

Response to questions put to the Parish Council by Mrs S Hartley, of Golding Hall, at the PC meeting 14th July 2020.

In 2000, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act was introduced in England and Wales. Section 53 of that Act gives a deadline for historical routes to be recorded on the definitive map. The Act provides for a cut-off date of 1 Jan 2026 for all claims to a rights of way based on historical evidence to be submitted to local authorities. As that deadline approaches, more information is published by interested groups (both local and national), this in turn prompts queries to the Parish Council from groups and individuals.

In 2018 the ABFPR&L Parish Plan was reviewed and in January 2019 the Community Led Plan update was published. This indicated that there was a community requirement for the maintenance and improvement of the local footpath and bridleway network. This requirement, along with other action items from the CLP, is ongoing and so may be commented on or discussed at any meeting.

Councillors for Acton Burnell and Pitchford have been approached by Parishioners on a number of occasions querying and/or requesting clarification of the status of rights of way in our Parishes; with the road from Pitchford to Golding being one. Standard map checking has not provided clear answers; the current OS map is not conclusive and the Shropshire Council on-line copy of the Definitive Map does not show anything for certain areas of Pitchford. At the PC meeting in November 2019, it was reported that Council Members had received further queries and that Cllr Johnson, as one Member for Pitchford, was seeking confirmation of the classification of two roads in the Parish. At the next PC meeting, in January 2020, Cllr. Johnson reported the information she had been given by Shropshire Council and this was recorded in the minutes.

I did advise all those attending the PC meeting in July 2020 that it was not legal to amend or redact any meeting minutes once they had been agreed by Council and signed off. I also advised that I had recorded a 'minute note' on the website, with the January PC meeting documents, at the request of the Chairman.

I can find no record of the PC having been informed of the Statutory Declaration submitted in 2011 but since learning of the document, at the PC meeting in July, I have obtained a copy for the Council's files.

The Parish Council believes that it has acted wholly within its powers and duties and does not believe that it has acted illegally. However, it has acknowledged that the information provided by Shropshire Council and recorded in the minute (that there is a Statutory Order in place to keep open the road from Pitchford to Golding as a Public Right of Way) was incorrect and has therefore provided a written apology which was, I understand, hand delivered to Mr Hartley by the Council Chairman. In addition the Parish Council has published a notice in the Parish Newsletter explaining that it has provided such an apology.

As the Parish Clerk for ABFPR&L Parish Council, I can confirm the following:

- The Parish Council did not undertake a Risk Assessment before recording Councillor Johnson's report to Members, nor would it expect to do so.
- The Parish Council has at no time commissioned and issued a questionnaire relating to the road from Pitchford to Golding.
- A Councillor is not required to 'declare an interest' before hearing a report from another Council member, where there is no motion to be considered.

Elizabeth Wicks

Clerk & RFO, Acton Burnell Frodesley Pitchford Ruckley & Langley Parish Council