

**Borough of Guildford Parish of Albury.
Public Footpath 206 Proposed Diversion.**

Written comments from Anthony Wreford and Marian Scrutton (owners of Mardons since November 2011) ahead of the Committee Meeting scheduled for March 25th 2015

Our intentions

When we acquired Mardons in 2011, our aims were fourfold:

- 1 To replace the existing house with a low carbon, sustainable eco-home
- 2 To put the land to economic agricultural use
- 3 To increase biodiversity
- 4 To improve access for all

We have lived in the Surrey Hills (Holmbury St Mary) for more than 30 years and moved last September to Mardons after three years building our 'forever' home. We love the house, the land and the views. We are to be married in late May at Shamley Green Parish Church where Anthony's sisters were all married and his parents and Grandmother are buried. Our wedding reception will be held at Mardons.

Improvements thus far

When we took over the property it was in a poor state, the elderly owner had neglected the place, buildings were derelict, fields neglected, footpaths and hedges overgrown and in poor shape. We have re-fenced almost all the boundaries, planted 147 native trees in a copse bordering FP206 and planted mixed hedging along FP219 as part of a continuing plan to restore the views and the wildlife following removal of the overgrown hollies and Leylandii. We have replaced the original house with a new home made from locally sourced materials, powered by air-source heat pumps and our own solar array.

Land use

Having now lived at Mardons for almost 6 months, we feel that we would like to make proper agricultural use of the almost 20 acres of land surrounding it, thus making a worthwhile economic contribution to local agricultural output. We will run cattle and/or sheep on the land.

A natural boundary

A line of trees (see photo 1) marks the original separation of the two fields south of the house. The proposed diversion follows this tree line, provides shelter from potential bad weather and is only a 20 yard (at the widest point) parallel move from the existing course. Our research has found no historic reasons for the position of the current path (A) across the field but the trees along the line (B) clearly show the ancient boundary between the fields.

The public benefit

Having already cleared and improved all the public pathways around the property (see 'before' and 'after' examples in photos 3 & 4) by fencing and planting, we also believe the wider path that we propose will benefit the public for a number of reasons:

We will put two log benches along the diversion route (as marked on photo 2)

We will remove three kissing gates enabling unencumbered access.

We will plant more native trees and mixed hedgerows to encourage wildlife.

We will rescind our right to re-instate the stiles along FP 219

We will encourage and help with the countryside access team's voluntary plan to replace the stile and build steps down to the B.O.A.T.

We believe these improvements will help disabled and elderly walkers by removing obstacles and giving them resting places.

On a personal note – we have two close relatives who are wheelchair users and we are more than usually aware of the need for ease of access whether across land, in buildings or on public transport.

ITEM 9

Safety

We will need to fence the footpath (whichever one is designated) to protect the public from livestock. Dogs currently run across the fields and this will be unsafe both for them and future livestock. The existing footpath route makes uneconomic use of the field as it effectively reduces its' use by 20%.

Current use of the string-marked diversion route

Our neighbours at Fellgarth, Mr and Mrs Duncan Godfrey, who have lived and farmed in Farley Green for more than 24 years, report that since we have cleared and maintained them, many more people use the footpaths. We have further observed that since marking the proposed diversion route with posts and string, the vast majority of walkers choose this diversion route over the existing path. We would also suggest that it is a more scenic pathway with magnificent views.

The environmental aspects

We have planted mixed hedgerows along FP 219 to encourage local wildlife and whilst we acknowledge that our clearance works may have temporarily disturbed this, we believe that our planting will provide a better long-term strategy for increased biodiversity. Two years ago we created a copse adjacent to FP 206 in which we planted 147 native trees. Our work to the hollies has exposed both oak trees and hawthorns (& an Ash which we hope will be saved from die-back) previously stifled by the uncontrolled hedgerow overgrowth. We plan further tree & hedgerow planting along the diversion route.

In summary, we have already planted far more than we have removed and propose carefully to maintain and encourage the bird and wildlife population of the area.

Cost of the proposed move

We have already purchased most of the fencing for the pathway and will guarantee to pay for and finish this work within 6 weeks of a decision being taken so that walkers reap the benefits this spring and summer.

Opposition

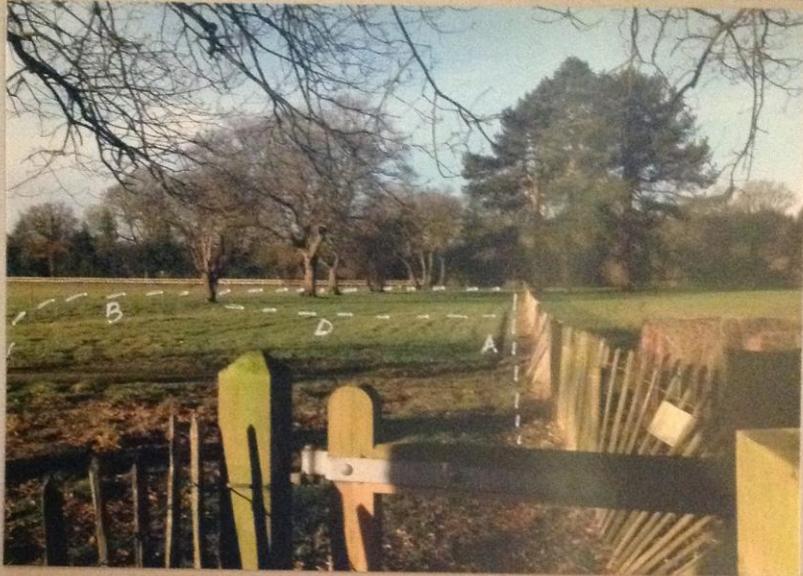
We understand that there are 4 local objectors to the proposed diversion (The Ramblers association and the Parish Council have no objection) and whilst we regret their opposition, we believe that for the vast majority of footpath users, the diversion of the path to follow the natural tree-line between the two fields will have both a logical and beneficial effect to the much wider walking public.

In summary

We have lived in the Surrey Hills (Holmbury St Mary and now Farley Green) for more than 30 years and care greatly about the landscape and the people that live here. We love the house, the land and the views and hope that we, our children and 6 grandchildren can enjoy Farley Green for decades to come. We have put our hearts and energy into bringing life back into this property. We have planted trees, replaced fences, improved existing and installed new hedges, all in pursuit of a safe, sustainable outcome. We believe our request is modest, logical to objective views and will be quickly appreciated as an improvement to the current footpath network by the public at large.

SEE 4 PHOTGRAPHS BELOW:

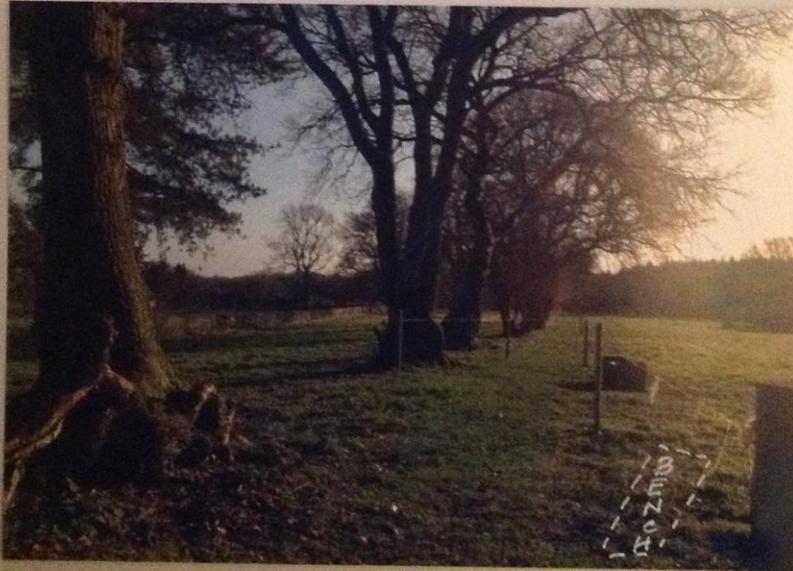
1.



A = EXISTING ROUTE 135 YDS
B = DIVERSION ROUTE 156 YDS

D = DISTANCE (AT WIDEST POINT)
BETWEEN 'A' AND 'B' . 20 YDS.

2.



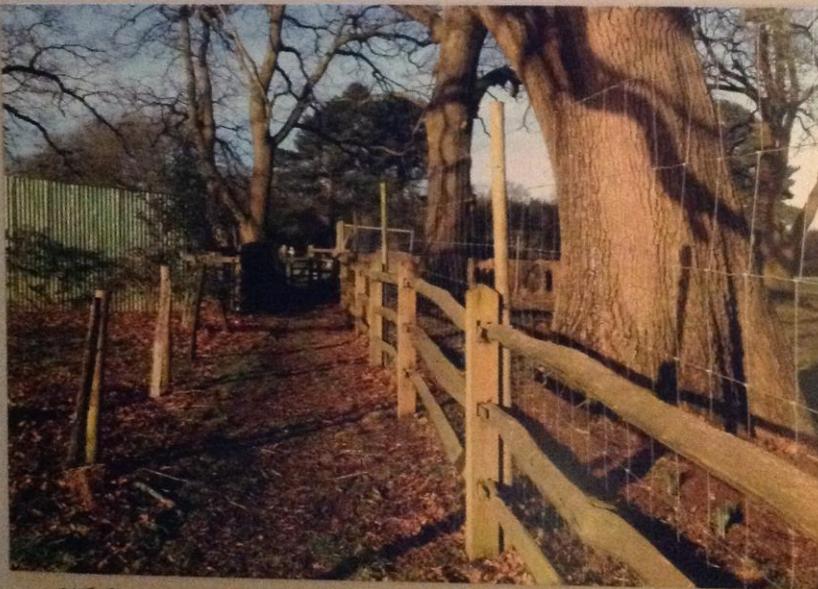
LOG BENCHES WILL BE POSITIONED AT EACH END OF THE
DIVERSION ROUTE.

3.



A SECTION OF FP206 BEFORE WE UNDERTOOK CLEARANCE WORKS.

4.



THE SAME SECTION OF FP206 AFTER CLEARANCE WORKS AND RE-FENCING OF OUR BOUNDARY (RIGHT HAND FENCE)