

Public Rights of Way in Hatfield Broad Oak Parish

Summary: The footpaths and bridleways of Hatfield Broad Oak parish are generally in good order with no major concerns.

This is a report of a survey of the footpaths in the parish of Hatfield Broad Oak. It covers Public Rights of Way (PROW) that are footpaths, bridleways or byways; roads are not covered, and, except for National Trust land, there are no permissive ways in the parish at the time of the survey. The survey was done by Adrian Birt with assistance from the Hatfield Broad Oak Walking Group (led by Toni Howarth), Little Hallingbury Walking Group and Meixian Birt during the period 4th May to 19th July 2024. This report was written by Adrian Birt for the Neighbour Plan Working Party of Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council.

In addition to the PROW there is one road which is regularly used by villagers for walks. This is Crabbs Green road which runs eastwards from Crabbs Green Farm. It is classified as a road and part of it is metalled, and rest has been metalled in the past. However the road has collapsed in parts and is now below the standard of a byway, although clear for a bridleway. Unfortunately the route runs only for about 1000 metres before ending at the start of a private track which runs to Bridleway 17 near Barnfield House. For the future it would be beneficial if that farm track could be opened as a permissive way but this would need negotiation with the land owner.

PROW in Essex are recorded in a definitive map held by Essex County Council. A non definitive version is available in an interactive form at <https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/public-rights-of-way/prow-interactive-map> . There is a search box on the map and to find a particular way search using a code for the type of path (FP, BW or BY) followed by the path number followed by the parish code (23 for Hatfield Broad Oak), for example "FP 7 23" then pick Hatfield Broad Oak from the list that should appear. Geographic Information System (GIS) data can be downloaded from the Essex Highways' website. Within the GIS data each PROW is given a number within each parish and each has one or more tracks within the GIS data. For example one of the paths is known as Hatfield Broad Oak Footpath 5 and has track data in the GIS data with the reference TRK6862.

Each description below shows the type of way followed by its number and the length quoted on the website. The next line is a brief description of the location of the way. The GIS TRK is the number of the track within the GIS data. Where the path has been inspected a brief report is added. Where problems that need rectifying have been found these have been reported to Essex Highways and the issue number quoted.

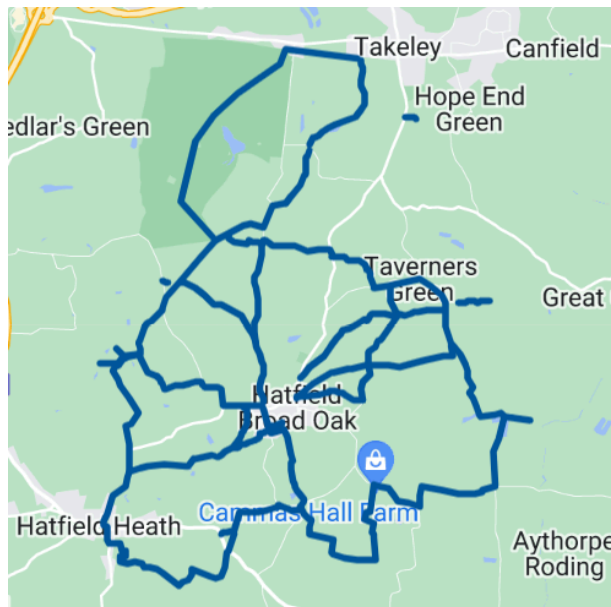
The total length of all the PROWs is approximately 21.1km (13.1miles). There are 19 footpaths (17,327m), 5 Bridleways (3,824m) and 1 Byway (414m).

This map shows the PROWs in the parish of Hatfield Broad Oak:

It is available at the link below:



<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1Op1V0mhyG9wF91KildvmuHOxfn35lg8>



The footpaths within the parish exist alongside those in neighbouring parishes. Together with the other PROWs in the area they can make a web of footpaths which is a valuable resource for those living in the parish. The map here gives an idea of how the Hatfield Broad Oak paths are extended once the neighbouring parishes and Hatfield Forest are taken into account.

The routes shown on this map add up to over 45 kms (28 miles).

This map is available at the link below:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1zjVLccNAvwY3t3OqQHjiqzuUZYIjsV4>

Footpath reports

Footpath 5 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 1,533 metres

Bush End to Flitch Way

GIS TRK6862

Walked 4/5/24. Clear, usable in walking shoes. Mostly grass and farm track with a short wooded section. One waymarker broken (reported to Essex Highways, issue 2916835). Can be muddy on the farm track section and the entrance had running water under foot when walked.

Footpath 7 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 376 metres

By Woodlands

GIS TRK4027

Walked 29/6/24. Mostly clear, can be walked in walking shoes. Where it crosses a field the path has been cleared, but at the junction with the main road it is overgrown with nettles.

Footpath 10 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 779 metres

Taverners Green To Greenhill

GIS TRK1525

Walked 22/6/24. Mostly fairly clear but overgrown and not cleared along the middle section. Walkable in walking shoes. This is mostly field edges, one section is across a field and this had been cleared.

Byway 11 in Hatfield Broad Oak has a approximate length of 414 metres

Boxley Lane

GIS TRK7316

Examined 29/6/24. Clear, walkable in normal shoes. This is metalled for a short distance before becoming a deeply rutted farm track which can get muddy. This is a byway and should be available for use by all vehicles including motorised. I took my 4x4 SUV part way but would not risk going all the way. There is a sign in the Hatfield Broad Oak section put up by Great Canfield Parish Council warning that the road should not be used by cars, in contradiction of the definition of a byway. I have referred this to Essex County Council, issue reference number 2928248.

Footpath 13 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 2,760 metres

Church Car Park To Doodle Gate

GIS TRK1582

Walked 22/6/24. Clear and walkable in walking shoes. A part of the upper section has been cleared round the field margin where the right of way should go across a field effectively rerouting the path. The Doodle Gate end entrance is being used as a compost heap for one of the nearby houses, but there is a clear way round it. Near the Doodle Gate end this path crosses a ditch which has running water during the winter when boots will be needed.

Footpath 14 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 1,308 metres

Footpath 13 to Wood Row

GIS TRK1581

Walked 18/5/24. Clear and well marked, usable in walking shoes. Mostly across productive fields and grass at the northern end. Two styles at the northern end.

Footpath 15 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 173 metres
Wood Row to The Forest Road
GIS TRK1580

Walked 18/5/24. Mostly clear but blocked at northern end, usable in walking shoes. On grass which had not been cut recently, two styles near the northern end, a style at the southern end which can be bypassed. The person who rents the field at the northern end has blocked the entrance to the path so that her horses don't escape, she pointed us to a gate in the south western corner of the field. The issue has been reported to Essex Highways, reference number 2919739, and Essex Highways have investigated it and report that they will be resolving it when they have other work in the area.

Bridleway 17 in Hatfield Broad Oak has a approximate length of 989 metres
Oakbury House to near the Hoppett
GIS TRK7650

Walked 14/7/24. Clear, walkable in walking shoes but can be very muddy in winter. Mostly a wooded farm track except for the eastern end is a field margin which was overgrown with grass at the time of walking.

Footpath 19 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 1,617 metres
The Fox to Taverner's Green
GIS TRK1524

Walked 22/6/24. Clear throughout, walkable in walking shoes at time of walking but can be muddy in sections.

Footpath 20 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 1,043 metres plus
Footpath 20 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 1,269 metres
Dukes Head to Woolards Ash
GIS TRK9668 & 9669

Walked 14/7/24. Clear, walkable in walking shoes. Mostly across fields which have been cleared. The bridge across the ditch in the middle is rotting and will need repairing soon.

Footpath 21 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 850 metres
Dukes Head to Crabs Green
GIS TRK1513

Walked 14/7/24. Clear, walkable in walking shoes. A mixture of across fields and field margins. The paths across the fields have been cleared although the eastern field has a narrow path which doesn't quite follow the correct line.

GIS TRK1513

Footpath 22 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 1,173 metres
Feathers Hill to Hatfield Heath
GIS TRK 1558

Walked 11/5/24. Clear, walkable in walking shoes. Mostly on grass, one section through a wood, another along a fenced off path between field and hedgerow. That section closest to Feathers Hill is very narrow and getting overgrown, although one section has recently been

cleared the section next to the nursery has not been. At the Hatfield Heath boundary the bridge across the boundary is now operational and clear to be used, but the field has crops and no path cut: most people follow the field margin and use the farmer's track to cross the ditch.

Footpath 23 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 562 metres
Village Hall to Pincey Brook
GIS TRK1559

Walked 19/7/24. Clear, walkable in walking shoes. The east end of the path is a metalled pavement, the rest on fairly short grass in good condition.

Bridleway 24 in Hatfield Broad Oak has a approximate length of 1,025 metres
Ryes Lane, north section.
GIS TRK7659

Walked 18/5/24 as far as Hatfield Heath Footpath 3, the rest On 20/5/24. Clear, walkable in town shoes. Entirely metalled surface in good condition.

Footpath 25 in Hatfield Broad Oak has a approximate length of 233 metres
Ryes Lane towards Little Hallingbury
GIS TRK1562

Walked 20/5/24. Clear, walkable in walking shoes. Mostly across a productive field where the farmer had cleared a path, plus a short stretch of grass.

Footpath 26 in Hatfield Broad Oak has a approximate length of 749 metres
Hatfield Heath Path 3 to near west end of Feathers Hill
GIS TRK1556

Walked 18/5/24. Clear, usable in walking shoes. Mostly on grass.

Bridleway 27 in Hatfield Broad Oak has a approximate length of 240 metres
Ryes Farm towards Little Hallingbury
GIS TRK7660

Walked 17/6/24. Clear, usable in walking shoes. Mostly on gravel, can be very muddy at the western end in winter.

Footpath 29 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 1,067 metres
Cannons Lane to Pierce Williams
GIS TRK7159

Walked 11/5/24. Clear, usable in walking shoes. Mostly on grass, a short section can be muddy. The section closest to Sparrow Lane is narrow but not overgrown.

Footpath 29 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 385 metres
Pierce Williams to Row Wood
GIS TRK7160

Walked 30/6/24. Clear, usable in walking shoes. The part of this path closest to the road has been modified to run between two fences, that part had recently been cleared, the next section up to the pond is overgrown but walkable. The rest is clear on short grass.

Bridleway 30 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 959 metres

Lancaster Grange to Lancasters

GIS TRK7653

Walked 11/5/24. Clear, walkable in walking shoes. Partly on a grass field margin but one stretch is across a productive field, and the final section is metalled. The field has had the path cleared but the crop was growing back when walked, there is a clear marker in the middle of the field.

Footpath 31 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 264 metres

Bridleway 30 at Lancasters to Main Road

GIS TRK1484

Walked 11/5/24. Clear, walkable in walking shoes. Mostly across a productive field that has had the path cleared.

Footpath 49 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 210 metres

Anne Lees Path

GIS TRK1557

Walked 3/5/24. Clear, usable in town shoes, Gravel underfoot. One short area liable to flood. Other areas form muddy puddles.

Footpath 51 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 976 metres.

Pincey Cottage to Bush End

GIS TRK9472

Walked 4/5/24. Clear, usable in walking shoes. Mostly grass underfoot, one productive field to cross. One waymarker not visible from the other side of the field (not reportable), the farmer had cleared a path through the crops.

Bridleway 54 in Hatfield Broad Oak has an approximate length of 611 metres

Taverners Green to Aldbury's

GIS TRK7652

Walked 22/6/24. Clear, walkable in normal shoes but in winter is very wet and muddy.

Adrian G H Birt

21/7/24