

Peter Stiles

From: Peter Harker (pwharker@whipples.fsnet.co.uk)  
Sent: 22 November 2009 15:27  
To: Councillor William Mumford  
Subject: Re: Whipples Cross

Dear Councillor Mumford,

Thank you for your email. I am replying on behalf of my husband who unfortunately is in hospital. I have seen the Parish Councils minutes and I feel we must reply as they seem to be based on incorrect premises.

1. The Parish Council ignored 12 petitions of approximately 400 local people who wished the lane to be restored to its original use: for access, agricultural use (tractors etc), horse riders, ramblers, dog walkers, runners, cyclists, families for walking etc. All these groups are represented on the petitions. We felt that by doing this the PCC did not act for their Parish or the local people. There were only 4 members of the Parish Council present at the meeting that made the decision and a written note from another, against 400 local people who voted to support the TRO.

The Parish Council supported the trail bikers, who are a small minority of the lane users, who are also non-parishioners. No parishioner spoke against the TRO, all were in favour and this seems to not have been taken into account.

2. The PCC stated other alternatives should be explored. Exploration of alternatives led to the idea of a petition. The petitions show the strength of local opinion. However, it is hard to explore alternatives with a group of 8 - 20 motor bikers who rally through the lane. Even if they do reduce their speed momentarily, they accelerate up the hill and it is very dangerous and disruptive for other lane users. The Police have stated although they would like to help they are powerless until there is a TRO.

3. The DCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan to develop the recreational use of the Countryside is endorsed by the wishes of the 400 local people who signed the petition. The lane in question has always been open. The aim of the TRO is to open the lane for use by all countryside lovers as it was before the last 15 years: since then use by motor bikes has progressively increased. The Campaign for Rural England have been involved and explain on their web site that the greater the volume of motorised traffic in a rural area the more the peace and tranquillity of the countryside is ruined. For example, an individual would not now feel safe taking a young child for a walk up this lane at the weekend. There are few local places where a family can go for a walk in freedom without fear of motorised traffic. Motorbikes, however, have much more freedom; there is a huge network of small country roads for their use. The lane is open for everyone who would like to stroll along and see the wild flowers, badger setts, owl boxes and the views. It is a pity it cannot be designated an area of outstanding beauty and therefore protected.

4. This lane has always been passable in the 28 years we have observed it, and from elderly and deceased local people who can recount walking and riding it as far back as the 1930s. In the recent last 15 years motor bikers have noticeably eroded the lane to the bare rock and in other places made large muddy grooves. Horse riders do not cause this problem, as they have always used these lanes and are part of the natural heritage of the countryside. I can confirm all the local lanes are passable to walkers, as of last weekend, including others closed to motor bikes.

5. Lack of information was stated as another reason. Some members of the Parish Council walked the lane in the last few weeks and so now should have enough information.

I have addressed the 4 points the PCC say are the reasons for their decision (if you do not already have them please see their points on the attachment). It is regrettable that the PCC were not informed earlier in the TRO process as the PCC discussions focussed on this somewhat.

Thank you for listening. We would be very grateful if you would circulate this to other County Councillors. If you wish to reply my husband should be out of hospital soon.

Kind regards

Peter and Ruth Harker

From: [Wdmumford@aol.com](mailto:Wdmumford@aol.com)

To: [pwharker@whipples.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:pwharker@whipples.fsnet.co.uk)

Sent: Monday, November 16, 2009 3:03 PM

Subject: Whipples Cross

Dear Mr Harker,

thank you for your call today. As promised I will update you on the procedure for HATOC and advise from there

Rgds

Will

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