

FROM MARGARET WILLS
SEACLIFF
56 HOWGATE ROAD

TO BEMBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

The County Press, December 1st gave notice that the Isle of Wight Rights of Way Improvement Plan had been updated, and the Public has until 23rd of February to make any representations. I have waded through some 120 pages and have not found any mention of BB40.

I have left a message for Rights of Way Officer Darrel Clarke for the present position regarding BB40, and am still awaiting a response. We have had no communications from him since last Autumn, neither do we appear to have had any acknowledgement from Councillors Murwill, Tyndall and Hobart who were contacted in October with reference to the proposed diversion. Very disappointing.

At the present time BB40 is still obstructed by a fence around the landowner's beach hut and the owners of the Café have fenced off the concrete plinth and last year added a pad-locked gate, stopping the route to and from the beach completely. I climb over the fence but I should not have to do that.

The route to the beach across the area in front of the Café is used by the Public all year round and in all weather conditions. The Café is closed during the year more than it is open, and the Public is forced to walk along the seawall. This is not acceptable because at high tides one is likely to get a soaking. This imposed diversion of the footpath only benefits the landowner and the present Café owners, but the issue is that moving a footpath should not disadvantage the Public.

It is over a year since the Isle of Wight Council established the route of BB40 as correct according to the Definitive Map of 1952. The summer season will soon be upon us and this issue needs to be resolved. The Public have been using this route for many years, but now are subjected to confrontation and often abuse, which is not what we are used to in Bembridge and certainly not what locals and precious visitors should have to endure.

Obstructing a highway is breaking the law. The Landowner has known since 2003 when she first purchased the beach hut, that it caused an obstruction. It is odd that the Isle of Wight Council did not enforce clearance of BB40 at that time as it is the duty of Rights of Way to look after our footpaths.

Please could the Parish Council support me, and others who have used this path for many years, and write to the Isle of Wight Council and ask for the obstruction to BB40 to be removed.

Margaret Wills

January 16th 2018