



The Pot Kiln

## FOLLOW THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

- Respect other people: consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under effective control.
- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Follow advice and local signs.

For the full Countryside Code and information on where to go and what to do, visit <https://www.gov.uk/topic/outdoor-access-recreation/rights-of-way-open-access>

No responsibility is accepted by the authors of this leaflet for the state or condition from time to time of the paths comprising these walks.

Walking is recommended by the Government as a safe and health promoting form of exercise. However, it should be carried out with care and forethought. Always wear appropriate footwear and take care when walking in the town or countryside.

## Acknowledgements

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Path titles and routes acknowledged to West Berkshire Council Definitive Map.



West Berkshire  
Countryside Society

Frilsham  
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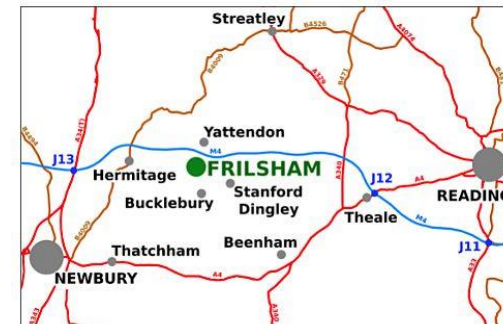
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# FRILSHAM

## *Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways*



Frilsham Church



**Frilsham Parish lies in the North Wessex Downs  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

## FRILSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Further copies of this leaflet may be downloaded from

[www.frilsham.org.uk](http://www.frilsham.org.uk)  
[www.westberkscountryside.org.uk](http://www.westberkscountryside.org.uk)

## FRILSHAM – FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND BYWAYS

This leaflet describes the footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways in the parish of Frilsham, West Berkshire.

Frilsham lies on the dip slope of the Berkshire Downs some 5½ miles (9km) northeast of Newbury, and like much of West Berkshire is in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The parish is without public transport, a post office or a shop, but, to refresh walkers, it does have a pub and a brewery with a Brewery Tap Room.

There are 20 paths of various classifications and many links to the path networks of surrounding parishes. The paths offer walks and rides through different terrains - across open fields, through ancient woods and along ancient drove roads.

**Paths with red titles** have obstacles such as stiles or steep hills which make them unsuitable for people with limited mobility.

**Those with black titles** have no obstacles but may have uneven and muddy surfaces.

**Those with blue titles** have no obstacles and reasonably sound surfaces, but it would be wise to check the path's condition before use.

These classifications are based on observation and opinion, but time and weather can make changes.

### THE HISTORY OF FRILSHAM

People have lived in Frilsham parish for many millennia. There is a ploughed out Bronze Age barrow (burial mound) in a field near path 20 which probably dates to 2500BC. Roman material has been found around the parish and Frilsham church is thought to have a Saxon origin. It is dedicated to St Frideswide, a Saxon saint closely associated with Oxford. The close proximity of the Manor House and the church may indicate the headquarters of an early settlement, and the parish boundary encloses a typical Saxon estate provided with a mix of resources. It would have had hay meadows along the river, arable land on the terraces and woods and

wood pasture on the higher land of Frilsham Common.

William the Conqueror's Domesday Book (1086) gives Frilsham Manor about 900 acres of taxable land, about 240 acres of arable, 10 acres of meadow and a watermill. There was very little woodland – only 'enough for ten pigs'! Before the Conquest in 1066 two tenants held the land from the king. They were franklins - free men. There is still a Franklins Copse and Magpie Farm was previously called Franklins Farm. Things change slowly in West Berkshire!

Enclosure of the common lands began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Common was enclosed in 1857, but Yattendon Great Field, alongside the Hermitage Road, was left in Frilsham parish! Hawkridge Wood was enclosed in 1705

The riverside hay meadows were converted to water meadows with a complex system of carefully engineered ditches at some date around 1800. The ditches allowed the meadows to be flooded and drained in early spring to produce early grass for pregnant ewes and very large crops of hay.

The areas of clay and sands around The Pot Kiln were used to make bricks. *John Pocock brick burner of Frilsham* made his will in 1664 and the many shallow pits are the results of clay digging. The kilns were at the rear of the pub. World War 2 blackout regulations banned the brick burning because the bright flames would have attracted enemy aircraft.

### NATURAL HISTORY

The underlying geology is chalk with layers of acid clays and sands above it. As a result, the woods tend to be on the high land and the cultivated land on the valley sides and in the valley bottoms.

The woods are home to roe and muntjak deer, badgers and a few rabbits. The woods have mainly mixed deciduous trees and plantations of conifers. Red kites and buzzards are common and there are rumours of goshawks.

**Footpath 15** runs south from Wellhouse Lane near Parsonage Farm through grass meadows. The southern end turns west. Look for the owl box in the tree near the turn. There are three difficult pinch stiles along this stretch. The path joins Bucklebury Restricted Byway 14 which becomes Frilsham Restricted Byway 1 as it enters Wellhouse Lane. This Byway is the parish boundary.



WBCS Barn Owl box

**Footpath 16** runs southeast from the sharp double bend near The Pot Kiln along the edge of the field to cross the parish boundary ditch and become Bucklebury Footpath 110. The field side of the path is defined by an electric fence. Dogs should be kept on short leads when there are animals in the field.



The parish boundary ditch

**Bridleway 17** runs eastward from the sharp bend in School Lane at the top of Hawkridge Hill, through Hawkridge Wood and Witmoor Copse to cross the parish boundary and join Chapel Lane as Bucklebury Bridleway 76. Both woods are interesting mixed deciduous woods with mature conifers. There are no actual obstacles but the path is narrow and muddy.

**Footpath 18** is about 10 metres long! It fills the tiny gap between the end of Bucklebury Footpath 97 that starts at Brocks Lane and ends at the parish boundary, and Frilsham Footpath 15 at the sharp westward bend.

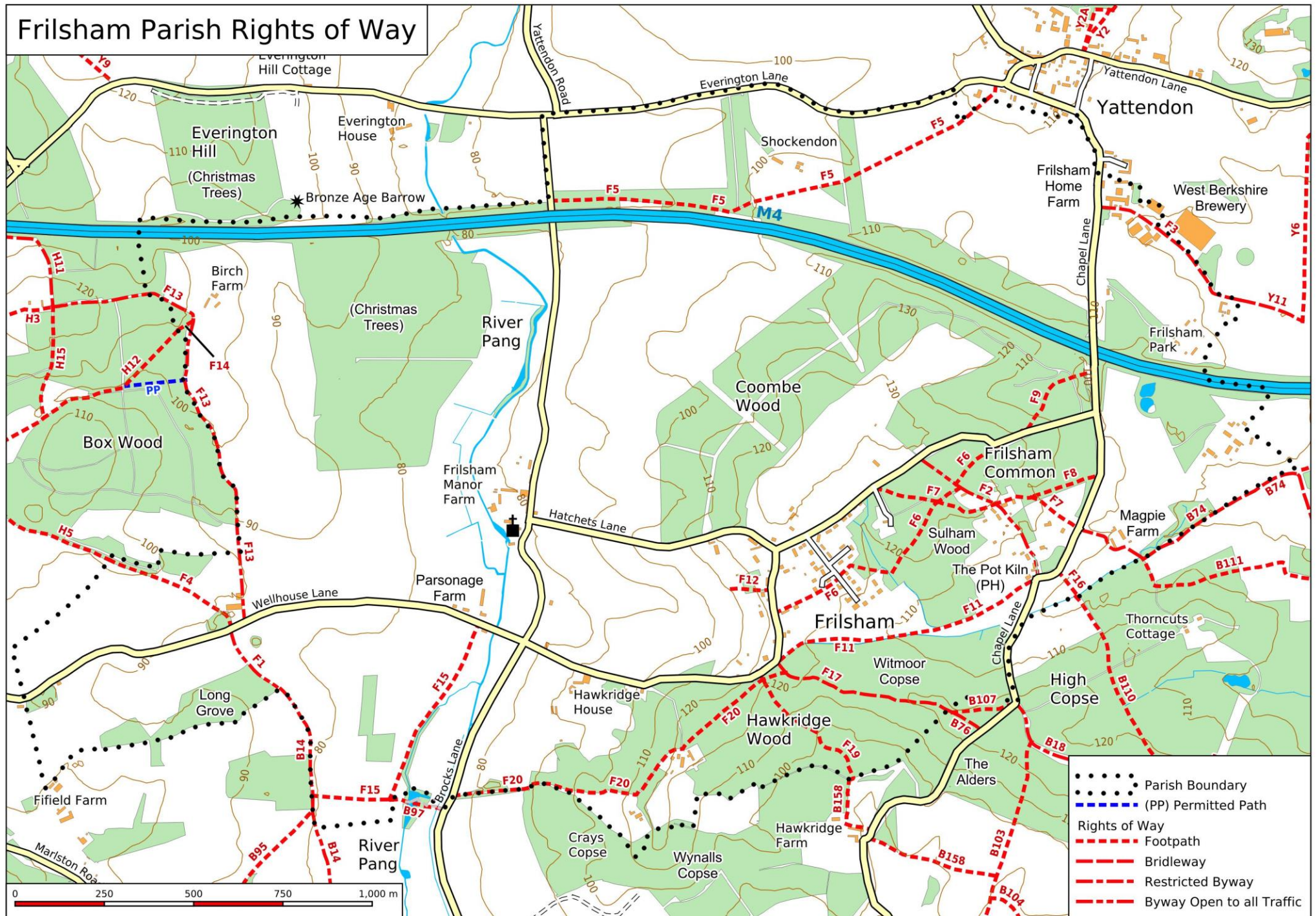
**Footpath 19** also runs through Hawkridge Wood and links School Lane at the top of Hawkridge Hill with Hawkridge Farm. There are two kissing gates at the southeast end - one at the wood edge (the parish boundary) where the path becomes Bucklebury Footpath 158 and the other at the road edge near Hawkridge Farm. The path is often very narrow and may be difficult in high summer and there are three narrow footbridges without hand rails. The wood was open Common Grazing until it was enclosed in 1705. It was once thought that Hawkridge was the wood mentioned in a 10<sup>th</sup> century Saxon Charter. This has now been disproved and the Saxon wood is now known to be at Stanford Dingley. Look for the dragon near the southeast end!



The Hawkridge Wood dragon

**Footpath 20** joins Brocks Lane in the valley with School Lane on the hill. There is one stile and one kissing gate. The path is narrow and could be difficult in high summer. The trees are mainly oak and beech and there are some old coppice stools. The wild flowers are rich and varied – bluebells, yellow archangel, wood mellick etc. Look for a large chalk quarry near Brocks Lane.







**Footpath 9** links Chapel Lane at the M4 crossing with Coach Hill. The steel barrier of the M4 bridge extends past the path entrance but can be stepped over. The descent into the wood is along a steep double ramp and there is a very steep hill up out of the wood to Coach Hill. The wood was once part of Frilsham Common and is a young mixed deciduous plantation – oak, beech, sycamore, silver birch - with a scatter of old trees. The two oaks near the ramp are at least 200 years old.



One of the path 9 oaks

**Bridleway 10** leaves Chapel Lane along the drive to Magpie Farm and then curves around the buildings to the parish boundary ditch. Magpie Farm was originally Franklins Farm. Two franklins (freemen) are mentioned in Domesday Book (1086). The large oak near the bridge has a girth of 4.4m and is about 250-300 years old. The wooded area to the northeast of the footbridge conceals a very large swallow hole, carved out by the parish boundary stream over millennia, where the water disappears into the ground. It can best be seen, when the vegetation is low, from the continuation of the path beyond the bridge. It is very rich in wild flowers including masses of ramsons (wild garlic).

**Footpath 11** runs between School Lane at the top of Hawkridge Hill and The Pot Kiln. Two kissing gates hinder wheelchair use and the eastern (The Pot Kiln) end of the path is very soft and swampy. Sulham Wood is an Ancient Wood that has been quarried for brick making clay. Look for snowdrops, wood anemones and bluebells in spring. The wood was part of Frilsham Common until 1857. The bank along the southeast edge is the parish boundary and may date from the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. Note the huge oak at the southeast corner. With a girth of 4.8m it is probably about 300–350 years old.

**Footpath 12** is beautifully maintained by the owner (see below). It once led to a spring that provided local people with water.



**Restricted Byway 13** runs along the Parish Boundary and links Birch Farm to Wellhouse Lane. The northern 50 metres is a wide even track. The rest, along the edge of Box Wood, is deeply sunken in parts and is rutted with muddy patches. There are good views to the east across the Pang Valley. Box Wood is a mixed deciduous Ancient Wood and the path verges are rich in ancient woodland plants.

**Footpath 14** ran through Box Wood to the parish boundary. It has been temporarily abandoned and temporarily replaced with a Permissive Path joining Byway 13 about 150m to the south.

## WALK DESCRIPTIONS

**Byway 1** is Burntbush Lane from the northern end at Wellhouse Lane to the parish boundary at the southern edge of Long Grove Wood. The track is wide and firm and continues to Marlston as Bucklebury 14. It was a major road in 1761.

**Byway 2** is a wide well surfaced track that joins The Pot Kiln car park to Coach Hill. The beautiful pond on the west side of the track was originally a clay quarry that was made into a water supply reservoir for the brickworks. The pit on the other side of the track was another clay quarry. *Walkers wishing to use the car park should first check with the pub. 01635 201366*

**Bridleway 3** joins Chapel Lane at Frilsham Home Farm to the Stanford Dingley Road close north of the M4 bridge. After crossing the parish boundary, it becomes Yattendon 11. The Home Farm was built in the 1890s to accompany Frilsham House. The House was demolished during the construction of the M4. The farm buildings are typical of the High Farming Period and have been converted to industrial units. West Berkshire Brewery replaced a large dairy unit and is noted for its beer and the food sold in its Tap Room.



West Berkshire Brewery

**Footpath 4** runs from Welhouse Lane near Byways 1 and 13 to the western parish boundary. Its eastern end is narrow and ends at a damaged stile and a bridge. It could be difficult in high summer. The path

then runs along the edge of a field with good views to the south. It steps sideways into the edge of the wood through a narrow gap and continues to the un-marked parish boundary where it becomes Hermitage Footpath 5. It is a very narrow path. The double bank running parallel to it in the wood was a road in 1761.

**Footpath 5** provides a valuable link between Yattendon village and Frilsham Lane avoiding the need to walk along the busy Hermitage Road. Before the M4 was built it linked Frilsham Manor Farm, mill and church with Yattendon. There are stiles at either end and at points along the path and a kissing gate.

**Footpath 6** is not easy to follow as it twists and turns through dense holly! It links Coach Hill to School Lane and passes St Frideswide's Well. Frideswide was a Saxon saint and is patron saint of both Frilsham church and Oxford cathedral. At some of the many path junctions a compass would be helpful to pick out Path 6.



St Frideswide's Well

**Footpath 7** joins Coach Hill to Chapel Lane and passes St Frideswide's Well. The western section is wide and well surfaced, but between the crossing of Byway 2 and Chapel Lane the path is narrow and poorly surfaced. The path across the field at the eastern end is undefined. Walkers coming out of the wood should head for the southeast corner of the field.

**Footpath 8** links Chapel Lane to a point near the end of Path 7. The section near Chapel Lane is narrow and could be difficult in high summer. The wood contains, oak, ash and beech.

