

APPENDIX F

Proposed Diversion of Footpath I63a at Priory House, Ratcliffe on the Wreake

Comments and objections received from local residents during the preliminary consultation period.

1. Local Resident/1

I am the owner/ occupier of ** Church Lane, Ratcliffe on the Wreake. I understand the owner/occupier of Priory House has applied to have part of footpath 163a diverted away from the proximity of their house and garden. It would appear they have in fact pre-empted permission being granted as they have already constructed an earth embankment across the ditch, known as "the Dovecote" in preparation for the proposed diversion. They do not own one of the fields across which part of the diversion would pass, so I assume the land owner has already agreed this with the owner of Priory House. I wish to register my objection to this proposal for the following reasons:-

1. This is a well documented ancient footpath in existence for at least 200 years. It is frequently walked by both the residents of the village and those of the other Wreake Valley villages and is an important historical feature of our village landscape.
2. There appears to be no valid reason for this diversion, other than to provide more privacy for the occupants of Priory House, who are the only beneficiaries of the proposal. The current owner was aware of the route of the footpath at the time of purchase and chose to proceed with the purchase. They have already erected a fence at the edge of the garden and planted trees in their adjacent paddock which already affords a reasonable level of privacy.
3. Footpath 163a runs adjacent to the front of my property and only a few metres away. During the 33 years I have lived here the footpath was only ever an intrusion during the first few months of the COVID pandemic when a "lockdown" was imposed. The volume of walkers increased significantly, a small number of whom were rude and abusive. However things rapidly returned to normal and almost without exception walkers are very respectful and just enjoy the beautiful scenery as they pass through.
4. The 2013 village conservation report states that "the conservation area has a distinct "grain" or pattern of builds which clearly defines it's historic development. This gives the area individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings, ANCIENT FOOTPATHS and highways and clearly defined borders. This "grain" is an important part of the character of the conservation area and will be protected". Diversion of this important ancient historic footpath would directly contravene this statement. There seems little point in producing a conservation report if the recommendations are then totally ignored.
5. This footpath currently passes two important listed buildings, "Field Cottage" and Priory House", and has an important historical relationship to both of these properties.

In summary, I fail to comprehend why an ancient footpath which has been regularly walked for more than 200 years should be re- routed just to satisfy one individuals desire for greater privacy. I also wonder why the proposed diversion of the footpath had not been widely publicised to the people who walk it so they have a chance to express their views. It is termed a public footpath for a very good reason and the clue is in it's title.

2. Local Resident/2

We wish to object to the proposal to move the footpath 163a (Part) in the Parish of Ratcliffe on the Wreake. This is a path that we walk frequently. Ratcliffe on the Wreake has a very special topography and this particular area has very historic significance. Changing the route of the footpath would certainly impinge on this. This path has been in place for around 200 years and it is well used.

There seems to be no good reason why it should be moved, other than the fact the current proprietors of the land would rather it was further away from their property. It is very important that in a conservation area, the status quo is maintained. This path diversion is not required and would change the character of the village and goes against the spirit of the Conservation report 2013, as it will prevent people from using this ancient right of way in the future.

3. Local Resident/3

Re Diversion of public footpath 163a

We write in response to the above application and make the comments and objections detailed :-

- The application by the owners of Priory House is to divert an historic footpath that passes through the agricultural paddock adjacent to the gardens of their property which already circumvents the private residential areas.
- The gardens have a hedge and a number of trees have been planted in the paddock.
- This village has many ancient and historic footpaths and they go along the boundaries and garden edges of 31 out of the 78 properties within the village. We have lived in the village for about 29 years and live in a house in Church Lane bordered by two footpaths and we have not had any problems from dog walkers and other walkers using these paths.
- Hedging and trees provide not only privacy, but complement the environment in the village, we observe that Priory house has attractive hedging and young trees.
- The footpath in the application is not in the property's garden, or particularly close to the boundary, but goes through a small agricultural field/paddock owned by the applicant.
- Ratcliffe on the Wreake has been able to benefit from the Conservation status, afforded to parts of the village by the Ratcliffe on the Wreake Conservation area Character Appraisal 2013 for example:-
 - (a) There are quite a few footpaths that link up historic and listed properties of this village including Priory House and 28/30 Church Lane which have been linked by footpath 163a for over 200 years.
 - (b) The village history is very apparent from the Houses , Field boundaries, roads, paths, old roads, hedges and the bases of old houses and buildings.
 - (c) the report sets out to retain the character and ambience of the Village as detailed on pages 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 21, 22 and 23 of the report should be considered as they pertain to the village layout and history.
- This diversion would make significant changes to this historic path, and to the layout of the village and its appearance.
- The proposed diversion will move the route from "A,B,C,D" where it has historically gone. To a route:-
 - (I) Route "AtoE" passing over historical remains of house bases shown on 1770 Map.

(II) Route “E to F” passing over the village feature known as the “Dovecote” the remains of Cottleborough Lane. At this point the new earthwork has filled in the drainage ditch interfering with this historical feature.

(III) From “F” the path would follow a new route to Broome Lane adding some extra distance, an extra climb up from “E” and a Dog leg at “G” and then passing along the hedge to “D” making a two sides of a triangle diversion.

We understand the owners of Priory House own the land with the path 163a enclosing “C,D,G,F,E” but do not own the land with the path 163a enclosing “A,B,C,E” therefore should not be diverting this part of the Path.

4. Local Resident/4

> I write as a resident of many years of Ratcliffe on the Wreake Parish, to share my concerns relating to the above and ask that you consider the change with extreme caution due to the health and safety of footpath users herby as follows:

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> 1. The proposed footpath A E F G D will be sited straight through land that for the majority of the year contains cattle (bull beef cattle). This is not a safe route for footpath users to walk through the centre of grazing cattle disturbing them.

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> 2. Point E F on the proposed footpath is an area where the cattle shelter from all elements and the proposed bridge with chicken wire, will be sited right through the middle of this sheltering point, again walking through this point is disturbing grazing cattle and causing unnecessary aggravation to the cattle and danger to footpath users should the cattle become disturbed. There is no safe place for footpath users to escape to should they be chased by aggravated cattle.

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> 3 The current 200 year old footpath A B C D, takes footpath users around the EDGE of the field away from grazing cattle, allowing less disturbance and a safer walking route, with a safe fenced off area to get to quickly in C D should they need to do so should cattle start to charge.

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> 4. The current footpath C D allows safe passing in a secure fenced off area for footpath users away from grazing cattle.

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> 5. The countryside code recommends “when walking through cattle fields walkers should walk calmly, quietly keeping to the EDGE of the land keeping dogs on lead”. It is not possible to keep to the edge of the land when you propose to move the new footpath straight through a cattle grazing area.

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> 6. By changing the footpath route it will discourage walkers, ramblers and general foot path users from walking in the village due to being scared of walking through the centre of grazing cows and concerns for their safety. In today’s environment where we are supposed to be encouraging more healthy living through walking and exercise, putting risk to walkers and discouraging them from using our countryside footpaths is not a positive approach.

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> 7. The current footpath has been in place for over 200 years and is a historical part of the village.

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> 8. The current owner of the property at Priory Farm was aware of this footpath route when the property was purchased by them in approx 1996. Why do they all of a sudden want to change this now after so many years? This leaves open future requests of changing other footpath routes just

because residents “don’t like walkers passing by their property” - in such you change for this one you end up changing for others and thus we start to lose all of our historical footpath routes.

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> 9. Privacy to Priory Farm is not comprised by footpath users in any way shape or form. The property is sited well away from the footpath route and sits in a dip whereby eye level from ground floor rooms in the property is way below eyesight level towards the footpath C D. No upper windows look out from the property to the side of the land C D. In addition to this trees have been planted by the current owner to block any privacy issues they may have. May we suggest they plant more trees where they feel privacy is an issue. This would be kinder to the environment rather than moving a footpath to compromise the safety of footpath users ?

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> 10. The new proposed footpath route still enters the land of Priory Farm at point G D so defeats the object of privacy.

5. Local Resident/5

Proposed Diversion of Public footpath 163a (part) Within Ratcliffe on the Wreake

I am emailing you with my objections below regarding the above:-

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1/ I am the owner **, Church Lane, Ratcliffe on the Wreake ,(a Listed building and oldest in the village) having resided here for the past 31 years.

2/ The owners of Priory House do not own one of the fields across which part of the diversion would pass and which also is currently in the process of being sold.

3/ An earth embankment has already been constructed over part of the ‘Dovecote’ ditch which is prone to flooding and to my knowledge no drainage system has been installed.

4/ This is a well-documented ancient footpath in existence for at least 200 years. It is frequently walked by both the residents of the village and many others and is an important historical feature of our village landscape and fail to see why it should be re- routed just to satisfy the owners desire for greater privacy.

5/ The reason for diversion appears to provide more privacy for the occupants of Priory House which in turn will make my garden and property far more visible to walkers as the proposed route, currently on the old Main Street with the ground sitting below my garden, will raise the walking level by 1.5m and totally overlooked. The current owner was aware of the route of the footpath at the time of purchase and chose to proceed and has since erected a fence at the edge of the garden, planted trees in their adjacent paddock close to the brick wall by the house and gardens creating more privacy.

6/ The 2013 village conservation report states that” the conservation area has a distinct “grain” or pattern of builds which clearly defines its historic development. This gives the area individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings, ANCIENT FOOTPATHS and highways and clearly defined borders. This “grain” is an important part of the character of the conservation area and will be protected”. Diversion of this important ancient historic footpath would directly contravene this statement. There seems little point in producing a conservation report if the recommendations are then totally ignored.