

P-05-774 Pass Wide and Slow Wales

This petition was submitted by Jocelle Lovell, having collected 723 signatures online and 1,032 on paper – a total of 1,755 signatures.

Petition text:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to implement an annual ‘public education’ road safety campaign to educate all road users how to pass horses and riders safely, and one that highlights the dangers/consequences of not doing so. We are aware of, and support, a UK wide petition that is campaigning to make it law to pass horses wide and slow (<https://www.change.org/p/uk-govt-make-it-law-to-pass-by-a-horse-wide-and-slow-and-abide-by-our-hand-signals>), but would prefer to see education and prevention rather than prosecution after a serious or fatal incident had occurred. Welsh Government has the opportunity to capitalise on the materials and information already available from existing campaigns such as; the British Horse Society’s road safety campaign Dead Slow (<http://www.bhs.org.uk/safety-and-accidents/dead-slow>), whilst emphasising particular issues facing Welsh road users. These include the close links between urban and rural communities in Wales, and the popularity of Wales as a tourist destination. In more urban communities (e.g. the commuter belt around Cardiff), there is a volume of traffic using country lanes, either as a short cut or main access route. In other parts of Wales (e.g. Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire) there is an annual influx of holidaymakers with little experience of encountering horses on the roads. All we ask is that drivers, recognise horse riders as vulnerable road users, and be more considerate when passing horses. We feel the best approach to achieving this is by the Welsh Government taking a lead, in line with their commitment to ‘Work with representatives of the horse riding community to understand their road safety concerns and facilitate engagement with other partners.’ (Welsh Government Road Safety Framework (July 2013)).

Additional information:

The British Horse Society (BHS) estimates the economic value of the horse industries across the UK to be worth £7 billion, and to employ 220,000 – 270,000 people. This, alongside, the health and wellbeing benefits associated with horse riding make it an important part of Welsh life. But,

increasingly, if feels that the voice of equestrians is not being heard. Many equestrians would rather not ride on public highways, but as the availability of accessible bridleways varies across Wales, we often have little choice. Welsh Governments Road Safety Framework (July 2013) recognises that horses and their riders (as well as carriage drivers) are vulnerable on the road network, and that a collision between a horse and a vehicle can have life threatening consequences for the horse, rider and those in a vehicle. It also states that there is evidence to suggest that the number of road traffic collisions involving horses is underreported. As the number of new houses being built in rural/semi rural locations increases, it brings with it an increase in the volume of traffic, on country roads that are frequently used by farm machinery, horses and riders. Many drivers, new and experienced, are often unaware of the potential dangers of driving fast on these roads, and many do not know how to pass horses safely. Just because the legal speed limit on these roads is 60, does not mean it is safe to drive at that speed. Furthermore, evidence from the BHS (<http://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/press-centre/news/jan-to-jun-2016/riding-and-road-safety-campaign>) shows that there is an increase of incidents involving horses, riders and motor vehicles in June. Although the reasons for this increase remain unclear, there is a potential correlation with holidaymakers driving on unfamiliar roads in unfamiliar circumstances.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central