

**Responses to Effingham Parish Council Consultation
(sent to residents of Beech Avenue, Beech Close, Critten Lane, High Barn
Road, Effingham Hill and Ranmore Common Road)**

Mr & Mrs J. Barrett have lived in the area since 1963 and have walked the route almost daily over the last 20 years. They claim never to have seen a horse rider on any part of the claimed route although they have occasionally seen evidence of such use. They state that A-C would not be wide enough for equestrian use, but that horses did previously use Footpath 122 until it was gated.

Mr & Mrs F. Cromwell claim that, prior to the hurricane [of 1987], there were separate routes through the wood for horses and walkers. The route used by walkers was lost after the hurricane. They have witnessed equestrians using D-E.

Mrs J. Forrest regularly rode over D-E between 1977 and 2005 (when Footpath 122 was gated and locked).

Mr A. Goldup has lived almost opposite point A on Beech Avenue for 35 years and has never seen horses entering or leaving Beech Avenue. He has regularly walked A-C-D but has never seen an equestrian use it. There has however been evidence of horses using C-D which has increased in 'recent months'.

Mr T. Harrold lived in Fiddlers Green (adjacent to B-C) between 1939 and 1960 and regularly visited it until the 1970s. At no time does he recollect seeing horses use the route.

Mr A. Henry first explored the routes in question in 1998 and has since walked all sections of the claimed routes. He doesn't remember ever having seen a horse and reports that A-C is particularly unsuitable for equestrians being too narrow and winding and having low branches. There have not even been any signs of equestrian use on A-C.

Mrs G. Nicol submitted a user evidence form. She has regularly used both claimed paths for the past 35 years (except for when it was 'closed' after the storms in 1987). In that time she has used E-C at least twice a week. Use of A-C has diminished in recent times as the route has become too narrow. The route has also been used by Mrs Nicol's children and many other riders in the area. Until 2008 there were 'footpath' signs but no 'no horses' sign or barriers.

Mrs J. Page is the District Councillor who applied for Footpath 491 to be added to the Definitive Map in 1996. She confirms that she intended it to be a footpath only and, in describing the route, states that A-C was too narrow and winding to be a bridleway. Mrs Page goes on to raise concerns regarding the safety of users exiting onto Beech Avenue although she seems to accept that there has been occasional recent use of the claimed routes by equestrians.

Mrs M. Rice-Oxley & Mrs M. Dyer state that between the 1930s and the beginning of the 1950s both claimed paths were considered to be 'private footpaths' belonging to Mr Calburn (the Lord of the Manor). As such they were not used by pedestrians or equestrians.

ITEM 14

Mr C. Sandford is the applicant and also submitted a user evidence form. He moved to Greenacres in 1978 and has regularly ridden over B-C-D-E. He has a private right over B-C-D but not D-E. From his property he has seen riders regularly (i.e. at least once a week) using all sections of the route. No notices prohibiting equestrian use appeared until 2008. Mr Sandford goes onto disagree with other witnesses who have claimed that equestrian use increased when a nearby farm opened as a livery stables. He points to the fact that there had previously been stables at High Barn and that a riding school, based at Fir Tree Farm, Woodlands Road, had at one time used the claimed paths several times a week.

Mrs J. Sandford submitted a user evidence form and also lives in Greenacres so has the same private rights as Mr Sandford. She rode along B-E herself between 1978 and 2003. Since Mrs Sandford has stopped riding she has continued to walk the claimed bridleways. Through this time she has often seen riders and at no point had there been any 'no horses' signs.

Mr D Steer suggests that it would be impractical to lead or ride a horse over A-C and that he had never seen any horses on C-D, although he had recently seen evidence of such use (i.e. the cutting up of the surface). Mr Steer also refers to a 'no horses' sign at point A which preceded those signs which went up in 2008; he does not state when that sign appeared. In a second letter Mr Steer refers to a number of safety issues and suggests alternatives to recording the routes as bridleways.

Mrs C. Watson has walked the route for 44 years and in that time has regularly seen horse riders on B-C-D. 'No horses' signs were erected in 1987, one at point A and the other at point D. The signs were posted because of damage being caused by the creation of a second path between Beech Road and Footpath 491 (both walkers and horse riders were trying to avoid using Footpath 491 as it was very muddy). The notice at point D was destroyed by the storms of October 1987 while the other went missing during the clearance operations following that storm. Those signs were only in place for a few months; they were not replaced.

Mrs P. Wetenhall lived in Fiddlers Green (at point B) between 1978 and 1983 then moved back to the area (Beech Avenue) in 1991. She has regularly walked B-C-D and A-C. She has witnessed occasional equestrian use of C-D-E and claims that this has increased in the last few years (especially since Badger Farm became an equestrian stable). However, she has never seen any use of A-C. At some point since 1991 'no horses' signs were erected at point A. These went missing and were not replaced until 2008.