

Getting Around West Chiltonington



1. Introduction

1.1. West Chiltington is characterised by its narrow streets and old drovers' roads with steep banks and overhanging trees.

1.2 Although each of the two settlements has a village shop there are no medical services, libraries, secondary schools or supermarkets. This means that residents must travel to neighbouring Storrington or Pulborough but on each of these routes the roads are narrow, convoluted and largely without pavements.

2. The road network

2.1 West Chiltington is located between:

- the A24 Horsham to Worthing road to the east
- the A29 Horsham to Bognor Regis road to the west
- two main cross country routes the A272 to the north meets the A29 at Billingshurst, and the A283 Shoreham to Petworth road

This latter road passes through Washington, Storrington and Pulborough and is often highly congested.

Parts of Storrington experience such bad consequential pollution that an Air Quality Management Area was declared in December 2010.

Congestion on these routes and further afield on the A27 at Arundel have a significant impact on West Chiltington which is increasingly being used as a rat run.

2.2 Access to these roads is via a network of C and D Class roads and one B Class road.

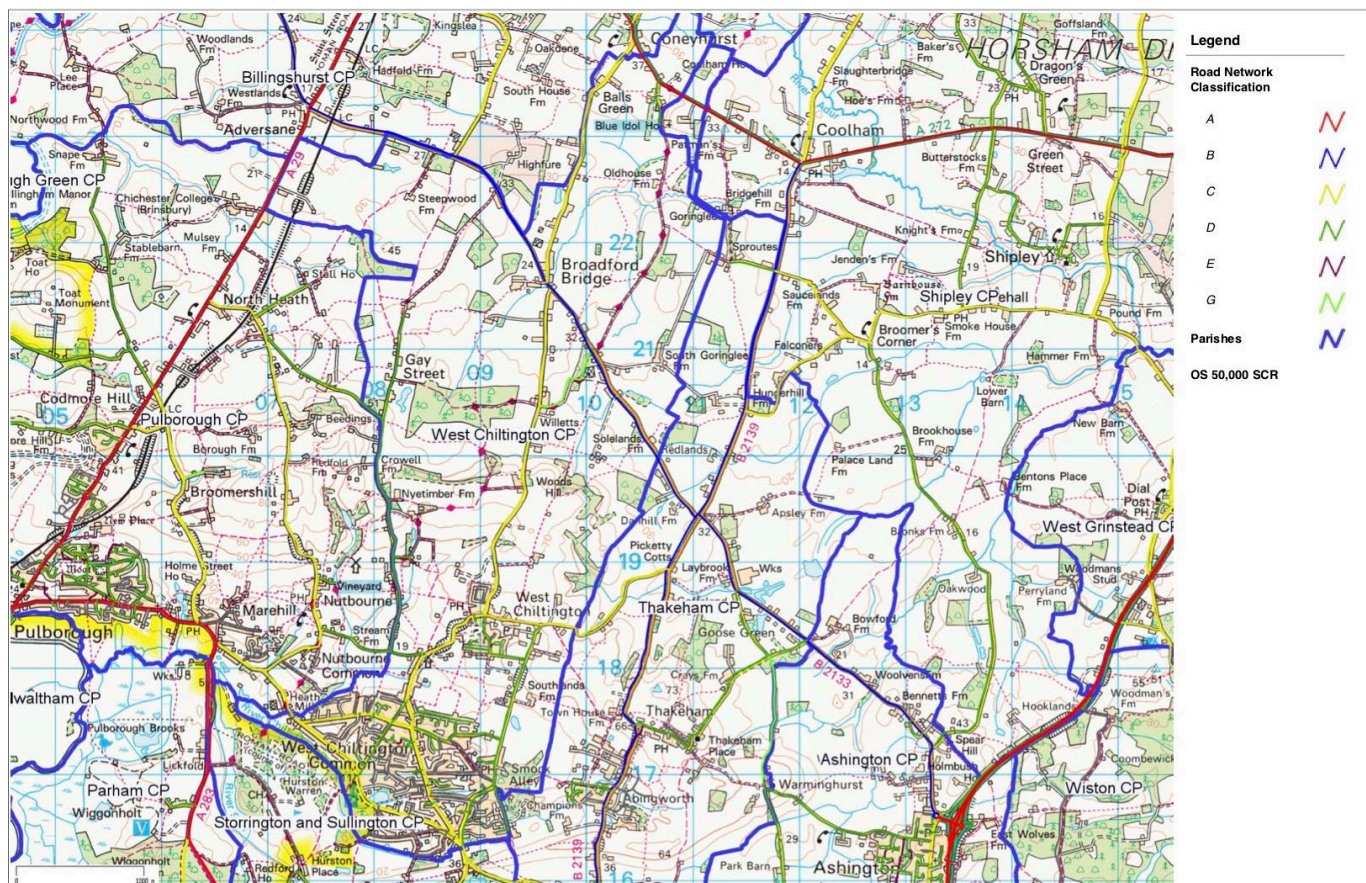
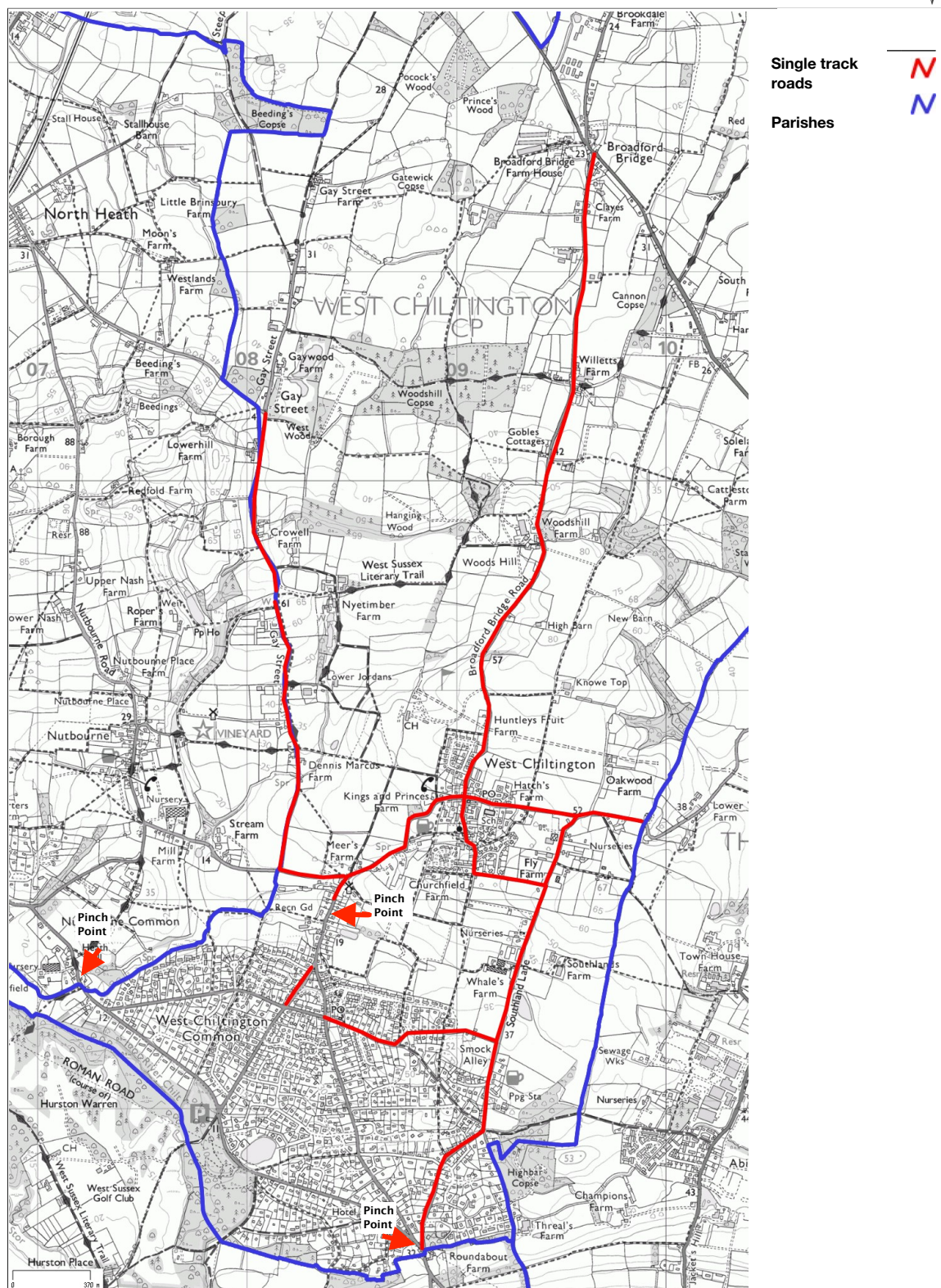


Figure 1 - the road network

2.3 Only two of the four access routes are truly capable of taking two lanes of traffic, although each of these have pinch points as they enter the Parish which preclude two large vehicles passing in opposite directions. Both these pinch points are on bends and extremely hazardous for pedestrians. The other two access routes are predominantly single track roads with passing places.

2.4 The map at figure 2 shows the roads that are single track in places.



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Figure 2 with single track roads shown in red

2.5 The restricted road network often causes jams with large vehicles getting stuck and causing traffic delays.

2.6 In rough weather the lanes often become streams, adding to the road hazards.

2.7 Most of the roads have no footways and no street lighting.



Traffic jams

The Sunken Lanes

2.7 Sunken lanes are roads or tracks that are incised below the general level of the surrounding land, often by several metres. They are formed by the passage of people, vehicles and animals and the action of running water. They may be active (incising) or inactive at the present time, and are often hundreds of years old. Many are metalled as roads have been laid within them.

2.8 Sunken lanes have acted as strategic route-ways in times of battle. They are repositories of geological information (exposures in roadside banks), and provide habitats for animals such as badgers, foxes, rabbits and birds, and route-ways for bats (source John Boardman - University of Oxford).

2.9 The sunken lanes are very important to the residents of the Parish who like them as they are and do not wish to see them changed. They enjoy the winding tracks, without pavements, and walk and drive according to the prevailing conditions.

2.10 The sunken lanes are also an important part of the Green Infrastructure of the Parish providing channels for wildlife to move around, feeding areas for birds and bats and important habitat for all forms of wildlife (see Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services).



3. Car Parking

3.1 As with many historic villages West Chiltonton suffers from parking issues. The small winding roads and lanes were never intended to cope with the levels of vehicles that currently use them on a daily basis.

3.2 Parking when mixed with no pavements can and does cause hazardous conditions for pedestrians.

3.3 The only school in the Parish is located in the Old Village fronting East Street. Most of the pupils come from homes in the Parish and nearby Nutbourne and Thakeham. Accessing the school on foot is only really feasible for those who live in the Old Village.

Residents of the The Common would usually need to drive to the school. This causes huge issues twice a day when cars park to drop off children, which then means that pedestrians have to walk down the middle of the road to get to the school.



East Street at school time

3.4 Single track roads with cars parked on verges adds to the hazards for both road and pedestrian users.

4. Cycling

4.1 There are no designated cycle paths in the Parish.

4.2 Developers seeking to justify planning applications invariably cite the accessibility of their site to local facilities by bike as a reason for gaining consent. WSCC in response to such applications invariably also comments that facilities can be accessed by bike. However the view of residents cycling down leafy country lanes appears idyllic, but it is far from reality. In today's world of speeding cars, cycling on such roads is hazardous. Cars can often be seen screeching to a halt as they meet a cyclist on a dark winding road. Allowing a child to cycle such routes would be foolish.

5. Public Rights of Way

5.1 The Parish has a good network of public footpaths, some of which join the two settlements together and provide access to the adjoining parishes/hamlets of Nutbourne and Thakeham.

5.2 The paths are well used by residents who value them not just for the exercise but for the wide variety of wildlife that can be seen when using them.

5.3 A long term aspiration is for the existing core footpath network to be upgraded to provide a safe, all-weather infrastructure that would link the Village to the Common and encourage walking, cycling and mobility for the elderly between the available facilities in the Parish.

5.4 The community has indicated that it would like to see the use of the paths increased through better signage and publicity.

