



**Devon Countryside Access Forum**  
c/o Public Rights of Way Team  
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Mr J Hulland  
Transportation Strategy and Road Safety Manager  
Planning Transportation and Environment  
Devon County Council  
County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
EX2 4QD

26 February 2021

Dear Mr Hulland

### **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a statutory local access forum set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Its members are volunteers, appointed by Devon County Council, to provide independent advice on “the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment”. Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the forum has a statutory function to give advice, one of which is councils.

The DCAF currently has fifteen members who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism

The Devon Countryside Access Forum met on 21 January. At that meeting Philip Hackett, British Horse Society Access Field Officer SW, expressed concern that horses were not legally permitted to ride across the whole trail network in Devon. The Forum had also received sight of the email from Mark Weston, Access Officer at the BHS, who highlighted the need to include equestrians in any Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and off-road routes. We understand you have received this email.

The Forum would like to re-emphasise its commitment to multi-use, as included in the Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan policies, and advises that Devon County Council should seek to include horse-riders in Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. This would contribute to equestrian safety, particularly in view of recently

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reported figures on horse related traffic accidents which DCC's Cabinet recently discussed. [DCC Cabinet 13.01.21](#) (British Horse Society Motion – Dead Slow Campaign, Item 615, g)

The Forum would welcome feedback on this matter.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Hilary Winter.

Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

*Letter sent on behalf of Devon Countryside Access Forum*

*Chair: Sarah Slade*

*Vice Chair: Chris Cole*



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Mr J Hulland  
Transportation Strategy and Road Safety Manager  
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Exeter  
EX2 4QD

1 March 2021

Dear Mr Hulland

### **Multi-use of trails**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a statutory local access forum set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Its members are volunteers, appointed by Devon County Council, to provide independent advice on “the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment”. Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the forum has a statutory function to give advice, one of which is councils.

The DCAF currently has fifteen members who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism

Over the years the Devon Countryside Access Forum has supported and promoted a policy of multi-use whereby routes are assessed to see whether equestrians can be accommodated. The Forum is aware this is part of the process for new routes that are currently being designed and developed, such as the Wray Trail.

The British Horse Society, Access Field Officer SW, Philip Hackett, made a representation to the Forum at its meeting on 21 January, expressing concern that equestrians still had no legal access to much of the existing trail network.

The principle of multi-use remains, and the Devon Countryside Access Forum wishes to reaffirm its commitment to this policy which is incorporated in the Devon Rights of Way

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Improvement Plan 2012, a statutory document. **Policy CY3B states 'A review of existing cycle routes will be undertaken to see if multi-use is appropriate.'** Whilst the Forum recognises the time and financial constraints in examining whether the existing network meets current standards for equestrian use and any legal impediment to that use, steps which Devon County Council can take to expedite this process would be most helpful. Well-reported statistics on horse traffic incidents and growth of road traffic mean that horse-riders are understandably seeking safe off-road routes. During coronavirus, horse-riding is an activity that recreational access users can engage in and, where trails are local, horse use as a form of sustainable transport can contribute to aspirations for a reduced carbon footprint.

If funding can be found to assess these routes, the British Horse Society would be able to contribute time in helping to carry out safety audits.

The Forum would welcome feedback on this matter.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Hilary Winter.

Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

*Letter sent on behalf of Devon Countryside Access Forum  
Chair: Sarah Slade  
Vice Chair: Chris Cole*

Planning, Transportation and Environment

Hilary Winter  
Devon Countryside Access Forum  
(by email)

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Tel:01392 383000  
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Date: 12 April 2021

Dear Hilary,

**Re: Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and Multi-Use of Trails**

Thank you for your letters dated 26th February and 1st March in respect of the above. I have pleasure in responding to the points raised.

*Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (26<sup>th</sup> February 2021)*

In respect of the request to include horse-riders in Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), the County Council will be guided by the Department for Transport's technical guidance for local authorities. Paragraph 2.19 of the guidance states that:

*"The needs of equestrians may also need to be borne in mind where they have access; for example, regarding the width of off-carriageway routes, the arrangement of road crossings and differing surfacing standards".*

Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design Guide has also recently been published and sets out principles for inclusive design of cycle infrastructure but with recommendations for how to consider needs of horse-riders, i.e. through the use of DMRB GG 142 (formerly HD 42/17) Walking, Cycling & Horse-Riding Assessment and Review.

Over the next 12 months, we will be refreshing our Cycling and Multi-Use Trail Network Strategy, with the need to bring the plan more in line with LCWIP expectations and latest Government guidance. It is an opportunity for us to update our approach and we will commit to producing a checklist to assist our designers in the development of our infrastructure, for instance, considering what the demand may be for equestrian use (as well as by other users), its appropriateness for such use and therefore what design considerations may be necessary, e.g. headroom, structural and surfacing requirements.

*Multi-use of Trails (1st March 2021)*

The County Council notes the request to review existing cycle routes to see if multi-use is appropriate in accordance with policy CY3B of the Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2012 (ROWIP). At the time of publishing the ROWIP, the County Council had designed, audited and delivered several routes according to the prevailing guidance at the time. We therefore recognise that not all of the routes are suitable for horse-riders.

Since the ROWIP's publication there have been notable efforts to create opportunities for equestrian use on a number of trails, including parts of the Granite Way, the Tarka Trail, the Pegasus Way

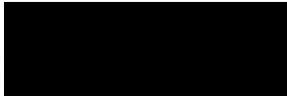
(between Meldon and Cookworthy Forest) and most recently the Wray Valley Trail, which ensured safe passage for horses over the A38. Many of these routes have proven popular with horse-riders.

Unfortunately, at the current time there is no available funding or resource to investigate the historic infrastructure and the various complex legal definitions and different rules in place for pedestrians, cyclists and people on horseback using it. It would also be a significant cost to determine what retrospective engineering may be required to make such routes suitable for equestrian use and there are no current plans to evaluate this.

That said, as described above, the refresh of the Cycling and Multi-Use Strategy provides the opportunity to formalise the County Council's approach to developing its leisure trail network with consideration of use by the widest range of users, including cyclists, pedestrians, people with buggies, wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and equestrians.

I hope this is a helpful response to your letters.

Yours sincerely,



Jamie Hlland  
**Transportation Strategy and Road Safety Manager**

## Horse-riding access statistics in Devon – April 2021

These linear routes and land offer opportunities for horse-riders to enjoy riding off-road in the County. Connections between the different types of access provide longer or circular routes.

### Recreational trails

Horse riders have access to parts of the recreational trail network in Devon. Information provided in order of length.

- Pegasus Way - 15 miles
- Tarka Trail - Meeth to Servis Farm, Great Torrington - 9 miles (via Little Torrington Bridleway 1 or Frithelstock Bridleway 2 - 11 miles)
- Wray Valley Trail - 7 miles and Stover Trails - 3.5 miles
- Granite Way - Granite Way - 2 sections Prewley to Lake and Southerly Down Sourton Bridleway 12 to Lydford - 4 miles
- Holsworthy (Windmill Road to Hollacombe) - 3.5 miles
- Exe Estuary Trail (Starcross) - 1.5 miles
- Okehampton (Fatherford) Granite & Gears project - 1 mile
- Drakes Trail (connection to Mary Tavy) - 0.62 miles
- Knowle link (Castle Lane) - 0.3 miles
- Bratton Fleming (NCN3) at Ditch End Cross - 0.14 miles

***Total length of recreational trail accessible to horses – 47 miles approximately***

### Public rights of way

- Bridleways – 256.11 miles
- Restricted byways – 20.31 miles
- BOATs (byways open to all traffic) – 49.81 miles

***Total public rights of way accessible to horses – 362.23 miles***

### Unsurfaced, unclassified County roads

These roads are not used by normal vehicular traffic but might be used by off-riders or farm vehicles.

***Total length of uUCRs accessible to horses – 365 miles***

Note that all public carriageways are also available except those with legal restrictions e.g. motorways.

### Other access – not quantifiable

- Permissive access routes by permission of the landowner e.g. Clinton Devon Estates on the Pebblebed Heaths and the National Trust at several locations including Killerton.
- Forestry Commission woods and forests, some with waymarked horse trails and designated de-boxing car parks.
- Common Land on Dartmoor. The right to ride on the commons was established under the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985.