

Rec'd Slu/24

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R.O.W

FAO Ian Aston.

30TH October 2024

Your ref: ROW/3282977

Dear Sir,

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981- Section 53

Lancashire County Council

Title of Order: Public Footpath from Banks Road to Station Road, North Meols, West Lancashire Borough (Definitive Map Modification order ) 2014

Thank you for your letter of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

POINTS TO NOTE: for ROW/3282977

1. Inspector decided that this route should be recorded as a BRIDLEWAY. This issue needs to be prioritised.
2. CLEAR evidence given by riders at Public Enquiry. Most had used this route since childhood as walkers, cyclists and as horse riders.
3. ALL USERS considered this route to be a natural continuation of the "ancient road" ( now BW No 47) which is immediately opposite on Banks Road.
4. There is still a LOWERED KERB (which would permit vehicular/ horse access) immediately opposite BW 47 on Banks Road immediately adjacent to the entrance to [REDACTED]
5. BANKS PARISH COUNCIL have attempted to have this "SLUICE ROUTE" formally recognised as early as the 1950's. It was widely acknowledged to have been used for centuries.
6. Efforts at this time may have been jeopardised by plans for the extension of the Crossens Pumping Station and possible disturbance of the route along the river embankment which must have been used to access the MULTI-COASTAL Business Activities at the pumping station site. (see previous statement) submitted at P. Enquiry. *Copy Enclosed.*
7. Some time after this Mr Trow acquired this section of route behind/ beside his house which accessed onto Banks Road. Horse riders/ cyclists continued along the field edge to access the route continuing across the road to (now BW 47). Clear, accurate descriptions given at Public Enquiry.
8. Both the Environment Agency and the Fishing Association had knowledge of horse/ cycle use along this route and acknowledged their OWN VEHICULAR use to the CAR PARK . These can hardly have objections at this stage !
9. I suggest that objections raised stating case histories largely featuring the railways are irrelevant as generally these are subject to a rather different set of criteria. . It is interesting that the now disused RAILWAY LINE THROUGH BANKS VILLAGE IS NOW A MUCH USED CONCESSIONARY BRIDLEWAY- which along with this SLUICE ROUTE SECTION and BW 47 forms a decent off-road circular route around the village.
10. This route(as a Bridleway) is just as necessary TODAY as it was 100 YEARS AGO.
  - a.) Would connect with BW 47 across the road.
  - b.) Provide ACCESS to the NEW COASTAL PATH (KING CHARLES III WAY)
  - c.) Provide access (off BUSY MAIN ROAD) to TRANS PENNINE TRAIL-CYCLE TRACK to Southport and beyond.--Both located just along Banks Road opposite the pumping station.

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d.)The CYCLE PATH and new COASTAL PATH continue along both sides of the river inlet bank which is a continuation of what is now referred to as THE SLUICE.

di.)

Yours faithfully Mrs E Tyson

E. Tyson

Mrs Elizabeth Tyson :



ref:ROW 3282977

FAO Mr Michael Edwards.

Banks (North Meols) Parish Council have been attempting to have this route recognised since the 1950's- so clearly it was locally known about and had been well used, probably for centuries. Early map evidence of roads in this West Lancashire locality are very sparse because simply there were few recognisable routes across this flooded, boggy terrain bounded by rivers / a canal/ large meres inland and the coast (Southport).

All access to these coastal villages was and largely still is severely constrained by available river crossings. ( A59 trunk road Preston- Liverpool) and the A 565 Preston-Southport road -only BUILT 1935/1936, NAMED SOUTHPORT NEW ROAD – which encompasses the aptly named WATER LANE / Bridging point over THE SLUICE. Formerly over the coastal inlet for the channel at CROSSENS . This original bridge at Water Lane – built by T FLEETWOOD circa 1715 crucially for public use , not private gain, was recorded on his gravestone in the local churchyard. NB : Water Lane/ Station Road is the access to the route in question at this inquiry.

The other coastal route , MARINE DRIVE, from Crossens roundabout across the marsh to Southport and beyond was only built during the 1960's. The RAILWAY LINE was for years the nearest to coast transport link available. Again, significantly this disused railway now serves as a concessionary Bridleway through Banks village.

I have no doubt that “A ROUTE” existed along the line of THE SLUICE waterway since its construction in the early 1700's. Historically and geographically events around this waterway are very detailed and support local belief that this route should be recognised at least to \bridleway status creating an asset for the community today.

Basically the Sluice was created to drain Martin Mere (Burscough)- then one of Englands largest lakes - to the nearest coastal access which was a tidal inlet on the Banks/ Crossens boundary. ( now the site of Crossens Pumping Station).A route developed along the embankment created by the digging of this waterway- not least for access for the 200 workers involved and the horses and carts required to remove the soil and silt.

Originally access along the riverbank (later, The Sluice )would have been needed to access the ferry needed to cross this coastal inlet.

This location is still recorded as “Fiddlers Ferry” and as early as 1252 was access for an ancient crossing of the marsh and the River Ribble. This is the point of access for this claimed route and its continuation across Banks Road (now BW 47, 48 and 49 )recognised as an Ancient Highway along the coastal sea wall defences, continuing along the sea shore for fishing, farming and occupational activities.

On the site adjacent to THE SLUICE was a mill, later to become the early pumping station. Also a substantial fishing industry, a significant boat building yard and associated employment featured on this waterway until the early 1900's. Workers gained access by the shortest route possible ie. along THE SLUICE embankment which would have acted as a tidal sea defence at this time.

In fact fishing both coastal and inland at the large lake of Martin Mere is well documented from Mediaeval times .



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The monks from Burscough Priory accessed the coast at Banks to harvest salt to preserve their fish and meat. Remnants of the earth banks are still findable today. This link with Banks must have been along an ancient route across the flooded, boggy, inhospitable marshy land.

Ecclesiastical links with this location are very strong. Stone crosses are still evident along routes from Burscough to Banks. The 1888 OS map marks site of "URNS" found AD 1840 on land beside THE SLUICE which are proof of an accessible public route.

The monks and other notable visitors used the ancient crossing of the River Ribble from this point of Fiddlers Ferry.

Oliver Cromwell was recorded as marching along the seashore (now Marsh Road/ Shore Road) to the Hesketh Bank river crossing down Guide Road, across the Ribble estuary to Freckleton. The right to keep this route as a carriage crossing was won at a Public Inquiry during the 1990's. Similarly another ancient track from Moss Lane to Shore Road was recognised as a BW at a Public Inquiry in 2001. BW No. 53 was recognised as another crucial link with the coast and the Rivers Ribble and Douglas crossing point. Much as the claimed route along the SLUICE would have done for ferry/ river crossings at Fiddlers Ferry, arriving on foot or by horse.

Records from 1869 showed 100 fishermen working from Banks/ Crossens. As the sea receded the shrimping and cockling with horses and carts became a major source of employment here and local residents, myself included, remember fishermen accessing the shore via these routes which we are needing to RECLAIM today, into the 1960's.

Census details from 1700's to 1800's record 2 smithies along Ralphs Wifes Lane-close to its junction with this route- access would have been possible for horses via the route in question and undoubtedly be the shortest way back to the Station Road end of the village. Working horses were an essential part of life in BANKS village until the 1940's due to the unstable, boggy ground-"special shoes" were fitted ie. To spread their weight and prevent them getting bogged down. Paths to a certain width were laid out on farmland to allow horses and carts to access the land. A local milk delivery, vegetable deliveries and coal( collected from sidings at Hundred End Station) were all made by horse and cart accessing this track between BANKS ROAD and STATION ROAD. (Many 'photos available in local archives )

During the 1930's THE SLUICE AND OTHER LOCAL WATERWAYS WERE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CROSSENS DRAINAGE BOARD-SILTING UP BOTH FROM COASTAL AND INLAND SOURCES WAS A MAJOR PROBLEM. LOCAL RESIDENTS AND LABOURERS UNDERTOOK DIGGING OUT AND REMOVING SLUDGE FROM THE WATERCOURSES - BY HORSE AND CART. THIS TRACK ALONG THE SLUICE WAS THEIR MAIN POINT OF ACCESS.

During later developments along the SLUICE Waterway the original embankment track would have been lost as the New Pumping Station site was developed and opened in 1961. However local knowledge and map evidence agree that the TRACK at Point B/C continued for approximately 50 metres in a straight line to BANKS ROAD./RALPHS WIFES LANE exiting directly opposite what are now Bridleways Nos. 47,48 and 49.

I remember this track in the 1960's being much closer to No 99 (the last house in the row). I believe this route was taken into the garden of No 99 during the late 1990's. Unfortunately because this route had no Definitive status at the time despite earlier efforts of the parish Council and the local ramblers Association no action was taken to protect this route. However, local riders, cyclists and walkers continued without opposition to use the field edge to access BANKS ROAD and the



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Bridleways (Nos 47, 48 & 49) towards the coast. There is still a LOWERED KERB ACCESS immediately opposite the Bridleway entrance. My 1960's memory is of an open track entrance down to the marsh- no gates, hedges or fencing and only a gappy hedge along either side of BANKS ROAD towards the village. One could clearly see on-going farming activities and along the TRACKS in both directions.

It is hard to reconcile the current, productive, economic scene with the isolation, poverty and lack of amenity experienced in North Meols only a century ago.

The area in general including the villages of Banks, Hesketh Bank and Tarleton were compared to living on an island.

From Mediaeval times the waterways were crucial transport links and the West Lancashire Railway was, during its service 1877 to 1961 the best transport link available. All roads and paths today are constructed on Sea Bank defences ( New Coastal Path- opened 2023) or EMBANKMENTS on CAUSEWAYS flanked by deep drainage channels. Many routes were often impassable, rutted and flooded, even today. Some tracks were eventually made into through routes and adopted. ie. NEW LANE PACE- a continuation of BANKS ROAD – along MARSH ROAD and SHORE ROAD to Hesketh Bank- all aptly named. Many roads are still only fit for horse and cart transport. The Heavy Goods Vehicles of today cause terrible subsidence problems and often finish up overturned in drainage ditches and fields, yet another hazard for local riders and cyclists.

West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC) LOCAL Plan 2012/2027 features The SLUICE route as a "LANDSCAPE CHARACTER/ HISTORY" and shows the site of the Old Pump House as a "NATURE CONSERVATION SITE" with a clearly marked access track to Point E on current claim. Historically there are photographs in circulation of ladies (circa 1920's) enjoying a picnic beside their horse drawn carriage on this site.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) were only asked by Banks Parish Council to determine this route as a Public Footpath largely on the strength of fairly recent user evidence obtained at a public meeting some years ago.

I would ask you to consider Bridleway Status for this route given the increased number of riding/ cycling users who have submitted User Evidence Forms.

Many of these riders considered and used this newly claimed section as a natural continuation of the "Old Road Route" now recognised as BWs 47, 48 & 49.

I hope that by looking at a broader picture of activities in this rather unique situation which I accept has been subjected to vast changes over time and not least TIDES that this route can be formally recognised and once again become a crucial link for riders/ cyclists at a time when SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL and RECREATIONAL issues need to be economically viable.

This short link joining with the concessionary BW route along the old railway line will make a SAFER, circular ride around the village, linking up a number of the local Livery Yards. This link is as functional today for safety and recreational activities as it was for travellers/ workers centuries ago.

RIDERS CAN CONTINUE ON BRIDLEWAYS FOR SAFER OFF ROAD RIDING.  
CYCLISTS CAN CROSS BANKS ROAD TO ACCESS THE COASTAL CYCLE ROUTE ALONG MARINE DRIVE TO SOUTHPORT AND BEYOND to NATIONAL TRAILS ie Trans Pennine Route.

WALKERS CAN ACCESS THE NEW "KING CHARLES WAY" (2023) linked to the Round Britain Coastal Path.

ROW 3282977.



To Whom it may concern,

RE: WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981- PART III  
PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY FROM BANKS ROAD TO STATION ROAD, NORTH MEOLS,  
WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH (DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION) ORDER 2014

REF : LSG4/PROW/5.46089/MB  
DMMO No. 804-529

Whilst I strongly support Banks/ North Meols Parish Councils efforts to have this route and others in the locality – Station Road to Banks Road reopened and accorded a definitive status, I feel that I must object to the Modification order for Footpath status.

I have known of this route and its usage for over 50 years. Vehicles, horses, cyclists and walkers all used the route which provided direct access away from the main road from one side of the village to the other, until “cut off” at Banks Road end circa 1990.

It would be a missed opportunity for the Banks and Hesketh Bank communities for this route not to have a HIGHER STATUS recognised. I feel that Bridleway Status affording Multi- Purpose use would be an invaluable road safety asset.

This historical route – formerly used by working horses and carts for Southport Shrimpers and Fishing activities directly links to Bridleway Nos 47 and 48 at Banks Road and is very close to the new Sefton Cycleway route ( avoiding dangerous main road junction at the Plough Roundabout).- taking users along the coastal road route to Southport.

The Station Road entrance to this route (which already affords vehicular access) is only a short distance from the old station at Banks village where the disused rail track is a concessionary bridleway route – already widely used by horse riders and walkers etc. To access quieter country lanes or ultimately if required to the other end of Bridleway Nos 47- 49 thereby providing a Circular Route around the village perimeter, avoiding the more congested village centre.

I hope that further user evidence is being presented to you and that serious consideration can be given for Bridleway recognition for this historic and much needed route.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs E Tyson