

Our ref: 418/POCHI003.065 /LD/240618

18 June 2024

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Dear Ellen

**AJP POCHIN ESQ - EDMONDTHORPE ESTATE
PROPOSED DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATHS E53 AND E54**

Thank you for providing an update in respect of the consultation process and it is disappointing that Leicestershire Footpath Association have now come forward stating that they would raise an objection, despite us having consulted with the diversion secretary in the early stages.

I wish to make the following comments in respect of the site and footpath concerned which follows our recent conversation:-

1. New guidelines were implemented by DEFRA from 1 August 2023 giving regard to applications of this nature, to ensure the local authority have considered the benefits to privacy, security and safety reasons when making the assessment for all parties concerned including landowner, occupiers and public.

With this in mind, we wish to reiterate that footpath E53 goes through the garden to the west of Church Farmhouse and leads into Stoneycroft yard, used as a materials store for the Estate. Whilst the footpath extinguishes in the yard, the public use the private driveway for Sycamore Cottage and yard to access the public highway. Therefore, there are a few interests affected by the current pathway.

The farmhouse is a residential dwelling and along the footpath route users can view into the property through the sitting room and kitchen windows, both of which are approximately 3m from the 'official' route, but users are not restricted from access in this area and can approach and 'peer in' if they wished. Both the sitting room and the kitchen are regarded as rooms in frequent daily use therefore impacting on the quiet enjoyment of the occupier, from both a privacy and security perspective.

Stoneycroft yard is used as a commercial unit and Estate store for materials and currently unsecure which we are looking to improve. The access way to these buildings is also utilised by the resident of Sycamore Cottage which is narrow and the public are generally not expecting to meet motorised vehicles on this section.

2. You have suggested relocating the footpath in a parallel position between points 'AB' on the application. We have evaluated this, and the images attached show the stone wall which acts as the curtilage of the Stoneycroft farm yard. The ground level is elevated in this section of the farm yard and, given the topography, if we were to consider a diversion route running along your proposed route (in blue) along the opposite side of this wall it would entail taking down a section of this stone wall within the conservation village and heavy construction work to build steps etc into this boundary. This would be neither sympathetic nor practical given the agricultural activities in the adjoining field and not to mention the costs involved. It would also be very imposing and does not alleviate the problem regarding privacy.
3. The alternative route (through extinguishment and diversion) will enable the footpath users to walk through the same fields albeit along a short diversion. The steep slope, which is currently in place through Church Farmhouse, will be eradicated and, where the diversion meets the highway footpath, a new kissing gate will be provided. This route will not be substantially less convenient, it will be more accessible (better topography) and ensure the same level of enjoyment and link with other footpaths in the village to the north and from a south easterly direction also.
4. By moving the footpath away from the private residence, it should open up opportunities for the public to use the new route and illuminate the feeling of infringing on the privacy or disrupting the activities at Church Farmhouse.

I very much hope that the County Council will understand the landowners' reasoning for this diversion and would be happy to discuss this with you further if required.

Yours sincerely



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