

Statement of Truth of Sue Raven of [REDACTED] Calstone, Calne, Wiltshire

1. This is the Statement of Truth of Sue Raven of [REDACTED] Calstone, Calne, Wiltshire [REDACTED]

2. I learned to ride as a young girl and have ridden the bridleways, restricted byways and byways in and around Calstone since I was about 13 years old. So, I know them very well indeed.

3. In 1994 I set up my own livery yard at Seven Boxes. My Yard, Seven Boxes is about 10 minutes slow riding from The Mill House, Calstone and the bridleways that go immediately past it and the Permissive Route that the owner of Calstone Mill, John Moore, has now installed.

5. I am, therefore, a very experienced rider with thousands of hours in the saddle. In the course of my riding career I have ridden over all sorts of different surfaces, in every weather imaginable, and on lots and lots of different horses and I can honestly say in respect of the current formal bridleway route that:

5.1 Prior to the installation of the Permissive Route I only rode the bridleway past Calstone Mill on extremely rare occasions. I also know that that route was very rarely used.

The bridge that you have to cross over the millstream at the River Marden there is thoroughly dangerous; and I would only attempt it on a nice dry day when I could also be sure that the route underfoot there would be really dry. Even then I would only consider that crossing on a really reliable horse that could pretty much be guaranteed not give any trouble over that nasty, narrow, badly maintained and dangerous bridge.

The concern is that, once on the bridge, there is nowhere to go except forward. The bridge is so narrow that you cannot turn on it. So, a horse that becomes concerned at the crossing, due to the sight of the fast moving water underneath, or who slips because of the really poor surface which Wiltshire have never maintained properly at all, might land me or both of us in that mill stream with really nasty consequences.

You could have a horrific accident there. I would never advise someone to take a child on a pony there.

5.2 Also the route on the north side of the bridge away from Calstone Mill is genuinely impassable to a horse in winter: deep mud, really slippery and very awkward to get any footing in at all. Overall that section, in winter, is thoroughly unusable and not safe at all.

5.3 Also I do not like intruding on people's privacy; and the bridleway not only runs right past the Mill's front door but it is also very close to it. That sort of thing makes me feel uncomfortable.

5.4 Several of my liveries want to hack out. The hacking from my yard is in many ways excellent. However, if anyone wanted to cross the River Marden, I would send them down to the crossing at South Farm. This means that they have to ride further on the road: it is a quiet road, but you can still have accidents on a quiet road. Riders are a very vulnerable element of the community. So, when riding, you want to get off the road just as soon as you can.

6. The introduction of the Permissive Route, though, has changed all of that. This route is safe and inviting to ride. It is wide. We can use it all the year round, the going underfoot is solid and gives the horses a great feeling of confidence whatever the state of the weather and whatever time of the year it is. It no longer goes right past the house, so I do not feel awkward using it.

In every way, the Permissive Route is just so much better than that horrible old route. Also I can, and do, recommend the Permissive Route to my liveries.

They all ride to quite different standards and have horses with quite different capabilities; but with that route available to them, they can get off the road a lot faster and be safe using it. And so lots of them do use it, which was never the case before.

7. I know lots of people in the riding community around here and they all feel the same. We have been waiting for years for Wiltshire to make a proper decision about this route. Everyone is thoroughly fed up with Wiltshire not seeing what is perfectly obvious: the Permissive Route is just better in every respect than the Official Route and we all just want to carry on using the Permissive Route and thoroughly support the intended diversion.

I BELIEVE THAT THE FACTS AND MATTERS CONTAINED IN THIS STATEMENT ARE TRUE

Name: [Redacted]

Address:
[Redacted] Calstone, Calne
Wiltshire [Redacted]

Signature: [Redacted]

19/07/2019

Madgwick, Sally

From: Graham Bennett [redacted] >
Sent: 21 July 2019 13:50
To: Madgwick, Sally
Subject: Calstone Mill - Diversion under s119 - Statement of truth of Sue Raven
Attachments: Sue Raven - Statement of Truth.pdf

Dear Sally,

I understand that you are in the process of drafting your Report to Council on the subject of the proposed diversion of the bridleway at Calstone Mill.

It would be enormously helpful to know where you have got to with your Report and the decision process from there, once submitted. In particular, if it is likely to go to Area Planning Committee, it would be very helpful to know the date of the intended Area Committee Meeting that will address it and to be advised of that meeting in advance.

In the meantime, and for your review as part of your deliberations, I attach the Statement of Truth of Sue Raven who owns and runs the livery yard at Seven Boxes, Calstone.

Seven Boxes, as you may know, is only a few minutes ride away from the bridleways in question. Sue confirms:

1. that prior to the installation of the current Permissive Route, the Definitive Route was rarely used due to the serious difficulties in using that route (see paragraphs 5.1,5.2 and 5.3 of the attached);
2. the dangerous and inconvenient nature of the existing Definitive Route (paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2);
3. the contrasting nature of the Permissive/Diversionsary route (paragraph 6);
4. the benefits of the Permissive Route to her liveries and those engaged in Active Travel; and the fact that the intended Diversionsary Route is in every way better and more useful than the existing Definitive Route, enabling riders and others to get off the roads and away from motor vehicles, and the dangers that they entail to vulnerable user groups such as horse riders, quickly and effectively (paragraphs 6 and 7).

I maintain the view that the tests under s119 are satisfied in every respect by the intended Diversion and that this Statement is further evidence of that fact.

Kind regards

Graham Bennett
BHS ABO (Legal)
Wiltshire