

# New road safety petition to hold drivers to account

Campaigners seek greater legal protection for riders involved in road incidents

"If a horse is hit or killed on the roads, action should be taken" — this is the message campaigners are pushing back into the public eye with a new petition.

Cornwall-based rider Debbie Smith, who launched the Pass Wide and Slow road safety group, created the petition earlier this month and it has already received more than 2,000 signatures.

The petition calls for greater legal protection for riders and horses involved in road incidents.

This is the second road safety petition created by Ms Smith. Her previous campaign centered on making passing wide and slow and responding to riders' hand signals a legal requirement.

The petition received more than 138,000 signatures and was debated in parliament ([horseandhound.co.uk](http://horseandhound.co.uk), 30 June, 2017), but Ms Smith feels that the issue has been shelved by government and needs a refocus.

She told *H&H* she deliberately left out details of potential new laws in her new petition to give it as much scope as possible.

"The other petition went to parliament but it doesn't seem to have gone any further," she said. "The point of this new petition is to highlight the problem again. I will keep going until they take notice. The new petition leaves it a lot more open as to what can be discussed, while the previous one was quite limited."



Horses remain vulnerable on the roads despite attempts to change drivers' attitudes

By RACHAEL TURNER

Ms Smith said she would like to see greater penalties for drivers who pass horses recklessly.

"Horses are getting hit and killed and drivers are getting away with it," she said. "If we get [dangerous driving] caught on camera, or if the horse is hit or killed, action should be taken."

Ms Smith added that even if a horse is not injured or struck by a motorist, the driver should still be held to account if their behaviour could have led to an incident.

Claire Lilly of Essex-based road safety group Canewdon Equestrian supports Ms Smith's call for change.

"Generally when people are set guidelines to follow they do just that, especially if they are faced with losing their licence or receiving points," she told *H&H*.

"It is part of the bigger picture in reducing horse and rider fatalities, alongside increased visibility of riders on the road."

"Education from the outset via driving schools is paramount, as is speed reduction on roads used by vulnerable road users."

"It's a collaboration of many factors that will reduce accidents."

## SEEKING JUSTICE

HANNA CAMPBELL of Horse Solicitor supported making the guidance in rule 215 of the Highway Code [which covers passing horses and riders safely] into a legal requirement.

"However, the police are already able to hold drivers to account under current laws, such as driving without due care and attention or dangerous driving," she explained.

"Unfortunately, we often find that the police fail to bring

charges despite having the power to do so. This means that, while we are able to win a civil claim for our clients and ensure that they are financially compensated for their injuries and associated financial losses through the civil courts, the person responsible is often not brought to justice in the criminal court."

Ms Campbell said this could be rectified by encouraging police officers to utilise their powers to protect vulnerable road users.

"Riders should also be encouraged to wear head cameras to ensure that there is evidence to enable the CPS to secure a conviction," she added.

A spokesman for the British Horse Society (BHS) told *H&H* that changing legislation "can take a long time".

"This is why we are asking for a change in behaviour from drivers," he said, citing the BHS's Dead Slow campaign.

"The BHS has been working with a number of organisations to help educate drivers on how to pass horses safely. This includes the Department for Transport, the Driving Instructors Association and the DVLA, which now has the details of the campaign in their handbooks given out to drivers."

"We've also worked with a number of companies on our safety days to educate drivers."

Last year the charity commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory to look into what riders can do to ensure they are seen on the roads.

The report found that as well as conspicuous clothing, lights on both the rider and the horse means they can be seen sooner, allowing the driver extra time to slow down.

● Visit [petition.parliament.uk/petition/217985](http://petition.parliament.uk/petition/217985)

The Kimblewick hounds were unperturbed by their city surroundings



## Hounds break down barriers in the city

Kimblewick hounds paid a visit to the big smoke to meet the members of an inner-city riding school

By CATHERINE AUSTEN

CHILDREN in Brixton, London, got their first introduction to hounds and the world of hunting on Thursday, 3 May, when the Kimblewick paid a visit to the Ebony Horse Club, an inner-city riding school that teaches young people, many from disadvantaged backgrounds and at risk of falling into gang culture, to ride and care for ponies.

*H&H* columnist Andrew Sallis, who is in his second season as joint-master and huntsman of the Kimblewick, said: "We were invited to visit by Charlotte Steel, a patron of Ebony Horse Club, to bring hounds and talk about hunting to more than 100 people including guests, patrons, sponsors, staff, parents and, most importantly, dozens of fascinated, inquisitive children."

"It was a privilege to meet children and parents from Brixton, who simply adore this remarkable project and hugely value the important skills and opportunities it offers. The skills and responsibilities they gain engender a remarkable sense of community and pride."

The Kimblewick visitors

watched riding lessons and displays by members of the Ebony Horse Club during their stay.

"The children ride with confidence on brilliant ponies in fine condition and they clearly love it," said Andrew. "The children were fascinated by the hounds. They had refreshingly open minds and were inquisitive about post- and pre-ban hunting. Not one spoke with the ingrained prejudice often found, even in more rural settings."

"To see the children playing with the hounds and to hear the hunting horn in an inner city outdoor school surrounded by tower blocks was an important lesson to us all in how simple it can be to make new friends and break down barriers."

"The hounds enjoyed their trip to London, too!"

"Hopefully we will be able to organise a trip to Kimblewick later in the year for the children to visit our new kennels, see a local working farm and maybe even enjoy a day's hunting."

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**PEOPLE**  
IN THE NEWS

**Britain's Mat thew Sampson** has won the Hamburg Derby. Matthew clinched the

British eventer **Nicola Wilson** is temporarily out of action after injuring her knee in a fall. She

Dutch showjumper **Harrie Smolders** has secured the number one spot in the world

Riding for the Disabled Association president **Princess Anne** attended the

**Sophie Wells** has three exciting new horses to ride. Dime, a 10-year-old mare currently training

1st prize, plus two younger OFS Diamond Crusador sires, Jillz Geuzenhorf.