

Statement dated: 15/3/ 2013. Bridleway 18 – Mill Lane, Chideock, Dorset.

According to Dorset County Council ROW Office Bridleway 18 runs from the end of Mill Lane County Road then it becomes both a road and a bridleway and then a bridleway with private rights – it finishes at the main entrance to Golden Cap Caravan Park at Seatown.

I do not dispute that Golden Cap Caravan Park has a ‘private right’ over the middle and southern sections of the bridleway. It is the northern stretch that ROW Office state is a road and a bridleway. If this is the case then anyone can drive to the point where ‘private rights’ take over but if you are not part of the ‘private right’ then you would have to reverse back up to the County Road of Mill Lane. This is not apparent by any signage. Chideock Parish Council have applied under ‘Freedom of Information’ for more information with regard to this northern stretch as it does not appear to have dual status on the Definitive Map.

Whilst I accept that Mr. Cox has made a few ‘refuge places’ along the northern stretch this part of the bridleway is extremely narrow and it is very difficult to walk along with cars approaching from the south and north. The ‘refuges’ Mr. Cox has made are gravelled which is of no use to those on disability scooters.

The ROW Office will not accept that there is any pedestrian/vehicle conflict on this stretch of the bridleway despite a 20 year history of complaints and Mr. Rod Webb (now retired) spending much time trying to find solutions and to what he himself stated in correspondence ‘there is no doubt that the public are put at risk’.

Mr. Cox has had his planning application approved with this bridleway now approved as ‘alternative access’. This will, no doubt, exacerbate the problems. You will remember that when we walked along this stretch that you noticed a caravan park road runs adjacent and all we have ever asked is that Mr. Cox ask his customers to use the Park access roads instead of the northern stretch of the bridleway. Appropriate signage could easily be installed. This, he has always refused to do. It is not only village walkers that are put in danger it is also his own holidaymakers who have expressed many times how dangerous it is.

We now face the onslaught of another Season with the only ‘safe’ access to Seatown and the beach being taken away. This cannot be in the interest of either the holidaymakers or the residents of the village.