

I visited site on Tuesday 1st November and had a look at the closed section of the former A344 to see how the reseeded grass areas were establishing.

While they are coming along well and thickening up, I would be very reluctant to allow pedestrian traffic onto them yet which would soon create bare worn tracks through the thin growth and almost certainly develop muddy patches as we come into Winter.

The former roadway was seeded with a natural chalk wildflower seed mix to allow it to blend into the wider landscape. Unfortunately, this takes a longer time to establish than a general lawn grass seed and is less wear tolerant since it contains a lower proportion of grass and a high proportion of the slower and weaker growing wildflower seed. This needs extra time to develop stronger root systems and grow into larger, sustainable plants.

I would recommend that the road has another season's growth without any pedestrian traffic to allow the wildflowers to establish further and to enable the grass to spread into and fill up the bare patches that are still present.

Once the permissive path is opened up, I am concerned about the amount of wear that the wildflower grass areas will be able to take if there is heavy use especially from bicycles which can cause compaction very quickly, particularly in wet conditions. There is a risk that the successful return of the road to grass will then wear away to become a clear worn track if use is heavy.