

## Newsletter Spring 2025

### Report on the AGM and talk held on 30 January 2025 Horseback to Resus - Stay Safe around Horses by Dr. Diane Fisher

Our speaker Diane Fisher, a major trauma and emergency medical consultant and also BETA Chief Medical Officer, manages to connect safety and enjoying horses. Diane talked about her background as a local Grade v Para rider who has three horses and has represented the North West Para Dressage Riders qualifying for the Nationals.

Diane set up the 'All the Kings Horses' Facebook page:

( <https://www.facebook.com/medicalmare> ) during the pandemic as she noticed that there were more horse related injuries and it now has 20,000 followers. As a result Diane won an award as Social Media Influencer of the Year in 2022. She has also appeared in the TV series 999 Critical Condition shown on Channel 5 and Netflix.

Diane has a campaign as BETA's CMO to link industry with medicine and is often asked to advise medical staff on equestrian matters. In the event of an accident, she stressed the importance of describing any injuries accurately to include the fall height when contacting the emergency services and making sure that the airway is free. Importantly 999 always works even if there is no signal. It is also useful to have a plan in case things do go wrong. For example carrying a lead rope is very helpful if a helicopter lands and you need to deal with two horses as it is essential to keep well out of the way for safety.

Diane stated that we are all responsible for our own safety when not just riding but particularly when handling horses and she described some horrific accidents which had occurred. She stressed the need to tell someone where you are going with your horse and your anticipated return time. Also that everyone should have the What3words app on their phone as used by all the emergency services. This can identify your exact location and can save valuable time in case of an accident.



Diane stressed that equestrian activities can never be risk free but can be mitigated by appropriate PPE and medical and equestrian education. Hat safety was highlighted and these should always be replaced after impact or periodically and well stored away from damp. In case of injury Dianne showed how to keep the neck still and carefully remove the rider's hat using two volunteers shown in the photo above. Body protectors were also recommended as well as air jackets as these can greatly reduce the risk of internal damage in the event of a serious fall. After any brain injury Diane pointed out that often two weeks rest was advised which also means resting the brain from screen time.

The talk was both informative and thought provoking and made everyone realise the importance of staying safe at all times whilst still enjoying horses.

Would you use your seat belt if you had airbags in the car?



### **New Committee**

Kath Wurcbacher – Chair

Liz Holmes – Treasurer / Membership

Sue Griffiths – Secretary and Newsletters

Kathryn Steer - Website and Facebook Administration

Janene Hamilton - Delamere Forest Liaison

Harry Ziman – Committee member

Following a plea for new members we are pleased to announce that Emma Daniels and Natalie Heaton have also joined our committee and we welcome them.

### **Website**

Our new website is being developed and we did make a plea for some good photos at the AGM. If you want to forward any of your favourite rides, preferably with a good resolution, please forward to our email address below and there will be a prize for the best photo.

Email: [midcheshirebridleways@gmail.com](mailto:midcheshirebridleways@gmail.com)



### Membership

A reminder if you haven't already renewed your membership at the AGM, subs are now due. The cost is still £10 for individuals or £15 for family membership and this supports our access work and helps towards the BHS affiliation fee which has increased yet again this year. A form is enclosed with the email or you can click on the following link to an online form which most people find easier and payment is by PayPal or BACS: <https://zfrmz.eu/jy2sLq6m72C2x9x11zkP>

### Bridleway News

Bridleway Acton Bridge 10 which links from Acton Bridge to Crowton has become eroded again following heavy rain last month. It was only repaired a couple of years ago but has quite a steep gradient. The Council are currently exploring alternative surfaces.



Bridleway Acton Bridge 10



Concrete barrier to Northwich Flashes route

### Northwich Woodlands

The concrete barrier on one of the bridges to the multi-user route around the Flashes has been moved recently as shown on the photo. It's now too narrow to ride through safely and has been reported to the Rangers but apparently this loop isn't owned by Cheshire West and Cheshire Council (CWAC). If you ride anticlockwise around the flashes, there is an alternative route straight on through the gap next to the gate back towards Marbury Lane which is the same width although designated as a footpath. The link below shows the map of Northwich Woodlands and horse riding is permitted to the multi-user routes. Some of the signage on the ground isn't clear and we have been asked by the Rangers to meet them and review this as they have some funding for signage. If anyone isn't sure where to ride, several of the committee are happy to meet and escort anyone around. The link below shows the map of the area as it's difficult to read the notice boards when mounted.

<https://foam.merseyforest.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Northwich-Woodlands-Map.pdf>

We continue to report any problems and do encourage riders to also report and we post links in our newsletters and Facebook page to help. As well as taking photos, it is a good idea to use What3words as this can highlight the exact location and will save time locating. This app is very useful, as if you are unfortunate enough to need the emergency services, it gives your exact location. Our Facebook group has also proved very useful for riders to highlight any issues and post photos. The links to CWAC and Cheshire East ROW are:

[https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport\\_and\\_roads/public\\_rights\\_of\\_way.aspx](https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport_and_roads/public_rights_of_way.aspx)

[https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/leisure\\_culture\\_and\\_tourism/public\\_rights\\_of\\_way.aspx](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/leisure_culture_and_tourism/public_rights_of_way.aspx)

Any tree issues in Delamere Forest or other land managed by Forestry England such as the permissive path between Stoneyford Lane and the Whitegate Way should be reported to [delamere@forestryengland.uk](mailto:delamere@forestryengland.uk). If you let us know too we can report it directly to our contacts. Their priority is always to clear main routes quickly but minor routes are generally not cleared.

### Whitegate Way

The proposed mounting block has now been constructed by Countryside Equestrian and we hope it will be installed by next month subject to the surfacing which is to be carried out by Cheshire West and Chester Council in association with volunteers. We have also funded a new horse box parking sign to replace the old one.



### Liaison with Cyclists

The BHS has been working together in partnership with Cycling UK for years to improve safety for both vulnerable road users. Recently the BHS and Sustrans have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to improve equestrian access on the National Cycle Network, improve safety and minimise conflicts between different users. Recently MCBA have met with the Cycle North Cheshire (CNC) as we have similar aspirations in improving access for all. It is often easier to attract funding for multi-user routes than just bridleways. CNC have a campaign to extend the Chester Greenway and to resurrect plans for the future opening of the disused Mouldsworth to Helsby railway line.



## **Dog Issues**

We are aware that some riders have had issues with loose dogs not under control, especially in Delamere Forest. We have raised this in our liaison meetings with Forestry England and there are free workshops on Saturdays to help owners with control and recalling. There has also been quite a bit of publicity in the press and social media recently regarding dog behaviour. Any dog incidents should be reported to the Police on 101 as anti-social behaviour otherwise they will not be aware of any issues and it will also encourage them to allocate resources appropriately. In addition, make sure incidents for dogs and other issues whether traffic or fireworks etc are reported to the BHS, either via the website (link at bottom of page) or using the BHS Horse i incident reporting app. The link below includes advice for both riders and dog owners and a useful video. The BHS website also includes loads of advice on access issues.

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding-and-learn/riding-out-hacking/common-incidents/dogs/>

### **Advice for horse owners**

- Always slow to a walk to pass dogs
- Communicate with the owner if they have not seen you, or call out for an owner if a dog is loose or unaccompanied
- If necessary, stop to allow the owner to put their dog on a lead
- Give dogs a wide berth so they do not feel threatened
- Always wear hi vis to enable other route users to see you
- Be nice and say hi

### **If the worse happens and your horse is attacked by a dog:**

- Stay calm
- Distance yourself from the dog by riding away
- Protect young or vulnerable riders if possible and safe to do so
- Keep the horse's head away from the dog
- Allow your horse to defend itself

### **Afterwards:**

- Make a note of any identifying details of either the dog or their owner
- Make sure that you and your horse are safe
- Try to get the dog owner's contact details in case the incident needs following up.
- Always report any incident to the Police and ask them to refer it to the Dog Legislation Officer, who will be an expert in these matters
- [Report the incident to the BHS](#)