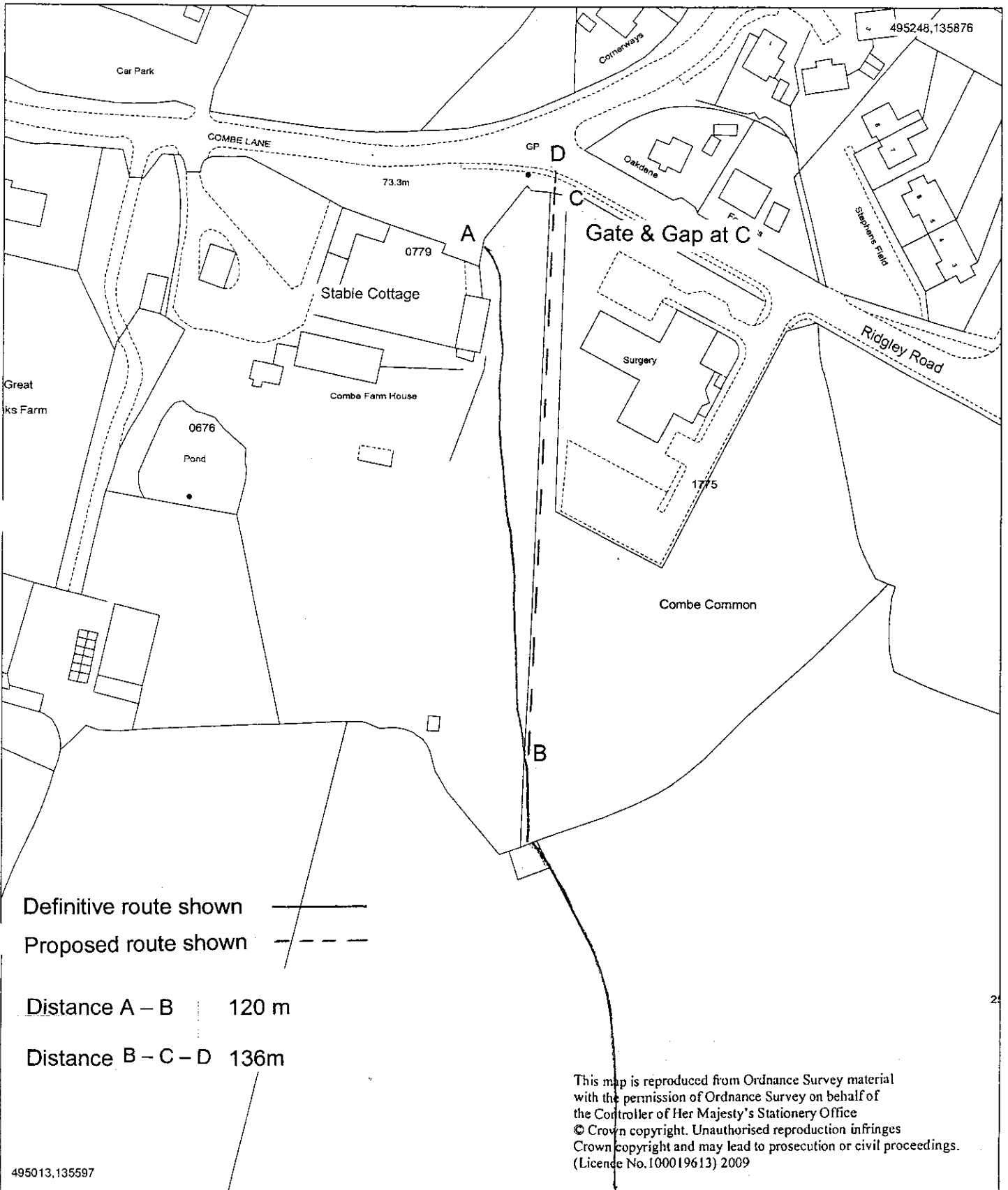


**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(WAVERLEY)**



**PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 233 CHIDDINGFOLD – PROPOSED
DIVERSION**

17 December 2010

ANNEX A



Borough of Waverley Parish of Chiddingfold
Footpath No. 233 Chiddingfold Proposed Diversion

	Date:	04/02/2010	Grid Ref at A: 95125 35824	<small>© Crown Copyright Licence No. 100019613, Surrey County Council, 2006. Except A-Z mapping © Copyright of the Publishers Geographers' A-Z Map Company Ltd.</small>	 SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
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Scale 1:1250					



Chair Jackie Warr Charity no 214753 General Secretary KATE ASHBROOK
25a Bell Street, Henley on Thames, RG9 2BA tel: 01491 573535 website: www.oss.org.uk

Please reply to
2 Utworth Cottages Alfold Road CRANLEIGH GU6 8JU
01483 272003
ralphholmes@yahoo.co.uk

Sue Briant
Countryside Access Officer
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
KINGSTON UPON THAMES
KT1 2DY

November 13 2010

Dear Sue

Chiddingfold 233

I revisited the site on Tuesday as planned.

Whilst I would like to thank you for your email of November 05, I was disappointed to read that the item was to be taken to committee on December 17. I had hoped that further consultations and negotiations might lead to a satisfactory solution.

As the proposals stand at the moment the OPEN SPACES SOCIETY would maintain its objection because of the adverse effects the proposed route would have on the public's enjoyment of the route as a whole. Even though it is the historic route, it does not mean that the SOCIETY is taking a dogmatic stand for the present definitive route and nothing else. The Society would certainly consider sympathetically any proposed diversions that are to the west of the hedge to find a route more convenient to the owners. To the east of the hedge it would consider sympathetically any proposals to improve the environment to make the route more acceptable.

There are three main possibilities to the east for improvements:

- The whole route from D to the stiles just beyond B should be surfaced to the same standard as the first part alongside the doctors' surgery. I know you have mentioned on a couple of occasions that the proposed path 'appears to be on drier land' than the routes being walked. I don't know what evidence you have for this, but I thought the height of the land and the nature of the soil were both very similar. Once it is trampled on I feel the definitive route would become at least as muddy as that being walked at the moment. Indeed it could become worse as it would be shaded from the sun and more protected from drying westerly winds by the hedge. I imagine the reason that James Taylor wisely got the first section surfaced was because of the likelihood in his judgement of it becoming very muddy
- The removal of at least one of the two stiles, neither of which are easy to climb, just beyond point B. I appreciate that they are not strictly speaking on the section to be diverted, but they are extremely close to it and it would be relevant and helpful to deal with the problems of these at the same time and help to compensate for some of the disadvantages of the diversion

- Landscaping, scrub clearance or other environmental improvements to the land east of the proposed route and south of the doctors surgery

I appreciate that your budget for these sorts of improvements is very limited at the present time, but I am also aware that this diversion is in the private interests of the landowners who probably have a significant financial gain to make if a diversion takes place. It would therefore be very appropriate to invite them to contribute.

Yours sincerely

RALPH HOLMES
Waverley Representative



Chair Jackie Warr Charity no 214753 General Secretary KATE ASHBROOK

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01483 272003

ralphholmes@yahoo.co.uk

Sue Briant
Countryside Access Officer
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
KINGSTON UPON THAMES
KT1 2DY

July 17 2010

Your ref: DS/SB/3/1/4

Dear Mrs Briant

Chiddingfold 233

Thank you for arranging yesterday's site meeting and for the background information and helpful advice from you and James Taylor.

The section from Combe Lane (point D) to the end of the Surgery land isn't very attractive. The stile needs removing and should be replaced by a gate or some other less restrictive structure - James Taylor mentioned that he had already decided to do something along these lines.

The greater problem is the section from the end of the Surgery land to point B where the proposed route and the definitive route rejoin. Compared with the definitive route it is a much less enjoyable route to walk along. My main concerns are:

- It passing through some very scruffy unattractive scrubland - a very tatty landscape. I wonder if some scheme would be possible to upgrade the landscape and perhaps make Combe Common into an attractive open space.
- Brambles everywhere including along the proposed route itself - as you know we were unable to get through keeping to it. Although yesterday we were able to get through fairly easily further east, when my wife and I visited in February of this year, the brambles were so bad that we had to carry our dog through this section. No doubt the brambles could be cleared, but the fear is that after an initial period they would recolonise. James Taylor mentioned that the path would be included in his path cutting programme for one or two cuts a year, but there could remain problems between cuts or if reductions in Council expenditure restrict the number of cuts possible
- A very muddy surface in wet weather. This could well be the reason why the first section of the path has been sensitively surfaced. Perhaps such surfacing should continue throughout
- A very unattractive fence and hedge to the west. The latter causes overhanging problems from time to time. I know the present owner has dealt with the hanging branches for the time being and has agreed to keep it cut, but future owners may be less helpful

Just beyond where the definitive and proposed route meet (point B) there is a double stile. I appreciate that this is just outside the area of the proposed diversion, but I wonder if this matter could be dealt with at the same time. There are elderly and other less mobile users who can cope with stiles, but perhaps only just cope and two stiles close together more than doubles the problem. The ideal solution would be one gate, but I understand the landowner is legally allowed one stile.

I much prefer the definitive route - it has none of the above problems. As the proposal stands at the moment the OPEN SPACES SOCIETY is likely to object to a draft order. Having said that I don't feel that the definitive route as it is on the map at the moment is sacrosanct. It may be a better route could be found to the west of the hedge or improvements could be made to the proposals to the east or perhaps a mixture of the two using the hard surfaced path to the east initially and then crossing to west of the hedge.

I appreciate and understand the definitive route goes through the existing garden of Combe Farm House and has only been used occasionally in recent years. I appreciate the owner of the house would probably prefer the path to be east of the hedge. On the other hand it is a big garden and sometime in the past has very probably been deliberately created over a definitive right of way that had been an historic farm track - probably for many centuries. It is worth mentioning that the definitive route does not pass close to the farmhouse so there are no problems of looking into windows etc. However it passes by a historic barn that would add interest and enjoyment to users of the path.

Yours sincerely

RALPH HOLMES
Waverley Representative