



Briefing Note – British Horse Society

The safety of horses on the roads – The Dead Slow campaign

Response to Petition P-05-774 Pass Wide and Slow - Wales

Background

The British Horse Society is the largest equestrian charity in the UK. One of our charitable objectives is to promote and advance the education, training and safety of the public in all matters relating to the horse.

There are 2.7 million riders in the UK, 1.3 million ride regularly. Horse riders represent a significant group of vulnerable road users. Despite this horse riders have received little attention in terms of academic research and transport policy.

The British Horse Society launched a Horse Accidents website in November 2010. To October 2017 there have been 134 reports of road incidents involving horses in Wales reported to us. The incidents include any near miss or collision with a horse. This is the tip of the iceberg, as the vast majority of incidents go unreported.

Since the start of horseaccidents.org.uk there have been reports of 1 rider killed, 32 riders have been injured, 9 horses killed or euthanized because of their injuries. 30 horses have been injured.

80% of these incidents have been where the vehicle has passed too close or too fast to the horse.

In March 2016, the British Horse Society launched the Dead or Dead Slow campaign on national TV. This is a campaign to educate drivers and influence their behaviour on how to pass horses safely.

The four Dead Slow messages are:

When passing horses:

Slow down to a maximum of 15 m.p.h

Be patient, don't sound your horn or rev your engine.

When safe to do so, pass the horse wide and slow, at least a cars width.

Drive slowly away.

To date the British Horse Society has;

- Had meetings and interest from Welsh Assembly Members and Westminster MPs.
- Met with the National Police Chiefs Council Lead on Road Policing, as a result content from our Dead Slow campaign will be included in relevant NDORS Courses.
- Met with the Strategic Roads Policing Group for Wales.
- Involved with Operation Snap in Wales, and will be presenting at its launch in Cardiff in December.
- Presented at the Megadrive event in Cardiff in October.
- Formed a partnership with the Driving Instructors Association and IAM Roadsmart. (Dead Slow won the DIA- Driver Education Campaign of the Year 2106)
- Formed partnerships with other vulnerable road users (Cycling UK and the Motorcycle Industry)
- Trained the driver trainers for Ocado.com, DHL, Morrisons and Stagecoach.
- Met with the UK Governments DfT , 'Think' campaign team. The 'Think' logo has been used on the BHS' Dead or Dead Slow marketing materials and, on a joint awareness video showed on TV and in cinemas. Launched a video with the Think Campaign DfT.
- Worked with various Police Forces around the UK, specifically Operation Considerate in GMP, Operation Spartan in North Yorkshire and Op Snap in Wales to facilitate the submission of head-cam footage of vehicles passing too close or too fast when passing horses.
- Met with the DVSA to discuss increasing the hazard perception content (horses) of the driving test.
- Horse rider awareness through a series of rider responsibility events. The latest event in North Wales in October had over 60 riders attending.
- Publicity and awareness of the 'BHS Ride Safe' education programme.
- Driving awareness through a PR campaign and presentations to driving groups..

Objective

The British Horse Society aims to change driver's attitude and behaviour when passing horses on the road.

Drivers often have good intentions when passing horses but are unaware of what speed or at what distance they should pass the horse. They are unaware of how quick a horse can move. They are unaware that a horse is a flight animal and how it may react to a fast moving car. They are also unaware of how much damage a horse can do to a vehicle notwithstanding the injuries a horse may receive.

The British Horse Society does not believe legislation regarding obeying horse riders hand signals and giving an enforceable speed limit when passing horses is the answer. It would cause an already stretched police force greater enforcement challenges. This would also alienate many drivers who just need to be educated about horse's behaviour and the challenges horse riders face.

The British Horse Society would support a reduction in speed limits on specific rural roads where horses have to use the roads from 60 mph to 40 mph.

The British Horse Society actively campaigns to increase safe off road riding. We campaign for all new routes to be truly multi user and to include horse access.

To drastically reduce the number of horses and riders involved in road incidents we ask that:

Section 215 of the Highway Code is amended and strengthened.
Greater emphasis on driver education - how to pass horses safely.
Horse riders educated about their responsibilities on the road.
More safe off road access.

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