

# The challenges and opportunities for equestrian access in Rutland

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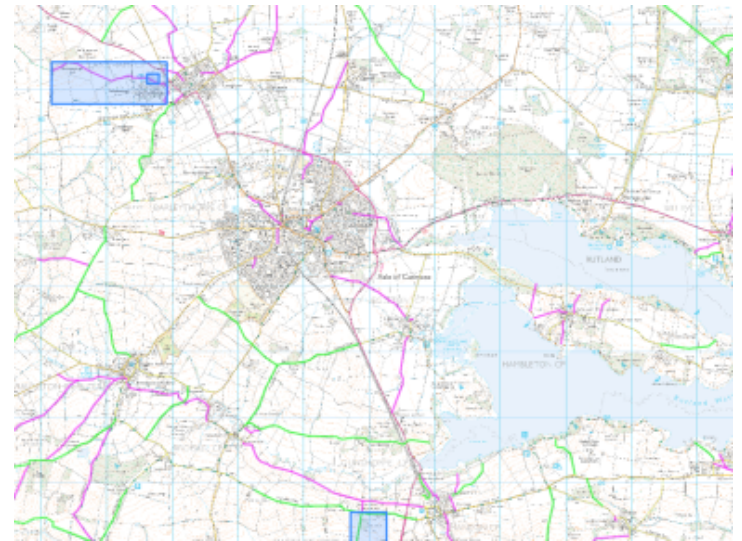
# Safety

- Statistics produced from the Horse-I app show an increase in incidents, accidents and even fatalities on the roads involving horses and their riders/handlers
- All statistics are from 01.01.2021 – 31.12.2021
- 2,943 road incidents involving horses have been reported to The British Horse Society
- Of these, 66 horses have died and 129 have been injured
- 126 people have been injured because of road incidents
- 13% of riders were victims to road rage or abuse
- 85% of incidents occurred because a vehicle passed by too closely to the horse
- 75% of incidents occurred because a vehicle passed by too quickly



# Fragmented PRow network

- ROWIP 2019-2029 shows Rutland does have above England average % of PRow accessible to equestrians (37%) although low density in comparison to other authorities per sq km (IPROW ROW Network Length Data, 2018)
- In part due to the establishment of Rutland Water, routes are often cul-de-sac or lead to busy roads
- Rutland's LTP focusses on walking and cycling



# Active Travel and Equestrians

- Jesse Norman in House of Commons debate on Road Safety, 5 November 2018:
- “We should be clear that the cycling and walking strategy may have that name but is absolutely targeted at vulnerable road users, **including horse-riders**” [my emphasis]
- S.6 of the Active Travel includes horse riding supported by the Ministerial Statement of Richard Benyon from 2011 stating cycleways should be multi use.



- If equestrians are not an included user on active travel routes, permissive trails, footpaths, etc. they are left on the carriageway with lorries and cars passing them on the outside and cyclists passing them on the inside



# Environmental benefits



- Commuting is likely to take place at times other than when recreational use takes place.
- Future-proofing the off-road network by ensuring they are shared by all non-MPV users including equestrians



# Health benefits

- According to BETA two-thirds of equestrians are women and Church et al (2010) found 37% of women who are horse riders are over 45 years of age and over a third would pursue no other physical activity
- Horse riding constitutes moderate exercise as defined by the government
- Schwarzmuller-Erber *et al* (2020) found that ‘activity with horses ... in nature environments is a source of wellbeing, enjoyment, self-confidence and social contacts



# Economic benefits

- The equestrian industry generates £4.7 billion of consumer spending
- DEFRA has recorded 3,911 horses in PE9, LE15 and LE16 postcode areas (2021), making a total of £21,698,228 contribution to the economy.
- Livery yards and riding centres in the county create employment and use equine services (vet, farrier, feed, instructors, etc) as well as visitoing equestrians due to the growing interest in equestrian tourism ('take your horse on holiday').





# Extending, protecting and improving equestrian access

- What are the opportunities to increase equestrian access in Rutland?
  - Permissive routes around Rutland Water
  - DMMO applications
  - Express dedication
  - Allocated parking



# Examples from the Midlands: Multi-user routes/greenways

- The BHS has worked with Sustrans to remove barriers on the Lias Line, Warks making the route more accessible in line with their *Paths for Everyone* commitment





# Permissive routes

- Many country parks do include equestrians by providing horsebox parking and these are both council owned and those owned/managed by other organisations.
- Examples are Shipley Country Park, Poulter Country Park, Fosse Meadows and more recently Stanwick Lakes.
- [Poulter Country Park, Derbyshire](#)
- [Shipley Country Park, Derbyshire](#)
- [Fosse Meadows Country Park, Leicestershire](#)
- [Bradgate Park, Leicestershire](#)
- [Oakwell Hall Country Park, Yorkshire](#) where a fundraising ride with 56 riders was successfully held recently



# Allocated parking for reaching off-road routes

- Designated parking works well in the locations listed on the previous slide and others
- Prevents any conflict between user groups
- Increases access to off-road routes
- Example of Hartington Station, Derbyshire



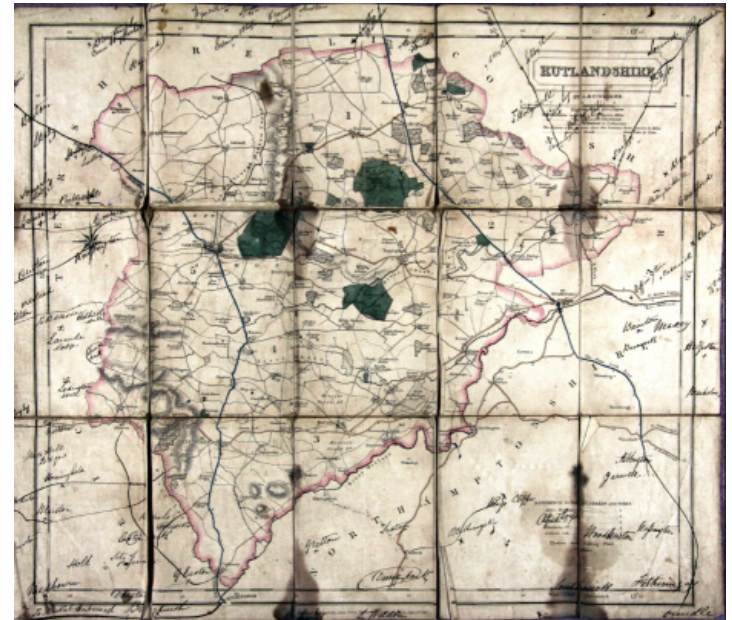
# Campaigns: Ride Out UK

- Equestrians fundraise through Rideathon, organised rides, tack sales and other events
- Examples of projects considered are:
  - Linking existing off-road equestrian routes or public rights of way
  - Removing riders and/or carriage drivers from a dangerous section of road
  - Improving infrastructure (e.g. repairing/new gates, fencing, bridge anti-slip strips)
  - Waymarking
  - Surface improvements
  - Restoring an existing route which has fallen into disrepair
- <https://www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/access/ride-out-fund/>



# Campaigns: Project 2026

- Despite the English and Welsh governments' announcement that they intend to abolish this deadline there remains a risk that it could be overturned, leading to the loss of many routes to future generations and forcing more horse riders onto the roads.
- Regardless of the deadline, our work must continue to record unrecorded and under recorded routes as this is the best way protect them from obstruction, development and neglect.



# Further information

- Free information and guidance on surfaces, dimensions, structures and much more:  
<https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/free-leaflets-and-advice>

