



PENNINGTON LANE USAGE SURVEY

June 2021

Rule 6 Party SAVE STANSTED VILLAGE &

STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL

Relating to the planning Appeal by Bloor Homes, Bower Croft Ltd & Oaks Croft Ltd against the refusal of planning permission by Uttlesford District Council for:

‘Outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for up to 168 dwellings (Class C3) including 40% affordable homes, public open space, local equipped area for play, sustainable drainage systems, landscaping and all associated infrastructure and development’.

Appeal Reference APP/C1570/W/21/3271310

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the survey

1.1.1 This report has been prepared by local residents who support Save Stansted Village (SSV) for submission to the Inspector at the Public Inquiry Appeal ref. APP/C1570/W/21/3271310 to be held on the 13th July 2021.

1.1.2 The historic Pennington Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet, abuts the east boundary of the Appeal Site. The Application documents include a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) by James Blake Associates. In LVIA Table 4 – Summary of Visual Receptors and Assessment of Sensitivity ‘Users of Pennington Lane’ is the statement: *Pennington Lane is a rural lane with no footpath and users are predominantly motorists.* Local residents know this is untrue and decided to find out how and why the Lane is used.

1.1.3 The aim of the survey was to find the answers to the following:

- Who is using the Lane?
- How many people are using the Lane?
- When and how are people using the Lane?
- What do people value about the Lane?

1.2 Surveys

1.2.1 Two surveys were prepared, and the results analysed:

- A Site Survey: an onsite count of people and their activities, as well as vehicles, on two days from 6am to 8pm on Wednesday, 19th May, and Saturday, 22nd May 2021
- An Online Survey available from the 11th May 2021 to the 31st May 2021.

1.3 Appendices

1.3.1 Six Appendices are included with the report:

- Appendix A: Photo Location of the Survey Point for the Site Survey
- Appendix B: Blank survey sheets for the Site Survey
- Appendix C: Content of the Online Survey
- Appendix D: Site Survey data from the 19th and 22nd May 2021
- Appendix E: Analysis of data: Site and Online Survey

- Appendix F: Photos submitted by the public.

1.4 Analysis: Online Survey

- 1.4.1 652 responses were received to the Online Survey. Four duplicate entries were deleted. 202 respondents declined to give their name and 61 of these did not give their postcode. Six of the 202 respondents were in support of the development proposals or saw Pennington Lane as a good short cut that should be widened to make the Lane faster to drive.
- 1.4.2 It is understood that on previous surveys submitted to public inquiries the validity of including those people who did not give their name or postcode was questioned. It was therefore thought prudent to remove these 202 respondents from the analysis.
- 1.4.3 The 196 respondents (202 less 6) reported that they used they Lane in similar ways to those included in the analysis and their comments were very similar to the remaining 439 respondents. If they had been included, the results would have been reinforced rather than diluted.

1.5 Analysis: who is using the Lane?

- 1.5.1 The aim of the survey was to find out who was using Pennington Lane (the Lane), how it was being used and what people valued.
- 1.5.2 The Online survey revealed that people of all ages, from children to the elderly, use the Lane and whilst a few drive down it, the majority of people are using it for recreation. It is not just local residents who use the Lane as people come from local towns and villages. In the Online Survey the second most popular activity after walking was 'accessing footpaths'. The Lane has good connectivity as it is used as part of longer, circular walks around the village, gives access to Bridleway 3 and on to Manuden or the Harcamlow Way as well as an all-weather route for local residents to take the dog for a walk and other activities.
- 1.5.3 The Lane is considered a safe place so people with disabilities feel able to use it for wheelchair access and walking, on their own. People with pushchairs regularly use the Lane and Bentfield Primary School uses it to train Year 5 cyclists.

1.6 Analysis: how many people are using the Lane?

- 1.6.1 It was not the best of weather on either Site Survey day and neither day was advertised in any way. Results show that between 6am and 8pm 233 vehicles used the Lane on the Wednesday and 114 on the Saturday. There were less commercial vehicles on the Saturday and obviously no cars on the school run.
- 1.6.2 The number of people using the Lane for recreation however was far higher: 406 people passed the survey point on the Lane on the Wednesday and 435 people on the Saturday.

- 1.6.3 It is known that some of these people were going one way up or down the Lane but if it is assumed that they were all return trips, it means that over 200 people are using the Lane daily if not more. On sunny days the Lane will be even busier.

1.7 Analysis: when and how are people using the Lane?

- 1.7.1 The Lane is used by people from early morning until nightfall and even at night for cycling, stargazing, and running.
- 1.7.2 The range of activities is considerable: the top five were walking, accessing footpaths, dog walking, cycling, and running. People reported that it was a good place for children and a place to learn to ride a bike, understand the country code and discover nature and wildlife. People come in wheelchairs and a blind walker and double amputee have been seen on the Lane, on their own. Horse riders are able to access the Bridleway at the north end of the Lane. It is also used for scootering and roller skating as well as access to school and the allotments.
- 1.7.3 Another activity was revealed by the Online Survey. People were asked to submit photos of their activities in the Lane and several landscape photographs were submitted. Landscape photography is clearly enjoyed by many people on the Lane.
- 1.7.4 What is clear is that people do not expect to be mown down any minute by a vehicle. The vehicles are few and far between. It is possible to walk the full length of the Lane without meeting a car and because it is quiet, it is possible to hear a vehicle coming. This perception is backed up by the photographs submitted by the public which show dogs off the lead, young children on bikes, people with pushchairs and horses in the middle of the Lane. They are relaxed and confident about using the Lane for recreational activities.

1.8 Analysis: what do people value about the Lane?

- 1.8.1 When asked in the Online Survey what five things they valued most about the Lane from a list developed by researchers looking at tranquillity, the top answer was scenery - i.e. seeing big open spaces without commercial development, the views etc. The Lane predominantly has a rural character despite being affected by the construction of Walpole Meadows. The rural setting of the Lane contributes to people's enjoyment.
- 1.8.2 The second most popular answer was nature and wildlife - ie. being out in nature, seeing birds, wildlife, and the natural environment. Since lockdown it has become clear that contact with nature and green spaces is vital to our mental health.
- 1.8.3 The absence of Infrastructure was next - ie. only small roads, not built over, untouched landscape and no light pollution. A dark night sky is valued. Then peacefulness: the absence of noise – ie not so much traffic, with stillness and little noise. This allows 'natural sounds' to be appreciated - ie. birdsong, rustling of leaves, sound of the wind in the fields etc.

- 1.8.4 People added their own reasons emphasizing that it felt a safe place to be and that its historical value is important - *a lane that has existed for a long time, and a sense that it remains untouched and something to be treasured and preserved.*

1.9 Conclusion

- 1.9.1 The surveys were compiled by residents with no special expertise in preparing surveys and no doubt there will be gaps in the methodology which more experienced people could identify. With the Online Survey, participants were aware that the survey would be submitted to the Inquiry and this may have tempered their responses to say Question 8 where scenery and the lack of built intrusion were the top two reasons for valuing the Lane. It was however their written comments that were so powerful. These reinforced that the public enjoy the Lane for many, many reasons including the rural views and the lack of built development.
- 1.9.2 It was a surprise that using the Lane to access footpaths was the second most popular activity. The Lane has good connectivity and is used as part of a number of circular and long-distance routes.
- 1.9.3 Whilst online respondents were aware that the survey would be presented at an Inquiry the Site Survey was held, unannounced on a weekday, and a Saturday and was a physical count of how many vehicles and people were using the Lane and what they were doing. The survey form had to be expanded for the second day as the number of users had been totally underestimated. The Lane became very well used during lockdown and many people are still using the Lane for recreation.
- 1.9.4 The Site Survey findings serve to reinforce those of the Online Survey, and vice versa. This increases the reliability of both, as individual exercises that ultimately support the same conclusions.
- 1.9.5 The northwest area of the village is poorly served for open space and Pennington Lane provides a much used, much loved and highly valued recreational resource for local residents, visitors and long-distance walkers, runners, photographers, cyclists and horse riders. The surveys confirmed what residents have always known: it is not a Lane predominantly used by motorists. It is predominantly used by people.
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2

METHODOLOGY

2.1

Methodology: Research base

2.1.1

Pennington Lane is a tranquil place. In SSV's objection to the Application reference was made to a research paper on tranquillity by Wartmann and Mackaness¹. The researchers conclude that:

Our results indicate that people find tranquillity in certain landscapes despite the presence of other people or traffic noise, which highlights the importance of taking into account tranquillity 'as experienced' for the purposes of planning and policy-making.

2.1.2

The research was undertaken in Scotland, a quite different landscape to Essex but in responses to a questionnaire, answers relevant to Pennington Lane are:

- **Absence of people:** *you can be on your own; lack of people; not crowded*
- **Landscape Elements: feelings:** *sunshine on my face; peaceful; lovely; peaceful; feel at peace; atmosphere; tranquillity; calmness; peace and tranquillity; pleasant; peace; earthy; down-to-earth; serene*
- **Absence of noise:** *not so much traffic; no noise pollution; stillness; quiet; can't hear the road; no city sounds; little noise*
- **Nature and wildlife:** *being out in nature; wildlife; birds; getting into the wild; at least to some extent natural; butterflies; flowers; lovely nature; peace amongst the trees*
- **Scenery:** *view is lovely; seeing big open spaces without commercial development; views; beautiful; view is free and not blocked; scenery*
- **Natural sounds:** *rustling of the leaves; birdsong; bees humming; bird sounds; sound of the wind in the grass; hear the birds; noises of nature; hear the wind in the trees*
- **Change from everyday life:** *no-one is rushing; it's a contrast to my busy life; we think of it at work to destress; you're not looking at hustle and bustle; get away; lack of city life; opposite of city life; you can watch the world go by*

¹ Flurina M. Wartmann & William A. Mackaness (2020) Describing and mapping where people experience tranquillity. An exploration based on interviews and Flickr photographs, *Landscape Research*, 45:5, 662-681, DOI: 10.1080/01426397.2020.1749250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2020.1749250>.

- **Absence of infrastructure:** nice being in a place where humanity hasn't left much of a stamp; lack of a lot of civilisation; not many roads; not built over; untouched; no disturbing lights; only small roads
- **Weather:** the climate is very pleasant; blue sky; sun; also great in the rain; mist; wind; sunshine;
- **Friendly people:** there is always people to help; people are nice and helpful; nobody is bothering people care; everybody behaves nicely; people respecting nature
- **Fresh air:** Fresh air; smell of the air; perception of the clean air; less pollution; no pollution
- **Absence of trash:** clean.

2.1.3 SSV has taken this research as a basis for finding out what people value about the Lane.

2.2 Methodology: Site Survey

2.2.1 The Site Survey was held on Wednesday the 19th May 2021, a working/ school day, and at the weekend on Saturday the 22nd May 2021. The Site Survey was deliberately not advertised in any way for either day.

2.2.2 The single survey point was at the junction of Rainsford Road and Pennington Lane and the location is shown in Appendix A. Lack of resources meant that the Site Survey did not include the users of Pennington Lane who:

- use the cycle/pedestrian path out of Walpole Meadows and turn north onto Pennington Lane towards Bridleway 3 and Cambridge Road
- drive or ride by horse up Pennington Lane from Cambridge Road and use Bridleway 3 to Manuden at the north end of the Lane.

2.2.3 A survey sheet was prepared for the first day (see Appendix B) but the number of users had been underestimated even in the poor weather conditions and for the Saturday, the survey sheet was expanded to give more room for recording (Appendix B)

2.2.4 The survey sheet included separate categories for vehicles:

- Car
- Van
- Pickup
- Lorry
- Motorbike
- Other

- 2.2.5 The range of activities on the survey sheet was as listed in the Online Survey:
- Dog walker
 - Runner
 - Cyclist
 - Child (changed to child walking on Saturday)
 - Pushchair with child (Saturday only)
 - Horse rider
 - Roller Skater
 - Allotment Use
 - Child cyclist/scooter
- 2.2.6 The weather data was recorded visually with the temperature taken from AccuWeather.
- 2.2.7 The survey was held from 6am to 8pm to reflect the times in the Online Survey.
- 2.2.8 An individual was recorded as they passed the survey point and their activity noted. Those who turned around having travelled down the Lane and walked back were recorded twice.
- 2.2.9 On the Wednesday, the Bikeability group of 12 cyclists from Bentfield Primary School used Pennington Lane for training Year 5's. They made three circuits of the Lane from Rainsford Road then back down Longcroft. They were not counted as individual cyclists but as a group recorded separately.
- 2.2.10 Alongside the count people were asked to fill in the Online Survey and a QR code was available for them to use. A tablet was available for people who did not have access to the internet or needed assistance. Covid precautions were taken between users of the tablet and respected at all times.
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2.3 Methodology: Online Survey

- 2.3.1 The Online Survey was available to all from the 11th May 2021 to the 31st May 2021 and was widely advertised. Survey Monkey was used for the survey and the list on questions as they appeared online is included in Appendix C.
- 2.3.2 People were asked:
- If they used Pennington Lane for vehicular access
 - If so, how often and at what times of day

- Whether they used the Lane for recreation, how often and at what time of day
- What activities did they do in the Lane: this list was based on observations of activities already seen on the Lane by local residents, but people were asked to add any not on the list
- To send photographs of their activities in the Lane
- To pick five attributes about the Lane that were most important to them. This list was based on the research by Wartmann and Mackaness
- What improvements or changes they would like to see in the Lane
- An option to give their name and postcode
- Their age bracket: under 12, 12-18,19-39, 40-59 and 60+.

3 SITE SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Site survey results

3.1.1 Site Survey data collected on Wednesday, 19th and Saturday, 22nd May 2021 from 6am to 8pm is included in Appendix D. The analysis of the data is included in Appendix E.

3.1.2 On the Wednesday, 233 vehicles and 406 people were counted passing the survey point and, on the Saturday, it was 114 vehicles and 435 people. (See Table 1, Figures 1 & 2.)

3.1.3 On the weekday, 44 vans/pickups/ lorries and 187 cars used the Lane but, on the weekend, only 16 vans/pickups and 96 cars came by. The Lane is clearly used by commercial drivers who know where to bypass the congestion through the village on Cambridge Road. People from Manuden also use the Lane to get to the Cambridge Road without having to go through the village. Several cars were seen taking children to Bentfield Primary School.

3.1.4 There were more people out on the Saturday despite the poor weather conditions. Table 1 below and Figure 3 illustrates people's activities.

Table 1: Activities		
Activity	Wednesday	Saturday
Walkers/adults/children	195	220
Dog walkers	90	122
Runners	43	22
Cyclists	54	28
Horse riders	0	3
Child on a bike or scooter	4	20
Horse riders	0	3
Allotment users	17	15
Children in pushchairs	Not recorded	5
Bentfield Primary School training	3 circuits	0
TOTAL	406	435

3.1.5 Talking to walkers it is clear they fall into different groups:

- Those taking a quiet, leisurely stroll
- The faster walkers doing it for health reasons including Nordic walkers
- Parents with young children
- Parents taking children to the primary school
- Residents using the Lane as part of a daily circuit around the village of 4 to 5 miles
- People accessing the Bridleway at the north end of the Lane as part of a circular walk via the permissive path or as far as Manuden or the Harcamlow Way, a long-distance path that runs on the north boundary of the Parish.

3.1.6 Children in pushchairs and on bikes or scooters were noted as it shows that their carers feel it is safe enough to have their children on the Lane with time to get out of the way if they hear a vehicle coming along.

3.1.7 The higher number of runners on the Wednesday (43) compared to Saturday (22) was thought to be people working at home who need a break from their computers. Many of the runners did not return past the survey point and talking to them, many are on a long route and are only using the Lane one way.

3.1.8 Cyclists generally did not pass the survey point twice and like the runners are probably on the Lane as part of a longer route.

3.1.9 Three horses and their riders passed the survey point coming from the north on the Saturday. They had come from the Bridleway at the north end of the Lane and said it was a regular ride for them.

3.1.10 There is only room for one or two cars at the Allotments, so most people walk there. Some users park their cars at the end of Rainsford Road and walk to the Allotments.

3.2 Site survey results: when the Lane was accessed

3.2.1 The time at which vehicles and people were using the Lane was recorded and is illustrated on Figures 1 & 2. Use is highest from 8am to 4pm on the Wednesday but later on the Saturday as the rain stopped.

4 ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 652 responses were received to the Online Survey. Four duplicate entries were deleted. 202 respondents declined to give their name and 61 of these did not give their postcode. Six of the 202 respondents were in support of the development proposals or saw Pennington Lane as a good short cut that should be widened to make the Lane faster to drive.

4.1.2 It is understood that on previous surveys submitted to public inquiries the validity of including those people who did not give their name or postcode was questioned. It was therefore thought prudent to remove these 202 respondents from the analysis.

4.1.3 The 196 respondents (202 less 6) reported that they used they Lane in similar ways to those included in the analysis and their comments were very similar to the remaining 439 respondents. If they had been included, the results would have been reinforced rather than diluted.

4.1.4 The postcodes of the remaining 445 respondents were analysed.

- 396 from CM 24: Stansted Mountfitchet
- 37 from CM21, CM22 & CM23: Bishop's Stortford/Sawbridgeworth
- 2 from CB11: Saffron Walden
- 1 from CM20: Harlow
- 1 from CM5: Ongar
- 2 from CB6: Great Dunmow
- 1 from IG8: Buckhurst Hill
- 5 from postcodes in the Midlands, Lichfield and Walsall.

It was decided to omit the last six respondents on the basis that they may well visit Pennington Lane but it cannot be frequently.

4.1.5 The data from the remaining 439 respondents was used for the analysis.

4.2 Online survey results: age range of respondents

4.2.1 Figure 7 in Appendix E illustrates the age range of respondents to the online survey. Over 200 people fall into the 40-59 age group and over 100 are in the 60+ bracket. Just

under 100 are in the 19-39 age group with teenagers and children making a small contribution.

4.3 Online survey results: vehicular use

4.3.1 Of the 429 respondents, 254 people said they used Pennington Lane for vehicular access and 185 did not.

4.3.2 Figure 4 shows how often those who drive on the Lane use it and Figure 5 at what times of day. People are using it most once a week, then several times a week with the morning period recording the highest number of journeys.

4.4 Online survey results: recreational use

4.4.1 429 people said they used Pennington Lane for recreation and 10 said they did not.

4.4.2 Figure 6 shows the time of day that people are using the Lane for recreation. The morning is the most popular time but the afternoon is not far behind. Early evening use is prevalent and even in the early morning there are plenty of users. Night cycling and night running was also reported.

4.4.3 People were asked how they used the Lane for recreation and fifteen activities were listed. Figure 8 illustrates the results. Walking was the most popular activity and in descending order of popularity the activities were:

1. Walking
2. Accessing footpaths
3. Dog walking
4. Cycling
5. Running
6. Teaching children about nature
7. Bird watching
8. Rambling
9. Teaching children to ride bikes
10. Scootering
11. Accessing the allotments

12. Walking to school

13. Roller skating

14. Horse riding

15. Ball games.

4.4.4 Additional activities that people listed included:

- *Night cycling*
- *Stress relief, it is a lovely peaceful place to walk*
- *Picking wild fruit and berries for making Jams*
- *Socialising with friends and neighbours*
- *[the Lane] is the only accessible countryside I'm able to use with my family. Bentfield Bower has fast cars but Pennington Lane is relaxed and calm and our family member in a wheelchair can enjoy this slither of nature as all other local pedestrian walks have inaccessible terrain, as well as much of the village itself having uneven surfaces and lacking proper dropped curbs throughout the village. This lane is a literal breath of fresh air and very much loved.*
- *Always great fun in the snow*
- *Looking at insects, plants, trees and hedgerows, identifying species*
- *Rolling' in my wheelchair!*
- *Conker collecting*
- *Star gazing*

4.4.5 Landscape photography was revealed as a popular activity in the photographs submitted by the public (see Appendix F).

4.5 Online survey results: what people value

4.5.1 People were asked to choose the five most important attributes of the Lane based on the research by Wartmann & Mackaness. Figure 9 illustrates the answers. In order of preference, the results were:

1. Scenery - i.e. seeing big open spaces without commercial development, the views etc.
2. Nature and Wildlife - ie. being out in nature, seeing birds, wildlife and the natural environment.
3. Absence of Infrastructure - ie. only small roads, not built over, untouched landscape and no light pollution.

4. Peacefulness. Absence of noise – ie not so much traffic, with stillness and little noise
5. Natural Sounds - ie. birdsong, rustling of leaves, sound of the wind in the fields etc.
6. Landscape Elements: feelings ie. tranquillity, calmness, serene and peaceful.
7. Absence of people - i.e. not crowded.
8. Social: friendly People - i.e. meeting other lane users, like minded people respecting and enjoying nature, meeting neighbours and fellow people in the village.
9. Air Quality – i.e, cleaner air due to lack of cars, there is reduced pollution in the countryside.
10. Change from everyday life - ie. no one is rushing, it is the opposite of city life.
11. Absence of litter - i.e. an untouched and clean natural landscape.

4.5.2

Three people gave additional reasons for valuing the Lane:

- *It is one place that I can go with my grandchildren and feel creatively safe walking along a road with no pavement teaching them the country code*
- *It is currently a safe space to cycle to other villages as it links part of the National cycle way with bridle path to Henham Ugley and to Rickling Green as well as a link path for the Harcamlow way which is an important and significant walking and cycling route*
- *It's historical value - a lane that has existed for a long time, and a sense that it remains untouched and something to be treasured and preserved.*

4.6

Online survey results: Possible improvements or changes

4.6.1

There were many responses to Question 9: What improvements or changes would you like to see in the lane and surrounding area? Of the 439 respondents 372 people provided a comment.

4.6.2

183 people would like to see the Lane stay the way it is. Comments included:

- *Leave Pennington Lane as it is - a tranquil place to unwind & access beautiful countryside*
- *To be kept exactly as it is as it provides a different environment*
- *I'd like to see the area kept as it is, nature walks have been so important for health and mental health during lockdown*
- *Being left alone as a protected site for nature and birds*
- *I'm 11 and I feel safe*
- *It is beautiful as it is. It has been my lifeline through the pandemic*

- *It's an incredible thing to have on our doorstep*
- *Keep it natural. Once it's gone you never get it back*
- *Less verge cutting*
- *I think it is a lovely walk around the edge of the village*
- *I would just like the Lane to remain as it is. Untouched and unspoilt. To respect the wildlife that live along the lane. Often see bats of an early evening too*
- *No changes needed. It's a lovely, untouched lane, which should remain that way, most of the time it is safe for my children to run/ride bikes along, and there are not many roads in Stansted that are safe for this*
- *The lane doesn't need improvement, that's the point. No amount of compensation from a developer would replicate the quiet nature of the area perfect for walking and enjoying the countryside with family and friends.*

4.6.3 72 people made suggestions as to how the Lane might be improved in highway terms. Currently the Lane, rather unbelievably, has a derestricted speed limit. These were:

- Lowering the speed limit to 10 mph, 20mph or 30mph
- Making the Lane one way to traffic
- No cars at certain times of day
- Passing places, mirrors or footpaths on bends
- Designated cycleway and footpath
- Buggy paths
- Traffic calming
- Mowing the verges wider as a refuge for pedestrians who meet vehicles
- Designate as a quiet lane and ban larger vehicles
- Width restrictions at either end to stop fly-tippers but with gates for access
- Potholes filled more regularly – a plea particularly from night-time runners and cyclists.

4.6.4 28 people proposed that the Lane be completely closed to traffic.

4.6.5 20 people felt that the frequent flooding should be addressed.

4.6.6 20 people did not wish to see any more building in the area.

- 4.6.7 19 people thought that the new Bloor Homes/Martin Grant development at Walpole Meadows had diminished the character of the Lane in some way. There were several remarks about the loss of hedgerow to the development:
- *More trees and hedgerows planted along the Lane to hide the view of the new builds*
 - *Replacement of substantial hedging destroyed by developer*
 - *Better boundary treatment between Lane and Walpole Meadows*
 - *The walkway from Walpole Farm development completed, together with other unfinished landscaping from Walpole Farm*
 - *Repairs to the hedgerows that appear to have been damaged during construction of foot bridge*
 - *Replacement of hedgerows damaged during build of Walpole Farm estate. More screening of Walpole Farm houses in order to improve the uninterrupted countryside views whilst using the lane*
 - *Some investment into reintroducing hedgerows destroyed by the last housing development would be welcome*
 - *Removal of Heras fencing [at the footbridge], improved soft landscaping around new development.*
- 4.6.8 13 people would like to see more dog and litter bins particularly at the new cycleway/pedestrian access from Walpole Meadows.
- 4.6.9 7 people highlighted the occasional fly tipping and would like to see more measures taken to prevent it eg. CCTV and heavy fines.
- 4.6.10 10 people made comments that were hard to fit into any one group:
- *Increased biodiversity. New trees planted*
 - *More safe places to cycle - better connection to the Flich Way from Stansted*
 - *A bench or 2 for a sit*
 - *Everything returned to nature*
 - *To have the vegetation better managed to facilitate safer walking*
 - *Please keep Pennington Lane free from pollution*
 - *More wooden posts put up on the grass verge area to support the 'do not park on the grass verge' signs on the Rainsford Road junction as the signs are not adhered to.*

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Analysis: Online Survey

- 5.1.1 652 responses were received to the Online Survey. Four duplicate entries were deleted. 202 respondents declined to give their name and 61 of these did not give their postcode. Six of the 202 respondents were in support of the development proposals or saw Pennington Lane as a good short cut that should be widened to make the Lane faster to drive.
- 5.1.2 It is understood that on previous surveys submitted to public inquiries the validity of including those people who did not give their name or postcode was questioned. It was therefore thought prudent to remove these 202 respondents from the analysis.
- 5.1.3 The 196 respondents (202 less 6) reported that they used they Lane in similar ways to those included in the analysis and their comments were very similar to the remaining 439 respondents. If they had been included, the results would have been reinforced rather than diluted.

5.2 Analysis: who is using the Lane?

- 5.2.1 The aim of the survey was to find out who was using Pennington Lane (the Lane), how it was being used and what people valued.
- 5.2.2 The Online survey revealed that people of all ages, from children to the elderly, use the Lane and whilst a few drive down it, the majority of people are using it for recreation. It is not just local residents who use the Lane as people come from local towns and villages. In the Online Survey the second most popular activity after walking was 'accessing footpaths'. The Lane has good connectivity as it is used as part of longer, circular walks around the village, gives access to Bridleway 3 and on to Manuden or the Harcamlow Way as well as an all-weather route for local residents to take the dog for a walk and other activities.
- 5.2.3 The Lane is considered a safe place so people with disabilities feel able to use it for wheelchair access. A blind walker and a double amputee have been seen using the Lane, on their own. People with pushchairs regularly use the Lane and Bentfield Primary School uses it to train Year 5 cyclists.

5.3 Analysis: how many people are using the Lane?

- 5.3.1 It was not the best of weather on either Site Survey day and neither day was advertised in any way. Results show that between 6am and 8pm 233 vehicles used the Lane on the Wednesday and 114 on the Saturday. There were less commercial vehicles on the Saturday and obviously no cars on the school run.

5.3.2 The number of people using the Lane for recreation however was far higher: 406 people passed the survey point on the Lane on the Wednesday and 435 people on the Saturday.

5.3.3 It is known that some of these people were going one way up or down the Lane but if it is assumed that they were all return trips, it means that over 200 people are using the Lane daily if not more. On sunny days the Lane will be even busier.

5.4 **Analysis: when and how are people using the Lane?**

5.4.1 The Lane is used by people from early morning until nightfall and even at night for cycling, stargazing, and running.

5.4.2 The range of activities is considerable: the top five were walking, accessing footpaths, dog walking, cycling, and running. People reported that it was a good place for children and a place to learn to ride a bike, understand the country code and discover nature and wildlife. People come in wheelchairs and a blind walker and double amputee have been seen on the Lane, on their own. Horse riders are able to access the Bridleway at the north end of the Lane. It is also used for scootering and roller skating as well as access to school and the allotments.

5.4.3 Another activity was revealed by the Online Survey. People were asked to submit photos of their activities in the Lane and several landscape photographs were submitted. Landscape photography is clearly enjoyed by many people on the Lane.

5.4.4 What is clear is that people do not expect to be mown down any minute by a vehicle. The vehicles are few and far between. It is possible to walk the full length of the Lane without meeting a car and because it is quiet, it is possible to hear a vehicle coming. This perception is backed up by the photographs submitted by the public which show dogs off the lead, young children on bikes, people with pushchairs and horses in the middle of the Lane. They are relaxed and confident about using the Lane for recreational activities.

5.5 **Analysis: what do people value about the Lane?**

5.5.1 When asked in the Online Survey what five things they valued most about the Lane from a list developed by researchers looking at tranquillity, the top answer was scenery - i.e. seeing big open spaces without commercial development, the views etc. The Lane predominantly has a rural character despite being affected by the construction of Walpole Meadows. The rural setting of the Lane contributes to people's enjoyment.

5.5.2 The second most popular answer was nature and wildlife - ie. being out in nature, seeing birds, wildlife, and the natural environment. Since lockdown it has become clear that contact with nature and green spaces is vital to our mental health.

5.5.3 The absence of Infrastructure was next - ie. only small roads, not built over, untouched landscape and no light pollution. A dark night sky is valued. Then peacefulness: the absence of noise – ie not so much traffic, with stillness and little noise. This allows

'natural sounds' to be appreciated - ie. birdsong, rustling of leaves, sound of the wind in the fields etc.

- 5.5.4 People added their own reasons emphasizing that it felt a safe place to be and that its historical value is important - *a lane that has existed for a long time, and a sense that it remains untouched and something to be treasured and preserved.*

5.6 Conclusion

- 5.6.1 The surveys were compiled by residents with no special expertise in preparing surveys and no doubt there will be gaps in the methodology which more experienced people could identify. With the Online Survey, participants were aware that the survey would be submitted to the Inquiry and this may have tempered their responses to say Question 8 where scenery and the lack of built intrusion were the top two reasons for valuing the Lane. It was however their written comments that were so powerful. These reinforced that the public enjoy the Lane for many, many reasons including the rural views and the lack of built development.
- 5.6.2 It was a surprise that using the Lane to access footpaths was the second most popular activity. The Lane has good connectivity and is used as part of a number of circular and long-distance routes.
- 5.6.3 Whilst online respondents were aware that the survey would be presented at an Inquiry the Site Survey was held, unannounced on a weekday, and a Saturday and was a physical count of how many vehicles and people were using the Lane and what they were doing. The survey form had to be expanded for the second day as the number of users had been totally underestimated. The Lane became very well used during lockdown and many people are still using the Lane for recreation.
- 5.6.4 The Site Survey findings serve to reinforce those of the Online Survey, and vice versa. This increases the reliability of both, as individual exercises that ultimately support the same conclusions.
- 5.6.5 The northwest area of the village is poorly served for open space and Pennington Lane provides a much used, much loved and highly valued recreational resource for local residents, visitors and long-distance walkers, runners, photographers, cyclists and horse riders. The surveys confirmed what residents have always known: it is not a Lane predominantly used by motorists. It is predominantly used by people.
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