



WINCHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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Alex Brewer
MP for North East Hampshire

30 June 2026

By email to: alex.brewer.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Alex Brewer MP

Public Nudity on Public Rights of Way – Request for Review of the Law

I am writing on behalf of Winchfield Parish Council to raise concerns about a gap in the current law relating to public nudity in England. We have already been in touch with the Police and with the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner regarding this issue and are now turning to you to raise whether the law in the area is adequate.

For the past two years, and particularly during warmer weather, a person has regularly walked naked along public footpaths in and around Winchfield. Although we understand that public nudity is not, in itself, a criminal offence, the repeated nature of this behaviour on narrow rural footpaths has caused significant concern amongst residents and visitors alike.

Many people using these routes for walking, recreation and family outings have reported feeling embarrassed, intimidated or distressed when unexpectedly encountering a naked individual at close quarters. This is particularly the case where footpaths are narrow, which many are in Winchfield, and there is little opportunity to avoid the encounter.

The Parish Council has received numerous reports from residents who now actively avoid certain public rights of way, particularly elderly people, women walking alone and families with young children. Many feel they can no longer enjoy the countryside without anxiety. We believe this represents a significant loss of amenity for the wider public caused by the actions of a single individual.

Our understanding is that, unless there is evidence of an intention to cause harassment, alarm or distress, or the behaviour is otherwise sexually motivated or threatening, the current legal framework offers very limited scope for intervention. While we fully recognise the importance of protecting individual freedoms, we are concerned that the present position does not adequately balance those freedoms against the rights of the overwhelming majority of people to enjoy public spaces without being confronted by public nudity.

The issue is not simply one of personal offence, but of ensuring that public rights of way remain welcoming and accessible to everyone. In practice, the current law appears to place the burden on members of the public to avoid locations where such behaviour occurs, rather than providing any effective mechanism to prevent repeated conduct that many find distressing.

We would therefore ask whether you would consider raising this matter with the relevant person, with a view to reviewing whether the existing legislation strikes the appropriate balance between individual liberty and the wider public interest. In particular, we would welcome consideration of whether there should be clearer powers to restrict repeated public nudity in shared public spaces where it has a demonstrable adverse impact on the community, even where there is no overt sexual intent.

We appreciate that this is a sensitive issue involving competing rights and freedoms, and we are not seeking to criminalise harmless behaviour unnecessarily. However, we do believe the law should better reflect the reasonable expectations of the vast majority of people using public footpaths and other shared public places.

We would be grateful for your views on this matter and whether you would be willing to raise it in Parliament or with the appropriate Government department.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Alison Ball
Clerk
On behalf of Winchfield Parish Council

CC: Councillor Anne Crampton, Hart District Council
Councillor Richard Quarterman, Hampshire County Council