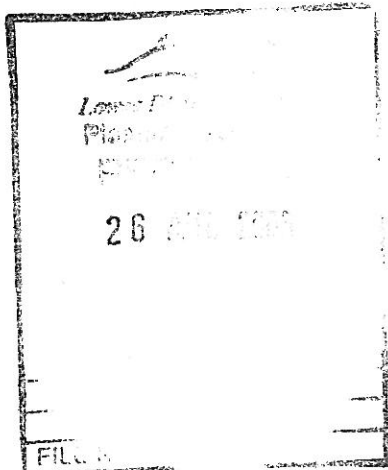


210/02/12.

**defra**

Department for Environment  
Food and Rural Affairs

Mr Frost  
Lewes District Council  
Lewes House  
32 High Street Lewes  
E Sussex  
BN7 2LX



**Our Reference:** 41/104/0105

August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2003

Dear Andy

### **SOUTH DOWNS ESA – New ESA Agreement**

It is a long time since I visited you about renewing the agreement land at the battle of Lewes Site. However, everything will be in place in time for the first payments on the renewed agreement this autumn. You will soon be receiving the agreement papers for the new agreement from my colleagues in Reading, but for the moment I write to confirm the changes to be made and enclose a new Grassland Management Plan. In summary:

- The new agreement will comprise the 39.83ha of land renewed in Tier 3A, Arable Reversion to Chalk Grassland, plus a small area of 0.65ha of land in Tier 1, Permanent Grassland on the Chalk over the scheduled barrows.
- Once signed this agreement will have begun on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2003 and will end on April 2013, with the first payment due this autumn.

### **Grassland Management Plan**

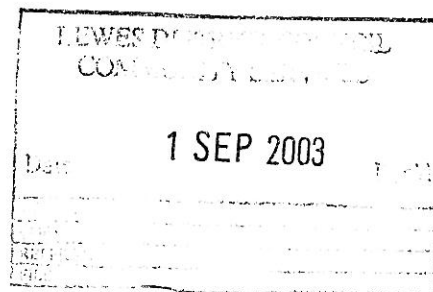
I would be very grateful if you could examine the draft Grassland Management Plan (GMP) that I have written for the renewed agreement. This goes into more detail on how all the land should be managed, as a reference for both you and the Project Officers. It will form part of your final agreement and will be binding, so if you have any comments, or wish to make any changes please let me know as soon as possible and I can amend it. Don't sign and return this version.

As always, do give me a call if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely

James LePage  
Project Officer  
South Downs ESA

Website [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)



# SOUTH DOWNS ESA GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

2003 Agreement

It is important that this document is read in conjunction with the *South Downs ESA Guidelines for Farmers* booklet and the site specific agreement map.

<b>Agreement holder:</b>	Mr Frost	<b>Holding no:</b>	41/104/0105
<b>Address:</b>	Lewes District Council Lewes House 32 High Street Lewes E Sussex, BN7 2LX		
<b>Site identity:</b>	Lewes District Council		
<b>Tier (s) of agreement:</b>	Tier 1, Permanent Grassland on the Chalk Tier 3A, Arable Reversion to Chalk Grassland		
<b>Site designations:</b>	Site of the Battle of Lewes in 1246. Bowl barrows SM25479.		
<b>Visit date:</b>	27/02/2003		
<b>Agreement Dates:</b>	Start: May 1 <sup>st</sup> 2003    End: April 30 <sup>th</sup> 2013		
<b>Plan Review:</b>	2008		
<b>Plan prepared by:</b>	James LePage, DEFRA Guildford		

### Introduction:

The objectives for ESA Tier 1, Permanent Grassland on the Chalk, are to achieve appropriate grazing management of the chalk grassland habitat (an UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat), maintain its conservation status and prevent scrub encroachment. The best grassland sites can support up to 50 plants per square metre, together with a range of insects that are totally dependent on such areas.

Tier 3A, Arable Reversion to Chalk Grassland, aims to re-establish the traditional characteristics of chalk grassland and its associated wildlife. It should provide a habitat for ground nesting birds and invertebrates, and have the potential for chalk grassland species to recolonise over time. Features of archaeological importance are protected from damage by ploughing or scrub.

### Site Description and Management to Date:

This agreement originally began in 1993, when Lewes District Council applied to revert around 83 ha of land to Tier 3A, Arable Reversion to Chalk Grassland. The grassland covers the site of the Battle of Lewes in 1246, a registered battlefield site, and is also adjacent to a number of ancient monuments and a dew pond (restored with ESA grant in 2000). It is very popular with local people for recreation but the sward has also diversified well in places, with unimproved grassland herbs colonising since being restored to grass. The largest field makes a dramatic sweep of downland upon which visitors may more easily visualise the scene of battle.

This land is now renewed for another ten years, with the addition of a small area of land in Tier 1, Permanent Grassland on the Chalk, which covers the sites of several scheduled bowl barrows. It is hoped that the addition of the barrow sites will lead to better fencing and scrub clearance of this area, allowing it to be grazed and the appearance of the barrows enhanced. As the barrow are close to the urban fringe of Lewes the area has suffered tipping and the sites of bonfires in the recent past. ESA funded improvements will hopefully end that and lead to greater respect of for area. The whole area is grazed by animals from Plumpton Agricultural College

**Aims and Objectives of this Management Plan:**

The aim of this Plan is to provide advice on the appropriate management of the site to ensure that its environmental interest is enhanced. The specific objectives are to:

- Conserve the historic landscape and open downland character of the area.
- Maintain the arable reversion (Tier 3A) grassland so that the sward continues to be colonised by unimproved and chalk grassland species, enhancing its botanical value.
- Enhance the land in Tier 1 by re-introducing grazing and removing low scrub and brambles.
- Prevent threats to all grassland areas and archaeological features, principally invasion by weeds, damage by burrowing animals and fly tipping on the urban fringe.

**Management Actions Agreed:**

- Graze all grassland areas extensively through the year with sheep (and/or cattle) to produce a sward 2-5 cm high on average. A proportion of the sward, especially around the edges, should have longer vegetation typically 10-15cms tall.
- You may graze more lightly in spring (allowing wildflowers to seed), but by the end of the year the majority of the years' growth should be removed by grazing in order to prevent the build-up of thatch.
- Any cutting or topping should avoid the bird nesting season between early April and July 1<sup>st</sup>
- Control injurious weeds through a combination of hand pulling, topping, spot-treatment and weed wiping.
- Avoid supplementary feeding on ESA land. If essential, feed sites must be agreed with the Project Officer in advance and must always avoid archaeological features.
- Any scrub control or fencing work\* on, or near, scheduled archaeological features must be discussed with English Heritage and consented in advance.
- Encourage greater local respect for the historic features in the new Tier 1 land by making the area look cared for and managed. Remove any tipping that occurs as soon as possible.

**All other prescriptions relevant to Tiers 1 and 3A should be followed. These are set out in the 'Guidelines for Farmers' booklet.**

(\* )This work can be grant-aided under an ESA Conservation Plan, but written approval from DEFRA must be obtained before any expenditure is committed or any of the work undertaken.

<b>Signed by Agreement Holder:</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of DEFRA:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

210/02/12

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DX No. 3118 Lewes-1

Mr R Hoad  
Windmill Lodge  
Spital Road  
**LEWES**  
BN7 1LS

direct dial 484408  
my ref DR/AJB 210/02/12  
e-mail [dan.ross@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:dan.ross@lewes.gov.uk)  
date 5 February 2008

Dear Mr Hoad

**Re: Horse riding at Landport Bottom, Lewes.**

Thank you for your telephone calls today and last week discussing horse riding at Landport Bottom, Lewes. This letter will clarify the position of the Lewes District and Town Councils (LDC and LTC), who own and manage this piece of land.

Landport Bottom is managed through a Management Committee consisting of Officers and Councillors representing LDC and LTC. It is managed as a downland landscape, through a site management plan, which aims to balance the informal recreation needs of local people with that of wildlife. Sheep grazing forms the basis of this management, as a sustainable traditional landscape management technique. LDC/LTC consider all site users when planning the management of this site, and none of them is given priority over each other, and safety is the primary concern.

Horse riding is not permitted along the narrow footpath that runs from the allotment area along the back of Highdown Road and Firle Crescent. I have enclosed a plan to illustrate the exact location (coloured green on the plan). This policy has been in place since the land was fenced to facilitate grazing back in 1995. There have been barriers installed for several years now to prevent horses from using this path, and also to prevent motor bikes. This path is narrow and backs directly onto peoples' gardens, many of which have gates opening directly onto the path. The provision of this path allows walkers, particularly those with dogs, to be separated from grazing stock. If horses were to use this path, it would create a high risk to path users, which was all too evident this past Monday morning (28 January), when two horse riders were unseated as their horses bolted along this path, prompting several concerned residents to report the incident.

LDC/LTC do permit the riding of horses on this land by consent, provided that riders use the strip of land adjacent to the Dew Pond/Gallops, clearly illustrated on the attached plan (coloured red). Your suggestion regarding segregating an area primarily for horse riding will not be possible on this site.

As you will also be aware, there is a bridleway crossing the site, from the tumuli near to the motor road, up towards Black Cap.

Director  
John Magness CPFA

I have discussed the issue of gates with East Sussex County Council's Rights of Way Team, and they have informed me that all the current arrangements at Landport Bottom meet with their approval, and are suitable for access by horse riders. I will continue to monitor the condition of these gates, to make sure they are in good working order.

I hope that this will clarify the issues you raised in your conversation.

If anything within this letter is unclear, please could you direct your correspondence in writing to our Legal Team, at the following address:

Ralph Harris, Senior Legal Assistant, Lewes District Council Legal Services,  
PO Box 133, Lewes BN7 9EZ.

Yours sincerely

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

Enc.

**Community Services**

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Hamsey Riding School  
Hope in The Valley  
Brighton Road  
**LEWES**  
East Sussex BN7 3JH

direct dial 01273 484408  
my ref DR/AJB 210/02/12  
your ref  
date 14 September 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

I am getting reports from members of the public that horses from Hamsey Riding School are continuing to use a circular route across Landport Bottom for riding, despite signage being in place clearly setting out the permissible routes across the site. I enclose a copy of signage to remind you which areas we have permitted horse riders to use.

Landport Bottom is owned and managed by Lewes District and Town Councils, and is managed as a place of informal recreation, and also is part of the South Downs Environmentally Sensitive Area. As such the site is part of a chalk grassland restoration project, and horse riding is controlled to prevent excessive damage to the turf.

I would be very grateful if you could pass this information on to your riding instructors, and alter your routes accordingly.

Yours faithfully

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

Enc.

Director  
John Magness CPFA

2nd side  
center across  
top of field

gate

1st side

Slows center to deep pond

Deep pond

Walk home.

Walk down to the mound.

mound.

Center back to the top.

MOTOR

gate

RS

gate

Hamsey Riding School,  
Brighton Road,  
Lewes,  
East Sussex,  
BN7 3JH  
30.9.09

Dear Mr Ross,

I am writing in response to your letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> September and also our conversation on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

I am saddened now to be told we are unable to use the route in question as in a previous encounter with Mr Ross we were instructed to 'carry on as normal'. To our dismay we then received your letter, therefore we had no chance to discuss your decision, therefore I would like to put in writing some points which I would like you to consider and believe these points are relevant to you're the final outcome.

Hamsey Riding School is a family run business which offers affordable riding for people for people who travel from all over Sussex and London to experience the beauty of the South Downs. As Lewes residents and business owners we pride ourselves on offering good value for money and also a high standard of riding.

As explained verbally to you we have used the route in question for over 20 years. During this time we have not experienced any problems and there have been no accidents involving third parties.

We regularly undertake risk assessment and have found this route is the safest as we have a fully 360 degree view and can avoid obstacles if necessary. This is respectful of everyone taking informal recreation, such as cyclists, dog walkers and horse riders alike. We also fully respect the sheep when grazing on the land and indeed in the past we have rescued stranded sheep and rounded up loose sheep when they have escaped.

Part of our customer's enjoyment is the Sussex Downs and its views. We are therefore always sympathetic to the environment and nature and when riding we make sure we keep to carefully thought out routes to avoid damage to grassland and wildlife. In all the time we have ridden this route we have not seen any erosion caused by horses. Even after this very dry period with very little rain there is no evidence of hoof damage to the ground. In fact, you would be unable to tell horses had been there.

As far as I am aware Stanmer Park had a right to roam and many individual horse owners use this land without damage and the downland is managed well. Why do we have to have this restriction?



Unlike the racing stables businesses in Lewes we do not have the luxury of owning gallops and all weather surfaces. As a small Lewes business we are trying to make a living when the financial climate is very difficult.

The local racing stables did use the route last winter, (although this still did not damage the land), but by stopping them in the future it would not have any adverse effect on their business. But as we are doing all we can to keep afloat this could be the final nail in our financial coffin!

I would like to request that we meet and have a visit and inspection of the area so that we can discuss the reasons for this decision. This would be of great benefit to us and hopefully we can explain our reasons and distress about this situation.

Yours sincerely

Mr and Mrs Ray Goldstein

**Community Services**

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finance@lewes.gov.uk  
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Mr and Mrs Goldstein  
Hamsey Riding School  
Brighton Rd  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 3JH

direct dial 01273 484408  
my ref DR/210-02-12  
your ref  
date 15 October 2009

Dear Mr and Mrs Goldstein

**Re: Riding at Landport Bottom, Lewes**

Thank you for your letter dated 30th September 2009, regarding the above.

I appreciate the issues you raise in your letter and I will consider these carefully, before giving you a full response in due course.

Yours sincerely

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

Director  
John Magness CPFA

Norman Baker MP  
(LibDem MP for Lewes)



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

File: 210/02/12



John Magness  
Director of Finance & Community  
Services  
Lewes District Council  
Fisher Street  
LEWES  
BN7 2DQ

16 October 2009  
Our ref: GS1410-Horse riding Landport  
Bottom\doe

Dear John,

**Re: Sue Goldstein, Paddock Cottage, Brighton Road, Lewes, BN7 3JH**

I have recently met with the above constituent to discuss the erection of signs indicating that the riding school can no longer use a route across Landport Bottom.

I understand that Mrs Goldstein has contacted the council about this already. However, she is very concerned that the limitation of a gate-to-gate route, see enclosed sketch by Mrs Goldstein, which I believe has been suggested, is simply unworkable, and any other routes, bar the one previously used, are not safe. She believes that this will lead to her business collapsing and this, therefore, is the reason that I write.

I should say that I appreciate that people have raised concerns about horses using this area and that their use may be damaging the Bottom or putting safety at risk. However, Mrs Goldstein primarily wanted to take the opportunity to differentiate her situation from that of the racehorse stables who she says have large areas of land which they can continue to use. She, on the other-hand, does not have the same luxury. I can also understand her point that it is very different for a racehorse to be galloping around to that of a riding school horse which I assume travels at a much slower pace.

She believes a workable situation could be achieved whereby permits are issued to her horses, and other privately owned horses, via a "disk" system. Preventing the access of racehorses, who she says do not have to use the site, would, in her view, improve safety, minimise alleged damage and ensure that access for the riding school could remain. I understand that such a system is in place at Ashdown Forest.

Constituency Office: 23 East Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2LJ Tel: (01273) 480281 Fax: 480287

Email: [normanbaker@cix.co.uk](mailto:normanbaker@cix.co.uk) <http://www.normanbaker.org.uk>

Surgeries held every Saturday morning in Seaford, Lewes, Newhaven and Polegate



She also stated that she has witnessed little damage to this area from either her horses or the racehorses and I would therefore be grateful if you could quantify the damage which has apparently taken place.

On a further point, can you confirm the legal position with regards to extinguishing rights of access which seem to have been in place for at least fifteen years? Are signs, for instance, sufficient to extinguish the route?

As I have said, I do appreciate that there are concerns about horse access. However, Mrs Goldstein's business has been around for some time and is, after all, a small business. As such, it would be a shame if some middle ground could not be reached and I would therefore be grateful if you could respond to the concerns raised sympathetically and clarify the council's position. I would also welcome any further comments that you wish to add.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Norman".

Norman Baker MP

**Community Services**

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Norman Baker MP  
23 East Street  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2LJ

direct dial 01273 484408  
my ref DR/210-02-12  
your ref GS1410-Horse riding Landport  
date 26 October 2009

Dear Mr Baker

**Re: Mrs Sue Goldstein and Horse Riding, Landport Bottom, Lewes.**

Thank you for your letter dated 16 October 2009. Please find enclosed my response to Mrs Goldstein to her original letter of 28th September.

I am currently seeking legal clarification on the complex issues relating to horse riding at Landport Bottom, and will provide a more thorough response to Mrs Goldstein and yourself once this advice has been received.

Yours sincerely

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

Director  
John Magness CPFA

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Mr and Mrs Goldstein,  
Hamsey Riding School,  
Brighton Rd  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 3JH

direct dial 01273 484408  
my ref DR/210-02-12  
your ref  
date 26 October 2009

Dear Mr and Mrs Goldstein

**Re: Horse Riding at Landport Bottom Lewes**

Further to my acknowledgement letter of 15 October, I would advise you that the delay in responding to your letter of 30 September has been to facilitate consultation with colleagues on this issue.

Lewes District Council Legal Services are currently investigating this issue, and will be offering clarification in due course.

I appreciate the issues you raise in your letter, and will offer a more thorough response once I have the necessary legal advice.

Yours sincerely

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

Director  
John Magness CPFA

**Community Services**

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Norman Baker MP  
23 East Street  
Lewes  
BN7 2LJ

direct dial 01273 484408  
my ref DR/210-02-12  
your ref  
date 5 November 2009

Dear Mr Baker

**Re: Mrs Goldstein, Hamsey Riding School**

Further to my letter dated 26 October, please find enclosed another letter to Mrs Goldstein, updating her of the progress on the above issues.

Yours sincerely

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

Encs

Director  
John Magness CPFA

**Community Services**

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Mr and Mrs Goldstein,  
Hamsey Riding School  
Brighton Road  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 3JH

direct dial 01273 484408  
my ref DR/210-02-12  
your ref  
date 5 November 2009

Dear Mrs Goldstein

**Re: Horse Riding at Landport Bottom, Lewes**

Further to my letter dated 26 October 2009, I am writing to inform you that the issues raised in your letter have been referred to the Landport Bottom Management Committee. The site management of Landport Bottom is overseen by a committee consisting of elected members and officers from Lewes District and Town Councils.

Having taken advice from our Legal Services team, I have called a meeting of the committee to discuss this issue specifically, and as such will subsequently be in a position to feed back to you the results of this discussion. The date for the meeting has yet to be finalised but it is likely to be early December.

I will contact you after this meeting.

Yours sincerely

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

Director  
John Magness CPFA



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Mr Norman Baker MP  
23 East Street  
Lewes  
BN7 2LJ

direct dial 01273 484408  
my ref DR/210-02-12  
your ref GS1410-Horse riding  
Landport Bottom/doe

date 14 December 2009

Dear Norman

**Re: Sue Goldstein, Hamsey Riding School**

Please find enclosed copy of a letter that the Council's Ranger, Daniel Ross, has just sent to Mrs Goldstein giving a full response to the issues she originally raised in her letter dated 30th September.

We have corresponded many times with Mrs Goldstein subsequent to the letter of 30 September but it is only now, having convened a meeting of the Landport Bottom Management Committee, that we have been able to offer a full and detailed response. The attached letter should provide clarification and explanation to all the issues raised, in addition to the specific issues you have raised with me on 16 October 2009.

There are two points on which I would like to offer clarification in response to your letter of 16 October. Firstly with regard to the horse permit disc system operating at the Ashdown Forest. Landport Bottom is a small downland landscape consisting of only 44ha. Ashdown Forest is a 6,500ha site, which consists of forest and heathland - much less sensitive to damage by horses than chalk downland, and as such it is not possible to adopt similar management activities on this basis.

Finally with regard to the legal position with regards to the "extinguishing of access rights", the joint Councils refute the existence of these rights in the first place and as such there are no rights to extinguish.

If you require any further information or clarification on this or other issues, please contact me at the above address.

Yours sincerely

Director of Finance and Community Services

Director  
John Magness CPFA

## Community Services

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Hamsey Riding School  
Brighton Road  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 3JH

direct dial 01273 484408

my ref DR/210-02-12

your ref

date 14 December 2009

Dear Mr and Mrs Goldstein

### **Re: Horse Riding at Landport Bottom Lewes.**

Further to my acknowledgement letter on 15 October, I write to offer a full reply to your letter dated 30<sup>h</sup> September 2009 regarding this issue. The delay in responding has been to allow time for the Landport Management Committee to be convened to consider the points you raise.

Landport Bottom Management Committee consists of elected members and officers from Lewes District and Town Councils, the joint owners of the land. It is a long-standing policy that horse riding should only be permitted along designated routes, as noted in my previous letter, and the erection of new signage to clarify this was not a change, or new policy. The land has been managed in the same way since the Councils jointly purchased the land in 1991.

We frequently receive reports of conflicts between walkers and horse riders who are not observing the designated routes. You will appreciate that the land is used by many families from the neighbouring housing estate who will often have dogs, small children and babies walking with them. Equally important to these commonsense health and safety issues is that the land has, since its purchase, been managed within the Government's Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme (ESA) which aims to return previously arable farmland to chalk downland. We are achieving this in a number of ways and whilst such things as hoof prints may appear superficial, you may be unaware of the fundamental impact these will have on the development of chalk downland sward. There are special requirements imposed upon us, with the aim of achieving the enhanced environment which will evolve over decades. An interesting point, of which you may be unaware, is that chalk downland exhibits a greater diversity of species per square metre than the Amazonian rainforest! The land is grazed by sheep in a partnership arrangement with Plumpton College as this is the most acceptable way of addressing the requirements of the ESA, and the college have complained that use of the main field enclosures by horses is degrading the quality of grazing. Your preferred route also crosses areas where the Councils have responsibilities for archaeologically-sensitive ground, and includes the heritage-scheduled site of the Battle of Lewes (shown on Ordnance Survey maps).

Director  
John Magness CPFA

I would like to point out that horse riding continues to be accommodated at Landport Bottom via both the established legal bridleways, as shown on all official maps, and also along our *additional* "permitted route" as shown by the red line in the signage. It was mentioned during the consideration by Councillors that trainee riders should be taught to recognise and strictly observe legal rights of way. Coincidentally, I had consulted, earlier this year, with the South Downs Joint Committee, the National Trust and East Sussex County Council over the general issues of horse riding and there is currently a co-ordinated effort to raise awareness of legitimate riding routes. The location of our signage on Landport Bottom was part of that process.

Regarding your claim to have followed your preferred route for 20 years I would point-out that: prior to the purchase by the two Councils the land was farmed and under arable crops and, subsequent to this, Council officers have drawn to your attention the requirement to follow prescribed routes on more than one occasion. The Councils therefore refute any prescriptive rights.

I note your comments regarding the potential damage to your business and of course we would not wish this. However, the Management Committee can see no reason that restriction to prescribed routes should be detrimental to a business such as yours. I regret that the Councils are unable to offer the dispensation you seek and must insist that in the future you follow only the permitted routes, as shown on the signs. I will of course be writing to *all* horse owners for which we can obtain contact details, reminding them of these restrictions.

I am happy to meet with you on site to clarify the permitted routes.

Yours sincerely

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

**Community Services**

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Ms Suzy Smith  
Suzy Smith Racing  
The Old Racecourse  
Lewes  
BN7 1UR

direct dial 01273 484468  
my ref DR/210-02-12  
your ref  
date 14 January 2010

Dear Ms Smith

Re: Horse Riding at Landport Bottom, Lewes

I am writing to a number of riding stables, racehorse trainers and other equestrian businesses following a recent debate over rights of way on land jointly owned by Lewes District and Town Councils, known as Landport Bottom.

An issue recently arose over the designated bridle paths which are supplemented by an additional approved route for horse riding. This was debated by Councillors from the Landport Bottom Management Committee who felt that their response could usefully be more widely publicised, hence this letter.

We frequently receive reports of conflicts between walkers and horse riders who are not observing the designated routes. You will appreciate that the land is used by many families from the neighbouring housing estate who will often have dogs, small children and babies with them. Equally important to these commonsense health and safety issues is that the land has, since its purchase, been managed within the Government's Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme (ESA) which aims to return previously arable farmland to chalk downland. We are achieving this in a number of ways and whilst such things as hoof prints and dung may appear superficial, you may be unaware of the fundamental impact these will have on the development of chalk downland sward. There are special requirements imposed upon us, with the aim of achieving the enhanced environment which will evolve over decades. The land is grazed by sheep in a partnership arrangement with Plumpton College as this is the most acceptable way of addressing the requirements of the ESA, and the college have complained that use of the main field enclosures by horses is degrading the quality of grazing. The Councils also have responsibilities for archaeologically-sensitive ground, including the heritage scheduled site of the Battle of Lewes (shown on Ordnance Survey maps).

Director  
John Magness CPFA

Landport Bottom Management Committee consists of elected members and officers from Lewes District and Town Councils, the joint owners of the land. It is a long-standing policy that horse riding should only be permitted along designated routes. The land has been managed in the same way since the Councils jointly purchased the land in 1991, and was put to arable crops before then.

I would like to point out that horse riding continues to be accommodated at Landport Bottom via both the established legal bridleways, as shown on all official maps, and also along our *additional* "permitted route" as shown by the red line in the signage (see attached plan). It was mentioned during the consideration by Councillors that trainee riders should be taught to recognise and strictly observe legal rights of way. Coincidentally, I had consulted, earlier this year, with the South Downs Joint Committee, the National Trust and East Sussex County Council over the general issues of horse riding and there is currently a co-ordinated effort to raise awareness of legitimate riding routes. The location of our signage on gates at Landport Bottom was part of that process.

I hope this letter provides a useful clarification of the permitted routes for horse riding at Landport Bottom.

Yours sincerely

Dan Ross  
Community Ranger

Enc: Plan of permitted routes



File 210/02/12

**G.P.Enright, The Oaks, The Old Racecourse,**  
Lewes, East Sussex. BN7 1UR. Tel/fax: - 01273 479183

Lewes District Council,  
Dan Ross -Community Ranger,  
Southover House,  
Southover Road,  
Lewes,  
East Sussex.  
BN7 1AB.

29<sup>TH</sup>.January 2010

Dear Dan,

I write in response to your letter dated 14<sup>th</sup>.Jan.2010.

I wish to confirm that at any time horses ridden from our yard through the field in question do not deviate from the designated route.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs.M.Enright

**Legal Services**

Lewes House  
32 High Street  
Lewes  
BN7 2LX

01273 471600  
01273 484121 fax  
01273 484488 Minicom  
DX No. 3118 Lewes-1

Mr and Mrs Goldstein  
Hamsey Riding School  
Brighton Road  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 3JH

direct dial 01273 484120

email address

my ref RH/MOT-24

your ref

date 1 October 2010

Dear Sir and Madam

**Horse Riding at Landport Bottom**

I have been instructed to write to you by Dan Ross, the Council's Ranger.

Since 28 August 2010, he has received two complaints that riders from your stables have been seen galloping across Landport Bottom and deviating from the permitted pathway.

You will know that this land is jointly owned by the Town and District Councils. You will also know that horses must follow the existing bridleways and/or the permitted pathway which is shown in red on the attached plan.

I have seen the letter that was sent to you on 14 December 2009 by Mr Ross. The Councils' rationale for limiting horse riding to the permitted pathway was clearly explained in that letter.

I must now ask you to please ensure that you and the riders from your school keep to the bridleways and/or the permitted pathway when crossing Landport Bottom.

Failure to keep to these designated routes will constitute a trespass and may result in the Councils' withdrawing the right for you and your riders to use the permitted pathway in the future.

Yours faithfully

Ralph Harris  
Senior Legal Assistant  
Lewes District Council

Catherine Knight LLB  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

**Legal Services**

Lewes House  
32 High Street  
Lewes  
BN7 2LX

01273 471600  
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DX No. 3118 Lewes-1

Mr and Mrs Goldstein  
Hamsey Riding School  
Brighton Road  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 3JH

direct dial 01273 484120

email address

my ref RH/MOT-24

your ref

date 25 October 2010

Dear Sir and Madam

**Horse Riding at Landport Bottom**

I refer to my letter dated 1 October 2010.

I am disappointed to learn that despite previous correspondence on this matter (from both the Ranger, Dan Ross and myself), the Council is still receiving complaints about riders from the Hamsey Riding School galloping or cantering their horses across Landport Bottom.

Mr Ross and the Landport Bottom Management Committee are very concerned about the risks that galloping/cantering horses pose to members of the public who frequent Landport Bottom. The District and Town Councils who own the land have a duty to under the Occupiers Liability Acts to ensure that those persons who come onto their land are kept reasonably safe. That is why signs have been displayed which prohibit the galloping of horses on the land.

I must ask you again, and for the final time, to ensure that your riders (i) keep to the permitted pathway and (ii) refrain from galloping or cantering their horses on any part of the Councils' land.

Please be advised that the Councils have the right to withdraw permission for you and your riders to access the land at Landport Bottom if further complaints are received. The Councils take this matter very seriously and will take whatever action is necessary to ensure that members of the public are able to access Landport Bottom in reasonable safety.

Yours faithfully

Ralph Harris  
Senior Legal Assistant

Catherine Knight LLB  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services



-Hamsey Riding School,  
Brighton Road,  
Lewes,  
East Sussex,  
BN7 3JH  
27.10.10

**Re: Horse Riding at Landport Bottom**

LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Legal & Democratic Services Dept

03 NOV 2010

Received

Dear Mr Harris,

I am writing in response to your letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> October ref RH/MOT -24 which we didn't receive until the 25<sup>th</sup> October.

I was concerned to read that you had received two complaints about riders 'galloping across Landport Bottom and deviating from the permitted pathway', also that you had been told these were two riders were from our Stables. I am unsure how these would have been identified as from our yard as there are other riders from other establishments using this route, along with numerous race horses.

Since the date you stated these complaints have happened we have also had incidents although we did not report them, which I regret now.

These incidents involved dogs chasing horses while they were on the designated pathway and one resulted in the rider being run away with to try and avoid being attacked by the dog. When the rider eventually stopped her horse and returned to speak to the owner she received a tirade of abuse. Who is right in this situation, maybe the person complained to you but as we are made to feel as though we are no longer welcome in this field we felt unable to complain!

I would like to add that this is not an irregular event, we are often walking along and a dog will appear to bark or chase the horses but we are expected to ignore this!

I am also aware of an incident involving a dog attacking a horse and it needing extensive treatment from bites.

On a more positive note we have spoken to other walkers and they say that they enjoy seeing the horses in the field and when we had the snow, the field was full of families and children and everyone was in awe of the horses without any accidents, proving that there is room for all and everyone is aware of the risks.

We bring outside business to the area and give children the opportunity to get involved giving them a healthy environment and exercise rather than sitting in front of a computer or a television.

In time we would like to pass our business to our sons and in turn their children.

We are acutely aware that if this problem re riding in Landport bottom is not resolved it could result in us losing this business to which we have struggled to maintain.

If we did have to close it would have a knock on effect to a lot of local tradesmen including a blacksmith, feed merchant, haylage supplier, saddlers and even the person who launders our rugs, all small businesses from East Sussex. On another note we would have horses that would be impossible to re home and would not be able to afford to keep.

I voiced this concern to the Town Councillor when I was first notified of proposed changes, he said that numerous businesses were going under but I explained this would not be the case for us if there was some consideration but it feels as though it is a closed argument. When I said I was concerned that we wouldn't have anywhere to ride and asked if they would prefer that we rode round the roads, I was told that this would be fine as it is legal. A few of our riders have ridden round the roads but feel that they have little consideration from drivers and have also been shouted out to get off the roads!

We offer affordable riding but also due to the recession we are finding that most patrons can only afford an hour rather than two hours riding therefore this has become our core business. Whereas on a two hour ride we have more time to take patrons further a field to enable to incorporate all aspects of horse riding.

**For this reason I am writing to ask you to consider an alternative route where we are able to take clients on a one hour ride where we can incorporate the rider being able to walk, trot and canter within this time limit.**

At the moment within the guidelines you have laid out we are unable to do this. We have also encountered problems with the gates leading into the field running adjacent to the motor road. This gate is very dangerous for riders and we have had two riders injured while trying to negotiate their way through this on horseback.

I would also like to meet for a face to face meeting with the committee to discuss our side of the predicament, as though I requested that I be allowed to attend the meeting to discuss this but was advised this was not permitted previously.

I would like the committee to take all the above into consideration but also the bullet points below that I have stressed in earlier correspondence but just wanted to reiterate.

- Up to a few years ago we used to ride over this field on all different routes and directions, without any complaints or accidents. (see attached map)
- We never encountered complaints until the signs went up on the gates of the field.

- This field is to be used for recreational purposes therefore feel there is a discrimination towards horses and riders.
- In the early 1990's the gates to the field were reinstated due to a riding business requesting this, at this time we were asked to not use the pathway but ride further into the field as a consideration to walkers, which we gladly adhered to.
- The bridle path adjacent to the motor road is not safe due to the unlevelled and stony ground.
- Cyclist use all bridle paths around this area and often are unsympathetic to riders.
- When using the field in question there is very rarely many other people in this area, and due to the outlook we have 360 degrees viewing so that we can consider cyclist and walkers alike and we are very conscious of other users.
- In all the years we have ridden on this circular route we have not had any accidents involving dog walkers, cyclists or general walkers.

I am sorry that this letter is so long but I am passionate about what we do and I am worried that we are not going to have the opportunity to carry on doing the thing that we know brings pleasure and enjoyment to others. One thing is clear when talking to walkers that they did not realise that we weren't part of the racing fraternity and although they have gallops they still use this field! I would like to point out that if the racing stables were not allowed to use this field it would not effect their business, unfortunately this is not the case with us as we would have to close down which would be a terrible shame as we have traded as Hamsey Riding School for approximately 30 years and prior to that Hope In The Valley.

Surely there must be some compromise?.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

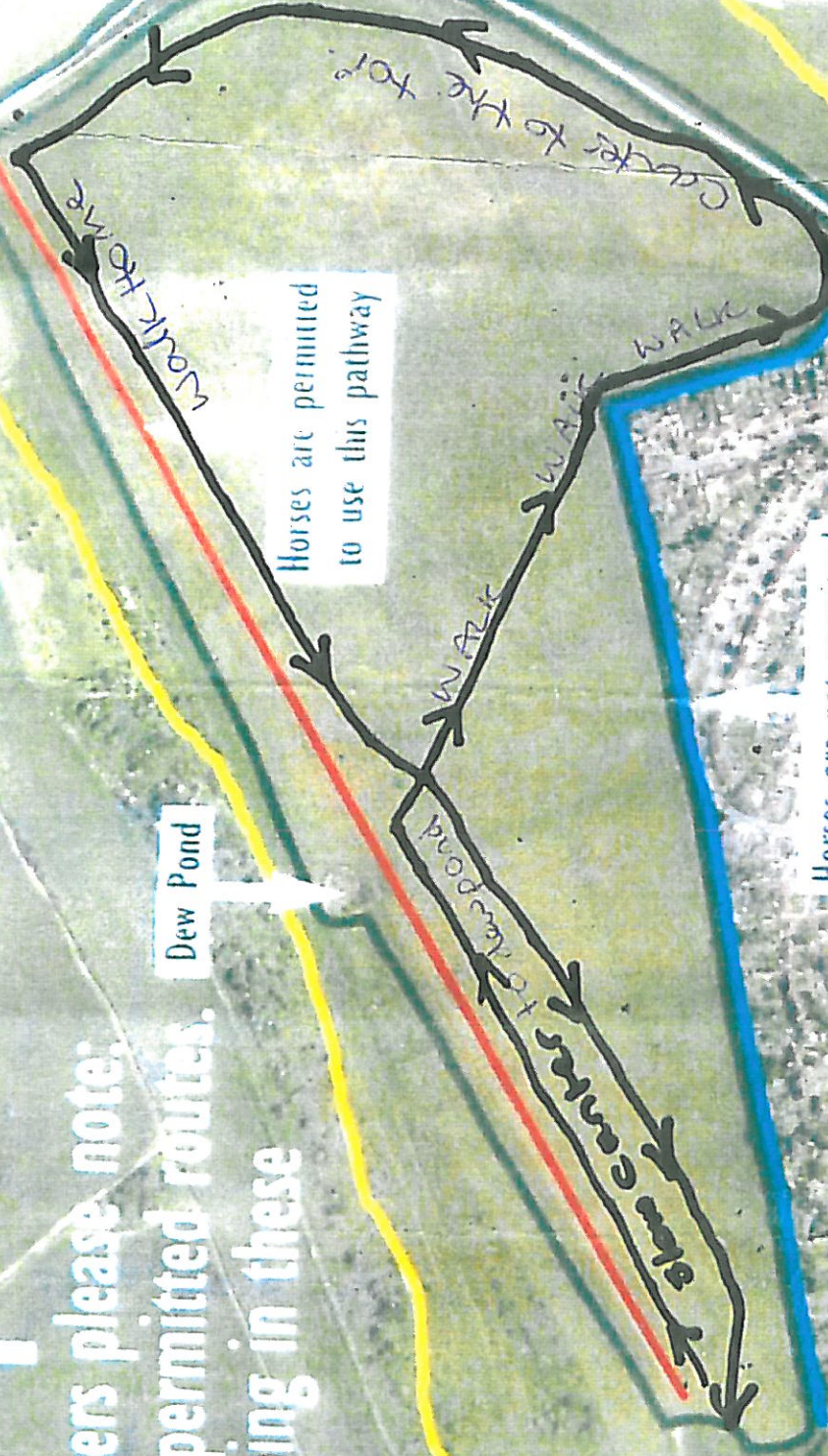


Sue Goldstein

# Landport Bottom

Horse riders please note:  
only use permitted routes.  
No galloping in these  
fields.

Dew Pond



Horses are permitted to use this pathway

Horses are not permitted on this pathway

Existing Bridleway

Existing Bridleway

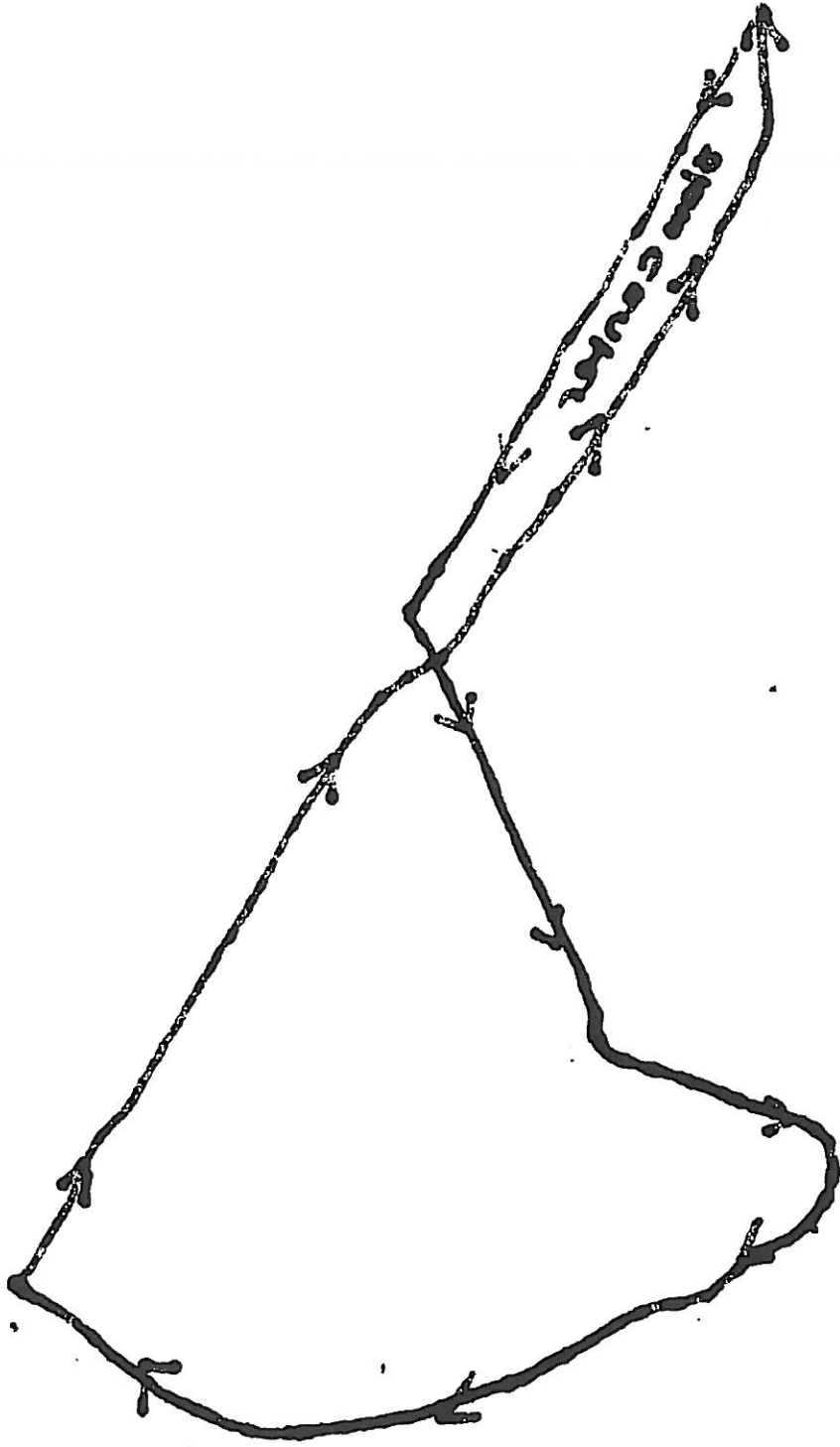
Chall Pit



LEAZES TOWN COUNCIL

Leazes Town Council  
15, Leazes Road, Leazes Park, Leeds LS2 9JF  
Tel: 0113 275 4444

Our circular route, which  
we would like to continue.



# Landport Bottom

Horse riders please note:  
only use permitted routes.  
No galloping in these  
fields.

Dew Pond

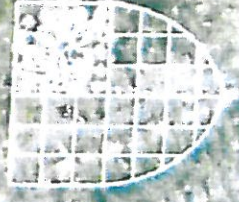
Horses are permitted  
to use this pathway

Horses are not permitted  
on this pathway

Existing  
Bridleway

Existing  
Bridleway

Chall  
Peg



TEVES  
COMMUNITY  
COUNCIL



Teves Community Council  
www.tevescommunitycouncil.co.uk

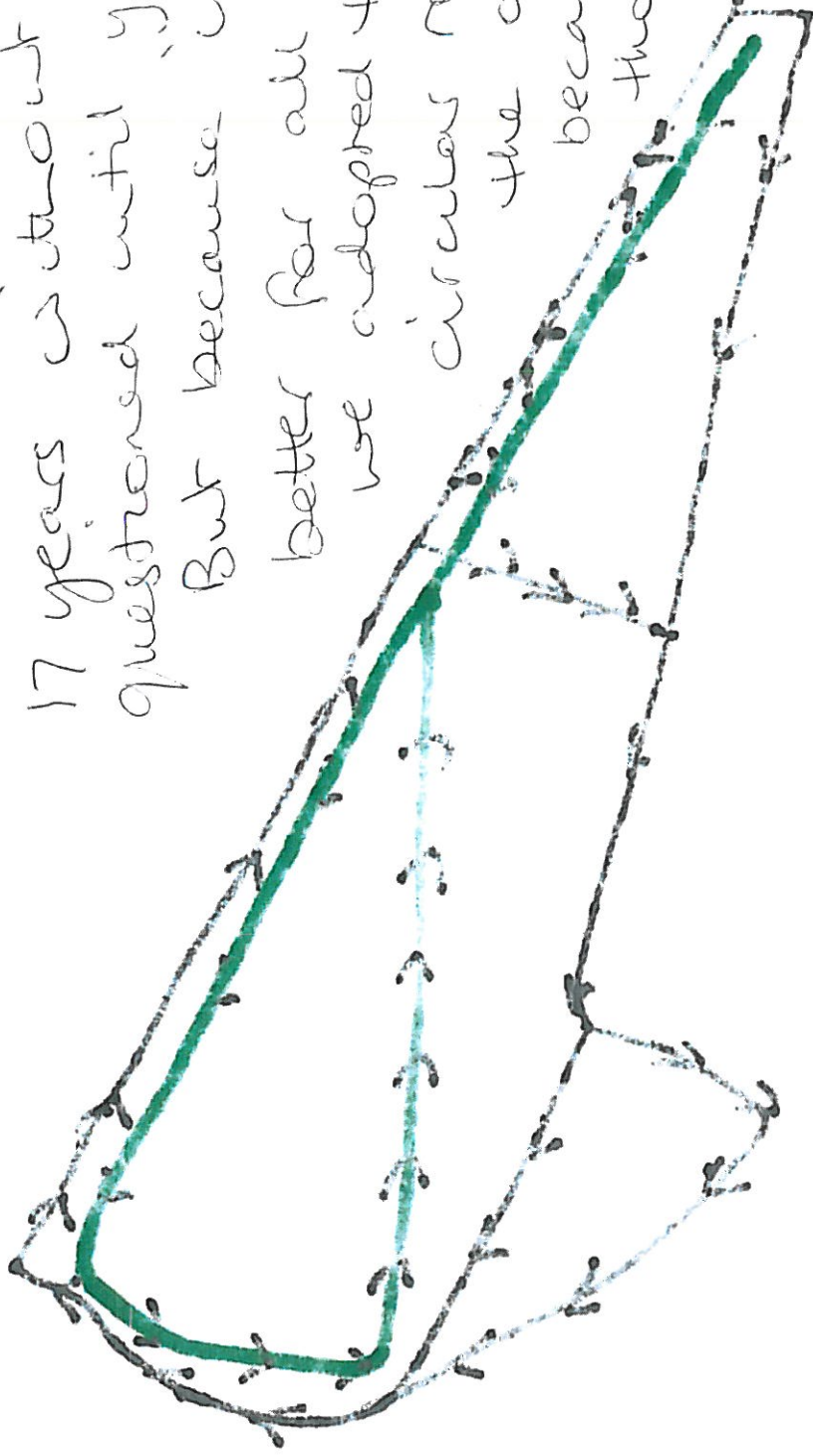
Overleaf are routes we  
have taken over the last  
17 years without being  
questioned until your signs

But because it was  
better for all concerned  
we adopted the

circular route on  
the other sheet  
because we  
thought

people  
would  
know

Exactly where  
we were  
going.



Hamsey Riding School,  
Brighton Road,  
Lewes,  
East Sussex,  
BN7 3JH  
07.11.10

**Re: Incident - Cyclist and Dog**

Dear Mr Harris,

Please find enclosed details of an incident that happened on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November.

Due to the aftermath of the bonfire celebrations, debris clearance etc and also still awaiting an alternative route for our one hour ride confirmation, we were unable to ride in the field adjacent to the motor road. Therefore we had no alternative but to trot and canter through the Landport bottom sheep field. Due to the circumstances we were extra vigilant of any other walkers or cyclists within the field at this time.


On the return journey of the ride when we were walking steadily back across the field we encountered a cyclist with a dog. This cyclist proceeded to ride straight at us and inform us that we should not be in this field. This startled the horses causing them to scatter in all directions. Not only was this extremely foolish and dangerous to the horses and riders it also could have resulted in an accident to the cyclist, dog and any other innocent uninvolved walkers or bystanders.

Please can you put this incident on file as I am concerned this person was showing animosity and aggression and could result in a dangerous situation as someone could have easily fallen off and been injured. If this had happened we could have then been in a situation where the client might take proceedings.

I urge you to please take into account my previous letter of 27<sup>th</sup> October and respond to this as soon as possible to avoid any further conflict.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely



Sue Goldstein



To. Lewes District Council (Parks Dept)

From. Carl Manklow  
32 Highdown Road  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 1QE

24<sup>th</sup> November 2010

Tel. 01273 475070

**Report of incident involving Riding School Horses on the Downs adjoining the Old Race Course on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a retired superintendent of the Sussex Police and have lived at the above address for over thirty years. I have had the pleasure during that time of walking dogs on the council-owned land adjoining the old Lewes Racecourse. This is an excellent facility enjoyed by many different types of user who most of the time seem to enjoy their own pursuits without interfering with others but occasionally things go wrong and there is a danger of an animal or person getting injured.

Between 10 and 11am on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010 I was walking my dog on the large field which lies between Firle Crescent and the racecourse gallops. I was on the diagonal path that runs from the access point in Firle Crescent to the Motor Road where it crosses the Gallops. As I entered the field I noticed a number of horses and riders had entered the field by the gate at the prison end of the field and were assembling by the gate. I recognised these as the riding school from Hope in the Valley who are regular users of this field. There were seven or eight riders and they began to make their way up the track next to the footpath where riding is permitted. They were accompanied by the Jack Russell dog who is always with the group but the well-built woman who I understand runs the school did not appear to be with them.

After the group had walked and trotted for a short distance two riders at the front altered their pace to a gallop and broke away from remainder followed by the dog and sped away up the field. I recognized by sight one of the gallopers, he always wears a distinctive black and red riding cap and he gallops frequently in this field. At the same time I became aware of a man with a child in a push-chair coming down the path I was on towards me. He was about 200m from the Motor Road and whilst he was possibly concealed from the riders by the folds in the land at this point he was in no danger. He had stopped and his attention was on the child. He had with him a dog which was sniffing around close to him. It was off the lead but there are no sheep in this field at present and people commonly allow their dogs a bit more freedom when there is no livestock present. The dog was one that I had seen before of indeterminate breed, gingery in colour and with a build similar to a greyhound.

The dog caught sight of the galloping horses and the Jack Russell haring along in their

wake and joined in the chase despite the man's efforts to call him back. The chase continued up to the gates where the horses were pulled up but they were restless as the dog approached them. I was about 200metres away from them and was talking to the man with the child who I knew by sight. It was apparent that he was unaware of the horses before his dog took off.

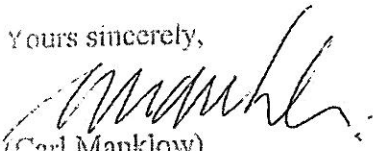
I could see that one of the horses was now rearing up and then lashing out with his hind-legs at the dog. There was a general melee in the area next to the gates. I then became aware of a woman jogger coming down the path from where the dog and horses were. She was in tears but angry at the same time. She was saying the horses were out of control and it was apparent that she had been close to the incident having entered the field by the gate just before the melee and that she had had some bad experience with the horses before. But she was out of breath and upset and I could not properly understand what she was saying.

The remainder of the horses from the riding school had continued up the field either walking or trotting. I know that horses are permitted to use this part of the field. But according to the council -placed notices no galloping is allowed and for good reason as this incident shows. I have had occasion to point this out to the woman in charge of the school on a number of occasions. She has said that the notices only apply to racehorses and not her riding school. Other times other riders in the school have claimed not to have seen the notices. It is clear to me that the riding-school continually breaches the no galloping rule and that either the advice on the notice is not brought to riders attention or that the instructors at the school have no control over some of the riders.

I understand that it has been suggested that the council's reluctance to take further steps is based on fact there are few complaints. I have tried to speak to the ranger a number of times about various matters. I always get an answer phone and the few times I have felt it worth leaving a message I have not had the call returned. I appreciate that a ranger's job is outside and I would not expect to find him at his phone. But if the council is using the 'lack of complaints' as a basis for judgement and others' experiences match my own there is a danger that the problem will be underestimated.

I am aware of the article by the owner of the riding-school in last week's Sussex Express. This report has not been prompted by that article and I have no wish to become involved in some public controversy but feel free to use this report in any way you wish.

Yours sincerely,

  
(Carl Manklow)

## Landport Gallop

Here a few observations concerning the supposed galloping of horses by the Hamsey Riding School on Landport Bottom.

1. I live on the edge of Landport Bottom and have the best view of the area where the alleged galloping is supposed to take place. I have lived there for over 54 years so have covered the time since it was turned over from arable (barley) to meadow land.
2. In all that time I have never seen the horses ridden at a gallop, at most at a strong canter, indeed the stride pattern is definitely not that of a gallop.
3. An inspection of the turf in the said area shows no in cut in the turf that one would expect from a gallop.
4. Not many years ago the riders were accompanied by the Goldstein's small Jack Russell which was able to keep up with some riders and did not keep the group who regrouped at the top of the hill waiting for much more than a minute.
5. They always walk their horses and ponies to the start at the bottom of the hill and wait to see if the run is all clear. There is never a "cavalry charge" The riders go off mainly singly and at intervals
6. Riders accept that they may have an accident as a consequence of their riding and it's more likely that they have been put in danger by some irresponsible walkers, dog walkers and cyclists who aren't aware or don't care about the courtesies of country ways.
7. To my knowledge the vast majority of the users of Landport Bottom respect one another and there is no problem.
8. I can say that I have never seen the riders cause distress to sheep which is more than can be said for some dog owners, children and youths and even adult accompanied children. Just this weekend a group of us saw two women watch their three children chase sheep for over 15 minutes.
9. The school doesn't cater for "rich kids" both my daughter and granddaughter have been riders. In the case of my granddaughter and her friends they were welcomed at the stables, all this helps develop confidence and enables them to share their pleasure with adults, now that can't be bad..
10. Horses have always been part of Lewes life and a ban that causes the loss of the school would be a tragedy to the town and particularly to the owners.
11. Have Plumpton Agricultural College suggested a ban?

Brian Beck  
111 Highdown Rd  
Lewes  
01273 473004

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# Galloping ban threat to riding school future

til the signs went up on the gates of the field." She said Landport Bottom was for recreational purposes and horses and riders were being discriminated against.

"In all the years we have ridden on this circular route we have not had any accidents involving dog walkers, cyclists or general walkers," she added.

Cyclists use all the bridlepaths around the area and were often "unsympathetic" to riders.

Mr and Mrs Goldstein now hope a compromise can be reached with the council, and are prepared to reduce the number of times a week they use the route.

The couple wondered whether an alternative route could be considered which would enable a client to walk, trot and canter within a one-hour time limit.

on a ride and Landport Bottom is the only place to do this.

Mr Goldstein, a former jockey, said: "We have been using Landport Bottom for about 16 years. There is clear visibility and no danger. If we can't go in there we will have to close down - people want to canter."

Closure of the riding school, which has more than 20 ponies and horses at the Brighton Road, Lewes, premises, would have a knock-on effect for local traders, including a blacksmith, feed merchant and hawlage supplier.

Mrs Goldstein said: "Up to a few years ago we used to ride over this field in all directions without any complaints or accidents.

"We never encountered complaints un-

by RUPERT TAYLOR  
 rupert.taylor@sussexnewspapers.co.uk

## A BAN on horses galloping on the Downs could put the future of an equestrian business in doubt, the owners fear.

The sanction has been imposed for safety reasons by Lewes Town Council at Landport Bottom, on the outskirts of the town. Warning signs have been put up at its approaches.

Now Hamsey Riding School, formerly Hope in the Valley, claims it may be put out of business.

Proprietors Ray and Sue Goldstein say their horses never gallop at the site, but clients expect to canter and trot when out

# Centenarian Eileen recalls town's last hanging

MEMORIES of a bygone age in Lewes are still fresh in the mind of Eileen Beaumont (nee Wicks), who celebrated her 100th birthday last week.

She recalls the "lamp-lighter", who switched on and off every street light by hand, and stories of the last hanging at Lewes Prison in 1914 when she was just four years old.

She was born in South Malling and educated at

Eileen left school at the age of 14 and got a job at the Post Office, later moving to Woolworths.

In 1933 she married her sweetheart, Sydney Ewart Beaumont, at St Michael's Church in Lewes High Street, and made their home in the county town. They had a son, Michael, and daughter, Gillian.

A widow now for more than 30 years, she has five grandchildren - Emma Jane, Hannah, Daniel and Lisa, and



## Trapped dog river rescue

LEWES firefighters assisted the RSPCA with the rescue of a dog which became stuck on a ledge under Cliffe Bridge on Tuesday night.

The collie was trapped under the arch with the River Ouse swirling around it.

Fire crews rushed to the scene but the terrified animal resisted rescue attempts, and the specialist skills of the RSPCA were called upon.

The RSPCA inspector carried out a water rescue to retrieve the dog from the river, using specialist equipment, and fire crews were there on standby to assist.

## Motorcyclist arm injuries

A MOTORCYCLIST has been detained at Eastbourne District General Hospital with serious arm injuries after an accident on the A27 at Fittleton Monday.

The 52-year-old man, from Hastings, came off his machine opposite Middle Farm on the eastbound carriageway shortly after 6pm. No other vehicle was involved in the incident but traffic congestion resulted for up to an hour.

Anyone who saw the accident is asked to contact

Write to us at Temple House, 25/26 High Street, Lewes, BN7 2LU. You can also send an e-mail to [sussex.express@sussexnewspapers.co.uk](mailto:sussex.express@sussexnewspapers.co.uk) or via our website, [www.sussexexpress.co.uk](http://www.sussexexpress.co.uk). Our fax number is 01273 476524

### MEPs' limousines in Strasbourg:

- 5.1 million for an exclusive "culture club" for EU officials in Luxembourg;
- 16,000 for a project designed to increase Tyrolean farmers' "emotional connection with the landscapes they cultivate".

I am currently busy filling my form in for my grant on creating a culture club where dogs are allowed to take the limousine as opposed to walk so they can become emotionally connected. There that should do the trick.

Barry Taplin, Plumpton

## We are stung by comments

MR Kevin Froude is quite right (letters, November 19) that the effigy of David James Smith produced by Southover Bonfire Society could have further fanned the publicity surrounding his recent controversial articles, but may I make the obvious point that Mr Smith has the ability to air his views to a national audience and is able to do so repetitively with little ability for the people of Lewes to respond in like fashion.

In a recent BBC interview, Mr Smith stated that he set out to be deliberately provocative and in so doing he is simply reaping what he has sown.

As to suggesting that Southover failed to consider the feelings of his children, perhaps he should have considered the feelings of his children before deciding to accept Mr Rupert Murdoch's dollar.

I am sure that I speak for every bonfire society when I say that we abhor passionately any element of racism and would defend our centuries old traditions of letting it be known that we have been stung by Mr Smith's comments and have expressed our opinions in time honoured tradition.

Stephen English, chairman, Southover Bonfire Society

## Race - never been an issue

REGARDING your article in the Sussex Express (November 12) about racism in Lewes, I feel I must dispute David James Smith's views of Lewes.

I was born and lived here for 27 years

## Beating to a different drum

CONGRATULATIONS Lewes FC on your win on Saturday, November 13, and we look forward to more of the same in the coming weeks.

It is so good to see the crowds rising and well done to all the hard working members of the club who are making this happen.

However, there was a part of the crowd that was not as popular as the rest. I am referring to the Cliffe Bonfire drumming band that appears to have become a permanent feature at home games.

While I can appreciate the extra noise within the crowd may be welcome by some, their incessant drumming spoiled what should have been a good afternoon. As entertainment before the game and at half time it is acceptable and welcomed. But, they played as the teams were being announced and then practically all of the rest of the match.

Part of the enjoyment of football is hearing the banter on the pitch, the witty comments from the crowd and the chanting of the supporters from the stand, none of which was audible. I am not alone. Comments heard along the terrace at half time were not in favour of the drums and felt that it was spoiling their game. I am not a killjoy, but this is just not football.

Christine Medhurst, Lewes.

PLEASE give your full postal address and a daytime telephone number when you write - even on emails.

● You should expect your name and town/village to be published in the usual style of the Sussex Express.

● We do not publish anonymous letters.

● Letters should be to the point.

● Writers are asked not to exceed 400 words.

● We reserve the right to amend or edit letters.

● We aim to give a cross-section of views.

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## Memories brought back

I WAS interested to read in Kevin Gordon's article on Friday the names of several that I knew in the 1930s as a child. Several had shops or businesses in Seaford.

Muddles shop was in the High Street, Mr Wynter in

## Riders' unfair treatment

I AM writing in support of Ray and Sue Goldstein's claim that horse riders are being unfairly discriminated against.

I have lived in Lewes for 26 years and have walked on the Downs daily. Horses have been ridden on Landport Bottom, to my knowledge, during this time and, as Mr Goldstein says, no accidents have occurred. The field has excellent visibility and is a safe place for horses to canter or gallop. I am a dog owner and horse rider. Last July the horse I rode was viciously attacked and bitten twice by an out of control dog.

Dogs regularly harass horses, as well as worrying sheep, and yet it is a small minority of dog walkers who are behind this 'anti-horse' campaign.

If Landport Bottom is for recreational purposes then this includes horse riders and I am afraid this recent discrimination is an example of 'townies taking over the countryside.'

Lewes is by tradition a horse riding/racing town and with the roads being now so dangerous for equestrians, it is even more important that we preserve this tradition and right.

Val Rumsey, Lewes.

## Christmas with diabetes

AS preparations for Christmas get underway and people begin to be full of Christmas cheer, some of your readers who have diabetes will realise that Christmas is not as straight forward as they would like it to be. For some people, Christmas is a time for treats and a bit of indulgence and any extra pounds can be lost in the New Year. For most people all of these things are fine and simply lead to putting on a few pounds.

But for someone with diabetes, Christmas is a time of temptation, unpredictable or delayed meals, extra nibbles, excitement and stress, all of which can lead to varying blood sugars.

We recognise that Christmas can be a difficult and a daunting time for people who have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, especially the first Christmas with diabetes, so we have compiled a fact sheet and Christmas information pack that will help to make

## Big Society or Big Con?

LEWES Green Party wants our young people to enter adult life after university without the crippling debts offered to them by the coalition.

Imposing the highest average tuition fees in the world upon students will increase indebtedness and depress savings. A better option to help sustain higher education would be increasing corporation tax to the average European level or - shock, horror - a truly progressive taxation system.

We are concerned that higher tuition fees will impact upon many local residents. Apart from the risk of many young people not going to university at all, those who do are likely to severely curtail their spending in the local economy. This makes job losses from higher tuition fees likely in both higher education institutions and in the local economy.

Sam Coates, co-chair of the Young Greens, was at Millbank on November 10.

He said: "The anger at the protests was remarkable, especially towards the Lib Dems who have left so many students feeling betrayed. Students have begun the fight against the coalition's dangerous and damaging policies. Obviously, we abhor violence against people, but the events at Millbank were a totally understandable response to pent up anger of young people who feel they are being jilted at every turn."

I share the students' sense of betrayal. Not only did Lib Dems, including our local MP Norman Baker sign a pledge not to increase student fees (I don't know about him, but I regard making a pledge as a solemn and binding commitment), but we now discover that senior Lib Dems were secretly planning to drop their policy on student fees in the months running up to the election. We should all - not just students - be very angry at this blatant abuse of the faith voters should have in the integrity of their politicians to represent their intentions truthfully during the election campaign. Of course the Tories always did intend to trash the welfare state but we had hoped for better from their partners in crime.

Every day now brings a new attack upon the poorest, the least able, the female, the young and I believe as people and the effects of these cuts in our community they

## Letters to the editor

### and file blame

walked with other societies and was made welcome by them.

However, as anyone who knows me will tell you I am passionate about Lewes Borough Bonfire Society and decided to return home this year. I was therefore, utterly dismayed to hear late on the night of the 4th from another society, rumours regarding the impending protest. I spent the rest of the night worrying and the next morning felt very sick.

Throughout the Fifth I thought very deeply about the implications of these actions not only on the Lewes Borough Bonfire Society but also on bonfire in Lewes as a whole.

By 4.30pm, I decided there was no way I could walk within the society. For the first time in more than 45 years I didn't walk and did not go out to see bonfire this year.

Living in a democratic society we are free to protest. However the traditional Lewes Bonfire celebrations is not the place. In the past, the miners and Ian Paisley and the Irish problem have tried to infiltrate the celebrations and each time have been seen off. Protest if you wish but do it outside of bonfire please.

I do hope that people will be able to overcome this unfortunate and misguided incident and that the Lewes Borough Bonfire Society can return once again to the great

and glorious society it once was.

**M Burrow,  
Lewes**

### History does repeat itself

OKAY, so I am two weeks behind the story but it takes the carrier pigeon a few days to get from Lewes to Chichester with my copies of the Express.

Anyway, I am putting in my twopenneth regarding the man that had his brand new winter woolly burnt, waiting appointment with the hospital as he has dodgy ears, oh and his wife had her jeans burnt.

History repeats itself does it not?

Couple of years back it was the lady who had her anorak - only two days old - burnt.

Then there was the lady who had the new canopy melt on her child's push chair, and I am sure the bonfire society was accused at the time. The bonfire council remember the incident of Dr. Tittinus. Let's not forget the family who came to Lewes and had their day spoilt because there was no baby changing station available.

Every year, the society officials and bonfire council put out the same notice ... if you don't like the noise, the heat, or the smoke and smell, please don't come to Lewes

incorporates a mere 20 minutes in Landport Bottom and, with this occurring just once or occasionally twice a day, at regular times, there is the option for people who really object to the horses' presence to avoid them if they so wish.

We have taken this route regularly over many years without incurring any problems, compromising anybody's safety or receiving any complaints. It is the very fact that Landport Bottom is so spacious and open, and visibility so unimpaired, that makes it such a safe location. With a bit of common sense and courtesy, surely there is no reason why horse riders and all other users of the site, such as people cycling, walking or exercising their dogs, cannot get along together, as most of them already do? Indeed, some "regulars" we meet en route have even remarked how much they enjoy seeing us and our horses having a good time!

We have tried but failed to find a satisfactory alternative to the one-hour ride and urge Lewes Town Council to re-think their "ban". It is grossly unfair to discriminate against horse riders.

The council should be proud to offer Landport Bottom for all to enjoy. Imposing an unnecessary riding restriction could result in Mr & Mrs Goldstein losing their livelihood and we, and all their other clients, offer them our full support in seeking an

acceptable and timely resolution to this situation.

**Paul & Alison Jones,  
Heathfield**

### Why the fuss over riding?

ALTHOUGH I no longer ride, I rode horses on Landport Bottom for many years and now regularly walk my dogs there. I am therefore at a complete loss to understand why Lewes District Council is making such an issue about galloping or cantering.

In all the years I was riding, I never heard a complaint from non-riders that it was dangerous and, now, as a dog walker, I find the present riders to be sensible, courteous and considerate of other users. Riders have been using this area for many years and I never heard of a single incident involving a horse and a pedestrian.

Why suddenly has it become dangerous? One could equally argue that cyclists present a danger to pedestrians (they certainly do when riding on Lewes's pavements); are Lewes District Council thinking of banning them on Landport Bottom as well?

**Jan Phillips,  
Uckfield**

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