BHS launches Keep Britain Riding campaign as equestrianism comes under threat.

The British Horse Society (BHS) has today launched a new campaign called 'Keep Britain Riding' to safeguard the long-term prospects of the equestrian industry, and to protect and nurture the special horse/human bond for future generations.

This comes after a major threat emerged following a nationwide survey by the BHS, which revealed that over 250 riding schools have closed since 2018, as well as the discovery that proprietors are either retiring and/or unable to recruit enough qualified coaches and yard staff to run their centres.

As a result of these closures, more than 1.5 million riding lessons have now been lost per year. That is 1.5 million fewer opportunities for children and adults to build that indescribable bond with horses; a bond that so many people would be lost without.

As the lifeblood of equestrian participation, riding schools are an essential part of the future of equestrianism. Without them, the professional sport and recreational riding could both be severely impacted.

James Hick, Chief Executive at The British Horse Society, is hugely concerned: "We need to address the decline in riding centres for a number of reasons. Firstly, simply so more people from more backgrounds can experience the benefits of riding. Secondly, most recreational and professional riders will start their journey as a child in a riding school. And thirdly, we know that good horse care and welfare is reliant on a thriving, knowledgeable and experienced workforce."

While the aim of Keep Britain Riding is to generate funds and reverse this trend to keep Britain's equestrianism thriving, the campaign also celebrates the unique horse/human relationship and all the benefits it brings. The BHS is encouraging anyone who has experienced the true wonder of horses to share their photos and videos of what these animals have meant to them using the hashtag #horsehumanbond.

Donations are also needed to expand The Society's activity around increased diversity, as James explains: "The horse/human relationship can be transformational for people's physical and mental wellbeing, no matter their background or experience. We have seen this first-hand here at the BHS, particularly through our Changing Lives through Horses programme, which has just registered its 2000th participant. This scheme is critical as we campaign to make riding accessible to everyone.

"This programme provides just one example of how truly precious the bond with horses is and it's frightening to think that, with every day that goes by, people are losing the opportunity to experience what that relationship feels like. In 2018, there were 1,747 riding schools in the UK. Today there are 1,497 – or less."

The BHS is also involving a number of its ambassadors in the campaign, including its President Martin Clunes who comments: "Horses are part of my everyday life – their beauty, bravery, strength and companionship constantly inspires me. The thought that future generations may not have the same opportunity to know the joys that horses can bring truly saddens me."

To learn more about the BHS's Keep Britain Riding campaign and how you can help the charity to make sure the equestrian industry continues to thrive, visit bhs.org.uk/KeepBritainRiding.

To donate to the BHS and their Changing Lives through Horses programme, visit www.bhs.org.uk/clth.

Key Assets:

To share our key 'Keep Britain Riding' messages and to help reverse this declining trend in riding schools, we have produced a suite of assets for use across all digital platforms.

- Horse/human imagery
- The British Horse Society logo
- Social media banner – which can be used over the top of any imagery you want to share of the special horse(s) in your life

All images & infographics can be found here: https://we.tl/t-qLdDZwWSNU

Sharing Our Assets:

All our assets, key campaign messages and Keep Britain Riding statistics will continue to be shared across the BHS social media channels. Please find our social handles below:

Facebook: The British Horse Society

Twitter: @BritishHorse

Instagram: @britishhorse

YouTube: The British Horse Society

Should you wish to, you can **amplify our posts, or download our assets**, and share on your own channels with the suggested copy displayed below.

- Together with The British Horse Society, we know that the connection and emotional impact experienced from spending time with a horse is not only unique, it's a part of who we are.

  However, the equestrian community at large is losing more than 1.5 million riding lessons every single year.

  Collectively, we can protect the #horsehumanbond and #KeepBritainRiding. Learn more here: bhs.org.uk/KeepBritainRiding

- We stand together with The British Horse Society in preserving the bond between horses and humans. We believe in the benefits of riding for all.

  To Keep Britain Riding, we want to you to share your incredible horse human moments! A lovely photo, a brilliant ride video or a heat-warming story… remember to use #horsehumanbond when sharing on your social feeds.

  Let's ensure the future of equestrianism. #KeepBritainRiding

  Learn more here: bhs.org.uk/KeepBritainRiding

- For thousands of years, equestrians have worked and lived alongside horses, creating a partnership that helps us be our best selves.

  Our community must safeguard this bond for future generations. We are losing riding schools each year. Reversing this trend is critical to keep equestrianism thriving.

Join the cause with The British Horse Society and share your photos of the horse(s) in your life, while using the #horsehumanbond.

Let's #KeepBritainRiding: bhs.org.uk/KeepBritainRiding

- "The thought that future generations may not have the same opportunity to know the joys that horses can bring truly saddens me" – British Horse Society President Martin Clunes

  The British Horse Society's #KeepBritainRiding campaign is striving to reverse the declining trend in riding schools, and to make sure more people can experience that unique #horsehumanbond.

  Visit bhs.org.uk/KeepBritainRiding to learn all about how you can get involved.

- Since 2018, the equestrian community lost 15% of Britain's riding schools! That's the equivalent of losing more than 1.5 million riding lessons every single year (The British Horse Society Survey).

  To help Keep Britain Riding and protect the #horsehumanbond, join us/me in sharing your incredible horse human moment on your social feeds. Don't forget to tag #horsehumanbond.

  Discover more here: bhs.org.uk/KeepBritainRiding

Key hashtags:

#KeepBritainRiding #horsehumanbond

The BHS Press Office Contacts:
If you have any feedback or questions, you can reach us on 02476 6840521 or by emailing pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk