Well Cottage

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to make you aware of the condition of a footpath across Basel's field.

Because of the nature of the field it not been farmed traditionally for many years – goats have grazed there and sheep and for a while horses, and so it has lent itself as a natural community space for generations, and rarely have there been any complaints from the owners. The footpath over it has been well used, but I had never noticed anybody straying too far away from the path or any mess left from dog walkers.

When the field was divided into smaller paddocks, and accessibility to the stream lost, and the usual sledging on the odd occasion that we have enough snow, it was accepted that we had lost this privilege. It is obvious and understandable that the new owners were keen to make the most of this field, improving the stiles and providing shelters for their animals, and of course they need to make sure that they are safe. I am aware that advice regarding the legal requirements have been followed, but feel that the fences enclosing walkers are dangerous and prohibitive to users.

The footpath is up a steep hill over an area which is boggy from underground water sources. The mud is ankle deep for the width of the path in places, extremely slippery and each side of the walker there are 2 strands of barbed wire topping the fence.

People have already sustained injuries from this wire.

I haven't seen this arrangement of fences anywhere else locally, could the council on behalf of local walkers appeal to the owner's sense of community spirit to re-think this fencing? There are few enough safe local places to walk in, and it's such a beautiful part of Stalbridge,

Yours Sincerely,

Judith Watts.