

Reply No.	EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS BY SUPPORTERS IN RESPONSE TO PRE-ORDER CONSULTATION
1	<i>"I am in full support of diverting 104, the alternative route is safer for horses and the general public as it is well maintained and provides a good safe passage".</i>
2	<i>"As an active member of the BMC (British Mountaineering Council), qualified mountain leader, member of the BASC (British Association for Shooting and Conservation), lover of the great outdoors and occasional user of this path, I feel the proposed route is far more suitable and safe".</i>
3	<i>"I meet many other walkers and riders along there and they all seem happy with it.</i>
4	<i>The route is horse and rider friendly and much frequented by, not only my own family, but everyone else who keeps their horses at the livery yard I am at in Lydiard Millicent".</i>
5	<i>"...brilliant...One of my favourite hacks where I walk with my dog."</i>
6	<i>"... walk this route most days with my dog. I have to stress that it's so much better than the old route...."</i>
7	<i>"I have often ridden my horse along the permissive bridlepath since it was created some 7 years ago. It has made a large difference to riding in the area since it allows one easily to get from Restrop to across the Paven Hill Road to the Red Lodge Woods (where there is good riding), without going through Purton and down the dangerous Paven Hill. I am very much in favour of you adopting this route as a permanent bridlepath in place of Mud Lane...".</i>
9	<i>"The proposed diversion is an excellent route which we walk regularly."</i>
11	<i>"...the permissive path has proved to be a great and more suitable route over the past 5 years".</i>
14	<i>"Far better than original".</i>
16	<i>"The permissive path is a great benefit to all walkers and riders".</i>
17	<i>"I use this path regularly and think it's a very good idea".</i>
18	<i>"Many advantages. Has proved suitable for 6 years".</i>
21	<i>"...and very much approve of the suggested new route".</i>
23	<i>"Best interests of the public especially for its safety and ample space for horses to pass".</i>
24	<i>"The new proposal B-C-D-E makes total sense over the old Mud Lane".</i>
25	<i>"...level and sound ...went for a walk with my elderly father, at first I was a bit miffed to be diverted, however, the further we walked around the diversion, the more pleasantly surprised I became".</i>
26	<i>"The alternative bridleway offers several advantages to members of the general public".</i>
27	<i>"The reasons you give are entirely sound and exactly correspond to my own view".</i>
28	<i>"Far more suitable and safe".</i>
30	<i>"We love the route and will be walking it with family again next week".</i>
31	<i>"Great improvement on the existing arrangement, and a better layout".</i>
32	<i>"The fact that Mud Lane is in its current condition would indicate that previously it was: a) Not used b) In a condition which did not facilitate use. C) In a location that was unsuitable".</i>
33	<i>"As a horse rider and cyclist I can confirm that this bridle path is the safest and most well maintained in the Swindon and Purton area....Easy to find and access good ... safe to use and it's wide, flat, without holes or ruts...doesn't flood.... obstructions or low branches ...It prevents riders having to use dangerous roads and is wide enough for horses to pass, or riders and other users to pass safely.... available and safe for different uses all year round.... provides better privacy and security for the farmer and his family...already a well tested better alternative set in place with zero cost to the taxpayer".</i>

34	<i>"...offers a number of advantages ...especially being easier to use and walk around and so much better for riders".</i>
35	<i>"...a more viable route and as it is already being used , it would appear to be a waste of money to embark on major drainage and clearance of the original route when there is a suitable alternative".</i>
36	<i>"Seems to benefit all round – the public, the Council and the owner".</i>
37	<i>"Real advantages for the public, the owner and the Council".</i>
39	<i>"We have regularly walked our dog along the current Permissive Path, it allows superior views over the countryside...We meet many horse riders who appreciate the access which allows them to keep off the adjacent narrow roads and also extends their ride routes".</i>
40	<i>"As a mother with young children I feel it is a better, safer path".</i>
42	<i>"I would also add that my daughter and grand-daughter as well as myself use this route regularly and find it has great access is well maintained and a pleasure to walk".</i>
43	<i>"As a keen horse rider and dog walker I use this route regularly and so does my daughter".</i>
45	<i>"We have been using this (diversion) now for several years and it has been great, it has been kept so that people can use it at all times".</i>
46	<i>"Far more suitable and safe".</i>
47	<i>"As a keen walker and father of two young children I'm compelled to write to you with my continued support for the diversion and the proposed bridle path which has proved to be a suitable and safe route and is in the interest of all those that use it, the taxpayer and the landowner".</i>
48	<i>"I am a keen (walker) walking across many counties and a member of walking societies and understand the need for change and this one I welcome".</i>
51	<i>"... provides real advantages for all and the significant width is of benefit to horses".</i>
52	<i>"I continue to support the diversion. As a mother of three young children, security is among my chief concerns. When we first moved to Restrop Farm nine years ago, we frequently had people trespassing through our driveway and farmyard, walking in any direction they wished. It was disconcerting to say the least. With the addition of the permissive path all this has changed. Walkers have felt happy and confident to walk a clearly marked route away from a domestic house... On the rare occasions that people still seek the old, impassable footpath, they walk right by our house and frequently look in the windows. It is a big infringement on our privacy and makes the children feel vulnerable and frightened. Footpath 104 runs right along our garden and if it were to be made passable again, I would feel unable to allow our children to play freely outside. We have had repeated incidents involving questionable characters trespassing on the farm as documented in police reports. With crime levels as high as they are, it is in our best interests and those of future families that may live here, to keep people a safe distance away from the house".</i>
54	<i>"... far safer for both walkers and equestrians, it is much drier and never floods so requires less maintenance".</i>
55	<i>"The path has provided a safe, accessible passage now for all users for over 6 years in all seasons. At no time, even during heavy rain or snow has the path been inaccessible".</i>
57	<i>"I walked with my young children and think the route provides a better, safer alternative and has to be in the interest of the public, taxpayer and landowner".</i>
58	<i>"I have two young children and I feel this route provides a better and safer alternative. It was extremely well maintained, wide enough for us to walk along safely and allowed horses to pass without scaring the children".</i>
59	<i>"Young, old and less agile can walk it safely including families with pushchairs... The path won't get overgrown – it is well maintained for tractors with hedge trimmer or topper".</i>
60	<i>"This much used route is a well defined even grassy track, varying from 4-7 metres in width, well fenced and bounded with conifers and deciduous trees (the conifers being temporary cover, whilst the deciduous trees are becoming established). The gates are to the required standard for all users, making access easy. I believe that the proposed diversion of BR 104 (Mud Lane) would be a great benefit to everyone".</i>

63	<i>"...it offers a far better route for horses and riders. Also it is wider and drier in the winter".</i>
67	<i>"I feel this would cause no disadvantages to the public".</i>
70	<i>"Having worked at Restrop Farm from the 1960's I have had considerable experience of the land surrounding the path over many years. Regular flooding made path 104 unpractical and at times dangerous. It was therefore largely unused and being narrow was hard to maintain. The new route offers a wide safe passage, even in winter and improved access for horses and the less able".</i>
71	<i>"It is so much more practical than the former route and has my full support".</i>
72	<i>"I write to confirm my total support for the proposed diversion of the former footpath 104. The new access to the Ringsbury Camp is a superior access by far for horseriders and walkers like myself".</i>
73	<i>"I have young children and think that the route provides a better, safer alternative and is in the interests of the public. It has such a great wide path and can be accessed with little disruption to anyone..."</i>
74	<i>"...a fabulous walk along the permissive path. I also had a look at the original path and it seems of no benefit to open that path up especially in the current climate of fiscal prudence. My children and I walked the route it is so safe and also beautiful views..."</i>
75	<i>"This path is a pleasure to ride on and has user friendly gates...We are a group who have our horses at livery at Lydiard Millicent and are 12 in number. We also take visiting horses and riders down the route that is currently being used and have had nothing but praise for it".</i>
77	<i>"Having spent some time at Restrop recently, I feel that the new bridle path is a better option over the former path, as it seems to be an all-round better route with regard to flooding and overgrowth".</i>
81	<i>"I am astounded to see how much paperwork and effort this small diversion has caused when it is obvious that the diverted route is far superior to the original route! The cost and effort put in to various parties opposing the diversion must far outweigh the cost of the actual re-routing of the path!...lots of people will get the benefit of the horse-friendly gates, including horse riders and dog walkers alike".</i>
86	<i>"...it is far better than the original route".</i>
87	<i>"As a mother, responsible dog owner and keen horse rider, I take great pleasure in the safe enjoyment of the beautiful Wiltshire countryside, and I am grateful for the obvious care and hard work that goes into maintaining the appropriate paths. In this case I feel the diversion is a very good improvement, and I would be pleased to see the diversion approved".</i>
88	<i>"We are writing in support of moving the bridle path, being a near neighbour we believe the proposed diversion will provide a better safer route, especially for horses".</i>
89	<i>"In my original correspondence I stated that in the sixty years I have walked this area no one has been able to walk the original route for two reasons, one you have identified in your photographs and the second that the previous land owner restricted the access to that part of Mud Lane. To my knowledge no one ever queried this. The route now in place is far more user friendly than that deemed the original route".</i>
91	<i>"The new route is perfect for riders, walkers etc and everyone I meet along it seems completely happy with it. The gates are great for riders and horses and the path is well maintained and does not flood in winter".</i>
95	<i>"The proposed route would be far more advantageous for the public and no doubt the owner".</i>
96	<i>"I had my four children with me including a buggy and it was a very easy route, safe for the children and I would highly recommend this footpath to be diverted. I would hate to be looked on so closely by a whole load of walkers if I was in the house next to the current footpath (bridleway) and surely everyone would benefit from this change?."</i>

Officers Views on Supporter's Comments shown above

Mrs Mosely (joint landowner) puts a very compelling case showing this diversion to be expedient in the interests of the landowner for reasons of privacy and security (response 52), a view endorsed by other local people (responses 73,96 and Purton Parish Council).

The new route is widely held to be a safer route than the existing legal route (responses 1,2,23,27,33,40,46,47,52,54,57,59,70,73,74,87,88,96), and particularly appreciated by those that have young families or elderly relatives (responses 30,40,42,43,47,52,57,59,87,96). Public safety is a concern that Wiltshire Council takes very seriously.

Superior ease of access is a point endorsed by many (responses 4,23,33,39,42,43,51,59,60,70,72,73,75,77,89,96) including the County Access & Bridleways Officer for the BHS and patrons of local livery/stables.

Heavy costs to the public purse, especially in this time of national austerity, of opening up Mud Lane compared with diverting onto a bridleway which has been laid out by the landowner at no cost to Wiltshire Council, is also a recurring theme throughout (responses No's. 33,47,57,81) with many pointing out that the diversion would also benefit horse-riders, cyclists, pedestrians as well as the landowner.

There have been numerous positive comments about the fact that the new route is easy to maintain (responses 1,33,87,91) and has been well maintained since its inception 6 years ago and also that it doesn't flood (responses 54,63,91) and so is therefore accessible all year round.

In summary there are shown to be strong benefits to a wide range of users for a variety of reasons. These benefits are amply shown to be not limited to users of the bridleway but also extend to Wiltshire Council, the taxpayer and the landowner.

The total number of responses to the pre-Order public consultation were 96 in favour of the diversion and 47 against it.

Further to the above comments from supporters, below are some comments from the draft minutes of Purton Parish Council's meeting held on the 13th June 2011. Although the Parish Council narrowly returned a vote of 6 to 5 not to support the diversion, they did pass some positive comments on the diversion.

“ The Chairman highlighted the proposed diversion would improve the security of the Mosley's home considering its rural situation as Mud Lane runs within a few feet of the rear of their house. Others councillors said that they could see the benefits to the public if it were to be diverted to the permissive route, given the nature of Mud Lane and its tendency to flood in winter”.