

## **Submission from Tilehurst Parish Council in response to West Berkshire Council's consultation on the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.**

We wish to make the following comments and recommendations in relation to footpaths in or passing through Tilehurst Parish.

1. Housing developments in the area of Stonehams Farm on Long Lane, Tilehurst have adversely impacted the West Berkshire Recreational route included in "Walking in the Sulham Valley - The White Route". Currently part of the White Route joins Long Lane (Tile FP6/2) next to the remains of Stonehams Farm and follows the narrow part of Long Lane to Sulham Hill near the Mud House and continues as footpath Tile FP7/1 across the fields to Little Heath Road. We are concerned at the risk of an accident when walking along Long Lane and crossing Sulham Hill near the Mud house due to recent increases in traffic and further increased traffic volumes once the Stonehams Farm developments are completed.

We therefore suggest that the White Route could be made safer by crossing Long Lane at the end of Tile FP6/2 directly into Blackthorn Close (already signed) and then taking walkers and cyclists on the right into Barefoot Copse and on to join with Back Lane (BWTile17/1). Then follow Back Lane up to Sulham Hill. The route could then cross Sulham Hill on a stretch which gave more visibility and therefore safer. This is currently a well used track in the trees and off the road along to join up with Tile FP7/1 near The Mud House. The White Recreation Route would then continue as published.

We would further suggest that consideration is given to where walkers from outside the immediate area might park as the current parking spaces on Long Lane may be restricted by the proposed care home at the Stonehams Farm site and this could lead to inconsiderate parking in nearby roads such as Blackthorn Close.

2. There was a footpath from Barefoot Copse at the junction with Back Lane (BWTile17/1) which terminated near The Cornwell Centre. This could be a good addition to the Rights of Way in that it would enable the residents of the "Little Heath" area of Tilehurst to reach Sulham Woods without walking on busy roads. We also note that there are Disabled Access Gates at both ends to enable registered people in wheelchairs to fully access with a key supplied by the council. The gate at the Back Lane end is currently vandalised.

A local resident has made an application for this to be recorded as an official ROW, but the Definitive Map Officer replied that it would require evidence of a set number of users over a set period of time for it to be considered. We suggest that this path should be recognised as a ROW and would support a public consultation to determine frequency of use.

3. There are various footpaths across the land generally described as the land East of Pincents Lane.

3.1 We support the recognition of FP 20 which runs from the bottom of Farm Drive to the Calcot Centre, an application for which was made some years ago but has yet to be determined.

3.2 Also from the path that enters the land from the end of Farm Drive, there is a well used path that heads in a western direction descending the hill on a diagonal path and which eventually meets Tile FP13/3. This is a long established path and was subject to an earlier submission for recognition as a footpath.

3.3 FP 13/3 has a parallel path to its south that is more heavily used than the recognised path and may be worthy of consideration as a recognised ROW. If walking west along this parallel path a second path appears to the left that then follows the Calcot Recreation Ground fence line, then the Sainsburys retail park fence line before it meets Tile FP13/3 and the parallel path again. Many walkers use this path to enable a circular walk.

3.4 If then walking further west along Tile FP13/3 there is a path to the right that follows the western fence line with a field (used for horse grazing and owned by Mr and Mrs Barron). This path takes a left turn when it reaches the hedges by Pincents Lane and then eventually rejoins Tile FP13/3. This path is also used as a circular walk and has become established since the closure of paths across Mr and Mrs Barron's field.

3.5 We would recommend recognition of all the paths covered in point 3.1 to 3.4 above as formal Rights of Way.

For further information, or clarification on any of the points made, please contact Parish Cllr Clive Taylor on 07948 315358 or [clive.taylor3@ntlworld.com](mailto:clive.taylor3@ntlworld.com)

Date : 11 June 2021