

# Small Footfall Study on Public Right of Way at Rear of Ragged Hall Lane, Chiswell Green, St. Albans.

**Declaration of Interest:** this study was carried out by volunteers of a Keep Chiswell Green What's App Group. The group are against Green Belt development in Chiswell Green and, as such, this study is not and should not be misrepresented as independent. Despite this, this simple survey has been conducted accurately and honestly.

**Aim:** to establish a reasonably useful idea of the use of the Public Right of Way to the rear of Ragged Hall Lane, Chiswell Green, St. Albans, supported by some observational evidence.

**Method:** Volunteers from the Keep Chiswell Green What's-App Group took shifts to observe and count the tally of users on footpath in a notebook.

The study was carried out on the designated public footpath Ragged Hall Lane to Watford Road footpath at the junction with the historical Park Wood to Westfields path (at 51.734391, -0.362245). Approximately behind 76 Ragged Hall Lane.

Times: Friday 11 August 2023 0700 to 0900. (2 hours)

Saturday 12 August 2023 0800 to 1800 (10 hours)

**Counts:** People who used the footpath were counted in the following categories: dog walkers, Joggers, fruit pickers, walkers, other.

**Data:** see last page.

## **Observations on Method:**

Many people stated they walk a circuitous route that did not come back through the same location (for example returning along lane). People passing the count-point twice were counted twice but most did not.

Some people adopt different routes on different days so, some walkers absent on this day may visit on a different day. Dogs will generally be walked on this and the local routes every day regardless of weather.

While bicycle tracks were evident in the mud further towards Park Wood no vehicles passed this route during the survey.

Saturday was subject to shower forecasts and there was an apparently significant football match in the afternoon.

People who walked along the Ragged Hall to Westfields track north to the path and turned eastwards, or by that route in reverse, were not captured by the survey.

### Conclusions and comments:

In a 10-hour period on Saturday, 74 people used this path amounting to an average of 7.4 an hour. Accounting for the small number of people who would have used the path before and after the survey times it appears reasonable to say that the daily use amounts to around 75-80 a day at about 8 an hour.

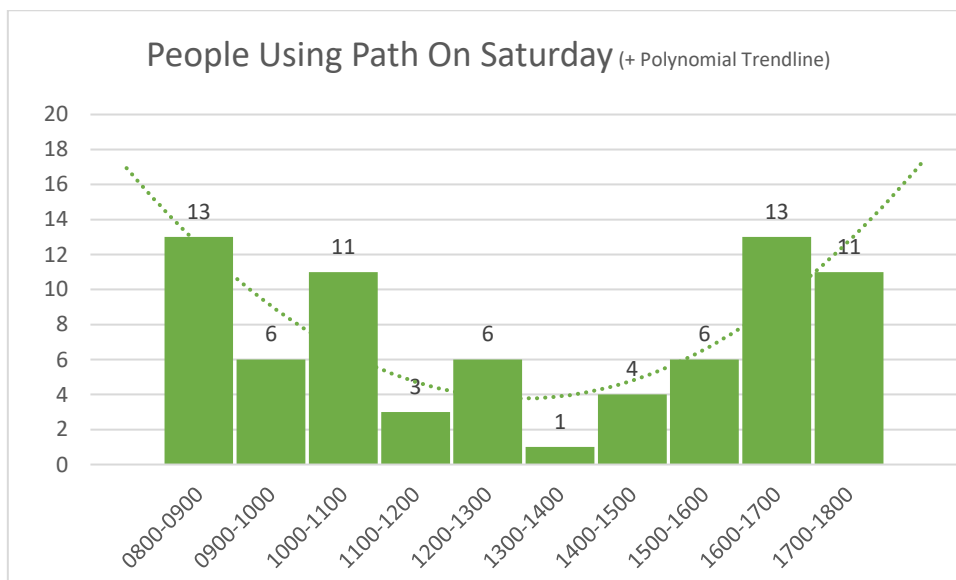
There is a trend towards early mornings and late afternoon to evenings which equates to the needs of dog walking. This might change on different days for example, on Sunday, when warm afternoons may be more attractive to families after lunch.

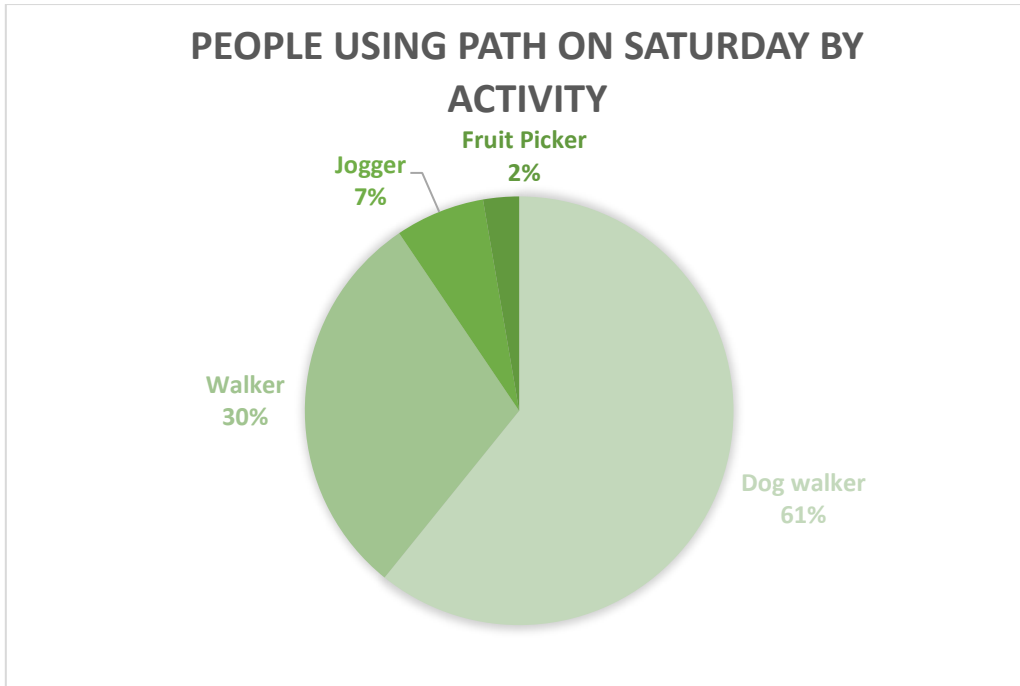
Although not counted specifically, gender use is broadly equal and the majority were adults although some children were apparent in groups or one pair of children.

Many people in interviews stated they were unaware of the threat to the Green Belt. No notices from the local authority or applying developer are apparent along the footpath.

Surprisingly, about a quarter, who engaged in conversation, stated they came from the opposite side of the A414.

The path is well-enough used to probably deter some wildlife activity away from immediately near the paths. Birdsong was considerable in the morning and evening (a variety of six garden birds according to the Merlin Bird Song phone App), but, very silent around midday. Red Kites were apparent overhead all day. A weasel was seen to quickly cross the Park Wood to Westfields path from south to north in the early morning. When quiet some 'shuffling' can be heard in the brambles and bracken, but the source was not identifiable. Blackberries are coming into fruit and being picked by people and dogs on their way.





**Data:**

Date	Times	Hours	Dog walker		Jogger		Fruit Picke		Walker		Other	Total	Note
			W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E			
11-Aug-23	0700-0800	1	4	2		1			1			8	
11-Aug-23	0800-0900	1	2	1			1		1			5	
<b>Day Totals</b>		2	6	3	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	13	
<b>Average per hour</b>			3	1.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	1	0	0	6.5	
<b>West/East bound combined</b>			9		1		1		2			13	
<b>Average per hour</b>			4.5		0.5		0.5		1			6.5	

Date	Times	Hours	Dog walker		Jogger		Fruit Picke		Walker		Other	Total	Note
			W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E			
12-Aug-23	0800-0900	1	3	2	2	1			5			13	Weasel on path
12-Aug-23	0900-1000	1	1	4						1		6	
12-Aug-23	1000-1100	1	4	1		1			3	2		11	
12-Aug-23	1100-1200	1	2	1								3	
12-Aug-23	1200-1300	1	1	1					2	2		6	
12-Aug-23	1300-1400	1							1			1	
12-Aug-23	1400-1500	1	2		1					1		4	
12-Aug-23	1500-1600	1	2	3					1			6	
12-Aug-23	1600-1700	1	6	3			2		1	1		13	
12-Aug-23	1700-1800	1	5	4						2		11	
<b>Day Totals</b>		10	26	19	3	2	2	0	13	9	0	74	
<b>Average per hour</b>			2.6	1.9	0.3	0.2	0.2	0	1.3	0.9	0	7.4	
<b>West/East bound combined</b>			45		5		2		22			74	
<b>Average per hour</b>			4.5		0.5		0.2		2.2			7.4	

Compiler: Brian Dowling, 32 Ragged Hall Lane, Chiswell Green.