

## Cookham Bridleway 19

### Consultation responses from local horse riders – Limestone surfacing along northern section

Name	Comments
Karen Meade	<p>Thank you for inviting feedback.</p> <p>I agree that something needs to be done with the pig track, especially the top end as it gets almost impassable in winter due to the mud. However this proposal appears to be just making the whole track into a road which is not ideal at all. Scalpings are hard and sharp and can easily cause lameness in horses if they go at any pace faster than a walk. I was under the impression that you were hoping to find a solution that would allow for the track to stay as a usable bridleway. There are less and less places where riders can have a canter and the pig track used to be lovely for that. When the bottom half was resurfaced a couple of years ago it was fine for the first year as there was a reasonable surface on it, but that has all gone now and it is just a road now. However there is a stretch of grass on the right hand side where you can still have a trot or slow canter (if you have a narrow horse and as long as you don't mind treading in all the dog poo there), so I hope you are going to retain that. Is there really no solution to allow a hard wearing surface that can also accommodate riders?</p>
Graham Sharp	<p><b><u>Initial comment</u></b></p> <p>I have been forward the attached recent proposal in regards to a bridleway affectionately known locally as 'The Pig Track'. I see there is yet another proposal to change this surface, following another surface not working.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. Excavate a trench 4m wide, 300mm deep, 420m long between points A and B on the location plan.</i></li><li><i>2. Lay and compact 200mm as-dug chalk</i></li><li><i>3. Lay and compact with a slight central camber 100mm limestone scalpings, topped with 5mm limestone dust.</i></li></ol> <p>I have a concern that not only is the path being widened, but the idea of having a slight camber with the use of limestone scalping's and limestone dust is potentially dangerous to horses/ riders and walkers. This type of surface will</p>

become slippery in the wet winter months and hard under hoof and foot in the summer months.

I understand you are the RBWM's representative for local bridle ways and public rights of way. Therefore I am rather surprised that a well-known bridle path is allowed to be altered yet again with another proposed experiment.

What happened to good old fashioned dirt, at least this way, the ground would correct itself as nature intended, and provide a natural environment for riders and walkers. There is no longer a good straight stretch of ground, to allow a safe controlled up-hill 'canter' where riders can exercise their horses freely, meaning we are all being pushed of what was a bridle path, to having to use the edge of the farmers field. I would suggest that the surface would be returned back to its natural state.

In the meantime, should you like to get a feel of what I am imagining this new proposal to feel like under foot, perhaps you would like to walk up the chalk path by Cock Marsh and also the Chalk Pit in Cookham Dean. I believe this would provide you with an idea of what will happen, should this resurfacing be allowed to take place. I personally would ask Mr Copas to return the bridle path / right of way, back to its original state, and stop trying to turn it into some form of highway.

**Further comments:**

As you can understand, this particular bridle path is very fondly thought of, both as myself owning an equine and also a enthusiastic canine walker. I really hope consideration is given to this path actually being usable for both walkers and riders, with great consideration also given to its original use of training young horses in a safe enclosure (off roads) for that first canter uphill!. Meaning there was plenty of time to pull then up, in case they got excited.

This was the last remaining track in cookham dean were should the path be clear from walkers, we could get our horses canter fit. Sadly, due to the more recent surface change and even the proposed surface change, horse riders are being squeezed out of cookham dean, and having to move further-a-field to use land

	<p>that is other-wise taken for granted. (less of an 'Emmerdale' theme in cookham dean ). If it is at all possible, can this surface be returned to its original state, that had all-year round safe use.</p> <p>Surface will be hard / slippery when wet / and road like (just what riders do not need, as there are plenty of roads around the 'Cookhams' to already negotiate.</p> <p>This is the last remaining track for safe / controlled ' hill work' in order to get horses fit and let off steam. If the surface changed, then we have lost this tracks use forever. Its bad enough that half of it is already been made into a road and gated at the end (for no reason but to be difficult). If this is made into a hard surface - you are automatically inviting 'traffic' to use it, such as mopeds, cyclists, cars (between farm houses)...thus not a sole bridle way.</p> <p>The Cllrs are knowingly urbanising the 'country-side' where 'wellingtons' will no longer be required in the winter months for the next generation to enjoy. The Cllrs are squeezing 'horse-riders' off an existing 'Bridle Path' with a surface that they do not want or require! If 'The Cookhams' squeeze 'horse riders' off a safe dirt track where they can allow their animals to safely let off steam (assuming the coast is clear from dog walkers), then the Cllrs are placing riders and motorists in dangerous situations out on the road.</p> <p>I'm attaching a picture of a painting done by Sir Stanley Spencer, of this track known as 'The Pig Track' - surely the Cllrs should be wanting to protect those areas from being 'over-developed' 'un-naturalised'.</p> <p>And lastly - at who's cost is this surface being laid / corrected at?</p>
Derek Tyler	<p>I understand there is a proposal to change the surface of a bridleway affectionately known locally as 'The Pig Track'.</p> <p><i>1. Excavate a trench 4m wide, 300mm deep, 420m long between points A and B on the location plan.</i></p>

	<p><i>2. Lay and compact 200mm as-dug chalk</i></p> <p><i>3. Lay and compact with a slight central camber 100mm limestone scalpings, topped with 5mm limestone dust</i></p> <p>I have a concern that not only is the path being widened, but the idea of having a slight camber with the use of limestone scalpings and limestone dust is potentially dangerous to horses/ riders and walkers. This type of surface will become slippery in the wet winter months and hard under hoof and foot in the summer months.</p> <p>I understand you are the RBWM's representative for local bridle ways and public rights of way. Therefore I am rather surprised that a well-known bridle path is allowed to be altered yet again with another proposed experiment. What happened to good old fashioned dirt, at least this way, the ground would correct itself as nature intended, and provide a natural environment for riders and walkers. There is no longer a good straight stretch of ground, to allow a safe controlled up-hill 'canter' where riders can exercise their horses freely, meaning we are all being pushed of what was a bridle path, to having to use the edge of the farmers field. I would suggest that the surface would be returned back to its natural state.</p> <p>In the meantime, should you like to get a feel of what I am imagining this new proposal to feel like under foot, perhaps you would like to walk up the chalk path by Cock Marsh and also the Chalk Pit in Cookham Dean. I believe this would provide you with an idea of what will happen, should this resurfacing be allowed to take place. I personally would ask the Farmer to return the bridle path / right of way, back to its original state, and stop trying to turn it into some form of highway.</p>
Jane Webster	<p>I'm afraid that the proposed new surface on this bridle way will not be very horse friendly, scalpings generally contain sharps stones and we need the changing soil conditions for riding. It's also a environment of wildlife and it is meant to be rural not another step closer to losing its countryside feel. Bridle way 19 is one of the most popular rides and it would be very sad to lose a safe place to enjoy riding.</p>

Pam Raisey

**Initial comment**

It would appear from the spec supplied that what is proposed is hardly suitable for a bridleway and in no way constitutes returning the bridleway to its original surface, rather that once again the landowner is pursuing his own interest of making the bridleway suitable for farm vehicles. So, no I am not in favour of what is proposed. It would be far more preferable for the bridleway to be reinstated as it once was, and if a track suitable for farm vehicles is required it should be made as an extra 'highway' alongside. I really do not understand why it is that the landowner has been allowed to get away with the work undertaken so far when permission to change the surface should surely have been sought before making any changes.

**Further comments:**

I must admit that I am surprised the council is taking on the cost of this, seeing as how the whole dispute has arisen because the landowner concerned changed part of the bridleway surface himself without permission to alter the right of way. Surely it would be better to make him restore the right of way to its original surface at his expense and save the council tax payers' money for something more deserving. Not that the bridleway is not deserving, but the work would not need doing had all of this been nipped in the bud when the surface was first altered. Surely the landowner is perfectly capable of restoring the surface, and applying for and constructing a suitable road for his farm traffic alongside the bridleway? As I see it, whilst the surface may be suitable for a place where the only traffic is horses, pedestrians and cyclists it is going to be worn away in no time if heavy tractors, trailers and other machinery are to use it. It will wear away very quickly indeed if there is a wet winter and farm traffic going to and fro. This will then just leave the substrate in place which will be far from suitable for horses and possibly hazardous for other users too.

I'm sorry, but I really do not see that this is a suitable resolution and I think that the Council is wasting time and money unnecessarily rather than making the landlord: a) put the right of way back to its original state as he had no permission to alter it to begin with, and b) pay for the surfacing himself since once done he will pretty much be the sole user as it will quickly be unfit for purpose as a

	<p>bridleway.</p> <p>I note that you have stated that all communications to date will form part of the report to be discussed and I very much hope that a way forward can be found whereby the Bridleway will be restored to its original state. Any form of re-surfacing that restricts the use of the Bridleway by not being suitable in all weathers for horses to use safely, which none of the surfaces proposed would be, is unacceptable. It would be hoped that during the meeting the re-surfacing idea is dropped in favour of complete re-instatement; with recommendations that should the landowner wish to create a shortcut across the fields for farm vehicles then he installs a separate track to the side of the Bridleway. This would be safe for all users and should not then incur a cost for the Council Tax Payer.</p>
Fiona Beaumont	<p><b><u>Initial comment</u></b></p> <p>I am staggered that this is being suggested as a suitable surface for a bridleway. Wet compacted limestone (chalk), as it will soon become, could not be a more dangerous and slippery surface when wet for walkers, and even more so for horses/riders. Not only is this being suggested as a surface, but a surface on an slope! It is as though you are trying to make the conditions so dangerous, we are being pushed off our own bridleways. If a horse slips and goes down with a rider, the chance of the rider, possibly child, being crushed by the horse are high. I myself broke my neck when my horse slipped and fell on the road, (not as slippery as chalk), a few years ago. Have you ever tried walking down Winter Hill in the wet? Has no one done any research about suitable riding surfaces at all?</p> <p>Just to illustrate, here is an extract from a Mountain Biker commenting on the ludicrously slippery chalk path she used: "There's been no rain for about a week so I kidded myself it might not be that slippery. Ha. To be fair, it was nowhere near as muddy as Bedgebury, however the chalk is way more slippery. At some points I was going sideways like Jeremy Clarkson test-driving an Aston Martin. Quite fun in a way, but not when there's a tree looming at your shoulder." <a href="https://lardymtb.wordpress.com/tag/wet-chalk/">https://lardymtb.wordpress.com/tag/wet-chalk/</a>This is an accident waiting to happen.</p> <p>But the points I still question are;</p>

	<p>a) why is this being done at the tax payers expense? By your own admission there have been NO COMPLAINTS about the muddy conditions in YEARS. This is the countryside, not an urban landscape.</p> <p>b) and more importantly, why has the section at the southern section been rectified as was promised and requested by the council many months ago?</p> <p><b>Further comments:</b></p> <p>I wonder who decided on this surface, and what advice was sought by the equestrian users? The surface you describe here is not only a 'hard surface' but will also become dangerously slippery when wet. Add to that the fact that it is on a slope makes it even more hazardous.</p> <p>I attach the BHS (British Horse Society) leaflet on suitable surfaces, and my local BHS access officer is going to be contacting me for assistance on this matter. The surface you suggest meets NONE of these criteria.</p> <p>Maybe where you used this elsewhere it was not on an exposed surface where the 'dust' will be blown and washed away, leaving just the compacted chalk sub-base exposed? May I ask what equestrian user you consulted on this issue, because you have received numerous objections to this surface when it was discussed before, so I fail to understand how/why this was agreed upon.</p>
Jill Oseman	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to re-surface Bridleway No 19. Given our past correspondence on the subject, you will not be surprised to learn that I object, most strongly, to this quite unnecessary further destruction of the bridleway.</p> <p>The basis of my objection is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a bridlepath, not a road; it needs to be suitable for horses, not cars. Agricultural vehicles can already get on to the field – they have, after all, been doing so to my certain knowledge for the last 37 years. Such machinery is, after all, designed to go on fields.</li> <li>• Everyone has been using this bridleway very happily for years – there was no perceived problem until it suited the landowner to claim that there was one.</li> <li>• It represents urbanisation of the countryside. I do not ride out in the countryside in order to go on made up surfaces.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It damages the scene shown in the painting by Stanley Spencer – the path he painted was as now, not covered in scalplings.</li> <li>• From what I have found on the internet, limestone dust is not a suitable surface for riding unless one wants to walk. There is no way that it is going to stay in situ as dust so I must assume that it will either blow away or become hard; from past experience (see below) we can be certain the landowner will not maintain it. Scalplings are not compatible for riding horses at anything other than at walk so, whatever happens to the dust, what will be left does not constitute a suitable surface. The soil surface is natural, has been there for ever and does not rely on the landowner doing anything.</li> <li>• The consequence of an unsuitable surface is that it further spoils the path for riding. This used to be an excellent path for going up at a faster speed as it offered clear lines of sight, meaning one did not start if walkers were on the path, and an up-hill slope which meant even fit horses were happy to stop once they got to the top.</li> <li>• If the landowner is so keen to build a road across his land (setting aside for one moment the urbanisation of the countryside issue), he can build it anywhere else he likes on that field; there is no need for it to follow the line of the bridleway.</li> <li>• I note that despite my letter of 9th August 2013 (attached) to Cllr Stretton, nothing has been done to make the landowner live up to earlier promises. As the so called experiment has clearly failed, far from ruining the rest of the bridleway, I expect the Council to require the landowner to reinstate the lower path to the condition it was in before he, without permission, destroyed it.</li> </ul>
Sarah Broadhead	<p>As a regular user of the pig track bridleway I was very concerned to hear about some proposed changes to it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That bridleway has been enjoyed by many horse riders for many years and has already been spoilt by the work Copas have done to it at the end nearest to Cannon Court Farm.</li> <li>• As it is a BRIDLEWAY surely the wishes and needs of horse riders should come first.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We do not want a hard or slippery surface. It should be made safe for horses to have a good canter up, which is what we had before Copas took over.</li> <li>• Please have the courage to stand firm on this matter and recognise the wishes of local horse riders for whom the BRIDLEWAY is intended.</li> </ul>
Jane Brocklebank	<p>I am writing to add my comments to the ongoing discussions about Bridleway 19, informally known as the Pig Track which runs from Cannon Court to Long Lane.</p> <p>I don't own a horse, but like many others, I share a horse in Cookham Dean which means that I ride 2 or 3 times a week around the lanes and bridle paths. I know of many others that do the same, so it is not just an elite community of horse owners that are affected by this bridle path issue. I would suggest for each and every horse, there are probably 3 or 4 riders of all ages (including children) to consider.</p> <p>Whilst many drivers are considerate, it is a scary process riding on public highways. Bin lorries, delivery vans, tractors etc all provide hazards for horse riders so bridle paths really are an important and valuable resource.</p> <p>In the 2 years that I have been riding around Cookham, the Pig Track has been no more suitable for riding on than a tarmac road, other than the fact there is no traffic. The surface is too hard and uneven to do anything other than walk and trot. I understand it used to be a perfectly good canter track. The fact that is uphill and long makes it the ideal place for a safe canter, and I would love it to be reinstated. The ideal surface is a natural one - yes, it will get muddy in the winter and dry in the summer, but the proposed lime/chalk surface will be disastrous for horses.</p> <p>I don't know if you're a rider or not, but would urge you to listen to the riding community about the suitability of the surface and its fitness for purpose.</p>
David Matthews	<p>I am writing to you regarding the surface of the above mentioned bridleway. Having lived in the village all of my life and kept horses I have regularly ridden and</p>

driven in the area. I am also a farrier by trade and have been for the last fifty years. My son also drives horses at international level and has represented Great Britain on seven occasions. Therefore I feel qualified to comment and support Tom Copas.

Since Tom purchased the land he has made changes to the bridleway that I feel have improved it. Previously it was very muddy and rutted especially after farm vehicles had used it. Now that there are plainings on the lower part of the bridleway it is much drier making it more accessible to horse riders, walkers and disabled people. The path can now accommodate large machinery without ruining the surface.

Having been fortunate enough to use the bridle paths in Windsor Great Park I feel that this bridleway is of a similar standard to that put down by The Royal Parks. I will happily continue to use the bridleway with our horses in it's current condition. If you require any further information from me then please don't hesitate to get in touch.