

RENEWAL OF PERMISSIVE ACCESS TO FARM LAND IN THE OWNERSHIP OF MRS LESLEY KNIGHTS

At its meeting on 9th January 2017 (agenda item 7) the parish council resolved to accept my proposal whereby Bletsoe residents would continue to enjoy access to permissive routes on my farm land. Permissive access had previously been provided under Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Scheme which lapsed on 31st October 2016. As was reported to the annual parish meeting in May the first trees to be provided by the parish council as part of this new scheme were planted in March and are flourishing.

It was agreed that this scheme should be renewable annually at Michaelmas (29th September) so as to fit in with the farming calendar. Hence we have already arrived at the point where the future of this arrangement must be reviewed.

For my part I am happy for the scheme to continue for a further year until 29th September 2018, subject to the conditions previously agreed and on the strict understanding that **I have no intention to dedicate these routes as public rights of way**. However, I feel that there needs to be some clarification of the extent of the scheme in so far as it relates to equestrian use of my land. I am content that the arrangement with the parish council should include private recreational use by resident horse riders. I do not intend it to include use by non-resident riders or for any form of commercial gain. Specifically I intend it to exclude use by non-resident riders, commercial livery use, riding school use, pony trekking and any form of competitive equestrian use. Some of these activities have in the past resulted in over use of some routes in wet conditions causing surface damage and inconvenience to pedestrian users. Anyone excluded from this scheme is of course free to contact me to discuss terms under which I may be prepared to permit their use of my land without it causing disruption or inconvenience to the beneficiaries of the scheme already agreed with the parish council.

I trust that the parish council will notify me before 29th September whether it also wishes to continue with this scheme for a further year on these terms.

Lesley Knights

Old Rectory Cottage

Bletsoe

23rd August 2017