Agenda Item 4



Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to: Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way Sub-committee

Date: **12 February 2024**

Appeal against the prioritisation of Definitive Map Modification Order Subject:

(DMMO) Case 430 Addlethorpe – Proposed addition of a public footpath

between Rectory Lane and St Nicholas' Church

Summary:

An appeal against the prioritisation of DMMO Case 430 which seeks to record a public footpath between Rectory Lane and St Nicholas' Church, Addlethorpe.

Recommendation(s):

That consideration is given to the appeal to upgrade the priority of the DMMO Case 430.

1. **Background**

As the Surveying Authority for the area, the County Council has a statutory duty to keep under continuous review the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way for Lincolnshire and to make orders to take account of events requiring the map and statement to be modified. This is carried out by the processing of definitive map modification orders ("DMMOs") which are either applied for by the public or initiated by the Authority on the discovery of evidence. Highways Guidance Note 9.2, Prioritisation of Definitive Map Modification Orders, sets out that such cases will be dealt with in order of receipt/initiation unless one or more of the eight "exception criteria" apply. The criteria are as follow:

- 1. Where there is sustained aggression, hostility and ill feeling within a community that is causing severe disruption to the life of that community, and that in processing the case early there is a strong likelihood that this will reduce.
- 2. Where there is a significant threat to the route, likely to cause a <u>permanent</u> obstruction (e.g., a building, but not, for example, a locked gate or residential fencing).
- 3. Where there is, or has been, a finding of maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman on a particular case and that in processing the case the County Council will discharge its duty to the Ombudsman's decision.

- 4. Where legal proceedings against the County Council are instigated or are likely to be instigated and it is possible that the Authority has a liability.
- 5. Where there is a risk to children on County Council owned property and land or where the claimed route would provide for a safer alternative route to a school, play area or other amenity for children.
- 6. Where there is a significant financial saving to the County Council (and therefore taxpayer) through the processing of an Order.
- 7. Where a new application is received that relies on evidence of a case already received or, if the new application forms part of or is adjoining to an existing claim, the new claim will be dealt with at the same time as the older application.
- 8. Where the route will <u>significantly</u> assist in achieving a Countryside and Rights of Way Improvement Plan Objective or Statement of Action.

Addlethorpe Parish Council has appealed the current priority of DMMO Case 430 being an application seeking to record a public footpath between Rectory Lane and St Nicholas' Church in Addlethorpe. **Appendix A** provides a brief synopsis including the reasons for the appeal.

2. Conclusion

That Addlethorpe Parish Council has made a valid appeal against the current prioritisation of the DMMO case which requires consideration by the sub-committee.

3. Consultation

a) Has the Local Member been consulted?

Yes, but no comments were made in response to the consultation.

b) Has the Executive Councillor been consulted?

Not required.

c) Scrutiny comments

Not required.

d) Risks and impact analysis

None carried out.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached to the end of the report.

Appendix A	Case Synopsis – DMMO 430 Addlethorpe
Appendix B	Plan showing the location of the alleged footpath in context of the wider
	local area
Appendix C	Addlethorpe Parish Council's appeal email of 31 October 2023
Appendix D	Letter of 9 November 2020 from a parishioner to the Ramblers Association
Appendix E	Undated anonymous letter to Lincolnshire County Council
Appendix F	Letter of 19 December 2022 from a parishioner to Addlethorpe Parish Council
Appendix G	Letter of 20 December 2022 from a parishioner to Addlethorpe Parish Council
Appendix H	Handwritten documents detailing challenges made towards people who
	sought to the alleged footpath
Appendix I	Definitive Map Modification Order Case Priority Schedule

<u>Please note</u> that personal details and any information which might identify a person have been redacted from the correspondence listed in the above appendices to comply with the data protection legislation. Some of these documents are of low quality, but this how they were provided by the appellant.

5. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in writing of this report.

Highways Guidance Note 9.2, Prioritisation of Definitive Map Modification Order (HGN 9.2)

This report was written by Andrew Pickwell, Senior Definitive Map Officer, who can be contacted on 01522 553083 or andrew.pickwell@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, section 53

Definitive Map Modification Order Case 430

Addlethorpe – Alleged footpath between Rectory Lane at St Nicholas' Church

1. Application

An application made by Addlethorpe Parish Council in May 2021 under section 53(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 seeks a definitive map modification order to record a public footpath between Rectory Lane and St Nicholas' Church in Addlethorpe.

2. Location plan of the route



See **Appendix B** for a plan showing the alleged footpath in context to the wider local area.

3. Evidence in support of the application

11 user testimonies have been submitted in support of the proposal indicating usage over a period between 1953 and 2021. However, it should be noted that the route has changed course during this period of usage due to the construction of St Nicholas Close and 10-14 Rectory Lane in circa 2000, and the alleged footpath claimed is the one that has been used following the development. Several other documents were also submitted in support of the application include extracts from the minutes of several meetings of the Addlethorpe

Parochial Charity (also known as the Mottram Trust) over the period November 1983 to September 2002, correspondence and documents of 1986 relating to the sale of land owned by the Addlethorpe Parochial Trust that is now occupied by St Nicholas Close and 10-14 Rectory Lane, and correspondence of 2001 between Addlethorpe Parochial Charity, Addlethorpe Parish Council and Lincolnshire County Council.

The County Council's letter of 23 November 2001 suggests that efforts were made seeking the agreement from the developer of St Nicholas Close for a route across the site, but this came to no avail. As a result, Addlethorpe Parish Council were advised to apply for a modification order seeking to record the route as a public right of way, and they were provided with an application pack in December 2001 to facilitate this. However, 20 years passed before an application was made.

4. Background

The alleged footpath runs east from a point on Rectory Lane down a snicket between the properties West View and Balmar (9 and 10 Rectory Road respectively) and then north between 3 and 4 St Nicholas Close. It then continues along St Nicholas Close before turning east to run through the grounds of and to the entrance to St Nicholas' Church. Both Rectory Lane and St Nicholas Close are adopted highways. Evidence held on the file suggests that the application was made following the discovery by a parishioner that the passageway between Rectory Lane and St Nicholas Close it is not recorded as a public right of way and to prevent its close to the public.

5. Current Priority & Original Officer Assessment

Officer opinion following the initiation of the proposal was that none of the exception criteria applicated to it. The case is currently ranked 158 out of 458 cases in the Priority Schedule (as of 18 January 2024), with the first 20 cases actively being progressed (see **Appendix I**). It should be noted that there are seven cases that have been given higher priority and are awaiting officer availability for progression.

6. Appeal

An appeal request for a change of priority relying on criterion 1 of the Policy has been received from Addlethorpe Parish Council (Appendix C). This criterion is as follows:

1) Where there is sustained aggression, hostility and ill feeling within a community that is causing severe disruption to the life of the community, and that in processing the case early there is a strong likelihood that this will reduce.

Addlethorpe provided in the following documents in support of their appeal:

• Letter of 9 November 2020 from a parishioner to the Ramblers (Appendix D)

- Undated anonymous letter Lincolnshire County Council (Appendix E)
- Letter of 19 December 2022 from a parishioner to Addlethorpe Parish Council (Appendix F)
- Letter of 20 December 2022 from a parishioner to Addlethorpe Parish Council (Appendix G)
- Handwritten documents detailing challenges made towards people using the route (Appendix H)

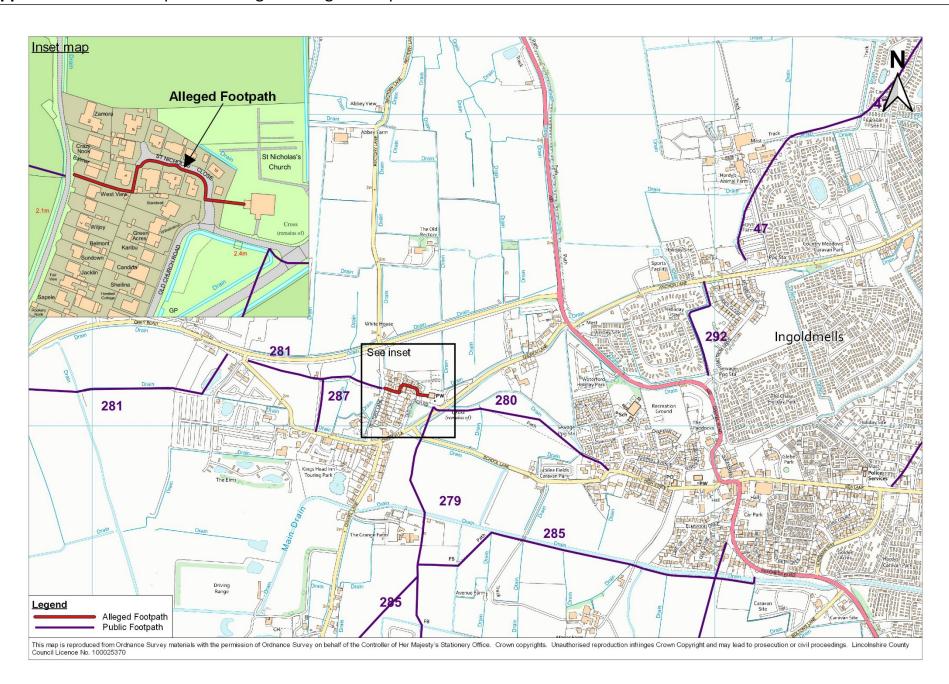
The letter of 9 November 2020 (Appendix D) and the undated anonymous letter (Appendix E) suggest that the path has been used for the last 50-100 years. They suggest that 15-20 years ago the builder of St Nicholas Close closed the path but then subsequently agreed to reopen it on a different alignment with a width of 1-1.5 metres and with a gate being provided at the point where there was a step to mitigate a trip hazard. They suggest that the path is in regular use, but the occupants of some of the adjacent properties wish to close the route and incorporate the land over which it runs into their gardens. One of the authors suggests that the occupants of one of the properties had blocked the path and someone had sawn down and removed the gate that was located on the route.

The letters of 19 December 2022 (Appendix F) and 20 December 2022 (Appendix G) do not provide evidence supporting sustain aggression, hostility, or ill feeling towards anyone who sought to use the path. However, one of the authors suggests that they may only seek to remove any of the fences and reopen the path should it be recorded as a public right of way. This suggests that the route was obstructed at the time when the letter was authored. It should be noted that it is typical for modification order applications supported by user witness testimony to be made for routes where access has been barred following long usage.

The handwritten documents suggests that the author was first told by a resident that they were closing the route. This was followed by the gate on the path being padlocked in April 2020, but the padlock was removed two days later. The documents detail five instances of alleged abuse towards people seeking to use the path during the remainder of 2020. The appellant's appeal email suggests that there was an alleged altercation between two parties in 2023 and that this is being investigated by the Police.

7. Maps and photographs

The Senior Definitive Map Officer, Andrew Pickwell, will provide a verbal report with slides at the meeting.



Appendix C – Appeal submitted by Addlethorpe Parish Council

From: addlethorpe parish council <<u>clerk@addlethorpeparishcouncil.gov.uk</u>>

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 11:46 AM

To: Sharon James

Subject: Request For Priority Processing of DMMO Application

Caution external: This email originated from outside of the council. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are confident the email is legitimate

Good morning Sharon

I am the new Clerk for Addlethorpe and I am told that you have been dealing with Kerry about a disputed footpath in Addlethorpe.

You may have already received this communication, an apologies if that is the case – I just did not want it to have been overlooked in the changeover.

Kind regards

Alan Vassar Clerk to Addlethorpe Parish Council

----- Original Message ------

Subject: Request For Priority Processing of DMMO Application

Re: Addlethorpe Footpath DMMO Application

Thank you for your email dated August 15, 2023 addressed to Kerry Cullen, the former Clerk of Addlethorpe Parish Council concerning the above noted matter. Please note that Alan Vassar is the new Addlethorpe Parish Clerk.

We understand that, in order to satisfy the criteria for priority processing of our DMMO application, you have requested additional evidence of the sustained aggression, hostility and ill-feeling within the community resulting from the attempts by certain residents of Addlethorpe to take possession of the subject footpath.

We are now enclosing the following evidence:

- 1. Letter to Ramblers Association from resident Hilary Ashton in 2020 summarising the contentious history of this issue.
- 2. Letters from two disputants in December 2022 setting out their claims to be entitled to take possession of the footpath and their intention

to take legal action.

3. Contemporaneous and other notes of Hilary Aston between 2019 and 2021 describing confrontations and threats by certain disputants.

In addition, a recent confrontation between a disputant and neighbouring resident in St. Nicholas Close resulted in the resident being physically assaulted. A video of the incident has been submitted to the police for review.

Appendix C – Appeal submitted by Addlethorpe Parish Council

Please advise if you require further information to support our request for priority processing of our application.

Yours truly, Roger Dawson Vice Chair of Addlethorpe Parish Council TELNO ADDLETHORPE
TO RAMBIER ASSOC SKEGNESS
09. 11 26

DEAR SIR/MADAM

Can give in trying to keep open a path in our village Endoson is an ols map dated 1906 showing the path, it was in use upto the late 1990's when the land to the north of it was sold as buildingland, but the path was to memain in site. In the late 90's the builded began to build a properties fronting on Rectory hand 10-13 a the path was left in position a the first owners of were told they could use the path for maintenance at but not block it, however further along the path the builder started putting waster & Soil piles on the path making it impossable.

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at the council complaining about the closure a he met up with us a the builder, he soud the path should be opened up a it was suggested that the builder should remove some gooden space from NoAST Not close we arred to the The council provided a gate

as the new path was higher than the old a it was a trip hazard

This has been of for 18 years now the occupiers on RECTORYHANG of ST What close have been obtained they want to close the path of put the area into their properties

blocked the path new the gate a in the last month someone has sawn down the sate a post a removed it.



council but which dut very slowly. I have also included other maps that may be useful you will see that the path is between two public footpaths that would enable our summer visitors to reach Insoldmells without having to walk along side busy noods

Moun I weekly a strammed when recessory.

MAP I Shows original Path in Rd

MAP2 Shows path in 1906 in allotment gooden a area 259/1166 is the building plote

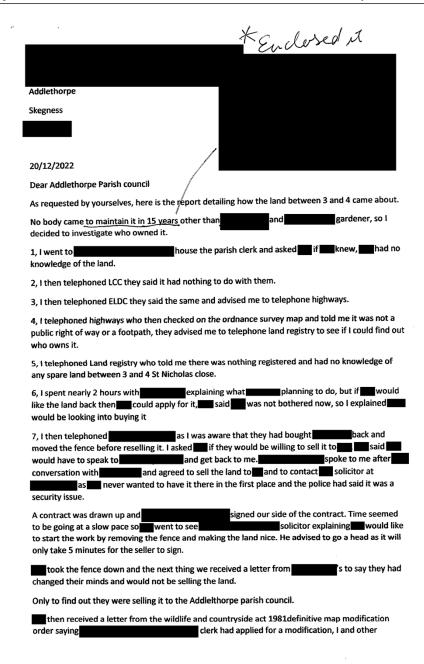
MAP3 Shows paths that used to link up to neach Insuldenells:

also enclosed is a letter received from the

Thank you for your two

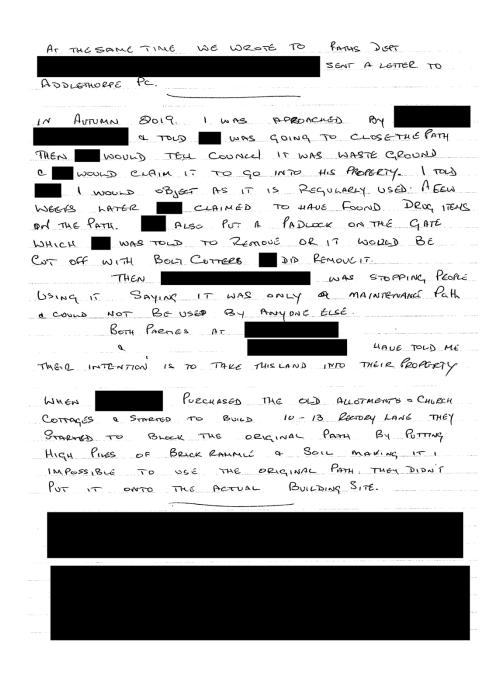
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THIS SITUATION

Addlethorpe
•
19/12/2022
Dear Addlethorpe parish council
As you requested sending you some facts regarding the land between number 3 and number4 St Nicholas close.
When number4 was bought back by the and they moved the fence 1 meter into number 4's land, they did not register it with land registry and sold the bungalow as it was. I enclose a copy of land registry plan dated the 19 th of December 2022 which shows no spare land or footpath between number 3 and 4 therefore the land still belongs to
I have also written an objection to the wildlife and countryside definitive map modification with our reasons on why this should not be opened as a footpath.
The total measurements from the fence to the curb edge is 3.5 meter's how can any persons obtain access on to St Nicholas close by illegally crossing over 1.71 meters of my land/ driveway this is taking into consideration the 1.8 meter service strip.
If the land does open as a footpath is the Addlethorpe parish council have purchased it are you the Addlethorpe parish council going to be responsible and liable for any damage caused to my property or any other surrounding properties that this issue concerns.
We will be willing to take this matter to court if necessary.
I await your response



members of the close signed to object against this and gave the reasons why.
who was on the Parish council at the time Knew had applied to buy this land but obviously was good friends with the sellers and it seems strange the sale fell through, and the Parish council was purchasing it.
l am pleased did not purchase the land as in looking into it, it still belongs to
bought and on deeds, there is 1 fence between the properties bought and on deeds, it is the same one fence between the properties.
So, while the bought back and moved the fence it is obvious they did not register the new boundaries before selling it to
will not be removing any fences to open it back up before hearing from wildlife and country, also are you going to be liable as you own the land if it does get opened for any damage caused to my property that is caused by the public if it is opened.
prepared to go to court to fight this.
I hope you find this information useful

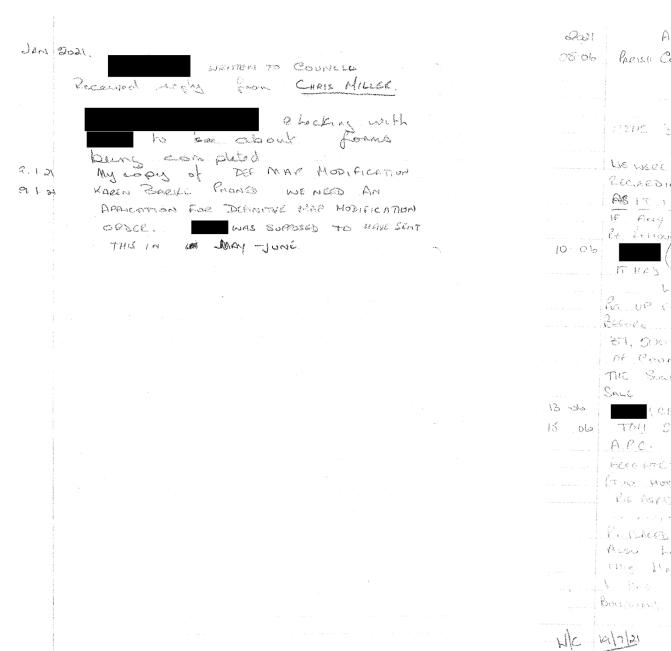
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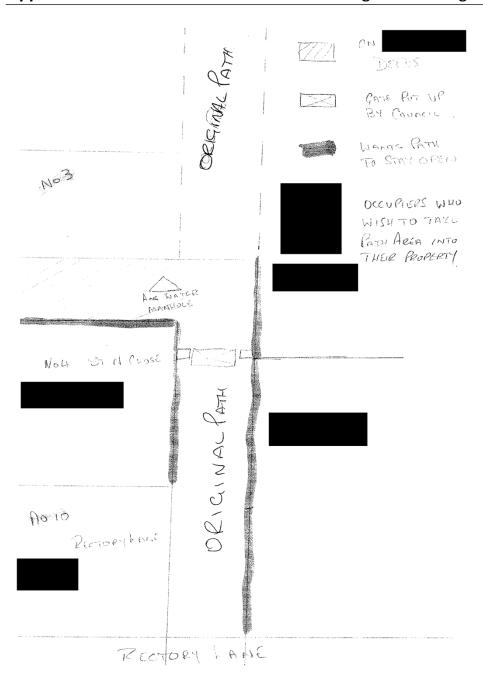
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Key: Grey – Cases currently being progressed. Yellow – Cases given higher priority which are awaiting officer availability for progression.

Parish	File	Route description	Application /	Priority
			Acceptance	Ranking
Mumby	410	Claimed footpath from A52, Mill Lane south then east to A52, public house	08/01/2020	1
Glentworth/Harpswell	371	Claimed footpath between Homeyard Farm & Hermitage Farm	20/05/2014	2
Belchford	421	Claimed footpath from Ford at Ings Lane to Public Footpath 27	17/11/2020	3
Cranwell & Byard's Leap	375	Addition of PF between PF754 and PB1	27/08/2014	4
Lincoln	390	Claimed bridleway between riverside cycle path and Hall Drive	29/06/2017	5
Holbeach/Fleet	392	Claimed footpath between Damgate Road and Branches Lane	01/09/2017	6
Heighington	323	Claimed footpath along Bracken Hill Lane and Third Hill Road	04/10/2007	7
Ingoldsby	405	Claimed footpath known as Ascoughy Lane running from Lenton Road to Public Footpath 13	05/06/2019	8
Aslackby & Laughton	277	Upgrade of RB 12 to BOAT	22/02/2005	9
Lenton Keisby and Osgodby	292	Upgrade of PB 3 to BOAT	06/11/2005	10
Lenton Keisby and Osgodby / Irnham	293	Claimed BOAT from RB 12 to PB 9 and Upgrade of PB 9 to BOAT	06/11/2005	11
Lenton Keisby and Osgodby / Irnham	295	Claimed BOAT from Irnham BR9 to Elsthorpe Road	09/11/2005	12
Chapel St Leonards	404	Claimed footpath from Ancaster Avenue & St Leonards Drive to Roman Bank & the beach	31/05/2019	13
Lincoln	334	Claimed Public Bridleway from Boswell Drive to Doddington Road	29/09/2008	14
Belchford	11	Ings Lane	25/01/1988	15
Colsterworth	426	Claimed footpath from Newton Way to Water Lane (Giles Hill)	04/05/2021	16
Bucknall	579	Claimed footpath from Chestnut Avenue to Platts Lane	21/09/2022	17
Belchford	620	Claimed bridleway from Ings Lane to the Bluestone Heath Road	19/12/2022	18
Westborough and Dry Doddington / Stubton / Claypole	307	Addition of a BOAT in Westborough and Dry Doddington, upgrade of RB 5 & 6 in Stubton, and upgrade of BW 8 in Claypole	22/03/2006	19
Greetham with Somersby	403	Upgrade of part of Public Footpath 53 to bridleway	12/07/2012	20
Bourne	420	Addition of public footpath from Public Footpath 3 to South Street	02/11/2020	21
Lissington / Holton Cum Beckering	303	Upgrade of PB 904 in Lissington and PB 904 in Holton Cum Beckering to a BOAT	06/02/2006	22
Wragby	435	Claimed footpath from Cemetery Road along the field edges to the A158 Horncastle Road	16/07/2021	23
Ludford	470	Claimed bridleway along Thorpe Road from PB123 to the highway	08/02/2022	24
Lincoln	635	Claimed footpath from Grosvenor Avenue to Pig Lane	16/01/2023	25

Appendix I – Definitive Map Modification Order Case Priority Schedule

Addlethorpe	430	Claimed footpath from Rectory Lane South to St. Nicholas Church	17/06/2021	158
130 Definitive Map Modific	ation Order cas	es		
Woodhall Spa	623	Claimed footpath from Manor Road to The Broadway	16/01/2023	27
Well	580	Claimed BOAT from Low Lane to PF79 at St. Margaret's Church 22/09/2022		