

Hursley Parish Council

Path Warden 2026/27 Annual Report

This is my first annual report having taken on the role of the parish path warden in January this year. It details an initial audit of the 'access to the countryside' routes (public rights of way, permissive paths and other footpaths) within the parish, related county and district local plans and current issues.

Access to the Countryside

Public Rights of Way

Hursley has 9 miles of public rights of way (PROW), of which 5.3 miles are public footpaths and the remainder bridleways or byways. These are registered in the [Definitive Map](#) and [Statement](#) maintained by Hampshire County Council. This is much lower than some of our neighbouring parishes. On the positive side, several of the PROW do act as a 'conduit' into these more extensive local networks.

Two long distance paths pass through the parish, most notably the Monarch's Way¹, but also a small section of the [Clarendon Way](#) (linking Salisbury and Winchester).

Reported Problems

Problems with PRW are reported on a Hampshire CC portal:

<https://hantsrow.esdm.co.uk/standardmap.aspx>. Currently open problems within the parish are sections of the Berrydown Farm route to Farley Mount country park becoming overgrown (a regular problem). There is also an issue with some of the access furniture on the Cranbury Park route (see "Planned Warden Activities").

Temporary Closures

Public access is currently impacted by the work being carried out by Southern Water in Compton and Shawford. [The temporary closure notice](#) extends to September 2028. Alternative routes have been put in place.

A small section of the [Monarch's Way towards Ampfield](#) is also currently closed for a month (to enable a solar power connection cable to be installed). A temporary alternative route has been put in place.

Permissive Paths

Permissive paths are not public rights of way. They exist only with the landowner's consent and can be withdrawn at any time. They are not included in Hampshire CC's definitive map and statement, but such paths are normally clearly signposted. The only known permissive path within the parish is the path running from the A3090 to Ladwell, providing access from the village to the Cranbury Park PROW, avoiding the need for walkers to use the very dangerous B3043.

¹ In conducting this initial audit, it was found that the Monarch's Way is not shown in local plans or Hampshire CC PRW related websites. This was queried with Hampshire CC. The County Council's approach to showing long distance routes is "that it will only promote those routes in which it has been actively involved in developing and maintaining. Because the Monarch's Way does not fall into this category, it is not promoted on the County Council's website". Note that it is also missing from "Map 9" in the Winchester District Local Plan.

Other Footpaths

There are two footpaths where the status is not clear: 1) the initial section before the PROW at Berrydown Farm approaching from Hursley, allowing public access to and from the PROW. This footpath is shown as “Other Route with Public Access” (ORPA) on OS maps; (2) the section of the Clarendon Way at Pitt. Both footpaths have no signage. Their status should be clarified with Hampshire CC.

Re-routed or Lost Historical Rights of Way

The Definitive Map and Statement list all currently registered PROW. Some historical rights of way may have been re-routed or lost within the parish. These can be identified using historical maps (see “Planned Warden Activities”). Note that any individual can apply for a lost historical footpath to be reinstated and added to the Definitive Map and Statement.

Local Plans

The ongoing management of the PROW network is principally covered in the [Hampshire CC Countryside Access Plan 2025-2035](#). Given the prevailing financial constraints, the plan emphasises community involvement and working closely with the parish councils on network management and improvement, [with the availability of small grants for specific works](#) (see “Planned Warden Activities”).

The current [Winchester District Local Plan](#) only briefly mentions access to the countryside and the PROW network (ref. 7.35), notably referring to “gaps in the Rights of Way network, for example to the west and north of Winchester, which prevent easy access to many areas”.

Planned Footpath Warden Activities 2026/27

- 1) Monitor reported problems on the PROW network to ensure these are resolved, ensuring any required maintenance plans are in place to avoid recurrence.
- 2) Clarify the status of the footpath at Berrydown Farm and the parish section of the Clarendon Way. Progress any required actions, including the provision of appropriate signage.
- 3) Conduct a research project into historical rights of way in the parish and their relationship to the current Definitive Map and Statement.
- 4) Progress the implementation of the Hampshire CC Countryside Access Plan 2025-2035 in relation to Parish Council involvement in the management and improvement of the PROW network.