane</p> <p>Update 2 - 29/09/2016</p> <p>Walked complete path but no other signs found</p>	<p>I started from the gate which led into the maize field at the end of the description for R132A. There was nothing at all to indicate a footpath so I just kept to the hedge. I eventually came to Coalpit Lane (no access to it) before turning left through a gap along the hedge to Ling Lane. I then walked back down Coalpit Lane to Heath Farm - the drive to it was opposite a gate with a sign on the other side of the road which suggested the footpath should have exited here. There was a gate next to the drive but again no signs.</p> <p>(I now realise the above was completely wrong)</p> <p>Update 1 - Uncovered footpath sign from Coalpit Lane next to sign for Heath Farm - was completely hidden under ivy. Walked down drive to farm but no indication of where path went and reluctant to go through private property. Clear now that path from other side must start at corner of field before where I previously joined from R132a and that it ought to be signed from there at the same point as a diagonal sign for the R132a leading to the metal gate into the field of maize.</p> <p>Update 2 - Started from footbridge with high stile on R132a which ought to go diagonally across field and down to kissing gate at corner of woods (this is not signed and the only apparent route is round the edge of the field). R132y starts immediately to the right of the footbridge and you walk through an ungated entrance past a tree stump and follow the track which winds through the field to an exit at the right hand side of the farm buildings just before the farm house and the drive back to Coalpit Lane.</p>	<p>Unable to follow this route at all.</p> <p>Update 1 - Managed to find a sign at Coalpit Lane but unclear how to progress past the farmhouse</p> <p>Update 2 - Managed to walk the whole route from other end back to Coalpit Lane</p>	<p>This footpath needs a complete review and appropriate signs adding otherwise it is useless.</p> <p>Update 1: Needs to be comprehensively signed at Heath Farm to avoid people intruding onto private property. On R132a needs a sign in corner of field near footbridge showing the R132a going diagonally down to the metal gate into field of maize and at the same location a sign for the R132y to the right. I will revisit to see what is present at the corner at the moment since I was not looking there on my original visit.</p> <p>Update 2 - There was nothing but you need to go through the entry with the tree stump. When you exit on to the farm drive there should be signs to the right to point you back onto Coalpit Lane.</p>



Path	Checked	Summary	General description	Other issues / comments	Definitely needs action
R121		<p>Path blocked completely by stinging nettles</p> <p>Update 1 - 26/09/2016</p> <p>From opposite direction unable to determine where to go after barbed wire fence</p>	<p>Started at gate opposite Heath Farm. There is a post showing the footpath going to the left through a crop – the route is defined but not very clearly. You then come to a pair of metal gates neither of which has a footpath sign. I walked ahead as per the map and another sign showing which side of the hedge would have been appreciated. The path between hedge and ploughed field was uneven and very awkward. The next stile was a little overgrown and in fact I walked past it first time. After that the path at the side of a field of maize was blocked by tall stinging nettles - you would have to be brave to risk it and I wasn't. I then had to abandon after barely a quarter of the path if that.</p> <p>Update 1 - Drove to layby on A45 just after Dunsmore Kennels - the footpath actually exits at the layby albeit I did not realise this. People emerging at the A45 would have a fairly precarious and dangerous route to progress further. However there is a kissing gate at the start of the layby. You walk along the left of a hedge to the first field which has been ploughed too close to the edge to easily walk along the verge. There is then a sign pointing right into the next field where the field margin is much wider. The official route I think goes round to the right at the first corner but you could just as easily go the other side of a pond to reach the next sign. A few yards afterwards after that is another sign leading into woodland. Soon on the left is a footbridge and then a post showing the direction of an ill-defined route. There are a couple of old gateposts in line with the hedge which I think according to the map is where you are meant to turn right. I walked to the bottom of the field there and then followed a hedge to the left for a couple of hundred yards. I then came to a barbed wire fence and was unable to see any further signs along it to indicate how you proceeded. There was also a field of cows which thought I had come to feed them and made further investigation awkward. I still could not see the field of maize where I had been unable to progress from the opposite direction. I retraced my steps but went all the way along the hedge back to the footbridge without seeing any alternative routes.</p>	<p>Unable to walk much of the path and it might need to be revisited after the nettles have died down or otherwise removed.</p> <p>Update 1 - Walking from the opposite end I was unable to progress further than a barbed wire fence - I was probably only a few hundred yards from where I had walked to from the other end but I could not see the maize crop where I had finished then.</p>	<p>The metal gates need signs and perhaps at the hedge just after them. The nettles need to be removed to allow further navigation.</p> <p>Update 1 - The kissing gate at the A45 needs to be adjusted as it does not close. At the corner of the second field from the A45 a further sign might be appropriate to advise which side of a pond (hidden behind trees) to pass. Shortly after you enter the woodland there is a fallen tree which needs to be moved / removed albeit it is possible to pass with some difficulty. A sign would be useful on one of the two old gateposts assuming this is the correct route.</p>

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R132X	20/09/2016	Straightforward bridleway slightly confused by presence of stile	<p>Started from Fosse Way opposite Dyers Lane - signed as bridlepath which is important to remember. Shortly after you start there is a fallen post with a sign about keeping to the main track and leaving the field margins for wildlife. There are numerous signs about walking dogs which I think is welcoming. This section is along a wide track. You then go past the sign for R132c to the right and the bridlepath is signed ahead albeit the track is no longer very wide. You then come to a metal gate - this is held open with a bungee at the moment (I am guessing something to do with its use as a bridlepath but clearly not the intention). There is a yellow-topped post here but a directional bridlepath sign might have been useful. If you carry on around the edge to the right you come to a stile - not sure what the function is as if you go the other side I think that is R132b and the bridleway just continues on this side (it may be a get you out of jail card if you miss the route). Continuing along the bridleway you come to a sign which I think is where R132b starts. You then come to another sign just before Coalpit Lane - the other side of the post also shows the R121 as a footpath. Shortly after is the gate onto Coalpit Lane opposite Heath Farm.</p>	Need to understand why first gate is held open by bungee.	The fallen wildlife sign would be a good idea to repair and add a bridleway sign. At the first gate a directional bridleway sign would be helpful. At the stile it would be useful to include signs confirming the route of the bridleway and possibly why it is there.

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R132B		<p>Start of path unclear, end of path quite difficult but surprisingly the bit in the middle is pretty good</p> <p>Update 1 - 26/09/2016</p> <p>Identified route from Fosse and it is passable but probably ought to be cleared</p>	<p>Not sure where starts but assumed R132x bridleway continues to Coalpit and R132b starts one side of a hedge where the bridleway parallels on the other side - there is a post with both footpath and bridleway signs. Soon after you start there is a large post with two waymarkers lying on the ground - this possibly was at the beginning of the hedge. You then reach the confusing stile seen on R132x - it seems to sign in the right direction if you had come down the bridleway (this might be the correct start of this footpath but not sure). Anyway you now follow a narrow path to your left through tall maize for quite a distance. Eventually you come to a metal gate which leads to a small footbridge over a ditch - this is quite difficult to spot from the opposite direction. A little further on and you come to the intersection with R132c. It is actually well signed around the farm buildings albeit the first is just too far away and you have to walk a little in the right direction to see it. Three signs in quick succession lead you around the farm buildings. Then you go downhill to a metal gate that leads to a footbridge - this is extremely difficult to spot from the other direction. You then turn right along a farm track until a post at the end of a hedge - this shows the way to the Fosse Way. Unfortunately not 100% clear which side of hedge and neither looks particularly used or indeed navigable. I chose left (unfortunately the wrong side - the footpath does point to the right but I took this only to mean the direction of the path) which was still difficult but led you to a wide track leading onto the Fosse but you had to climb a gate to exit. I walked a little along the Fosse and came to the stile I was meant to use but did not try the route from the other side as already knew it was difficult.</p> <p>Update 1 - Followed the path from the Fosse. It is actually okay to begin with albeit uneven under foot. Towards the end of the first section (where I had gone the wrong side of the hedge) it narrowed dramatically and was very overgrown (started from a water pipe which had also deterred me from thinking that was the correct path).</p>		<p>Reinstate fallen post so you know which side of hedge to walk - possibly other actions to ensure start of footpath is obvious. The metal gate leading into the field of maize needs to be cleared of vegetation as difficult to spot. The gate leading to the footbridge needs to be cleared from the farm track side. Final sign to Fosse needs to be clearer as to which side of hedge and track to Fosse needs to be cleared / improved. The stile from the Fosse needs to be cleared so that more obviously a footpath.</p> <p>Update 1 - The section just before the Fosse definitely needs clearing.</p>

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R132C		Very short path with no issues	Started at gap in hedge from R132x - footpath to the right, R132x continues ahead as a bridlepath. A wide track is followed. There is a stile which is no longer in use but is in good order were the missing gate next to it ever to be reinstated. The path continues between an avenue of apple trees to the intersection with the R132b at some farm buildings.	Nothing to mention	No actions required
R144A	22/09/2016	A very easy path with no obstacles other than one kissing gate	There is no sign as the path starts from the drive up to the church (there is a useful one on the drive in the opposite direction identifying as Coventry Way). However there is one on the wall just inside - never actually noticed it before (thought it was just warning about no bikes etc). As you exit the alley there is a Coventry Way sign on a lamppost. The path then hugs the outskirts of the woods (The Grove). Not strictly related to the survey but there are Private Property signs at the start of the Grove and if you were not local this would certainly deter you from entering (which I am guessing is not what we want). You then carry on along the path past the garages and there are several confirming signs before you reach the Leisure Centre. The path is then well signed along the edge of the metal fence around the Leisure Centre - it is also signed as Centenary Way and Shakespeare's Avon Way (there is a nice description of the latter at the base of the post outside the entrance to the Leisure Centre). You continue to a kissing gate before turning left along the fence (still very well signed) and alongside the Plantation. As you exit the Plantation there are useful signs at floor level (there is a diagonal path that might otherwise have been followed when going in the opposite direction). This is where R144c joins from the right.	A very easy route but perhaps we should be encouraging people to explore the Grove and Plantation?	Include a sign at the start of the alleyway on the drive to the church - this should show two paths intersecting. As you exit the alley it would be useful to have a sign at the corner of Paddocks Close (both directions) and again near the garages so that you did not think they were private property. Also a sign on the opposite side to the one on the end of a wooden fence would be useful to make sure you stayed on the correct path. As you exit the Grove a more visible sign pointing you to the right would be useful but when you turn the corner there are plenty.

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R144C		A very short path and actually quite difficult to understand why it is a designated footpath	The path starts from where R144a ends albeit it is not signed (the R144 is signed continuing in the same direction as R144a). It runs in between a fenced field and the Plantation. I believe the path ends as it meets the Plantation. However a path then leads you nicely through the Plantation down to the River Avon and along it for a while before coming to an abrupt end.	Surprised this is an official footpath as it just seems an extension of the paths through the Plantation and seems to serve no purpose in terms of providing a route.	There should be a sign at the start. A sign where the path ends might be useful to indicate that the remainder is permissive and takes you to the river's edge but is not a route along the river.
R144		Straightforward path with no current issues	The path starts at the corner of the Plantation. You walk alongside a fenced field with horses to a drive up to a farm. The sign points you to the left and then on the opposite side of the drive in a gap in the hedge another sign points to a well-defined path through a potato crop. There is then a brief gap between crops before another defined path to a prominent sign. Unfortunately at the next field crop there is a defined diagonal path but the route actually follows the edge of the field as there is a sign in the opposite corner (it is easy to go the wrong way and is slightly awkward as it has been planted too close to the edge). After that you are soon walking alongside the fence at the side of the water treatment works. As you exit this is the end of the path - Ryton Organic Gardens to the left and the path carries on through the gravel extraction works.	At the end of the water treatment works a path is signed to the left towards the Organic Gardens but this is not indicated by the map.  When I previously walked the route (prior to the survey) I found it quite difficult as there were diversions for the gravel extraction and I could not find the way across the field after the farm drive (possibly because there was no crop at the time). None of these issues are present now - there are some new paddocks just before the farm drive and I wonder if any work has been done on the path itself (if there has it has been very successful).	No suggestions.