

I am writing to express my concerns over the safety of the general public and of the horses at livery at Whitcombe Farm if the above proposal is adopted.

I have owned and ridden horses for over 40 years. My daughter and I currently have three horses at livery at the farm and, although fairly recent arrivals at the yard, we have ridden in the area for over 20 years. My daughter, and the other horse owners, regularly ride on a daily basis to and from the yard via the access roadway.

Horses are large heavy animals and can be easily upset by unusual noises or strangers on the yard, particularly if walkers are accompanied by dogs which may or may not be loose. This could cause unnecessary stress to the animals, resulting in unpredictable behaviour which could cause serious injury or damage to anyone who may be on the yard or on the access roadway. The unnecessary stress could also result veterinary treatment being required for the horse.

Any gates being left unfastened could lead to horses becoming loose, potentially causing injury/damage to the public as well as to the animals.

Walkers, however well-meaning, could feed totally unsuitable 'treats' to the horses, not realising that this could cause serious colic, which could ultimately result in the death of the animal.

There are frequent daily movements of heavy farm vehicles (tractors and trailers) on the roadway and around the farm buildings. In addition to this there are also horseboxes being loaded and Severn Trent vehicles using the roadway to access the nearby reservoirs. All represent a potential hazard to any walkers in the vicinity.

Opening access through the yard will also cause security issues, giving the opportunity to undesirables to 'case the joint' and potentially lead to the theft of property. There are thousands of pounds-worth of property on the yard, namely horse boxes and expensive equipment (saddles, bridles and rugs etc) and rural theft is now becoming a problem.

In addition, the immediate area has, for many years, been a haven for large numbers of wildfowl which inhabit the surrounding fields and the nearby reservoirs all year round. Walkers with or without dogs will undoubtedly cause unnecessary distress to these creatures, severely disrupting their daily habits and breeding behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Jane Bisco (Mrs)