

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - SECTION 247**

**PROPOSED STOPPING UP AND DIVERSION OF FOOTPATH 60 HOLMFIRTH**

**(Public Inquiry scheduled 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021)**

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE**

**RICHARD JEREMY PAXMAN**

**August 2021**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ('TCPA') 1990 - SECTION 247  
PROPOSED STOPPING UP AND DIVERSION OF PART OF FOOTPATH 60  
HOLMFIRTH**

1. I am **RICHARD JEREMY PAXMAN**. I am 38 years old. My address is  
. My contact details are supplied.
2. In the 'day job' I am the CEO of Paxman Scalp Cooling and other businesses in the Paxman Group. Paxman Scalp Cooling assists cancer patients with retaining their hair during chemotherapy and other treatment. Away from work, I am a husband and father of a very recently adopted child, as well as being an owner of dogs which require regular walking. I live not too far away from Mr. and Mrs. Butterfield in Wilshaw and have lived in the Holme Valley for most of my life.
3. I am a regular walker and there is a rich variety of countryside routes in this area. I walk either on my own, or more likely with my husband and my dogs. I have also very recently been spending more time walking with my recently adopted four-year-old son, who we would obviously like to continue to walk safely with. My mother in law who is also local and her two grandchildren will often also join us.
4. I would like to convey my overwhelming support for this excellent diversion route and plead with the Inspector to grant this diversion, which is an enormous asset to this area that myself and my family would hate to lose.
5. This is not what I would term a functional walking route. It is not for people going to work, to the shops, catching the bus, etc. It is a leisure/recreational route, as is most of the walking in the area. Like most, I walk for exercise, to relax, to spend time in the fresh air with my family and to take in the views that the Valley has to offer.
6. Like I used to use the main legal footpath 60, I use the diversion route in both directions. When exiting the diversion route moving northwards, I either walk right towards Wilshaw, or up the hill towards the current termination point of Footpath 60. Obviously either coming from Wilshaw up Wolfstones Road, or from the diversion termination point going down Wolfstones Road, the diversion route is more convenient to myself and others that live I Wilshaw and in that direction.
7. However, I shall say that when walking on a leisure or recreation route, convenience is not really a concern. Generally, a recreational walker is not going to be concerned with a 100m or so diversion, especially when the diversion route here is far superior as a recreational route compared with the current footpath. By comparison, the diversion route has a nice gentle gradient, is kinder underfoot compared to what can be a slippery current pathway through the houses, it is nice and open compared to the *dingy* part when you walk between two large buildings, with scenery to die for, both close (like the pond and the farm animals we see when we stop on the benches, which my little boy particularly enjoys) and afar, with far-reaching views which I speculate could not be replicated from too many other footpaths. The diversion path fits

beautifully into the landscape, as if it has always been there. We can't lose this at the expense of an existing inferior route between two buildings.

8. It goes beyond the aesthetics and openness though. I highly suspect that I am not alone in being mildly relieved when I do not have to walk so close and awkwardly past a person's property, impeding on their privacy and enjoyment. This is even though Mr. and Mrs. Butterfield are people that we know reasonably well. Even where they may not be bothered (and I don't know, because I have never asked), we are! That is not a problem going up or down the diversion route and I do have to say I think that the landscaping that is taking place around the diversion footpath is fantastic. I don't think that anybody could reasonably say that the diversion route is not a job well done.
9. I have to say also that the diversion route is safer than the existing route, not only underfoot. When coming out of the diversion route onto Wolfstones Road (therefore walking northwards towards Wilshaw), there is far better visibility in both directions. The current termination/entrance route on the brow of the hill at Wolfstones Road (Point 'B' on the Order), is where the real problem tends to be. This is a rural road. Whilst vehicle speed should always be an issue, is not itself a major consideration on this part of Wolfstones Road from my own experience; I cannot recall ever feeling unsafe in that respect when walking up and down the verges, before and after the diversion. However, vehicles coming over the brow of the hill from the Upperthong direction tends to be the problem, especially coming off the Wolfstone Heights Trig Point land onto Wolfstones Road.
10. We do visit the Wolfstone Heights Trig Point. We know that this is not a Public Right of Way. We get there in a number of ways, though not necessarily or usually walking right up Wolfstones Road, but depending on the routes in the area that we are walking on. For example, we quite often go from the Moor Lane/Bradshaw Road-side up through the woods, across the land where the Memorial Bench is on the other side of the Trig Point land.
11. We never just walk one route. There are many country walks around these parts. We vary circuits. I am not sure many walkers stick to one route. Either way though, we do frequently use the diversion route in both directions.
12. I shall admit that I can't profess to understand the intricacies of everything that is going on here. However, I understand the basics that Mr. Butterfield has obtained planning permission, but can't complete the development until he legally diverts the current footpath to officially being the diversion route. I would have thought that having got the necessary planning permission, then the diversion of the footpath would just be a formality, but I am reliably informed that it is a separate process.
13. It is obviously an advantage to Mr. and Mrs. Butterfield to finish their development, but frankly if planning permission is granted, I am amazed to learn that somebody is not allowed to complete it. It seems unduly complicated.

14. Where the work done so far is anything to go by, which blends beautifully and really enhances the landscape and countryside setting, I am sure that when everything is completed it will add in a very positive way to the landscape. Clearly what they have done so far is fabulous; like it was meant to always be this way.
15. There cannot be a question that the diversion route represents a far greater advantage to everyone else compared to the current legal route, which is not required at all because of the diversion route. As far as I can see and from experience of regularly using that diversion route with my family, the real winners here will be the public, or particularly people who like us enjoy open country walks.
16. The diversion route provides very many benefits, including improved amenity and improved safety for every pedestrian user in either direction, regardless of where they are coming from and going to, compared with the current route. I cannot understand why there is objection to something that is so much better to what exists. Again, this is a leisure route. Surely nobody is going to seriously complain if they must walk 100 yards further to get somewhere on a recreational route, uphill or downhill, especially when the diversion route here is so fantastic and is a real asset to the area. It did not surprise me when I learned that the level of support more than doubles the level of objection here. I am only surprised that the support was not higher if what others tell me when out walking the diversion route is anything to go by.
17. It's like the diversion route has always been there. It is something that has become very important to me and my family and will continue to be so as our son grows up. Doubtless many others in the area and beyond will feel the same. To lose the diversion route to keep a far inferior current route just does not make sense.
18. Please, I urge in the politest but strongest terms, could this stopping up and diversion be made official, because we cannot lose this diversion route, which has become an extremely important asset to this area. To lose that now in favour of a far inferior route, just does not make any sense at all to me and doubtless many others.
19. I am happy to answer any questions in relation to this Proof at the impending Public Inquiry.