

Landowner/Occupier responsibilities:

- Maintain stiles, gates and other boundary crossings;
- Obtain consent from the highways authority before erecting new stiles or gates on public rights of way;
- Cut back encroaching hedges or overhanging vegetation that is growing from their land;
- Keep paths clear of obstructions, such as padlocked gates, electric fences etc.;
- Ensure that no misleading signs are placed near rights of way that might deter people from using the path;
- To reinstate the path within two weeks of ploughing and keep paths clear of crops to a minimum width of:
 - Footpath: 1 metre across field and 1.5 metres at field edge
 - Bridleway: 2 metres across field and 3 metres at field edge
 - Other rights of way: 3 metres across field and 5 metres at field edge.



Wiltshire Council's responsibilities:

- Making sure that public Rights of Way are free from obstructions;
- Clearance of vegetation growing from the surface of the path;
- Signposting rights of way where they leave a road and waymarking the route where appropriate;
- Maintaining bridges over natural watercourses;
- To provide a minimum 25% contribution towards any costs incurred by a landowner in maintaining stiles and gates on rights of way.

Rights of Way – user responsibilities:

Whilst you must not ride or roam over such as farmland, Rights of Way are defined paths and tracks which anyone can use to cross private land. You have a legal right to use them at any time of the day or night but keep gates closed, and do not cut fences. Consult a map or websites for routes:

Footpath: on foot only;

Bridleway: on foot, on a pedal cycle, on horseback;

Restricted byway: on foot, on a pedal cycle, on horseback, on a horse drawn vehicle (eg. horse and cart);

Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT): on foot, on a pedal cycle, on horseback, on a horse drawn vehicle (eg. horse and cart), on wheeled vehicles of any kind (including cars and motorbikes).

Can I take a dog on a right of way?

Yes you can, but the dog must not run off the definitive line of the path and you must keep it under close control. *Please pick up and take home* your dog's fouling – it is unpleasant for everyone and dangerous: *Toxicara canis* is harmful to people and *Neosporosis* to farmers' livestock.

How does Wiltshire Council organise maintenance work?

The Rights of Way Section of Wiltshire Council plan and implement a number of regular maintenance schedules. These include annual growth clearance programmes and a parish by parish maintenance programme.

In addition, defects reported either by the Parish Council or by the public are prioritised and addressed in this order:

1. The issue represents an immediate danger to the user;
2. An obstruction that prevents or inhibits use of the path;
3. Not so severe that it would warrant attention prior to the parish being visited on the parish maintenance programme.

Maintenance work is carried out by Rights of Way officers, landowners / occupiers or in partnership with external contractors, Parish Councils, the Probation Service and volunteer groups.



Volunteer contribution:

The Rights of Way Section works in close partnership with several volunteer groups throughout the County, such as the Ramblers Association and local parish volunteers. Their work and dedication help to make valuable improvements to the Rights of Way network. To find out more about volunteering opportunities with the Parish Council's Footpaths Working Group please contact the Parish Clerk or for more general volunteering opportunities the Rights of Way Section at Wiltshire Council (details below).

Obstructions and Enforcement:

Most landowners carry out their responsibilities without contact or action from the Council. However, where landowners fail to comply with their statutory duties Wiltshire Council is required to resolve the matter. This is normally achieved through co-operation, although if necessary, the Council will serve legal notice, take direct action to clear an obstruction at the landowner's expense or seek prosecution. Rights of way must not be closed or in any way restricted without Wiltshire Council's prior consent.



Green
Footpaths

Blue
Bridleway

Red
Byways

Reporting a problem:

You can report a problem on the rights of way network using Wiltshire Council's online reporting system. Alternatively, you may wish to contact the Parish Council who can assess the problem locally and either fix it, or pass the matter to Wiltshire Council. Either way, both Councils would require location information such as a grid reference if possible. If you do not know this then the nearest street or road name or a nearby landmark would help. You could also provide the starting point of the path and approximate distance along the path where the fault is, with any identifying features.



Contacts:

The Parish Clerk is on 07734 483883 or by email clerkpc@sky.com

For Wiltshire Council call 0300 456 0100 or by email rightsofway@wiltshire.gov.uk

For more information and maps online visit www.westlavington.info/out_and_about.html

or

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/rightsofway

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WEST LAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL RIGHTS OF WAY – what you need to know

This leaflet explains the partnership between your Parish Council, Wiltshire Council and landowners. It also explains how you can have a part in protecting your Rights of Way for everyone to enjoy safely. The duty to maintain the Rights of Way network is shared between Wiltshire Council as the Highways Authority and the landowners/occupiers of the land over which the path exists. The Parish Council acts as custodian on behalf of your community.



The Parish Council as custodian:

The Parish Council has powers (but not a duty) to maintain paths and place signs, and to promote the public benefits and enjoyment that the proper use of rights of way can bring. The Parish Council:

- Makes condition surveys of local footpaths;
- Keeps close observation of other rights of way;
- Uses a mixture of volunteer effort and paid contractors to keep as many footpaths as possible open and accessible;
- Works with landowners or occupiers on hedging and overhanging vegetation;
- Works in liaison with Wiltshire Council to have obstructions cleared and improvements made that are beyond local capacity.