



**Hertfordshire &
North Middlesex**

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As The Ramblers Footpaths Secretary for North Hertfordshire, I am obviously disappointed in the loss of countryside in what has historically been a mainly rural rather area. Weston has been a popular destination for walkers from surrounding areas because of the excellent network of Rights of Way (RoWs). But I acknowledge the Local Plan and the pressures for housing. Although I personally live just outside North Herts, most (all but two) of the team covering all parishes in NHDC, live within the NHDC area.

I do note that the legal rights of these RoWs have been recognised and respected. I am pleased to note that the urban footways supplement these and are often duplicated to attempt to keep a rural feel to some sections of RoWs near woods; also, there are links between the networks.

I am concerned about the impact on RoW users during the development phase. Obviously, builders would prefer to cordon off the entire area until they have finished but they will recognise that it is not legal or acceptable. These RoWs have legal rights which must be respected. Without Whitehall being involved, any section should only be closed for 6 months allowing for crucial underground work such as sewers and cables. When such closures are needed, due process should be followed: the proposed diversion should be advertised beforehand with an opportunity for objections. Ideally the temporary diverted route should not be narrow, between barricades as such are even less rural than the final route and usually over soft ground which can soon become unusable especially in winter.

I am also the parish representative for Gravely and am concerned for the effect of the access road on RoW Footpath 11. The FP seems to follow a strange route at present, from a road, over a residential area and then continues in what seems random directions over an open space towards a wooded area. This is from the HCC gazetteer -



The anomaly is mainly due to a previous application for several diversions when a new school was planned for much the same area as this proposed development. I objected to other diversions but not for FP11 as it was to help the planned staff car park. When that school plan was abandoned, most RoWs were unchanged but this diversion went through.

Now would seem to be a good time to sort out the anomaly and find a sensible route by which I mean one that is good for motorists but also safe and as pleasant as possible for all users of the footpath. Fig 4.2 in the Planning Statement seems to offer a safe crossing for anyone approaching from the west. But I see many people using the accesses from around Grampian Place to the east and south of the FP and planned access road. I would welcome meeting planners for consultation, if not now then in the later detailed phases.

Anne Conchie (Mrs)

