

The Route F1403 Footpath between Ashdene Park, Taghnevan and Tullygally East Road, Craigavon (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

Observations of the Department upon the objections made to the proposed Order and not withdrawn

The Department for Infrastructure has made The Route F1403 Footpath between Ashdene Park, Taghnevan and Tullygally East Road, Craigavon (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016. The Order abandons 441 metres of footpath commencing at the front of No. 10 Ashdene Park, Taghnevan and running in a south-westerly direction to Tullygally East Road, Craigavon.

Following the publication of the Notice of Intention for this Order in the local press, one objection was received. The objectors' main concerns were:

- that the path was regularly used and was the safest pedestrian walkway in the area for mothers and children;
- that the area was a protected area for wildlife;
- the path is regularly used by the NIFRS and PSNI;
- removal of the path would be a waste of money;
- the anti social behaviour is not related to the footpath but to the Taghnevan area itself;
- lack of upkeep has reduced the use of the footpath and increased anti social behaviour;
- there are plans to develop football pitches in the area; and
- erection of a fence would be unsightly and would not reduce anti-social behaviour in the area.

In accordance with Article 133(4)(a) of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, the Department's observations on the objections are as follows:

- Monitoring of the footpath has shown that it is greatly underused and there is a well lit footpath with dropped kerbs along the Old Portadown Road which runs parallel to this one. Therefore the Department believes that the abandonment will not adversely affect residents' movement between neighbouring housing estates.
- The Woodland Trust, as an adjacent landowner, supports the proposals as their work has been hampered and their staff harassed while on site visits and closure will aid the protection and recovery of wildlife in the area.
- NIFRS and PSNI resources have been put under pressure dealing with anti-social behaviour, including drug-dealing, along the footpath and a recent spate of fires being lit along the path which could spread to residents' oil tanks is of great concern. Both bodies have been consulted

and are in favour of the abandonment. The PSNI has also confirmed that the footpath is the source of anti social behaviour nearly every weekend.

- Council, NIFRS and PSNI resources are being regularly expended to deal with the consequences of anti social behaviour on the footpath.
- The council has advised that all work to remove the footpath and erect a fence would be carried out in a manner sympathetic to the adjacent householders. New hedging is proposed to reduce the visual impact of a fence.
- The main aim in abandoning the footpath is to reduce anti-social behaviour and make the area safer for the whole community.
- The Department is unable to comment on any future plans for the development of football pitches but is certain that any such plans will be required to meet the relevant safety standards and planning approval.
- The local Policing and Community Safety Partnership has dealt with numerous complaints from local residents and community associations about anti social behaviour and, despite its efforts to identify local solutions, it believes the abandonment / closure of the path is the only long term solution.
- A survey of nearby residents carried out by Taghnevan Community Development association confirmed that 272 people were in favour of the abandonment. This is the only objection.

The Department having considered the objection made, and not withdrawn, has decided that the proposed abandonment order should be made.

Garry McKenna
A Senior Officer of the Department
5th October 2016