

ATODIAD 6 / APPENDIX 6

Senior Officer Mr Euryrn Williams,
Public Rights of Way Office
Gwynedd Council,
County Hal
Caernarfon
Gwynedd

25th November 2017

Dear Mr Williams,

Footpath in Front of Mawddach Crescent, Barmouth Junction.

I believe that you are dealing with the problem being caused by residents of Mawddach Crescent who are trying to close off the path in front of this terrace of houses. Please let me know if it is someone else who is dealing with this because I think this is a very important matter. I lived in No. 1 Mawddach Crescent for 10 years from 1990 until 2000 and so I know exactly what the position was at that time, and before that for that matter.

So that you know my history, I moved to this area from the West Midlands in 1964 when I was 15 years of age and have never left. Ever since I came here I have been walking the estuary and occasionally I went fishing on the banks of Mawddach estuary and sometimes I got to the shoreline by using the access and steps in the sea wall in front of the Mawddach Crescent. There were other fishermen who did the same. Whenever I walked along the road in front of the Crescent or fished off the sea wall in front of the houses, I was never challenged by anyone for using that path. Lots of people used the path and nobody used the track behind the terrace.

That was the situation when I went to live at No. 1 Mawddach Crescent in 1990. I rented the ground floor flat from Miss Marian Evans and so was conscious of people walking past. There were cyclists and walkers passing through every day and it was very popular in the tourist season especially from Easter until the end of the school summer holidays. Some people would stop and sit on the sea wall for a while to look at the view. No one caused any problem and no resident never suggested to them that they couldn't.

In the late 1990's several years after I came to live in the crescent, a resident in one of the other houses knocked on my door and asked me if I would sign a petition to try to close off the path in front of the Crescent to the public. I was quite cross with this and I said that people in this area have always been very welcoming to incomers but what upsets them is people coming to live in the area and trying to change things that local people have been doing for generations. Everybody who had bought a house in the Crescent knew what the position was before they bought. That resident's view was that because it was a private road and there were signs to say so, the residents should have the right to close it off to the public and to have it just for residents. I said that even I as an incomer had been using the path in front of the houses for 25 years before I came to live in the Crescent and the only reason that there were private signs at the eastern end was to try to stop tourists in their cars from driving through looking for a circular route or wanting somewhere to park. Anyway, I refused to sign the petition and said that I would object to any attempt to close off the path.

I think many others would have said the same and the petition came to nothing. I lived in the Crescent for 2 or 3 years after that and I left in 2000 and rented the cottage at Bryn Celyn which is just to the east of the Crescent for about 12 months. Nothing was done to put fences or gates up while I lived there nor while I was at Bryn Celyn. Sometime afterwards the residents installed a cattle grid and gates roughly opposite No. 8, the end house and a gate and fence at the other end opposite No. 1 but this was just to keep Mrs. Dorothy Roberts farm stock from wandering into the area. Sheep had been wandering in sometimes and if anyone had their front gates open they would get into the gardens and eat the plants. Signs went up on the gates to show that the road between the gates was a private road, but I was pleased that there was no attempt to stop the walkers and cyclists from using the path.

A few years later when I had left Barmouth Junction to live in Friog, I drove over to the Mawddach Crescent to fish and I parked in the area just west of the Crescent. When I was leaving, a resident of the terrace who was not someone I knew from the time I lived there, came over to the car and told me that I had no right to park there. He said his name was Mr. Bath and he owned No.1 the Crescent. I told him that I used to live in that house and he had no business telling people not to park where I did. By that time, signs had been put on the gates to try to send the public onto the path at the back of the houses but these didn't say that they couldn't walk the front route and everybody exercised their historical rights to use the path and just went through the gates. In 2015 the residents started to lock the gate at the Barmouth end but apparently on health and safety grounds because the wooden post holding the top hinge was rotted away. But the gate isn't always locked.

I hope the County Council will make sure that the path is registered so that all of the public can use it and not just those who can climb over the gate. Please acknowledge this letter and confirm that it has got to the right person.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Aston.

13 DEC 2017

Dear Mr Williams,

5.12.2017

I have picked up from chatting to people that there is still a problem with the path in front of Mawddach Crescent which one of the new owners tried to close off a few years ago. I thought this was now resolved because I know this person sold his house about two years ago and moved away. I've now heard that other residents are trying to close the path and are saying that there have been signs there for a long time to stop people using the path. That's just not true and I should know because I lived in one of the houses for 3 years in the early 1970's. Someone suggested to me that I should write to the Council to tell them and I've just been given your address. Would you please let me know that you have received my letter.

When I lived in the Crescent I had a hairdressing salon in Fairbourne. The Crescent was a lovely place to live but I moved out after three years to be a bit closer to the salon. There were always lots of people using the path in front of the terrace to walk the estuary and also people walking or cycling to Barmouth to shop. No one would dream of going round the back of the houses and why would they when it was obvious that the best path was at the front. Barmouth was a very important centre for people in Arthog and Barmouth Junction and it also was for me. A hairdressing salon uses a lot of towels and the only laundrette available was in Barmouth. And so at least twice a week I would take the used towels on my bike from the Crescent over the embankment to Barmouth bridge to get them cleaned.

There were never any signs to try to stop people from walking the Crescent path until that man bought one of the houses and at some point he put up signs to ask people to walk round the back. They shouldn't have been put up but most people took no notice of them. Eventually he started to challenge people who tried to walk through and I know that lots of people were intimidated by that and stopped walking there, but a lot of people carried on.

The only sign was one that said 'Private Road' near the post box. To be honest, I never saw that but it was there to try to stop people driving in, which they did all the time especially when Summer visitors came. If I didn't see it, I expect that drivers didn't either so that didn't work. The owners of the houses who are trying to close the path now should have to explain why there were no signs at the Barmouth end if people weren't supposed to walk through because hundreds of locals and visitors from Barmouth have always walked that path.

I do hope that you will not let the owners take away the rights of everybody else by allowing them to close the path.

Yours sincerely,

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STATEMENT BY: LYNN WALFORD.