

Cllr. Ken Thornber CBE
Leader of Hampshire County
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5th October 2006

Dear Ken,

Access and Safety for Horse Rider – Broxhead Common

Thank you for your letter by email dated 2nd October 2006.

I would like you to know that I speak for all British Horse Society members – over 3,000 in Hampshire alone – and many others, to thank the County Council for its excellent work in producing ROWIPs, not only for the pilot areas of Bere and Eversley Forests but rolling it out for the south downs district and beyond. As our island becomes ever more populated and our rights to the use and enjoyment of the highway impossible, unless driving a motor vehicle, these plans and the implementation of them become essential to the health and wellbeing of all non-motorised users who wish to leave the motor vehicle in the garage. I have of course contributed to them but am concerned that their implementation through the Local Transport Plan will be overlooked or trivialised. I say that, because of the long standing difficulty that I have personally encountered, in getting the traffic speed limits lowered on our very narrow country lanes to something more appropriate to accommodate a mixture of non-motorised and vehicular use. These roads are so narrow that it is not possible for the pedestrian to get out of the way. This has suppressed the use by NMU's almost totally and seems to be against all we as Conservatives stand for in the fight against global warming, and obesity etc.

With regard to Broxhead Common here are some facts:

1. I have lived at this address for the last 35 years so am well acquainted with the area and Broxhead Common in particular.
2. The landowner fenced in 80 acres of the common in 1964 and lost his battle against the commoners in the High Court to retain the fencing
3. An appeal to the House of Lords was a possibility and the commoners had run out of funds
4. A solution was proposed by HCC as Commons Registration Authority and endorsed in 1978 by The Rights of Way Sub-Committee and the Lands Committee
5. In order to gain support for fencing in 80 acres of the most valuable and scarce wildlife habitat at Broxhead Common the remaining 100 acres would be let to the County Council who would manage it to:
 - 🚩 Conserve the natural history and ecological qualities
 - 🚩 Sub-let five acres to Lindford Cricket Club to provide land for community use
 - 🚩 Incidental use by the public for air and exercise

🚩 THUS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WOULD BENEFIT AND IT
WOULD PERMIT THE FULLEST POSSIBLE RANGE OF
INTERESTS TO BE ACCOMMODATED.

As stated in the report of the County Secretary dated 22nd June 1978

6. The claims for public bridleways came before the Regulatory Committee on 19th October 2005, just about one year ago

In view of these facts I would like to know:

- a) why the Committee felt able to make a decision to refuse the claim and recommend increased access by permissive bridleways without knowing the terms of the lease.
- b) Why a whole year has passed and there is still no action to carry out the recommendation through the Executive Member, to increase the use for horse riders by permissive paths
- c) Why instead 'no horse riding' symbols have been placed on every available path, including the claimed ones (I have counted eight in all)
- d) Why in the circumstances, have horse riders been singled out to be deprived of their right of 'air and exercise' if this is routine work as you are suggesting.
- e) Why have the many trails which were once available been allowed to overgrow with gorse and bramble to the extent that they have for a very long time become unusable

I say this is not conservation it is neglect and discrimination against horse riders for bringing it into focus.

I would also like to bring to your attention that BW46 is now so overgrown with gorse and bramble that I tear my britches and scar my legs whenever I ride along it. Please may I refer you to para. 30 and 33 in the decision letter from the Planning Inspectorate with regard to the diversion order of BW4 & 46 1990. It is dated 3rd Feb. 1992. Both state that there will be substantial clearance of gorse and scrub which is causing the way to be constricted and would be cleared to a width of at least 4 metres.

Initially this was done but has since regrown and is as bad now as ever it was in the early 1990's. As the diversion order was secured on the back of the promise that this path would be kept clear to a width of 4 metres and the groove caused by the inability to use the full width of the path, would be graded, I think it is incumbent upon the Rights of Way Department to make certain that this path is properly maintained at all times and I would be grateful if you would see that this is done.

Yours sincerely

Maureen Comber
ABO BHS Hants

Cc Margaret Snaith
Mark Kemp-Gee

Enc. Photos of Broxhead
Copy of the lease
Report of the County Secretary 1978