

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig | Climate
Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee
Ymchwiliad i bolisi coedwigaeth a choetiroedd yng Nghymru | Inquiry into
Forestry and woodland policy in Wales

FWP 19

Ymateb gan : Marchogwr ac Aelod o Gymdeithas Ceffylau Prydain
Evidence from : Equestrian and British Horse Society Member

Woodlands for Wales Strategy Action Plan Progress as at 1 Dec 2016

With reference to the above I note section 13 states Promote and enhance access to forestry and woodlands for more people to participate in and benefit from outdoor recreation experiences more often, there is no mention of Equestrians.

The only reference to horses is the Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014.

The National Equine Database in May 2012 showed there were 134,748 passported horses and ponies in Wales this number did not include non passported horses and ponies.

Only 21% of the 33,000km of Public Rights of Way in Wales carries rights for horse riders, of which 15% are bridleways and only 6% are byways which allow access to carriage drivers. The existing sections of the PROW system usable by equestrians is fragmented and most of these paths do not link to provide an off road circuit.

BHS Cymru Statistics 2012

If you mix cyclists, horse riders and ramblers, you have conflict and a recipe for disaster. But when the British Horse Society (BHS), Cycling UK, and the Ramblers were called to give evidence for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) select committee, inquiry into the rural economy on Wednesday 25 January 2017, there was no conflict, only consensus, as is so often the reality on our trails when encounters between such groups take place.

The answer could not have been clearer, as Mark Weston, Director of Access at the BHS, explained that there was no evidence of systematic conflict between horse riders and other RoW users, though he acknowledged there was a perception it existed.

Elaborating on this topic, Weston called for increased access to the RoW network for both cycling and horse riding, which are currently only legally allowed on 22 per cent of the whole network in England.

I realise this covers England but I believe the same would apply in Wales.

“The Health Benefits of Horse riding in the UK”. Research undertaken by the University of Brighton and Plumpton College on behalf of The British Horse Society. The survey shows that more than 90% of horse riders are female, and 37% of those female riders who participated in the survey were above 45 years of age. Women have been identified as a social group with relatively low levels of participation in physical activity. The BHS survey also showed that horse riders with long standing illness or disability are able to undertake horse riding at the same level of frequency as those without illness or disability. (The survey was by means of a questionnaire of 1,248 riders)

The Road Safety Framework for Wales now classifies equestrians as “Vulnerable Road Users”.

As vulnerable road users in 2011 4,000 riders or occupants of horse drawn vehicles were injured on our busy roads. Road accidents involving horses are significantly under reported. Police figures do not record them unless a rider or other person is taken to hospital.

BHS Cymru Statistics 2012

It is vital that Equestrians are taken into consideration regard the use of the Forests and Woodlands in Wales, which would give access to safe off road riding and driving with connecting routes.