

Broadwood Farmhouse, Holford,

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Hema Stanley  
Coach House 1  
Alfoxton Park  
Holford  
TA5 1SG

18 July 2019

Dear Hema

It was good to meet you on Monday. My wife and I have now had time to consider the letter from the Parish Council regarding the gorse hedge bordering the A39 against our property and would make the following points for the Council to consider.

Firstly the hedge is not our property but that of the County Council and therefore, as you know, we cannot give permission for its removal. We are however opposed to its removal for a variety of reasons.

Gorse is used as a hedging plant in many parts of the country because of its hardiness and resistance to livestock damage. It is a very valuable nectar and pollen source for insect species throughout a very long flowering season, which is particularly important at this time when pollinating insects are in sharp decline. As on this property it provides excellent shelter for livestock and wildlife. Here it also masks the flow of traffic on the A39 and reduces traffic noise.

We have assessed the impact of this hedge on motoring on the A39 and do not believe it constitutes a significant hazard. The opposite may in fact be true in that by blocking the line of sight across the bend at the Kilton junction it forces the high speed motorcyclists and "boy racers" to moderate their speed at what is a 20 mph bend. Removal of the gorse could result in an increase in accidents. Regarding the exit from Ge Mare Farm, Anthony Salvidge accepts that there is no serious issue. Having driven out of that exit ourselves, it is clear that the main obstruction to vision towards the bend is the vegetation in front of the gorse hedge. We have a similar problem at our own exit and we and our neighbours at Ge Mare Lodge ensure that the vegetation is kept short despite it being the responsibility of the Council. Mr Salvidge has offered to cut back the gorse towards the fence. The gorse is largely irrelevant when exiting GeMare Farm to the left as the oncoming traffic is on the opposite side of the road and clearly visible.

With half the Nation's hedgerows having been removed since the 2nd World War, even a small length such as this should be regarded as important, especially in an AONB. There may even be a legal implication in removing the hedge without replacing it. We would certainly consider planting a hedge on our side of the railings. It is illegal to disturb nesting birds in a hedge, so if you decide to go ahead, any work must be delayed until the beginning of September. We are totally opposed to the use of sprays on the hedge and will not facilitate its removal by allowing access from our property. We would, however, be happy for sympathetic hedge trimming to be carried out.

Yours sincerely,

I. J. W. KETT

LYNNE KETT