

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

6th September 2022

AGENDA ITEM 9.2 PROPOSED ADDITIONAL SIGNAGE AT THE IROS

1. REPORT

- 1.1 On 2nd and 16th August 2022, Council decided to erect a fence at the IROS in order to try to mitigate the problems caused by excessive numbers of visitors to the lake in good weather during the summer.
- 1.2 The selected contractor is awaiting final confirmation of his instruction, following consultation with CEC.
- 1.3 Council has briefly discussed but not yet decided what additional signs might be appropriate for erection in conjunction with the fence. In summary three separate types of sign have been mooted:
- Signs to be attached at various points to the proposed fence, saying (effectively) private land.
 - Signs to be attached to the various fence gates, to be displayed when the gates are closed saying (effectively) 'Closed due to anti-social behaviour' or similar.
 - Signs to be erected on Jacob's Way and perhaps at Mere lane/Park Lane at the approach to the IROS when the land is closed.
- 1.4 A request has been made to members for views on these questions and the following suggestions have been put forward for Council's decision:

Councillor Dobson has proposed the following:

- 'NO ENTRY PRIVATE LAND' on every gate
- 'NO SWIMMING OR WATER CRAFT AT ANY TIME' at regular intervals along the waterside fencing
- Removable 'NO ACCESS TO THE LAKESIDE DUE TO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR' at the entry to Mere Lane and the Car Park

Councillor Shore has suggested the following

- 'PRIVATE LAND – No public access or right of way'
- Need the signs on all boundaries including Mere Lane footpath and IROS car park area
- Not keen at reference on signs to 'anti-social behaviour'. Are parking problems normally considered anti-social? Council's intention is simply wanting to restrict access to private land.
- Use of symbols



Councillor Bold has made the following suggestions and comments:

- I wonder if the wording on the fences could take the form of :
 - “Private land - no access”
 - “Private land”
 - “Private land - no access to lake shore”
 - “Pickmere Lake Closed”
 - “This field is closed”
 - “No access when gate is closed”
- Cllr Bold comments that all of these have implications and none is absolutely perfect, that simple cheap signs might help - the ‘No BBQ’ words get lost on our big green signs, and she further suggests the following amendments to the Council’s signage to include:
 - No BBQ’s/open fires of any type and no naked flames allowed.
- In terms of possible signage when the land is closed she suggests the following possibilities:
 - “Gate closed to prevent a breach of the peace”
 - “Gate closed to prevent antisocial behaviour”
 - “Gate closed to prevent overcrowding”
 - “Field closed - path open”

1.5 Councillor Tarrant’s suggestion for signage would be as simple, consistent, and conspicuous as necessary. He suggests:

- “THIS LAND IS PRIVATE(LY OWNED) and may be closed to the public at the discretion of the owner to prevent access or use”

Clerk’s comments

1.6 Whilst acknowledging the need for some new signage to help explain the proposed access regime, members are asked if they are happy with the concept of multiple, not particularly attractive, signs around a piece of open space in the countryside in terms of its effect on the local environment? What is the appropriate balance between making the message plain and preserving the character of the village? What image of the Parish Council will high levels of brusquely-worded signage give? It is not very long ago that the series of uncoordinated signs on gates etc at the IROS were replaced by a smaller group of signs, co-ordinated in their design so as to improve the amenity of the area. How far do we need to go to explain the situation to visitors?



1.7 An alternative approach to part of this issue is perhaps to alter the large green signboards. They were designed in this way so that individual panels could be replaced if updating/alterations were required. Perhaps the second panel from the top might be replaced (and possibly extended horizontally) to give a slightly different message?

1.8 Two more possibilities are suggested:

- If members wish to have signs displayed at the entrance to Jacob's Way (i.e. to the Council's parking spaces) and/or at the Mere Lane Park lane junction, then one simple solution would be for those signs to be similar in construction to the existing 'Community Speedwatch' signs – i.e. similar to signs that are temporarily displayed in advance of road works. Such signs are robust; they are easily erected/removed; they could be chained/padlocked to a nearby fixed structure.



- Similar types of signs (perhaps with different wording) could also be erected when relevant at the entrances to the IROS field.
- In relation to any signs that members might wish to attach to the proposed fence, the following conveys a simple but straightforward message.



2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That members consider the comments and suggestions made.

Jack Steel

Clerk to the Parish Council