



*To Ian Aston
Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN*

*Email:
RIGHTSOFWAY2@PLANNINGINSPECTORATE.GOV.UK*

*Highways Act 1980 - Section 119
Order Making Authority: Gloucestershire County Council
Title of Order: PUBLIC FOOTPATHS GDY 57 (PART) (PARISH OF DYMOCK) AND GKE
38 (PARISH OF KEMPLEY) DIVERSION ORDER 2023*

Your Ref - ROW/3369910

Statement by Kempley Parish Council

The current Diversion Order seeks to tackle the last major unwalkable public right of way in the parish of Kempley. It is a route that has not been open for over 30 years (confirmed by Martin Brockehurst who has lived at the Old Post Office Kempley for 34 years. The Old Post Office is opposite the start of GKE38). The proposed diversion order would remove a public right of way from two private gardens and open up a new circular route from Kempley Green to the benefit of local walkers. We are not aware of any parishioners who oppose the change. Our two walking groups, the Windross Footpaths Group and the Kempley Walking Group support the Diversion Order.

The changes proposed align with guidance given by DEFRA on diversion or extinguishment of public rights of way that pass through private dwellings and in our opinion satisfy the respective relevant legislative tests. The changes also benefit agricultural use of the field affected, diverting the footpath along the field edge. We see no detriment to users walking footpaths from Dymock Parish into Kempley Parish as two alternate routes are available along GKE29 and GKE39 into Kempley Green. GKE39 links to the Daffodil Way and to public parking in Forestry England (Dymock Woods) at Queens Wood Car Park. GKE 29 routes walkers onto Kempley Green and connecting footpaths to public parking near Kempley Parish Hall, and St Edwards Church. These two buildings are the only public buildings in this part of Kempley Parish. The village has no other facilities for walkers that would be affected by the Diversion Order.

We conclude therefore that the Diversion Order is in the interest of the users of these public rights of way, including the parishioners of the village, the landowners affected, and longer distance walkers seeking to use the public rights of way network in the parish of Kempley. We can see no reason why the Diversion Order should not be approved.



Kempley Parish Council

Finally Kempley Parish Council would welcome the opportunity to join your site visit.

Yours Sincerely

Daniel Hinde

Clerk to Kempley Parish Council



Annex 1

Supporting background Information on the work of Kempley Parish Council to improve the public rights of way in the Parish of Kempley

Kempley Parish Council has worked for many years to improve the public rights of way network across the parish, working with Gloucestershire County Council, local footpath groups, local farmers and the local community to that end. During the last 10 years we have worked in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council to replace virtually all wooden styles with kissing gates on the marked medium distance public rights of way, and have continued to develop the nationally famous Daffodil Way. As part of this work we have also replaced styles with kissing gates on most of the connecting public rights of way from the village to named public rights of way, with the support of the local farming community.

As part of this work we have actively engaged with landowners in the re-opening of two closed public rights of way that have been unwalkable for over 30 years. The Parish Council has also distributed parish maps highlighting all public rights of way to all parishioners, along with guidance documents on how to use public rights of way with specific guidance on walking with dogs across farmland, provided by Gloucestershire County Council. We have also worked to improve signage with users and farmers, along public rights of way, to ensure users are clear on the routes to follow

The last part of our work has been to partner with Gloucestershire County Council to resolve areas where public rights of way pass through contained spaces such as private gardens, farmyards or commercial premises. Here we have successfully supported diversion orders to re-route public rights of way out of private gardens and farmyards in the interest of both users and private landowners. This current order by Gloucester County Council is part of this work.

The results can be seen across the parish, where we have one of the best maintained and densest networks of public rights of way of any parish in England. The Daffodil Way is regularly highlighted in the national press as one of the 10 best spring walks in England. It is a public right of way used by hundreds of people each spring, along with the connecting routes from available vehicle parking areas. We have also worked with Buses4Us, (a local group that has re-instated a local public bus service between Ledbury, Much Marcle, Newent, Gorsely and Ross on Wye,) to create a free minibus service to Kempley during the spring. This service from Newent, has allowed visitors to see one of the best wild daffodil displays in the country, without driving to Kempley



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clerk@kempleyparishcouncil.org

along our narrow lanes. Such visitors use the public rights of way network in our parish as part of our spring Daffodil Weekend. Guided walks are offered to visitors that fully use the public rights of way network. Thousands of people visit Kempley each spring to enjoy this spectacle.

For the rest of the year our public rights of way are used responsibly by our local community and local walking groups. We are proud of the work that has been done and in the way we have sort to balance the needs of the users with those of our farming community.

Clerk to Kempley Parish Council

CC to all Kempley Parish Councillors