

Public footpath between BOAT No 15 and Bridleway No. 16 (Mickleham)

I am pleased to note that the Access Officer has decided in favour of this claim.

I am concerned, however, about both the detail and the tone of the letter from Ollie Vigors on behalf of Longshot Cherkley Court Ltd ("Longshot"). He states that the claim is both unnecessary and unreasonable and "appears to be vindictive".

I am a resident of Mickleham and a parish councillor. At an early stage in the planning process I pointed out to both Longshot and Mole Valley District Council that two of the proposed golf holes crossed the existing footpath, and that the plans for those two holes should therefore be changed. Neither body replied. Accordingly, when my wife and I learned that other Mickleham residents were preparing the footpath claim we gave evidence in favour.

We welcome Longshot's proposal to put in place a new footpath to the south of the existing one, but it should be in addition to, and not in substitution for, the existing footpath. We have seen no plans of the proposed new footpath but, if it runs to the south as Mr Vigors suggests, it will be through the woodland and below the ridge of the hill that the existing footpath follows. As such, walkers on it will not be able to see the view all the way to Windsor and Wembley that is one of the great pleasures of the existing footpath that locals have used for so many years. Also, as the golf course appears now to have been completed, I am at a loss as to why Longshot still oppose the footpath claim, as presumably they no longer have any plans to extend the golf holes across the footpath. I should be happy to meet you or Mr Vigors, or any other interested party, at the site to discuss all this.

Nor do we see any reason why, as Mr Vigors suggests, there should be any conflict between golfers and walkers on the existing footpath. While the dispute between Longshot, various local residents and MVDC has been at times heated, it has never to my knowledge been abusive or violent. There are other footpaths running through the Cherkley Court estate and it is not suggested by Mr Vigors that they be moved for this reason.

Lastly we are given to understand that the gates were there originally to stop horses from using the path as a short cut up to the Gallops and damaging the very special turf and anthills that make up the chalk grassland, maintained by rabbits, in this section of the estate.

Accordingly, our supporting this footpath claim cannot be described as unnecessary or unreasonable, and certainly not as vindictive. Mr Vigors should withdraw that potentially defamatory allegation.

We look forward to the December 2nd meeting confirming that a public footpath can reasonably be alleged to subsist over the route and that, as such, a legal order to modify the definitive map and statement should be made. Unfortunately I cannot be at the meeting, but my wife Annie Dennis will be there, together with Juliet Lowes and the Reverend David Ireland (Chair, Mickleham Parish Council). I am happy to authorise any of these three to

speak on my behalf, and for this statement to be read out at the meeting. I am also happy for this statement to be circulated to Local Committee Members to help inform their decision and for it to be included in your tabled papers for the meeting.

As stated I am a parish councillor but please note that this statement is sent in my personal capacity, though I have shared it in draft with my fellow councillors. There was, unfortunately, insufficient time between our learning of this matter (24 November) and the Local Committee meeting (2 December) to convene and hold a council meeting to form a collective view.

Kind regards

Cllr Will Dennis