

# CODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the public meeting held on 30 April 2015 in the Village Hall.

**Present:** County Cllr Maureen Dobson,  
Stephen Tipping, Notts CC Rights of Way Officer,  
Cllr Bob O'Donnell (Parish Council Chairman),  
Cllr Linda Cox (Parish Council Vice Chairman),  
Mrs Yvette Wellard (Parish Clerk)

**About 100 members of the public attended the meeting which had been organised by Cllr Dobson in response to the flood of enquiries received concerning the erection of gates, which had closed off access to the concrete roadway at Beaconfield.**

1. Cllr Dobson welcomed everyone to the meeting, and acknowledged the strength of feeling shown by the number of residents attending. Apart from other concerns, Cllr Dobson reported that the gates would require planning permission as they were over the permitted height. She then introduced Stephen Tipping who was representing the County Council Rights of Way Team.
2. Mr Tipping addressed the meeting, observing that residents of Coddington obviously take their footpaths very seriously. He explained that at this stage, it was not known whether the route was an established footpath. Evidence of regular use would be needed from the public, and also evidence from the landowners that they had taken steps to prevent it from becoming a public right of way. Existing statutory declarations and other preventative measures taken by the Ministry of Defence and by Mr Curtis would be examined, and there would be a lengthy process of gathering information before a decision could be made. Once the facts were established, if a public footpath was to be created, this would go to a public enquiry.
3. Cllr Dobson referred to the information pack which had been emailed to those residents who had contacted the County Council directly, and which included Public Rights of Way User Evidence forms. Copies of these were also available at the meeting, or could be obtained from the Parish Clerk at [coddingtonpc@hotmail.com](mailto:coddingtonpc@hotmail.com) or by tel: 01636 626780. Completed forms accompanied by the map provided, highlighting all tracks regularly used, should be returned to the Clerk or a member of the Parish Council.
4. The meeting was opened for questions and comments:
  - Several people stated that they had been walking the track for many years; it was a wonderful amenity giving access to the countryside, but now Thorpe Oaks' residents were cut off from the footpaths and had lost their circular route.
  - Mr Hounsfield responded that he had no problem with responsible people walking on his land, but there were people who let their dogs off the lead, and some 'up to no good'. However, there had been a gate in place with a 'private' notice on it for many years.

- As Mr Curtis was not at the meeting, his letter, explaining why he had found it necessary to install the gates, was read out.
5. Mr Tipping gave a definition of a presumed right of way – a route that has been used for over 20 years, unless the landowner has taken steps to prevent it from becoming a right, which, for instance, Mr Hounsfield's 'private' notice may have done. He also referred to an older common law which could be applied for less than 20 years of use, but this would require more evidence.
  6. Cllr Dobson said that she would arrange a meeting for the landowners, Rights of Way Officers, the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman, in the hope that a compromise could be reached. In the meantime, residents should read the Guide to Definitive Map Modification Orders, complete the Evidence of Use forms, and send them with an accompanying route map to the Parish Council who would be the co-ordinators. Information would be available on the Parish Council Footpaths page of the Coddington village web site.  
Cllr Dobson stressed that there would be no quick solution. It would take time for evidence to be collected and the legal positions defined. She thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and urged people to show respect for the countryside and privately owned land.