

Gateway 3 Speech House Road [B4226] from Gloucester

Location

3. Speech House Road/Poolway Road [B4226]

This gateway approaches Coleford from the east, via the A4151 above Littledean and the A48 at Elton Corner, it leads to Gloucester.

This is one of the two key routes in from the county town and the Cotswolds. This is a key tourist route, also linking Coleford with Beechenhurst, the Sculpture Trail and Speech House. It passes through Broadwell before reaching the centre of Coleford past the recycling centre.

Landscape

As it approaches the boundary of Coleford parish, this gateway ascends steeply from the floor of the narrow Cannop valley with steep, winding route, through mainly deciduous woodland. The road passes a small coal mine and several small former quarry sites, indicating the industrial heritage of the area. The largest of these, Oak Quarry, is now used as a council recycling centre, thus generating a large amount of additional traffic from the local Forest area. On occasions, queuing traffic occurs. It is also one route for cyclists to get to the bike hire centre and main circular cycle route in the Forest and vehicles may be trying to overtake cyclist or even walkers along this winding and steep road. It is also a bus route.

By Welsh Water's sewage pumping station, is a road leading to Worcester Lodge, where there is a new initiative to form a community farm/allotments, part of the Heritage Lottery award.

On the other side of the road is the area under the trees where pits are used informally for BMX practice to give a bit of challenge for local youth.

As the road crosses the parish boundary, the gradient lessens and the valley sides disappear as the head of the valley is reached. The highest point on the road is at the Broadwell Bridge crossroads, a focal point where the routeway crosses the road that links the settlements of Coleford's eastern arc.

The road is then level until it begins a fairly steep descent down Poolway Road to its junction with Gloucester Road. At the start of, and during this descent there are open views to the north and west across fields and Forest Hills Golf Course towards Berry Hill and Five Acres.



38 The Forestry Commission sign welcoming tourists on the edge of the parish



39 Oak Quarry recycling centre for the Forest



40 Previously old quarries



and pits: used now for leisure



41 View over to Berry Hill from Poolway Rd. Also shows Union Rd and the start of Bakers Hill



Settlement character

As this gateway enters Coleford parish it has open deciduous woodland on the southern side, signed for the Forest (38).

On the northern side the woodland gives way to the industrial site of Concrete Utilities and then to a row of four individually styled detached houses and bungalows dating from the mid twentieth century.

Beyond these is a small paddock and an unsurfaced walkway through to North Road and the Church of the Good Shepherd, past the Evergreen Hall. This used to link into the former tramway junction which is the reason for Broadwell Bridge having its name.

The woodland ends abruptly on the southern side of the road at the junction with two minor residential roads. From here there is one house and three bungalows on wide plots and of varying styles, dating from the mid to late twentieth century

Broadwell Bridge crossroads still acts as a local focal point but has lost almost all the services that were located there. On the cross is a 19C property that is now a private house, but was formerly a shop and post office. Opposite is the original school yard stone wall, behind which are the gardens of a small housing development built in the late 20C on the site of Broadwell school (moved to Coalway). On the Coleford side of the cross is the former Rising Sun pub (now a house) with a large open area in front of it, originally the car park, but now fenced off and used as garden. The exceptions are the Social Club; the 2 halls – Evergreen and Memorial Hall (the latter recently refurbished) and the Church just down the road.

The cross still shows a 19C feel to the settlement, but not the activity it once had, although the traffic is significant, and flashing speed signs in place. Two bus routes stop at the cross mostly o the hour and half hour, connecting Coleford with Gloucester

Beyond the crossroads, there is an area of low density residential land use on both sides of the road. Houses are of varying age and styles, several of them being nineteenth century cottages. The properties are at varying alignments to, and distances from, the road. Some gardens run parallel to the road increasing the distance between properties again giving a village atmosphere



42Concrete Utilities manufactures large concrete products eg streetlights which require heavy transport, so is sited off this main route.



43Evergreen Hall and walkway through to the Church next to the tree.



44 Approaching the cross, there are speed and traffic signs, and a short distance from the 30mph on the settlement edge with 2 access roads also coming in from the left



45The former school site right, now housing and the hall and Club next to the former pub opposite.

Where Foxes Lane meets the gateway, there is a small triangular area of open grassland, used for informal parking. There is still evidence of waste from mining here.

This is also the route to Broadwell FC which has a healthy following. Beyond this on either side of the road there are short rows of mid twentieth century individually styled detached houses with grass verges in front. Those on the northern side have very long front gardens, adding to the low density nature of the area.

The road, now Poolway Road, has reached the crest of the hill and begins to descend towards the centre of Coleford with fields of pasture on either side and with extensive views across farmland to the north and west. As the road continues to descend its level becomes lower than the surrounding fields and the grass verges become substantial banks, especially on the northern side. There are only three houses along this stretch of road, all on the southern side. Two of them are old cottage style properties with buildings and gardens parallel to the road.

Once the road passes the junction with Union Road the number of houses increases. To the north there are five detached properties on large plots overlooking the road from the slopes of Bakers Hill. To the south there is a row of late twentieth century detached and semi detached houses, marking the entrance to The Paddocks, a small estate constructed on a small brownfield site relating to the mine entrance (adit). At this point Poolway Road joins Gloucester Road, another gateway into Coleford. At the junction there is a triangular area of forest waste used for informal parking. This harks back to the local mine and the Pike house opposite (where just a wall remains).

Key views

North and West across farmland and Golf Course to Five Acres and Berry Hill (4) and (11)

Key features

- Broadwell Bridge crossroads (45)
- Concrete Utilities site (42)
- Evergreen Hall (43)



46 Broadwell FC is to the right, and the waste triangle at Foxes Lane is also marked with an arrow



47 Arrow shows the mine waste – now grassed over- but still evident in the landscape



48 Waste triangle where gateways meet at the bottom of Bakers Hill. The broadband box is just to the right of the site of the

former Pike house. Green Ring toward Berry Hill



49 Broadwell Memorial Hall

Positive features and special qualities

- Historic village of Broadwell with industrial heritage
- Rural woodland entrance on tourist route
- Gloucester bus routes cross, giving good service into town

Negative features and detracting elements

- Traffic significant at Broadwell Bridge

- Steep, winding approach to parish boundary from Cannop is picturesque but potentially difficult with large vehicles approaching in the middle of the road, and some cyclist traffic
- Loss of services very evident

Looking ahead

- Plan in an alternative, signposted route through the woods to Cannop and the cycle trail
- Community farm/allotments at Worcester Lodge
- Green spaces potential at several key sites