



South Milford Parish Council
Stewards House,
Lumby
LS25 5JA

Councillor Don Mackenzie
North Yorkshire County Council

cc: Mel Hobson, County Councillor for South Milford
cc: Penny Noake, North Yorkshire County Council, Public rights of way section
cc: Nigel Adams MP, Selby and Ainsty

Subject: Complaint about North Yorkshire County Council's processes for managing and maintaining Public Rights of Way

February 2022

Dear Councillor Mackenzie

South Milford Parish Council writes to complain about North Yorkshire County Council's processes for managing and maintaining Public Rights of Way. Although we have an extensive network of Public Rights of Way, their condition and accessibility of some of these is poor. In particular,

- The path linking South Milford to Ledsham was cut by the A1(M) in 2005, which rendered it unusable. Realistically there are no funds to reinstate it – however North Yorkshire County Council should have properly terminated this path as part of the planning permission for the motorway, and made improvements to the parallel country lane, which hasn't been done.
- The official (“definitive”) line of another well used path from Well Lane to Mill Lane runs through a residential building and a significant unofficial diversion is required to continue in the direction of travel. Similarly, a path linking South Milford to Monk Fryston crosses what is now a private garden, and has been obstructed for some years. Another path is blocked by a wall. Why have these issues not been addressed and diversions been put in place as appropriate?
- The path that links South Milford to villages in the east has been unusable since 2017 because Network Rail locked the level crossing on this path following embankment works. North Yorkshire County Council did not ensure that the level crossing was reopened. Following Network Rail's applications, North Yorkshire County Council has granted temporary closing orders since March 2020, despite being informed that the only alternative route is dangerous for pedestrians.
- London Road, a very well used pedestrian route as part of the common “Lumby loop” route is not an official Public Right of Way (despite being paved and signposted as a public cycleway); therefore, public access is not guaranteed for the future and responsibility for maintenance is unclear.
- North Yorkshire County Council can take a long time to process PROW applications. For example, an application submitted in 2007 has not yet been processed.
- When issues are reported by the public, feedback from local residents is that North Yorkshire County Council logs the issue but does not provide timescales for a resolution unless the individual who reported the issue contacts them again, with outstanding issues dating back many years.
- North Yorkshire County Council uses a system to prioritise paths for action. Our understanding is that this system scores urban paths, which are much more likely to have a nearby alternative, more



highly than rural paths that can require a lengthy diversion. This can lead to rural paths, such as those in our parish, being repeatedly moved down the list.

We acknowledge that North Yorkshire is the largest county in the country and that there are undoubtedly funding issues at play here, however the experiences over the past 2-3 years leave us in little doubt that North Yorkshire County Council is failing in its statutory duties to maintain the Rights of Way as listed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-local-authority-responsibilities>

We ask North Yorkshire County Council to improve their process for managing and maintaining Public Rights of Way so that issues are addressed promptly and Public Rights of Way are open and maintained for the public to enjoy, as is their legal right.

This letter has been circulated to our neighbouring Parish Councils and published on our website.

Kind regards

South Milford Parish Council