

Taunton District Bridleways Association Newsletter

2022 Review



Welcome

We have had a busy year making changes to the association and running events to raise funds, along with working on bridleway matters. As valued members we wanted to share with you the highlights to give you a picture of what we have been up to.

This year we streamlined the association banking into one simple account (closing the building society) and changed the access to online. This helps to make the administration easier and works well along with the online membership system which we brought in last year.

We continued to add new committee members so we have a wider oversight of the district and can act on reports, or issues quicker.

We also wish to extend a warm thankyou to those who have volunteered to help at events, we couldn't do it without you.

Our AGM will be held via Zoom on **Thursday 2nd February** where we will provide a summary of the accounts. The good news is we have raised some additional fund through running a few events.

Tack Sale

In the Summer we ran a tack sale for the first time, and this seemed to work well, with tables full of a buyers and sellers making some good deals. We were



offered the venue by Kathryn Baker and despite some threatening weather we had a good turn out of stalls. We will aim to run something similar in the Spring of 2023 when there is often a post Winter Clear out of sheds and tack rooms!

Fun Ride

In June we ran the Fun ride through the Dillington Estate. As in previous years, this is popular as a walk and trot ride, with a route going through the estate on areas which are not open to riders at other times. One of our committee members, Domini, is a photographer ([Domi Ricci Photography](#)) and captured some lovely [shots](#) of those enjoying the ride. Next year we plan to run a similar event where **entries will be discounted for members** - any feedback from members is always welcome to make the events as enjoyable and valuable as they can be.



Showing Show

In September we ran a Fun Showing show at Netherclay livery centre on an arena surface, kindly Judged by Charlotte Warman. We had some wonderful riders and horses attend, some completing their first shows on new or younger horses. We put on some hot food and drinks which were enjoyed by riders and spectators.

Our supreme champion was Cal, a cheeky Highland Pony!



We plan to run a similar event in 2023 at the beginning of the show season, around April time. **Discounted entry fees again offered to members.**

Fundraising

During 2022 we have raised nearly £1000 over the three events, with some real opportunity to grow this further in 2023. We really appreciate and rely upon membership funds and donations (however much or little you can give) from our members.

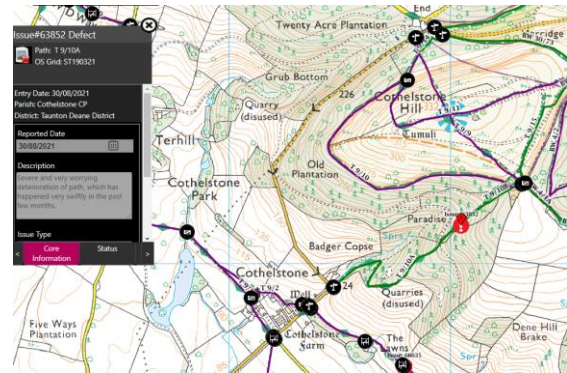
Bridleway Issues

The purpose of the association is to provide oversight for maintaining and preserving off-road riding routes for riders in our district.

The association can use our links with local rights of way officers to open lines of communication where required. We keep an electronic log of any bridleway issues which we are aware of / are ongoing with involvement of the Association.

We welcome members raising concerns or areas of disrepair to the email and messenger inboxes. We require members to report any issues initially themselves

using ROAM website.



The [ROAM](#) website is one of the main routes to raise a query/ problem on a right of way. These items, once raised on the map with a reference number are reviewed by the local area officer. They are required to review new items on the map every 48 hrs. It is then simple to keep track of the item raised and the response/ action provided.

Some issues we come across are simple to resolve but others can be a much more complex problem which often involves research into the type of path (definitive or permissive), contact with landowners (which are sometimes hard to identify/ track down). Usually, the most progress is made if we can arrange a meeting at the site of the problem and discuss with the parties, but of course this can take time and commitment.

An example of one of the more challenging and ongoing problems we have is a section of the Herepath in Bickenhall.

The Herepath was developed as a circular multi-user route, funded by lottery grants, and administered by the Neroche Project in 2008 in collaboration with the Forestry Commission and in consultation with the Rights of Way department of Somerset County Council.

There was Permissive route section either side of Bickenhall Lane. Gabions of old tyres were used as foundations for a woodchip surface. Unfortunately, after about 4

years, the wires holding the tyres in the gabions rusted out and began to push through the surface. Before the Neroche Project closed, the Manager tried unsuccessfully to remedy the problem by organising work parties to cut out the wires. The Rights of Way department decided that this part of the Herepath was dangerous and closed it. This also prevented access to Bickenhall Wood.

It has remained closed since 2013 despite significant efforts by TDBA including site visits with our MP, Rebecca Pow, and District and County Councillors. It is also on the agenda of every Somerset Local Access Forum meeting and has been discussed during the A358 Improvement Scheme consultation meetings. The Rights of Way Service manager is also negotiating with Forest England, although the closed section is outside the Forestry Commission landholding. Removing the tyres is prohibitively expensive but consultants have suggested a viable way to deal with the problem more economically if the new landowner will agree.

Meanwhile, no-one should attempt to ride the closed section. The rusted wires are difficult to see in the grass and new ones will be springing up as more wires rust out.

An example of a longer-term piece of work with a more positive outcome is described below.

Opposite Netherclay Lane there is a short section of the Herepath which runs along the route of an old road diagonally between two fields and links Staple Fitzpaine Road to Thurlbear Lane. TDBA funded the widening of the access refuge opposite Netherclay Lane so that riders can avoid using the main road.

This is part of the land bought by a developer and needs to be used to make sure that the route is not lost.

If the road sight lines get obstructed by the hedges, please let us know and we will try

to get them cut back. As there is a lot of historic evidence that this is an old road, a Modification Order Application has been submitted but it will be many years before it is reviewed so riders should consider to 'use it or lose it.'

Maintenance of routes and access

The association has been involved in the upkeep of official and un-official rights of way.

During 2022 we worked with rights of way officers to conduct repairs to

a bridleway near Wych Lodge which had a large sink hole filled with mud which was dangerous underfoot for horses.

The association has previously re-instated an un-official bridleway, West Lane, in Knapp which we use association funds to maintain as it is not an official route. We have applied for a definitive map modification order to get the route recognised and retained as a riding route.

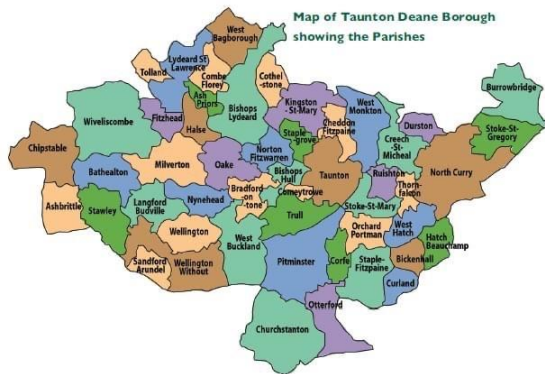


In the west of the district, we worked with local rights of way officers to widen a new access point to Paradise Woods in Bishops Lydeard which is the closest, and safest

access point for riders up to Cothelstone Hill.

Membership

We can only continue to fund the work we do through memberships. Annual subscriptions to the association are now due, so we would be thrilled if you could support us for another year. We also ask if you can mention us to any friends who use local riding routes in the district. The members we have, the more eyes we have on the ground.



Membership has been kept at just £10 for the year, and can be completed using our online system, [member mojo](#).

What happening in 2023?

The association will be holding more fundraising events throughout the year.

These will include:

- Spring tack sale
- Pre-season fun showing show
- Annual walk / trot pleasure ride
- Autumn tack sale
- Autumn fun showing show

We are also planning other events / campaigns that focus on road safety and raising awareness of vulnerable road users such as horse riders.

If you have any suggestions for events, please get in touch.

Some of our favourite pics of 2022



Committee members Ali and Mel flying the flag for Hi-Viz



Committee members Ann and Lucy meeting with the local forestry commission officers



Committee members Domi and Karen on clipboard duty at the tack sale



Volunteers Mandy and Dave (and committee member Domi) enjoying a burger at the showing show



Committee members Elaine and Ann at the secretary's table