

18 JUL 2019

Passed to: Sylvia Seeliger

Sylvia Seeliger
Senior Map Review Officer
HCC

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15.07.2019

Dear Sylvia,

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
Application to record Footpaths at Topfield, Kings Worthy

Thank you for your letter dated 08.07.19 with enclosed maps and for your email of today. We would like to comment on the way some of the paths have been used and a little of the history of the Woodhams Farm site.

The field marked Roman Building is mostly tenanted by us, with a small part around B, included in the field, owned by Nigel Bright. The paddock, marked Winchester Junction, surrounded by the letters ABI is owned by P. Bright.

The path marked A to I has only been used as a footpath on the purple line to walk the boundary of Top Field. The remainder has been enclosed by Southern Rail. There is no exit at I – it has been heavily gated and padlocked on Woodhams Farm Lane for decades. Any claim should be treated with incredulity – this is the main London Waterloo railway line.

The northern side of the Roman Building field was 'rabbit fenced' in the 90s, with no access at A. The fence was vandalised over time and torn down in several places including at A, by persons unknown. Any people crossing from A to B have been verbally told it is not a footpath. This has proved difficult to police as the walkers have disappeared before they can be engaged in conversation. It is impractical to stand guard at points A and B for 24 hrs. a day. The habitual trespass has been on the Roman Building side of the fence.

Some villagers have occasionally asked permission to cross the field, which has been granted on the understanding it is not a public right of way. It is obviously not ideal to have any footpath in a field with standing crops, which need applications of fertiliser granules, slug dressing, spraying, as well as field operations such as harvesting. In the past we have had vermin control of rabbits at night, which has been made difficult, if not impossible by people trespassing, even in the dark hours.

In June 2017 notices 'Private No Public Right of Way' were erected on 8 different places on the farm. To date only one is left. One notice was placed at A and one at B – time stamped photos can be supplied. By 11.07 17. the post at A, plus the notice were missing, removed by persons unknown. The post at B is still there but the sign snapped off. The police were informed and have treated this as criminal damage to private property. The crime Ref. No. is 44170270388.

Since the removal of notice B the remains of a fallen tree at that position was mistakenly used by the Watercress Trail to erect arrows directing people to cross the field from B to A. The arrows were removed and taken by ourselves to the Parish Council Offices. Consequently we had an apology from the Watercress Trail reps., who said the trail was misdirected. It was redirected down Woodhams Farm drive to Springvale Rd.

In 2018 the fallen tree trunks at B were put in the gap at A to reinforce the fence line and block the gap. The Fence was now 5ft. tall with brush and mud included with the logs.. Whilst in the paddock at Winchester Junction one day, we were surprised to hear voices by the fence at A and subsequently along the fence line A- B. A group of cyclists had scaled the fence, with their bikes, and cycled along the path to Woodhams Farm Lane. They had gone before we reached the Lane. The barricade is now ineffective – it has been pushed aside and flattened by walkers. It seems any attempts on our part to fence the field are immediately negated. There is evidence of people pushing through the hedge in several places.

At a Village Planning Presentation, regarding the secondary planning application for development at Top Field, the Rights of Way representative informed us they intended to fence the area from Springvale Rd. to A and direct walkers to the footpaths onto Springvale Rd. / Disused Railway Line .We were under the impression if planning was granted for the development the problem of trespass from A to B would be solved.

Nigel has not walked the footpaths at Top Field since the enquiry but has said the field is very overgrown and had been roughly cultivated. He would be surprised if any new footpaths have been established. The field is no longer such a pleasant place to walk around.

Woodham's Farm – recent history

- Historically a private drive – owned by private landlord. No footpaths crossed the fields onto Woodhams Farm Drive
- The drive up to the 90s was only used for Woodhams Farmhouse, farm vehicles, railway workers and people using the pony paddocks on either side at the top of the drive.
- In the 1970s no access was permitted – an ex teacher/ gamekeeper would soon tell people they were trespassing- there were white gates at the drive entrance – these were seldom shut, however. It was an extremely private place.
- The field to the north of Woodhams Farm Drive is a scheduled monument with a roman villa site and is protected and inspected from time to time
- The drive was formerly ‘hogging’ – now resurfaced- the tarmac extending onto the grass margin beneath the trees
- Latterly livery stables, a nursery and other businesses have been established at Woodhams Farm and there is much more traffic.

Hope these comments and notes help. We will send on the annotated photos as soon as possible. We are happy to have a meeting to discuss the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Nigel and Trish Bright



Notice: Private No Public Footpath
in situ. at [A]



Notice in situ at 13



Hotth at [17] post and
sign removed by persons unknown.



Remains of notice board. at

[B]



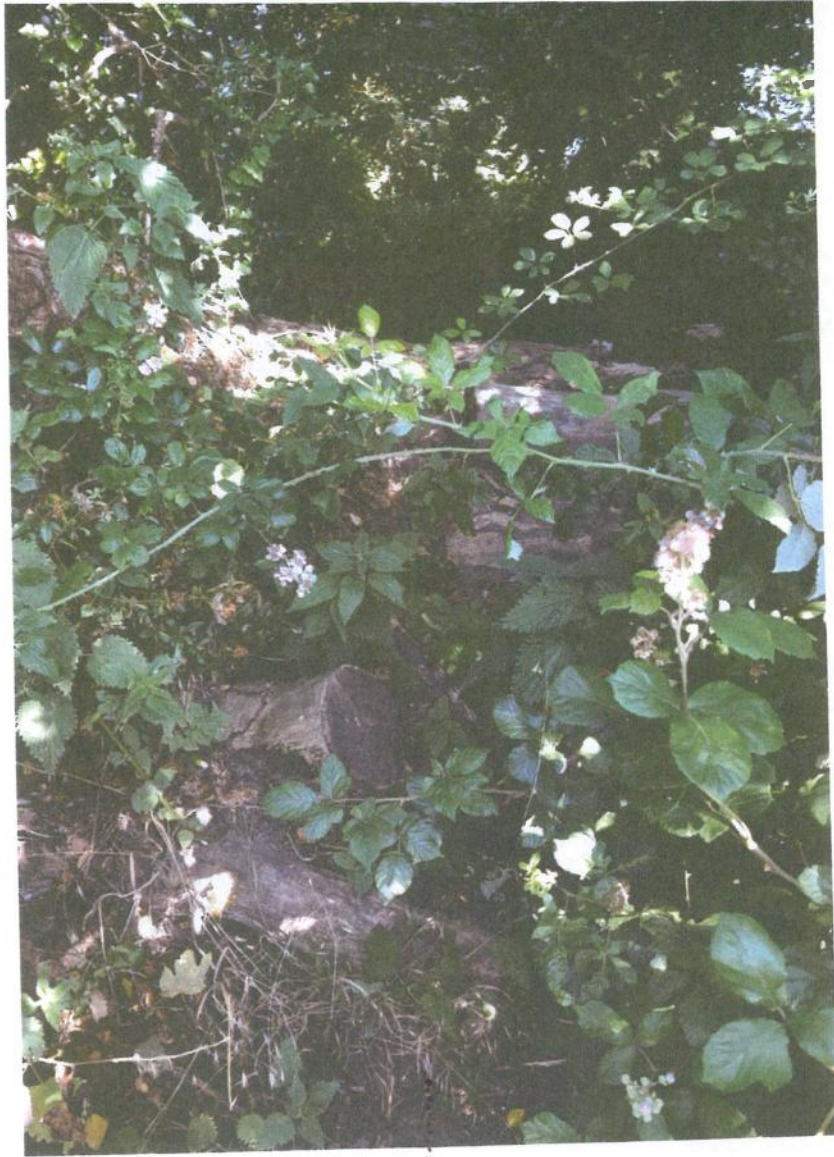
Remains of snapped off sign
at [B]



Tuesday 16.07.19

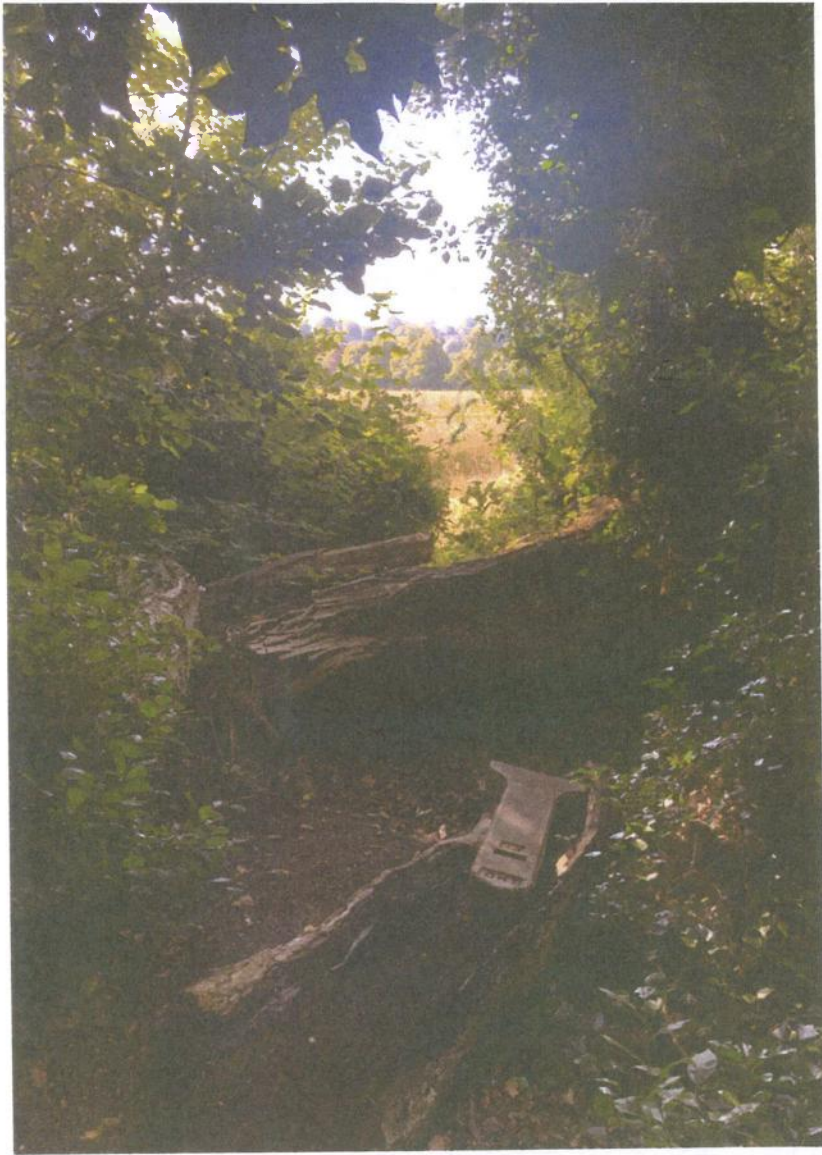
A on the map.

Path, seemingly, no longer in use.
'Barricade' of logs has deterred the
majority.



16.07.19

Log Bank at A - covered in brambles



16.07.19.

A

Log Bank - looking south towards
Woodhams Farm lane.

Note - concrete marker post uprooted
by persons unknown.



16.07.19. - Evidence of walking through
crop. Towards Woodhams Farm Lane.



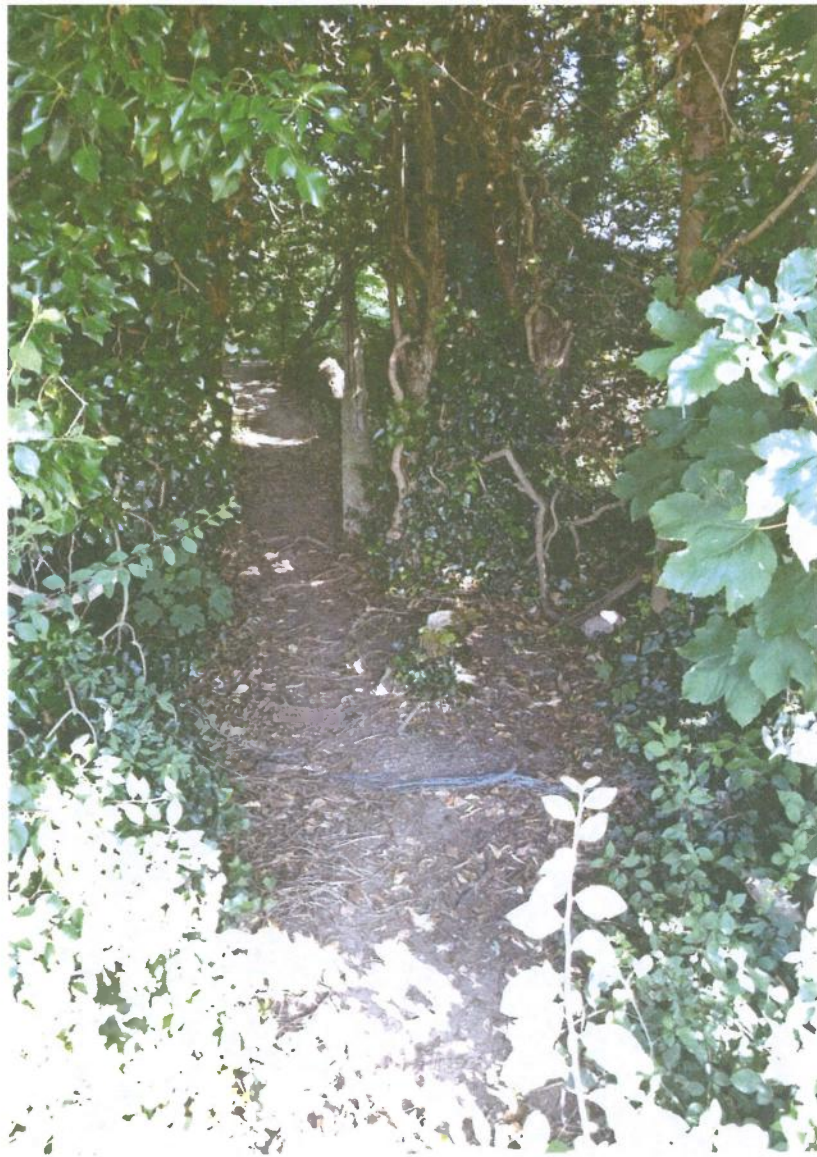
16.07.19. Agronomically we spray
around the edge of the crop - this is
now being used as a footpath

New entrance on (R) -

[A] 15 m to the top right of picture



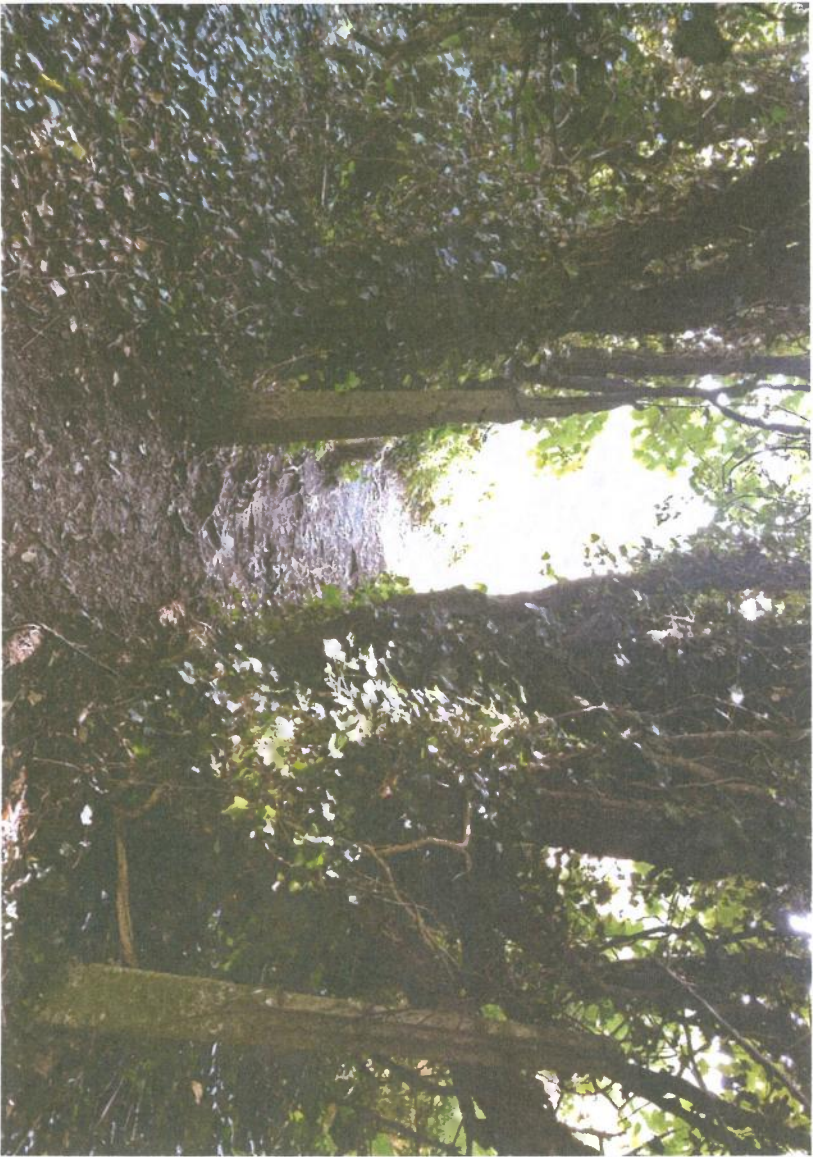
16-07-19. New Entrance - netting trampled on ground.



16.07.19. New entrance - original
netting on ground.

16.07.19

New entrance established
in the last year. Fence
posts visible.
This is c 15 metres





A on map.
Evidence of original fence line before
forced entry to the field.