



**CPRE Kent 6
Public Rights of Way**

Appeal by Gladman

PINS Reference: APP/V2255/W/15/3067553, 3067567 & 3148140

Swale Borough Council reference: 15/500671/OUT & 15/510595/OUT

Land Off London Road, Newington, Kent.

**Proof of Evidence of Margaret Milsted-Williamson
Swale Local Footpaths Officer, Ramblers Association
on behalf of the Kent Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England**

The Kent Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquility and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 I am the Local Footpaths Officer for the Swale area of the Kent branch of The Ramblers' Association.
- 1.2 Our organisation wishes to lodge an objection to the proposed development at Pond Farm, Newington.
- 1.3 Having studied the plans for both developments we note that the public footpath ZR 60 will remain, however the surrounding countryside will change substantially.

2. Objection

- 2.1 Ramblers go on organised walks in order to enjoy the countryside. In our opinion there would be far less enjoyment, to walkers in general, if the orchard is destroyed and replaced by houses.
- 2.2 The attractive views of the Kent agricultural countryside would be destroyed by this development. The benefit of the walk on the public footpath from Mill Hill to Boxted, on the opposite side of the A2 from the proposed development, and its attractiveness would be permanently lost.
- 2.3 At present, on the footpath from Boxted down to the Newington railway station, over the road from Breach to Newington Church, there are very attractive views of the Kent agricultural countryside leading up a valley towards Hartlip in the South. This view makes this walk very attractive to Ramblers.
- 2.4 The suggested Pond Farm development would be a major urban encroachment in the middle of an otherwise rural scene and would be detrimental to the mainly agricultural vista from the footpath. In other words, this proposed development would destroy an otherwise tranquil countryside scene. This would mean that the attractiveness and benefit of this walk would be permanently lost.
- 2.5 Currently the access to footpath ZR 60 is through a hole in the tree line, off the A2. Approaching the foot path from either direction on the A2 means walking along a fairly narrow pavement with the busy A2 alongside; to be able to cross this busy road via the gap in the trees then find a haven behind the trees is a delight. With the trees deflecting some of the traffic noise, and the sight and smell of the fruit in the orchard, the A2 is soon forgotten. The new development would mean the footpath would be bordered on one side by houses, an access road and a playground.

3. Importance to Health

- 3.1 In conjunction with the NHS Trust we organise important health walks. They take place on a weekly basis from Lower Halstow.
- 3.2 Recently some have been starting from the Tuck Inn, on the A2, in order to encourage more people from Newington and Hartlip and the surrounding villages to benefit from walking.
- 3.3 Our route from and back to the Tuck Inn has incorporated walking along footpath ZR 60. If the houses are built this would certainly have a negative impact on the Health Walkers' enjoyment, as described above, but also it would mean crossing the A2 with additional traffic from the new development (600 vehicle movements per day from the smaller development), a far more dangerous crossing than is currently experienced.
- 3.4 Several of our Health Walkers bring their dogs, and crossing a busier A2 with a dog would, in my opinion, deter people from walking with us.

4. Summary

- 4.1 The Ramblers Association strongly objects to both developments and to the permanent loss of further important footpaths used for recreational and health purposes.