

Ross Walkers are Welcome

Gates Project Final Report - November 2025



Summary of 3-Year Project 2023 to 2025

The Ross WaW (WAW) Gates Project started in Autumn 2022 and was completed at the end of September 2025. In total 132 gates have been installed (and some gaps created) to replace stiles in the area and improve access for walkers. This built on an earlier WaW Miles Without Stiles (MWS) initiative in the Ross area; and a Weston-under-Penyard Parish project to remove stiles – both of which replaced about a further 70 stiles with gates.

	Gates Installed
Phase 1 - 2023	41
Phase 2 - 2024	37
Phase 3 - 2025	54
Total Gates Installed	132



Ross WaW expenditure over the 3 years has been £31,322. The total funding received by the project was £31,953 comprising £29,886 from the Wye Valley National Landscape (WVNL) Partnership with Defra Access for All, £750 from Ross Town Council and £687 internal top-up funding by Ross WaW.

This funding excluded the cost of the gates, etc., which was paid directly by WVNL; and works out at only about £250 per gate installed over the 3 years, with significant help from volunteers in the early phases. Project management time from Ross WaW has not been calculated, but was extensive and thorough.

Summary of Footpath Access Improvements

The gates build on earlier work to also remove stiles, and to join-up and extend stile-free walking.

Overall, the project has enabled over 50 miles of stile-free walking just on the 3 main trails going through Ross – The Wye Valley Walk, the Herefordshire Trail and the Ross Round.

- Wye Valley Walk: Ross-on-Wye to Hereford – 18 miles
- Herefordshire Trail: Wormelow Tump to Putley – 29 miles (1)
- Ross Round: Ross-on-Wye to Upton Bishop – 6 + miles.

The specific areas of access improvement achieved are given in the table below.

(1) Note: there is just a single stile remaining on this route, at Hillington Farm, Upton Bishop, adjoining the A449.

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Locations	New Gates	Achievements
Wye Valley Walk - N of Ross	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17.6 miles of the Wye Valley Walk becomes Miles without Stiles (MWS) from Ross-on-Wye to Hereford (with the last stile at Capler Camp currently being replaced by a kissing gate). Creation of a stile-free link between the Wye Valley Walk and the Three Choirs Way on Broadmoor Common, Woolhope (1.3 miles); and the creation of a stile-free link between the WVV and the HT at Brampton Abbots (1 mile).
Herefordshire Trail – NE of Ross	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 14-mile section of the Herefordshire Trail (HT) becomes almost totally MWS, starting from Ross-on-Wye and passing through Brampton Abbots, Hole-in-the-Wall, Upton Bishop, Yatton, Marcle Ridge and close to Putley (except for one stile at Hillingdon Farm, Upton Bishop, adjoining the A449).
Other - North of Ross (Woolhope, Fownhope, Sollers Hope, Mordiford, Brockhampton)	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the local PC, creation of many miles of stile-free walking in the spectacular countryside of the Woolhope Dome – including improving the access to the numerous published walks. Improvement of multi-user access to the Mordiford Dragon Trail. Contributing to the Sollers Hope 11-mile “Three Churches Walk”. General access improvements to footpaths in Brockhampton parish
Herefordshire Trail - NW of Ross (Hoarwithy, Little Dewchurch, Little Birch, Much Birch)	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the removal of remaining stiles, Herefordshire Trail becomes a 15-mile MWS walk from Ross on Wye to The Mynde, passing through Bridstow, Peterstow, Sellack, Kings Cagle, Hoarwithy, Little Dewchurch, Much Birch and Wormelow Tump.
Other NW Ross (Kings Cagle)	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the PC to create stile-free walks around Kings Cagle village/ to the parish church.

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East of Ross (Upton Bishop, Linton, Gorsley, Weston-under- Penyard, Lea)	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a stile-free walk from Ross on Wye out to Upton Bishop along the Rudhall Brook. This links into MWS walks to Linton, Bromsash & Weston-under-Penyard (bus/ walk return to Ross); and also links to the HT Herefordshire Trail or WVV back into Ross on Wye. This route also has links from various points to the hourly community bus service between Ross and Ledbury. • Finalised a 2.3-mile MWS walk from Weston-under-Penyard to Ross with footbridge improvements. • Working with local PCs to create MWS routes between Lea village, Bailey Lane End, Dancing Green and Pontshill. (2.4 miles) • Upgrading the 6-mile Linton Jubilee Walk around the parish to a MWS route.
South of Ross (Bridstow, Goodrich, Kerne Bridge, Walford)	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a 5-mile MWS walk following the right bank of the River Wye from Ross to Kerne Bridge. This enables a circular walk from Ross with the WVV on the other side of the river (although there remain just 3 stiles on the WVV at Upper Wythall). • Creation of a stile-free link between Walford village and the Wye Valley Walk (WVV). • A MWS link from Ross to Cobrey to create a 4-mile circular walk from Ross, including a 2.5-mile section of the WVV. • Enabling MWS for a popular 6-mile circular Coppett Hill Walk, featuring 3-miles of the Wye Valley Walk; and a shorter alternative back to Goodrich.

Recommended Key Stiles for Future Action

Some important routes around Ross on Wye are still obstructed by isolated stiles that prevent the MWS status being applied, where approaches to the landowners have been refused. These include:

- One stile on the Herefordshire Trail at Hillingdon Farm, Upton Bishop on the Herefordshire Trail
- Three stiles on the Wye Valley Walk at Upper Wythall, near Walford
- Two stiles on the Wye Valley Walk at Welsh Bicknor
- Three stiles at Cubberley which obstruct a riverside walk south of Ross.

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Performance of Gates Supplier Centrewire (IAE)

Ross Walkers are Welcome has considered Centrewire to be their preferred supplier for various project over the past 14 years but their performance over the past two years has been very poor. Although Centrewire was contracted to WVN, WaW conducted extensive discussions and correspondence with the management of Centrewire to agree the instigation of a series of improvements in the following areas.

- Customer Support
- Fabrication
- Quality Control and Quality Assurance
- Technical Issues
- Product Information
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

While Ross WaW have not installed any more Centrewire gates, with the above improvements promised, it is recommended that they should be included on any future bid lists for WVN or other bodies.

Performance of the main Gates Installer Terry Griffiths Contracts (TGC)

The work has generally been carried out to a high standard with little supervision being required. TGC's direct liaison with landowners helped the project run smoothly. The contract model has proved to be very successful with a unit lumpsum for each gate, regardless of type. As anticipated, there was some extra work to ensure that fields were secured but this was minimal and justified. Invoices were correct and accurate.

The overriding issue with the installation work was the major slippage of the programme, caused by a variety of cascading issues.

John Smart
November 2025