

Natalia Morgounova

From: Lynda Warth <lyndawarth@hotmail.co.uk>
Sent: 12 November 2023 07:44
To: Planning DC
Cc: Tom Ruzala
Subject: Proposed Anaerobic digester at Streetly Hall Farm, Streetly End that crosses Bridlepath 131/21

Categories: Natalia

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[CCC/23/110/FUL | Farm-based anaerobic digestion renewable energy facility, construction of vehicular access/road to A1307, associated infrastructure and landscaping | Land At Streetly Hall Farm Webbs Road West Wickham Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB21 4RP](#)

For the attention of Helen Wass

Dear Madam

On behalf of the British Horse Society, I wish to OBJECT to this application on the basis that the proposals impact negatively on the amenity of Bridleway 131/21 Horseheath and the danger that the vehicular movements per year will create for horse riders and other users of this public right of way.

Summary and concerns

The British Horse Society (BHS) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this minerals and waste application for the proposed anaerobic digestion plant (the development), it is important that all users of the highways and public rights of ways (PRoWs) should be considered and represented at this stage. BHS is concerned that in the documents submitted for this development there is insufficient consideration on the impact of this proposed development on the local community, on the local economy and current rural businesses. There is no consideration of non-motorised users (NMUs) use of the highways and PRoWs within the area affected by this proposal and therefore their safety while doing so. BHS objects on the grounds of the failure of the proposal for the development to comply with current national and local planning legislation, on the grounds of highway safety, especially on Bridleway 131/21.

Reasons

Due process has not been followed by the applicant in relation to current CCC policy regarding proposed changes to a surface of a public right of way. Approval for such changes must be obtained **prior** to submission of an application. Part of the process required is for applicants to consult stakeholders. That has not happened therefore this application cannot proceed.

Making changes to a public right of way

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/countryside-access/rights-of-way#making-changes-to-the-surface-of-a-public-right-of-way-15-0>

All proposals that would involve a change to the surface of any part of a public right of way in Cambridgeshire are now required to follow an authorisation process. This Policy was approved on 7th March 2023 and sits within the Highway Operational Standards at Appendix T. [Highway policies and capital maintenance programme - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

The process has been developed to address recent concerns relating to changes of surface arising from various projects and developments. It will ensure transparency and consistency of decision-making across the County Council with respect to projects and development, and will help reduce delay in the delivery of schemes.

The new process applies to **all** landowners and scheme promoters, both internal and external to the County Council, where it would involve change to the surface of an existing right of way. Promoters are expected to consult statutory user groups and key stakeholders, and they are strongly encouraged to complete and submit the form **prior** to submitting planning applications, in order to avoid objections and to help to facilitate the smooth processing of applications. To view the guidance and the authorisation form (one document) please download the document in this section below.

Furthermore, in order to comply with current planning legislation, it is essential that the requirements of all NMUs are considered in this application. Equestrian users are amongst the most vulnerable users of the highway and PRow network. Equestrians are not mentioned anywhere in any of the documents submitted. Bridleway 131/21, affected by the application, provides excellent exercise opportunities for the local equestrian businesses. The equestrian industry (excluding the racing industry) in Cambridgeshire alone contributes over £100 million to the rural economy per annum. Nationally, the equestrian industry is the second largest rural employer. Both the nearest villages have vibrant equestrian communities as do neighbouring villages (stated above), all of these use and rely on the PRow bridleway network. This industry relies on a suitably surfaced, safe PRow network, this has not been mentioned or considered within this proposal. For the reasons given above BHS considers that the application for this development fails to consider fully and include provision for the following legislation:

NPPF 100 Highways Act 1980; Paragraph 130(1)

Manual for Streets 2 (2010); 2.8.4, 2.8.5, 3.1.5, 3.1.6

Cambridgeshire RoWIP

Highway Code

The bridleway forms part of the very ancient Roman Road that originally ran from Colchester to Cambridge. The section from Wandlebury to Horseheath is all that remains and the majority of it is a by-way but the section from Dean Road to Horseheath is designated as a bridleway and then a footpath. From the definitive map it will be seen that this is the only bridleway for riders in West Wickham, Horseheath and Streetly End so to have a road wide

enough to take large lorries which crosses the bridleway with 5,800+ trips annually with peak numbers in the summer months, peak time also for horse riders to be out and about in the countryside, is not viable. This is a glorious, peaceful, traffic free right of way safe for all permitted users, especially horse riders who have access to only 22% of the rights of way network, to enjoy the countryside and not be intimidated by large vehicle movements. Nearby there is a livery yard at College Farm, Horseheath and just outside Balsham a racehorse trainer who, together with local riders, utilise the Roman Road on a frequent basis. There is also a tributary of the River Granta which runs down near the site and by Deans Lane before joining the Granta at Bartlow which is a precious chalk stream. The Roman Road which includes Bridlway 131/21 Horseheath, is a 'destination' for horse riders who regularly transport their horses to use this wonderful facility – something rare in this area of Cambridgeshire.

Furthermore, there is nothing in the application to indicate that the applicant is intending to offer any improvements to the rights of way network – only to impact negatively on the existing provision. A development such as this is an opportunity to improve the network – something which is a requirement of the Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement plan and NPPF 100. For example upgrading footpaths to bridleways such as

- Footpaths 253/24, 23, 26 and 12 West Wickham,
- Footpaths 131/1, 3 and 12 Horseheath

Making these public rights of way available to more users by increasing the status to bridleways should be included as part of the development benefits, regardless of whether any application approval impacts on Bridlway 131/21.

Opportunities and next

Should this planning application be supported for approval, BHS would recommend the approval to have conditions to provide greater consideration of and provision for equestrians and the equestrian businesses in the local community so as to meet local and national planning policies as well as the Highway Code and Road User Hierarchy thereby ensuring greater highway safety for NMUs, and to ensure protection of the highways and maintain access to the PRoW network for all users in the local area. To not do this would be contrary to national and local planning policies that encourage development to build on the platform of the historical network to meet the needs of current and future users and land managers.

Following any progression of this application BHS would be happy to be included in further discussion particularly over the accessways to the development including any matters that might affect the highways or the PRoWs should this be required.

Kind regards,

Lynda Warth

Lynda Warth
County Access & Bridleways Officer – Cambridgeshire
British Horse Society