My footpaths report:

Excellent work has been done by all the Footpath Wardens throughout the Summer.  As a result, all footpaths have been kept clear from encroaching vegetation and the surfaces mowed.  Notable work was done by Hew and Beverley Helps with their various machines on many paths, including twice cutting the verges of Harris Lane all the way to the Bruces’s Arms.

I reported rather gloomily last time about the lost prospect of ever putting planings on the track running up onto the downs from the Bruce’s Arms (‘Badger Track’), but things have turned out much better than was predicted.  Wiltshire Council allowed us to have a discussion with Chris Brennan about work being done in exchange for retention by him of a proportion of the planings.  This was successful and Chris Brennan has now pre-positioned two loads on the track and intends to lay the planings in the bad patches very soon.  I offered him some money for the work done by his digger, but he kindly declined.

Two issues have been raised by villagers.  First, a question arose about a very large bank that was recently constructed along the edge of the Bridleway running north from the Bruce’s Arms.  Its seems its purpose was to protect foals in a field from being spooked.  After discussion with Wiltshire Council Footpaths Ranger it was decided that it represented no encroachment onto the bridleway, because a passageway of at least 4 metres had been retained.  It is to be hoped that the bank soon grasses over.

Second, a number of villagers reported encroachment onto two field-edge footpaths in the village as a result of ploughing this season.  The landowner concerned apologised that this had happened and explained that it was due to ploughing at night.  An assurance was given that the statutory width of 1.5 m would be reinstated when ploughing took place next season.

Christopher Elliott 17th November