

From: [REDACTED]
To: [TRANSPORTINFRASTRUCTURE](#)
Subject: Tackley bridleway proposal
Date: 24 January 2024 14:27:49

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I am writing to object to the proposed new bridleway in Tackley, Oxfordshire.

I own the [REDACTED] and exercise several horses every day along the bridleway from Lower Whitehill towards Tackley Station and Kirtlington.

The proposed new bridleway will have a huge impact on me. It is just not safe to ride that close to any railway line over that distance. Horses are flight animals and as such are unpredictable. There is a reason that the Highway Code requires traffic to pass wide and slow, and cars are able to take evasive action if the horse spooks. Given the length of the section adjacent to the railway and the frequency of the trains, it will be impossible to ride that section without encountering at least one high speed train. This is an accident waiting to happen.

A horse which is scared will bolt and run blind. If it is trapped in a fenced corridor as proposed, this could lead to serious injury not just for the rider but for pedestrians, bikes, buggies and other bridleway users.

It cannot be assumed that horses will become accustomed to situations like the trains over time. I had a horse 2 years ago which had trained with me in an outdoor arena with large mirrors several times a week for months. One day something spooked the horse, we still don't know what, and he ran blind across the arena and jumped straight through the mirror with me on him. The horse had horrific injuries and had to be put to sleep, and I ended up in hospital. Now imagine a child on a pony which gets scared and runs blind like that into the path of a train.

Apart from the safety concerns, the consultation regarding the proposals has been fundamentally flawed. It has relied on questionable evidence, assumptions and anecdotes. I have offered repeatedly for someone to come and walk the track with me on horseback to see how it feels to ride that close to the high speed trains. The views of those of us who regularly use the bridleway have not been taken seriously.

When filming Network Rail's own TV advert which purported to show a child on a pony riding adjacent to (but still some distance away from) a high speed railway line, a risk assessment found that it was so dangerous they needed to use a stunt rider with 2 people on foot next to the pony. If it's too dangerous for filming purposes, how can it possibly be acceptable for members of the public?

I hope that you see sense and look at other, safer alternatives which have been put forward by members of the local equestrian community. If these proposals go ahead, it is only a matter of time until there is a serious accident.

Regards
Amanda Geday

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