

Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Response to the Letter from GPS Ltd. of 24th October 2022.

Appeal: APP/A1530/W/22/3301862

Land at Brook Meadows, Tiptree

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, I wish to make a response to the statement issued by GPS Ltd. with regard to public access to Brook Meadow, Tiptree.

We are surprised by the claims made in the fourth paragraph and wish to make the following points:

- There has been open access to Brook Meadow for as long as anyone can remember. Audrey Rowe (who was interviewed on the first day of the appeal) has lived next to Brook Meadow for 58 years. Her children played in the meadow in the 70s. Denise Collins, also present on the first day, testified to the unrestricted access she had experienced on a daily basis for the past 10 years. Other witnesses state that there has been open access since pre 1969. During the time when the field was cultivated tracks were confined to the field perimeter. Since the meadow became permanent set aside in 2000, with annual mowing by a tenant farmer, tracks over the meadow quickly appeared as evidenced in the series of photographs included in the Proof of Evidence supplied by Nigel Cowlin (CD 8.12 Appendix F Figures 4 to 9).
- At no time were the open entrances fenced off.
- At no time has any member of the public testified to the presence of signs erected to indicate 'no access' or even 'permissive access'. Certainly in 12 years walking the meadow almost daily from 2009-22, I have never seen such a sign.
- To our knowledge, at no time has anyone been asked to leave the meadow.
- Following an invasion by travellers in 2017 a large concrete barrier was placed in front of the access gates in Brook Meadows (cul-de-sac) and some trenches were dug to prevent further access by caravans etc. A year or so later the concrete barrier was removed and the gates were replaced. The new gates and short fence incorporated a 'kissing gate' to allow continued access to walkers onto the meadow.
- Following the invasion by the travellers, a large quantity of mess and rubbish was left behind on the meadow. It was the local residents who came out to clear this away, aided by the tenant farmer. There have always been cordial relations between the farmer and local residents.
- There is a second, smaller, meadow adjoining Brook Meadow to the west. This meadow, in different ownership, was also open to public access until it was fenced off in the summer of 2021. This action 'cut off' many of the circular walks used regularly by dog walkers and was the reason for the application for some of the regularly used paths to be designated as Permanent Rights of Way.

We would also like to raise some concerns about the source of the letter from GPS Ltd. There is no company number attached to the letter and the company is not listed at Companies House. However, upon further searching we presume the letter is in fact coming from Granville Property Solutions Ltd. (05894035).

Furthermore the Westcliff-on-Sea address is an address of convenience supporting 401 active and dissolved companies, including this one. We also note that the agent is acting on behalf of the wider family rather than the landowner. Finally, the signature is illegible and is not accompanied by a name.

In conclusion, we question the veracity of this letter.

With kind regards

Jonathan Greenwood

Chair, Tiptree Parish Council

Chair, Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



Brook Meadow

Red: PROW

1, 2 & 3 Claimed footpaths

Light blue: Fence erected in 2021

Blue arrows: entrance points