

12 February 2020

Planning and Development Department  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
OX15 4AA

**By email**

**FAO Andrew Lewis**

Dear Mr Lewis,

**Planning Ref 18/00825/HYBRID – Application re-consultation, Heyford Park**

Thank you for consulting the British Horse Society (BHS) on this application. This response on behalf of the Society is based on the following supporting documents:

- Design & Access Statement, April 2018 (ref P16-0631\_81D)
- Heyford Park Composite Parameter Plan (Drawing no. P16-0631\_08 dated 17/04/2018)
- Heyford Park – Proposed Bridleways Routes (drawing no. D.0342\_51 SHEET NO: \_1 REV: \_E dated 15/10/2018)

Our comments relate mainly to the proposed reinstatement of the two bridleways to the west and east of the site, known as Portway and Aves Ditch respectively.

The BHS welcomes this proposal in respect of the two bridleways, which was the subject of a Condition within consent for an earlier application (08/00716/OUT).

We do however have some specific points and concerns about the design and layout of the bridleways, and the new primary HGV access route proposed at the eastern side of the site along Chilgrove Drive. These comments refer where appropriate to BHS advice, latest versions of which can be found online at [www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice](http://www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice).

## **1. PORTWAY:**

We have seen specifications for the Portway path across the western end of the airfield runway (drawing no. D.0342\_51 SHEET NO: \_1 REV: \_E dated 15/10/201) and are satisfied that these are broadly in line with BHS guidance.

- a. Surface:** A wearing course of Coxwell Gravel over a Type 1 sub-base is entirely acceptable for bridleway surfacing.
- b. Width:** The 2.5 metre surfaced width of the Portway path at the northern side of the runway (section A-A in the drawing) is narrower than we would recommend for a bridleway, however

provided that the adjacent 3 metres of grass is suitably maintained and available for use by horses we have no objection to the overall specifications for the Portway reinstatement.

## 2. AVES DITCH:

We are not aware of any specifications for the Aves Ditch path and therefore wish to raise the following points:

- a. **Surface:** We would expect the Aves Ditch surfacing to be the same as the Coxwell gravel proposed for the Portway. If there is any need for an alternative surface to be considered, it should be noted that **Tarmac / Bitmac is often dangerously slippery for horses and should therefore not be used for surfacing any equestrian route** (see BHS guidance on [Surfaces](#)).
- b. **Width:** BHS advice on [Dimensions for width, area and height](#) is that new bridleways should have a minimum *useable* width of 3 metres at all seasons, irrespective of whether the path is bounded by a hedge or fences, or may be fenced in future. In practice, a useable width is likely to require at least an additional half a metre to each side giving an overall width of 4 metres to avoid such factors as overgrowth reducing the useable width between cuts, or a rider catching a foot in a fence.
- c. **SAFETY ISSUES / Chilgrove Drive HGV Access:** The proposed route for the new HGV access road runs alongside the new Aves Ditch bridleway for some distance and would cross it approximately 400 metres north of the Camp Road. This is a major concern, as we understand that there may be as many as 5,600 HGV movements per week along this road. We therefore ask that the following be provided to minimise risks to all users of the bridleway (pedestrians and cyclists as well as equestrians):
  - i. **Screening:** The proximity of Chilgrove Drive to Aves Ditch within the airfield site is a particular concern as horses can be startled by large vehicles and also by sudden noise such as the application of air brakes. The BHS would therefore ask that the applicant provides details of the screening that will be provided between the bridleway and the HGV access road.
  - ii. **Controlled crossings:** Equestrian 'Pegasus' signal controlled crossings should be installed where Aves Ditch crosses both Camp Road and Chilgrove Drive (see BHS advice note on [Road Crossings](#))
  - iii. **Signage:** highway signage will be required along both Camp Road and Chilgrove Drive to warn HGV drivers (and others) of the presence of horses on the bridleway.

To conclude, the BHS has NO OBJECTION to this planning application, PROVIDED that all the above points are secured by a Condition, requiring full implementation of the bridleway reinstatements within 6 months of the date of approval of this application.

Please do not hesitate to get back to me if there is anything further that you wish to discuss in respect of our response to this application.

Yours sincerely,

*Petronella Natrass*

Petronella Natrass MSc, MIPROW  
Access Field Officer (BHS South Region)

[petronella.natrass@bhs.org.uk](mailto:petronella.natrass@bhs.org.uk) / [access@bhs.org.uk](mailto:access@bhs.org.uk)