

Lazonby Neighbourhood Plan



Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to object to the proposed new footpath along the private track known as 'the DS highway', located on the Lazonby Estate.

I have been a tenant on the estate in my own right since 2002 at [REDACTED] and with my parents before that at [REDACTED] from 1993.

My first concern is that the DS highway is a track that was laid down for estate and tenant farmer use and has gradually been improved over the decades providing high quality access to farmland.

If the Parish Council seek to force public access onto private investment there is little incentive for the estate to further invest elsewhere or to allow tenants to install similar tracks.

Improvements of this nature are part of the response to pressure to reduce cost within the agricultural industry, for the parish council to try to force access to it is opportunism at its worst.

I also note that the access is intended to be a new footpath but I am sure that it will be used by cyclists as the Highway is a perfect 'cut through' to provide a shorter route than the proposed cycle route which goes all the way around by low plains.

Part of the attraction of Castlerigg farm has been the fact that there are no rights of way across it.

In an era of extreme cost pressure on farms it is rare for farmers to employ labour and that is the case with us. It is important for us to be able to spray crops on time, run dairy bulls with cows (which wouldn't be legal with a footpath in the field) and move stock from field to field without the added hassle of unexpected visitors, invariably accompanied by dogs. Also because the farm has no public access and therefore dogs there is a much reduced risk of the spread of Neospora from dog waste.

Neospora can have devastating consequences to the fertility of cattle.

As mentioned at the top of this letter I used to farm at [REDACTED], which has a footpath running through it so I am perhaps as well qualified as most people on the negative aspects of public access to farmland.

I will remember the person that called at the house to inform us of a calf in a particular field that needed attention.

Despite knowing that there wasn't a calf in the field I investigated and never did find the calf as it didn't exist.

I realise that the majority of people are harmless and well meaning but allowing access to prime farmland is not a very good idea.

On a final note I would simply point out that as a tenant I pay to access the estate land and also contribute to the up keep of the highway.

I fail to see why anyone in the locality should think that they should have the right to free access which will devalue my business when others have to pay.

I would respectfully ask the Parish council to withdraw the application to create a footpath and ask them to keep in mind the fact that if created my business will be negatively affected but I will have no ability to recoup any losses.

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