

# The Path-or-Nones

c/o The Chandlery, Martley WR6 6QA

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2015

*For the attention of:*

Mr Jack Hegarty  
Chief Executive  
Malvern Hills District Council  
The Council House  
Avenue Road  
Malvern  
WR14 3AF

## **MARTLEY RIGHTS OF WAY, TAYLOR WIMPEY BUILDING SITE**

We are writing as the Path-or-Nones from Martley, a volunteer group that has, on behalf of Worcestershire County Council, maintained the 41 miles of parish rights of way for 30 years. Martley's routes are acknowledged County wide as being amongst the best maintained and signed.

This letter concerns matters arising from temporary closures, deviations and re-routing of rights of way, MT695, 696, 699, 700, that cross a new Taylor Wimpey building site in the village. We understand that Malvern Hill District Council, under Town and Country Planning, holds responsibility for this site. Now, some 6 months after construction commenced and after a false start by MHDC, where an unusable notification was placed in the newspaper to be later withdrawn, consultation documents addressed to us in Martley have finally been received. For your information there are errors in these that have been made know to the Parish Council in time for submission by 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

It has been pointed out several times in correspondence to MHDC by i.a. Rights of Way Consultant, Sue Rumfitt Associates, that legalities applicable to the diverting and closing of rights of way have not been followed. Since June 2014, paths have been re-routed and blocked off to suit the day to day needs of the contractor and without any notification or discussion with local residents, the Parish Council or ourselves. This is to be sharply contrasted with the resultant reaction by your officials, should any of us choose to modify or impede a route. Why should it be any different for the contractor?

We wish to address here the conduct and attitude of officers at both Worcestershire County Council and Malvern Hills District Council.

From being told by WCC officers that the rights of way amendments were a 'done deal' *before* we had any substantive knowledge of the matter at all (June 14), to learning that consultation by MHDC *had* taken place (with a Malvern footpaths group, the Open spaces Society and The Ramblers), we have to question if officials take any heed or place any store on local knowledge or interests. After 30 years voluntary work on the network, what do we have to do to be asked our opinion? Who on earth is this *Malvern Footpath Society* when it comes to commenting on *our* paths? What do the Ramblers know that we don't?

We take this matter as an undeserved insult to our group and to Martley residents. We believe that an apology from you is deserved, and we suggest amendments to your procedure so they take account of local valid interests, knowledge and expertise and that your Notices are correct when issued. It is worth both Councils reflecting on the reliance they place on our goodwill, key to maintaining not only the proposed changes but also the rest of the 41 miles of RoW in the parish.

Yours faithfully,

***The Path-or-Nones:***

Alasdair Maxwell-Stewart	Ian Pennell	Mike Install	Simon Honeyborne
Andy Palmer	John Corbett	Richard Langley	Tim Nott
Ben Cartwright	John Nicklin	Robert Day	Tom Pearsall
Carl Armstrong	Jon Pearsall	Ross Day	Tony Lewington

cc Ms Clare Marchant, Chief Executive, Worcestershire County Council  
Ms Harriet Baldwin, Member for West Worcestershire  
Mrs Janet Dale, Parish Clerk, Martley Parish Council