

Urchfont C. E. Primary School

Cuckoo Corner, Urchfont, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 4RA

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13.10.2015

Dear Parents,

We have now been informed that Wiltshire Rights of Way department have made the Order for a Public Right of Way through the school from the path at Top Green and alongside the school buildings ending at the front of the school. We have until 5pm on 30th November to lodge any objections to this order.

Our position is:

- *that the school has never had any intention to dedicate a permanent right of way through the school grounds.*
- *In recent years the school has happily permitted the public to access the playing field through school property outside of school hours.*
- *The current situation allows full access through the school grounds to the playing field without the impediment of dogs for 48 % of the days of the year. For the other 52% of days access is denied only from 9.15am to 3.00 pm.*
- *The school sees itself under no obligation to accommodate a permanent right of way through school grounds that either may have adverse implications for the safety of pupils and staff or inhibits the manner in which the school currently operates.*
- *The school is disappointed that Urchfont Parish Council did not consult with the school or parents of pupils before deciding to support the private application for a public path through school grounds.*
- *The school believes that safe and adequate access exists to the playing field via Cuckoo Corner without the need to sequester school property for an alternative route.*
- *The school believes that the reaction to the loss of a pathway to the playing field via Urchfont Manor by annexing school land is wholly disproportionate to any gain that may be achieved.*
- *Where valid grounds exist, the school intends to object to the Wiltshire Council Ruling to publish a definitive map modification order (DMMO) authorising a PROW through the school grounds.*
- *The school believes that in making their decision Wiltshire Council has not assessed the evidence in a balanced way.*
- *The school is concerned that a consequence of the DMMO is legally to allow dogs to be walked on the approach paths to the school and onto the school and village playing fields.*

Unfortunately, in considering our objections, the Rights of Way Officer is not concerned with safeguarding of children in school only whether there is a proven case for the claimed Public Right of Way. The people claiming that they have a Right of Way just have to state that they walked the route shown on the attached map with no impediment to their route,(ie gates) that they did not see any signage stating that it was not a Right of Way and that they were not challenged.

We need your help to try to stop this Order going through -

Please write to:

Ms B Burke
Rights of Way, Waste and Environment,
Wiltshire council,
county Hall,
Bythesea Road,
Trowbridge,
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

before 30th November 2015.

Your letter should state on what grounds you are objecting – which would be, that there is no right of way through the school grounds.

The criteria which needs to be included in any letter to the ROW Officer that will support the School's statement that it was not our intention to allow a public right of way is as follows:

- That *during the following period of time (eg 1995 to 2001 – whatever is the length of time you have been associated with the school or have lived in the village)*
- You always had a **clear understanding** that the pathway from Top Green to the school was not a right of way for the general public and was always, a pedestrian access to the school for parents and pupils.
- During the school day one **could not enter** through the gate unless on school business.
- The gate was bolted from the school side.
- There **were clear notice(s)** that stated [specifically if possible] that the path was for access to the school only
- you knew that you would **be challenged** if you walked through the school grounds and were not on school business.

If you feel you can write and support all or any of those statements in your letters please do so. It would be useful to say whether you are a parent, a villager, pre-school parent etc. Individual parents writing will carry more weight than parents writing as a couple and if you have any children who attended the school in the past and would like to object please encourage them to do so.

If you would like any further information or to discuss this letter please do speak to Mrs Talbot.

Yours sincerely,

C.E. Talbot

Mrs. C Talbot
Headteacher

Anya Watson

Mrs A. Watson
Chair of Governors
on behalf of the Governing Body.

