

This correspondence is from:

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Mike Ogden
Durham County Council

3rd July 2018

Dear Mike

Teesdale School and related proposals

Following my letter of 15th June we have given these proposals further consideration and now wish to withdraw that letter. There are aspects of the proposal to which we must object, as stated below.

The Open Spaces Society (Reg charity no. 1144840, England & Wales, limited company no 7846516), was founded in 1865 and is Britain's oldest conservation body. It campaigns to protect common land, village greens, open spaces and public paths, and the right of the public to enjoy them.

We now wish to object to the loss of Barnard Castle FP10, referred to in your consultation, point 2, as "moving Public Footpath 10 away from its current location". But there is no proposed new location for Footpath 10, as there is nowhere to which it could be diverted, so it would be the loss of a path, an extinguishment. This is what the plan accompanying your email suggests by the inclusion in the key to the plan of a solid black line indicating "Footpath to be extinguished", which is an accurate description of what is proposed. However, as you know, for a public footpath to be extinguished it must be shown that it is not needed, and clearly this path is needed. The proposal has made front page news in the Teesdale Mercury (27th June) where it is made clear that many people use this path not only for recreation in using it, but also to go to and from the Leisure Centre and to work at Glaxo, and no doubt to Glaxo social club as well. It also provides an off-road route for people to reach The Hub from the town.

Under the proposals, one alternative provided to reach the Leisure Centre from Prospect Place/A688 is via the pavements of Bede Road and Harmire Road beside traffic all the way, which is a much longer, indirect and less attractive route. Reaching Glaxo via those roads might not be longer, but would certainly be less attractive.

The other alternative under the proposals would be via the pavement of the A688 with its traffic, and The Hub, which would involve a relatively long and very indirect detour and would not be compensated for by the latter part of that route being attractive.

While we have sympathy with the school for the problems mentioned in the Mercury's report, we



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doubt that these would cease if FP10 were to be closed off. The playing field site is not securely fenced and there are plenty of places where anyone intent on continuing to use the area would be able to gain access. We consider that the answer to the problems is for the school to install proper, secure fencing on all sides so that access to the playing fields is under their control. No doubt if the playing fields were sited away from the school buildings in some other location, they would be securely enclosed. We believe that if the playing fields were to be securely enclosed the problems currently experienced would be prevented, and in that case Footpath 10 could remain on its historic line where it could continue to be used and enjoyed by a great many people.

With regard to the proposals to add the other paths being considered in this consultation, we are aware that most of them have already been in use by walkers for a number of years, including the link from Stainton FP4 to the former railway line. It is appropriate therefore that all of them should be added to the definitive map. We appreciate the work that has been carried out to improve some of these routes, and also that the proposal includes provision of a public bridleway. This locality has few bridleways and the proposed creation should be much appreciated by the many local people who keep horses, and also by cyclists. No doubt the work undertaken will be appreciated by all those who are using these paths now.

We hope that our comments and suggestions will meet with your approval.

With kind regards

Jo

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Local Correspondent for Teesdale & Wear Valley Districts in Co Durham

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