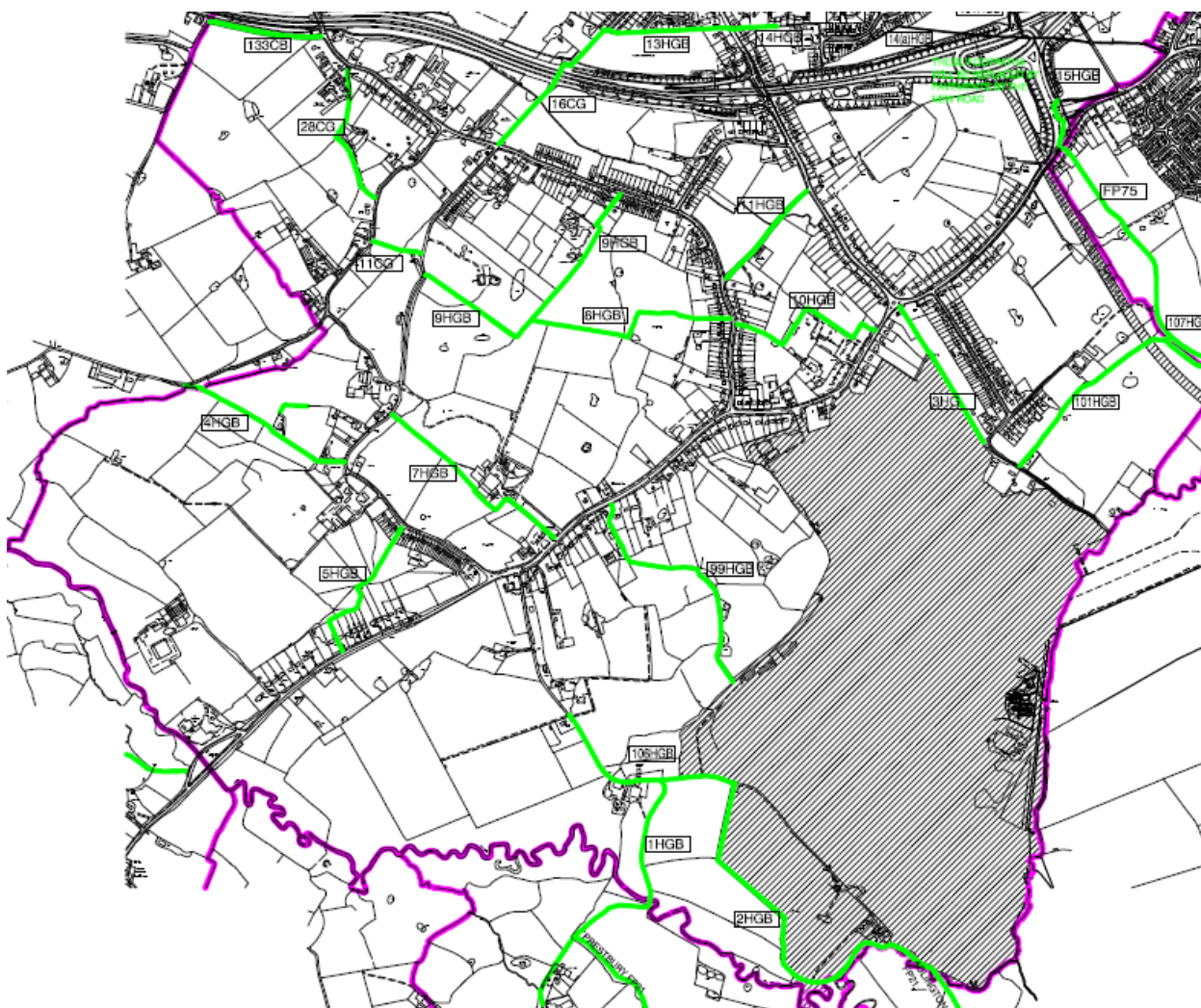


# Woodford Footpath Survey

## Introduction

Woodford lies in countryside on the edge of the Greater Manchester urban sprawl, surrounded on three sides countryside by in Cheshire. The majority of the Neighbourhood Area is farmland plus a small amount of recreational land and there are over twenty footpaths, including metalled tracks between roads, narrow jitties between houses, and a variety of grassy or muddy paths though woodland and farmland. They provide a network of pleasant short walks connecting one side of the village to the other, some providing beautiful views of countryside and the Pennines as they pass through open farmland. Several connect with footpaths into neighbouring areas, including Cheadle Hulme, Bramhall, Poynton, Adlington, Newton, Wilmslow and Handforth, providing the scope for much longer walks. The closure of the BAe site and its redevelopment into a housing estate may enhance this potential because conditions associated with the planning permission include reinstatement of the original footpaths that were closed due to purchase by BAe and the creation of footpaths and cycle paths on site.

The footpaths in Woodford Neighbourhood Area are marked on the maps shown below:



A high resolution version can be viewed [here](#)



## Methods

Volunteers walked the footpaths and collected data using the data collection sheet shown below:

### Woodford Footpath Survey Data Collection Sheet

Footpath number:

Surveyor name:

Date:

Please note, describe locations and mark on the map where any of the following are a problem

Signposting
Stiles
Width (Farmers are obliged to leave a width of a metre not cultivate along the route of a footpath through their land)
Accessibility impaired by overgrowth of vegetation or adjacent hedges
Accessibility blocked or impaired by fencing
Any hazards encountered
Ease and safety of road crossings, if any
Potential links with other footpaths once Aerodrome site becomes accessible again
Other comments

## Results

### Benefits

The footpaths in Woodford constitute a good outdoor recreational facility, providing the opportunity for exercise away from noise, danger and air pollution associated with traffic on the roads. They allow people to experience the countryside and come into contact with nature and excellent views can be enjoyed across farmland and to the Pennine hills from several locations. It has been demonstrated that outdoor exercise and contact with nature have physical and mental health benefits. They also provide short-cuts to the shops in Bramhall and Woodford, giving the opportunity to leave the car at home and go on foot.



Typical Woodford countryside on 4HGB



Woodland on 5HGB



View from 9HGB at Bramhall Cricket Ground



View of the White Nancy from 101HGB



View of farmland and Lyme Park from 101HGB



View of farmland and Croker Hill from 99HGB



Geese and gulls on 9HGB



Walkers on 9GHB

The majority of the footpaths surveyed were negotiated with ease during surveying. Full survey details are provided in the Appendix. Here we have briefly noted problems that were encountered.

### **Passage restricted or impossible due to overgrown hedges or undergrowth, or fencing**

28CG, which is kindly maintained by the Bramhall Rotary Club, was badly overgrown in the section joining Blossoms Lane during the summer of 2016, but cleared during the autumn of 2016.

8HGB was well maintained in 2016, but has become blocked by overgrown hedges in 2017 where it passes from Moor lane behind Woodford Cricket Ground.

Progress along 3HGB was slightly impeded by fallen trees and growth of brambles during September 2017.

The first section of 2HGB from Old Hall Lane into the Avro Golf course ground becomes overgrown during summer months and an overgrown hedge obscures the footpath sign.

A wire fence crosses 101HGB, requiring the walker to step over it or take an alternative route.

#### ***Examples of paths blocked by vegetation***



13HGB



3HGB



Start of 2HGB from Old Hall Lane



8HGB



28CG

### **Passage restricted by flooding or boggy ground**

8HGB becomes flooded in wet winter weather where it passes behind Woodford Cricket Club and in sections where it crosses the field on Hill Top Farm.

9HGB also becomes flooded in wet winter weather where it joins 8HGB in the field on Hill Top Farm. The flood water is deeper than wellington boots so a detour into the field is required.

5HGB, 7HGB and 101HGB cross very boggy ground in wet weather.

### **Examples of paths blocked by flood water**



9HGB



8HGB

### **Missing, illegible or confusing signage**

Illegible signs were found at the start of 9HGB on Foden Lane, the start of 8HGB on Moor Lane and two signs on 7HGB.

The footpaths across fields are not generally well signed in both directions and it is necessary to consult a map in order to follow the correct course in many locations. The following paths need additional or replacement signs, or pruning of foliage that is obscuring signs at the locations described in the detailed reports in the appendix: 1HGB, 2HGB, 3HGB, 4HGB, 5HGB, 7HGB, 8HGB, 9HGB, 10HGB, 11HGB, 101HGB, 107HGB and 28CG.

### **Examples of lack of signs or broken signs**



No direction sign on 5HGB    Broken sign on 9HGB

Signs have been erected at the end of 2017 on footpaths 8HGB and 9HGB, where they pass along the perimeter of the field in Hill Top Farm at the end of Foden Lane and behind Woodford Cricket Club, but they are misleading and walkers have been observed taking an incorrect route around the field.

**Examples of illegible signs**



Illegible signs on 7HGB



8HGB

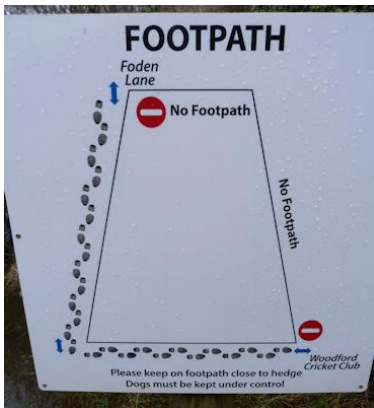


9HGB



10HGB – signs obscured by vegetation

**Examples of imisleading signs**



Footpath directions sign works well on 8HGB behind Woodford Cricket Ground...



...but the same sign placed here on 9HGB at Foden Lane is misleading without a “you are here” indicator.

## Broken stiles

Stiles were largely well-maintained, but a few broken ones in need of repair were noted during the surveys.

### Examples of broken stiles



4HGB



10HGB (rotted)



28HGB (wobbly)

## Conclusions

Woodford has a pleasing network of footpaths, which vary from jitties connecting streets to rural paths across farm fields. They provide a valuable resource for outdoor recreation and relaxation in the countryside, with all the associated physical and mental health benefits.

The majority are passable with ease, but maintenance is needed on several, as listed in detail in the Appendix, to clear vegetation, replace broken stiles, replace worn or broken signs and add signage to aid the walker in finding the correct route.