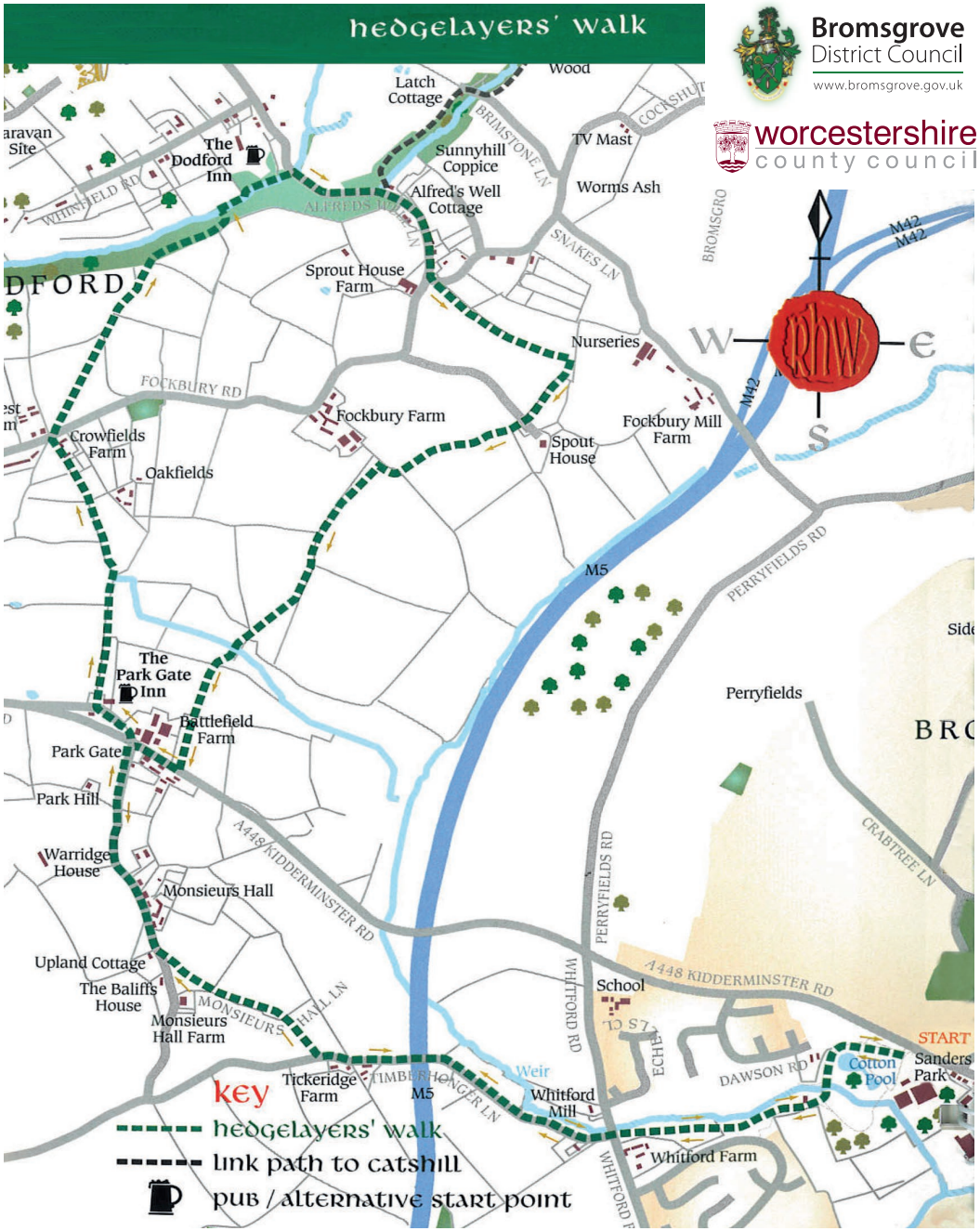

Bromsgrove District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

worcestershire county council

Hedgelayers' Walk starting point: Sanders Park car park on the A448 Kidderminster Road. 5 miles (2-3 hrs)

The walk begins at the information board at the far end of the car park at Sanders Park, along Kidderminster Road in Bromsgrove. From the car park with the bandstand in front of you, turn right and follow the wide tarmac path to the play area. Turn right after the play area and loosely follow the stream, leaving the tarmac path to meet the road. (In the absence of roadside verges, take care against approaching traffic along this lane, which leads forward to pass beneath the M5 motorway).

The hedgerow along Timberhonger Lane is predominantly hazel, also known as the cobnut, and grown as much far its edible nuts as for hedging. Hazel produces thin flexible rod useful for woven fencing and diviners' rods and was once of great economic importance. Rarely more than 10ft (3m) tall, hazel bushes live for centuries and occasionally grow into small trees.

Beyond the motorway continue until just past Tickeridge Farm where you leave the lane through a kissing gate on the right. Head up the ensuing field to a hedge corner, and through a field gate, keep forward along a rutted track through another field gate into the next field.

The walk passes a couple of Scots pine which are native throughout the British Isles, in spite of their name, and were once very widespread. Natural pine forest can still be found in the Scottish Highlands, but today it is usually planted for timber production, and can grow to 120ft (40m) tall.

A kissing gate in the hedge gives onto a narrow lane. Turn right, and continue to the A448 at Park Gate. Bear left, crossing the road when it is safe to do so.

Beyond Monsieurs Hall, holly is dominant in the hedgerow. One of Britain's few native evergreen trees the holly has adapted remarkably to differing growth conditions and can be found both in hedgerows and as woodland undergrowth. Its leaves, thick and wavy, enable the holly to resist water loss when the ground is frozen in winter. Legend associates the holly's blood red berries and spiky leaves with Christ's crucifixion and the crown of thorns, reinforcing its popular use for decorative purposes at Christmas time.

Bear left following a tarmac path which leads past the front of **The Park Gate Inn** public house. Turn right crossing the car park to a gate. Beyond this walk up the right-hand field edge.

Maintain the same direction across fields and paddocks, to a road (Fockbury Road). Cross the stile opposite, and in the ensuing field, head for a field gate in the far corner. Beyond go through an area of rough and overgrown ground, and turn left into a lightly wooded area cloaking a steep embankment, with the path following its top edge as far as a flight of steps. Go down the steps (taking care crossing protruding tree roots), to a footbridge giving into rough grazing. **(Chartists' and Foresters' walks leave Hedgelayers' Walks here)**

Turn right, following the bottom edge of a sloping field, closely parallel with a stream on the right and cross a stile. A short distance ahead a path up the bank to the left leads to the Dodford Inn public house. The Hedgelayers' Walk, however, continues ahead, following the stream and eventually running out to the bottom of Nibletts Hill. **(Chartists' Walk joins here)**

Turn right and follow the road (to return to Catshill turn left at the signpost next to Alfred's Well House) **(Foresters' Walk joins here)** past Alfred's Well House, and climb gently to a road junction.

Turn left at top of the Hill (signposted to Bournheath), and after 20 yards, turn right onto a sandy track along a field edge. Follow the sandy track, which switches through a hedgerow, continuing right, along a field edge. At the bottom of the field, through a gate, turn immediately right and cross the corner of a field to a kissing gate.

Beyond the kissing gate, continue forward parallel with a fence on the right, to reach a kissing gate in a field corner giving onto a rough track. Cross the track and go through the gate opposite to gain the edge of an arable field. Walk left along the field boundary until the hedgerow abruptly changes direction.

Here, head straight across the field aiming for a gate about 100 yards left of distant metal barns. Go through a gate and turn right and walk towards the barns, to a waymark post. This indicates the direction of the route, left, aiming for three distant trees, across the next field, eventually reaching a waymark post at a gap at the hedge corner.

Go through the gap into the ensuing field, and forward along the left-hand field boundary. Continue to the end of a hedgerow on the left, and from it go forward towards farm buildings in the distance, to locate a kissing gate in the hedgerow on the far side of the field. Through the kissing gate, cross a ditch crossing and keep left crossing fields to rejoin the A444 at Park Gate.

Turn right, past Battlefield Farm, and to return to Sanders Park, cross the A444 with care **(to return to start points other than Sanders Park do not cross the road but follow the tarmac path past the front of The Park Gate Inn) to take the first turning on the left (Monsieurs Hall Lane),** here joining the outward route.

Continue past Monsieurs Hall, and go down the lane until, opposite Upland Cottage, the walk returns through a kissing gate, right along a track and through a gate into the next field.

Now simply continue to retrace the outward route to Sanders Park. **See www.bromsgrove.gov.uk for more info.**