

Mike's AoRs – additional note for meeting Monday 8th Feb 2021 – Lovers' Walk

Lovers' Walk – top end



Thank you colleagues who have made suggestions / proposals regarding repair.

The British Standard for maintenance of public rights of way were revised in 2018. Extract below is from guidance explaining the update, highlighting is mine.

BS5709:2018

RULE 1: LEAST RESTRICTIVE OPTION FOR THE LAND MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Least restrictive option must be chosen. The standard's words are:

The selection of a gap, gate or stile, which permits people to use a path crossing a boundary such as a hedge fence or stone wall, shall meet the needs of the land manager and shall cause as little restriction as possible for all lawful users. [4.1]

On public paths lawful users includes people of all ages and abilities, including users of mobility vehicles (wheelchairs and pushchairs) etc and dogs. There will be very few paths on which these users, including those with mobility vehicles, would not be able to travel, were it not for impassable structures. **Just because other parts of the path are impassable to mobility vehicles perhaps because of existing stiles, does not, under this standard [4.4], allow stiles or non-mobility-vehicle-passable gates to be put elsewhere on the path.** To do so would be to make it harder in future to give access for all. This is especially true of structures at the start of paths, where they leave a road. Some people with disabilities may get no further than the first field in the short term, but that is so much better than not getting anywhere at all.

The standard [Tables 1 and 2] lists various types of structure in order of accessibility for users, for footpaths that is basically Gap, Gate, Kissing Gate for mobility vehicles, plain Kissing Gate, Stile but is dependent on latching arrangements. So where something beyond a gap is needed then a two-way-opening self-closing gate is the preferred option (except adjoining roads where safety and vehicle exclusion may indicate a kissing gate suitable for mobility vehicles).

Ideally the least restrictive is no structure at all and where there might be some other measure

that would remove the need for any structure then that measure should be taken. An example would be where some side fencing or rerouting of cattle paths might allow elimination of the need for any cattle barriers at all on the path [4.3 c) Note 2].

Stiles. The standard also says new structures on public paths shall not be stiles other than in exceptional circumstances [7.1].

RULE 2: MANOEUVRING SPACE. [eg 5.2 Note 2]

This is the space needed to be kept clear so as to allow users to get into position to open, pass through, and close a gate or to negotiate a fixed structure. This is something that is a requirement of the standard but was found too difficult by the writers of that standard to specify clearly. A great deal more space is needed than is commonly assumed. One-way opening gates need more manoeuvring space than two-way opening ones and some horses and mobility vehicles (wheel or pushchairs) may need a three metre diameter space [6.3.8 Note]. Horse stiles need a 4 metre long space to meet the standard [6.5.j)]. It is desirable that those involved have some training involving users with wheelchairs, pushchairs or horses as appropriate. Best to get it right before installation, since just one or two potential users who are unable to manoeuvre through the structure might serve to prove non-compliance.

View from other side is below:



dull day!