Written evidence submitted by William B. Tait, Chairman, Ryedale Bridleways (RUT0292)

More people would take their horses into the countryside if the Green Lanes/UURs (particularly the vulnerable ones) were free of recreational Off Roaders i.e. 4x4 s and trail bikes. Many of our historic lovely Green Lanes have been trashed by the selfish activities of recreational off roading. The green lanes form a vital link with the bridleways network and help to keep horses off our busy roads (the accident statistics involving horses and their riders don’t make good reading—see British horse Society for details). Many riders now enjoy doing 3 or 4 day treks on horseback and this provides welcome money for farmers and B&Bs/hotel, riding stables, shops etc. To encourage riding in the countryside it is important to ensure bridleways are well marked and clear of obstacles.

There are at least 2.5 million horse riders in this country and many people like farriers, saddlers, riding shops depend for their livelihood on riders. There is a huge demand for access to the countryside by horse riders and the Government could well respond to this by making all UURs/green lanes restricted byways so recreational vehicle users would be banned permanently. Organisations like GLEAM are campaigning for the Government (DEFRA) to act to protect our Green Lanes.

I take guided rides for Ride Yorkshire and there has been a big increase in riders wanting to do circular rides in the North Yorkshire Moors. This brings in money to the park as we use cafes/pubs on the rides. It is also encouraging riders to get and go for longer treks two or three days and this would also bring vital money to rural economies. I do hope you give serious consideration to my comments.

September 2016