

Report from Ken Hamilton, Planning Representative for Cambridge Ramblers

The Clopton Way, Church lane, Arrington

Arrington Public Right of Way No 4 forms an important part of the Clopton Way, which stretches from Wimpole Hall to Gamlingay, there giving access to the Greensand Way leading into Bedfordshire. The Clopton Way passes sites of great historical and ecological significance, such as the sites of the mediaeval Clopton and Croydon villages, and Potton Wood. It is justifiably popular with long-distance walkers and less adventurous ramblers. For many, it forms the start of a very enjoyable day's walking, from the edge of Arrington Village at Church End. The old entrance to the footpath was a fantastic entrance to open countryside – up a few steps, through a kissing gate into undulating open pastureland of a type seldom found in Cambridgeshire. This entrance is now a development site, as two houses are being built here. Additional land from the pasture has been purchased for large gardens for the properties. The buildings being constructed are making many changes to this edge of the village, and the developers wish to introduce hardstanding (increasing water run-off) and trees which are not local to the area, such as *Betula* (silver birch) which does not thrive in our local dry climate. Close boarded fencing and a non-local stone wall which are proposed for part of the edge of Footpath No 4 will radically, and unsympathetically, alter the nature of this section of the walk. There is a great deal of concern both locally and within the rambling community in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire that this whole stretch of pastureland will be released to development. If this occurred, it would be extremely regrettable. The Cambridge Local Plan Consultation asks:

- *How we can improve, add to and connect up our green spaces.*
- *How our green spaces can create wellbeing through places to relax and socialise, and healthy lifestyles through places for play and sport.*
- *Balancing public access to nature, which is known to have health and well-being benefits, with the need for some natural habitats to be undisturbed and wild.*
- *Making green spaces multi-functional – absorbing and storing stormwater, improving biodiversity, and absorbing carbon emissions.*

Further development on the site will not meet any of these exemplary criteria, so we strongly oppose it.