

**FOOTPATH REPORT FOR ALAN RADFORD**  
**by Tony Pritchard - July 2023**

I have completed my walk along all Dudley paths south of A456 and done first aid clearance work where I was able. With a few exceptions all paths can be walked by someone with a reasonable level of fitness and agility. That is not to say that they are good. A proper job is only possible by a work party with some power tools and many stiles need updating.

**Problem areas.**

Path 183 alongside Uffmoor Wood should be top of priorities. Where the path leaves the track to Tack Farm there is a barbed wire fence between the field and the wood for 200m and it is very much overgrown. I made it walkable for the first 100m to a point where the fence has fallen down. Wakers step over it and walk along the field. The path then is overgrown with bracken and is in the course of a ditch. It was too much for me so I left it, did the same as everyone else and walked along the field. Once the end of the fence is reached it is an easy walk along the edge of the field.

Further along the same path a water course crosses the path. It is difficult to cross and I have reported it previously. Last year I recommended two railway sleepers to make a bridge but we have gone beyond that now as water crosses in two places. It may be that there is a blocked culvert as the water downstream just off the path is 3 feet lower. I think it needs an expert to look at it. This isn't a minor path but a through route from Hayley Green to Romsley and gets a fair amount of use.

Path 174 parallel to the bypass continues to be a problem. A 2m strip between the hedge and the barley crop in the western field has been left by the farmer as a path but it cannot be walked as it is so overgrown. I went along it making my way between the barley and the path with difficulty, Clearing this isn't a job for someone with handtools. I opened up the stiles at each end and in the middle. When the barley has been cut it will be possible to walk along the stubble but that isn't ideal.

**There are 3 footpath signs missing in Uffmoor Lane at the start of paths 173, 183 and 182. In Illey Lane there are two signs needed, at the start of paths 93 and 100. If we have to prioritise, the two in urgent need are at Uffmoor Lane, path 183 where there is confusion because of a private drive sign and 100 in Illey Lane because of proposed house building at Innage Farm. The sign at the start of H402 at Illey is hidden in a holly bush and needs a Council crew to fix it. This is at the start of the track to Warstones farm.**

**I have not opened up two stiles, on path 76 and at the junction of 76/67/80. The opening by them has no farm gate so walkers can go straight through. If I find gates I will clear the stiles but each would take me an hour.**

**A signpost is needed at the right angle on path 78. The wooden post has rotted and fallen over twice in the last 15 years and I have re erected it twice but there is now not enough left for further use. If you could give me a 2m post and a couple of footpath and monarch`s way signs I can do the job. I could collect from Leasowes.**

**We still need a second step and a permanent top rail on the stile on path 58 at Carters Lane. Perry fitted a temporary top rail to stop the sheep jumping the stile and that could be reused as a grab post.**

**Path 109 at Lower Illey is an annual problem. I have opened up the stiles at the western end and in the middle. Walking alongside the western field is passable with difficulty and the farmer has done a bit of clearance where he has cut the hedge but alongside the eastern field is obstructed with vegetation and I didn`t attempt to clear it.**

**Path 105 is well used and some years ago a fence was put between the woodland and the field. The woodland has now extended out beyond the fence and everyone walks along the field. 30m from the stile at the south end the fence has fallen down and it is possible to step over it to get to the stile, not ideal. Some years ago I asked the farmer if he could fix the barbed wire at the other end of the stile but he said he would be blocking the footpath.**

**On path 112 near the Worcestershire border there is a flight of overgrown steps. I have ignored them for the last two years as everyone walks down the slope and there is no footfall to keep the steps open. In winter the slope is difficult as it is slippery.**

**The bridge on path 66 near The Abbey is in urgent need of replacement. The top rails are bowing down 5 or 6 inches near the eastern end probably indicating that the main beams are fractured. That`s about it for the moment.**