

Coast path move 'unjust'

THE Country Land & Business Association has condemned as "unjust" the Government's refusal to accept a parliamentary committee's recommendation to include a right of appeal in plans to create footpath access around the entire coast of England.

MPs on the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Efra) Committee concluded that the absence of a formal appeal process for the owners of land designated for public access was "a fundamental weakness" in the draft Marine Bill, published in April.

The committee recommended an appeal procedure to be added to the Bill, similar to that introduced as part of the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act in 2000 which opened up large areas of previously private land to the public.

A joint House of Lords and House of Commons Committee also recommended that an appeal process should be included in the new Bill but,

in its response to the public consultation, this has now been rejected by the Government.

In its response, the Government said that Natural England's eventual report on routes for coastal access would not constitute a decision suitable for an appeal process, but only a recommendation.

It would be up to the Secretary of State to decide if the correct balance between competing interests had been struck and, with Natural England being required to consult landowners potentially affected before making its recommendation, an appeal process would not be appropriate.

The appeal process set up under the CROW Act had proved to be "lengthy and expensive", it added.

The Government also said it believed that Natural England would have sufficient flexibility to avoid creating routes likely to cause financial loss for owners, and would be able to amend

routes where evidence of loss arose, making a compensation scheme unnecessary.

Nicola Currie, the CLA's eastern region director, said: "It is absurd, unjust and unfair that the Government has rejected an independent right of appeal on the spurious grounds that the cost of all the appeals against the right to roam introduced in 2000 was disproportionately 'lengthy and expensive'."

"In fact, two thirds of all appeals against the right to roam were successful. It is ridiculous the Government now seems to assume its system is infallible."

Mrs Currie added: "Despite refusing a right of appeal, the Government also ruled out compensation for rural businesses and landowners who could prove they had lost out financially because of the new right of coastal access.

"It is hard to equate this approach

with a Government that repeatedly claims 'fairness' is its calling card. There is precious little in the way of concessions in its response to pre-legislative scrutiny and public consultation to the draft Marine Bill."

"It is a great shame that the Minister has not heeded the advice of two parliamentary committees and the CLA among many others. The draft Marine Bill is little improved by the few concessions on coastal access that he has allowed to go through.

"By ignoring the majority of what the two committees have recommended with the CLA's backing, the Minister has missed a golden opportunity to correct basic inequalities on the coastal access proposals in the Bill. At the very beginning of this process, the Minister was keen to involve landowners, saying he wanted to ensure they were not adversely affected. It appears he has failed to do this."

£600,000 price tag on 69 acres

A BLOCK of arable land just outside Ipswich, with potential for organic conversion or development, is being marketed through Robinson & Hall with a guide price of £600,000.

Foxburrow Farm, which extends to around 69 acres, lies to the east of the A14 dual carriageway near the villages of Brightwell, Newbourne and Waldringfield.

The mainly level land, which is partially fenced and surrounded by mature hedges and trees, has previously been used for growing cereals, sugar beet and potatoes but has been left in natural regeneration for the last four years.

Having been left free from pesticides and fertilisers during that time, the land therefore lends itself to the possible use of organic crop production, subject to Soil Association approval, says Robinson & Hall.

"The farm also benefits from a range of agricultural buildings which could provide storage for machinery or crops and also benefits from a private water supply via a well," adds the firm.

"The vendor has highlighted that the land may have the possibility of some long term development opportunities (subject to planning), due to the recent proposed development which has been proposed nearby."

The land is being offered for sale by formal tender on Friday, October 24 at noon.

On safari to seek out the best food

THE closing weekend of the Aldeburgh Food & Drink Festival will see the launch of a new Suffolk-based business which aims to connect consumers with the best of local "artisan" produce.

Food Safari has been formed by Polly and Tim Robinson who, with their two young children, have moved to Framlingham where Tim grew up.

Inspired by Suffolk's unique cluster of independent food producers and retailers, they are planning a year-round programme of events including guided walks and forages, talks from producers and hands-on food and drink workshops.

Tim says: "Like many people, we were shopping more and more at farmers' markets to get our hands on fresh, local food but also because we really enjoyed meeting the producers who in nearly every case are so full of infectious enthusiasm for their produce, that it's hard to resist taking something home.

"But we both knew there was more to these food heroes than manning a stand on a Saturday or Sunday - incredibly hard work, unique stories, fascinating insights, often in beautiful landscapes. Wouldn't it be great to get behind the scenes and learn more about these producers and their food?"

The first Food Safari event will be a guided walk tomorrow at Peakhill Farm, the award-winning organic mixed farm near Saxmundham.

Visitors will meet Rob White, a passionate advocate of local and organic food production, be able to view his South Devon cattle and a couple of friendly pigs, and get the chance to wander around the



HOSTS: Rob and Karen White, left, with his parents Richard and Margaret

Photo: CONTRIBUTED

market garden - nibbling as they go. The walk will be followed by a feast of Peakhill's own meat and salad crops.

Polly adds: "If you've never tried Peakhill's salad mix you've never eaten salad - trying a leaf of purslane or beetroot tops as you walk around the field is a memorable experience."

Future events planned include guided safaris around producers' sites such as Richardson's Smokehouse at Orford and Sutton Hoo Chickens, brewing workshops with grain, bread-making at Alice and John's near Lavenham and a festive walk and demonstration of Christmas cookery back at Peakhill Farm.

Tomorrow's event starts at 2.30pm, with places costing £15. To book, call 07966 475195 or email Polly@foodsafari.co.uk.

■ The Aldeburgh Food & Drink Festival concludes today and tomorrow with a two-day event at Snape Maltings featuring more than 70 local producers. There will also be cookery demonstrations, children's activities, discussion forums, workshops, guided walks and musical entertainment. For further details, visit www.aldeburghfoodanddrink.co.uk.

LIVESTOCK AVERAGES

Stanfords on Tuesday reports 134 cattle, again totally inadequate. A full company of buyers and the dearest trade yet despite general quality down. A quite remarkable demand for middle of the road cattle and best also short of requirements. The medium steer average reflected that this week with very plain black and whites from 102 to 113p/kg - still an excellent trade. All steers average 159.64p/kg, all

heifers 170.02, all bulls 139.15, all cattle 164.14, and 16 cattle over £1,000. 3 light steers: top 183.50p/kg, average 161.09p/kg; 16 medium steers: 202p, 144.80p; 12 heavy steers: 196.5p, 176.43p; 9 light heifers: 187.5p, 147.82p; 32 medium heifers: 206.5p, 174.29p; 39 heavy heifers: 199.5p, 170.64p; 2 light bulls: 141.5p, 136.87p; 6 medium bulls: 163, 126.1p; 3 heavy bulls: 174.50p, 161.64p; 4 OTM cows: 109p, 89.48p; 1

OTM steer: 110p; 1 OTM bull: 114p.

Six OTMs very short and more wanted. Six store cattle only 25/28m/o black and whites - a good demand at £432.

736 sheep, another excellent entry and an excellent selling trade for all forward. Again best lambs regularly 130-140p/kg. Lean sorts less but no selected lambs under 109p/kg. More still wanted. 446 new season lambs to average

127.38p/kg, 27 light: top 126.6p/kg; average 122.37p/kg; 190 standard: 146.10p, 128.59p; 204 medium: 146.30p, 127.92p; 25 heavy: 122.40p, 120.24p 248 ewes, a good entry and an excellent trade with best continental to £56, plenty over £50 and only very, very poor sorts less than £20 to average £39.32 per head. 2 rams to £59. 40 store lambs to £44.80 for strong sorts to average £35.30.

Rural Business twgaze

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