

VISITOR ACCESSIBILITY

8.

ACCESS AUDIT

The Access Audit assesses the quality of access within and to the Fields in terms of its visibility, legibility and accessibility for both able bodied and less abled bodied users and is supported by the Access and Circulation Plan. The audit has looked at the following:

1. **The Primary Access Points where most people enter the Fields;**
2. **The Secondary Access Points where there is a level of informality to the entrances and they are less well used;**
3. **Formal vehicle access, from Bridge Street;**
4. **Maintenance access, i.e. all the field gates surrounding the Fields;**
5. **Main Fields access paths i.e. all the paths both surfaced and unsurfaced around the Fields; and**
6. **Access from the wider area, i.e. how do people get to the Fields**

A set of recommendations have been provided for each zone that have then been fed into the Actions of the Fields.





PRIMARY ACCESS POINTS

Car park

The car park is a primary entrance for vehicle users to Abbey Fields, St Nicholas Church and the leisure facility. As a result, it is also a primary entrance for pedestrians with two main points of pedestrian access from the car park. There is one welcome sign near to the car park entrance to advertise Abbey Fields/Abbey Ruins but it has too much information and is easily missed. It also faces away from the town centre, missing all vehicle users exiting the town. The legible road signage directs to Abbey Fields Car Park with a large sign 'Welcome to St Nicholas Church'.

The vehicle entrance to the car park shares the driveway despite having a separate 'in' and 'out' from Bridge Street. This results in vehicles coming into conflict with each other at the entrance.

The main pedestrian access to the Fields and leisure facility to the east of the car park also shares the narrow vehicle access, which often causes conflict between pedestrians and cars. Pedestrians with prams, young children and wheelchairs are most at risk.

The main pedestrian access to the Fields and church to the west of the car park is very narrow and creates a pinch point between a mature tree and post with chains. Wheelchairs and wider prams struggle to negotiate this path.

Chains and posts run the length of Church Walk parallel to the car park and are an historical feature designed to prevent unauthorized vehicles entering the Fields. However, without clear safe

primary entry points to the Fields, this barrier has restricted the permeability (flow of people) of the Fields and forces older and younger pedestrians to negotiate vehicles entering the car park. It has not prevented able bodied pedestrian movement as pedestrians frequently climb over the chains. Accessibility has therefore become more difficult and dangerous for many users as a result.



Recommendations:

- **West path – widen the path and create a good sized, well designed primary entrance.**
- **East path – suggest providing a safe pedestrian route that connects from the rear of vehicles parked along the Church Walk.**
- **Consider replacement of the chains and posts with a series of bollards as detailed in the Design Guide to allow for improved permeability into Abbey Fields, whilst continuing to prevent unauthorized vehicle entry.**
- **Vehicle access signage needs to be considered to encourage visitors into Abbey Fields, to complement Kenilworth Castle.**
- **Apply for brown signage for Abbey Fields.**



High Street – north east entrance

A primary access to St Nicholas Church, the Abbey Ruins and Abbey Fields beyond. This has a sub gate vehicle access timber field gate with gap for pedestrians.

The entrance is set back from the road and is well used by local residents but is not clearly signposted. There are no welcome signs to the Fields, but a notice board (belonging to the church) with no identifying information.

Fingerposts are located near to the road but adjacent to a mature tree with epicormic growth and easily missed. The finger post sign does not mention Abbey Fields, lake or leisure centre, but the church, the Abbey ruins, town centre and Kenilworth Castle.

Recommendations:

- **To encourage greater use of this entrance, finger posts need to be located where they are clearly visible.**
- **Signage at the entrance to the church should be identifiable and if possible combined with Abbey Fields signage.**





High Street – north west entrance

This is a well-used entrance to Abbey Fields for pedestrians north of the Fields. It is a pleasant entrance but considering the volume of users at this entrance it is narrow, lacks principality and entrance signage.



The Centenary Way long distance route appears to enter through the Fields at this point (although there is conflicting mapping data to confirm), but there are no way markers. The entrance is also close to a resident's driveway with potential conflict with vehicles and pedestrians.



Recommendations:

- **Move the entrance further east to avoid the driveway.**
- **Widen the entrance to create more principality and legibility. Erosion around infrastructure at the entrance suggests a well-used bin and seat in this location which would benefit being set in hard standing with path access.**
- **Provide entrance signage and way markers to improve the experience of pedestrians accessing the Fields.**



Castle Road West entrances

There are two primary entrance points at this location that receive a large number of visitors. These entrances are in close proximity to Kenilworth Castle. The entrances lead off a raised footbridge adjacent to the Castle Road ford that sits on a lower elevation over Finham Brook. The footpath bridge is fenced to the road and the brook.

This has caused much erosion of grass verges particularly to the Fields side of the entrance. The concern with regards to access is the fear of entry due to poor intervisibility.

Entrance north of Finham Brook



The entrance to the north of the brook is a formal tarmacked entrance. Access is past numerous signs, benches and bins and through old, hooped chicane barriers that restrict bicycle access, with hedging to the north and railings to the south. However, as a result, access for wheelchairs and mobility scooters is very poor.

Recommendations:

- **The entrance would benefit being widened which may result in removal of some hedging. A tree near the entrance would need to be considered in relation to the widening of the access to ensure its viability. Permeability and visibility at this entrance is really important allowing access to flow more freely creating a much more welcoming and accessible entrance fit for its primary status.**
- **Removal of the hooped chicane and replacing with timber bollards similar to other locations around Abbey Fields and inkeeping with the Design Guide, ensuring the width allows for wheelchair and mobility scooter access.**
- **Chamfering the entrance points and allowing people to access the entrance in an arc as opposed to right angles would help to reduce erosion.**



The access is narrow for a principal entrance and often causes a pinch point allowing only one person through at a time.



Entrance south of Finham Brook

The entrance south of the brook is a more informal entrance, although very well used with 2 worn paths to the north and south of a triangular grass verge that has been left uneroded by default. The ground is bare earth due to substantial footfall erosion that has resulted in a trip hazard to the edging kerb of the roadside footpath.



The erosion broadens and continues well past the entrance paths, to the water's edge and beyond the timber entrance gate.

The erosion into the brook is due to dog and pedestrian encroachment. However this has extended beyond the beach area. Erosion near to the bridge parapets may eventually cause issues of undermining the structures.



It appears post and rail fencing have been installed further east from the beach to limit the spread of bank erosion and to direct pedestrian movement to the kissing gate. Informal timber and compacted hardcore steps are located south of a mature tree but they are slowly being covered by brambles

and nettles encouraging people to find alternative sloped routes around the tree exposing a vast array of roots.

The kissing gate, introduced to prevent horse riding within the Fields, acts as a pinch point to the volume of footfall in this area. Erosion around and beyond it is wide and extensive, likely caused by substantial wet areas which are then avoided causing a vicious circle.



Recommendations:

- **The paths from the roadside footpath would benefit formalization. However, there are mature trees adjacent to these paths restricting path creation. It may be that a new formalized hard surfaced path is created within the central triangular grass verge, with a wide chamfered entrance to north and south, with fencing near the road footway to direct pedestrians and remove the two desire lines. This may also reduce dog generated erosion near to the bridge parapet.**
- **Access to Finham Brook further away from the parapet could be encouraged for dogs and people as it is a low and safe access and egress from the water's edge. Information in relation to encouraging access here and avoiding the bridge parapets would be of benefit to many.**



- Erosion around the tree adjacent to the steps could be reduced with removal of brambles and control of vegetation along the boundary fence and the steps to encourage use of the steps. Directional fencing could be used to block off the access to the north of the tree and encourage pedestrians further south of the tree into an area that has already received compacted hard core over time.
- The kissing gate could be replaced with a wider opening in the fenceline with timber bollards. A wide path would need to be constructed to reduce erosion. Root Protection cellular footpaths could be used here if tree roots are a concern, although tarmac paths may be preferable. Improved drainage within this area would assist with issues of wet ground.

Overall issue of access at Castle Road entrances

The major concern is the lack of formal connection between Abbey Fields and Kenilworth Castle, a major tourist attraction run by English Heritage. Kenilworth Castle is promoted with circular walks to Abbey Fields on an independent website and is encouraged as a place to walk to on the District Council's website for Abbey Fields. Many finger posts around Abbey Fields also direct visitors through the Fields to Kenilworth Castle.

However, access to and from Kenilworth Castle for pedestrians is fraught with issues as the busy Castle Road, B4103, creates a barrier between the two sites with no formal crossing points between the Fields and the Castle. This has resulted in dangerous informal crossing points at three locations along Castle Road. On numerous occasions pedestrians were witnessed running the gauntlet to cross this busy road as there are many

blind bends.

These two historic sites should not be seen in isolation, but their interaction actively encouraged to promote additional tourism into Abbey Fields and Kenilworth, providing easier access for residents between Abbey Fields and the Castle, and more importantly preventing potential serious accidents.

Recommendations:

The creation of formal pedestrian crossings between the two sites needs to be considered a high priority. The three areas of high pedestrian crossing footfall include:

1. **The southern main vehicle entrance to the Castle, shared with the Centenary Way (with no pedestrian facilities). Pedestrians from the Castle wait to cross Castle Road to get to the footway (that leads to Abbey Fields), alongside vehicles entering and exiting the Castle as there are no pedestrian refuge areas.**
2. **An informal footpath from the lower park of the Castle (near to the ford) that once across Castle Road, connects directly to the Abbey Field western entrances. The path appears historic and has had some formalization to encourage access but is located on a blind bend. It forms part of the 'circular route' identified online.**
3. **The northern Castle car park shared with the Millennium Way. Pedestrians wishing to cross Castle Road from Kenilworth Castle are forced to negotiate a blind bend.**



[Borrowell Lane/Forrest Road south entrance](#)

This is a well-used pedestrian entrance to Abbey Fields particularly from the National off-road cycleway (Sustrans 52) that ends at Borrowell Lane, connecting the areas of Borrowell and St Johns to Abbey Fields.

The entrance lacks principality with no signage except for 'no cycling' printed on the ground and a dog bin. The roadside footway is wide with a zebra crossing a short distance from the entrance providing good visible and safe access across the B4103, Borrowell Lane.

Recommendation:

- **Good entrance signage directing pedestrians into the Fields as well as widening the access and introducing bollards as per the Design Guide would improve its accessibility, legibility and principality.**



[War Memorial and Holmes Avenue/with Bridge Street entrances](#)

War memorial entrance

This entrance receives high footfall. The war memorial is a strong focal point particularly from the town centre, centrally located at the top of Abbey End. The Fields is only visible from the town as you near the top of Abbey End with no welcome signage.



There is one black finger post within the town centre that directs to Abbey Ruins, St Nicholas Church and Toilets, but does not include the Fields or leisure facility. The sign is also tucked within trees, adjacent to outdoor café seating and is easily missed.



The war memorial entrance is an open and wide entrance with timber bollards preventing vehicle access. Access is also available through the war memorial although this is not wheelchair friendly as it is stepped to the front and rear.

An old finger post is located adjacent to the entrance that directs to important features within the Fields except for the play area, lake and leisure facility.



A road name sign is located in principal view adjacent to the war memorial. The orange bench and road name sign also become detracting focal points.



Issue here is the lack of formal crossing at a busy junction/bend on a major road out of the town.

The only signage at Abbey Hill is a soiled and damaged sign providing historic context to Abbey Ruins, with a dog bin at Bridge Street entrance. No cycling signs are also painted on the ground at each entrance. Double gates near to the Bridge Street entrance provide access during events.



Good pedestrian connection via a Zebra Crossing is provided at the Bridge Street entrance.

Issue here is the lack of formal crossing on Abbey Hill at a busy junction/bend on a major road out of the town.



Recommendations:

- **Finger posts need to be better located and highly visible, with more information to encourage all ages to the Fields.**
- **The entrance needs to embrace the war memorial, but also advertise the Fields, encouraging access into the facilities. The bench and road name sign need to be moved to a less prominent location.**

Holmes Avenue Entrances at Abbey Hill and Bridge Street

The Holmes Avenue entrance located further east



of the War memorial entrance is a diagonal path that leads from Abbey Hill to Bridge Street and vice versa. It is a well-used and historic pedestrian route

to/from the town centre. The entrances are narrow and low key with no signage to give direction or welcome.

Recommendations:

- **The Holmes Avenue entrances at Abbey Hill and Bridge Street would benefit welcome signage and some historic context.**
- **Install a crossing point at Abbey Hill between Holmes Avenue and the War memorial entrance to encourage safe crossing. This will provide pedestrians safe passage into and out of the Fields across this busy road.**



Proposed Primary access at Abbey Hill shelter

An informal broad, stepped entrance is located to the rear of a large timber double sided shelter and offline bus stop along Abbey Hill near to the junction with Upper Rosemary Hill and Priory Road.



This entrance appears to have high footfall although it is partially hidden from the road behind the shelter.

The access is framed by pretty raised herbaceous borders that create a pleasant frontage. Narrow paths to the rear of the shelter and broad steps leading into the Fields restrict access to able bodied pedestrians. Footfall erosion is an issue leading from the steps as there are no formal paths from the steps into the Fields.

The steps are in serviceable condition but the tarmac paths are in need of improvement. The shelter is also in need of maintenance.

Recommendations:

- **This entrance could receive substantial improvements and would benefit erosion control around the base of the paths to reduce trip hazards.**
- **The entrance would benefit wider paths and upgrade to steps to the rear of the shelter to create a more inviting space.**
- **The shelter requires repair and maintenance to create a high-quality entrance experience.**
- **Entrance signage to the Fields would invite visitors into Abbey Fields from the bus stop.**
- **Access across Abbey Hill also needs consideration with a crossing point to ease permeability with residents, schools and businesses to the east and south of Abbey Fields.**





Footpath under Bridge Street

This is a formal pedestrian link leading under Castle Road bridge. It is a pedestrian only path that connects to the off road National Cycle Route (Sustrans 52) that links Abbey Fields with Kenilworth Common and beyond.



Steps and ramps lead down under the bridge to allow for head room. This is a well used route by pedestrians to avoid crossing the road and negotiating the car park entrance.



There is footfall erosion around the entrance points and muddy areas under the bridge as it is a basin and collects water. Drainage is provided to ensure this flows away when possible.

Timber cycle finger posts do not advertise Abbey Fields but suggest cycle connections to University of Warwick and the Town Centre (via vehicle routes).



Recommendations:

- **Welcome signage to the Fields would encourage pedestrians from along the footpath/cycleway to explore the Fields fully.**



SECONDARY ACCESS POINTS

Car park steps

Steps lead from Bridge Street into/out of the car park, providing pedestrian able-bodied connection with the east. There is no signage at this entrance, but its access is generally to/from the car park.

Recommendation:

- **Improved signage at the primary entrances off the car park would identify the Fields entrances. No additional signage required at the steps.**

Entrances on High Street



Church entrance

A secondary, narrow, formal tarmacked entrance leads to St Nicholas Church from High Street. Iron railings line the western edge with a wide hedge to the east, creating a narrow alley way that feels intimidating and uninviting. There is no signage to indicate its connection to the Fields. An old

church sign with no footings leans against the iron railings from within private land further along the alleyway. No cycling is painted on the footpath and a pedestrian roadside barrier is located along High Street to prevent pedestrians potentially running into the road.



This is an historic route into the church with stone edging and mature trees lining the main path to the church. A community church garden lies further east of the entrance beyond the wide hedge. However, access and visibility are impeded by the hedge.



The Centenary Way long distance route appears to enter/exit through the churchyard at this point (although there is conflicting mapping data to confirm). However, there are no way markers to show its use of this path.



Recommendations:

- **Remove the wide hedge alongside the path to create an open view of the church and churchyard and improve access. Perennial borders could be introduced along the boundary to allow views in, but limit access to the churchyard if required.**
- **Provide signage to the church and Fields beyond, with way markers defining the route of Centenary Way.**

Vehicle/pedestrian entrance on High Street



A double leaf timber field gate provides combined pedestrian/vehicle access with lockable bollard further west along High Street. A trombone handle allows for easy opening of the pedestrian gate. This is an informal historic entrance, with mown grass path and wildlife margins. However, there is no signage to the Fields.



Recommendation:

- **Signage to the Fields would encourage access. This could include engravings onto the timber posts to reduce additional clutter.**

Borrowell Lane south west

This is a combined vehicle and pedestrian access. The vehicle access is via a rotting timber field gate with rotten posts with a lockable bollard. The pedestrian access is adjacent and via an old metal hooped chicane.



This is a mown access with wild margins. It appears well used as there is a formal zebra crossing over the main road linking to access to the south and south west. It is a very wet access.

Recommendation:

- **Replace the field gate with similar, in line with Design Guide. Replace metal hooped chicane with timber.**



Forrest Road

Lower Forrest Road



Paving slabs are used to control erosion. There is no signage, however, this location is in close proximity to the War Memorial entrance.

War memorial informal opening



An informal timber chicane pedestrian access enters the Fields through the fence along the lower end of Forrest Road. Erosion has been managed with use of paving slabs, although wear is noticeable at the intersection with the mown grass causing a potential trip hazard. The access point would not be suitable for wheelchair access.

Recommendations:

- **Geocell mats could be used to control erosion or periodic closure for repairs to the erosion could be introduced.**
- **Informal signage of entrance to the Fields.**

Mid Forrest Road



Further east along Forrest Road an informal opening is located adjacent to double field gates.



A wide informal gap in fencing with timber bollards, utility cabinet and a bin is located west of the War memorial. This allows for informal access onto the higher ground of Abbey Fields. A raised stone kerb restricts less able bodied access.

It appears that this opening may have been created to reduce pedestrians trampling on the bedding plants around the war memorial.

Recommendations:

- **Make the access level with the footway to create a more accessible informal entrance.**
- **Replace all bollards in line with the Design Guide**



Abbey Hill informal entrances

An informal timber chicane pedestrian access enters the Fields between the bus shelter and Holmes Avenue. It is located opposite Southbank Road. Erosion has been managed with use of paving slabs although they have some subsidence. The fence line here is broken. It doesn't appear to be a well-used entrance.



Recommendations:

- **Repair the fence and level the paving slabs**
- **Make necessary repairs should erosion become a problem.**
- **Encourage pedestrians from Southbank Road to use the Abbey Hill shelter entrance or War memorial entrance with improved signage and permeability across the main road.**



FORMAL VEHICLE ACCESS

Formal vehicle access is via the car park entrance off Bridge Street. Signage for parking is provided from the town centre and adjacent to the car park.

There is substantial conflict between cars entering and exiting as well as between cars and pedestrians as they all share the same driveway.



The lime tree avenue, Church Walk, leads to St Nicholas church and provides for occasional vehicular access with a triangular vehicle barrier.





The leisure facility has a lockable vehicle barrier and an automated vehicle barrier. The lockable barrier is believed to be used when concerns are raised over potential traveller incursion. Pedestrian access remains feasible with a block paved bypass to the barriers. However, pedestrian access is regularly impeded with storage of the Leisure Centre's commercial bins.

MAINTENANCE ACCESS

There are multiple field gates that are located around Abbey Fields that provide maintenance access to the Fields. These are all protected by lockable bollards to prevent unwanted access. Maintenance access is good, although there are differing styles of gates and conditions noted around Abbey Fields, discussed in more detail in the infrastructure audit.



Recommendations:

- Consider alternative options for access into the main Drive to improve pedestrian permeability.
- Consider passing places along Main Drive for safe refuge for pedestrians when vehicles use the main drive.
- Access to the car park would benefit the provision of a separate pedestrian footway and signage to warn of shared access with a 'Give way' from the car park to incoming vehicles. Rumble strips would slow vehicles entering the car park.
- Consider a passing place at the entrance to the Fields to reduce conflict between vehicles.



Recommendation:

- All field gates should be replaced as and when required, in the style of the Design Guide.



MAIN FIELDS ACCESS PATHS

Church & Abbey



Church Walk leads up to St Nicholas church and is a wide, lime tree-lined path with tarmac in good condition. Access into the churchyard is clearly demarcated with stone cobbles in line with the churchyard walls. The cobbles are showing signs of subsidence where vehicle movement has tracked them. Grass is growing through the sets which is acceptable but may destabilize them in time. 'No cycling' is marked on the access to the church and does detract from the quality of the churchyard experience.



Tarmac around the church is of different grades and quality although the surfaces are in reasonable condition.

There are no signs in relation to accessing the Abbey ruins. Well-maintained mown areas through the churchyard allow access and lead to some of the ruins although the signs for these are often difficult to find. Access to many of the ruins within the churchyard are not suitable for those in wheelchairs or for less able bodied. However, provision of a more permanent path may detract from the experience of the ruins within the churchyard



Leading west from the church is an historic tree lined path that connects with the Gatehouse ruin. It has been re-laid with compacted loose stone and appears temporary. The path becomes narrower as it leads to the Gatehouse ruin. This appears to form part of the Centenary Way although there are no way markers to define its route.



The Gatehouse ruin within the churchyard has substantial pedestrian erosion around its base with desire lines through the churchyard, past the ruin. The paths around the base of the Gatehouse ruin have deteriorated resulting in hardcore becoming visible with some trip hazards of foundation stones and stones within the ground.



Tarmac paths that lead from the Gatehouse south and west are covered in leaf litter and have not been maintained. The condition of the paths is unknown with encroachment of grass verges leading to the paths narrowing. Tree branches are low and overhang the paths and the Gatehouse creating dense shade.



but a more formal path is likely to not be appropriate in this location.

- **The tree lined path leading to the gatehouse should be retained as a loose bound stone surface, wide enough to facilitate access as per current specification.**
- **Desire lines through the churchyard should be repaired regularly to prevent erosion of the graves below. Improving the overall paths around the Gatehouse may discourage these desire lines forming.**
- **The paths around the base of the Gatehouse ruin need to be repaired with a new surface, such as Breedon gravel. This will not only reduce trip hazards but provide a higher quality experience of the ruin and encourage pedestrians to walk through the ruin.**
- **Paths leading from the Gatehouse ruin should be cleaned more often, and overgrown grass edges cut back to encourage pedestrians to use the paths and reduce the need for desire lines.**
- **Selective crown lifting of some mature trees within the churchyard around the paths and ruins may help to improve the experience of this area.**
- **The desire line past the Barn should be formalized into a permanent tarmac path to form part of the proposed circular wheelchair accessible route.**
- **All tarmac paths would benefit resurfacing to improve the user experience.**



The Barn/Museum located south from the Gatehouse and on the edge of the churchyard has a narrow tarmac path leading to the main door. However, this narrow path has formed part of a well-worn desire line that leads from the lake and continues east connecting the Barn to a formal path to the car park.

Recommendations:

- **The cobble setts may require relaying in the future if subsidence continues or they become unstable.**
- **A small plan of the Abbey ruins should be located within the churchyard near to the main entrance off Church Walk. Maintaining a clear path to the ruins will assist in access,**



Northern bank

An historic, informal mown grassed path leads south from High Street and adjacent to the churchyard wall. It has tall, wild margins that include bramble, nettle, common thistle, teasels and other species.



Alongside the garden boundary to the west, large native shrubby trees are overgrown. The wildlife margins, although of high value, are encroaching onto the mown path, resulting in the path becoming narrower. The wildlife margins are important and need to be balanced with a decent path width to prevent the path become narrower, impassable, or difficult to negotiate.



Informal desire lines continue along the southern and western boundaries of 41-45 High Street. Brambles have encroached into the Fields. The brambles provide



protection to the boundaries of the dwellings and are currently managed on a rotational basis of a 1 in 5 year management. The brambles on the edge of the woodland adjacent to 45 High Street, prevent intervisibility of the woodland and could result in locations for antisocial behaviour.



The desire line adjacent to this woodland continues up to the fenceline and it appears pedestrians are climbing the fence.



A tarmac path leads from High Street (north west of the Fields) and connects with the churchyard at The Gatehouse ruin. This is a very narrow, steep path, but is well used. There is much erosion either side of this path as it is too narrow to take the volume of footfall. It also forms part of the Centenary Way. There is significant erosion around the bin and bench at the top of the hill.





Informal paths lead around and through the western woodland. Through the woodland the path is well worn, narrow and undulating. Both paths meet the hardcore path that connect to the lakeside.

From the hardcore path an informal path follows the line of trees at the bottom of the bank and connects through the tree line to the lake, and also to the Gatehouse ruin. There is much erosion at the interchanges between the paths.



Benches located throughout this area have substantial erosion to their base and in some instances are no longer the recommended height for seating and footings are visible. Some are enveloped in brambles and difficult to utilize.



Recommendations:

- **Brambles, nettles, thistles and shrubs along boundaries to continue to be managed on a 1 in 5 rotational basis. Wildlife margins should be encouraged, but encroachment on seating areas and paths needs to be monitored. If required a 1m buffer around seating should be maintained.**
- **Managing eroded areas could be undertaken on a rotational basis to encourage grass regrowth. Formalising path connections to the lakeside would reduce bank erosion between the bank and the lake.**
- **Set all benches within a tarmac and surfaced base that ties into the formal path surfaces. If benches are located within a grassed margin, erosion management will be required around the bench base.**
- **Consider widening the main path to 2m in line with Warwickshire County Council Rights of Way and Recreational Highway Strategy 2011-2026, Policy RW5c.**
- **All tarmac paths would benefit resurfacing.**



Lake

A compacted hardcore path leads north from the tarmac entrance on Castle Road along the western margins and northern edge of the Lake. It has substantial footfall with erosion to the edges of the path.

Castle Road towards the leisure facility. This runs between the lake and Finham Brook. The path does not appear to be wide enough for the volume of pedestrians who use it as there is much erosion to the path edges although its width allows two prams to pass each other easily. The condition of the path is generally good, with some signs of subsidence. A mown path connects this tarmac path, through the meadow to the other side of the lake.



The hardcore path is discontinued half way around the northern edge of the lake with a series of eroded desire lines leading to the Barn/Museum and the Leisure facility. Informal mown paths are positive additions to the western margins of the lake.

Some benches are set within hardcore and there is erosion to the base of the benches.

There are a number of locations along the line of the path where dogs and people are gaining access into the brook and the lake. Access to the brook is causing erosion to the embankments of the brook, which has in some instances resulted in



A tarmac path leads east from the entrance off



reinforcement to prevent subsidence of the path.

Access to the lake has been limited with hidden fencing, which has controlled the areas of erosion. There are two beach areas that encourage interaction with the lake.



The duck feeding station at the leisure facility is a decked platform over the lake. It is easily accessible for all pedestrians from the leisure centre and the lake. The southern lakeside edge leading up to this platform has substantial erosion to the surface and also to the embankment.



Recommendations:

- **The lakeside path would benefit being a wide tarmac path that extends around the lake and also connects to The Barn/Museum. This would create an accessible circular wheelchair path around the lake, through and into to the play area. Tree roots would need to be considered near to the leisure facility.**
- **Look at the potential to widen the southern lakeside path to reduce further erosion.**
- **Ensure all benches are set within tarmac and connected to the paths.**
- **Consider creating a hard surfaced graded slope into the lake at the north side to replace the timber sleepers to provide high quality interaction with the lake. Introduce positive notices encouraging the safe use of the lakeside beaches to reduce pressure elsewhere. Continue fencing in more sensitive locations to restrict dog ingress into the water's edge.**
- **Identify suitable locations for a more manageable public interaction with Finham Brook and fence the remainder of the brook to limit pedestrian and dog ingress and erosion. Education of dog owners is also important to limit access.**
- **Consider use of alternative structural supports, to prevent undercutting of the lakeside.**
- **Replace and extend duck feeding station with a solid structure to remove erosion issues.**
- **All tarmac paths would benefit from resurfacing.**



South Brook

Accessed via Castle Road, the path network is informal in nature with extensive erosion at the entrance and along its length, particularly in winter, and at pinch points at bridges over Luzley Brook and where informal paths meet tarmac paths.

Issues associated with the erosion and safety of the mound along Finham Brook has resulted in fencing of a hole eroded into the roots within the mound along Finham Brook.



Vegetation along the dwelling boundaries is managed on a 1 in 5 rotational basis. Some areas have substantial extent of tall ruderals and brambles. This is important for wildlife and is managed accordingly.



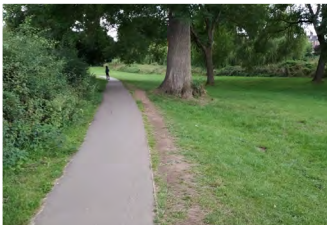
There are a number of locations along Finham Brook where dogs and pedestrians have caused erosion to the embankments, although erosion along the southern bank is not as critical as the northern bank with the lakeside.



A very well used formal tarmac path leads from Borrowell Lane and connects with the lake and the leisure facility via two bridges over Finham Brook. However, the path is narrow with erosion along the western edge as it is bound to the east with a wide



mature hedgerow. Mature trees are also dotted along this path potentially restricting its width in parts.



There are also a number of interconnecting informal paths that lead through gaps in the hedge and into Hillside with substantial erosion and potential trip hazards where they meet the tarmac edging.



Benches located throughout this area have erosion to their base and in some instances are no longer the recommended height for seating and footings are visible.



Recommendations:

- Entrance erosion is detailed in relation to Primary Access points
- A formal tarmac path from Castle Road would reduce erosion and improve accessibility to this area of the Fields.
- Rotational erosion control at pinch points should be considered to ensure trip hazards are managed and grass recovers.
- Access to Finham Brook should be controlled where possible with vegetation to limit erosion by dog access/egress.
- Consider fencing the mound along Finham Brook to prevent access for safety reasons and to reinstate it to grass.
- Brambles, nettles, thistles and shrubs along boundaries to continue to be managed on a 1 in 5 rotational basis. Wildlife margins should be encouraged, but encroachment on seating areas and paths needs to be monitored.
- All tarmac paths would benefit from resurfacing.



Hillside

This encompasses a number of primary and secondary access points, with formal paths leading from Abbey Hill and Forrest Road to the leisure facility and Bridge Street.

The formal path leading from Abbey Hill to the leisure facility is steep, wide and in reasonable condition with some root disturbance. Benches are accessible and set within hard standing and located evenly for good resting stages.



Where the paths meet at the base of Hillside, there is considerable 'corner cutting' erosion exposing stone from the Mill ruins.



Holmes Avenue, the tree lined route from Abbey Hill to Bridge Street is steep but in adequate condition. Benches are accessible and set in hard standing and located evenly for good resting and



viewing stages. The path is narrow but limited in width due to its proximity to the avenue of mature lime trees.

An informal path at the top of Hillside, loops a connection between these two primary access paths off Abbey Hill with substantial erosion.



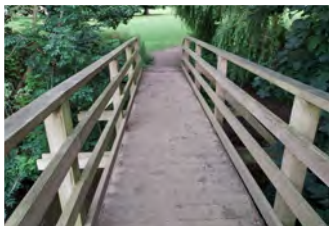
Access to informative signage is poor, located within grass, under trees and away from main paths.

Meadow areas with mown paths provide additional popular routes around Hillside, with gaps in the hedgerow along the Abbey Hill path to connect through from South Brook to Holmes Avenue. However, this has caused substantial erosion points, with trip hazards adjoining tarmac. In some instances compacted hardcore has been used to control erosion. Informal paths at the base of Hillside suffer erosion at locations where water collects.





A timber bridge at the bottom of Hillside crosses Finham Brook and connects into the play&leisure zone towards the car park. This is well used with substantial erosion to its base.



Entrances from the bus shelter on Abbey Hill and also west of the war memorial on Forrest Road provide access to the high ground plateaus to enjoy the hill views. Many groups of people use these spaces for picnics with level grass. This area is also used for overflow parking during Fields events providing good access into the Fields.



Recommendations:

- **The informal path at the top of Hillside that links Holmes Avenue with the war memorial path would benefit formalising into a tarmac path. Tree roots would need to be considered in its construction and alternative structures used if required.**
- **Holmes Avenue would benefit some crown lifting. Epicormic growth is undertaken once per year, but with climate change it has been noted that epicormic growth is becoming a problem later in the year. It would be beneficial to undertake a biannual removal of growth to ensure access is not restricted or oppressive.**
- **All tarmac paths would benefit resurfacing.**
- **All areas of substantial erosion could be managed with rotational reinstatements to encourage grass recovery or more formal entrances created.**
- **Consider fencing of the Mill area to protect the ruins.**



Play & Leisure

Main drive/parking

The main drive is a vehicle and pedestrian shared path. It is the main pedestrian path from the car park to the play area and leisure facility. It is also used by delivery and disabled vehicles accessing the leisure facility. The main drive has conflict between vehicles and pedestrians along its entire length with overrun caused by vehicles on soft verges avoiding pedestrians particularly in poor weather conditions.

A fenced play space for younger children is located to the south of the drive and an unfenced play area for older children to the north. The main drive and turning space bisect the play areas with a large zebra crossing painted on the ground. However, children are continually traversing this driveway



The driveway has a speed limitation of 5mph painted on the ground. Speed bumps are located at intervals along the path.

Recommendations:

- **Pedestrian safety along main drive is a priority. Suggestions for improving safety include,**
 - » **more severe speed bumps,**
 - » **rumble/cobble strips,**
 - » **Auditory announcements at the entrance to advise drivers of speed limit, to turn on hazard lights, and to give way to pedestrians.**
- **Redesign the layout of the parking and vehicle arrangement at the entrance to the new leisure facility to reduce potential conflict.**
- **Provide passing places for safe refuge of pedestrians when vehicles access the main drive, and also to remove the overrun and rutting of the Fields during wetter months.**



However, it has been witnessed that drivers often do not adhere to the speed limit. The path condition is generally good, although there are small areas of wear to lawned areas from mobility scooters avoiding the speed bumps, and vehicles passing along the length.



Fenced play

Tarmacked access to the eastern gate of the fenced play space is muddy. Muddy erosion extends to both sides of the path particularly as it joins the driveway. Drainage appears to be an issue in this area. There is a rain garden located a few metres away from this entrance.



The fenced play area has a number of resin bound paths that extend around the play space. The paths are in adequate condition with some signs of edging wear and cracking. Benches and picnic tables have been set within oversized areas of basic concrete. Access is good, but aesthetically it does not tie in with the quality of the play space.



The mown access paths to the meadow appear to have missed a regular mowing regime. Brambles are also encroaching the mown path along the hedgeline boundary. Some of the play structures have rotted but are still accessible, and some



formal play structures have been fenced off due to unsafe structures.



Recommendations:

- **The eastern entrance path would benefit being widened and chamfered to the driveway.**
- **Potential to improve drainage in this location directing water towards the rain garden gully.**
- **Annual inspection of resin bound paths is required to ensure that the edging wear and cracking does not create holes and trip hazards. Repair of paths required as and when needed.**
- **Mown access paths to the meadow with benches and wild play should be mown at least fortnightly to maintain firm footing for children to explore the meadow.**
- **The play facility will require substantial improvement within the next 10 years. However, repair/replacement of broken structures is of high importance to improve the accessible experience of children in this play space.**



Unfenced play

Access to the unfenced play space is from the Main Drive around the leisure facility, as well as paths from the Barn/Museum and the car park. Paths are generally in good condition. However, there are some wet areas and patchy tarmac to the north of the leisure facility/public toilets.

Recommendations:

- Additional drainage may be required for wet areas and surface improvements will be required around the new leisure facility.
- Introduce several wheelchair friendly picnic benches that are easily accessible from the tarmac paths.
- All tarmac paths would benefit resurfacing.



Leisure facility

Access to the leisure facility is good and level, although unattractive. Parking of disabled vehicles and trailers in this location inhibits movement around the leisure facility. There is concern over conflict of vehicles with many pedestrians using this space.



Level areas of tarmac around the leisure facility allow for skateboarding which can cause conflict with other users.

The leisure facility is due to be improved and access to and around this facility needs to be incorporated into the design layout.

Recommendations:

- **Redesign the layout of the parking and vehicle arrangement at the entrance to the new leisure facility to reduce potential conflict.**
- **Ensure that the design layout for the Leisure Facility considers all pedestrian links.**



All picnic tables are located within grass, with no access for wheelchair users. There are also no picnic benches for wheelchair access.



Tennis courts

Formal access to the tennis courts is through the fenced play area with subsidiary access from the eastern boundary. The surface of the tennis courts is basic tarmac. Access to retrieve balls outside of the tennis courts is via the main entrance within the play space, and also the subsidiary entrance.



Fairground field

The fairground field is located to the east of the tennis courts with informal footpaths that cross the field leading to/from the car park, and also under Bridge Street. The field is easy to access.



Basketball/netball posts are located to one end of the tennis courts with shared court use.

Recommendations:

- **In alignment with the Final Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report, June 2019, Abbey Fields tennis courts are classed as poor quality, conflict with netball and require refurbishment. Recommend refurbishment following leisure centre development.**



Recommendations:

- **Consider a trial of the provision of informal, removable/moveable goal posts to encourage positive use of the open space adjacent to tennis courts, in addition to MUGA consideration. Awareness of the flooding and events conflicts. Removal of posts is necessary at certain times.**



Informal footpath

An informal footpath runs from Bridge Street between the fenced play area and Finham Brook leading to the iron bridge adjacent to the leisure facility. This path can be boggy during wetter periods, with steep sides down to Finham Brook.



Recommendation:

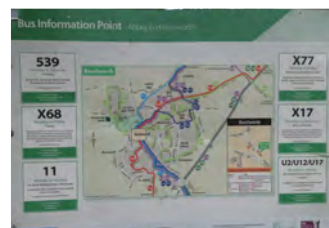
- **Ensure this path continues to link with the proposed leisure development. Plans appear to show it as being permanently closed off.**



ACCESS FROM THE WIDER AREA

Bus

There are numerous bus stops located around the Fields although there are no bus stops along Borrowell Lane or Forrest Road. A small bus station is located at the south of Abbey End with maps identifying its proximity to Abbey Fields.



Recommendations:

- **Work with Kenilworth Town Council (KTC) alongside their Wayfinding Strategy and in line with the Fields Design Guide to ensure that Abbey Fields is clearly signposted with finger posts visible from the bus station.**
- **To provide entrance signposts at all entrances to the Fields such that pedestrians are welcomed into Abbey Fields from the bus stops.**



Green links

Kenilworth Castle, an English Heritage site, is located to the west of Abbey Fields either side of Finham Brook. The castle and its grounds are an important tourist attraction and located on the edge of the countryside. Numerous public rights of way connect with Kenilworth Castle, including long distance footpaths of Millennium Way and Centenary Way. Centenary Way appears to continue its trajectory through Abbey Fields (although there is discrepancy with regards to its exact alignment around Abbey Fields).



An informal footpath within the Castle valley crosses Castle Road into Abbey Fields. However, the Castle currently feels disconnected from the rest of Kenilworth due to the busy Castle Road, B4103.



Finham Brook and Luzley Brook from the south provide an important green link from Borrowwell through Abbey Fields towards Kenilworth Common.



Recommendations:

- **Provide entrance signage and way markers for Centenary Way to improve the experience of pedestrians accessing the Fields.**
- **Work with Kenilworth Town Council (KTC) alongside their wayfinding strategy and in line with the Fields Design Guide to ensure these key locations are included and to identify new potential sustainable links and walkable routes.**
- **To improve wider accessibility and safe access to Abbey Fields, undertake a traffic management review to consider in partnership with others such as English Heritage, the implementation of formal safe pedestrian connections with Kenilworth Castle. This will improve the green links from the east through to the west of the town and reconnect the historical context of Kenilworth Castle and the Abbey.**



Roads & Access

Abbey Fields is well served by major and minor roads, although Abbey Fields Car Park is the only aspect of Abbey Fields signposted to road users. There are many visitors by car to the adjacent Kenilworth Castle and these are signposted with brown signs and English Heritage markers. On road restricted parking is also available on High Street and Abbey Hill, with unrestricted parking along Forrest Road.

The Fields is surrounded on three sides by walkable residential areas and there are many visitors who access the Fields on foot.



Recommendations:

- Consider use of Brown Signs to direct visitors to the Fields (similar to Kenilworth Castle)
- Pedestrian safety to a destination green space is priority considering the increasing number of people using this green space following Covid 19. Undertake a Traffic Management Review to consider and implement, in partnership with others such as English Heritage, traffic safety measures to reduce the conflict between moving traffic on busy main roads and pedestrians accessing and egressing the Fields via Kenilworth Castle and the Town Centre. Particular emphasis on Castle Road, Rosemary Hill and Abbey Hill
- Work with KTC with regards their Wayfinding Strategy in line with the Fields Design guide and ensure finger posts identify the length of time for walkable links to the Fields.





Train

Pedestrians entering the town by train should be guided with finger posts to all important destinations including Abbey Fields and Kenilworth Castle via Station Road and Southbank Road to create safer pedestrian access routes.

Recommendations:

- **Ensure that all finger posts are clear, concise, and provide relevant timed information in relation to the Fields, what it offers and other destination areas within Kenilworth, tying in with KTC's Wayfinding strategy.**



Town Centre

Only one finger post was located within the town centre and was hard to identify, being hidden from view by trees and café paraphernalia. Access to/from the Fields along Abbey End is disconnected from the town due to the busy road, and pedestrians find it difficult to negotiate traversing the busy Abbey Hill.

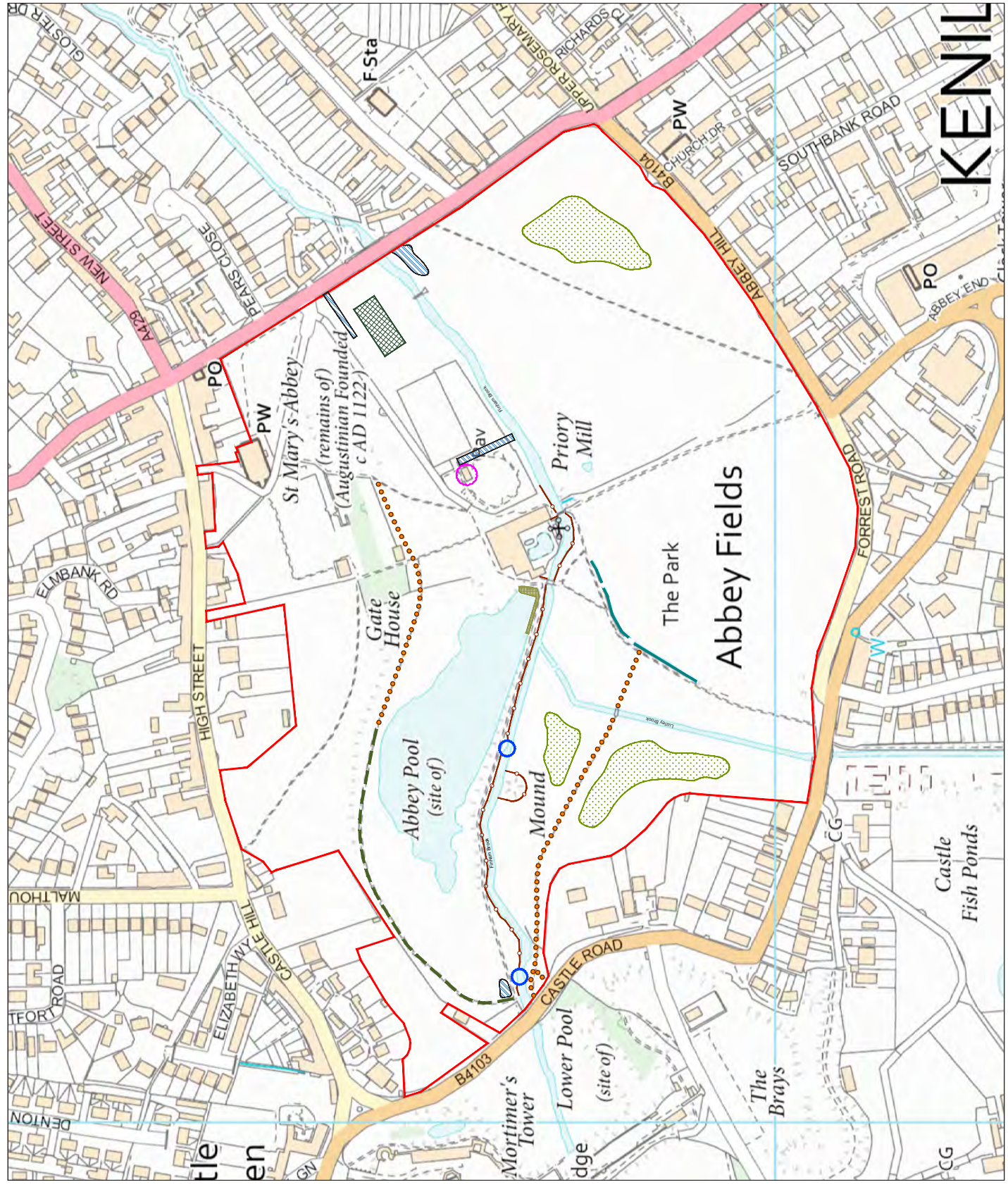
Recommendations:

- **Ensure that all finger posts are clear, concise and provide relevant information in relation to the Fields, what it offers and other destination areas within Kenilworth, tying in with KTC's Wayfinding strategy and in line with the Design Guide.**
- **Undertake a Traffic Management Review to consider and implement, traffic safety measures to reduce the conflict between moving traffic on busy main roads and pedestrians accessing and egressing the Fields via the Town Centre.**

Abbey Fields Detail

KEY	
	Study Area Boundary
	Existing ditch
	Potential SuDS interventions
	Proposed pedestrian access to Finham Brook
	Fenced locations around Brook and Mound
	New surfaced paths
	Surface changed paths
	Bird feeding platform and bank restoration
	Informal kickabout area
	Future pavilion development
	Proposed meadows

Map scale A3: 1:3000



KENIL