

RUBY RIDERS

Notes of Meeting held at Cookworthy Centre 28.10. 2010

Present:	Steve Gardner (DCC)	SG
	Jonathan Rowlands (DCC)	JR
	Caroline Gatrell (DCC)	CG
	Russell Collins (FC)	RC
	Mark Betson (Ride the Ruby Country Co-ordinator)	MB
	Chris Ingram	CI
	Philip Hackett	PH
	Richard Leonard	RL
	Mike Stone	MS
	Lynne Hughes	LH
	Jane Pratt	JP
	Elaine Freestone (Equine business)	EF

Apologies: H. Winter, A. Smith, T. Freeman. J. Down, S. Boycott,
P Human. B. Parsons DCC

Matters Arising

SG explained that nearly 1000 jobs have already been shed through a recruitment freeze that has been in place for a few months. Government announced a £30bn transport budget, may be able to tap into that, but still not sure how budget cuts will affect things. Optimistic. No more tabards to be distributed at the moment because not politic to be giving things away. SG to make a case for continuing their distribution because they can save lives.

Ride the Ruby Country Update

MB - Gave an overview of the Ruby Country partnership and handed out a detailed sheet covering this. He is in favour of multi-use and developing trails through the Equestrian Devon Project

PH -Regarding the Business Forum – the BHS seemed to have dropped out of the loop, we have no representation.

MB - He would rectify this.

JS - said that neither was there any equine representation for the Holsworthy/Bude area.

CI – What are needed are good sustainable trails. South West Riders multi-use policy developing cycleways will be a fundamental part of the development of Ruby Country, looking at the wider picture to encourage people to come here. Need to look at group development as a group including forestry.

EF – Needs clarification on where one can ride the Ruby Way.

PH – Explained situation, contentious issues affecting equestrian businesses and jobs. Assurances given by DCC that there was a way around and through. Deadlock at Simpsons Barton.

SG suggested that if anyone wishes for further information then Graham Cornish is the contact and Barry Parsons is the County Councillor for that area.

RL – Holiday makers want something to do without paying all the time and that there was no basis or fact that multi-use was dangerous.

MB – Offered to help promote any of our events, via website, notice board at Cookworthy etc. Contact him. Fun ride would be good. He will be writing in BHS magazine and Ride the Ruby Country magazine and would welcome articles from us. Routes to ride, photos etc.

Car parking issues for horse transport were discussed. MB suggested Halwill Jct. RC suggested Cookworthy.

Rights of Way Improvement Updates:

- a. **Whiteleigh Meadow** – Horse bridge in place. Advised not to ride area until next spring to give ground chance to settle. “Fanfare” opening. MB suggested fun ride to include it and to celebrate it’s reopening. Parking at Cookworthy.
- b. **Cookworthy to Halwill bridleway creation** – All agreements with landowners now in place. Works to start in the near future.
- c. **Halwill bridleway 13 / Beaworthy bridleway 11** – Under improvement.
- d. **Beaworthy Byway 9** – Under improvement along with above in readiness for Phase 2 of Pegasus Way.
- e. **Melbury bridleway (Beaworthy BW 4 & FP 5)** – SG – Showed us the new route with it’s improvements.
- f. **Pegasus Way Phase 2** (Venn Down Gates to Halwill Jct.) SG – hoping to meet individual landowners and walking the route. A public showing of maps and routes planned after that.
MB – Suggested doing this in partnership with Ruby & possibly sharing budgets.

The Ruby Way. SG – Graham Cornish having an exhibition showing the plans (week beginning 1.11.10 at Waitrose then week beginning 8.11.10 Holsworthy library). Horses not included, but Graham Cornish suggests that riders could use an improved grass verge alongside the A3079.

Exhibition to state that:

“Horse Riding

It is proposed that the path will accommodate walkers, cyclists and people using wheelchairs but not horse riding. It is considered that horse riding is not appropriate because:

- *The Council’s safety auditor has concerns about the mix of users in a confined space*

- *The path leads from an urban area to a path (Colesmill to Anvil Corner) which currently does not accommodate horse riding along its whole length*
- *Horses require a parapet height of 1.8m. The bridge engineer and English Heritage advise against the use of 1.8m high parapets as they would be heavier and out of keeping with the original. Other users would not be able to see the fine views from the structure.*

It is considered that an alternative route on the verge of the A3072 could be developed so that horse riders may bypass the viaduct. This could give access to the network of small lanes to the south of the town.”

Discussion - Anger, disbelief, (had the rug pulled yet again) at this decision. Among the negatives from the group was the structure. PH – It was designed and used by horse drawn trains.

PH Richard Reid (minuted in previous meeting) had agreed to get together to put in a joint consultation to make sure it would be open to horse riders. RR has not contacted PH. SG suggested that the any consultation would have come from DCC on this, not from RR.

CI – This action by GC needs bringing before the DCAF.

PH – Horse riders have been let down. BHS are consultees but PH had not been consulted but as BHS representative he should have been.

Maintenance matters

LH – Construction works alongside Lower Voaden bridleway needs watching as likely to change surface. Machinery had ruined bridleway surface near Lower Voaden, flattened now but substantial grass surface replaced with stones. TF informed.

LH Pegasus Way – Sections now worn away and throwing up loose stones due to much use. Suggested dusting. SG will see if budget allows.

PH – Money for Access – Querying whether Jane Wicketts was still receiving monies for this route as difficult to get through yard, dogs, loose horses. “Walkers welcome” signs are displayed but no “Horses welcome” signs. SG advised that this is probably a Forestry Commission grant scheme and has passed on contact details to PH.

EF – Unclear as to the position of horseriders on cycleways. PH explained only in parts, but the aim was for the entire Ruby Way to be multi-use. EF – In the meantime clear signage needed.

EF – Is working with MB.

Any other Business

Forestry – RC – Had been surprised to find parts of Devon required permits, usually one thing or the other. Suggested that it seemed unfair that horse

riders had to pay when walkers and cyclists did not. Suggested riders write to him expressing the way they feel and how it fits in with the partnership (having to pay for permits). If FC is only collecting a small amount from permits it may not be worthwhile. East Anglia and Nottingham do not have permits. Informed us that 90% of the forestry is freehold.

MS – Queried the possibility of some softer tracks to enable a canter without having to damage the horses' legs. He thought there must be woodland material that could be used.

LH – Seconded this and pointed out the cost of shoeing and how softer going saved on shoes and concussion.

CI – Connecting tracks from hard track would be useful.

RC – Willing to help and would welcome suggestions.

LH – Already piles of bark at side of track in Wadland Woods, could that be spread on hard track. RC - agreed

CI – Holidaymakers would not expect to have to buy a permit.

MB – willing to publicise PROW improvements.

RL – Raised the issue of safe crossings. Much discussion. Trouble seems to be that the “manual” does not contain a sign e.g. “Horses crossing 100yds ahead”.

LH – There are signs for ducks, badgers and other animals crossing why wasn't there one for horses?

SG – There are signs for those as well as walkers and cyclists crossing but not for Horses.

LH – The manual wants updating. How do we do this?

CI – Backed this suggestion.

SG – suggests that riders could approach the Department for Transport about this matter.

CI – Could scrub hedge at Venn be cut back to give better visibility for horse riders having left the Pegasus Way and then crossing at Venn. This would also benefit vehicular vision

This suggestion and request for crossing signs, followed an incident where 3 riders had become split up crossing the road i.e. 2 had got across while road was clear, but speeding traffic prevented the third one crossing with them. Luckily one driver realised this and stopped the traffic on their side.

SG – Will mention to landowner – Richard Hulls and see if this can be included in Pegasus Way Phase 2 negotiations.

Next meeting 24.03.11 at Cookworthy Forest Centre at 1.30pm

SG will email a reminder nearer the date.