

Letcombe Bassett/Regis & West Challow: Green Road BOAT & BOAT Nos.399/13/10 & 275/3/10 - proposed prohibition of motor vehicles & carriages

On behalf of the British Horse Society, I am writing to formally object to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order. Whilst supportive of the principle of protecting the BOATs during the winter months there is a significant concern over how this will be implemented. A particular concern is the installation of barriers, as has recently happened nearby by OCC, to enforce a new TRO on Corn Hill Lane at East Challow. Four barriers have been installed and below is a good example of poor design that excludes some lawful users:



As can be seen in the photo the two side gap posts (**gap 1.6m**) are set at an angle to the barrier, on uneven sloping ground and with a direct (straight) line leading into the undergrowth. The barrier is locked with a key operated padlock and it remains unclear how OCC have met the TRO conditions of maintaining emergency vehicle access to the byway in the case of an emergency/accident.

This barrier arrangement knowingly excludes some lawful users of this byway, such as mobility wheelchair users and horse drawn carriages.

The Officer responsible for this installation at OCC has been provided with BHS guidelines on barriers and offered site meetings and discussions about barrier installations before any work took place and this has not happened.

Whilst Cornhill Lane will need remedial works (and expense) to fix this unnecessary problem it is important that this does not happen again with the proposed Green Road Seasonal TRO. Any proposed layout needs to meet the mandatory criteria outlined in the British Horse Society's Policy and Guidance on Vehicle Barriers (2026). To repeat some of the advice provided to OCC the BHS Guidance includes:

Requirements

Whatever the form of barrier, the principles required for safe equestrian access are:

- *Minimum gap of 1,525mm (1.525m) on a bridleway*
- *Minimum gap of 3,048mm (3.048m) on a carriageway — that is, a restricted byway, byway open to all traffic or road — unless subject to a permanent Traffic Regulation Order, in which case 1,800mm (1.8m) may be acceptable to permit passage with a horse-drawn vehicle (see Bollards)*
- *Minimum gap measured between the narrowest section if edges of the structure are not vertical (e.g. bank, tapered bollard)*
- *Straight smooth vertical edges to the barrier reduce risk; rough, sharp or broken edges increase the risk of injury when negotiating a gap*
- *Set back from a road edge so that a horse is well clear of road traffic when negotiating the barrier: 3m on bridleway, **6m on byway** (see Barriers at a roadside)*
- *Straight approach and exit of 3m length on a bridleway (**6m on byways**) to allow the horse (and vehicle) to be aligned to pass the obstacle*
- *No further structures within 3m (**6m on byway**) to give space to align for the next gap (see Multiple structures)*
- *Firm level ground through and on approach to the structure*
- *A non-slip surface to avoid a horse slipping, with deflexion ('give') if a vertical barrier on a bridleway such as a horse stile which a horse may jump (i.e. not asphalt or concrete) – polymer-bound rubbercrumb-grit is ideal*
- *Clear of overhanging vegetation and other hazards, to at least 3.7m*
- *If a barrier, such as a locked gate, is installed across the width of the main part of the right of way with a bypass, the bypass must be kept clear of vegetation and be on level ground. This is particularly important on a byway or road where the bypass gap must be negotiable with a horse-drawn vehicle which will tip in relation to the crossfall of the ground and may collide with the structure or even overturn, with serious consequences.*

Link : <https://www.bhs.org.uk/media/42bmu2su/vehicle-barriers-0226-1.pdf>

The BHS policy for a TRO is for **1.8m gaps** and that there should be genuine evidence of both need and effect, not just perception and reaction. Any barrier must only be installed on a time-limited trial basis, with monitoring in place, to ensure that evidence is collected on reduction of antisocial activity in balance with impact on lawful use of the way, to allow assessment of whether the barrier is justified to remain. NB: It should be noted that on Cornhill Lane a vehicle used the 'closed' BOAT when there were no TTRO enforcement/notice signs in place, as required by that Order.

Two examples of OCC TROs with wider gaps locally, that are still effective are:



OCC TRO on BOAT 285/8/10 at Ardington (leads to the Icknield Greenway) gap 2.1m



OCC TRO bollards on the Icknield Greenway, Ginge Road, East Ginge gap 1.8m



Another example just over the county border:



West Berks Council signs for width barriers on a BOAT under the A34 at East Ilsley **Gap 1.7m**

Equality and discrimination

The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 must be considered. A barrier affects people with limited mobility and vision as well as equestrians and any may have difficulty negotiating the structure safely. Drivers of horse-drawn vehicles are commonly excluded by failure to recognise the width required for their vehicle.

Equestrians may have limited agility and their horse and/or vehicle provides them with beneficial means for open air exercise. Many riders turn to driving their horse when they can no longer ride. There are horse-drawn vehicles adapted for use by wheelchair users. The highway authority's Public Sector Equality Duty means that it must not authorise structures which reduce equitable access for legitimate users.

Whilst these concerns could easily be addressed, without future infrastructure plans being clear or forthcoming, on behalf of the society, I submit an objection to this Order on the grounds that it will unfairly discriminate against vulnerable and lawful users, as has been clearly demonstrated by the OCC TRO barriers installed on the Cornhill Lane BOAT (May 2026). OCC has not demonstrated compliance with its Public Sector Equality Duty, as the proposed restrictions risk disproportionately excluding or discriminating against disabled users, including carriage drivers utilising adapted vehicles.

I am happy to withdraw my objection should it be possible for OCC to produce a clear design plan that shows the proposed barrier layout with a level surface, clear approach and exit. Where the design will allow for safe passage to all lawful user groups that have a legal right to use these byways (inclusive of horse drawn carriages).

Yours sincerely

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BHS Access & Bridleways Officer
for Vale of White Horse