

# Gamlingay Cycleway Improvement Plan

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## Gamlingay to Potton Feasibility

March 2019



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# 1. Executive Summary

This report examines the feasibility of a shared use cycle route between Gamlingay and Potton.

Currently there is no footway between the two and the road has a 60mph limit for much of its length. It is straight with ups and downs leading to blind summits. It is considered an undesirable place to cycle and no cyclists were observed during field work.

The verge width varies considerably along the road meaning that a verge only solution would lead to a path of inadequate width. This means that land acquisition will be required. In many cases this will be for a field edge path as much of the land passed by the road is agricultural. However, especially at the Gamlingay end, there are a number of properties fronting onto the road with crossovers and informal parking.

The National Cycle Network (NCN) currently reaches Sandy and is being extended towards Potton. This path would be likely to become part of the NCN if it were built to the required standards, principally width and sealed surface.

It is estimated that the construction costs for the path alone will be at least £1M. This excludes land acquisition costs and any bridge works.

## 2. Introduction

This report assesses the feasibility of a shared use cycle route between Gamlingay and Potton. Three possible alignments are examined with recommendations made. All three alignments were cycled where possible and walked where not.

Currently there is no footway between the two and the road has a 60mph limit for much of its length. It is straight with ups and downs leading to blind summits. It is considered an undesirable place to cycle and no cyclists were observed during field work

The internal cycling network within Gamlingay is also examined and recommendations made.

# 3. Alignments

## 3.1 Overview

There are three parallel potential alignments:

- Using rights of way
- Following the old railway line
- Parallel to the B1040

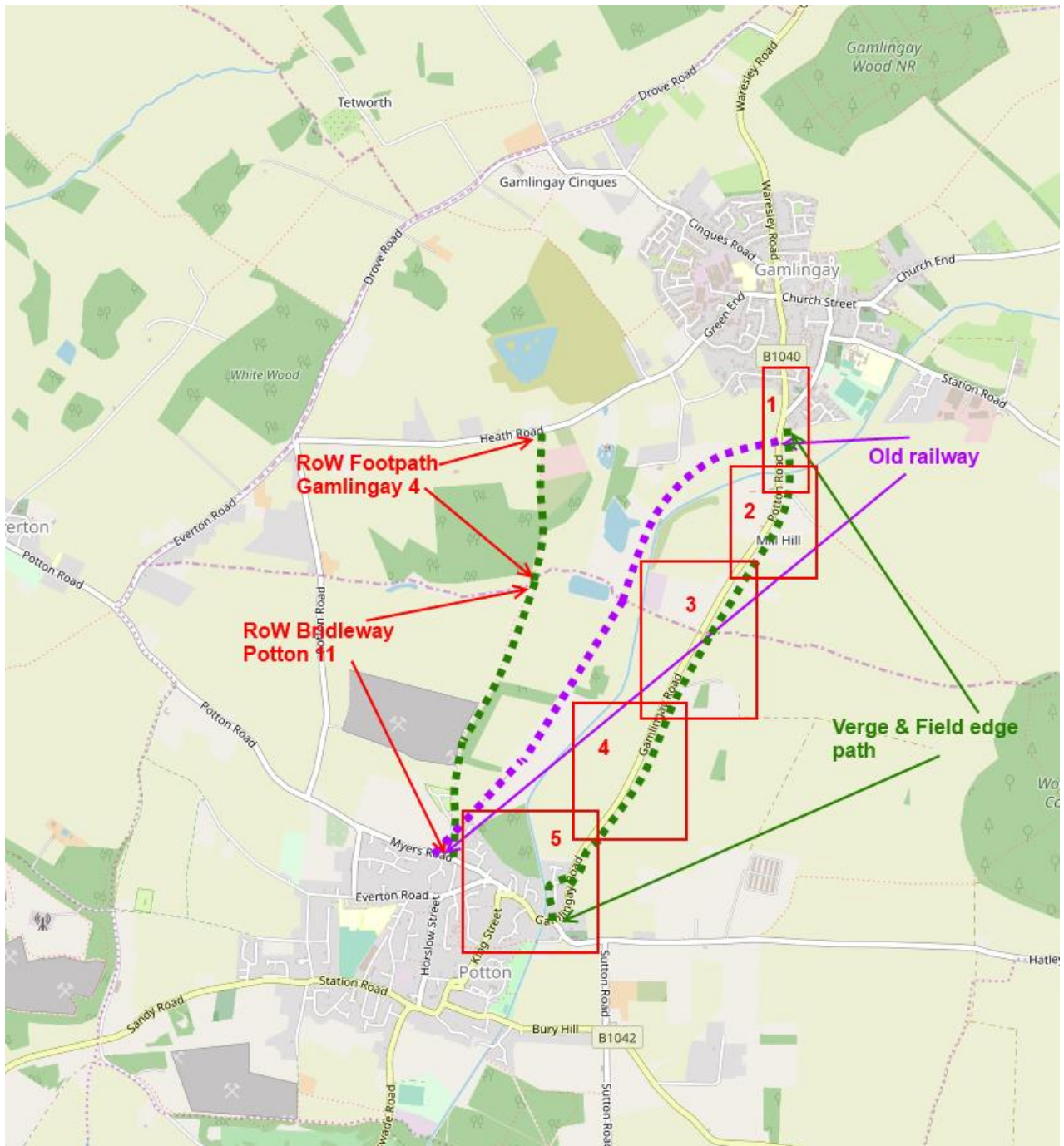


Figure 1 - Overview map

All of these have advantages and disadvantages which will be discussed in detail

## 3.2 Rights of Way

- 3.1.1 There is a continuous right of way from Heath Road in Gamlingay to Everton Road in Potton comprising:
- Footpath Gamlingay 4
  - Bridleway Potton 11
- 3.1.2 The status changes at the county boundary. It is quite common for the status of rights of way to change at parish and county boundaries. This dates back to when they were first formerly recorded in the 1950s and the methods used.
- 3.1.3 Cyclists are allowed to use bridleways but have no rights over requiring them to be cyclable. They are only required to be usable by horseriders.
- 3.1.4 Cyclists are not allowed to ride of footpaths. Footpaths often have stiles and other barriers on them. A footpath could have its status changed to bridleway, Restricted Byway or Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT). This requires the agreement of the landowner(s) and suitable changes to stiles and other barriers..
- 3.1.5 An alternative approach is to add permissive cycling rights to a footpath. This is normally agreed between a Council and the landowner(s).
- 3.1.6 The footpath comprises multiple land parcels in Cambridgeshire & Bedfordshire which are, running from North to South:
- CB101809
  - CB319874
  - Unregistered. Approx 100 metres.
- County boundary**
- BD258477
  - BD257866
  - Unregistered. Approx 1110 metres
- Unregistered land is land which is not registered with the Land Registry and has therefore not changed hands since 1974. It is quite common for rights of way to be on unregistered land and if the land on both sides is registered, as it is in this case, then it is very likely that knowledge of ownership and therefore responsibility for maintenance has been lost to time. This is not an insurmountable problem as Councils can maintain and improve these routes.
- 3.1.7 The footpath/bridleway alignment has been walked and ridden. There are a two stiles and two kissing gates on the footpath section. The footpath section is partly used as paddocks for horses & ponies. The bridleway has a poor surface and the southern end is very overgrown. It seems likely that it is not used even by walkers.
- 3.1.8 The alignment is some distance from habitation or alternative routes and therefore has little in the way of personal security.
- 3.1.9 It is not recommended to pursue this option due to the likely land issues, cost of upgrading the surface and the low level of personal security.

### **Recommendation 1: The rights of way alignment not to be pursued**

### 3.3 Old railway line

- 3.3.1 The old railway line was the original alignment of the Oxford to Cambridge line which was closed in 1967.
- 3.3.2 On closure of a railway it was the practice to offer the land for sale to the land owners on either side. This seems to be the case here.
- 3.3.3 The old railway consists of multiple land parcels some of them unregistered. Running North to South:
- CB290795
  - CB234521
  - CB140504
  - Unregistered. Approx 500 metres
  - BD165936
  - BD323522
- 3.3.4 The alignment is some distance from habitation or alternative routes and therefore has little in the way of personal security.
- 3.3.5 It is not recommended to pursue this option due to the likely land issues, cost of upgrading the surface and the low level of personal security.

#### **Recommendation 2: The rights of way alignment not to be pursued**



### 3.4 Parallel to B1040

- 3.4.1 The road is the most direct route from Gamlingay to Potton. It is a B road which is fairly straight with wide verges and one bridge. It is undulating.
- 3.4.2 The speed limit starts at 30mph, changes to 40mph just south of the junction with Honey Hill and to 60mph just south of Mill Hill. It changes from 30 to 60 and the urban boundary of Potton.
- 3.4.3 The speed limit and traffic volumes suggest cycle lanes or tracks according to LTN2/08 [3] i.e. the right most column of the table below:

Traffic flow	85th percentile speeds			
	<20 mph	20–30 mph	30–40 mph	>40 mph
<1,500 vpd, or <150 vph				Cycle lanes or tracks
1,500–3,000 vpd, or 150–300 vph			Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle lanes or tracks
3,000–8,000 vpd, or 300–800 vph	Cycle lanes may be appropriate	Cycle lanes may be appropriate	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle tracks
8,000–10,000 vpd, or 800–1,000 vph	Cycle lanes	Cycle lanes	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle tracks
>10,000 vpd	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle lanes or tracks	Cycle tracks

Notes:

- 1 vpd = number of motor vehicles in typical 24-hour weekday.
- 2 vph = number of motor vehicles in typical morning peak hour.
- 3 Where traffic speeds/flows are low, the designer should assume a default position of no signs/markings specifically for cyclists. However, there may be situations where it is appropriate to indicate the cycle route using cycle symbol markings to diagram 1057 with advisory route signs to diagram 967.
- 4 Cycle lanes used in the higher speed/flow situations should provide good separation between cyclists and motorists. Wide cycle lanes or buffer zones can help here.
- 5 Where cycle lanes or tracks are shown in the table, cycle lanes should be considered first. In general, cycle tracks should only be considered if cycle lanes cannot be made to work.
- 6 In congested areas cycle lanes can be useful even when traffic speeds/flows are low.

Figure 2 - Table 1-3 from LTN2/08

- 3.4.4 The solution proposed consists of:
  - Using the wide verge for a shared use path
  - Field edge paths where the verge is not wide enough
  - Reducing the speed limits in urban areas to 20mph
- 3.4.5 The chosen side of the road is the east side. This is because there are fewer land parcels with entrances and there is more verge available.
- 3.4.6 There are a lot of land parcels, many with crossovers.
- 3.4.7 The basic spec of the path is min 2.5m of sealed surface path with 1.5m of roadside verge and 0.5m of hedge side verge giving a 4.5m corridor. This design can be downgraded for short stretches if the constraints are significant.

**Notes:**

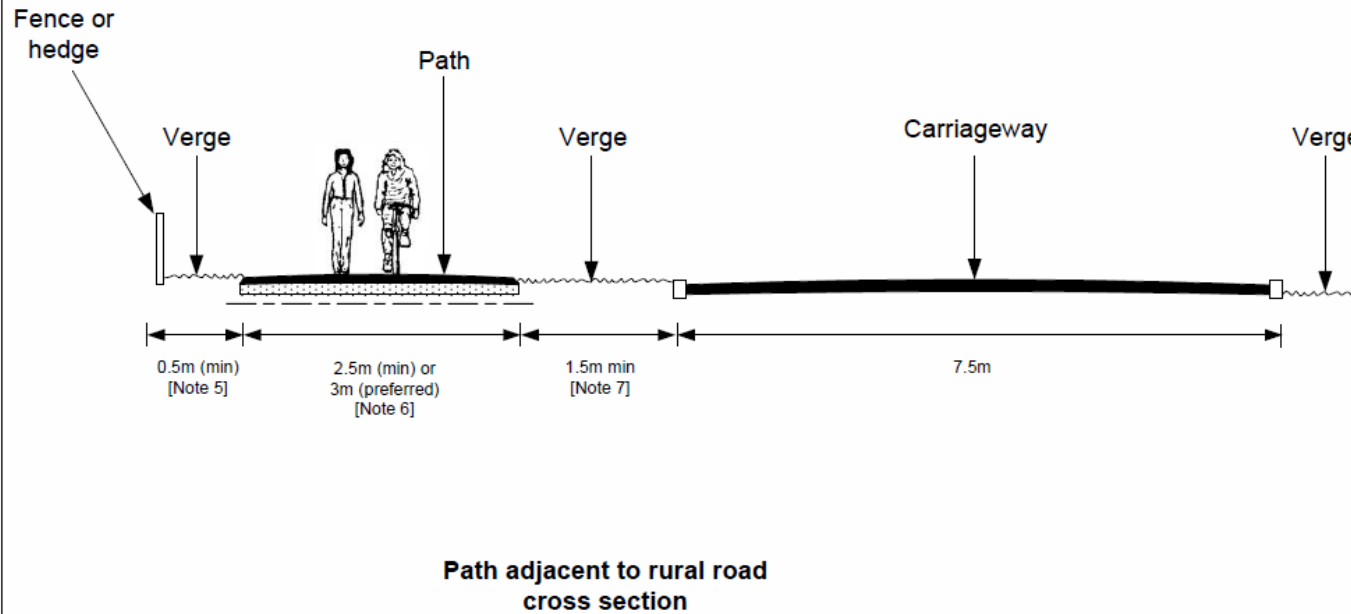
1. Centre line of path is as indicated on General Arrangement Plans.
2. Finished surface to be laid to 2.5 % cross fall/camber, to be free draining, free of undulations and /or steps and should not pond or hold water.
3. This drawing to be read in conjunction with all other drawings.
4. Refer to Standard Detail SD/01 "Standard DBM path cross section" for details of path construction.
5. Source: LTN 2/08 Cycle Infrastructure Design Table 8.2
6. Source: LTN 2/08 Cycle Infrastructure Design para. 8.5.3
7. Source: LTN 2/08 Cycle Infrastructure Design Table 2.2 and DMRB TA90/05 para 7.22

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Do not scale from this drawing

**Health and Safety Information:**




A	First Issue	RvB	26/04/12
Rev	Description	Drawn	Date
			
George Nott House 119 Holloway Head Birmingham B1 1QP Tel: 0121 633 5500 Fax: 0121 643 1214			
Status:			
<b>Standard detail</b>			
Project:			
<b>National Cycle Network</b>			
Title:			
<b>Path adjacent to rural road</b>			
Drawn and designed by: <b>RvB</b>		Checked by: <b>HD</b>	
Scale:			
<b>Not to scale</b>			
Drawing No:		Revision:	
<b>SD/81</b>		<b>A</b>	

Figure 3 Sustrans standard design for a path adjacent to a rural road

- 3.4.8 The highway corridor does not appear to be consistently wide enough to accommodate a shared use path of adequate specification.
- 3.4.9 There are three solutions to this:
- Narrow the carriageway to reallocate space to the shared use path
  - Acquire strip of adjacent land. In many cases this means removing the hedgerow. An alternative approach is a field edge path on the other side of the hedge.
  - Accept a lesser specification for the path.
- 3.4.10 The verge is already used for services cabinets and service poles. These may need moving to accommodate a path of the desired width. This is difficult and often impossible to achieve so the path will have to be narrower than desired.
- 3.4.11 In many places the verge is used for informal parking which would block anyway shared use path.
- 3.4.12 A basic budget cost for this sort of path is £350 per linear metre excluding land acquisition costs.
- 3.4.13 The route has been divided into sections:
- A: Gamlingay 30/40mph boundary to Mill Bridge
  - B: Mill Bridge to 40/60 mph boundary
  - C: 40/60mph boundary to Cambs/Beds border
  - D: Cambs/Beds border to 60/30 mph Potton boundary
  - E: Potton gateway

**Recommendation 3: The route parallel to the B1040 on the verge or field edge is the recommended alignment**

3.4.14 Section A: Gamlingay 30/40mph to Mill bridge 235m

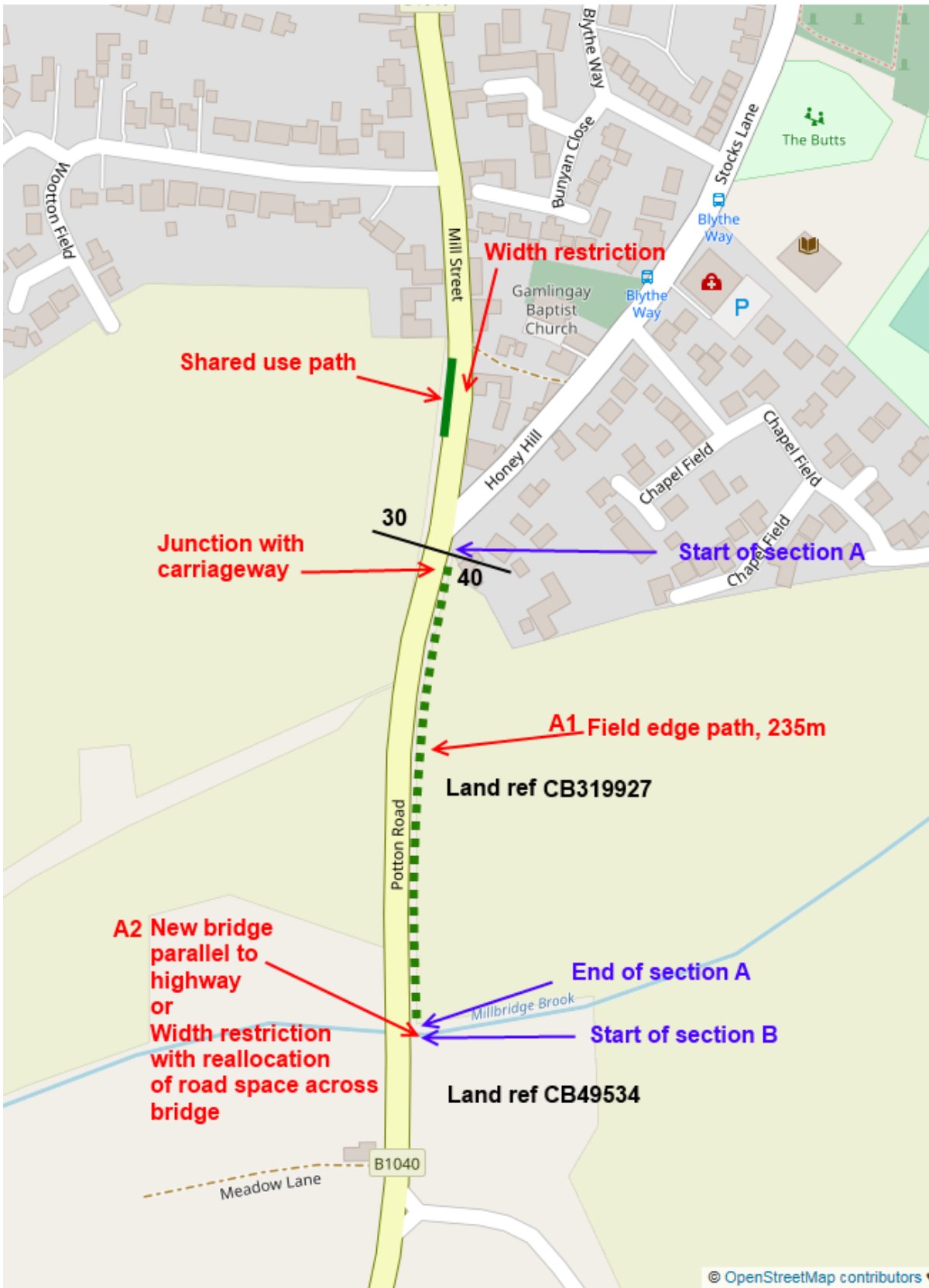


Figure 4 - Map 1. Gamlingay

3.4.14.1 The path leaves the road just south of the junction with Honey Hill



Figure 5 - Gamlingay gateway looking north

There is a short stretch shared use path requiring maintenance just north of the junction which takes cyclists past the width restriction.



Figure 6 - Short stretch of shared use path

3.4.14.2 The verge is not wide enough so a strip of land approximately 235m long and 4m wide will be required. The land ref is CB319927.



Figure 7 - Field edge path on right

3.4.14.3 Millbridge Brook

The bridge is not wide enough to accommodate a 3m wide shared use path on the existing bridge. The existing footway could be widened up to the white line to match the other side. This would gain some width. Although this would be narrower than ideal its only for a short length. This would have to include the sections both sides where there is a crash barrier.

An alternative would be to narrow the carriageway to gain the required width, possibly with an alternate one way section. This would also help slow traffic.

A further constraint is the communications cabinet and telegraph pole. These two items would be very difficult to impossible to move.

The option of a parallel bridge is also possible but would be expensive and require land acquisition on the south bank which is already constrained by the comms equipment. This would be something to consider when the bridge undergoes major works.

3.4.15 Section B: Mill bridge to 40/60mph boundary

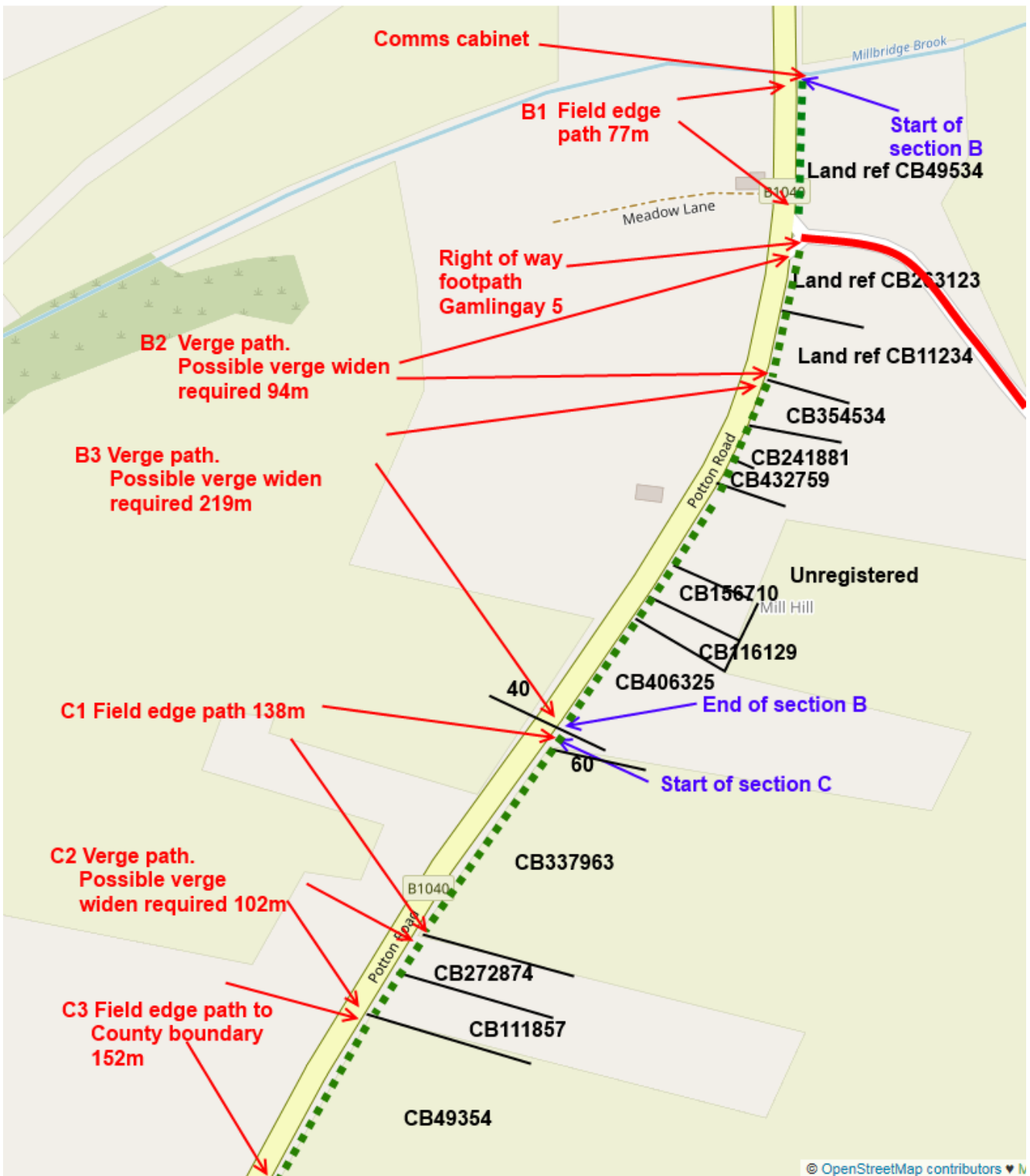


Figure 8 - Map2, Mill bridge to 40/60mph boundary

3.4.15.1 Section B1, 77m

The section from the bridge to the junction with the right of way is wide enough if the hedge is cut right back



Figure 9 - verge path. Evidence of informal parking

3.4.15.2 The path needs to be carried across the junction on a raised table crossing



Figure 10 - Side road crossing





Figure 11 - Example of a side road crossing

### 3.4.15.3 Section B2, 94m

The verge is not consistently wide enough so land acquisition will be required. The land refs are: CB263123 and CB11234. In both cases the roadside hedge is the back of the property.



Figure 12 - Verge path with land acquisition

#### 3.4.15.4 Section B3, 219m



Figure 13 - Section B3 looking south

The verge does not look wide enough so land acquisition from adjacent properties is required. The land refs are:

CB354534

CB241881

CB432759

Unregistered (Mill Hill)

CB156710

CB116129

CB406325

All of these have entrances which have to be crossed. Some have informal parking on the verge.

This takes the path to the end 40/60mph boundary.

3.4.16 Section C: 40/60 mph boundary to County border

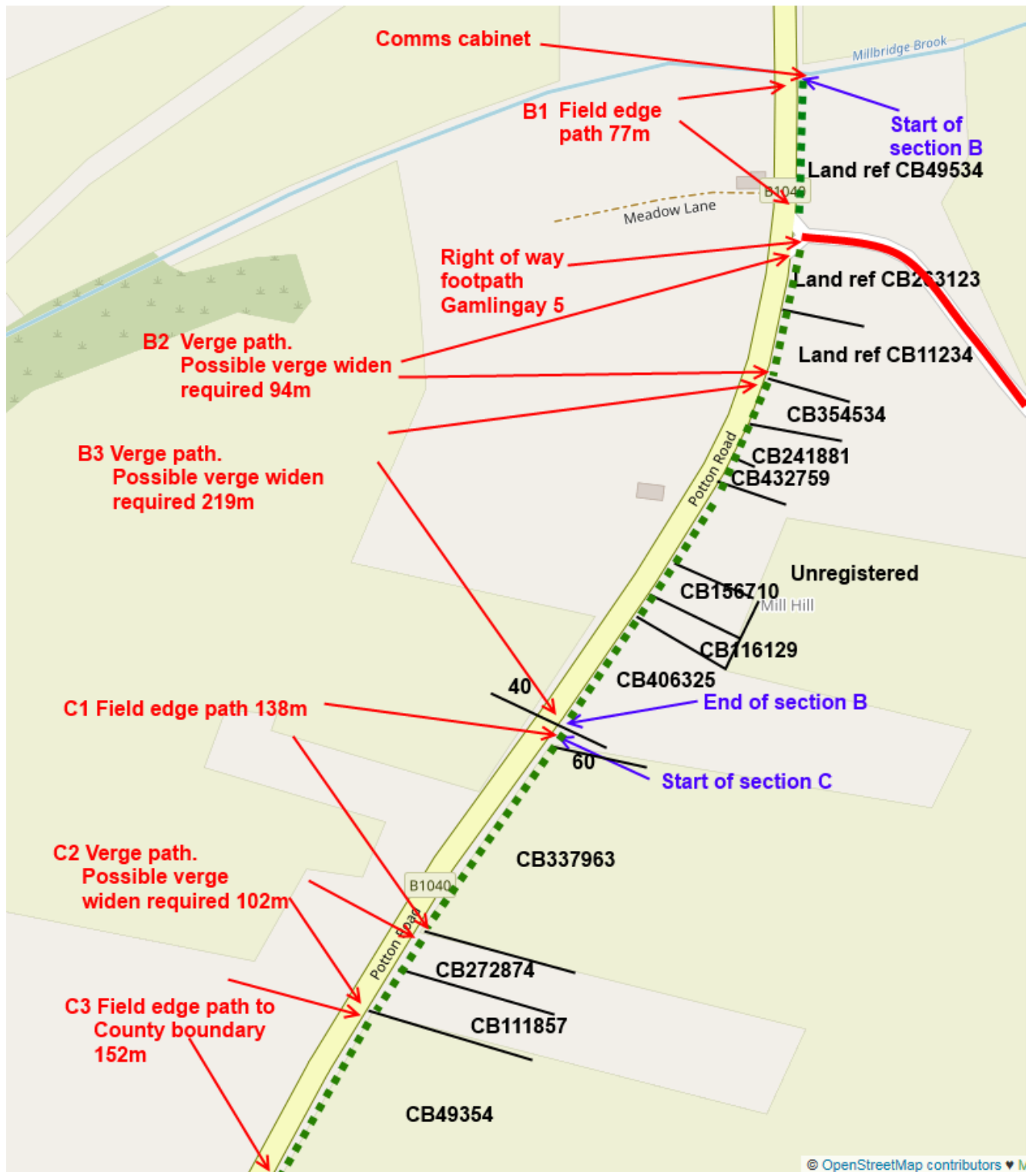


Figure 14 - Map 2

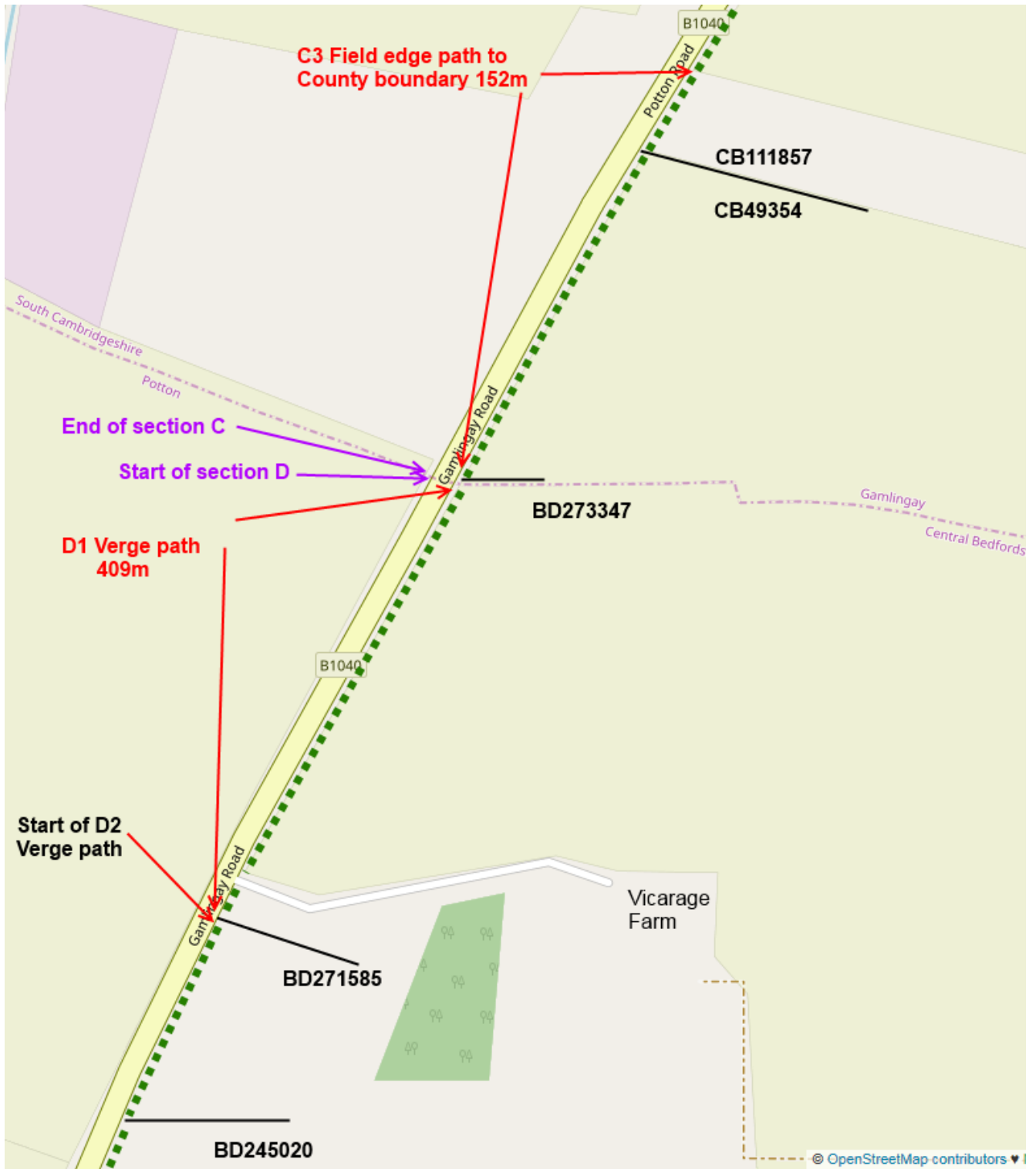


Figure 15 - Map 3

#### 3.4.16.1 Section C1, 138m

The verge is quite narrow but as this is an agricultural field a field edge path is viable which will require land acquisition. Land ref CB337963.



*Figure 16 - Example of a field edge path from Stow cum Quy*

#### 3.4.16.2 Section C2, 102m

This section is likely to require verge widening which will need land acquisition from the adjacent two properties: CB272874 & CB111857

#### 3.4.16.3 Section C3, 152m

A field edge path to the County boundary. The land ref is CB49354.

3.4.17 Section D: County border to 30/60mph boundary

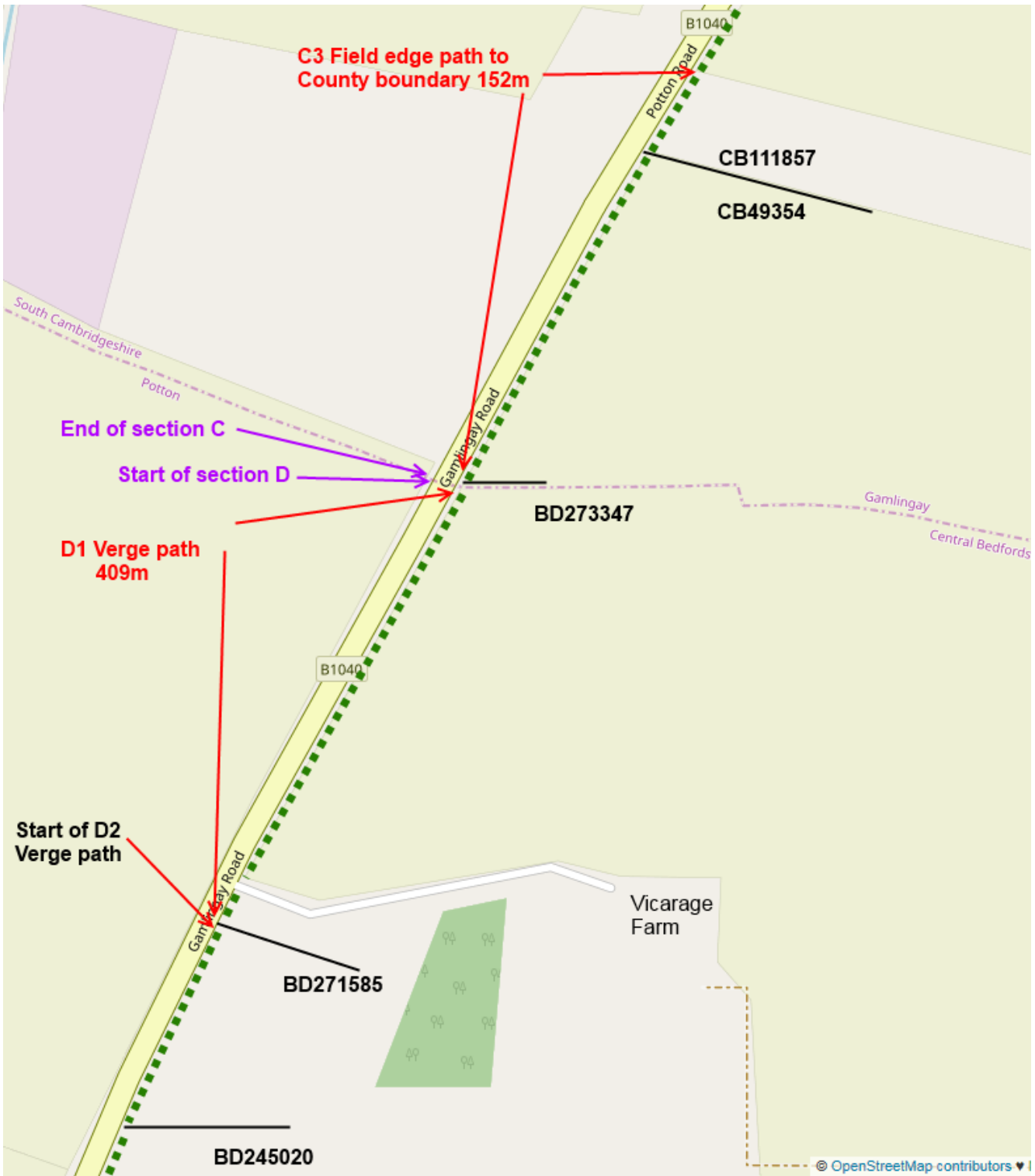


Figure 17 - Map 3

3.4.17.1 Section D1, 409m



*Figure 18 -Section D1 looking south at county border*

The verge is just about wide enough and there is an absence of service poles. There is one crossover at the Vicarage farm entrance. Traffic levels will be low on this crossover.

If a survey shows more land is needed then the adjacent land refs are:

BD273347

3.4.17.2 Section D2, 960m

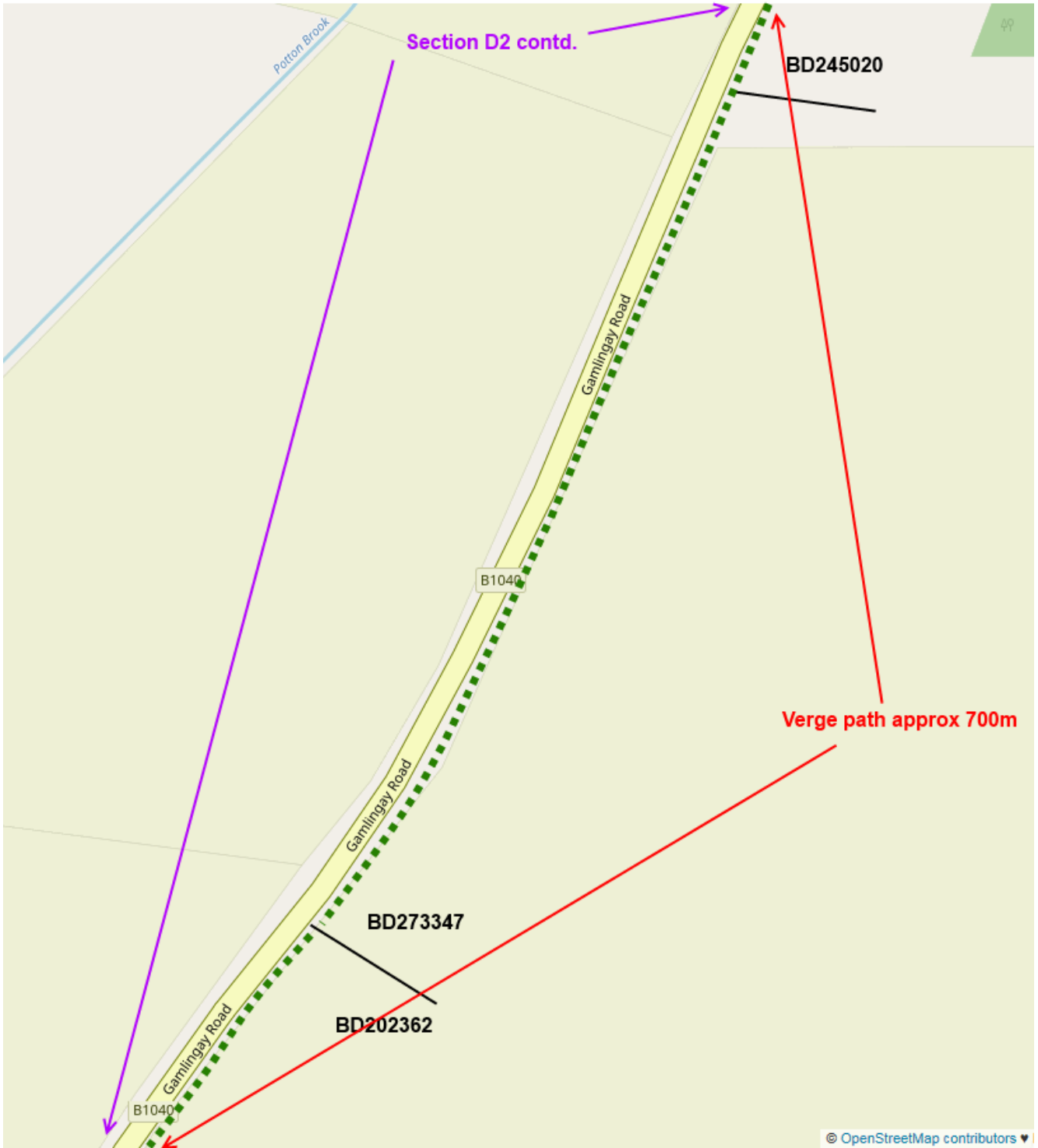


Figure 19 - Map 4



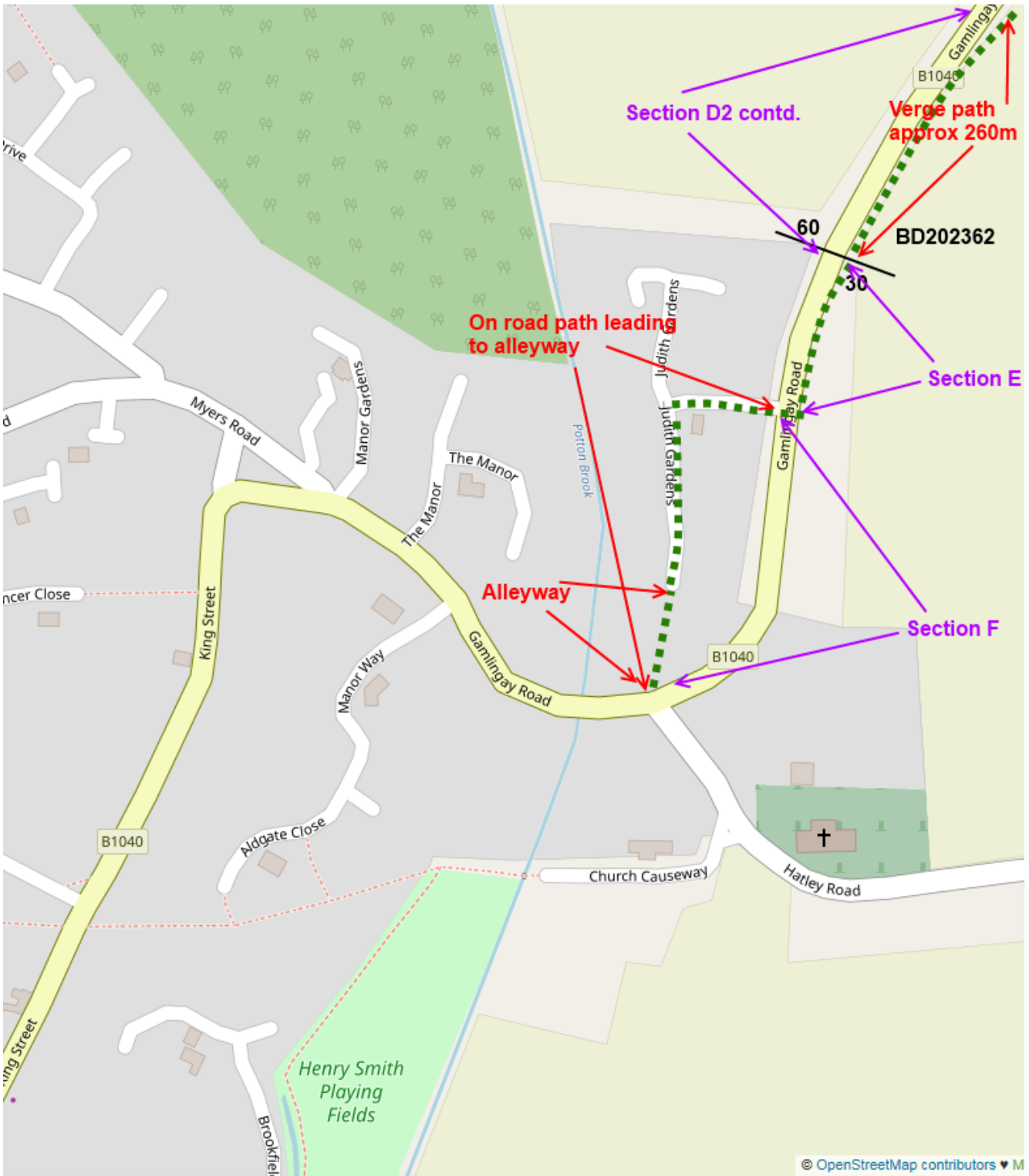


Figure 20 - Map 5



*Figure 21 - Looking south. Room for verge path*



*Figure 22 - Looking north. Room for verge path*

The verge is wide enough to accommodate a path. This takes the route to the 30/60mph boundary.

If a survey shows more land is needed then the adjacent land refs are:

BD245020

BD273347

BD202362

3.4.18 Section E: 30/60 mph Potton boundary to Judith Gardens

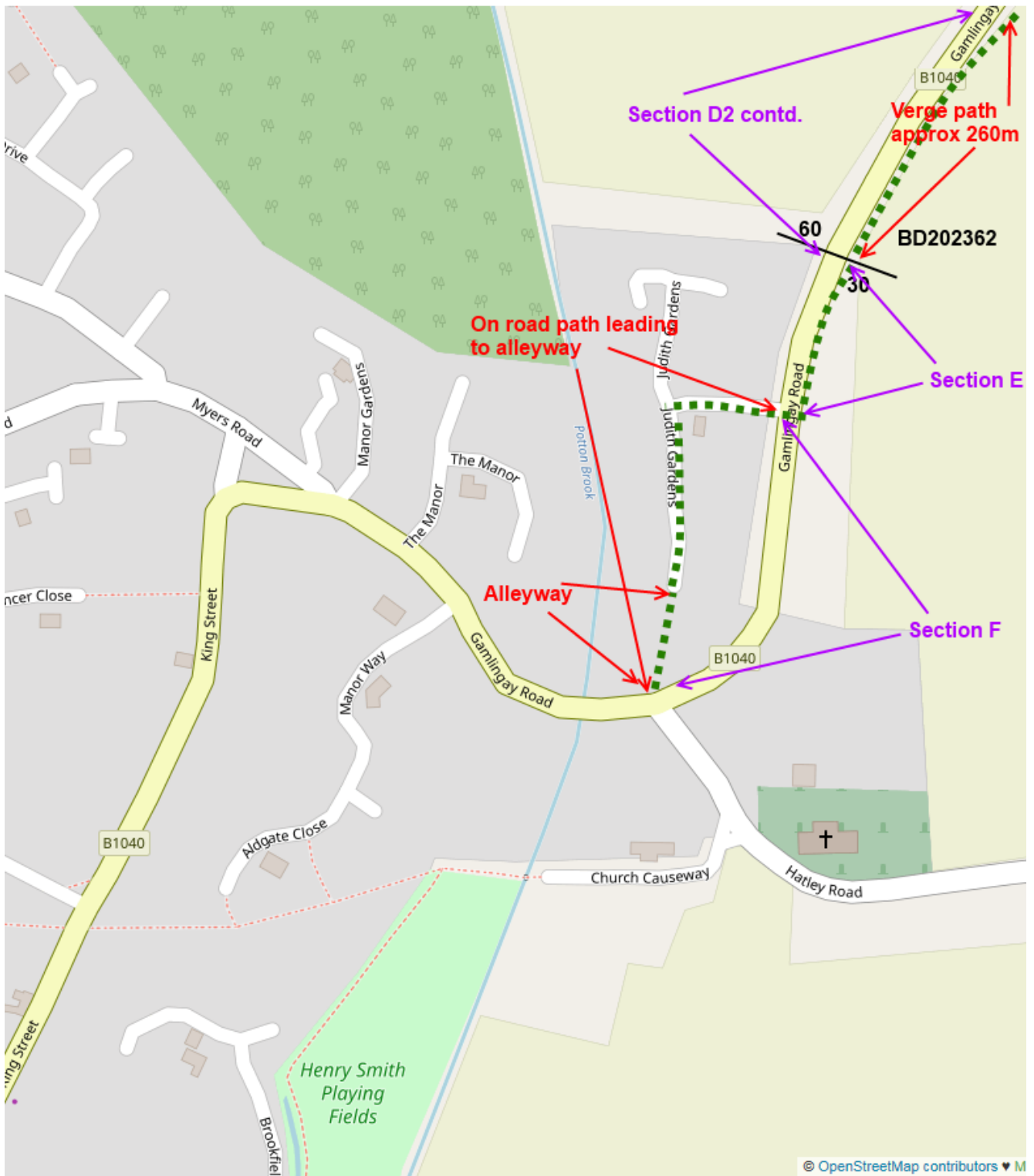


Figure 23 - Map 5

### 3.4.18.1 Potton gateway



*Figure 24 - Potton gateway looking north*

The fencing will need removing to allow the cyclepath past on the verge

### 3.4.18.2 Judith Gardens crossing

In order to avoid the sharp corner, the route crosses the road and proceeds on road along Judith Gardens.



*Figure 25 - Junction of B1040 with Judith Gardens*

### 3.4.18.3 Alternative

An alternative would be to end the route at this point and continue on road.

### 3.4.18.4 Alleyway through to Gamlingay Road

There is a wide alleyway from the south end of Judith Gardens through to Gamlingay Road opposite Hatley Road.

Permissive cycling rights would have to be added to the alleyway.



*Figure 26 - Alleyway from Judith Gardens*



*Figure 27 - View along the alleyway*



*Figure 28 - Junction with road*



*Figure 29 - View of junction of alleyway from B1040*



### 3.4.19 Summary

Section	Length/m
A1	235
A2	20
B1	77
B2	94
B3	219
C1	138
C2	102
C3	152
D1	409
D2	1170
E	120
F	233
Total	2969

The total length is about 3km. This leads to a construction cost of at least £1M just for the path itself, excluding land acquisition costs.

## 4. Gamlingay cycle routes

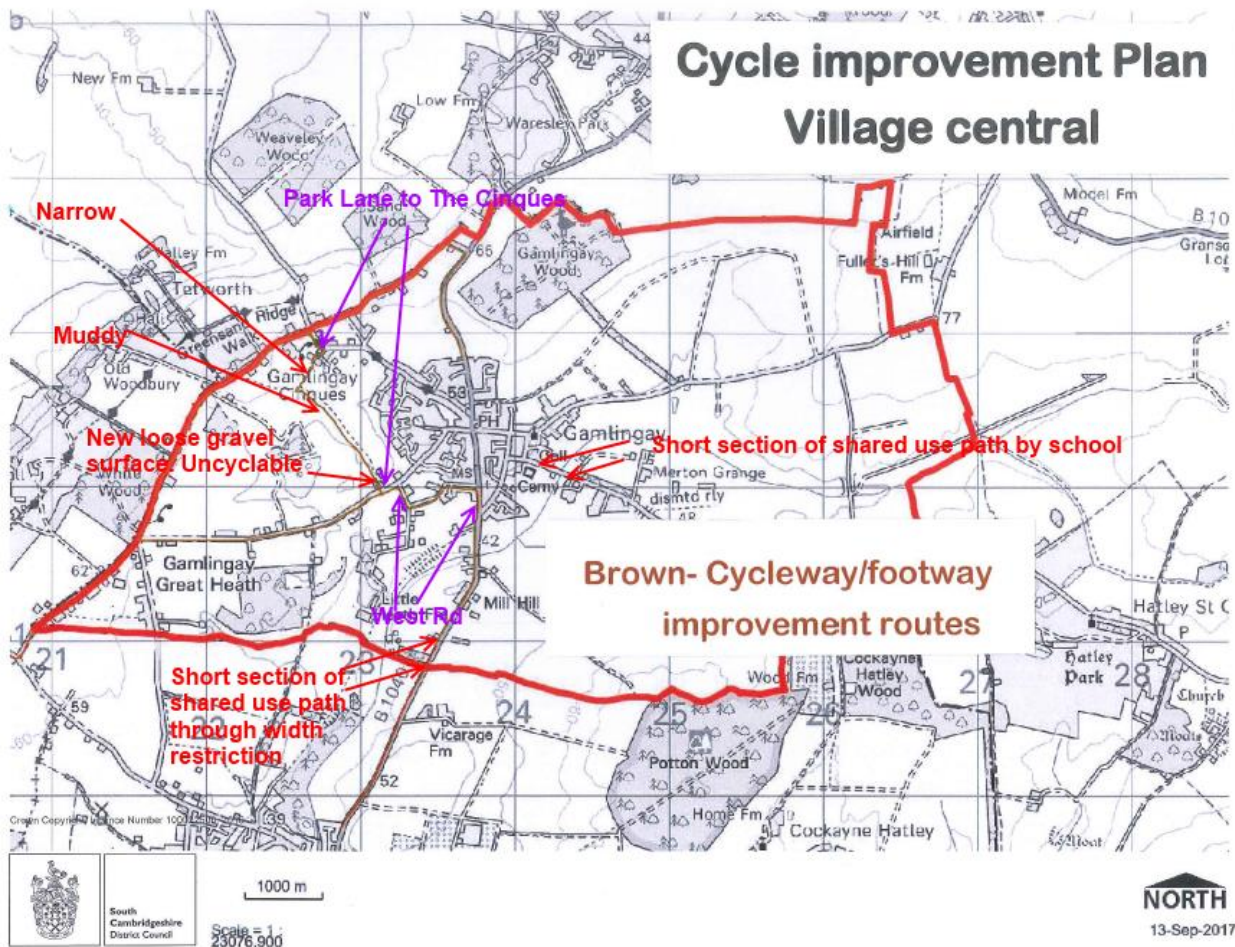


Figure 30 - Map 6, Gamlingay cycle routes

4.1 Gamlingay is a compact village and many journeys can be undertaken by walking or cycling. It is probable that the people most likely to cycle will be children.

Bikeability [1] is the modern version of cycling proficiency and has three levels which are basically:

Level 1: Traffic free routes

At Level 1 new riders learn to control and master their bikes in a space away from traffic such as a playground or closed car park. At Level 1 you can:

- prepare yourself and your bike for cycling
- get on and off your bike without help
- start off, pedal and stop with control
- pedal along, use gears and avoid objects
- look all around and behind, and control the bike
- share space with pedestrians and other cyclists

## Level 2: Quiet roads

Level 2 takes place on local streets, giving trainees a real cycling experience. Trainees learn how to deal with traffic on short journeys such as cycling to school or the local shops. At Level 2 you can:

- prepare for on-road cycling
- start and finish an on-road journey
- recognise typical hazards
- let others know what you are about to do
- know where to ride on the road
- pass parked vehicles and side roads

## Level 3: Busier roads, complex junctions and roundabouts

Level 3 equips trainees with skills for more challenging roads and traffic situations – busier streets, queuing traffic, complex junctions and roundabouts. It also includes planning routes for safe cycling. At Level 3 you can:

- prepare for a journey
- understand advanced road positioning
- pass queuing traffic
- perceive and deal with hazards
- understand driver blind spots
- react to hazardous road surfaces

Levels 1 and 2 are those taught in schools. Bikeability is available to all privately as well as through schools for children.

Therefore in order for the network to be accessible to school children, it must be possible to cycle on routes of no greater than level 2 from their homes to key destinations appropriate for children, namely schools, shops and leisure facilities.

- 4.2 There is limited specific provision for cycling in Gamlingay. There is a short stretch of shared use path on the B1040 at the south end of the village, a short stretch of shared use path by the village college.



*Figure 31 - Width restriction shared use path*



*Figure 32 - Shared use path outside the village college*

- 4.3 The National Byway runs through the village from west to east. This is waymarked on road route that uses quiet roads. It doesn't seem to be actively promoted anymore.



Figure 33 - National Byway signs in village centre

- 4.4 The constrained road layout of the traditional village layout makes the provision of segregated cycle routes difficult or impossible. This leads to the most viable approach to calm the road environment.
- 4.5 The easiest thing to do is to reduce the speed limit in the urban area to 20mph and implement a HGV ban for through traffic. A HGV ban would involve Central Beds and Cambridgeshire County Council as alternative routes would be well beyond the village boundary.
- 4.6 There is a lack of permeability for routes in the urban area. Few alleyways and through roads. This forces vehicular cycle & pedestrian traffic to go through the crossroads in the centre. This is a very difficult problem to solve retrospectively but it can be avoided in the future.
- 4.7 The cycle route that is proposed to run along West Road and Heath Road to Gamlingay Great Heath is fine until it reaches the 50mph speed limit on Heath Road. Although this is signed as National Byway it wouldn't be suitable for unaccompanied children as the 50mph speed limit means that it wouldn't be classed as a Bikeability level 2 road.
- 4.8 The cycle route that runs along Park Road to The Cinques has a number of problems as a cycle route:
- It has been resurfaced at the south end with loose gravel which cannot be cycled on.



*Figure 34 - Junction of Park Road with Heath Road*

- It is not clear if public cycling rights exists on this route. It is a right of way footpath (Gamlingay 8 & 9) and the properties will have access rights.
- The section leading to The Cinques is rather narrow



*Figure 35 - Narrow section near the Cinques*

- Much of the surface is muddy.



*Figure 36 - Muddy section*

- 4.9 There didn't seem to be any cycle parking near shops, pubs, places of worship and so on. This can be easily & cheaply installed.

## 5. Next steps

The next steps are:

- Survey of the verge. This may already be available from the county highways depts.
- Approach landowners to assess willingness to accommodate the project



## Reference

- [1] “Bikeability levels”, DfT, 2017, <https://bikeability.org.uk/what/>, (Accessed 19/March/2019)
- [2] Handbook for Cycle Friendly Design, Sustrans, 2014, <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-services/our-expertise/route-design/sustrans-design-guidance>  
(Accessed 21/March/2019)
- [3] LtN 2/08, DfT, 2008, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-208>, (Accessed 21/March/2019)