

## Slough Local Plan

### Issues and Options Consultation – Bridleways and Byways

For many years equestrians have been concerned that there is no controlled crossing to link Langley Park with Black Park which are bisected by the four lane A412 with fast moving traffic. A Pegasus crossing where the bridleways WEX/24/1 and WEX/21 connect with the road was not deemed feasible for safety reasons. The crossing here is particularly dangerous and intimidating for all users especially horse riders.

Now that development is planned for the area south of Black Park developer funding should be secured to fund a bridge crossing to link the two parks which are adjacent to each other. Vulnerable users of rights of way – walkers, equestrians and cyclists – should not have to take risks to access these two green recreational areas.

All bridleways in the area should be well maintained for equestrian use. If new cycle links are created equestrians should be allowed on them where possible. If bridleways are to be used as cycle paths and therefore require surfaces to allow use by cyclists they should not be sealed (tarmac) surfaces but should remain unsealed. The British Horse Society strongly recommend the use of rubber crumb or flexi pave which, if slightly more expensive than tarmac, is guaranteed for much longer and is a more satisfactory surface for all users especially walkers and equestrians as it is flexible, porous and non slip.

Without well maintained bridleways in the area, access to both Langley Park and Black Park is only via busy roads (to Langley Park via St Mary's Road / Coronation Avenue and as already mentioned, to Black Park via crossing the A412). Whilst horse riders are allowed to use the roads as any motorist is, residents from one of the local livery yards in Langley have on more than one occasion reported abuse by residents as well as motorists regarding their horses being on the roads. The traffic due to increased numbers in the local schools as well as houses being built means that it is becoming increasingly dangerous for equestrians to use these roads. More than 4,000 horse riders and carriage drivers were admitted to hospital between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 from an injury in a transport accident.

In view of the problems of accessing Langley Park via St Mary's Road and Coronation Avenue we ask that the little used footpath WEX/9/1 should be upgraded to a bridleway so that riders do not have to use these roads.

For horse riders near Burnham Beeches there are two footpaths we would like to get upgraded to bridleways – this would connect them with Littleworth Common: these are BUH/4/1 and BUH/4/2. This change would connect them with Burnham Beeches by a far safer route as currently the only way there is by narrow roads. It would also siphon off riders currently exiting onto the Dropmore Road (the exit from the bridleway coincides with a straight section of the road where the traffic is very fast) and redirect them to quieter roads. It is believed these two footpaths used to be bridleways but this was some time back.



It should be noted that there is large and flourishing equestrian industry in Slough which is estimated to contribute in the region of £16 million to the local economy per annum (see attached paper). It is important that the needs of equestrians as well as cyclists and walkers is taken into account with regard to rights of way in the local plan as they are vital to the industry. This response has been compiled with the help of BHS members in Slough who have extensive experience of equestrian routes in the area.

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