

Public Questions Full Council 17th June 2020

From / Date	To	Question	Response
<p>Mick Scholes Via email</p>	<p>Cllr Brownridge</p>	<p>In light of the recent increase in the number of families out walking as part of their daily exercise, and the hopefully declining level of work needed to alleviate the effects of the Coronavirus, would the Council be able to prioritise the opening of unlawfully blocked footpaths that are a public right of way; to carry out the replacement of missing 'Public Footpath' signs and to increase the speed at which footpath surfaces are repaired, and for this to be carried out across the borough? The very welcome news that many footbridges around Saddleworth are to be repaired by OMBC will be welcomed by many who not only live in, but visit here, and by refusing to allow the unlawful closure of public rights of way, the Council will help those who wish to participate in a free, healthy form of exercise."</p>	<p>The latest and still current Government Guidance on Public Rights of Way for England has allowed during the recent unprecedented circumstances for there to be temporary diversions of existing Public Rights of Way away from dwellings and through gardens and this has been undertaken by each landowner as they see fit as they have a Duty of Care to the public - other illegal obstructions are dealt with on an individual basis in the normal way. Currently this government guidance is still in operation, but no doubt it will be subject to review in due course, and temporary diversions may be removed.</p> <p>Recently only emergency works had been being undertaken due to Officers and Contractors not being on the ground due to various factors - however, the routine maintenance possible with the available funding has recommenced across the Public Rights of Way network and general maintenance issues are being undertaken once again.</p>

<p>Jane Barker Via email</p>	<p>Councillor Roberts</p>	<p>The approval for development of the Knowls Lane site on 1st July 2019 (PA/343269/19) involves the destruction of woodland to make way for a new link road. It has now been evidenced that the woodland that will be destroyed meets the criteria to be registered as Ancient Woodland, and was registered with Natural England as such on the 18th February 2020.</p> <p>The Planners' Manual for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees, issued by the Woodland Trust, states that where small woodland is affected by development, it cannot be assumed that just because the woodland is not registered on the Ancient Woodland Inventory that it is not ancient. The Woodland Trust also state that archival studies, map work and fieldwork should be carried out to ascertain whether the woodland is ancient or not prior to any planning submission. The woodland at the Knowls Lane site was clearly present on the readily available County Series maps from the 1800s, and this evidence, along with other readily available supporting evidence, was submitted to Natural England resulting</p>	<p>At the time that the planning permission was granted, no part of the site had been designated as Ancient Woodland. The development was resolved to be approved on 1st July 2019 and the planning permission issued on 5th December 2019. However, the Ancient Woodland designation was not registered with Natural England until 18th February 2020. The planning permission specifies the development that an applicant can lawfully implement, and the Council cannot retrospectively take account of designations placed on land after a planning permission has been issued.</p> <p>In the event of any valid planning application being received in the future in respect of this land, the Ancient Woodland designation will be a material consideration in its determination and will be given appropriate weight in accordance with paragraph 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019).</p>
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Michael McLean via email	Cllr Jabbar	When will the list of grants because of covid 19 be published.	<p>In responding to the question, I am assuming you mean the small business and retail, hospitality and leisure grants that the Council has administered on behalf of Central Government. If this is the case, the Council has published all grants paid during April and May on its website in accordance with transparency requirements.</p> <p>The grants paid during June will be published after the end of the month.</p>