

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED DIVERSION OF MAIDENHEAD FOOTPATH 19 AT MAIDENHEAD CRICKET CLUB

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consult the Forum on the proposal to divert Maidenhead Footpath 19 at Maidenhead Cricket Club.

**2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

2.1 Maidenhead Footpath 19 runs from North Town Moor in Maidenhead through to Widbrook Common. The route of the path takes it past the Maidenhead Cricket Club and along the permitted cycle path at Summerleaze.

2.2 Summerleaze, the landowner of the path, has applied to divert part of the footpath which runs in a field adjacent to the cycle track, to take the path fully along the existing cycle track at this point. A map detailing the proposed diversion is included in Appendix A to this report.

2.3 The landowner states the following reasons for their desire to move divert the path

*A Permissive Path has already been provided as a more convenient and direct route between points A and B on the enclosed Plan. The Permissive Path is surfaced with gravel and is used by the great majority of walkers, including users of Green Way East.*

*The present Definitive Route loops into a small field that the applicant wishes to continue using for recreational use for football in response to requests from local community football clubs.*

*The footpath conflicts with this use due to walkers exercising their right during periods when the football pitch is in use. Users of the footpath also exercise their dogs in the field and do not clear up their dog faeces. This unedifying task is left to the players and is a deterrence to participation. The playing area therefore needs to be fenced.*

*There are no gates on the existing Permissive Path and none are proposed on the proposed route. The existing Definitive Path between Points A and B will be closed. It is unsurfaced and no restoration works are required*

*The existing Permissive Path had a gravel surfaced width of approximately 1.8m and overall width of approximately 2.7m between existing post and wire fencing.*

2.4 The East Berks Ramblers and the Maidenhead Civic Society have been consulted at the pre-application stage and have made the following comments:

| <b>Group</b>        | <b>Comments received</b>   |
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| East Berks Ramblers | We will most certainly object to this proposed diversion were it to be formally requested. As I noted in our earlier conversation, we would be concerned about the loss of a green path. We have now undertaken a site visit to this very popular walking area and feel strongly |

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|                                 | <p>the loss of the section of FP 19 as proposed would be a severe loss to the footpath network in the locality. It is also part of the Green Way East, and we would hope the Council will safeguard the Green Way as it is now, in view of the high profile accorded to it.</p>  |
| <p>Maidenhead Civic Society</p> | <p>Diverting the footpath onto the permitted cycle track and thus creating a combined cycle path and public right of way seems a sensible move and we have no objection to this being done subject to certain conditions and clarifications.</p> <p>These are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The existing cycle path access gate be changed to the authorised structure for such paths i.e. the Three Valleys Gate. This will encourage cyclists to use this access rather than the footbridge. This gate, compared to the existing access, is easier for pedestrians to use and is accessible for disabled people using mobility scooters. It will prevent motorbike access.</li> <li>2. The width of the cycleway is supposed to be 2.5 metres. However encroachment by nature can restrict the width. If it is to be a combined path any encroachment needs to be cleared regularly.</li> <li>3. Previously the field to the east of the cycleway was used for football. We would like clarification on whether it will be returned to such use once it has been re-fenced.</li> <li>4. Though not affected by the proposed diversion of Footpath 19 (Green Way East), we note that the field to the west of the cycle path has recently been supplied with water and that a few bullocks are being kept there. We would like clarification on whether the landowner has any future plans that could result in the diversion of Green Way West that runs along the stream. FYI Such a diversion would be strongly resisted by the Society as the Green Way was designed as a streamside path.</li> </ol> |

2.5 Photograph of the route:



Approximate line of existing path adjacent to existing permitted cycle track

2.6 The opinion of the Forum is being sought with regard to this proposed diversion. At the time of writing discussions are currently underway with the landowner in response to the feedback received. Any further details or changes will be reported at the meeting.

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