

**From:** public rights of way - mailbox <publicrightsofway-mailbox@devon.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 February 2024 16:31  
**To:** connect@lovebraunton.org <connect@lovebraunton.org>  
**Subject:** ENQ241709301 Mill Lane, Braunton & Heanton Punchardon

Hello Love Braunton

I am writing in response to your recent enquiry, given the above reference on our customer service system, concerning the temporary closure to, and nature of works proposed to parts of Mill Lane.

The temporary closure is a template which covers periods of closure for 'up to 18 months', however in this case the time the path is likely to be closed is more likely 3 months, depending on ground conditions.

The closure is to allow a scheme of work to be put in place to bring Mill Lane into a condition where it can be safely used and enjoyed all year round, where it has suffered from flooding and very deep mud issues for many years. When the recent extension of the South Park housing estate was granted planning permission, it was conditional on, amongst other things, the provision of a sum of money under the s106 agreement to be used specifically and exclusively on works to bring Mill Lane into a suitable condition. The closure is to allow the delivery of a scheme that has been designed to do that.

The scheme designer & engineer has provided a summary of works proposed in italics below. The necessary vegetation clearance has already been completed before nesting season, and the main construction elements will start in mid March. There will be a signed diversion route for pedestrians.

*The enhancement initiative involves a 600-metre footpath upgrade, focusing on surfacing improvements. The project entails the installation of a permeable footpath surface composed of a stone sub-base topped with dust stone, omitting any tarmac or hard materials to preserve the area's ambiance. Artificial lighting, which could disrupt the surroundings, **will not** be introduced.*

*Enhancements extend to the drainage system, involving the clearance and re-profiling of an existing ditch with a concrete lining to enhance flow. The improved drainage will pass through a small culvert with sandbagged head walls, dispersing into the Knowl Water river. Existing fences and stiles will be replaced with new treated timber kissing gates and chicane sections featuring safety rails.*

*Vegetation clearance is necessary to expose the full width of the footpath, ensuring safe passage for users. Rigorous ecological surveys, conducted by an accredited ecologist, have identified the presence of badgers, bats, dormouse, and other wildlife. Measures have been outlined to protect these species, with no interference or disturbance proposed as part of the scheme.*

*The region is prone to excessive flooding, and the planned improvements aim to mitigate standing water issues and provide a suitable outfall to the local watercourse. Additionally, an earthwork bank will be constructed along a section of the footpath, serving to secure the route, create a divide between the neighbouring field, and offer additional habitat for native plants and wildlife.*

To emphasise, whilst the construction will need to be robust and be able to stand up to use and periodic flooding in the lower reaches, there will be no tarmac & no lighting. It has incorporated ecologist assessment, oversight and supervision from the start, and will include the re-creation of a

missing section of hedge-bank to help make the entire route a lane again, with the landscape and wildlife benefits that go with it.

I hope that helps to set the context of the works and provides some clarity.

With regards

Simon

Public Rights of Way Team