Re: Public Footpath, Goostrey No 12 - Diversion Proposals - Access Assessment & Report

Author: Philip Chambers 6th April 2016

1. Introduction

My name is Philip Chambers and I operate a countryside access consultancy service specialising in access to the countryside and heritage environments with disabled people. My trading name is Phil Chambers Consultancy and my website is www.philchambersconsultancy.co.uk

2. Experience and Background

I was a founder member of the Fieldfare Trust in 1987 and key contributor to the BT Countryside for All Standards and Guideline[1] publication in 1977. This guidance was agreed in consultation with national and local countryside and disabled peoples' charitable organisations including the Countryside Commission (now Natural England), Ramblers Association, National Trust and the Countryside Landowners Association, together with the Royal National Institute for the Blind, MENCAP and RADAR (Royal Association of Disability) now Disability Rights UK. This guidance, which is still widely regarded as best practice, was used in assessing access needs at Goostrey.

Since 2001 I have operated independently carrying out numerous outdoor heritage access audits and providing countryside disability access training across the UK. I have previously been commissioned as a Groundwork Trust Facilitator (2008-2012), DEFRA agri-environement peer reviewer (2015) and was formerly until the panel closure, a Heritage Lottery Fund Expert Advisor – access and learning (2005 -2008) and a member of the CRT Towpath Design Guidance Document Panel (2008 – 2011) I am presently a Design Council/CABE expert advisor, working across built environment and greenspace guidance.
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3. Instructions

Phil Chambers Consultancy (PCC) was asked by Robin Carr Associates on behalf of Mr Cameron Dick of Swanwick Hall, Goostrey to assess a footpath network at Swanwick Hall in terms of providing a convenient public path and particularly to assess the usability by people with a range of disabilities. Mr Dick would like to realign part of the footpath and has provided an optional permissive footpath, as an alternative to the original designated footpath. PCC was asked to identify current barriers to access along the existing footpath and the proposed footpath. The full report is provided at Appendix 2

[1] [1] BT Countryside for All Standards & Guidelines – a good practice guide to disabled peoples access to the countryside. BT & Fieldfare Trust 1997

4. Site Visit

A site visit was arranged on Sunday 7th February 2016. The day was bright after a period of poor winter weather, so the land was quite wet. On the day of the visit a number of visitors were encountered along the permissive footpath route, but, none along the existing section, including the boardwalk. Mr Dick and Steven Chambers, who often assists me with access audits, accompanied me on the visit. I was cognizant of key legal requirements and principles of access with disabled people along footpaths, when carrying out the site survey.

5. Legislative Framework

The key legislative considerations are the Equality Act (2010) which incorporated the principles of the Disability Discrimination Act (2006) and the Countryside Rights of Way Act – CROW (2000) and Section 119 of the Highways Act(1980).

The Equality Act (2010) sets out the requirements to meet the needs of people defined as having "protected characteristics" within the law, including people with disabilities. The Act sets out a requirement for service providers to ensure that "reasonable adjustments" are made and auxiliary aids are provided to support equality of opportunity objectives. The landscape topography or history of a place may well impact on what is deemed "reasonable". The Act outlines four options for overcoming a barrier caused by a physical feature. These are:

1) Removal of the feature;
2) Alterations to the feature;
3) Providing a reasonable means of avoiding it;
4) Providing the service by a reasonable alternative method if none of the preceding options is viable

The Countryside Rights of Way Act - CROW Act (2000) makes provision for public access to the countryside and promotes increased and better opportunities for disabled people.

Section 119 of the Highways Act (1980) state that:-

"In deciding whether or not it is expedient, the authority must have regard to the extent to which the way would add to the convenience or enjoyment of a substantial section of the public, or to the convenience of persons resident in the area and, the effect which the creation of the way would have on the rights of persons interested in the land"[2].

[2] The Planning Inspectorate Rights of Way Section General - Guidance on Public Rights of Way Matters Advice Note 9 (2001)

In determining the level of convenience for disabled people it is helpful to take into consideration the principles outlined below which affect access to outdoor opportunities to people with disabilities.
It is also necessary to be aware that wheelchair and mobility scooters are legally entitled to use footpaths and bridle paths. Wheelchairs and Mobility Scooters fall into three categories of "invalid carriages" which are covered in the Highways Regulations (1988).

- Class 1 - manual wheelchair, (i.e.) self-propelled or attendant-propelled, not electrically powered;
- Class 2- powered wheelchairs and scooters, for footway use only with a maximum speed limit of 4 mph;
- Class 3- powered wheelchairs, and other outdoor powered vehicles, including scooters, for use on roads/highways with a maximum speed limit of 8 mph and facility to travel at 4 mph on footways.

Class 1, 2 &3 vehicles can be used:-

- On footpaths, pavements, bridleways and pedestrian areas at a maximum speed of 4 mph;
- On most roads at a maximum speed of 8 mph

6. Diversity of Need

It is necessary to consider the physical, sensory and intellectual needs of all potential visitors to the site. The aim should be to think in terms of inclusive design rather than trying to second guess what individual "*problems*" a disabled visitor may present. The objective should be to, where reasonably practical, to design the footpath network so that visitors are not restricted; or "handicapped", by their physical and social surroundings. Social surroundings would include opportunities for disabled people to conveniently enjoy the footpath and natural environment alongside friends and family and other countryside visitors. In terms of impairment it is worth noting that people with disabilities represent approximately 15% of the population and of those about 6% are people who use wheelchairs or outdoor mobility vehicles. Predominantly people with sensory impairments and learning disabilities contribute to the disabled community and their requirements are often more related to information; way-marking and interpretation than physical access needs.

7. Principle of Least Restrictive Access

The Principle of Least Restrictive Access is implicit within the Equality Act (2010). It recognises that it is not necessary to make everywhere and all facilities fully accessible to all disabled people, but asserts that reasonable adjustments are made to provide the best quality of access for as many people as possible, given the constraints presented at a site or facility. Access work should aims to meet the

Countryside for All Rural Standard (See Appendix 2) where practical, to exceed it where possible and to apply the principle of least restrictive access where it is not practical to meet the minimum of the Rural Standard. It is possible that it may not be practical to achieve a gradient of not steeper than 1:10 on the slope after the bridge, but the best quality of surface and optimum gradient should be the aspiration at this point. It is a relatively short stretch and the slope might be mitigated by providing a leaning post and resting point mid-way up the slope. The route would comply with Natural England's By All Reasonable Means Zone C (See Appendix 2.).

There is a clear need in a landscape such as the Swanwick Hall estate to balance the access needs of visitors with the conservation of the landscape. On balance most disabled people would prefer to see reasonable and practical modifications made rather than inappropriate interventions which might ultimately negate the heritage character of the site and the enjoyment of visitors. The aim should be to provide equitable services which reflect the principle of making reasonable adjustments set out in the Equality Act (2010). This should be an objective when designing and improving services and facilities currently and in the future.

8. Methodology

The site assessment methodology, regarding disabled people is based on the Countryside for All Standards and complemented By All Reasonable Means (See Appendix 2.) which is supported by Natural England and the Disabled Ramblers.

The aim is to identify barriers to access and formulate a time critical improvement plan. This might range from immediate "quick fix to extensive groundwork e.g. from replacing the gate fastening latch at the entrance to the permissive route with an easier to operate one to resurfacing the original route and replacing the boardwalk and gateways with accessible alternatives. The process was as follows:

I. The Date the survey and weather conditions are recorded as some areas may present barriers at certain times of the year when affected by the weather
II. Determine the Countryside Setting – See Appendix 2
III. Carry out an Assessment of the landscape against the Standard for the Setting - some tracts of land might include more than one setting See Appendix 2
IV. Record the Barrier and its location – photographic evidence is helpful
V. Provide recommendations for improvement

It is necessary for the landowner to determine the time frame for removing barriers and the resources necessary and to periodically monitor the site accessibility and make any improvements required in the future.

9. Assessment of the Current Footpath Route (Sections ABC on the Plan)

The existing path route commences at Booth Bed Lane in the village of Goostrey and leads to the stable yard at Swanwick Hall Farm, a distance of approximately 450m. The good quality footpath is used by vehicles, visiting the equestrian centre

and house and by pedestrians. The owner Mr Dick has installed traffic lights to establish a safe shared- space route for pedestrians and vehicles. The path is more than 2.5 wide and a mix of trackway with some minor potholes and a tarmac section. The path enters the yard of Swanwick Hall Farm where it passes between the main house, barns and outbuildings, which are now primarily used for equestrian purposes. Visiting riders and vehicles share the space in the yard with pedestrians, including disabled people on the definitive footpath, which has safety implications. It is pertinent to point out that such as wheelchair users may not be able to move quickly if confronted by vehicles and people with sensory impairments are disadvantaged in such environments. The Guide Dogs Society advocate separate delineated routes where there is conflict between blind users and vehicles and deaf and hard of hearing people may not hear approaching vehicles in the stable yard. These are important safety considerations.

The path which is then constructed of loose grave intersects the main buildings and leads to a field gate on an existing residential/equestrian area. The field gate leads to an earth track which follows a field boundary and eventually towards Mill Lane, Goostrey.

Figure 1 Exit gate from the farm/stable yard.

After the gateway the footpath turns and runs parallel to the boundary of the house and garden and a field fence -line. It is initially a grass path before deteriorating into a less defined route.

Figure 2 Grass Route

The subsequent rough grass and earthen path has some undulation and is not an easy going route for disabled people to access. A grass path can be suitable if, for example grazed by sheep, into a consistent firm swaithe, but longer grass is difficult to access by people with mobility impaimensta and blind or visually impaired users. A grass paath should be mown to keep a surface which meets the Standard.

Figure 3 Undulating Footpath

Pedestrians and in particular disabled people are soon confronted by a series of barriers; including two difficult to negotiate field gates and a board walk with stepped access. The entrance point to the boardwalk is restricted by an uneven and poorly maintained path with a step onto the boardwalk of approximately 20cm. The design of the field gate is a barrier to some people with mobility impairments and probably those with visual impairments, as it opens towards the user and the step access will impede independent wheelchair users and people with outdoor mobility scooters.

Figure 4 Field Gate and Step to Boardwalk

The boardwalk is not well maintained and moss, leaf litter, undergrowth and overgrowth encroachment have reduced the useable width and a clear walking tunnel of 1200m x 2100mm is not provided, so the route does not meet the Countryside for All Standard. Boardwalks are prone to becoming slippery surfaces when leaf litter etc. accumulates and it is always best to provide a non-slip safety

surface on the decking to reduce the potential hazard, this has not been provided. The wooden hand rails which a visually impaired or blind person would grip are rough and abrasive.

Figure 5 Poorly Maintained Board Walk

There is a second gate at the other end of the board walk. The second gate is an absolute physical barrier to most wheelchair and mobility scooter users as the box hurdle has been designed with insufficient space to permit a convenient turning space. A gate rail appears to have been broken off to try and create easier access to and from the boardwalk.

Figure 6 Difficult to Negotiate Gate

After the boardwalk the path continues alongside the edge of a field where it is reasonably level and made up of a mix or earth and grass. It does not meet the Standard. As an independent wheelchair users, I found that the combination of the Boardwalk and gates detract from the pleasure of the journey and I would normally have been dissuaded from this route, mainly due to the physical man-made constructions which cause access barriers.

Figure 7 Erath and Gras Path after Boardwalk

The footpath provides a pedestrian route, along an earth path continuing towards Mill Lane Goostrey, where it finishes at a field gate, which does not provide wheelchair or outdoor mobility scooter accessibility.

10. Permissive Footpath Route ADC on Plan

The route, (See Figure 1) followed in assessing the landscape started at the house and stable yard and progressed in a westerly direction along the drive and public right of way where. The good quality path continued to Booth Bed Lane with access to Goostrey village.

After approximately 200m, the permissive footpath was signposted and access provided to a pasture, through an accessible gateway where the path follows the field boundary and fence line.

Figure 8 Field Gate leading to Permissive Path

The path, which is a mix of earth and grass is fairly level, although at the time of the survey was quite muddy. This part of the route provides good views of the open fields and overlooks Shear Brook.

Figure 9 Level Muddy Earth Path

The path turns about 180degrees and the footpath slopes down to a footbridge over Shear Brook, situated in a pleasant valley setting. The slope is steeper than 1:10 and is an earth path so does not meet the Countryside for All Rural Standard. Seating has been provided to assist people who need to take a rest when or after approaching the slopes.

Figure 10 Seating Adjacent to Footbridge

The footbridge is of a good quality with flush access to and from the footpath. The handrail should be extended to enable blind or visually impaired users to navigate more easily and to appreciate when they are leaving the bridge and returning to the footpath. On leaving the footbridge the footpath is muddy and rises at a gradient of steeper than 1:10, so does not meet the Standard.

Figure 11 After leaving bridge Path does not meet Standard

The path levels off and although remains an earth structure and it was firm. There are good views of the surrounding rural countryside and over an attractive nature pond which the landowner has opened up near to the path.

Figure 12 Path provides good countryside views and experiences

The earth path remains level and after approximately 1,000m from the start, the path culminates at an accessible field gate where recent wet weather and regular footfall had caused a muddy gateway. At this point the definitive footpath and the permissive footpath join.

Figure 13 Easy Access Gate – Restricted by Muddy surface

The adjoining footpaths continue towards Mill Lane Goostrey. The path width is narrower than 1000mm and is an earth path which is muddy in parts, but it is level, although it does not meet the Standard. The path meanders past a redundant fence line and stile, eventually culminating at a field gate adjacent to Mill Lane. The field gate is in good condition, but the design precludes wheelchair access.

Figure 14 Path Does Not Meet rural Standard

Figure 15 Footpath finishes at field gate - design restricts wheelchair access

11. Interim Conclusions

In comparing the existing route (Sections ABC) on the plan and the permissive route (Sections ADC on the plan) I considered the level of accessibility and barriers to access for people with a range of disabilities, including wheelchair and outdoor mobility scooter users and people with sensory impairments, including blind and visually impaired path users. I have also thought about conflicts in terms of vehicles and pedestrians accessing shared spaces and particularly the safety implications for disabled people. I have also thought about why visitors wish to visit the site and the levels of enjoyment and convenience that each of the two routes might provide.

I feel that the existing route requires a significant degree of modification to improve the quality to meet the Countryside for All Rural Standard. The access to the boardwalk with the two gates is a major concern as the gates will certainly need to be replaced by wheelchair accessible designs, with level or ramped access to the structure to the boardwalk. The boardwalk is in a poor state of maintenance and will require upgrading and on-going maintenance into the future, to ensure it is fit for purpose. Additionally the full footpath will need be upgraded and constructed to meet the minimum of the Countryside for All Standard.

It is the safety implications of keeping a shared space in the yard where vehicles and pedestrians will be mixing that is a major concern. Traffic lights have been introduced on the drive to mitigate the danger and I feel the risk is potentially greater in the yard. People with sensory impairments are at clear risk, perhaps not seeing or hearing (or both) visiting vehicles and farm and equestrian traffic.

In term of enjoyment of the countryside environment, the stress of crossing the shared space area may deter some disabled people. The route along the field edges were visited in February when the hedgerows were bare, so it is hard to compare the aesthetic and natural history value later in the year, but as the route currently exists it is not a healthy or enjoyable option.

In comparison the permissive footpath does not require pedestrians to enter the farm/equestrian area, so the conflict between vehicles and pedestrians is effectively removed.

There is barrier free access leading from the drive the footpath route. As with the existing route the full permissive path will need to be upgraded to meet the Countryside for All Rural Standard. The route is barrier free throughout and the only place where the Rural Standard will be difficult to meet will be on either side of the footbridge over the brook. The gradient of the slopes may be mitigated by contouring the design of a new footpath where practical and by providing additional resting points and seats.

The permissive route is attractive and enjoyable as it offers a mix of natural features, brook, ponds, open spaces and hedgerows and good countryside views. On the day

of visiting, there were many more visitors using the permissive path, none were encountered on the existing path.

12. Conclusion

In taking into account the points outlined in Section 11 Interim conclusions I feel that the most suitable route from an accessibility perspective in the permissive footpath (ADC) as it already exists as a barrier free route with countryside furniture which is fit for purpose, this cannot be said of the board walk and gates at each end of the existing route. It is fair to say that both footpaths require significant construction work and surfacing to meet a minimum of the Rural Standard. Appendix 2 provides details of the access audit, of both footpaths, identifying barriers to access and provides recommendations for improvement to each section of the existing and permissive footpath.

In terms of the landscape the slopes leading to and from Shear Brook at the footbridge are steeper than 1:10 in places and the existing footpath (ABC) does not include any slopes steeper than 1; 10 so meets that characteristic of the Rural Standard. It is likely that the slopes may be mitigated with landscaping and that additional strategically positioned seating and rest points will be required.

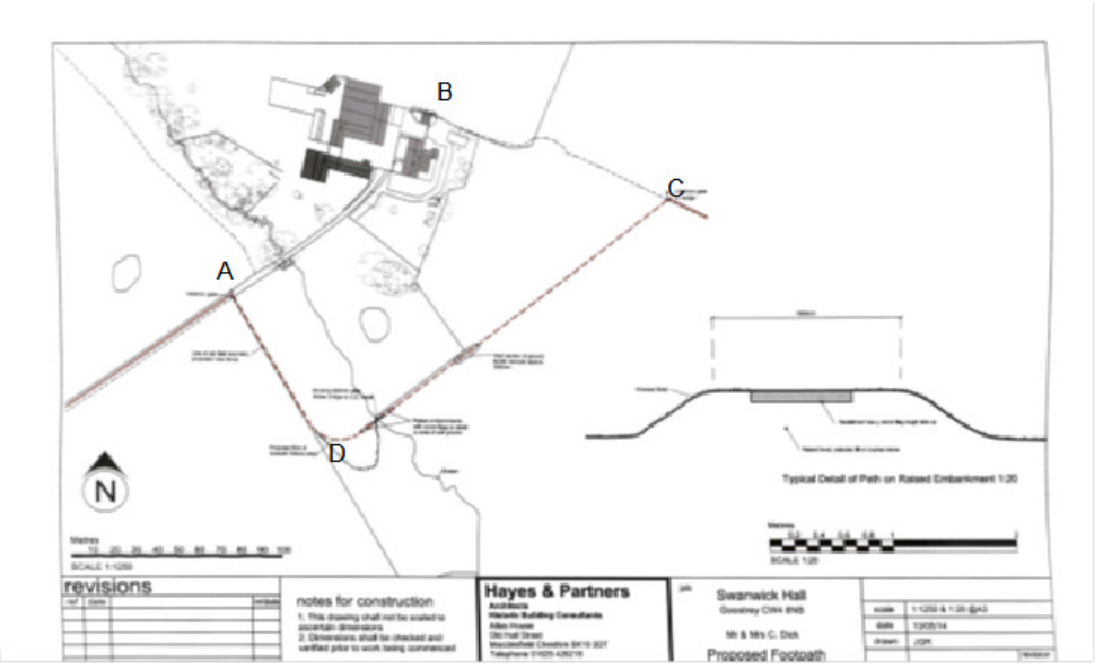
On balance, although subjective, I feel the permissive footpath provides more countryside and natural features than the existing route and for this reason may be more enjoyable to visitors including disabled people.

The most significant reason for recommending the permissive route as the preferred one is based on safety. I feel that if the existing footpath is upgraded to the Countryside for All Standard, then it will attract more visitors with disabilities and there are inherent dangers of mixing people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments with moving traffic and machinery in a shared space environment such as the yard of the equestrian centre.

However, if it is decided to maintain the existing route; then recommendations set out in the access audit report at Appendix 2 should only be implemented on condition that full consultation with disability led organisations is arranged and only on gaining their support for a shared space safety protocol for pedestrians and vehicles in the equestrian yard should the access improvement work be carried out.

Appendix 1

Site Plan (ABC Existing Route & ADC Permissive Route)



Appendix 2

Full Access Survey Report with Recommendations to reduce Access Barriers

Swanwick Hall Access Survey February 2016

Introduction

Phil Chambers Consultancy (PCC) was asked by Robin Carr Associates on behalf of Mr Cameron Dick of Swanwick Hall, Goostrey, Cheshire to assess a footpath network at Swanwick Hall in terms of providing a convenient public path and particularly to assess the usability by people with a range of disabilities. Mr Dick would like to realign part of the footpath and has provided an optional permissive footpath, as an alternative to the original designated footpath (Figure 1). PCC was asked to identify current barriers to access and to make recommendations for improvements.

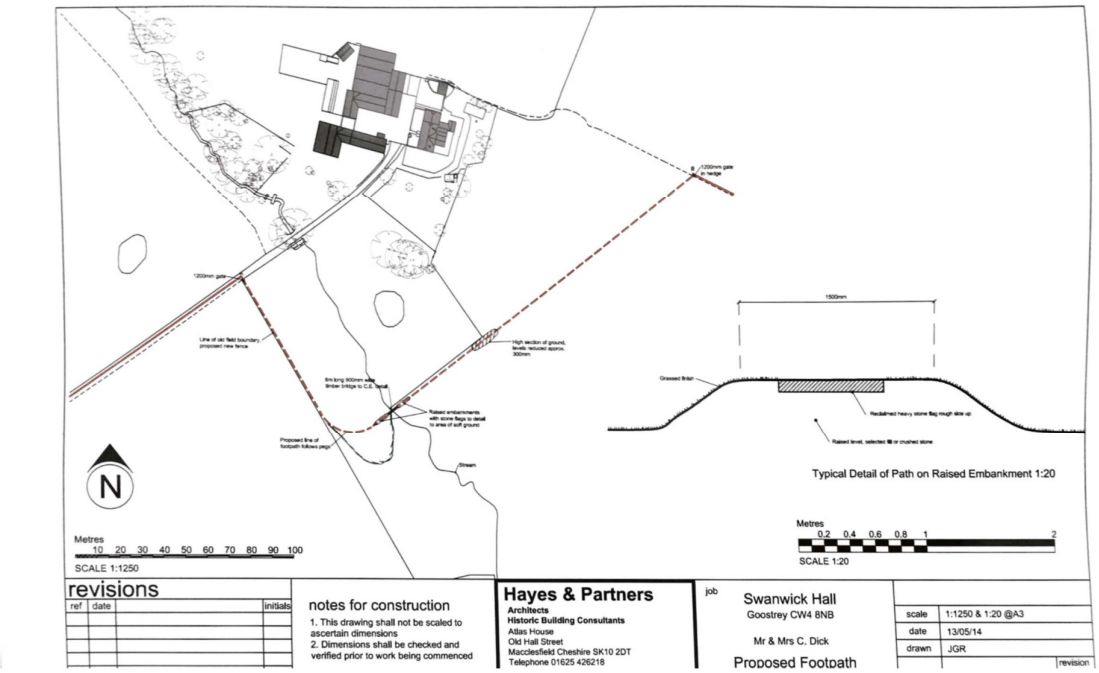


Figure 16 Existing Footpath & Permissive Path

Legislative Framework

The two key legislative considerations are the Equality Act (2010) which incorporated the principles of the Disability Discrimination Act (2006) and the Countryside Rights of Way Act – CROW (2000).

The Equality Act (2010) sets out the requirements to meet the needs of people defined as having “protected characteristics” within the law, including people with disabilities. The Act sets out a requirement for service providers to ensure that “reasonable adjustments” are made and auxiliary aids are provided to support equality of opportunity objectives. The landscape topography or history of a place may well impact on what is deemed “reasonable”. The Act outlines four options for overcoming a barrier caused by a physical feature. These are:

5) Removal of the feature;
6) Alterations to the feature;
7) Providing a reasonable means of avoiding it;
8) Providing the service by a reasonable alternative method if none of the preceding options is viable

The CROW Act (2000) makes provision for public access to the countryside and promotes increased and better opportunities for disabled people.

Diversity of Need

It is necessary to consider the physical, sensory and intellectual needs of all potential visitors to the site. The aim should be to think in terms of inclusive design rather than trying to second guess what individual "*problems*" a disabled visitor may present. The objective should be to, where reasonably practical, to design the footpath network so that visitors are not restricted; or "handicapped", by their physical and social surroundings. Social surroundings would include opportunities for disabled people to conveniently enjoy the footpath and natural environment alongside friends and family and other countryside visitors. In terms of impairment it is worth noting that people with disabilities represent approximately 15% of the population and of those about 6% are people who use wheelchairs or outdoor mobility vehicles. Predominantly people with sensory impairments and learning disabilities contribute to the disabled community and their requirements are often more related to information; way-marking and interpretation than physical access needs.

Principle of Least Restrictive Access

The Principle of Least Restrictive Access is implicit within the Equality Act (2010). It recognises that it is not necessary to make everywhere and all facilities fully accessible to all disabled people, but asserts that reasonable adjustments are made to provide the best quality of access for as many people as possible, given the constraints presented at a site or facility. It is recommended that the access work planned aims to meet the Countryside for All Rural Standard (See Appendix 2.) where practical, to exceed it where possible and to apply the principle of least restrictive access where it is not practical to meet the minimum of the Rural Standard. It is possible that it may not be practical to achieve a gradient of not steeper than 1:10 on the slope after the bridge, but the best quality of surface and optimum gradient should be the aspiration at this point. It is a relatively short stretch and the slope might be mitigated by providing a leaning post and resting point mid-way up the slope. The route would comply with Natural England's By All Reasonable Means Zone C (See Appendix 2).

There is a clear need in a landscape such as the Swanwick Hall estate to balance the access needs of visitors with the conservation of the landscape. On balance most disabled people would prefer to see reasonable and practical modifications made rather than inappropriate interventions which might ultimately negate the heritage character of the site and the enjoyment of visitors. The aim should be to provide equitable services which reflect the principle of making reasonable adjustments set out in the Equality Act (2010). This should be an objective when designing and improving services and facilities currently and in the future.

Methodology

The site assessment methodology, regarding disabled people is based on the Countryside for All Standards[3] and By All Reasonable Means (See Appendix 2.2-4) which is supported by Natural England and the Disabled Ramblers.

The aim is to identify barriers to access and formulate a time critical improvement plan. This might range from immediate "quick fix to extensive groundwork e.g. from replacing the gate fastening latch at the entrance to the permissive route with an easier to operate one to resurfacing the original route and replacing the boardwalk and gateways with accessible alternatives. The process was as follows:

13. The Date the survey and weather conditions are recorded as some areas may present barriers at certain times of the year when affected by the weather
14. Determine the Countryside Setting – See Appendix 1
15. Carry out an Assessment of the landscape against the Standard for the Setting - some tracts of land might include more than one setting See Appendix 2
16. Record the Barrier and its location – photographic evidence is helpful
17. Provide recommendations for improvement

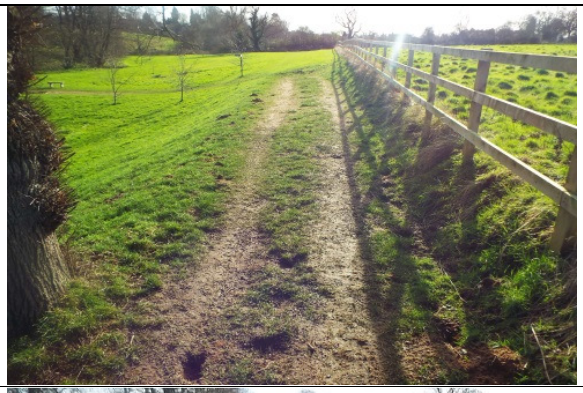
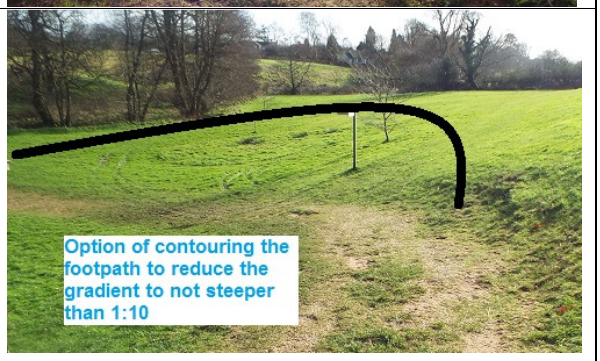
It is necessary for the landowner to determine the time frame for removing barriers and the resources necessary and to periodically monitor the site accessibility and make any improvements required in the future.

Swanwick Hall Access Survey

The access survey was carried out on dry winter day in February 2016. The site was assessed meeting the Countryside for All Rural Setting, with a score of 17 (See Appendix 1) for method of determining setting and Appendix 2.3 for minimum Rural Access Standard. The table below identifies the key barriers to access and the recommendations for improvements. It is recommended that where practical the minimum standard should be bettered and if it cannot be achieved the Principal of Least Restrictive access is applied - see Appendix 2.4 By All Reasonable Means. To aspire to meeting the minimum standard it is recommended that a new path is constructed along the complete route.

Comments/ Barrier	**Recommendation**	**Photographic Location**
It is quite difficult, particularly for wheelchair users to operate gate latch	Provide Centrewire access gate or an equestrian latch in the short term See: http://centrewire.com/product-category/pedestrian-and-mobility-access-	

[3] Fieldfare Trust

to gain access to the permissive route	gates/ for example the gate opposite provides access for wheelchairs and most outdoor mobility scooters	
Some drainage work has been done, but the earthen path is not firm in wet weather	Provide a firm and compact surface to meet the Countryside for All Urban and Formal Standard Appendix 2.2 on this level section Address drainage issues to maintain quality of path	
Slope down to bridge is steeper than 1:10 and does not meet Rural Standard (Initially 1:9 steepest 1:6)	Aspire to contouring the slope to meet a minimum of the Rural Standard See Appendix 2.3 with a gradient not steeper than 1:10, provide level resting pads of 1500mm x 2000mm every 9.6m If resources permit a boardwalk over the grass/reed-bed might be provided	
There is flush access from the path to the bridge and safety treads have been provided. The bridge handrail is functional, but would be	Extend handrails on the bridge to meet specification below: Handrails should be 1000mm from the ground. A secondary rail of 7500mm may be provided for children; Hand rails should be smooth and non-abrasive; Grips should be between 40mm – 50mm. Grip designed in children's areas should be 25mm-32mm; Hand	

improved by extending the length at each end and tapering downwards at the star/finish to advise users with visual impairments that they are moving to a different surface.	rails should extend at least 300mm beyond the end of a hazard, bridge or any access ramp. Handrail should be made visible by providing colour/tonal contrast with the surrounding space. The height of the hand rail should be gradually reduced to 850mm as it culminates to alert visually impaired people that they are re-joining the main pathway.	
A bench is provided close to the bridge which assist people with mobility needs to access slopes more easily As an alternative to seats leaning posts might be provided from time to time See example opposite	Seating or leaning posts should be provided every provided every 300m to meet the Rural Standard – this might be bettered to mitigate slopes on long open stretches. Leaning posts such as the one opposite can be alternatives to formal seats – these are often constructed from recycled timber and windfall Passing places should be provided every 150m along the route and additionally at pinch points See Appendix 3	 

The gradient after the bridge is steeper than 1:10 in parts	Aspire to designing the path to a minimum of Rural Standard. If this is not practical meet the Principle of Least Restrictive Access and By All Reasonable means standard See Appendix 2.4 A resin bond surface, in parts, might add to the traction for wheelchair users Provide resting point on the slope with a minimum specification of 1200mm x 15000mm and provide a leaning post mid-point	
Straight and level 50m path from crest of hill from brook; good views including over the nature pond	Resurface the path to meet the minimum of the Rural Standard and aspire to an improved quality if practical Provide resting point to benefit from view of pond and provide searing or leaning post Resting places should be provided every 350m	
There is good clear signage provided at this point and generally good directional markers	Signage should be clear concise and consistent in design	

The path is muddy leading to the field gate which needs modifying to meet the Rural Standard. A pothole has been formed due to heavy pedestrian use of the earthen path. A finger post shows the original footpath route	Resurface the footpath to meet a minimum of the Rural Standard, although as the gateway is heavily used then aspire to better Standard. Address the pothole and drainage issue Replace the field-gate with an accessible Centrewire alternative or improve access to the latch e.g. equestrian latch	
The footpath extension (to the right) towards the village does not meet the Rural Standard. An old stile and fence-line is a physical barrier, although it has been avoided by a pedestrian desire line.	If this path constitutes part of the access development plan resurface to meet the Rural Standard and provide centre wire gates at the end of the path leading to the village If the original gateway, now unused needs to be kept provide Centrewire option.	

		
The original footpath is potholed and muddy. Towards the boardwalk, there are two gates that are barriers to outdoor mobility scooters and wheelchair users and require replacing with an accessible Centrewire alternative The boardwalk requires remedial work or better replace There is a 20cmstep onto the boardwalk	Upgrade the footpath to meet a minimum of the Rural Standard Provide level or ramped access to/from the boardwalk Replace the two existing gates with accessible alternatives See Appendix 3 Path Widths Carry out remedial work or replace boardwalk, remove moss and leaf litter to aspire to maintaining a sustainable accessible route	 

The path to the yard of stables and house is earthen and of poor quality ending at a field-gate In the yard there is a real shared space danger, where vehicles and people mix. There is a loose gravel surface leading back to boundary of the house and stable yard boundary A tarmac road joins the access lane from to the permissive footpath Traffic lights have been provided for control	Upgrade and resurface the path to a minimum of the Rural Standard Provide a formal footpath to meet the minimum of the Rural Standard Across the yard and adopt a shared space protocol to safeguard pedestrians Seek to find an alternative route to avoid the shared space dangers	 

of vehicles on lane to safeguard users		

Appendices

Appendix 1 Determining the Countryside Setting

Scoring system for choosing setting			
Feature	**Expectation**	**Criteria**	**Score**
Visitor centre, encouraging or helping people enjoy the countryside	More chance of meeting other people. Evidence of management. Less challenge or risk	Visitor centre less than 500m away	+10
		Visitor centre between 500m and 1000m away	+5
Parking areas of 20 spaces or more (including lay-bys and roadside parking)	More chance of meeting other people. Less naturalness.	Parking area less than 500m away	+8
		Parking area between 500m and 1000m away	+4
Parking areas of 20		Parking area less than 500m away	+6

spaces or less (including lay-bys and road-side parking)			
		Parking area between 500m and 1000m away	+3
How the land lies	More naturalness. Greater challenge or risk	Steepest slope of ground on which the path lies greater than 1:6	-3
Habitation	Less naturalness. More chance of meeting other people.	Group of at least 100 buildings within 1000m	+8
		Group of at least 25 buildings within 500m	+6
		Group of at least 25 buildings within 500m and 1000m	+3
Character of path	Some naturalness. Management. Need to rely on yourself more.	Path surface tarmac or concrete	+2
		Path surface not constructed (earth trodden by use, or across open ground)	-4
Public transport	More chance of meeting	Bus stop, station etc. within	+5

point	other people. Need to rely on yourself more.	1000m	

Scoring for table Setting = Sum of all scores measured against the rows below

Score	
Up to 15	Urban and formal
15 to 22	Urban fringe and managed
10 to 17	Rural and working
Less than 17	By All Reasonable Means Zone C & D

Appendix 2 Countryside Standards

Appendix 2.1 Urban and Formal Standard

1. Path Surface must be hard, firm and smooth with very few loose stones (none bigger than 5mm).
2. Path Width 1200mm minimum width.
3. Width Restrictions 815mm minimum width for no more than 300mm along length of path – 1000mm width for no more than 1600mm along the length of the path.
4. Barriers No stiles, steps, fences, hedges etc., blocking the path.
5. Ramp Gradient 1:12 maximum.
6. Rise of ramps Where the place is steeper than 1:20 (i.e. a ramp), a level resting place should be provided. The maximum height rise between landings is 750mm.

Maximum distance between landings for 750mm vertical climb

Gradient	Max Distance between Landings
1:18	13.5
1:16	12.0
1:14	10.5
1:12	9.0

7. Cross Slope 1:50 maximum
8. Steps 5mm maximum.
9. Surface Break Breaks in path surface as in boardwalks, grates, grills etc., should be no more than 12mm measured in the direction of travel along the path.
10. Clear Walking A tunnel clear of overhanging or encroaching Tunnel vegetation, and other obstructions should be a minimum of 1200mm wide and 2100 high.
11. Passing Place There should be a passing place every 50 metres along the path. The minimum width of the path should be 1500mm for 2000mm along the length of the path.

12. Resting Places There should be a resting point every 100m along the path. Each resting point should have a seat or perch, which is placed on surfaced, level ground. These should be set back from the path and, in addition to path width, be at least 1200mm wide and 1500mm long.

Appendix 2.2 Urban Fringe and Managed Standard

1. Path Surface must be hard and firm with very few loose stones (none bigger than 10mm)
2. Path Width 1200mm minimum width.
3. Width Restrictions 815mm minimum width for no more than 300mm along the length of path – 1000mm width for no more than 1600mm along the length of the path.
4. Barriers No stiles, steps, fences, hedges etc., blocking the path.
5. Ramp Gradient 1:12 maximum.
6. Rise of ramps Where the place is steeper than 1:20 (i.e. a ramp), a level, resting place should be provided. The maximum height rise between landings is 830mm.

Maximum distance between landings for 830mm vertical climb	
Gradient	**Max Distance between Landings**
1:18	14.94
1:16	13.28
1:14	11.62
1:12	9.9

7. Cross Slope 1:45 maximum.
8. Steps 10mm maximum.
9. Surface Break Breaks in path surface as in boardwalks, grates, grills etc., should be no more than 12mm measured in the direction of travel along the path.
10. Clear Walking A tunnel clear of overhanging or encroaching
11. Tunnel vegetation, and other obstructions should be a minimum of 1200mm wide and 2100 high.
12. Passing Place There should be a passing place every 100 metres along the path. The minimum width of the path should be 1500mm for 2000mm along the length of the path.

13. Resting Places There should be a resting point every 200m along the path. Each resting point should have a seat or perch which is placed on surfaced, level ground. Resting points should be set back from the path and, in addition to the path width, be at least 1200mm wide and 1500mm long.

Appendix 2.3 Rural and Working Landscape Standard

1. Path Surface must be hard but may have some loose stones but not covering the whole surface (stones no bigger than 10mm).
2. Path Width 1000mm minimum width.
3. Width Restrictions 815mm minimum width for no more than 300mm along the length of path – 915mm width for no more than 1600mm along the length of the path.
4. Barriers No stiles, steps, fences, hedges etc., blocking the path.
5. Ramp Gradient 1:10 maximum.
6. Rise of ramps Where the place is steeper than 1:20 (i.e. a ramp), a level, resting place should be provided. The maximum height rise between landings is 950mm.

Maximum distance between landings for 950mm vertical climb	
Gradient	**Max Distance between Landings**
1:18	17.10
1:16	15.2
1:14	13.3
1:12	11.4
1:10	9.5

7. Cross Slope 1:35 maximum.
8. Steps 15mm maximum.
9. Surface Break Breaks in path surface as in boardwalks, grates, grills etc., should be no more than 12mm measured in the direction of travel along the path.

10. Clear Walking A tunnel clear of overhanging or encroaching Tunnel vegetation, and other obstructions should be a minimum of 1000mm wide and 2100 high.
11. Passing Place There should be a passing place every 150 metres along the path. The minimum width of the path should be 1500mm for 2000mm along the length of the path.
12. Resting Places There should be a resting point every 300m along the path. Each resting point should have a seat or perch which is placed on surfaced, level ground. Resting points should be set back from the path and, in addition to the path width, be at least 1200mm wide and 1500mm long.

Appendix 2.4 By All Reasonable Means Access Zones

By All Reasonable Means Access Zones – Access Guidance

Zone A - Countryside for All Standard. Zone B provides paths which may have been modified and are generally hard and firm throughout the year and are at least 900mm wide and with step changes not higher than 40mm (1.5 inches). Gradients of not steeper than 1:10, for natural paths and 1:8 for constructed paths are acceptable. Cross slopes should not be steeper than 1:35. Zone C includes paths of a minimum width of 900cm, with no barriers such as stiles, but step changes are permissible of 100mm (4 inches). Paths need not necessarily be hard and firm in all weathers, with occasional tree routes protruding and occasional potholes and gradients not steeper than 1:8. Cross slopes should not be steeper than 1:25. It was found that NRW sites offered a mix of physical access provision ranging from the Countryside for All - Urban Formal to By All Reasonable Zone C.

Appendix 3 Path Width Specifications

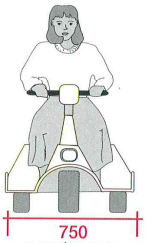
Path Users/Path Width

1.1

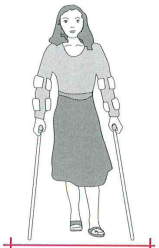
BT Countryside for All


600
single person


700
wheelchair user


750
scootor user

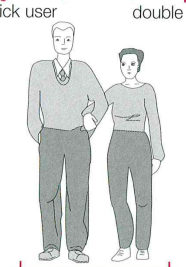

900
long cane user

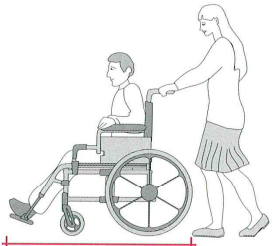

950
double stick user


1000
double push chair


1100
adult & guide dog

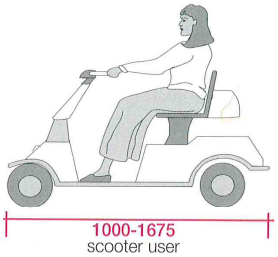

1100
adult & child


1200
adult & helper


1250
1750
wheelchair user & helper

The width of paths in the countryside will depend on a number of factors:

- Who you expect to use it. For example, pedestrians only, cyclists, horse riders, motorised vehicles or a combination of some or all of these.
- How many users you expect. Busy paths need to be wider.


1000-1675
scooter user

N.B. All measurements are in millimetres