

# A Concordat between Natural Resources Wales and The British Horse Society

*Equitable access to our public land for people, communities and nature*

National Survey for Wales (2017) showed that 3% of Wales's population participated in horse riding activities during 2016/17. The gross output of the equestrian sector is valued at £4.3 billion per annum to the UK economy. Within the Welsh Government Woodland Estate there are 3749km of forest roads and tracks, 1045km of bridleways and 415km of purpose-built horse trails. In addition, NRW also manages most of our iconic National Nature Reserves some of which have bridleways, byways and other access suitable for equestrian use. These resources are a great asset to the people of Wales and especially to equestrians.

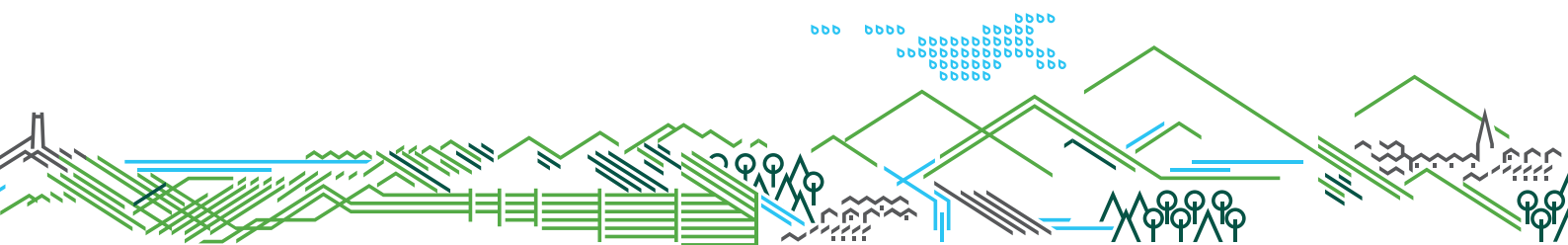
The purpose of this concordat is to strengthen the collaboration between NRW and the BHS thereby promoting greater equestrian access across NRW managed land.

**Natural Resources Wales** manages 7% of Wales' land area including woodlands, National Nature Reserves and flood defences; looking after our environment for people and nature.

**The British Horse Society** is the leading equestrian membership organisation in the UK.

## By working together, we will:

- Promote year-round opportunities for horse riders within our woodlands and forests, on the Public Rights of Way network (PRoW) and, where appropriate, National Nature Reserves.
- Promote the Trail Users Code and any other good practice to riders that encourages safe and responsible use. Use our networks to facilitate mutual understanding between all users promoting responsible behaviour and respect by all.
- Maintain a close working relationship to ensure the needs of equestrians, other users and the environment are met.
- Develop best practice for managing commercial horse riding recognising the needs, benefits and issues associated with such activity.
- Consider opportunities to manage, improve and enhance equestrian access, especially in linking existing networks of PRoW, promoted routes and forest roads.
- Work together to identify and prioritise development and source funding to carry out the work.



## Natural Resources Wales will:

- Ensure horse riders feel welcome on the land we manage and have opportunities to help improve and conserve it for the future.
- Recognise that the network of forest roads, promoted routes and other routes with permissive access are of vital importance to equestrians. Where we do not lease the land from other people, and where it will not unacceptably harm the environment, we will make sure that these routes are open to all riders.
- Endeavour to keep promoted routes in good condition, monitoring them on a regular basis.
- Encourage feedback on issues affecting equestrian access especially on PROW recognising their legal status.
- Make it easier for equestrians to find good places to ride by providing information about access for horses on our website.
- Provide clear guidance to our staff to ensure a positive and consistent approach when managing equestrian access.
- Consider applications for events and commercial activities such as pony trekking via our permissions process.

## The British Horse Society will:

- Promote responsible horse riding.
- Encourage horse riders to be considerate to other users who may not be familiar with horses, recognising that certain routes may be set aside exclusively for other users.
- Continue to embed messages about responsible horse riding in all training, especially for those being introduced to horse riding from an early age.
- Proactively work with partners to resolve any local issues and endorse any mutually agreed management measures.
- Use the network of members, affiliated Bridleways Groups and Riding Clubs to distribute information and to gather feedback on access.

## Both parties will:

Meet together annually to discuss the concordat and other issues of mutual interest

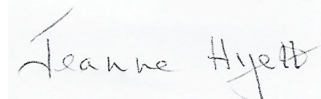
The Concordat will be reviewed in 2024 and thereafter every 5 years.



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