

Dated 21st August 2024

Memorandum of Understanding between the British Horse Society and Sustrans



The British Horse Society
Abbey Park
Stareton
Kenilworth
Warwickshire
CV8 2XZ

Sustrans
2 Cathedral Square
College Green
Bristol
BS1 5DD



THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING is dated 21st August 2024

and records the understanding between:

(1) The British Horse Society (a company limited by guarantee and with registration number 00444742, and whose registered office is at Abbey Park, Stareton, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2XZ).; and

(2) **SUSTRANS**, a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated and registered in England and Wales with company number 1797726 and registered charity number 326550, whose registered office is at 2 Cathedral Square, College Green, Bristol BS1 5DD ("**Sustrans**")

Background

A. The British Horse Society

The British Horse Society was founded in 1947 and has grown to become the largest and most influential equestrian charity in the UK with over 124,000 members.

We are the charity which works to:

- To promote and advance the education, training and safety of the public in all matters relating to the horse
- To promote the use, breeding, well-being, safety, environment, health and management of the horse for the public benefit
- To promote community participation in healthy recreation involving the horse
- To promote and facilitate the prevention of cruelty, neglect or harm to horses and to promote the relief, safety, sanctuary, rescue and welfare of horses in need of care, attention and assistance
- To promote and secure the provision, protection and preservation of rights of way and of access for ridden and driven horses over public roads, highways, footpaths, bridleways, carriageways, public paths and other land.

Having safe places to ride and carriage drive is particularly important for equestrians as horse riders have access to only 22% of the public rights of way network and carriage drivers to just 5%. With the increasing volume and speed of traffic on our roads they are often not safe places for equestrians to be, so bridleways, byways and other multi-user routes, that equestrians can access, are vital to enable equestrians to get off the roads.

There have been 15,496 incidents reported to the Society since 2010, 81% of these incidents involved vehicles passing too close, 23% of riders were victims of road rage or abuse, 79% of incidents occurred because a vehicle passed by too quickly. 47 people have lost their lives and 1,686 injured, 636 horses have been killed and 1,522 horses injured.

Our research shows that horse riding and activities associated with horse riding, such as mucking out, expend sufficient energy to be classed as moderate intensity exercise, and that horse riding stimulates mainly positive psychological feelings. Horse riders are strongly motivated to take part in riding by the sense of well-being they gain from interacting with horses. This important positive psychological interaction with an animal occurs in a very few sports. Being outdoors and in contact with nature is an important motivation for the vast majority of horse riders.

With ever increasing rates of obesity, stress and declining mental health in the UK, we are uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to improving the wellbeing of two hard to reach groups when it comes to exercise namely younger and older females.

B. Sustrans

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We are engineers and educators, experts and advocates. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done. We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

C. The National Cycle Network: Paths for everyone

Sustrans is the custodian of the National Cycle Network and works collaboratively with many partners and stakeholders towards achieving our shared, long-term vision for the Network.

The National Cycle Network is circa 12500 miles of traffic free routes and quiet roads, and our Paths for everyone programme aims to implement 15 recommendations to make the Network better for everyone.

The vast majority (97.5%) of the National Cycle Network isn't owned by Sustrans but by a variety of landowners who are supported in caring for it by Sustrans staff, over 3,200 Sustrans volunteers, and many of the communities the Network serves.

D. Context

Sustrans and the British Horse Society share many common objectives and we believe there are significant benefits to both organisations working together.

The National Cycle Network often consists of safe traffic-free routes which can also provide safe passage for equestrians and thereby help to reduce the number of riders and horses being killed on our roads. Sustrans are also working to make the on-road Network safer by introducing more formal Quietways to improve safety for all users.

Sustrans believes that the National Cycle Network should wherever possible provide paths for everyone whether they are wheeling, on foot, on horseback or on a cycle. The vision is to create a UK-wide network of traffic-free paths for everyone, connecting cities, towns and countryside, loved by the communities they serve.

Together we believe that by working together we can help everyone to enjoy these safe and attractive traffic-free paths.

We both recognise that accommodating equestrians on some parts of the National Cycle Network can present challenges. We will work together to minimise the causes and impacts of these challenges to maximise the benefit to all users.

Accordingly, Sustrans and the British Horse Society have agreed to co-operate in the following areas and to make best use of their respective resources and influence to their mutual benefit:

1. Areas of Collaboration

The British Horse Society and Sustrans will:

1. Identify and pursue opportunities to promote the public benefits of multi-modal use (including equestrians) of the National Cycle Network (“the Network”), to national, regional and local government, statutory bodies, opinion formers, other mutual partners and potential funders.
2. Identify and pursue opportunities to improve the Network for all users by working with landowners and Highways Authorities
3. Ensure that those formulating public policy are aware of the opportunities that multi use routes offers to improve the health and safety of the nation
4. Identify and pursue current and potential third-party funding streams which can deliver our shared objectives around removing physical access barriers from the national cycle network so that it is accessible to everyone.
5. Identify and promote ways to successfully manage interaction between equestrians, walkers, cyclists, and other users, and resolve conflict between them where it arises.
6. Freely exchange and share data, information, statistics, monitoring, evaluation and research and identify areas where a joint approach would be beneficial, for example in identifying rights of way that need to be definitively mapped
7. To share knowledge, design expertise and resource where appropriate to ensure the development of high-quality routes suitable for all,
8. To make the case for, develop and apply good practice in Quietways and rural Quietlanes to improve safety for all users.
9. Share best practice on how to engage local communities and increase community involvement.
10. To promote joint working parties between British Horse Society volunteers and Sustrans volunteers on the NCN and the bridleway network.
11. Jointly celebrate the contribution made by communities in the development and stewardship of the network.
12. Jointly promote routes to existing and potential users.
13. Endeavour to promote and reference each other in communications where relevant, appropriate and helpful to our audiences, and endeavour to sign off such communications with the respective marketing teams.
14. Work to ensure that all users are featured in relevant promotional material and guidance, and to collaborate to develop and improve approaches to signage on the NCN
15. Encourage regular dialogue between our regional and local staff/volunteers.
16. Sit on each other’s stakeholder/advisory panels as appropriate (Paths for Everyone UK and national/regional steering groups).
17. Ensure that both parties are consulted and involved in relevant proposed changes to the National Cycle Network at the earliest feasible opportunity.
18. Work together for mutual benefit to highlight issues arising from proposed development likely to impact on equestrian use of the NCN.

19. Support one another in undertaking risk assessments about specific paths, features of paths, Quietways and road crossings, in order to ensure they are suitable for the right mix of users
20. To make every reasonable effort to ensure equestrian access to new/improved NCN paths by equipping Sustrans Network development staff and land negotiators with skills to undertake this, and by sharing information about specific existing and future issues as required
21. Update, publish and keep under review, technical information about design and support the training of staff in negotiating access and designing for all users

2. GENERAL TERMS

Legal status

- 2.1 This Memorandum of Understanding is not legally binding and will be reviewed every 5 years or when both parties agree it is appropriate.
- 2.2 No action arising from this MOU will override the statutory duties and responsibilities of either organisation
- 2.3 Nothing in this MoU shall be deemed to establish any partnership or joint venture between the parties, nor constitute either party as the agent of the other party

Variation

- 2.4 This MoU may only be varied by written agreement of the Parties.

Charges and Liabilities

- 2.5 Except as otherwise provided, the parties shall each bear their own costs and expenses incurred in complying with their obligations under this MoU.
- 2.6 Both parties shall remain liable for any losses or liabilities incurred due to their own or their employee's actions and neither party intends that the other party shall be liable for any loss it suffers as a result of this MoU.

Term

- 2.7 This MoU may be terminated by either party giving no less than three month's written notice to the other party.

Costs

- 2.8 Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in connection with this MoU, whether or not it proceeds (including without limitation the preparation and negotiation of this MoU, and any documents contemplated by it).

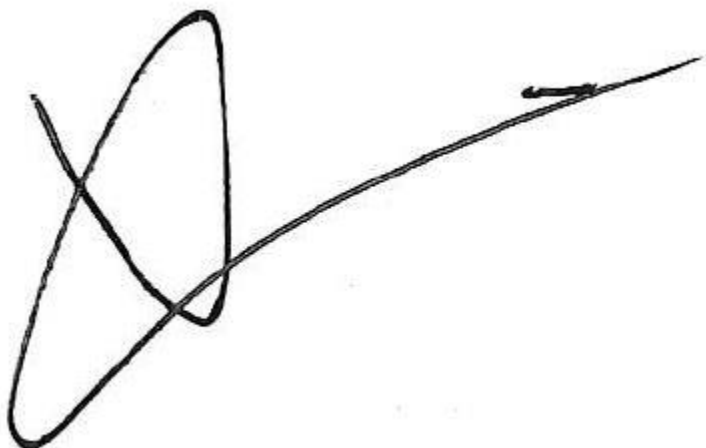
Third Party Rights

- 2.9 This MoU does not give rise to any rights for a third party to enforce any of its terms.

This MoU has been entered into on the date stated at the beginning of it.

Signed by XAVIER BRICE

Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a long, horizontal stroke that tapers to the right.

for and on behalf of

SUSTRANS

Date 21st August 2024

Signed by JAMES HICK

Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

for and on behalf of

THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY

Date: 21st August 2024

