

Messrs A G Twine

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Dear Watchfield PC

Westmill Farm – Permitted Pedestrian Access to the Airfield

I am writing to inform the Parish Council that I have recently erected signs on the Airfield asking all walkers to keep to the paths and to keep their dogs on a lead at all times.

Since creating the permitted access on the Airfield for local people almost 15 years ago the usage of the paths gradually increased and in the last two years very dramatically due no doubt in part to the development of Cowans Camp.

Two wildlife surveys over the last three years have shown a significant reduction in ground nesting birds, particularly Corn Bunting, on the site in the last few years. This correlates with general anecdotal evidence and is despite my employing various measures to try and support larger populations of wild birds on the site.

I suspect a major cause of the loss of birds to be the widespread roaming of dogs (and to a lesser degree people) in the areas that have been taken out of arable production and put down for birds for foraging and nesting.

I am keen to reverse this trend and as well as making more changes to my own farming systems I am asking for all walkers to keep to both walk only on the paths, not around the other margins and for dogs to be kept on leads at all times.

I would appreciate any support that the Parish Council can give to this move, as I believe that the permitted access is a valuable resource for the village.

If after a bedding in period to these changes I still need to ask people to keep their dogs on leads I will be inclined to ban dogs from the Airfield altogether. Any support the Parish Council is able to give to these changes will be much appreciated as I believe that there should be greater access to the countryside than there currently is and have no wish to reduce the permitted access currently in place at Westmill.

Yours sincerely

Adam Twine