

Reference: ABS/DIV/190/01.18

**Countryside Records
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
Oxford
OX1 1ND**

**Owen Jenkins
Director of Community
Operations**

19th August 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Informal Consultation

**Application for Diversion Public Footpaths under S119 Highways Act 1980. Part of
Dorchester Footpaths No 13 and 14 at Bishops Court Farm.**

The owner of Bishops Court Farm, Vision Residences (Phase 2) LLP, has applied to the County Council (OCC) to divert part of the above public rights of way. This is an informal consultation seeking any comments on the proposal. These will be taken into account when OCC decides whether or not to make a diversion Order.

Any Order would be under s119 of the Highways Act 1980 in the interests of the owner. Footpath 13 runs northwards through Bishops Court Farm to Abingdon Road. Footpath 14 runs from Oxford Road, Dorchester north-westwards to the farm and then north-north-westwards to Abingdon Road, terminating at the same point as Footpath 13.

The owner has set out in the application the following the reasons for requesting the diversion:

- The current footpath is no longer safe for purpose.
- Accidents involving members of the public and farm machinery or livestock as they stray from the permitted path.
- Children are regularly caught playing in the hay/straw sheds and have previously burnt down buildings.
- A safe environment cannot be maintained in a farmyard with unpredictable livestock.
- The farmyard is used all year and the footpath running directly through the middle particularly at lambing/calving time cannot be practically protected.
- Should there be a disease outbreak in the livestock the current footpath would dramatically increase the risk of disease spreading across the farm.
- Dogs continue to use the yard as a place to defecate and some unreasonable owners do not clear up after them resulting in cases of neospora in the livestock.
- Dogs have also entered livestock pens on numerous occasions attacking animals.

The proposed route of the footpath would run to the eastern side of the farm buildings across pasture field to join with Footpath 14. Footpath 14 would itself be diverted south-westwards to retain one crossing point of the farm access track where kissing gates would be installed.

The Definitive routes that would be diverted and their proposed widths (2m) are shown on the attached plan and key HA1980/583.

The applicant considers that the diversion would:

- Dramatically improve the safety of the public from risks associated with a busy farmyard including machinery, heavy plant, cattle crossing sheds on a daily basis (*across Dorchester Fp 13*).
- The new route would improve the route for public enjoyment and the terrain making it more accessible for the public including replacement of the stiles on the existing route with kissing gates on the proposed route.
- The applicant aims to reduce the number of accidents involving the public and dogs in the yard on a regular basis ranging from accidents with machinery to attacks on animals particularly at lambing time.

The administration and advertising costs this Council incurs in respect of any Order will be recharged to the applicant. The works that will be required will be carried out by the landowner.

Any comments you wish to make are welcomed and will be taken into account when the Council decides whether or not to make an Order. I would be grateful for any comments by **30th September 2019**. Should you have any queries please do not hesitate in contacting me on the below number.

Yours faithfully



Andy Sylvester
Rights of Way Officer

Direct line: 01865 815302

Email: andy.sylvester@oxfordshire.gov.uk

NB

Oxfordshire County Council will consider correspondence and comments received in response to this communication, for further consideration. They may be disseminated widely for these purposes and made available to the public.