

Bures Hamlet Parish Council Meeting

Monday 16th September 2019

Public Rights of Way Report

The majority of the footpaths and bridleways in the Parish are in good order.

FP33 Pauline Phillips' Path

This footpath was adopted last year following much work over time to formally recognise the path from Brook House on the Colchester Road up Hall Road to the Mount Bures level railway crossing.

The path had been dedicated to Pauline Phillips, the founder of the Mount Bures Footpath Group.

Hildegard Hill, a Mount Bures resident, has worked hard to arrange an unveiling ceremony of the commemorative plaque which has been sited at the opening to the footpath. This is to take place on the morning of Sunday 6th October and will be attended by members of her family. Various people who have been involved with the adoption of the footpath will be invited to attend, to join a walk around Mount Bures and then have refreshments. Details are still to be finalised.

Agenda Item 10b:

FP5 Ferrier's Farm to Hornes Green

The Parish Council has been asked to comment on an informal consultation regarding the re-routing of this footpath which has for many years been a source of local concern.

The three options suggested by Essex Highways were put to the Parish Council at the last meeting. The Ramblers' Association have also been consulted. It remains for the Parish Council to agree on and notify Essex Highways of their preferred route.

To recap:

From Ferriers Farm you will see that the official footpath, having crossed the field, should ascend the headland for a short distance then enter the upper bank of the wood before eventually dropping down to leave the wood and continue along a grassed corridor to Hornes Green Lane.

Option1: To retain the Crossfield path, enter the lower scrubland, install a boardwalk over the boggy area and re-establish the lower path through the wood (most people consider this to be the actual PROW.) The landowner does not want the public in the woodland. The board walk alone will cost approx. £40,000. This would take a very long time to be approved, if at all, and meanwhile the footpath will become even more overgrown and wild. Currently it is totally inaccessible and has been problematic for many years.

Option 2: To restore the definitive line which will involve retaining the Crossfield path, ascending the headland before dropping onto the upper reaches of the steep woodland bank as per the route shown on the Interactive PROW map. There will need to be clearance of some trees, bluebells lifted and relocated. A shelf will need

to be cut into the bank to create a safe walkway and as it descends the bank, steps and handrails will be required. Costs will obviously be considerable and is realistically unlikely to be readily approved anytime soon. However, it would restore the current legal PRow if granted.

Option 3: To relinquish the current path across the field altogether and walk around the lower headland to meet up with the far end of the current crossfield path. The farmer has promised to maintain a 3m. corridor around the field. Any disturbed wildlife will re-establish itself in the adjacent acres of woodland and fields. The proposed diversion then ascends the headland and follows the edge of the woodland all the way round to meet up with the straight grassed corridor leading up to Hornes Green Road. Walkers will still see the carpets of bluebells. There will be no cost to the Parish Council and Essex Highways will manage the diversion admin. This should provide an all-year round accessible footpath to link up with several routes beyond our Parish. It could be put into effect quite quickly. The landowners x 2 involved in this option also prefer it to the other two choices.

I recommend Option 3 with reservations (Ramblers' Association are of the same opinion):

Essex County Council will need to guarantee their prompt action if the landowner (Clees Hall Estate) lapses in the maintenance of the headland corridors.

The lower headland section passes alongside a stream. There is no way of knowing if this area will become boggy and difficult to traverse at any time. If that proves to be the case, there should be the opportunity to restore the upper footpath and crossfield corridor.

Footpaths 1,2, and 3

As far as Essex Highways are concerned, the re-instatement of FP 3, as originally proposed in 2014, remains a viable option. This has been recently discussed with the owners of Ferriers Pit. They are unable to consider this matter at the moment due to personal circumstances but this can be visited again in the future.

To recap:

Proposals re Parish Rights of Way Numbers 1;3 & 4

(as so numbered on the Definitive Map dated 1st July 2002)

These three public footpaths run in a southerly or south-easterly direction from Bombose Lane, which runs between Lamarsh Hill and Hornes Green.

The course of each route was interrupted many decades ago by the digging of Ferriers Pit. Those parts of the paths which survive are walkable, but footpaths 1 and 4 end abruptly on a steep scarp forming the edge of the pit. Footpath 1 traverses the garden of a property named on the Definitive Map as Westwind, and is very rarely used as it is almost entirely contained within the private garden of that property. Footpath 4 lies just outside the boundary of that property and can be used to access Ferriers

Pit, which is privately owned and used for off-road motor activities which could be hazardous to walkers.

Footpath 3 follows the western boundary of Ferriers Pit. It does not lead to the edge of a scarp, and its line could be reinstated to join or adjoin a route leading in a south-easterly direction past a hydraulic ram and emerging opposite Ferriers Barn on Ferriers Lane.

The present situation allows public access into an area where activities pose a risk to the public. We believe it would be in the interests of the owners and operators of Ferriers Pit to have Rights-of-Way 1 and 4 extinguished. The owners of Westwind would also benefit from the extinguishing of No 1.

Public interest would be served by extinguishing these two potentially dangerous, but fairly pointless paths, and reinstating one through route on footpath 3 between Bombose Lane and Ferriers Lane. As this route follows the pit boundary it could be fenced and signed as appropriate to restrict public access to the pit itself, and thereby protect the public from the activities undertaken in the pit.

Footpath 30 (approaching the Paddocks)

The uneven surface around the protruding manhole has been reported to Essex Highways as a trip hazard. Report No: 2632396

FP30 Pedestrian Railway Crossing

No further information on the ownership of the land crossed by FP30 in accessing the passive crossing over the railway line. A decision is expected on closure or not of the pedestrian crossing by Network Rail in November.

Jan Aries

(Parish Councillor for PROWs)