

Anger over fence blocking off wood

Gareth Jones

Local residents have hit out at a fence which they claim blocks public access to woodland.

Dunblane Community Council has expressed its concerns about a heras fence which has been put up at Holmehill.

The fence was put up several weeks ago and members of the community council have said they believe it is aimed at stopping people from using the land.

The council's most recent meeting on Monday heard that Stirling Council is now examining the fence.

Dunblane Green Councillor Mark Ruskell said he had been in touch with Richard Barron, the council's access officer, to see what could be done about getting it removed.

He said: "I can't see any valid reason for the fencing, apart from an attempt to scare people off the site. There are gaps in the fencing and no proper notices and although it looks intimidating it would not meet a genuine health and safety requirement for keeping people off the site during felling. I urge

Mr Stirling to respect local people's legal rights, including those of school children, and restore full public access to Holmehill immediately."

Locals in the area expressed fury last summer when a number of trees at the site were cut down. Police had to be called in as residents said the trees should be protected, however landowner Ian Stirling claimed he was within his rights to carry out woodland management. A tree preservation order, covering the whole site, has now been made by Stirling Council.

David Stirling, from Allan Water Developments, said the company is committed to bringing the woodland back into a manageable condition, but only had limited resources available to carry out the work.

He said: "In terms of the fencing the only formal right of access across Holmehill is the core path and this will be kept clear to provide access at all time. The rest of the land as it goes through its management will be fenced off for the safety of both our staff and the public."

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