



Mark Ramshaw
Parish Clerk
62 Trevelyan Place
Peterlee
County Durham
SR8 2NL

Tel: 0790 080 0540

Email: westraintonparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk

24 April 2018

Dear Sirs,

FAO: Paul Anderson, Highways Inspection and Maintenance Manager
Kevin Telford , Public Rights of Way Officer

Highway Works on Marks Lane and Footpath Concerns, West Rainton

At its meeting on Thursday 19 April 2018, the Parish Council considered a number of residents concerns relating to highways works being undertaken on Marks Lane. Some concerns have also been raised relating to damage to public footpaths. The Parish Council resolved to refer these concerns to Durham County Council to seek clarification, assurance and advice.

Concerns raised are detailed below:

Disruption to the Highway on Marks Lane

It is understood that works have been undertaken along and across the highway by Herods Building Contractor acting on behalf of Rye Hill Farm.

The Parish Council does not appear to have been notified that any works and disruption to the highway was planned, and share residents concerns about the way in which works have been undertaken.

On occasions the highway has been impassable and was often in an unsafe state due to the volume of mud and water flowing down and across it. It is acknowledged work was started in a period of bad weather and this may have contributed to the state of the highway. However, in such conditions the importance of adequate warnings to advise users that the highway may be obstructed or slippery becomes even more important. It is understood that

there were no such warnings in place to advise users of the hazard in the road.

It would appear that water pipes and /or other ducting have been laid along the western verge from the junction with Village Farm, down and then across the road to Rye Hill Farm. The state of the verges and attempts to reinstate is appalling. It is however acknowledged that works are not yet complete and further works may be planned before reinstatement can be completed.

Given the lack of prior notification and the poor way in which works have been carried out and are being reinstated, concerns have been raised as to whether the appropriate license, (S50 License, New Road and Street Works Act 1991) had been sought prior to works commencing.

I should therefore be obliged if you could please confirm:

1. What works have been undertaken
2. That a S50 license had been approved prior to works commencing and that the contractor appointed to undertake the works was considered to have the appropriate knowledge and accreditation to undertake such work
3. What further works are planned, when and what further disruption to the highway can be expected
4. Inspections have and will continue to be undertaken by highways inspectors to ensure the highway is in a safe condition and that verges and hedgerows damaged as a result of work carried out are fully reinstated by the developer/license holder.

Location of large Slurry Heap

Concerns have been raised relating to the location of a large a slurry heap, just off the right hand side of Marks Lane and the entrance to public footpath 21(?) which leads to Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve. Given the close proximity to the acute bend in the highway and the slow/heavy farm vehicles accessing the heap, concerns have been raised about potential road safety issues as mud and waste sometimes spills out on the highway.

As the position of the heap is adjacent to the start of the public footpath, this part of the footpath gets badly churned up with mud and slurry spillage. The heap itself is also on an incline and consequently, especially in wet weather, slurry runs down off the heap and onto the footpath. Concerns have therefore been raised about environmental health issues and damage to this valued footpath which on occasions is almost impassable to many residents/visitors.

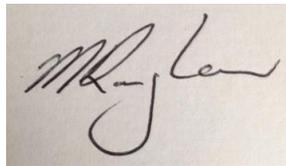
I should therefore be obliged if you could inspect the site and confirm whether the location of the heap is considered appropriate.

Damage to footpath

Finally concerns were also raised about the damage to a public footpath that leads from the rear of the Meadows Housing Estate/The Dene and joins up with the above mentioned footpath 21. This path has been significantly churned up and damaged by cattle which have been put there to graze in the last couple of years. It is understood that this footpath, which is considered to have been used by the public for over 20 years, is a permissive path and not a public right of way.

I should therefore be obliged if you could confirm the status of this footpath and, if it is permissive, whether to not any action can be taken to seek to improve/reinstate its condition. If permissive, I should also be obliged if you could advise what the process and or consequences would be should the Parish Council wish to seek making this path a permanent public right of way. Could the footpath be reinstated and better maintained/protected if it were to become a public right of way?

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Ramshaw', written on a light-colored background.

Mark Ramshaw, Parish Clerk, West Rainton Parish Council