

Dear Carol,

Very sorry for the delay in following up from our meeting on 25th August. Replacing the bridleway gate alongside the Abbey at George Meadow has proven more difficult than I had anticipated.

I mentioned that we have metal bridleway gates in stock. Unfortunately it transpires the ones we stock aren't suitable for this location. The gate needs to open the way it currently does, with the latch on the side furthest from the Abbey Wall. This is crucial because horse riders need to be able to position the horse in such a way that they can reach the latch. If the latch were towards the Abbey wall the horse's head couldn't go beyond the closing post and that would prevent the rider from reaching the latch.

It also needs to open in to the field. If it were to open in the direction of the town there would obviously be a risk of the cattle escaping, either if the gate didn't latch properly or if an inquisitive (or itchy) cow were to push against it. If it opens in to the field a cow would obviously be pushing it closed by pushing against it.

The gates we stock open both ways and so aren't suitable. So we have had to make a special order for a one-way opening gate with the hinge on the correct side to enable it to be hung in the same way as the current gate. Unfortunately we've been given an approximate delivery date of 10-12 weeks! That seems to be pretty typical for a lot of products at the moment, particularly with steel and timber.

I haven't even been able to identify any local supplier for oak gates. But based on online costs it would cost around £700 for the bridle gate, approximately double the price of a metal gate. For both the field and the bridleway gate it would be around £1700. So I suspect that you could reckon on around £2000 in total including labour.

As I said, we would definitely favour a metal bridle gate, because they are so much more reliably self-closing and require so much less maintenance. Bearing in mind the incidents John described where the cattle have escaped previously and the potential implications of them causing an incident.

If the Town Council wanted to proceed with investigation of an arrangement of oak gates, I'm afraid that I would have to leave it to you to take that forward on the basis that we would make a contribution to the equivalent of the metal gate. I suspect there would be a similar wait for timber materials.

If the Town Council is happy for us to proceed with installing the metal gate we will obviously do so as soon as we take delivery of it. In the meantime, John will need to padlock the gate with a chain. Perhaps if he does so with a slack chain his gate won't prevent the bridleway gate from closing properly. That might be something he and I need to look at again.

Please by all means give me a call to discuss this.

Best regards

Matthew

Matthew Harper

Principal Rights of Way Officer

Rights of Way & Countryside

