# SANDBACH FOOTPATH GROUP

**Watch Lane and Crabmill Flashes.**

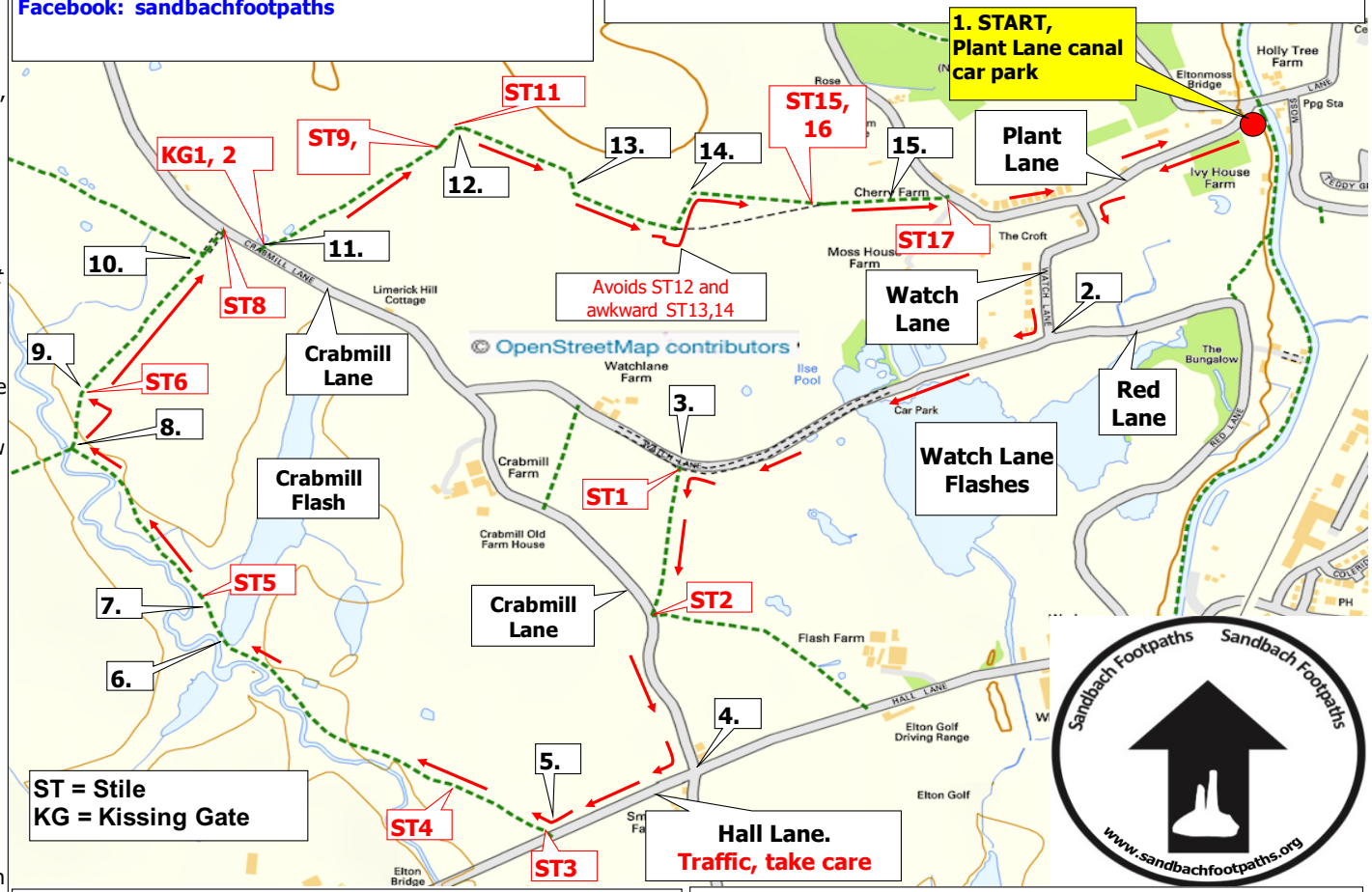
**3.5 miles, 13 stiles** (would be 17, but some disused)

**website: https://sandbachfootpaths.org**

**email: sandbachfootpathgroup@gmail.com**

**Facebook: sandbachfootpaths**

**Start: Plant Lane canal car park.** To find this, follow Middlewich Road from Sandbach to Elworth, through traffic lights, over the main line railway bridge and then left into Moss Lane just before The Fox pub.
Follow Moss Lane for about 1km (0.5 mile) over the canal and the car park is on the left by the canal (it is an awkward turn, so it may be better to pass it, turn round and enter, avoiding the pot holes).




**1.** **Starting from the canal car park on Plant Lane**, walk down Plant Lane and go left to follow **Watch Lane**, bending right, then left.

**2.** At a T-junction go right, still on **Watch Lane**.
Watch Lane goes between the Flashes of that name, now fishponds.
Ignore the wooden gate on the left which is for fishing.
Watch Lane soon becomes a delightful, rarely used, farm track.

**3.** Look out for **ST1** on the left (sometimes hidden in foliage, but there is a finger post) and enter a field.
*(If you miss it take the next stile on the left, it still emerges onto Crabmill Lane and go left.)*
Keep field boundary to the right and go over **ST2** to emerge onto **Crabmill Lane** and turn left.

**4.** At the crossroads with **Hall Lane** go right.
***Take care here**, keep to the side facing oncoming traffic; it is a straight road and they travel quite fast.*

**5.** After about 200m go right, over **ST3** in the hedge, then head very slightly left across an open field and over **ST4**.
Keep on in the same direction and the River Wheelock will be to the left, a small flash on the right.

**6.** The path (sometimes muddy!) eventually follows a narrow causeway between the River and **Crabmill Flash** on the right. There is a farm gate on the causeway that may need to be opened.

**7.** At an abandoned farm trailer, go left over **ST5** and keep the River to the left.

**8.** Do not cross a substantial bridge with metal side rails to the left, but turn right up the track, then turn left at a boundary and proceed with the boundary on the right for a short distance.

**9.** Go over **ST6** and turn right, keep boundary to the right.

**10.** Keep straight and go through a gap ahead (by a broken gate and disused ST7), and soon over **ST8**, or round it through the farm gate to emerge onto Crabmill Lane and turn right.

**11.** After a short distance go through **KG1** and then **KG2** on the left into an open field.
*An alternative (same distance, but no more stiles) would be to continue on Crabmill Lane for about 300m and turn left into Watch Lane. Stay on Watch Lane to join the outward route, then after the Flashes left, still on Watch Lane, and finally right at Plant Lane to return.*
After **KG2** go very slightly right and head for the right-hand field corner about 400m.

**12.** Go over a footbridge and double stiles **ST9-10** (ST10 may be broken, so go round it) and soon go right over **ST11** with footbridge, through the hedge.

**13.** Keep the boundary to the left and at the end of the field go right and very soon left, the boundary remaining to the left.

*At the end of the next field, you are supposed to go left, on the Right of Way, over (ST12), now with the boundary to your right, then after a 100m right over a pair of awkward stiles in the hedge (ST13-14).*

But, it is much easier to go right for two paces, then sharp left through a gap and back on the other side of the boundary, the hedge boundary still on the left.

**14.** Look out for the pair of awkward stiles (ST13-14) in the hedge and turn away right at that point, going straight across the field and over a footbridge and stiles **ST15-16**.

**15.** Continue in the same direction across the field over **ST17** and turn right onto Plant Lane.

Follow **Plant Lane** for 500m to return to the car park.