

Proposals to extend the Berryfields Paths with a Greenway route through to Buckingham Park



View of Green Lane approaching St Peter's Chapel

**Greenways & Cycleroutes Limited
for Buckinghamshire County Council**

June 2021 with landscape revisions October 2021

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Appendices bound separately:

Appendix 1 - Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Two Wheels Ecology

Appendix 2 - Archaeological Walkover Study by Oxford Archaeology

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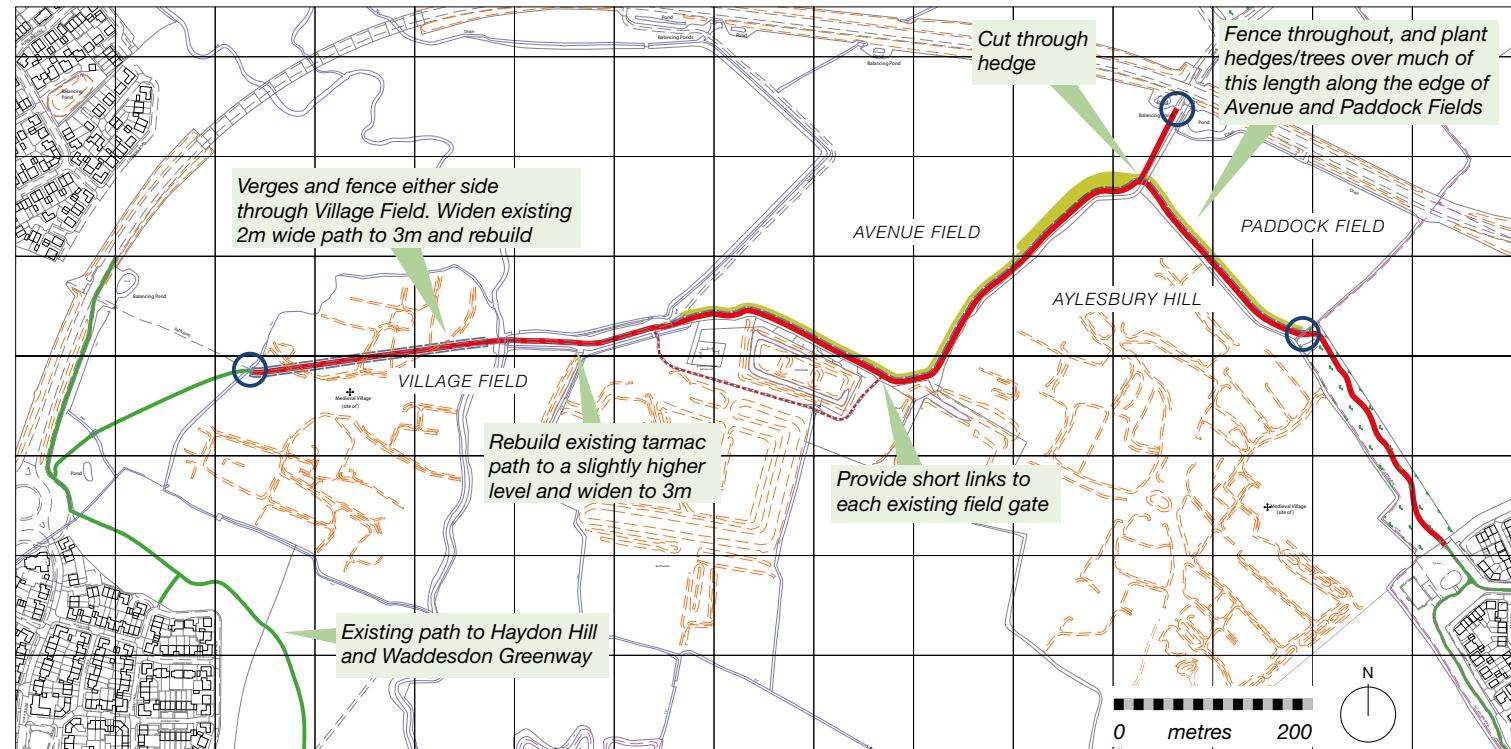
Proposals to extend the Berryfields Paths with a Greenway route through to Buckingham Park

1 Introduction

This 1.7km long path will link existing paths in Berryfields with those in Buckingham Park, to make an attractive and traffic free connection between these two quarters of Aylesbury. Buckingham Park will then have a complete traffic greenway to Aylesbury Vale Parkway and then via the Waddesdon Greenway to Waddesdon and the Manor.

This path is part of the Aylesbury Gardenway project which aims to provide walking and cycling routes through landscaped corridors and parks all to a standard which will make it a pleasure to walk and cycle around the area.

The vision of a town which flips over the current dominance of cars is very much to do with promoting active travel for fitness and health for recovering the local streets for local people and our making a much smaller impact on the planet. A walking and cycling town will make a real and positive contribution towards combating climate change.



Berryfields and Buckingham Park linking path showing the Aylesbury Gardenway and existing paths

- Existing paths
- Proposed link
- Entrances to Trust lands



Waddesdon Greenway in use

2 Background and options

The river valley of the Thame makes for a most attractive green space around the northern side of Aylesbury, but it is prone to flooding on a fairly regular basis.



View of floods, January 2021

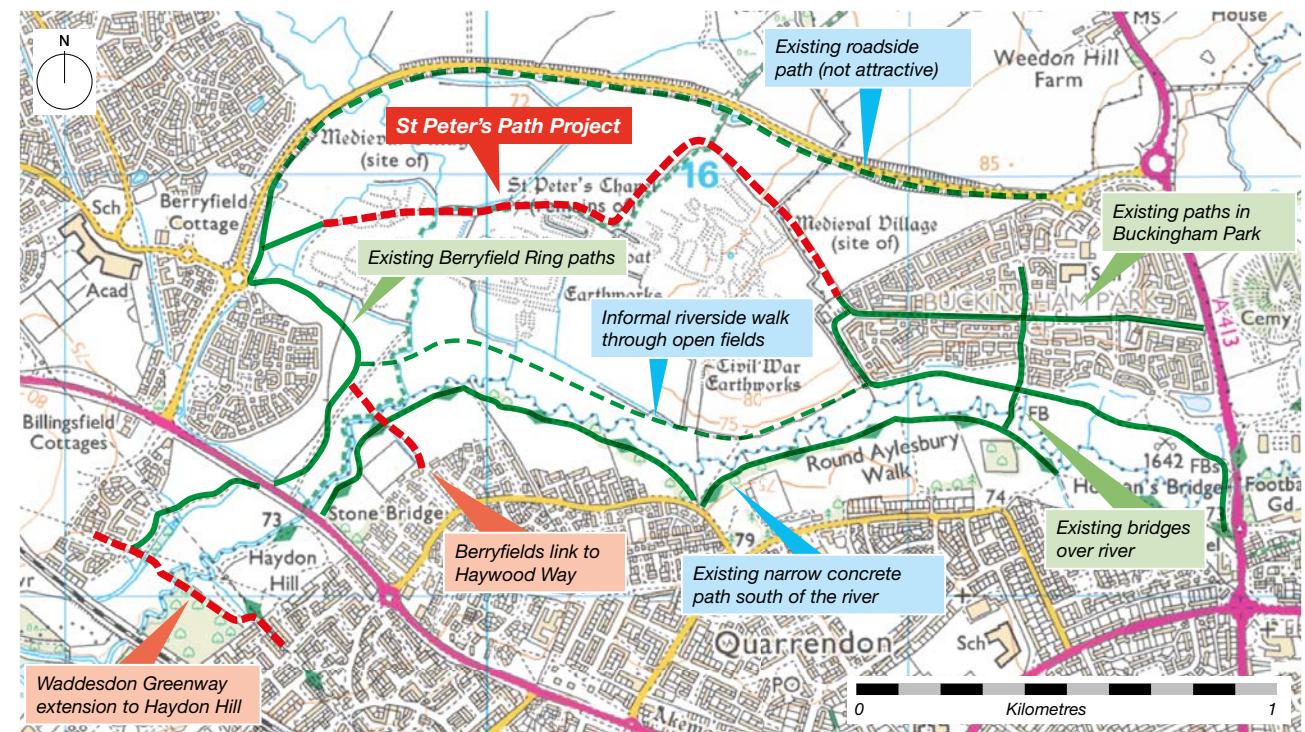
The existing riverside path on the Quarrendon bank of the river is completely inundated this year. It might be possible to construct a path above the flood levels on either the north side or the south side of the river, but this would be difficult.

The one possible route in the area which is almost completely above the flood levels, although only just, is the path across the site of the medieval village to St Peter's Chapel, and this is the route proposed for this link.

This route will connect across the river at a number of points: the timber bridge near Malford Crescent, the planned Haywood Way link by the side of the football club, the lattice truss bridge at Stone Bridge beside the Bicester Road and via the new Haydon Hill Link currently under construction (June 2021).



Picture of Haydon Hill Bridge being lifted into place



Linking path options considered

Once the St Peter's Path is built there will be a good range of routes to choose from, depending upon the season and the purpose of the journey. The St Peter's Path will be a sound year round route; the existing riverside path will mostly be usable except in times of flood, and on the north side of the river the public can casually ramble across the grass meadows in dry weather.

3 Details of St Peter's Path

The planned path is described in a series of detailed maps on the following pages. They start at the Berryfields end by leading off from the existing new built path in the area.

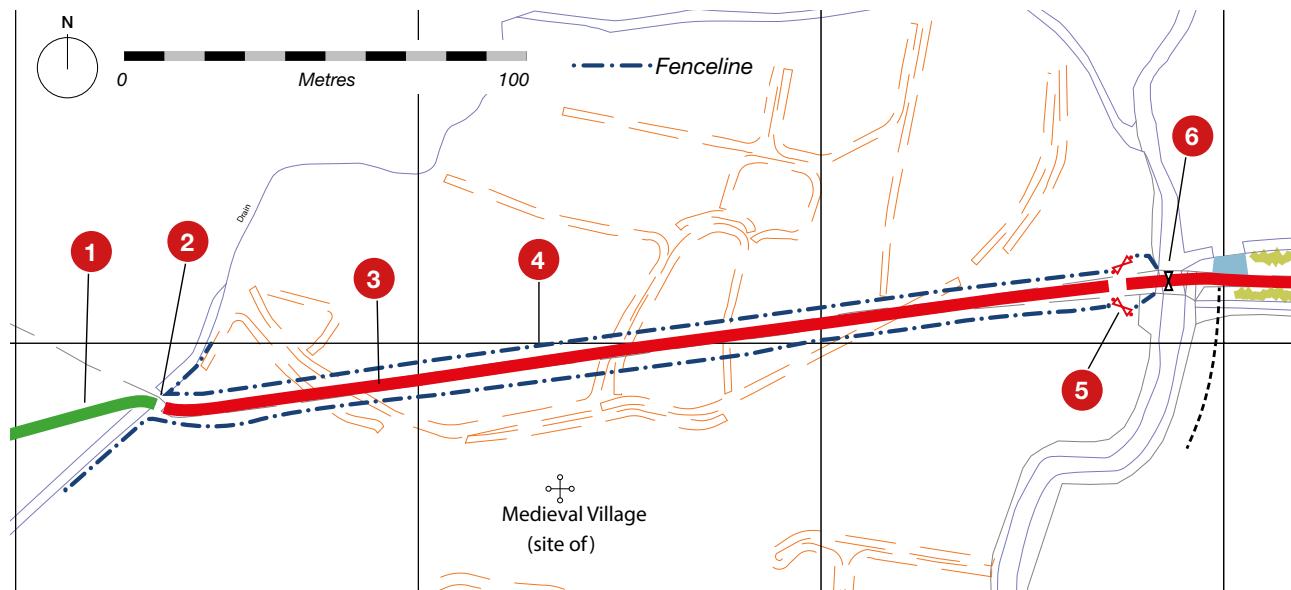
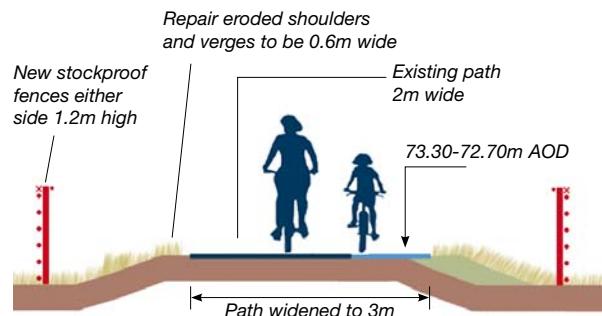


View of existing Berryfields path near compensation pond (kerbs will not be used in this Buckingham Park Link project)

Points of note are described on each map together with a picture of a typical section. Detailed cross sections are provided to show how the path will look in relationship to the ground and its surroundings.

Details of all fences and gates follow on pages 10-12.

Cross section through Village Field



Map 1 - Village Field 260m long

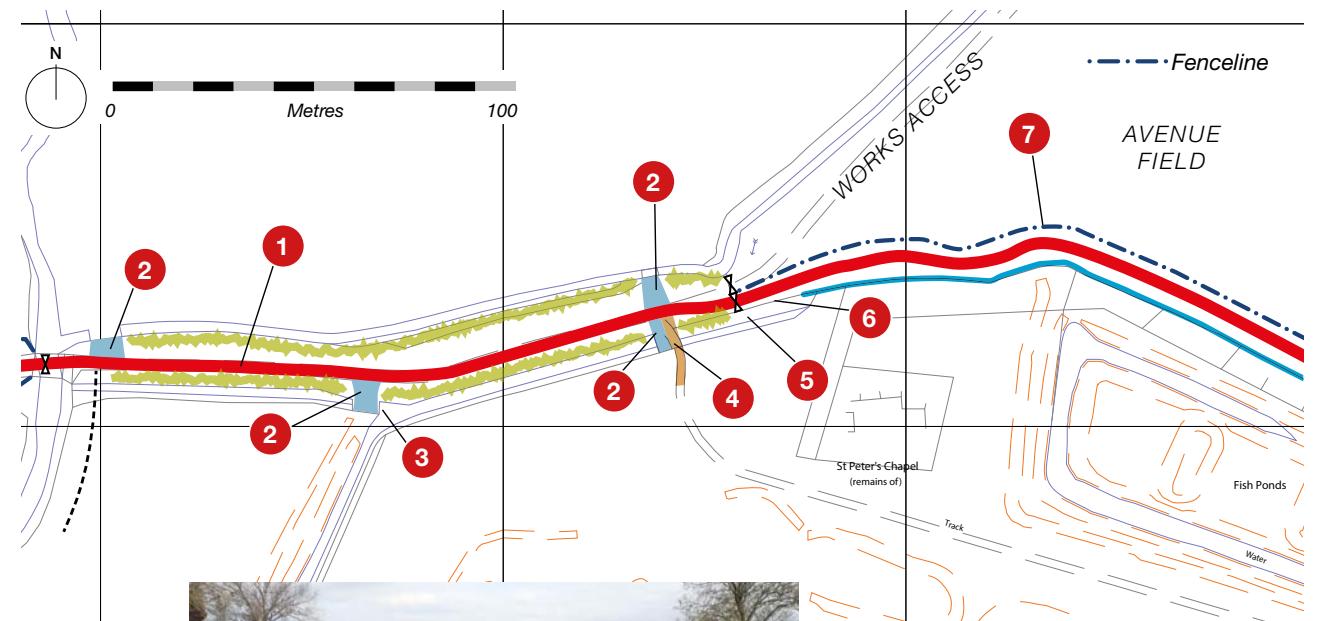
- Completed Berryfields path links to Haydon Hill, Roman Park, Aylesbury Vale Parkway Station and Waddesdon Greenway.
- Remove existing kissing gate and replace with 1.5m wide wicket gate. This will usually be kept open. It marks the entrance to the Conservation Trust's land, and this gateway needs to be marked with an entry arch or similar.
- The existing tarmac path runs on a causeway above the 100-year flood level. The existing path is only 2m wide. This surface will be widened to 3m for comfortable shared use by walkers and cyclists, and the verges either side strengthened and repaired.
- Fence both sides with stockproof netting and barbed wire. This will ensure that the public, and their dogs, do not disturb the livestock.
- The planned gate arrangement will allow for stock to pass into both halves of Village Field and between both halves. On rare occasions the public will have to wait whilst stock is moved from the north field to the south.
- Existing 3.5m stock gate and 1.5m wicket gate to remain to assist stock management. The wicket gate will normally be kept open.



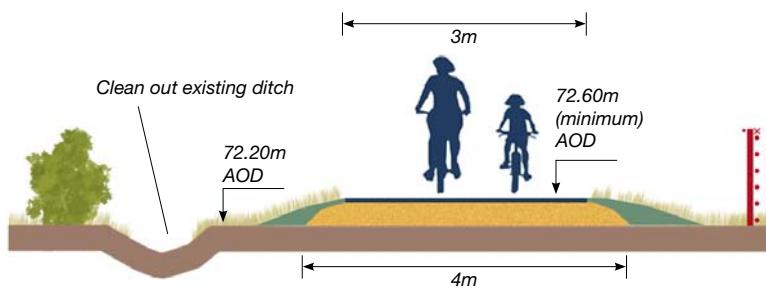
Existing path across Village Field

Map 2 - Farm Track 160m and Avenue Field

- 1 The farm track is 2m wide and as a consequence farm vehicles overrun the verges. The track will be reconstructed 3m wide and to an accurate level of 71.6m AOD. This will raise the current levels by up to 200mm to create a path mostly clear of floods.
- 2 Lay compacted stone link to field gate, 3m wide and extend 5m past the gate into the field.
- 3 The culvert across the entrance to the "L" shaped field is in poor condition. It will be replaced with a new 450mm dia culvert finished with sandbag headwalls. Stone through the gate as standard.
- 4 Rearrange the link to the Chapel to tie in with the renewed farm track.
- 5 Install new 3m gate across adjacent existing gate, extend the existing 300 culvert by 6m, backfill and take path through. This gate will usually be open unless stock is being moved.
- 6 Culvert extended and ditch infilled to provide for path.
- 7 New field fence over whole length. The path will run through on a shallow causeway with a level of 72.60m AOD to raise the surface clear of floods. Maintain this level or higher depending upon ground level.



Gates at east end of track into Avenue Field

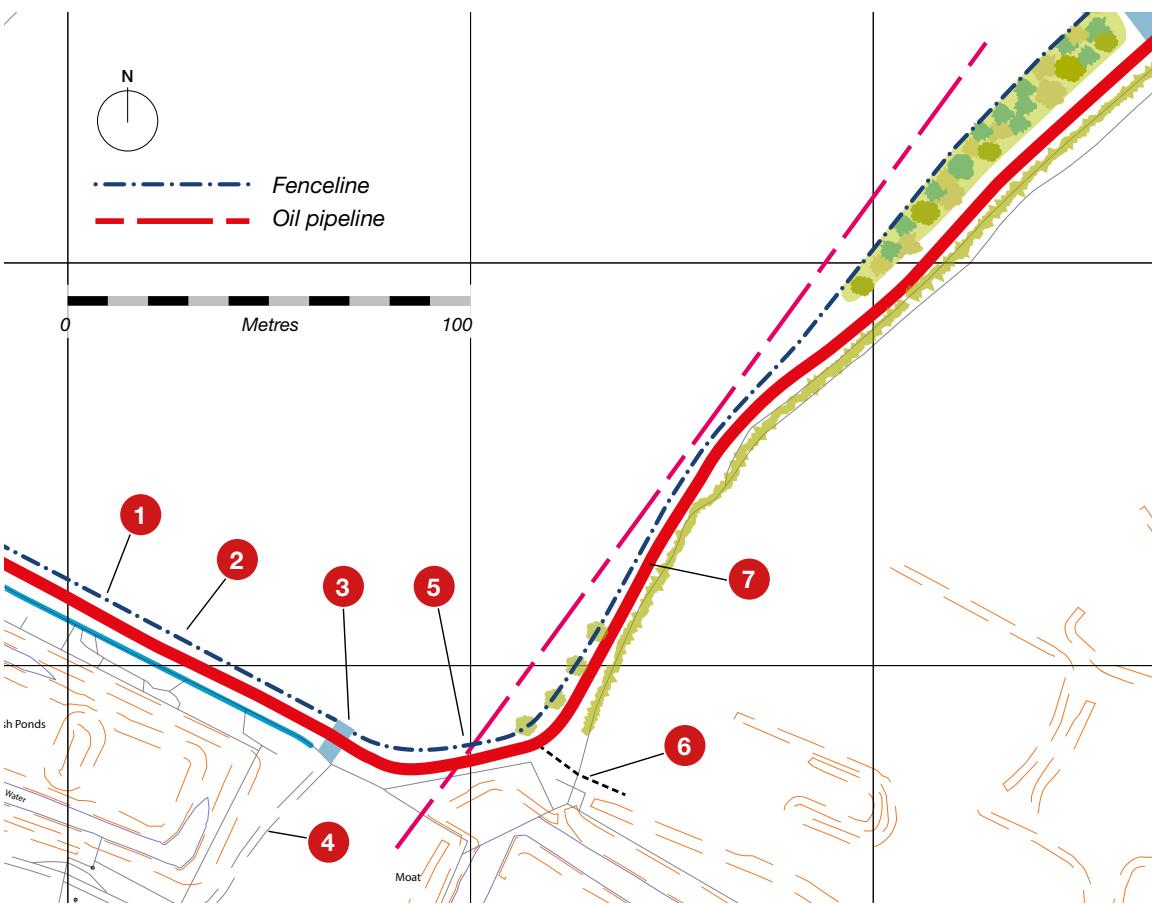


Gates at west end of farm track section

Map 3 - Oil Pipeline

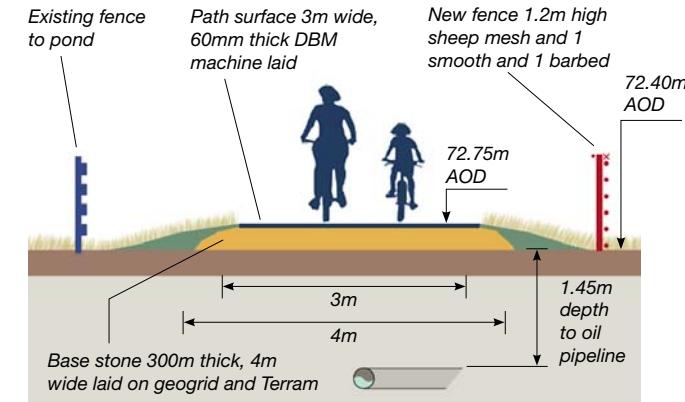
- 1 New field fence over whole length. The path will run through on a shallow causeway to with a level of 72.60m AOD to raise the surface clear of floods. Maintain this level or higher depending upon ground level.
- 2 Wide open views over Avenue Field. Martin Darley Way will eventually be hidden behind newly planted trees.
- 3 Double gates across existing access arranged so as to close the path off if necessary, for stock movement.

- 4 Existing path from chapel. Extend existing tarmac path.
- 5 Oil pipe crossing limits fencing and planting.
- 6 Close off existing footpath.
- 7 Path to rise with levels once past the oil pipeline. Generally aim for path to be 200mm above ground level.

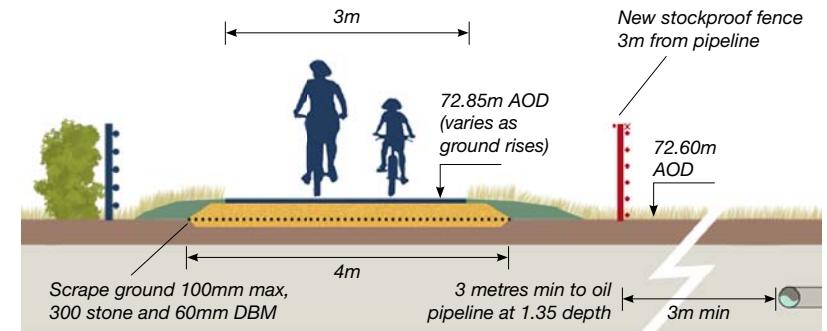


Example of farm crossing along the Waddesdon Greenway

Cross section crossing oil pipeline near St Peter's Chapel

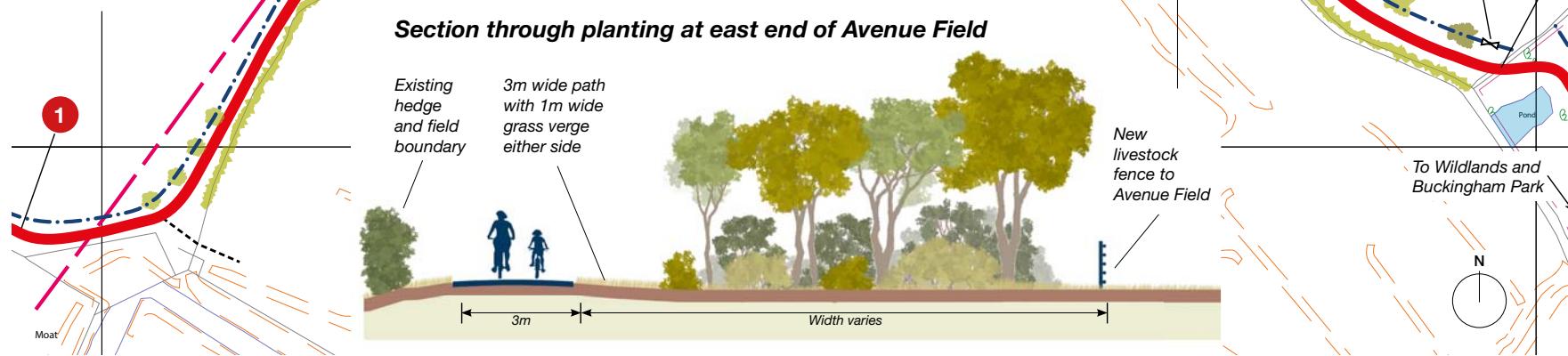


Cross section part way along Avenue Field where the pipeline runs close alongside

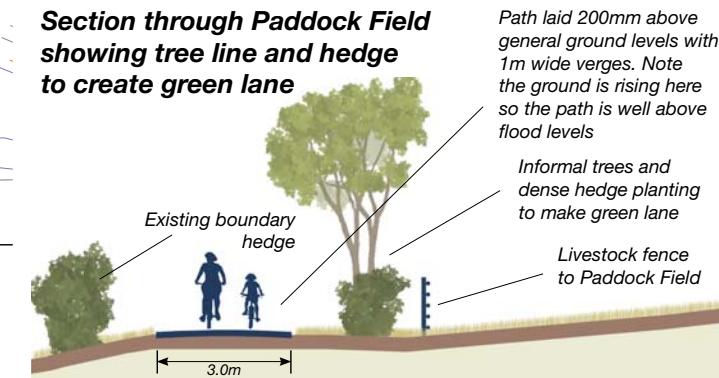


Map 4 - Paddock Field

- 1 Wide view across field unaffected by new path.
- 2 Planting through to end of field. This will be a wide hedge or copse beyond the line of the oil pipe as far as the end of the field to try to reduce traffic noise as well as extend the wildlife areas.
- 3 Double gate for farm access.
- 4 Link through to Paddock Field to take account of electricity pole stays. Culvert ditch. 450 dia pipe with sandbag headwalls.
- 5 Link path to join existing ROW crossing of main road.
- 6 New farm access link to be just south of existing balancing pond.
- 7 Path to be placed 100mm above the general surface of the field for drainage, and to be fenced over whole length.
- 8 Farm access to Aylesbury Hill Field.
- 9 Plant hedge with trees to create Green Lane, as shown in section.
- 10 Make at least one new viewpoint in the hedge through to the open Aylesbury Hill Field.
- 11 Field gate to Paddock Field.
- 12 Wicket gate and entrance feature.



Section through Paddock Field showing tree line and hedge to create green lane



- Binding Margin -

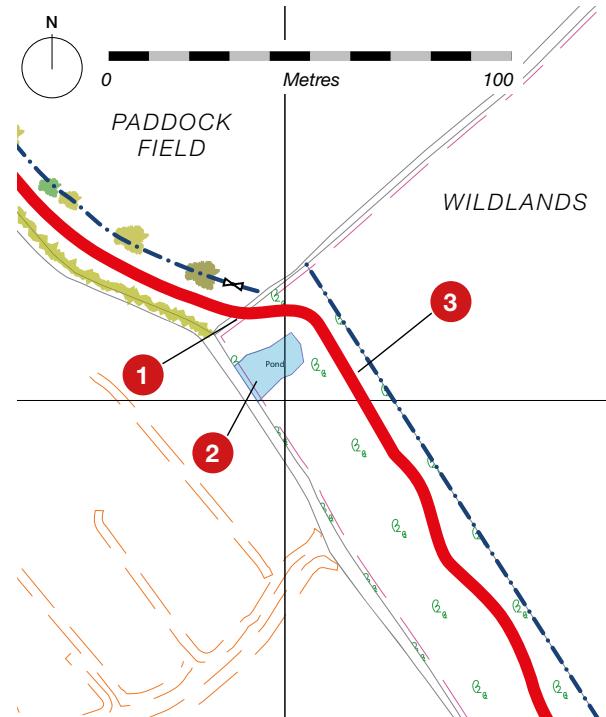
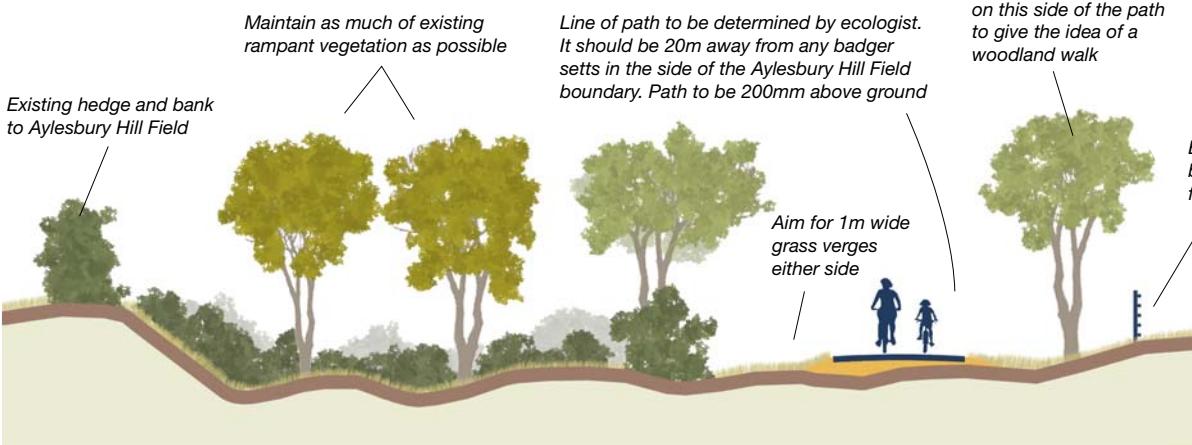


End of existing path at the boundary of Wildlands



Existing path running through Buckingham Park

Cross section through Wildlands looking north towards Paddock Field



Map 5 - Wildlands

- 1 Entrance gateway to Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust Lands.
- 2 Existing pond to be maintained and enhanced and the new path to move to the edge of the strip to give as wide a margin to the pond as possible.
- 3 Line of path to be chosen by ecologist. It will be set 20m away from any badger setts along the edge of Aylesbury Field. The scrub will cut down over a 5m width to provide 1m wide grass verges either side. This section of the path will be constructed on "tree cell" past all trees.
- 4 The surplus spoil to create a raised viewing point looking out over this corner of Aylesbury Hill Field and place one seat here.
- 5 Entrance to St Peter's Path and link to existing Buckingham Park Paths. Provide for entrance feature and information board.

At the farm crossings the path will be reinforced with a concrete slab so as to be sure that heavy agricultural equipment does not damage the running surface for the public.



Fences and Gates

These are a most important element of the works because the whole of the Conservation Trust's area is managed by grazing and it is crucial that the public are channelled freely through this area without their interfering with or hindering the livestock management.



Picture of livestock crossing typical path (Granite Way, Dartmoor)

The gating details have been worked out closely with the local farmer and livestock manager. On occasion when livestock is moved from one field to another across the line of the path it may be necessary for the public to wait and watch for a short while. This will only happen occasionally rather than, for example, daily.

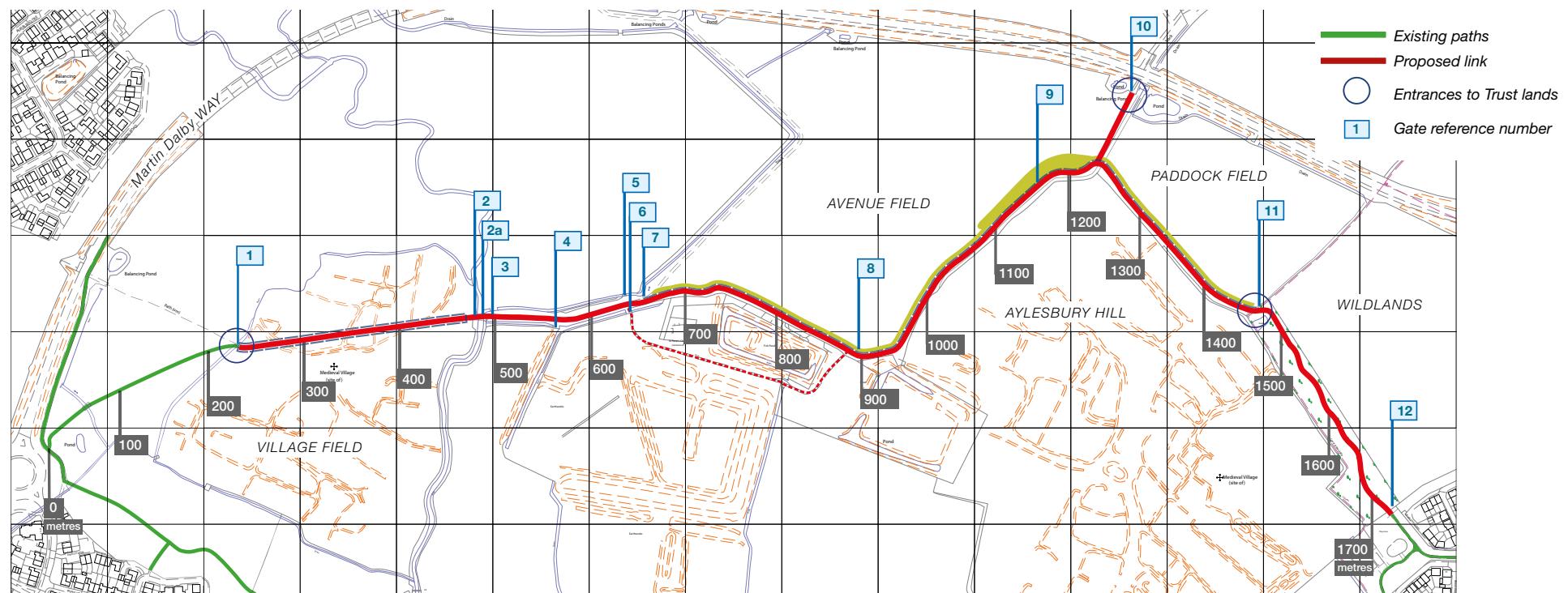
The detailed arrangements of the gates are as follows:

Gate 1: Western entrance

Replace existing kissing gate with self-closing gate 1.5m wide opening inwards. This will usually be held open; its function is to control access when required and to contain any livestock which accidentally wanders down the path. Consider providing entrance features to announce that one is entering the historic lands of Quarrendon Leas.

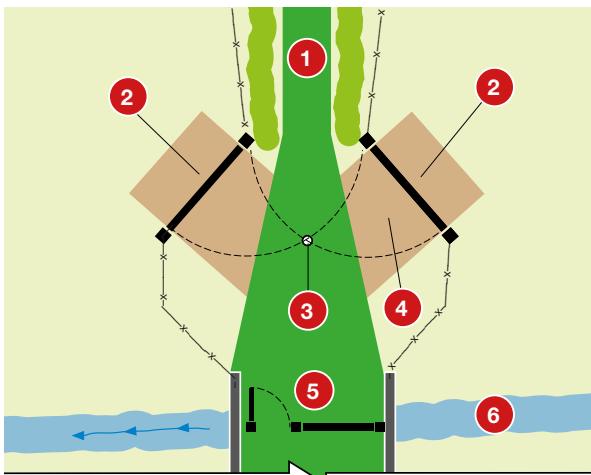


These small shelters used on the Waddesdon Greenway could double up as entrance markers. As there is no shelter on this route they could be a welcome refuge on occasion



Gate 2: Quarrendon Brook

The gates here must give access to, and between, Village Field north and Village Field south. One 4.5m (15 ft) gate will lead into each field and will be arranged to swing across path to close it for occasional livestock movement.



Sketch of gate 2 and 2a arrangement

- 1 2m wide existing path slightly realigned to allow for new gates.
- 2 One 4.5m gate (15ft) for each side of Village Field. Either or both of these to swing across the path for the occasional livestock movement. These gates to have drop bolts.
- 3 Central bolt hole so that one or other of the gates could be kept open for farm movements but at the same time allow the free passage of the public along the path.
- 4 Approach to gates to be provided with stone base 200mm thick laid on polypropylene. This hardstanding to extend 2m beyond each gate into the field.
- 5 Existing 3.6m (12ft) stock gate and 1.5m wicket gate across the Brook to remain. The wicket gate will normally be kept open.
- 6 Quarrendon Brook below.

Modes of operation:

- 1 Normal, both gates closed across field entrances and path open.
- 2 One gate closed across path to allow livestock over the bridge and into field.
- 3 Two gates closed across path to allow livestock to go from north to south.
- 4 Gates opened to central drop bolt and left open for a few hours say for silage for example. The public could still freely pass through.

Gate 2a

Existing 3m field gate and 1.5m wicket gate over stream left unchanged. Normally the field gate to be left open for the free passage of the public. For livestock management the field gate would be closed, but the public could continue to pass through via the self-closing wicket gate.

Gate 3: Existing Quarrendon Brook Field

Unchanged. Stone up to gate and sweep in edge to correspond with vehicle movements.

Gate 4: L-shaped Field

Gate unchanged. Excavate rubble and install 600mm dia. culvert and backfill. Stone base to gate.

Gate 5: Quarrendon Brook Field

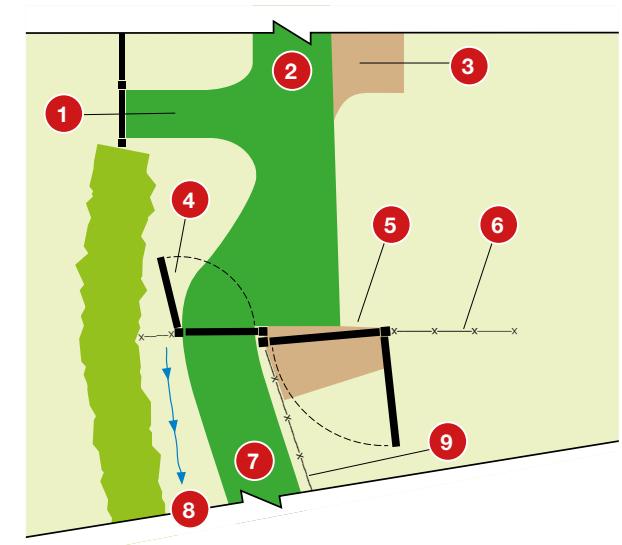
Unchanged. Stone link to gate.

Gate 6: Field gate to St Peter's fielded wicket gate

Unchanged. Stone to field gate and tarmac link to St Peter's path 2m wide. Sweep into main path.

Gate 7: Avenue Field

Keep existing field gate. Remove existing wicket gate and fence off. Install new 3.0m wide gate on Chapel side. Fence down from path to post between gates. Usual operation, field gate closed, 3.0m gate open. Close 3.0m gate for livestock movements. It will be necessary to fill in short section of the end of the ditch to allow the path room to come through.

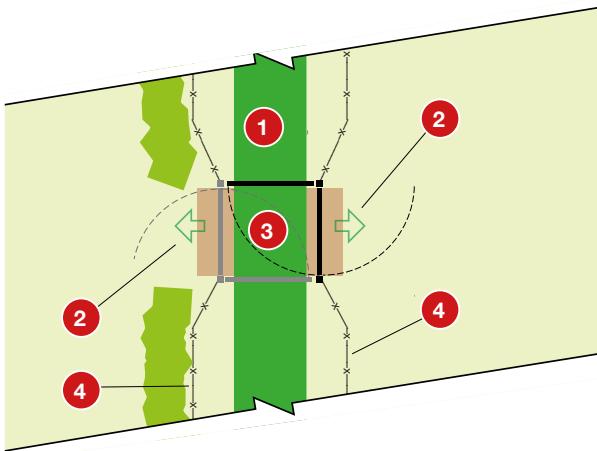


Sketch of gate 7 arrangement

- 1 Existing link path to Chapel to be reconstructed to slope up from the gate to join the new farm road level which is raised by 20cms.
- 2 Existing farm road reconstructed to 72.60m AOD level, approximately 20cms higher and widened from 2m to 3m.
- 3 Provide compacted stone base to adjacent gates.
- 4 New 3m (10ft) gate set adjacent to the existing field gate. This will normally be kept open. The new gate will slew across to line up with this gate.
- 5 Existing farm gate (15ft) to be retained. This will normally be kept closed.
- 6 Existing narrow wicket gate to be removed, and the fence closed off, once the public footpath is diverted to the St Peter's Path alignment.
- 7 Path runs on adjacent to existing ditch.
- 8 This first 10 metres or so of the existing ditch will need to be culverted in order to provide space for the path to come through. Provide a pipe to match existing finished with sandbag headwalls.
- 9 New stockproof fence arranged to allow for the existing farm track and gate opening. This fence to run the full length of Avenue Field alongside the path.

Gate 8: Aylesbury Hill (south gate)

Existing field gate and wicket gate unchanged. Provide 2 x 3.6m (12ft) gates in new boundary fence. These to close across path for livestock movement, to open into field for day long use. Normal operation closed.



Sketch of gates 8, 9, 10, and 12: Field access crossings

- 1 3m wide St Peter's Path running along field edge.
- 2 Farm crossing from field to field.
- 3 3.6m (12ft) gates mounted 4 square so that they can be closed across the path for livestock movement. They should be arranged to open into the field should the farmer require open access for, say, haymaking, without closing off the public route.
- 4 New livestock fencing runs the full length of the path.

Gate 9: Aylesbury Hill (central)

Keep existing field gate but rehang to level clear of low spot to match new path levels. Double 3.6m gates as in 8.

Gate 10: Through hedge to Paddock field

Path goes straight through without gates. Field gate for the farmer to cut through hedge just south of the existing balancing pond.

Gate 11

Existing gates to main road unchanged.

Gate 12

Existing field gate unchanged. Provide 2 x 3.6m (12ft) gates in new boundary fence. These to close across path for livestock movement, to open into field for day long use. Normal operation closed

Gate 13: Eastern access to site

1.5m wicket gate opening towards fields, with entrance arch.

Gate 14: Buckingham Park Playground

1.5m wide gap between plain points with entrance arch.

4 Wildlife, ecology and landscaping

The Ecological Assessment has been carried out by Two Wheels Ecology and their report is shown in Appendix One. The proposed path mainly runs across open fields grazed by sheep. Whilst it is inevitable that the surfaced path reduces the area of open field, this diminution is counterbalanced by planting the verges of the path with wildflower mixtures, planting new hedgerows and maintaining the growth of trees along the hedge lines.

The Project will apply to Nature Space for a Great Crested Newt Licence as there are recorded ponds in the vicinity of the planned path.

On routine matters such as the timing of the works, we confirm that the Project will be following all the Ecological Studies requirements.

The landscaping of the route will be very modest with the only physical works the construction of the path lying low on the open ground. The most visible feature, apart from the people using the route, will be the planted hedge and trees – particularly the latter. These are to be planted along the whole length of the field known as Avenue Field.

5 Archaeology

The proposed path is situated in the vicinity of the Quarrendon site of Historical Importance and is a scheduled monument. A walkover survey by Oxford Archaeology is included in Appendix 2. Whilst most of the site lies just outside the boundary of the Historical Area, its western section across "Village Field" does cross the site following the line of the existing path on its causeway.



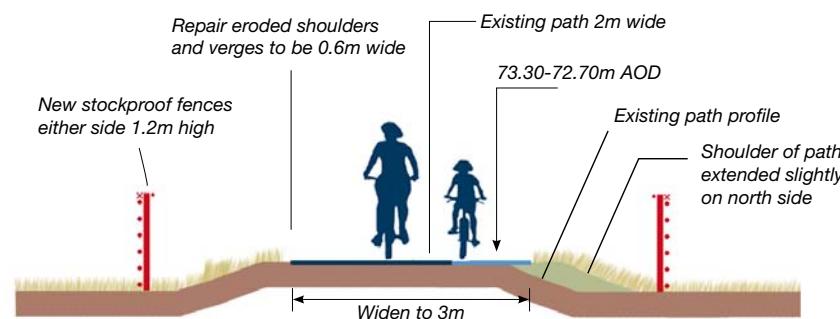
View of existing path across Village Field

Over this section the existing rather narrow 2m wide path will be rebuilt to 3m with renewed shoulders either side and boundary fencing. The construction will be "no dig" and a Licence will be sought from Historic England.

For the remainder of the way the path lies outside the boundary of the Historical Site. The Walkover Survey suggested possible evidence of ridge and furrow woods, and the possible course of an old access road. Over the whole of this section the path will be constructed as "no dig" with excavation limited to a maximum of 10 cms so as to clear grass and small irregularities in the ground.

Upon completion the project will erect two information boards designed to inform the public about the history of the landscape they are passing by. These signs will be prepared in conjunction with the Archaeological Trust.

Cross section through Village Field



6 Flood Risk Assessment and flooding considerations

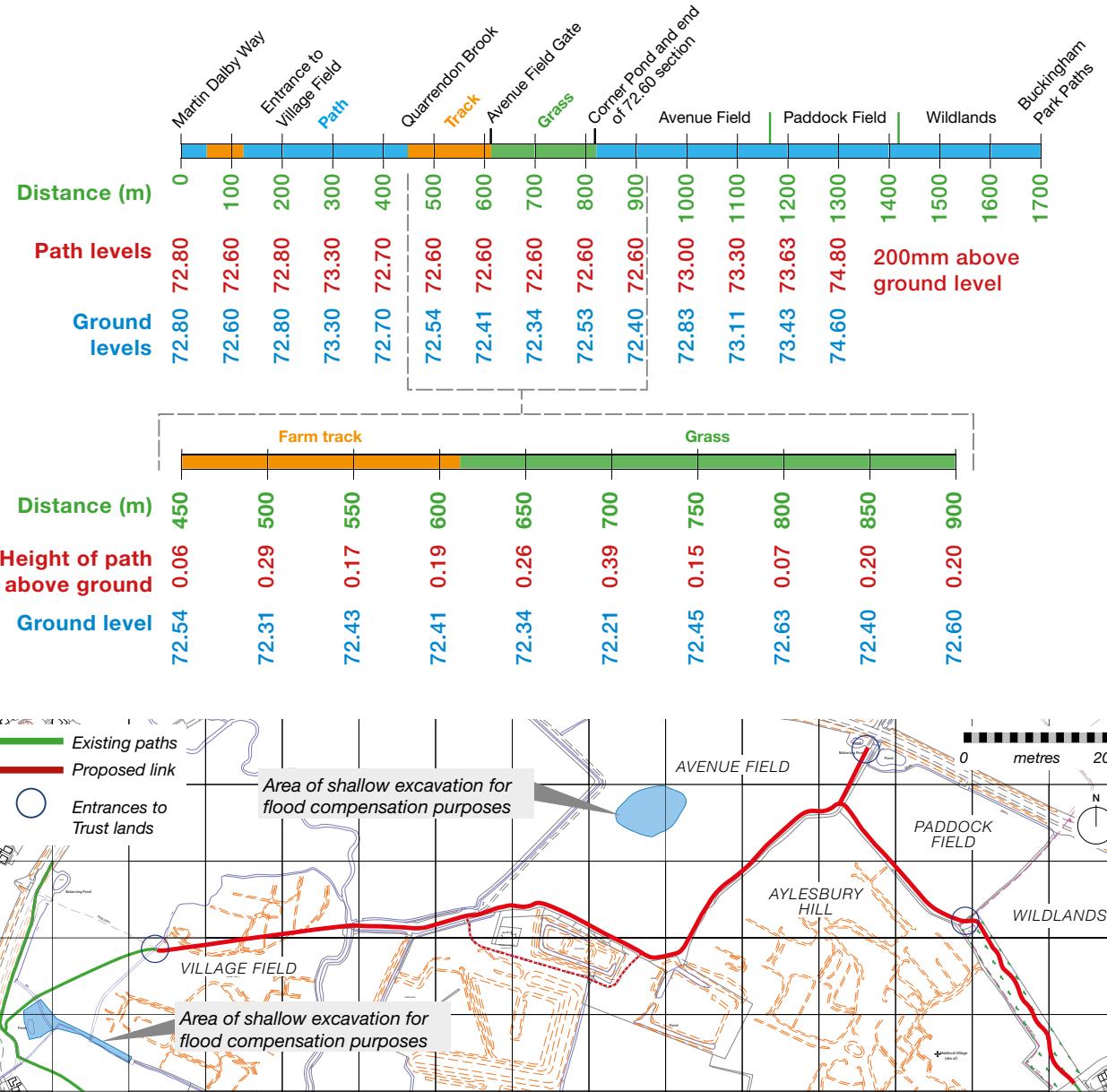
This path runs along the very edge of the highest floods. The path across the Village Field is already constructed on a causeway to be clear of flood water. Over the central section the new path will be constructed to a single level up to 300mm above existing ground level. This is partly to ensure that it remains dry in almost all circumstances, and partly so as not to interfere with any archaeology. The long section below shows that the lowest point of the finished route will be along the already completed Berryfields Path.

The path will not cause any change to flooding or otherwise in the area, as being level, all rainfall will flow to the sides of the path within one or two metres of where it would have fallen anyway. The sealed surface will hardly affect the runoff in these clay soils, but to be sure the existing ditches adjacent to the new path will be thoroughly cleared out before construction commences. The causeway section of the path occupies 250 cubic metres of flood plain between the levels of 72.4m AOD and 72.6m AOD, together with a very small volume between 72.3 and 72.4m AOD. This volume will be balanced by a shallow scrape some 40m x 30m in area lowering the ground by 300-400mm further to the north in Avenue Field. Here the existing topsoil will be set to one side for reuse, the flood compensation material removed and then the field restored back to grass. The material excavated will be used to fashion a low planted bank higher up along the path near the hedge to Paddock Field.



View of Berryfields Path last flooded January 2021

Chart through route showing path levels in relation to ground levels



7 Design and Access Statement

The St Peter's Path will be constructed to a similar standard to the Waddesdon Greenway.



Waddesdon Greenway along field edge with fencing and trees

The path will be fenced from livestock and planted with new hedges over various sections.

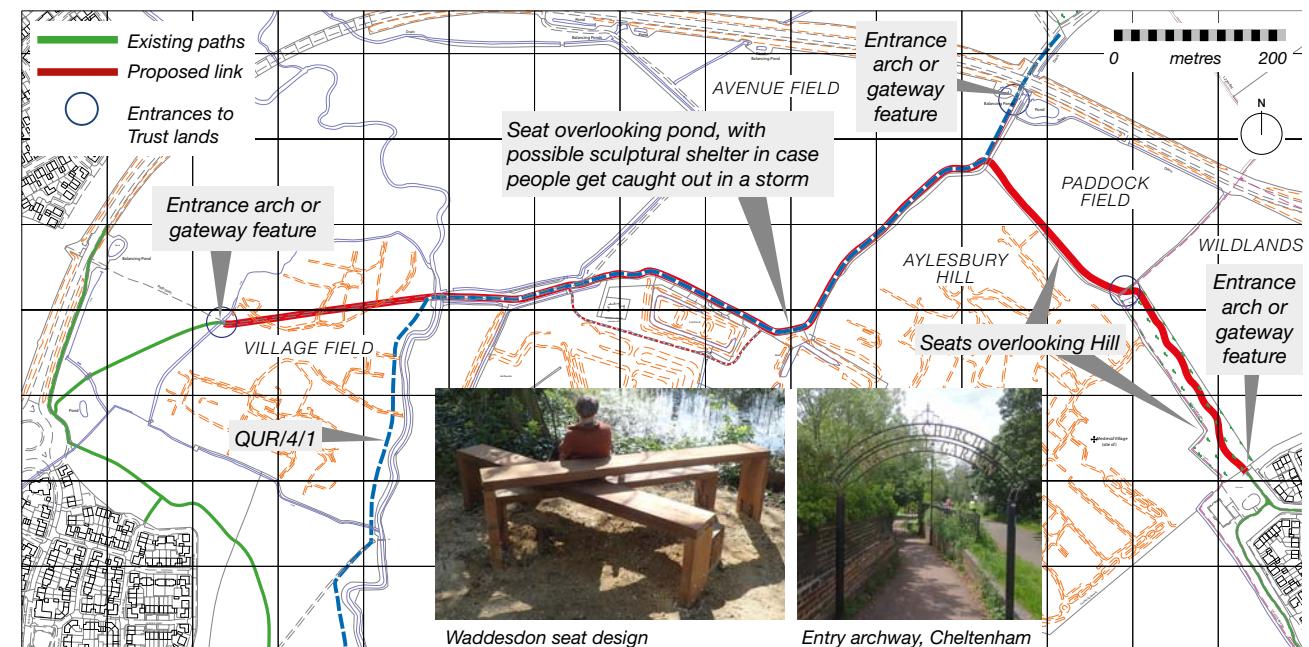
The route connects with existing paths and has no new link or access to a public road.

Public footpath QUR/4/1 will be redirected clear of the historic area and will run along St Peter's Path for the whole length of Avenue Field.

The path will not be lit with street lighting, but it will be set with central solar powered LED lighting units so that the route can be conveniently used after dark. If individuals are not comfortable with this then there are alternative routes which can be followed e.g. adjacent to Martin Dalby Way.

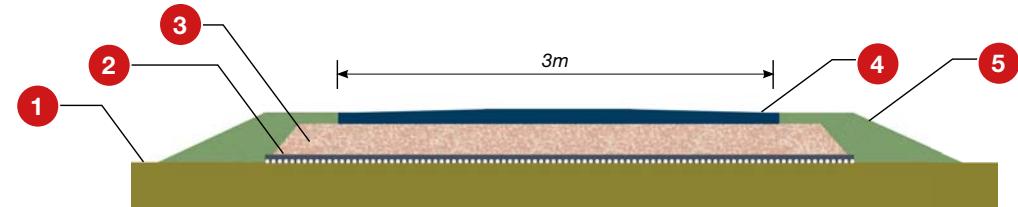


Example of lighting on existing path at Bristol



Map showing proposed rerouting of Footpath QUR/4/1 and proposed locations of seating, shelter and entrance arches or gateway features

Cross section showing path construction



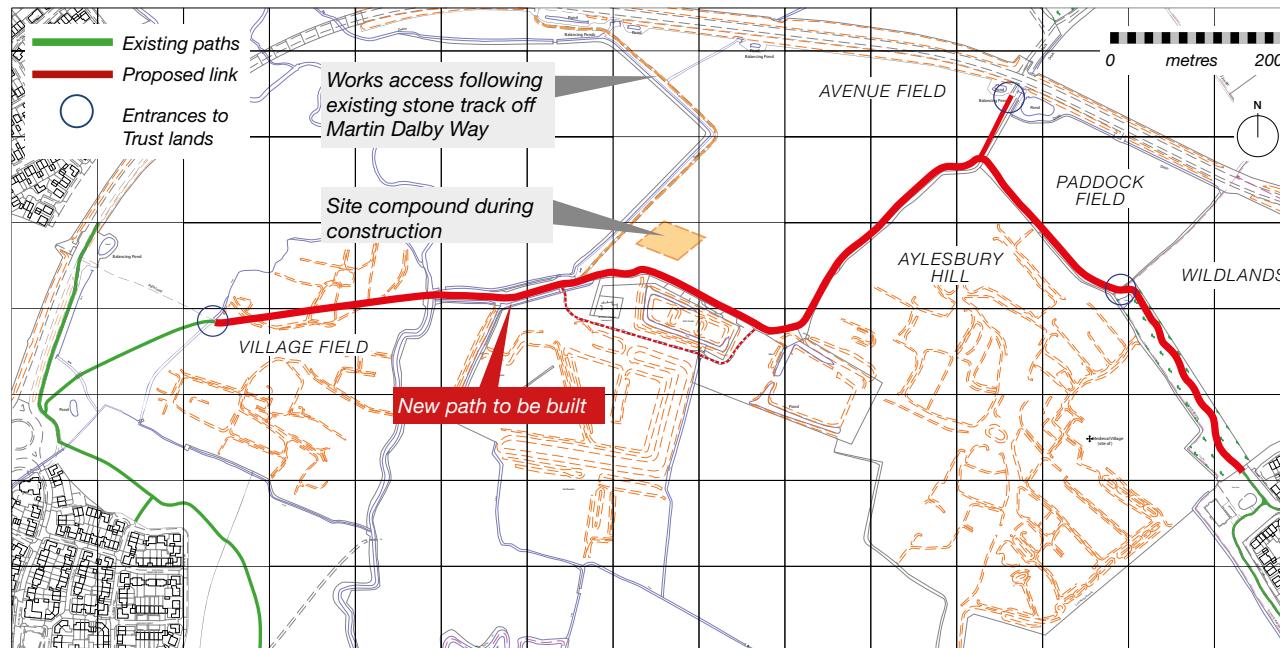
- 1 The path will be constructed as "no dig". The turf will be removed, and the ground levelled, excavating a maximum of 10cm to remove undulations.
- 2 Lay polypropylene filter fabric and Tensar geogrid or similar 4m wide.
- 3 Compacted base 250mm thick, 4m wide of suitable stone or approved recycled materials.
- 4 Machine laid surface DBM, 3m wide, 60mm thick, 20 min aggregate size, all laid with a central camber of 25mm. Note this path is to be laid exactly level at 71.3m AOD.
- 5 Finish with shoulders made from available material. These are to be level with the finished surface for a width of 500mm.

A limited number of seats will be provided at locations where there is a viewpoint. These will be of the nested bench type used along the length of the Waddesdon Greenway.

At the entrances to the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust lands, archways or similar will mark out the fact that the public are moving through a historic landscape. The details of these visual features will evolve as the Quarrendon site draws up its own design guide.

8 Construction and construction traffic

The work will be carried out by local contractors as far as possible. Vegetation clearance, fencing and gate works will be carried out through the winter of 2021/2022 with a view to construction starting in April 2022 and the whole path being opened for that summer.



Plan of site access and works compound

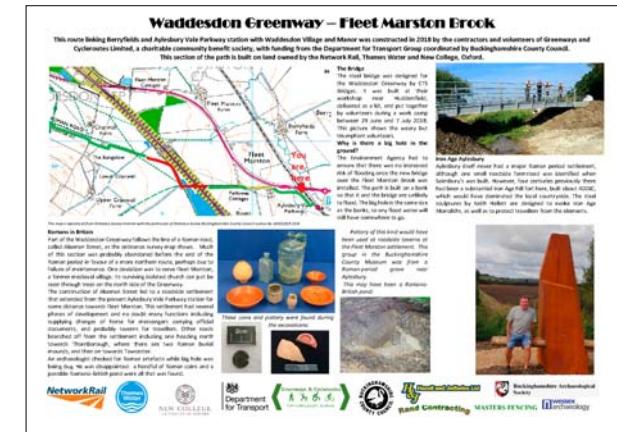
Works access will be via the existing hard stone road off Martin Dalby Way and the side offices will be in the corridor of Avenue Field near the path.

The total tonnage of materials required for the construction is approximately 1200 tonnes or 50 lorry loads. This will be spread over 16 weeks. No materials will be taken off site as all arisings will be utilised in the works.

At the end of the work, the contractor's area will be restored and seeded. The existing farm track will be repaired and finished off in compacted stone.

9 Signing and information

Directional signing will follow the guidelines being prepared by the Gardenway Team. Information boards will be erected at the start and the finish of St Peter's Path, and a third one near the Chapel. These will be similar in size and detail to this example on the Waddesdon Greenway.



Example of Waddesdon Greenway information board

Clear signs at each entrance need to welcome walkers and cyclists and all forms of active travel, prohibit motor vehicles and motorbikes and exhort the public to respect the land and farm. The signage will be consistent with the Aylesbury townwide signage and style. The routes will be shared use throughout.

10 Maintenance matters

The path itself will be constructed to a high standard with a sealed surface and it is not expected that this will significantly deteriorate in the coming years. The principal maintenance effort will be to manage the grass verges either side of the path to care for the hedges and trees as they get established. The ongoing management of these will adopt the Council and the Conservation Trust's policies.

This work will be undertaken by the Parks Department as an integral part of their management of the green and open spaces in the whole town.

New dog waste bins should be placed at either end of the path and emptied by the Council's contractors.

As far as possible the network of volunteer fostered by the Conservation Trust should be encouraged to take over the stewardship of St Peter's Path, and to deal with litter and minor obstructions such as brambles encroaching.

Eventually the whole of the Gardenway Project needs to be adopted by the public as a feature of Aylesbury they value and care for.



Picture of well managed Brean greenway route where all the maintenance is by a small team of volunteers

11 Conclusions and programme

St Peter's Path will considerably extend the value of already completed paths in Buckingham Park and Berryfields, by opening them up to much longer trips with many popular and everyday destinations. The path will give ready access to Aylesbury Vale Parkway Station which will soon provide passenger services to Milton Keynes, and it will connect through to Waddesdon, Calvert and Steeple Claydon to create a range of opportunities for car free excursions to the north of Aylesbury.



Waddesdon path shortly after construction

All being well, and provided the weather is kind, advance preparations will go on through this coming winter with a view to construction commencing in April for a path opening in summer 2022.

Greenways and Cycleroutes
September 2021

