



RE:

From HARRIS, Jaci <Jaci.HARRIS@gloucestershire.gov.uk>
Date Fri 10/11/2024 9:20 AM
To 'Kay Nagai' [REDACTED]

Thank you, Kay, I acknowledge receipt of all emails received today.

Jaci Harris

Asset Data Officer
Highway Records
Gloucestershire County Council
Shire Hall
Gloucester
GL1 2TH

01452 328981

Email:- jaci.harris@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Important: Please note that, as Modification Order applications may result in a legal Order being made to change the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way, any evidence, comments or objections you submit in respect of a Modification Order application, whether current or proposed, will form part of the published record of the application and may be available to anyone who requests it (including any affected landowner or their representative); this will include certain personal data.

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From: Kay Nagai [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2024 8:54 AM
To: HARRIS, Jaci <Jaci.HARRIS@gloucestershire.gov.uk>
Subject:

please confirm receipt & let me know if you still have any issues opening any of the 3 attachments.

We'll send over our LES later today once more complete

HARRIS, Jaci

From: Kay Nagai [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 October 2024 01:58
To: HARRIS, Jaci; Windmill
Subject: Re: Verney Fields, Stonehouse: Definitive Map Modification Order: Landowner's submission

Thank you Jaci,

Please accept these letters into evidence in the meanwhile, it will provide good evidence & background, better than we would be able to provide first hand. We're still working through completing the LES.

I've highlighted in blue what I believe relevant to DMMO & annotated with a highlighted box, how they are interpreted or how I understand them.

Attached are 3 PDFs
Annotated Objection letters
Previous Farmer letters (last pages of above)
Town Green Objection letters (unhighlighted & unannotated copy)

Please start with PDF titled Previous farmer

The unsigned letter [REDACTED] intentionally left it unsigned to avoid any backlash directed to [REDACTED] please keep it similarly unidentified when publishing.

Lorna-Marie Jones was born at Grove Farm in 1996, she was there on the ground, farming the land up until 2013 (17 years).

David Jones was born at Grove Farm around 1991, he was there on the ground, farming the land up until 2013 (23 years).

Their mother is Rachel Jones (who also farmed the land), Rachel's father was Martin Fletcher who was the named tenant & farmer most people knew by name.

All 3 generations farmed this land, it was part of their family run farm for decades, along with what is now Godsell's land (North) & Shiner's land (East), so their statements applies to all 3 land holdings. Rachel hasn't yet given a statement, but I believe would be willing to. They all feel very badly wronged the public & had a very difficult time, as you will read.

Don Stewart had no direct interest in the land, he is a member of the public who wrote to me, but described in a lot of detail, the south parts (windmill fields) as always being locked behind gates & private, he told me in many years, the ground cover was too high to walk through. Trevor Baker also said similar to me in person. They say that until recently, the south fields (including MST62) were believed to be private & most people stayed out of them, there was no path going south in many years. Even Stonehouse Town Council excluded the south fields from all 3 ACV applications

Neil Clements mentions being historically challenged by a farmer when straying off from footpath.

Several people mention seeing signs historically, some mention those signs being destroyed &/or fences being cut historically.

I've included the unhighlighted pdf in case any of the highlighting does not show the words beneath well, or if it needs printing (although if printing this one, you won't have my annotations, so please refer to both).

If you wish to get in-touch with any of the people who wrote letters, I have contacts for, or could find contacts for most of them, although several of them wrote to GCC independently so I don't have contacts for those (Jemma Brown - GCC Legal team would be able to help you however).

Thank you, we will email you our LES even if incomplete in part, tomorrow.
kay



for jaci Annotated evidence for DMMO - Town Green Objections.pdf



Previous farmer - evidence for DMMO - Town Green Objections.pdf



Town Green Objections.pdf



On Thu, 10 Oct 2024 at 13:57, HARRIS, Jaci <Jaci.HARRIS@gloucestershire.gov.uk> wrote:

Kay,

Thank you for your email. It is apparent you have a lot on your plate.

My report addresses the actions you and your neighbours have taken to show your lack intention to dedicate further public rights of way across your land including fencing ,trenches, notices, boarding up of stiles and the s31(6) deposit which prevent further claims going forward. **These actions do not act retrospectively however and for the purpose of the investigation, are irrelevant.**

I would therefore recommend that you concentrate on addressing actions that you may be aware of covering the 20-year period leading up to your purchase of Verney Fields on the basis that this is the only timeframe being considered (for your land). The claimed routes affecting your neighbours are being considered against a slightly different timeframe due to their earlier s31(6) deposition. If you do this, it may cut down on the amount of 'evidence' you feel that you need to compile.

Jaci Harris

Asset Data Officer

Highway Records

Gloucestershire County Council

Shire Hall

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Email:- jaci.harris@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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From: Kay Nagai [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 9, 2024 7:13 PM
To: HARRIS, Jaci <Jaci.HARRIS@gloucestershire.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Verney Fields, Stonehouse: Definitive Map Modification Order: Landowner's submission

Hi Jaci

Thank you for helping explain the process & timescale better, & the minimum of what you require, it was very helpful. I'm sorry we've delayed you in concluding the report & progressing the application process. There was no real way of us getting through it any sooner, I've been absolutely swamped with everything, it's been an overwhelming amount & I've had no time for any enjoyment in life for many months now.

I understand it needs to conclude at some point & I was not trying to extend it indefinitely. I cannot get everything to you by Friday, but we will get you the minimum interim submission by Friday, which we will need to frequently add a lot to, up until 8th November. It is a big application & we are struggling to get everything done.

Neighbouring landowners only have the tail ends of 1-2 DMMOs, not the density of 11 DMMOs we have (although they did have a similar density of paths that luckily for them, were not applied for). They are also agricultural giants (Godsell - vast Dairy farm & Shiner - hundreds of acres of Vineyards), with many farmhands, much great resources than us & better support network; they also have not been subjected to the extreme, malicious treatment we have had, from Stonehouse Town Council & criminal members of the public, who have made it their mission to destroy our lives in every way possible. We do Not have the same help they have at all, I myself, one person, am juggling what could easily be at least a dozen people's full time jobs.

Just to give you a sample of my life, since our meeting:

1½ months full time was spent dealing with vandalism & police evidence, this took around 300 hours in gathering & formatting evidence for police prosecution, more than 100 hours on repairing & dealing with the vandalism in Stonehouse.

4+ weeks preparing response to planning on fields next to our farmhouse (elsewhere), developer wants to put 400+ residence new high-rises, several 5-7 story monstrosity development next to us on 25+ acres directly neighbouring us & put a sewage pumping station directly next to us, on the doorstep of our farmhouse, with our water supply as the proposed overflow. We've also had a lot of pressure from this developer, which includes their contractors & surveyors forcing their way into & trespassing, intrusively surveying our farm without our permission (not their land or land they have any rights over). We've had a lot of grief from members of the public (local to farmhouse & also some Stonehouse) believing our farm is part of this development when it isn't (that land was separated from our farm over 4 decades ago, by previous owners). The planning application contained 2000+ pages across 300+ documents, which reading & responding to it was a full time job (it took 2 weeks full time on reading alone). If the application gets approved it will impact our farmhouse so greatly that it would push us out of it.

The GL10 Rebels (Stonehouse angry mob Facebook group) got hold of our farmhouse address, put it on laminated notices across the land & on Facebook. In comments, they've threatened to run us through with pitchforks, break into it to get rid of us & burn our farmhouse out whilst we're sleeping, amongst many other violent & destructive threats. We've had them come to our farmhouse & bring some similar vandalism & destruction that we've had in Stonehouse, including attempted arson. They've said they've done this so we wouldn't be able to deal with town green & footpath applications.

It's taken 3 weeks to secure up parts of our farmhouse, board up smashed windows, doors, improve security & gates, block off areas... etc

We've given up fruit harvest & milling / pressing this year, as preparations would have overlapped with the violence, securing up & let it mostly rot on the ground or on the trees. Deer & rabbits have enjoyed them.

I'm falling very behind on work that brings in my only income (none of the other work, responding to applications, dealing with damage, police, complaints, none of that brings in any income despite the substantial time it consumes).

We've been maliciously reported by the GL10 Rebels to several government bodies & been investigated for our produce & farming practices (thankfully they closed the reports quite quickly without too much stress, once explained the circumstances & reassured them).

We still have the Town Green application paperwork coming in & going out which still requires substantial attention (fortunately, Jemma Brown sympathetically gave us an extension to January, which we are very grateful for)

There's the Forestry Application, to be able to sustainably manage the woodland areas of the 10 acre TPO on half that land, which Stonehouse Town Council surprise gifted us on purchase. That has taken several days with Forestry England who've been helpful & sympathetic. Stonehouse town council misrepresented our application, telling everyone this forestry application is so we can cut down all the trees there, including that Oak tree (which it obviously isn't, it relates to thinning out scrub overgrowth, Forestry England do not license work to veteran trees & require a 70% canopy covering all 10 acres at any given time), we've had all the public backlash & anger from that too, including violent threats if we touch any of our trees (one threat involving bringing a chainsaw to our farmhouse at night).

We've had someone fly tip asbestos all over one of our fields (elsewhere) & then move a lot of their stuff into it & set up camp, which we've had to involve the police to help with, had complaints ... etc

Another holding has a neighbour issue, which required 4weeks of back & forth full time to resolve & still isn't sorted. Another which is co-owned has many issues, the other owner can't agree with us on anything & it's a mess.

I've been assaulted 3 times (in Stonehouse), one of which cost me a few weeks in recovery with initially total, then partial blindness; another was a punch in the head (believe I told you about briefly).

My mother's health medically isn't great, she's due further surgery.

We were recently flooded for days at a time on & off for 2 weeks (late September), a lot of equipment & young fruit trees washed down the river. Parts of our farmhouse sunk from flooding / subsidence after & low parts are still full of water (cellars not yet pumped out). We've had no electricity at times & no / poor internet access while it was bad. We've been cut off on road access by 1-2ft of water on several days. Unwelcome wildlife sought refuge in many of our farm buildings whilst the ground all around was underwater, which we haven't had the time to deal with yet.

Has the fields in Stonehouse been worth it? Probably Not. The barrage of problems with the town council painting us to be a villain & destruction the militant group of locals subjected us to just for trying to make use of it has been horrendous, it's destroyed our lives. Most farms don't have that, they're usually busy enough, without the artificially added stress of multiple successive applications intended to break them. We didn't know we'd be put in this position.

I have a lot on my plate & I do apologise for the delays, thank you for the extensions, it's been most helpful & generous.

Kay

On Wed, 9 Oct 2024, 10:03 HARRIS, Jaci, <Jaci.HARRIS@gloucestershire.gov.uk> wrote:

Kay,

The investigation into the applications to add public footpaths across your land and the surrounding area at Stonehouse, needs to have an end point. Your lawyer, Mr Bancroft, and yourself received the submitted user evidence in January of this year and along with the other affected landowners, you were officially consulted (again through your lawyer, Mr Bancroft) on 17 July 2024 and given until 30 August to respond. I received responses from your neighbouring landowners during this time, but I was happy to extend the consultation period for you until the end of September and then again until 10 October. As I advised you yesterday however, I need your submission, at the very least, your Landowners Statement, by the end of this Friday (11 October).

This need not prevent you submitting more evidence but yesterday, I gave you the 28 November as the last date for submissions which can be included in my report. I had not appreciated that this is the date that the report is uploaded to our website and made available to the public. Tuesday 12 November is the date that I must submit my report to our lawyers and therefore the last date that I can incorporate comments and evidence from you in my report, would be the previous Friday 8 November (thus allowing me a couple of days to include it). This allows you one further month to collate your evidence and get it to me.

After 12 November, no further evidence can be included within my report. If an order is made however, and you object, it will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate who will ask you, along with the applicant and other landowners/ objectors, if you wish to submit further evidence before the Inspector decides whether to confirm the order.



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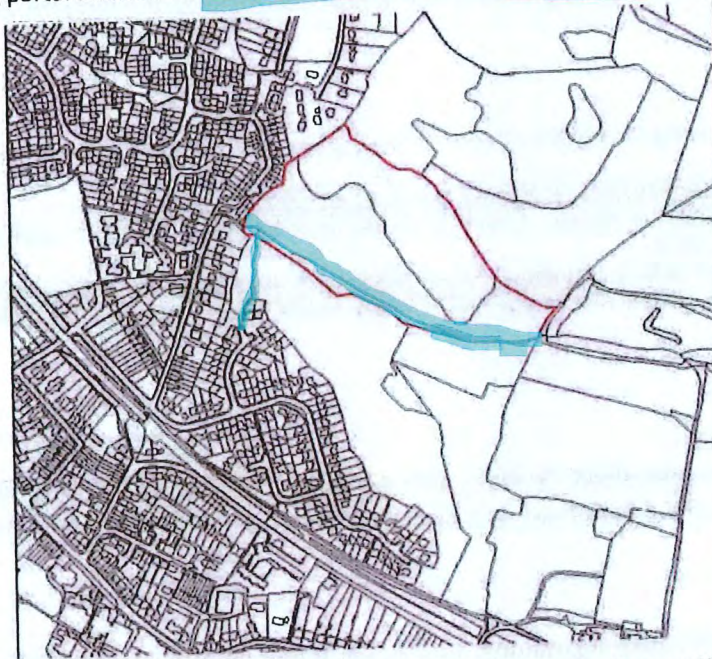
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Annotations of relevant points relating to DMMO will be highlighted blue

7. Scope of Land within Application; STC confirmed "inaccessible" "limited use" "walking"
7.1 The demarcated areas within the application, exceed that of the 2015/2016 applications for ACV, in which Stroud District Council determined the vast majority was not in use by the public, except for a footpath & a bench.

Below is the plan attached with the 2016 ACV applications, it covers only 11 acres of Spring Valley SDC planning portal attachment: [2016_0003_ASSETC-PLAN_B-1817923.pdf](#)



Stonehouse Town Council ACV application map in 2016 only shows these footpaths

Below is the **officer's decision report**, in response to the application, noting the **majority of the land was not in public use.**

SDC planning portal attachment: [2016_0004_ASSETC-OFFICER_S_REPORT-2745659.pdf](#)

The only footpath identified by [redacted] in 2016, whilst appraising the site for possible ACV, was J-O (parallel to MST30 – which was overgrown, obstructed by fences & quarry)

The evidence submitted in support of the nomination demonstrates that recreational activities take place on specified footpaths on a regular basis. It is also noted that during the site visit 4 walkers were seen utilising the footpath running along the southern edge of the site. However, the topography of the site makes it apparent that large portions of the site, particularly sections in the middle, are not suitable for the recreation activities described to take place on site. Furthermore, large sections of the site are overgrown and inaccessible to the general public, this is acknowledged by the Town Council.

Only Footpath usage

Large portions of land inaccessible due to topography & overgrowth

Considering these facts the Council agrees with the land owner's contention that the nomination does not demonstrate that the whole of the area nominated has been or is currently used in a manner which furthers the social interests of the local community. Any recreational or sporting value of the land nominated is limited to specific areas, in particular the designated public footpath and the relatively flat and well maintained area surrounding the public bench.

The only areas in-use by the public
 1 - a Footpath
 2 - area surrounding a bench (less than 50sqm)

As regards to the land owners' claim that any recreation use of the site beyond designated footpaths is unconsented and occasional, Upper Tier Tribunals have previously ruled that the use need not be lawful unless there is some other way in which the law provides that it should be. However, the Council agrees that the nomination does not demonstrate that all areas beyond the designated footpaths are used in a manner which furthers the social interests of the local community on a regular basis.

In 2016, little use beyond the footpath J-O described by last owner as occasional (infrequent), following ACV refusal Stonehouse Town Council later founded the Walking Festival, Arboretum Project & Scouts movement, all to expand walking activities / guided walks over the site to prepare themselves to be in a better position to reapply at a later date.

7. Scope of Land within Application; STC openly admitted "inaccessible" "limited use" "walking" (contd.)

7.2 28th November 2016: Below, in Stonehouse Town Council minutes, in response to the third ACV refusal, STC considered re-applying with a **reduced area**, to include **only the suitable areas IN-USE by the public**. (*STC Full town council meeting minutes, 2016, November 28th*).

suggested. Plan is being re-drafted for consideration at the January Town Council meeting.

TC1803 UPDATE - NOMINATION OF VERNEY FIELDS AS A COMMUNITY ASSET.

There is no opportunity for appeal. Council to decide whether to make another application with amendment to the detail

Council debated the merits of making a fresh application excluding the land not obviously in public use. It was agreed that a draft application would be prepared for consideration by Town Council.

TC1804 FINANCE

7.3 No further ACV materialised. In 2016, after **3 failed ACV Applications** (December 2015 to September 2016), **STC decided not to submit a 4th application** with further reduced land scope.

7.4 It is clear from STC's meeting minutes during that time, that STC were trying to obtain a number of sites & once they obtained a project, they lost interest in this.

7.5 Given that STC already considered substantially reducing the area applied-for, and SDC confirmed:

"the Council agrees that the nomination does not demonstrate that all areas beyond the designated footpaths are used".

it is now illogical that STC have increased the scope of land for their TVG application, to include further inaccessible, overgrown land, the majority of which is on topography of similar poor suitability & NOT currently, recently or previously in public use.

8. Limited Use: Walking / Dog-Walking along footpaths:

The attachments below further illustrate the lack of merit within this TVG application. Below, Stonehouse Town Council minutes in which STC first became aware of the ACV process; they considered their options with reasons / intended purpose. **STC's only mentioned purpose & use was 'dog - walking' (footpath use):**

22nd May 2015, STC Full town council meeting minutes:

TC1610 Adjournment for Public Participation

Mrs Ross enquired about the second Resolution in TC1617-what was the exact location of land off Bramble Lane?

Councillor Theresa Watt explained that this referred to land leading up to Doverow Hill from the top of Verney Road.

TC1617 Community Right to Bid

A response to the Council's Expression of Interest for Asset Transfer indicates that the County Council have not listed the Athletics Field for disposal. Following discussions with the Department for Communities and Local Government County Councillor Williams has been asked to ascertain how the County Council will manage the athletics field for public recreation and to request that the Council considers a lease or management agreement with the Town Council.

In the meantime the DCLG have advised the Town Council to make a community right to bid.

For Resolution

Councillor Powell proposed that the Town Council should make a community right to bid for the area of land currently used for athletic related sports. This was seconded by Councillor Gwen Atkinson and agreed by all Members present.

TC1617 Community Right to Bid (continued)

New rules allow Councils to bid for privately owned land which fulfils the purpose of dog walking.

With this in mind the Council may want to make a bid for land off Bramble Lane.

For Resolution.

Following discussion, Councillor Gwen Atkinson proposed that the Town Council should make a community right to bid on the land leading up to Doverow Hill, off Verney Road. This was seconded by Councillor Deborah Curtis and agreed by all Members present.

22nd May 2015, STC Full town council meeting minutes:

Below, Stonehouse Town Council minutes after 1st unsuccessful ACV application, the only stated recreational use mentioned was 'walking' (footpath use). The Stroud officer stated footpath use is Not enough evidence of public use, also the last grazing tenancy ended in 2012 (in 2015, this had only been 3 years of non-grazing use). They proceeded to reapply with their 2nd ACV. (Source: STC Full town council meeting minutes, 2015, May 22nd.)

TC1674 Community Assets

Verney Field

Stroud District Council have advised that they would refuse the nomination. The application was withdrawn and further advice sought from Locality. The advice is that there are no grounds for refusal. Agricultural land is permitted where it has had a recreational use i.e. walking. Council to decide whether to proceed with application. Councillor Watt asked the Clerk to explain. The Clerk explained that the District Council (Ricardo Rios) had advised that the reasons given in the application were not sufficient. Locality had confirmed that they were sufficient grounds. The officer has now said that there is not enough evidence of public use, or when it ceased to be grazed, and that he has to check whether the land is operational land for the County Council. The Clerk advised the Council to survey residents and obtain the support of Ward Councillors. Cllr Mattie Ross interjected that she had not been consulted so how was she expected to offer support. The Clerk responded that a consultation would follow whereupon the Councillor told the Clerk not to interrupt her and went back to her complaint about lack of consultation.

The Council agreed to proceed with an application following a period of consultation with the community to gather evidence.

Elm Road Former Youth Centre

8. **STC Admitted Limited Use, Limited to Specific Areas; for Walking / Dog-Walking along footpaths (contd.)**

Below, Stonehouse Town Council's ACV application, states their primary reasons for the application was 2 footpaths, one 'public' seat, primary walking use (very few people claimed to have had picnics on the survey, picnics later disregarded by Stroud as being unsuitable anywhere other than on the bench; the majority of people find the steep route to the bench a huge physical exertion which they could not do regularly, unlike on many other more preferred benches in Stonehouse; when in-use it had primarily been used for rest & to catch their breath, rather than for snacks). STC states the reason for application is their wish for vehicle access to their asset & it's close proximity to town, to **prevent planning & propose alternative use (convenience to STC & safeguard against planning)**. SDC planning portal attachment: 2015_0018_ASSETC-NOMINATION_FORM-1711675

Please provide reason for ticking the box(es) above and your detailed reasons why the authority should conclude this is land of community value. Please also provide a simple business plan which shows that the asset if registered would be liable for at least 5 years.

Stonehouse Town Council only identify 2 footpaths within their ACV application, these paths providing access to Doverow Woods (outside of application site), many of the other paths were not well used at this point or didn't exist at all.

The land was tenanted until 2012 and is intersected by 2 public footpaths allowing access to Doverow Wood. Doverow Wood is owned by the Town Council having been conveyed as a public pleasure ground in 1896. The field from Bramble Lane to Doverow Wood allows the amenity of walking and picnics and is a very popular leisure facility for Cairncross, Ebberly and Stonehouse. There is a public seat towards the top of the rise which allows views over the valley.

Business Plan for Verney Field

Background

The land is currently unmanaged and not grazed. The land has been recognised as a SHLAA by Stroud District Council but the Town Council would like to suggest another use for the land as parkland to retain usable greenspace within walking distance of the Town Centre. In fact the Town Council needs to retain vehicle access to Doverow Wood to ensure its maintenance and survival as a public pleasure ground.

Below, the application states the main reason is walking & it's Potential for further walking, with significant landscaping alterations (potential use, not current use), it also does Not tick box for sporting use, ie. it **does Not demonstrate the usage required for TVG**.

What area of social interests does the Asset further?		Please Tick
Cultural		
Recreational		X
Sporting		X
Other (please state)		
Give reasons why you believe the main use of the asset furthers, or has recently furthered, the social wellbeing or interests ticked above.		
Wildlife corridor		
The land is a popular destination for organised and social walking and this could be extended with careful management of the site.		

As above, this referred to walks to Doverow Woods, Stonehouse Town Council indicated their wish to expand the footpath network & promote further use of them, which they did after 2016 ACV was refused

10. Specific Conditions Not Met, re: to s.15 of the Commons Act 2006

- (a) a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, have indulged as of right in lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of at least 20 years; and

'a significant number'

Population of Stonehouse is 8,450 persons, 118 people is 1.4% very insignificant

Population of Stonehouse & Stroud is 8,450 + 26,300 persons, 118 people is 0.34%

'indulged as of right'

There is abundant evidence of forced access, with vandalism & cut fences going back more than a decade prior to our purchase.

'sports & pastimes'

Both STC & SDC acknowledge there are none; as per council meeting minutes & ACV applications 2015/2016; the only usage was footpath.

'the land'

Both STC & SDC acknowledge the vast majority of the land is inaccessible to the public due to overgrowth & poor topography, the only parts in use by public had been footpath & bench.

'at least 20 years'

This land has been farm tenanted for cattle grazing for many decades, until 2012 (11 years ago), none of the described recreational activities happened amongst the cattle.

15 Registration of greens

- (1) Any person may apply to the commons registration authority to register land to which this Part applies as a town or village green in a case where subsection (2), (3) or (4) applies.

~~X~~ This subsection applies where—

~~XX~~ a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, have indulged as of right in lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of at least 20 years; and

~~X~~ they continue to do so at the time of the application.

~~X~~ This subsection applies where—

~~X~~ a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, indulged as of right in lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of at least 20 years;

(b) they ceased to do so before the time of the application but after the commencement of this section; and

(c) the application is made within ^{F1}the relevant period].

^{F2}(3A) In subsection (3), "the relevant period" means—

(a) in the case of an application relating to land in England, the period of one year beginning with the cessation mentioned in subsection (3)(b);

(b) in the case of an application relating to land in Wales, the period of two years beginning with that cessation.]

~~X~~ This subsection applies (subject to subsection (5)) where—

~~X~~ a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, indulged as of right in lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of at least 20 years;

(b) they ceased to do so before the commencement of this section; and

(c) the application is made within the period of five years beginning with the cessation referred to in paragraph (b).

9. 2016, STC Minutes, Oldends Field public activity (not suitable on our topography)

Below, STC meeting minutes with description of a picnic & activities, typical of a town green. There is nowhere on our fields which is suitable for a fete of this description; apart from the impractical logistics of carrying everything up the steep, slippery slope, nowhere is flat enough for marquees or tables/chairs for stalls, drink dispensers or games typically played on flat greens.

Music events are similarly unsuitable as our land has nowhere flat for stage or sound equipment setup (microphone/music stands/amplifiers...) or drum set.

No such similar event has taken place on our private land in view of the topography (which has been farm tenanted for decades).

TC1706 Celebration of the Queens 90th Birthday

To receive a report of the Working Group

Councillor Byrne reported that the Group were planning to hold a Big Picnic on Oldends field on the 12th June with stalls, refreshments, games and music provided by the Young Gloucestershire bus. On the 21st April the WI would be decorating the High Street trees with yarn bombing and shopkeepers being encouraged to hang bunting. 90 candles will be lit and a large birthday cake available to share on the Town Green. Stonehouse Rotary were reluctant to take responsibility for lighting the beacon. Councillors would look into this.

[REDACTED]
information and in some cases to apply for services online.

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 3:39 PM

Subject: Town Green application JB77161

For the attention of the Assistant Director of Legal Services

I should like to register my objections to this proposal.

My reasoning:

Stonehouse has a population of over 8500 of which according to the application 129 actively support the proposal. A very small percentage of those that live here. The campaign has been spearheaded by a vocal and vociferous minority and whilst we do not know the opinions of the 8400 these have remained fairly silent.

The original survey which is being used to support the application (which I completed and am named on the list provided) was conducted without providing full information on the implications, the implication being it was about the rights to walk across the land. Had I been aware of the facts I would not have completed the survey.

I do not believe that the way the land has been used, and abused, by the public fits with the requirements of Town Green status. To my knowledge there have not been any organised sports or activities that have taken part on this piece of land. Walkers, dog walkers and runners have sporadically transited through this space to other areas of the hillside but I am not aware of any community led activity taking place here. Some of the supporting comments in documents supplied by STTC refer to areas outside of Verney Fields, e.g. Doverow Woods and The Quarry.

The Town Council have adopted a 'one sided' approach to their position seeking supportive comments rather than open feedback. They have given no information about the consequences of this being approved, e.g. any compensation to the land owner, costs to the public, what will actually be achieved. If there are costs that have been associated with this proposal and any future costs (land maintenance etc) there has been no mention of what these are/will be and the impact on local finances/financing. We as the public do not have a full picture on which to make a reasoned judgement.

The Land owners have taken steps to ensure that there are footpaths available.

As land owners, people who have invested capital to run a business, they should be allowed to pursue their legal business on their land and decide who is or is not allowed on it within the confines of maintains lawfully used footpaths. It would seem deeply unfair for this proposal to be passed to the financial detriment of the land owner without full compensation.

Actions taken by the council with Tree Preservation Orders (which if deemed necessary should have happened before) appear to be an attempt to hinder the land owners from progressing their business whilst progressing this application.

In summary, it is apparent that the pending TVG application has no merit & appears unsubstantiated, in light of the previous decisions and open admissions of fact by the applicant, including:

- (1) The fact that the land was used for agricultural purposes (**grazing**) for many years until 2012;
- (2) The fact that the applicant, STC, openly admitted to SDC (as confirmed by SDC's Decisions and by STC) that large sections of the land were **inaccessible**;
- (3) The fact that the applicant, STC, openly admitted **limited** use, specific to footpaths;
- (4) The fact that SDC concluded that any potential recreational or sporting value of the land was limited to a footpath and a bench and not the whole of the land; therefore the conditions of s.15 of the Commons Act 2006 are not met;
- (5) The fact that there were no sporting or other pastimes by the public amidst the cattle previously grazing upon the land for many years, or at all.
- (6) The fact that the application is unsubstantiated as the applicants declared that this land was "**Obviously**" "**Not... in public use**". (28-11-16).

Should you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact us; we have substantial, further representations should this be necessary.

Yours sincerely,

L. Maiik, BSc Hons, MSc Eng. & K. Nazai (Horticulturist and Orchardist)
 Email: [s\[REDACTED\]@john-copland.co.uk](mailto:s[REDACTED]@john-copland.co.uk)
 c/o John Copland & Son,
 77 High Street
 Sheerness, ME12 1TY

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Les Richards [REDACTED] on behalf of Les Richards
17 April 2024 13:17
[REDACTED] k
Ref 77161/JB Doverow Hill or V erne's Fields or Windmill Farm.

My wife and I live on the perimeter of the above and we both regularly use it for walks for many years. We both strongly object to the application as we consider it to be farmland and is totally unsuitable for a commons or towns green. You only have to visit site to reach that conclusion. This application is an emotional one not a logical one and emanates from a few locals who ignored the irresponsible behaviour of some and the harm to the wildlife and environment. **Indeed the previous owners of the land held similar views** and I was delighted when the new owners decided to take control and limit what was being done by those in our community who feel it's ok.

The new footpaths are perfect as they still allow access to the areas useable by the public and much of it has been thankfully returned to nature. Indeed the whole area is totally inappropriate for use as a town green given the steep slopes. **In the past I have seen signs erected by previous owners asking the public to stick to the footpaths and behave responsibly but they were ignored and** it was common place to see dogs running wild, dog mess, dog mess in bags, drug paraphernalia, litter, cans, broken bottles, fires you name it. It became a ASB hotspot. My sympathies are with the new owners as they have been victimised for trying to run a farm, maintain footpaths whilst protecting wildlife and the environment. We are **against the application** and I hope it's rejected.
Kind regards, Les & Margaret Richards [REDACTED]

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad

[Reference to previous owners signs](#)

Robert Stanworth

[REDACTED]

From: Victoria Dovey Spicer [REDACTED] on behalf of Victoria Dovey Spicer
Sent: 27 April 2024 19:43
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ref JB/77161

Access difficulty – right to deviate on varying paths to get across land.

Reference to vandalising previous signs & fences

Reference to permissive paths being variations of the Public Right of Way, i.e. they evolved from them via Right to deviate around obstructions.

Hi Jemma,

I am writing in objection to the application to make Doverow/Verney fields a town green status.

I have been a resident of Stonehouse for years and my family for generations. I have enjoyed walking on Doverow since childhood, and have continued to do so even since ownership has transferred to Windmill Farm, on the public rights of way. In fact the transformation of these rights of way following a great deal of investment have made many parts of the hill more accessible, as any local will tell you, getting up the hill in the winter mud was never easy, but a lot easier now with handrails, steps and gravel!

I am appalled at how some residents have treated the owners. I am baffled by their entitlement to private land, as if they themselves would be happy for complete strangers to trespass in their gardens, and to assume liability when this happens. These selfish locals have publicly boasted vandalising signs and fences and have now taken their bullying to new heights with this application. And why? Because they are not allowed to now walk as they please on someone else's land? Even though they still can, just via public rights of way, which in most cases are ever so slight variations from the prior permissive paths. They can still access the same landmarks, the woods, the viewpoint. I suspect what they do not like is that they cannot let their feral dogs run riot and defecate on the land (I am a dog owner myself and have seen so much irresponsible ownership in the community, with lack of control or cleaning up after them). I suspect they do not like being told they cannot do something, even if their actions are hurting livelihoods and nature. I suspect they are very bitter people indeed.

What I see windmill farms try to do is to create a farm that lives in harmony with nature, which requires them to limit access to the general public, and I believe there's nothing immoral in this in the slightest. I have seen how their rewilding efforts have already benefitted the local ecology (so few grasslands are allowed to be long these days which is essential for many ecosystems), with more deer, fox, flowers, fauna and insects than ever. I know they have plans for wetlands too, no doubt which have been hampered by spending funds in this very objection. As a local resident who cares about nature, small sustainable businesses and the community, I would love to see them able to fulfill their vision.

I have no affiliation with the farm, I know this because of efforts from the farm to engage the community, efforts which I see be attacked time and time again by the same entitled minority who have pushed this application forward with selfish vigour. I have purchased and enjoyed their crop and would love to continue to support them, not run them out of town.

I know I am not alone in feeling this way, but I feel like my local governance is being allowed to be hijacked by these extremist thugs, who wish to seize land over what is frankly a blow out tantrum. If this is allowed to happen, I truly fear what could happen next for farmers, or indeed any one with private land.

So I plead to the county to please discount this ridiculous application, which has consumed the local community for too long already, and allow Windmill farm to finally establish themselves as the community benefactors I know them to be.

Sincerely,
Victoria Dovey
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Lar Dowding [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 May 2024 21:00
To: BROWN, Jemma
Subject: Land 77161/jb

Dear Jemma Brown

I am writing to you on a matter close to my heart, the farm known as Windmill farm/verney fields. Me and my family both feel the actions that are being taken to put said land in to a town green status morally unacceptable.

A person or person who buys a house, land or a farm should have the right with in reasonable reason to do as they wish, such be it to stop trespassing a valid reason.

I walk the footpath on a regular basis and see the changes that have been made by the owner .cceptable,

These folk who feel it is there **right to free wander across private land** are in the wrong,

We are very much a countryside family and have lived in stonehouse for over 50 years.

I have seen the reality of **free roaming** and what it has done to farm animal's, wildlife and our beautiful wild flowers.

If the person or persons feel they should have the right to wonder on private property, they should have bought the land them selves not to force it upon others! As to with stonehouse town council they should have bought it for the good of the town.

Good day to you

Mr laurie Dowding

Refers to wandering at will rather
than consolidated footpaths

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

H D [REDACTED]
14 May 2024 21:30
BROWN, Jemma
7716/JB - Land known as Doverow Hill or Verney Fields or Windmill Farm

Dear Jemma,

I am writing to formally express my objection to the application for the designation of Verney Fields as a commons or town green. As someone intimately familiar with this land, having visited it regularly for many years, I strongly oppose this proposed designation for several compelling reasons.

First and foremost, I adamantly believe that the land in question is farmland and is wholly unsuitable and inappropriate for registration to a commons or town green. Throughout the years, I have witnessed this land primarily used for agricultural purposes, consistent with its classification as farmland. To consider it otherwise is not only preposterous but also a gross misinterpretation of its historical and practical use.

Furthermore, I find the notion of registering this land into a commons to be nothing short of ridiculous. It seems to be a waste of time and resources, driven by misguided intentions rather than sound reasoning. This reactionary approach to new ownership disregards the longstanding history and character of the land, undermining the rights of those who own it.

Additionally, I can attest that the vast majority of the land, aside from the footpaths providing access to Verney Fields has remained largely untouched by public use. Its overgrown vegetation, steep topography, sharp drops, and hazardous conditions render it inaccessible unsafe and unfit for recreational activities typical of a town green. Never have I witnessed any market stalls, fêtes, or sporting events held on this land, nor has it been utilized for such purposes in any capacity, which would usually be expected should the field be suitable.

While occasional sledging has occurred, it has been infrequent and sporadic, with the surround fields being preferred due to their more suitable terrain. However, any sledging activities that did take place were with the permission of the farmers and were far from a regular occurrence.

Throughout the years, I recall seeing signage indicating that the land was private and urging visitors to keep to the footpaths. Unfortunately, there have been instances of fences being cut for unauthorized access, leading to conflicts with occasional public misuse, including dog fouling, littering, fires, vandalism, and other forms of disruption.

In light of these facts, I urge you to reconsider the proposed designation of Verney Fields as a commons or town green. Such a decision would not only be unjust but also detrimental to the integrity and functionality of the land. I trust that you will give careful consideration to my objections and make a decision that is fair and in the best interest of all parties involved.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Reference to signs & fence
damage (forced access)

Sincerely,

Hazel Dowling

[REDACTED]

From: beccy [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 May 2024 17:03
To: BROWN, Jemma
Subject: Ref 77161/JB land known as Doverow Hill/Verney Fields/Windmill Farm

Dear Jemma

My name is Rebecca, I am a secondary school teacher and live on Bramble Lane (no 20) with my husband and two young children. My mother in law lives on Cotswold Green in the house that belonged to her Mother and Father for 60 years. We fell in love with the area around 9 years ago and now that we're lucky to live here, spend at least one day per week walking around Doverow, past the vineyards and up to Westrip. My children absolutely love it, especially when we spot the deer! We spot the deer more often now since whoever has purchased the land has started taking care of it.

Before the land was purchased, we had awful problems with antisocial behaviour including evidence of drug use, condoms, dumped rubbish and fires that needed to be attended by the fire services multiple times. Not nice for us to look at and have to explain to our children, not to mention incredibly detrimental to the natural world that we love so dearly. We used to do weekly litter picks and come home with 2 bin bags full of broken glass, empty drinks cans/bottles, crisp packets etc

I completely **object** to this absurd application to turn it into a town green; unfortunately many humans that live around here have proved time and time again that they do not respect the environment and do not care about it at all. They clearly also haven't bothered to educate their children about the importance of looking after our environment.

We are very lucky to already have plenty of open green spaces, on a level, useable ground that can be used as a 'town green'. Not to mention the actual town green that we already have where the war memorial is situated and where we gather to commemorate Armistice Day amongst other events. We have absolutely no need for a town green and attempting to have one on the top of a steep incline is ludicrous. The ground is so uneven and there are some very dangerous sheer drops from the top.

I have been absolutely appalled by the actions of local residents, seemingly doing everything in their power to make things as difficult as possible for the new land owners, including vandalising their property. My children were absolutely heartbroken to find the beautiful new wooden tree swings to be stolen after only a few weeks of being installed. These people can't seem to see beyond the end of their own noses and are completely ignorant to the benefits that the new land owners are bringing to Doverow.

Wandering at will rather than on consolidated footpaths

The footpaths that the new landowners have installed are more than sufficient. Admittedly, in some places they could do with being a little wider. However, **There is no need for people to go stomping all over the land**, not to mention letting their dogs defecate all over the place and not picking up after them.

The new landowners keep the local community updated with their expert knowledge of all the different species of plants that are now thriving.

How wonderful to have homegrown maple syrup that we can purchase!

Better for this land to be used how nature intended; for plants and trees to thrive and support our precious landscape and wildlife whilst we can benefit from the fruit, the healthy air and wonderful views on our walks. Rather than local people feeling like they have the right to tramp all over the place, leaving their rubbish and hurting the things that are so precious in this world.

I really hope the right decision is made and we can continue enjoying this beautiful area.

Yours Sincerely,

Rebecca Bevan

[REDACTED]

From: Trevor Baker [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 May 2024 15:04
To: BROWN, Jemma
Subject: Verney Fields Town Green Application Ref-JB/77161

Dear Sir/Madam.

I write to formally object to the Town Green application submitted by Mr Carlos Novoth on behalf of Stonehouse Town Council.

I have lived in Stonehouse all of my life (61 Years) and have represented the Town as both a Town and District Councillor. I have regularly walked Verney Fields and the surrounding environs. I consider myself to know the area and its uses well.

I have read through the evidence submissions deposited at Stonehouse Library and would make the following comments.

1. A significant number of the responses cannot confirm the uses claimed as they do not meet the 20 year minimum requirement.
2. A significant number of responses have stated they know of such uses in excess of 20 years in their answers to question 25, however they have failed to confirm the number in the declaration section of the evidence statement.
3. A significant number refer to use of the land by Wycliffe College as part of their cross country course but haven't stated whether this was "as of right" or with the permission of the land owner. As far as I am aware, Wycliffe College haven't commented on the application and therefore, it hasn't been established on what terms they made use of the land. I would have thought a cross country course would follow permissive or public footpaths in any case. I would be surprised if such a reputable organisation would use any land without permission.
4. Several responses refer to use of the land by the scout movement but again, as far as I am aware, the scout organisation haven't commented themselves. If the scouts have used the land (and I have never seen it) was it "as of right" or with permission. I know there are lots of badges to acquire in the scouts but I doubt there is one for trespass.

I have known this area for many years and am aware of its uses. I agree the land had been used for sledging on the few occasions weather permitted but it wasn't the preferred option. The run was short (even shorter after the development of bramble lane), the course was dangerous due to a cattle trough at the top end and a tree near the bottom and the camber directed you to these obstacles. The rear of Cotswold Green and the slopes down to Ebley is where sledging mainly took place. I have seen photos suggesting sledging in 2019 although it is hard to make out if it is on The Verney and they have the clarity of Loch Ness Monster/UFO photos.

I have never seen a picnic taking place on this land although I have seen a picnic/gathering on the quarry face. This was in the mid 1990s and was a contrived event in an attempt to hoodwink a planning inspector. One of the evidence providers for this application was a participant in the bogus picnic/gathering.

Unlike many (particularly those with a sense of entitlement), I have never considered the land to be anything other than private farmland. I am not aware of anything on the land that could be described as organised sport (other than Wycliffe cross country) or recreation.

I do recall a beacon being lit on the land to celebrate the late Queens silver Jubilee and a firework display that celebrated the new millennium. I assume these events would have sought permission.

Finally, I consider the application not to have met the threshold required to grant Town Green status or to be of merit. Although the criteria may have been slightly different, I recall a process to designate the land as a community asset was also rejected by Stroud District Council some years ago. I believe that decision was correct.

If this ends up at a public enquiry, I wish to speak at it so as to elaborate on some of the points I have made.

Yours Sincerely

Trevor Baker
Stonehouse Resident

Trevor Baker

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Debbie [REDACTED]
19 May 2024 16:25
[REDACTED]@countryside.gov.uk
Land known as Verney fields ref.. 96/77161

Dear Jemma.

I am writing to object to the Town Green application on Verney Fields from Stonehouse town council. I have used Verney Fields as a child and adult for over 55 years, to gain access to Doverow woods and the Quarry itself. I never used the Verney field part for play, because it was of little interest. The Quarry itself and the woods was vastly more interesting, I've always known the land to be private farmland and not in the ownership of a public body.

With regards to the sports and recreation claimed, I've never witnessed it in Verney Fields, but I have in adjoining Fields, Sledging was carried out primarily on what is now Godsell land at the rear of Cotswold Green.

I understand some evidence providers claim a use by Maidenhill School for cross country. I can confirm this wasn't the case during my and my sons time at Maidenhill school. I know this because I used the course weekly.

I object to the application due to the lack of evidence and merit in these claims.

Kind regards
Deborah Baker

[REDACTED]

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Helen Al Amily
19 May 2024 15:24
BROWN, Jemma
Ref: 77161/JB - land known as Doverow Hill or Verney Fields or Windmill Farm

Good morning Jemma

I wish to strongly object to the above application please.

I believe it to be PRIVATE farmland & unsuitable/inappropriate for a commons/towns green.

It's ridiculous waste of council money, ie, our money.

It has been used by a few locals over the years. Farmers stopped using it as people never cleared up their dog mess. They roamed wherever they liked with their dogs. All cattle had to be removed due to dog faeces, so the farmer sold up to the current owner. Some of the very opinionated locals started moaning creating a snowball effect in our town. The local GL10 fb group became a battlefield. Some locals were horrid and rude to the new owners. They set up private fb groups to spread misinformation to as many as they could. The new owners had constant damage and still do to their land.

Stonehouse Town Council have spent "our" money making huge banners, hanging them all around Stonehouse, weekly stalls at the market catching everyone that walks past to sign their petition or whatever they've called it.

The land is steep, uneven, with sharp drops so completely unsuitable for use as a Town Green, fetes, or sports clubs, utter nonsense to think otherwise. Unfortunately STC and a few "locals" think they own/have the right to do as they please.

As long as the owner keeps the public footpaths open and in a good state of repair that you be sufficient. We have 3 huge parks in Stonehouse. 1 is home to Stonehouse football club, 1 has the community center and another park. We don't need another area. If STC hold an event (very very rarely they do) they have it in Laburnum Park as its huge and flat, accessible to all. It has a car park with disabled parking etc.

Please come and visit Stonehouse, see the large green areas we have then go to see this piece of private land. The new owners want to plant trees, surely that's a better solution than another dog toilet.

Yours sincerely
Helen

Sent from [Outlook for Android](#)

[REDACTED]

From: Helen Al Amily [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 May 2024 15:31
To: BROWN, Jemma
Subject: Ref: 77161/JB - land known as Doverow Hill or Verney Fields or Windmill Far

Hi

Sorry I meant to mention at the bottom of my email, I do not know and have never met the new owners of the land.

Thanks
Helen

{ Sent from [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Rachel Clements [REDACTED] on behalf of Rachel Clements
Sent: 19 May 2024 22:28
To: [REDACTED] k
Subject: Ref: 77161/JB - land known as Doverow Hill or Verney Fields or Windmill Farm

Dear Ms Brown,

I write to you to formally object to the application by Stonehouse Town Council regarding land belonging to Windmill Farm on Doverow Hill.

Having been born and raised in Stonehouse, I have very fond memories of Doverow Hill over my near 40 years living in the area. We used to visit regularly as a family, walking the footpaths with the dog and enjoying spending time exploring the paths through the woods and playing in the quarry.

The application for a town green on land owned by Windmill Farm is something I strongly object to for a number of reasons. Firstly, it's clearly an inappropriate reaction from Stonehouse Town Council to the land being purchased by new owners. It's farmland, it has always been farmland and is wholly unsuitable for a common / town green space as they are proposing. Stonehouse already has several areas which are far more suitable for use as a town green space, including land at Laburnum Walk and Oldends Lane (which have been used in the past as just that, town greens, for fetes, puic events and the like). There has never been any usage typical of a town green on Doverow Hill, it has never been used for markets, fêtes or for sporting use, the idea is ridiculous to say the least!

People have been wrongly claiming public access to Doverow Hill for many years. The public have never used, nor had access to, the majority of the land on the hill. Apart from footpaths which only provide access to Doverow woods, the public have never used the majority of the land on the hill as it is inaccessible due to the overgrowth, the steep topography and the sharp drops making it slippery, dangerous and generally unsuitable for all.

I am not aware of any non-footpath activities taking place on Doverow Hill, aside from occasional very rare sledging (with land owners permission), although the fields north or east of the application site were much preferred due to their more suitable even topography and longer sledging run; it has only snowed sufficiently to sledge once or twice a decade, not often enough to be considered used for regular sporting use.

Finally, the claim that we, the public, had free reign over the land is untrue. There have always been certain public footpaths to allow access to the woods and clearly signed private farm land. People may well have cut fences and torn down signs to give themselves unauthorised access, but this doesn't give us any claim over the land now.

I fully support the work being done by Windmill Farm, their plans for the land are excellent; it's nice to see the land being used for the good of the local ecosystem and wildlife.

I hope that the application is thrown out and the owners of Windmill Farm are left to farm their land as they see fit. The neighbouring vineyards are an excellent example of the positives that can come from fruit farms, it's about time Windmill Farm received the same support from the local and county Council.

Regards,

Mrs Rachel Clements
Local resident

Mentions only footpaths going to Doverow Woods

Mentions signs & fence cutting during previous ownership

[REDACTED]

From: Fiona Lenore [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 May 2024 20:44
To: BROWN, Jemma
Subject: Ref: 77161/JB - land known as Doverow Hill or Verney Fields or Windmill Farm

Dear Ms Brown,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the current application by Stonehouse Town Council for Town Green (TVG) Status for land at Doverow Hill (Windmill Farm).

It is absolutely preposterous that this land even be considered for town green status, for it is not practical, or ever used (in my experience) for anything other than walking and perhaps the occasional picnic. The steep incline of the land would restrict any practical usage for gatherings or sports. Also, the best spots for picnics or small gatherings are up in the woods where a better view and more peaceful surroundings are to be had.

I am a local resident and often walk or run up to the woods at the top of Doverow Hill, it is a very pleasant walk, and very popular. I often see other walkers and there are multiple approaches to the top of the hill by public footpath. This does not mean however that this land should in some way belong to the town.

Only reference to paths towards
Doverow Woods

Since Windmill Farm have purchased the land they have improved many of the footpaths, some of which were uneven, on a slant, or muddy and wet. I do not appreciate Stonehouse Council and a few local residents giving these poor farmers such a hard time. In fact, I think it is a reckless waste of Council money.

Prior to Windmill Farm putting up multiple signs regarding footpath usage, I recall seeing the remains of fires and litter at a couple of spots on the fields. What land owner would want to have to clean such things up, so I understand that they must restrict people to footpaths, which is much opposed by some local people. Furthermore, if they are trying to start an orchard and plant seedlings, these could be easily tampered with by people wandering through not aware of where or what they are stepping on. This is, and has always been farmland, and these new owners have every right to do what is needed to be done to make it profitable for them. So long as they maintain, and continue to allow access to the current public footpaths, which of course they have done more than enough.

I do hope this will be the last time that Stonehouse Council frivol away money into a cause not supported by many people living here, and we can start to enjoy this hill in harmony with the owners of Windmill farm. It would be lovely to see a working orchard on the banks of Doverow hill, much more picturesque than grazing land.

Kind Regards,
Fiona Wilson