

Subject:Re: Concerns over Bridestones Moor and surrounding areas.

Date: 2021-03-22 09:29

From: Colin Hill <townclerk@todmorden-tc.gov.uk>

To: [REDACTED]

Reply-To: townclerk@todmorden-tc.gov.uk

Molly

First of all thank you for bringing this to our attention.

At this stage I just wanted to acknowledge your email.

Whilst Todmorden Town Council does not have any responsibility or legal obligations regarding these areas, Town Councillors are concerned about misuse of the Moorlands area and do support their proper use.

What I will do is take your email to our development committee on 30th March to see if and how they wish to take this forward.

I think at best the most we can do is engage I expect with Calderdale MBC and possibly raise this with the police.

I also do not want to raise your hopes on a quick fix on any of this. As irritating as this is, we have seen for other areas locally that some people's selfish behaviour, during this pandemic has not been helpful and priorities for both Calderdale and the Police have meant that they cannot be as responsive as I know they would like to be on issues like these.

We will come back to you after the 30th meeting.

Kind Regards

Colin Hill

Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Todmorden Town Council

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this email because I have noticed some issues regarding public behaviour around the Bridestones area. Given that the area concerned crosses the boundaries of both councils, it seems logically to address this correspondence to both.

I shall start by providing some context before stating my specific concerns. I live on the boundary of the moor and over the past year I have noticed a marked increase in the numbers of visitors to the area. I would like to state that I believe this to be on the whole a positive given the educational and health benefits attached to exploring the outdoors. However, some members of the public do not treat the area nor the residents with respect and behave in an anti-social manner.

Firstly, some members of the public seem to be confused about the differences between footpaths and bridleways as can be seen by the new mountain bike trails that have been irresponsibly cut on Rawtenstall Bank (Mytholm Steeps). I have especially noticed an increase in horse riders and mountain bikers using the footpath across the moor, I myself have witnessed on separate occasions both horse riders and cyclists riding all the way to the trig point. This irresponsible use of the moor is having a detrimental impact upon the condition of the path and moor. I have attached photographs taken today at 18:02 of a horse rider with a dog off the leash on the moor. I would like to state that I am both a keen equestrian and cyclist and have no objections to the activities but rather the location, both activities carry risk and the behaviour I have witnessed shows an unsettling arrogance and lack of acknowledgement of the risks to both themselves and particularly others whom are not committing trespass (using a footpath for the purposes of horse riding or cycling without the express consent of the landowner constitutes as trespass under civil law.

As alluded to above, I have also noticed an increase in loose dogs roaming over the moorland. There have been several occasions when driving home I have come across dogs on the lane when the owners have lost control. I have also witnessed dogs chasing local wildlife. This is especially a concern given that the curlew breeding season is fast approaching and I am sure both councils will recognise the importance in protecting these special birds from irresponsible members of the public.

As can be expected, this increase in visitor numbers has also had an impact upon the local traffic, especially the lay-by on Eastwood Road across from the stile leading to Bridestones Moor. There have been several occasions when the parked cars have extended down the lane and past the turning to Windy Harbour Lane, this when combined with the number of walkers, has made driving along the road quite dangerous on busy days. This problem has only been exacerbated by an increase in motorhomes using the lay-by as permanent/long-term parking spot, one in particular has been parked in the same spot for over a year, however the owners previously parked another motorhome in the same spot for a number of years before. Currently there are about three to four motorhomes that are parked in the lay-by on a regular basis. This is especially a concern given that there are no rubbish nor sewage provisions.

As has been stated, there has also been an increase in litter and fly-tipping in the Bridestones area. The rubbish is predominantly from picnics, whilst walking my dog I have come across such items as broken glass bottles, plastic containers/wrappers, and other such pieces of domestic rubbish. The fly-tipping seems to be predominantly located along the Long Causeway. Both are concerning given the dangers posed to local livestock and wildlife.

Unfortunately, I can also state that on some days it is difficult to engage in day-to-day activities because of the behaviour of some members of the public whom do not seem to realise that social

distancing must also be maintained when walking in the countryside. In one recent incident I sustained an injury due to the actions of a couple of walkers who were unwilling to wait until I had safely navigated a stile with my dog which was on a lead and ended up tangled around my foot.

As I am sure you can appreciate, the current situation on the moor is becoming unsustainable and seems to be a common problem across many local beauty spots. I would like to reiterate that I personally love that others would choose to spend their free time exploring the local area, however, I also believe that there needs to be balance, and respect towards the moor. Both the residents and the local Councils need to be proactive about protecting the moors for future generations to enjoy.

Thank you for taking the time to engage with this correspondence and I look forward to receiving a response and details about any proposed action that both Councils intend to take.

If you require any additional information or engagement from myself then please feel free to get in touch.

Kind Regards,

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