

Kimpton Rights of Way Working Party

Status Report, September 2020, draft v2

Item

1. Introduction

Although in March we had an impromptu meeting with our new HCC Access Officer, Andrew Burton, subsequent communication has proved difficult. In particular, we did not receive any information at all about the first maintenance cut of the year and we abandoned our planned working group meeting for early June. We did receive some information, though rather belated and incomplete, concerning the recent second cut and much of this present report is based on a survey of the work done recently.

Meanwhile, we have done what we could locally, with the additional support of the Bench Working Party. But major issues remain on which we are dependent for the support of HCC.

2. Status of Kimpton rights of way - overview

Once again the upside of another summer drought has been that there has not been too much overgrowth. So, as last year, there are not so many problems with be-nettled kissing gates and the like.

Maintenance

Revising slightly what I said this time last year, HCC's new maintenance contract seems to be working '*more or less*' OK. Given the difficulty we have had getting information about the timing of the work, it has been difficult to check it and report back in a timely manner so shortcomings could be corrected. Detailed report below.

Ploughing (etc.)

Deep ploughing has not been quite so problematic this year. The main problem has been early growth, when the paths have not been reinstated or otherwise made clear. The tall waymarks may help a little but are not a complete solution. Some paths are almost impassable because of the growing crop.

Signage

Generally fine. Usual issues: some finger-posts obscured by overgrowth from hedges; faded waymarks that can be refreshed with stick-on copies; and a few rotted waymark posts. (Also see above re ploughing and tall waymarks.) Some 'white-topped' waymarks have been refreshed to help with cross-field paths.

3. **Maintenance: 2020 second cut review**

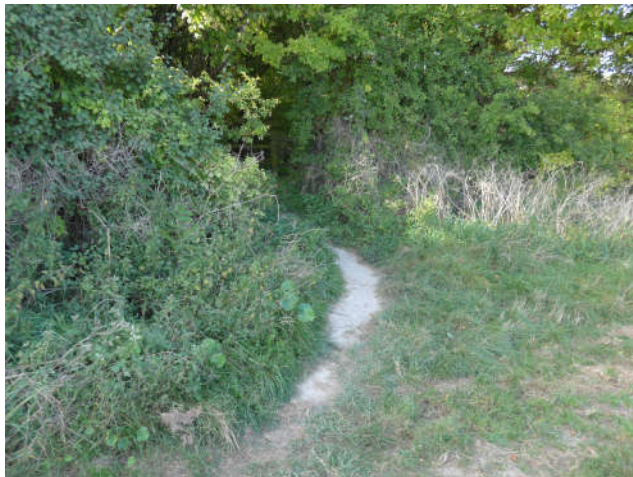
Annex 1 comprises an annotated version of the ‘schedule’ for those sections of our rights of way that are to be either mown or strimmed. In the right hand columns are indications of whether what has been done has been checked yet and a summary of any findings. Some of these are amplified in the notes below following the general findings.

General

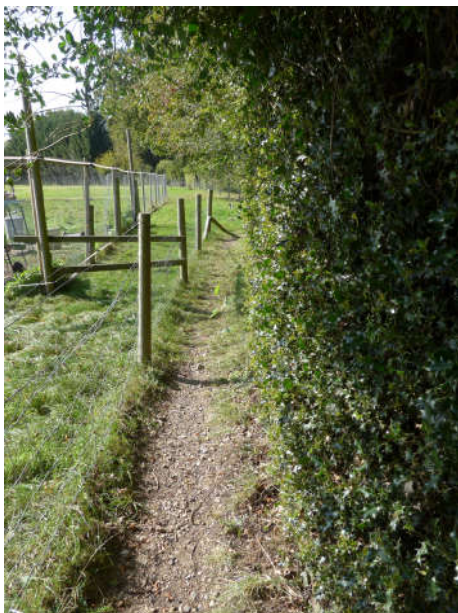
Mostly the cuts were satisfactory. Shortcomings were in parts that were not done at all and, along some stretches, the cut was clearly patchy and often nowhere near low enough to meet the specification (75mm.). This was particularly the case where the grass (etc.) had been long. This suggests that the mower operator was unfamiliar with the technique for cutting long grass *or* that they were in too much of a hurry. Either way, they seem to have disregarded the specification. In most places where this was evident it is not too serious since the route is clear and footfall will deal with the rest.

FP2

This is odd. Year on year the new contractors seems to ignore the headland just south of the steps from the recreation ground.



FP14



The narrowness of this path has been a problem for a long time, exacerbated by overgrowth from bushes planted hard up against it on the northern side. The contractors note “*hedge not cut*”. It is worse than that. At the eastern end, near Ayot church, holly almost blocks the way.

FP17

This was added to the schedule a year or two ago but on the 3rd September it was not marked as done and it had clearly not been done by the 18th September. The gateway in particular was *extremely* difficult to get through – apart from the nettles along the way. And the main headland appeared untouched.



FP47

Some thanks are due here. This path goes from Peter's Green Village Hall to the 'unclassified county road' at Chiltern Green. The Chiltern Green end lies in Bedford where it is not a recognised right of way and was never maintained (one of many oddities of the move to 'definitive statements'). A year or two ago HCC agreed to take on the maintenance of that southernmost stretch across Chiltern Green and I am glad to report that this is still happening: the path no longer just stops short of Chiltern Green facing an impenetrable barrier of bramble and brush.



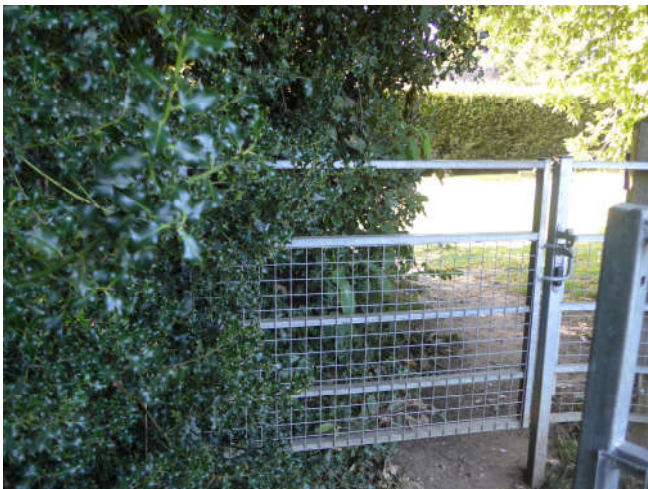
4. **Other non-‘maintenance’ issues with specific rights of way**

Note .. this may not be complete, given time constraints

FP22: in March we asked Andrew Burton if he would talk to the residents of Cuckold’s Cross Cottage but the barbed wire is *still* there:



FP26: the kissing gate at Hoo Cottages end is badly overgrown with holly and the rotted waymark is just loosely propped against the fence.



FP28 & FP29: the most depressing paths in the parish.

The saga of the route of FP29 through (or around) the Bothy and Keeper's Cottage drags on. 35 (?) years now. Andrew Burton said in March that he would look into the now long-promised enforcement action and we await his report back.

The FP28 waymark on the corner of Keeper's Cottage is in a still worse state. And the barbed wire is *STILL* there. Last year's photo will suffice: no change (for the good).



And the cross-field section has not been reinstated. Again.



Without the waymark, this is even worse than it was.

Kissing gate at junction of FP28 & FP29:

The barber wire on the right is just **WRONG!** (And, I believe, illegal.)



BR39 (Skegsbury Lane):

We have heard no more of the worrying proposal to upgrade this to a Restricted Byway.

In April we expressed concern that one or more of the adjacent residents were encroaching on this ancient bridleway. We warned HCC that this was happening and asked if we could have a detailed (1:1250) map showing the precise boundaries of the public and private land. We understood that the Highways Department charges a small fee for this and said that we were (and still are) prepared to pay that. Andrew Burton said he would investigate and discuss it with his colleagues. We await his response. Unfortunately, since then, the encroachment has got worse.

RB50 (also Wheathampstead 8): this is almost impassable with bramble and nettle:



Getting through it was very painful with stings and quite a bit of blood.

BR51 & FP53: rotten waymark at their junction not yet fixed. Something we could do ourselves but not yet arranged.

4. Parish Paths Partnership (P3)

We had agreement to our P3 application for last year and further agreement to vire the budget in order to purchase kissing gates for St Paul's Walden stretch north of FP21 (PW20?). Andrew Burton had said in March that he could recommend a supplier if we would provide dimensions, which we did in July. We await his response.

5. Volunteer support

We have been given to understand that although the 'old' means of volunteer support through CMS has changed, such support is still available. In July we sent to Andrew

Burton details of support we would like to improve the access at the start of FP10 between Cooper's Hill and the field above. We await his response.

7. Kimpton public rights of way map

Bob *still* has to get reprints of an updated map.

2018 2nd cut review summary

Parish & Path	Type	Status	Comments	Dist From (m)	Dist To (m)	Length (m)	Description	CHECKED?	Checking comments.
Kimpton 001	Mow	FP		172	589	417	SW cnr of Rec. to Ballslough Hill	✓	OK
Kimpton 002	Mow	FP		280	512	232	Jn. w FP7 to Ballslough Hill (needs clarification)	✓	OK except (again!) headland between FP1 & FP8
Kimpton 004	Mow	FP		0	249	249	ALL - apart from badger sett	✓	OK
Kimpton 005	Mow	BR		651	811	160	Hall Fm gate toward PP start (see also final item)	✓	OK
Kimpton 006	Mow	FP		0	98	98	Hall Lane to Hall Fm cottages lane	✓	OK (if not to spec.)
Kimpton 007	Mow	FP		0	189	189	ALL (n.b. as far as FP02)	✓	OK (ditto)
Kimpton 008A	Mow	FP		0	331	331	fm Jn w FP01 to Hall Lane.	✓	OK
Kimpton 008B	Strim	FP		322	611	289	Only from BR5 to somewhere short of FP61 ???	✓	OK
Kimpton 010	Mow	FP		326	509	182	Headland by copse NW of Hall Farm	✓	OK
Kimpton 011	Strim	FP		810	1,104	294	Bottom of dip. Clagbottom Wd, to edge of Ayot Pk.	?	?
Kimpton 012	Mow	FP		336	652	315	Western stretch - shared w Wheathampstead	✓	on Wheathampstead schedule?
Kimpton 013	Strim	FP		?	?	?	Primarily steps (pt thru wood to be dropped?)	✓	OK
Kimpton 014	Strim	FP		0	304	304	ALL	✓	surface OK but hedge overgrowth NOT OK
Kimpton 017	Strim	FP		0	213	213	ALL	✓	NOT OK: headland not done; gate nr impassable
Kimpton 022	Mow	FP		0	456	456	ALL	✓	OK (not 'maintenance' but note barbed wire STILL!)
Kimpton 023W	Mow	FP		0	273	273	Round The Bungalow then to start of x-field part	✓	OK - access fm road good
Kimpton 023E	Mow	FP		641	850	210	Headland to N of the field as far as the farm track	✓	OK
Kimpton 024	Mow	FP		650	771	122	headland by side of Valentine's Grove	✓	OK
Kimpton 026	Mow	FP		350	431	81	NE of Hoopark Wood; S of Mare's Dell; gate @ E end	✓	OK
Kimpton 026	Mow	FP		648	858	210	Headland along Mare's Dell	✓	OK
Kimpton 026	Strim	FP		858	865	7	Kissing gate at SE end of Mare's Dell	✓	OK
Kimpton 026	Strim	FP		1,039	1,052	13	Northern access to FP26	✓	OK
Kimpton 027	Mow	FP		714	1,091	377	Just headland to E of Hog Wood	✓	OK
Kimpton 028	Mow	FP		0	521	521	From start on Kimpton Rd to x-field start	✓	OK to S but LONG: k-gate OK (but); Headlands OK; BUT
Kimpton 029	Mow	FP		0	266	266	Jn w FP28 to start of disputed stretch	✓	Headland OK
Kimpton 033	Strim	BR		0	547	547	ALL		
Kimpton 034	Strim	FP		0	253	253	Opp Corner Stores to Park Lane		
Kimpton 035	Strim	FP		0	60	60	ALL		
Kimpton 037	Mow	FP		0	572	572	Start on Kimpton Road to NE corner of copse	✓	OK-ish
Kimpton 038	Mow	FP		0	785	785	ALL	✓	OK-ish
Kimpton 039S	Mow	BR		185	577	392	North from Skegsbury House	✓	OK
Kimpton 039N	Mow	BR		577	1,077	500	Remainder to Kimpton Rd.	✓	OK (contractor's note "canopy collapsing") ?
Kimpton 040W	Mow	FP		309	882	573	Kennels to end by Peter's Green	✓	OK
Kimpton 040E	Strim	FP		0	236	236	Ramridge Lane to Oaktree Garage	✓	OK incl P's Gn end of CBW
Kimpton 041	Mow	BR		41	274	233	From new Ramridge S to corner of wood (Jn FP42)	✓	OK-ish
Kimpton 042	Mow	FP		109	377	268	NE cnr Bishey Wood to x-fld part to BR41	✓	OK
Kimpton 044	Strim	FP		185	194	10	Just the end by Lawrence End lane - thru hedge etc.	?	?
Kimpton 045	Mow	FP		0	285	285	ALL (Jn FP44 to Jn BR51)	✓	OK (thanks to residents?)
Kimpton 047	mow	FP		39	367	328	From gate by chapel to Chiltern Green	✓	Good! (Incl. Ch. Gn end, thanks to Tom G)
Kimpton 048	strim	FP		0	35	35	Access to/from Kimpton Bottom	✓	OK
Kimpton 048	Mow	FP		234	529	295	S edge of spinney to Porters End Lane		
Kimpton 048	Mow	FP		529	1,006	477	Porters End Lane to start of gravel drive		
Kimpton 048	Strim	FP		210	234	23	Through spinney		
Kimpton 054	Mow	FP		328	855	526	Headlands after x-field, to Whiteways Bottom		OK
Kimpton 058	Mow	FP		0	645	645	Kimpton bit from S edge of Hurst Wood: ALL		OK
Kimpton 061	Strim	FP		0	23	23	Lloyd Way to field: ALL (does this still need doing?)		OK