

I, and several other users of the footpath, are in fairly late age. The availability of the path allows us and young families to undertake a regular circular walk in the countryside that is close to home and of a manageable distance. It was highly valued by the residents of Hempsted Village without needing to use the increasingly busy Rea Lane, which is very narrow, twisty with blind bends and potentially dangerous for walkers.

The footpaths were assumed by many to be public rights of way as they were made accessible with gates, stile (at one time) and bridges by the Council. This was reinforced by the misleading direction given by one of the Public Footpath signs at the end of Rectory Lane pointing directly at the track in this application. This assumption included the footpath following the perimeter of the landfill site to the Severn Way as this completed the connection from Rectory Lane and the Glevum Way.

Access to the “landfill footpath from Glevum Way could also be made via a footpath between the field immediately below the Ladywell and the “FB” shown on your map*. This was facilitated by a metal pedestrian gate in the corner of the field and a pedestrian footpath (erected by the Council?) over the drainage ditch that eventually discharges into the River Severn. This was well used, but not to the extent of the path subject to this application. This was also an unmarked Permissive Path that was also closed suddenly and without explanation for the very first time in March 2024 as was the application path, thereby cutting all access to the Severn Way and riverbank generally.

Although in my case it is unlikely that advancing age will permit me to use the requested footpath for many more years it is important that the younger residents of Hempsted can continue to benefit from it. The land surrounding our cities and towns is being hugely urbanised and it is generally recognised that getting into the open countryside is important for their physical and mental wellbeing.

People of my age were lucky to have enjoyed a time when we could walk in the countryside and appreciate it. Families were often close enough to be able to take Sunday walks and schools nature walks which taught us to respect the countryside, its nature and wildlife. This does not happen very much these days because the opportunities are no longer there and footpaths are being lost all over the country. We should cherish the footpaths in this crowded country and I urge the authority to support this application.

* I have attached a map showing this path, which at present is not part of the application for modification.