

E7/pf/1564

2 October 2006

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Leader of Hampshire County

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Mrs M Comber

By Email

Dear Maureen

ACCESS AND SAFETY FOR HORSERIDERS

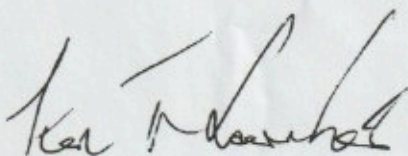
Thank you for your email dated 8 September 2006. I have looked into the matters you raised.

I am grateful to you for your description of your meeting with the site manager at Broxhead Common and I can understand your frustration that land which may appear to be suitable for riding is not being made available.

In your note you refer the decision by the Regulatory Committee to recommend that the matter be considered by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage. This decision is being acted upon but before doing so officers need to ensure they have all the facts they need. The land is only leased and managed by the County Council so the Council does need to know the views of the owner and understand the terms of the lease. There are also issues relating to the conservation value of the land and ensuring that any routes proposed will have the smallest impact. All of these matters are being followed up and the Executive Member will be asked to consider the matter once we have all the information we need. The new signs are not being erected in response to this issue, this is simply routine work being undertaken to safeguard the areas of high nature conservation value across the Common.

In respect of your wider points about safe access for horse riders I can assure you that this an important matter for the County Council. I am sure you are aware of the detailed work that the Countryside Service has undertaken with the help of local horse riders in order to find out what the problems are and to develop effective solutions. These are issues which are coming out time and time again in our Countryside Access Plans and, as a consequence, we are reviewing our priorities to ensure that we respond by making a difference on the ground. I know your contribution to the development and implementation of the Plans in your area would be most welcome.

Yours sincerely



Ken Thornber
Leader

Cc: Yinnon Ezra, Director of Recreation and Heritage