

BHS 2026 Project – Historic Research Volunteer



Are you a super sleuth?

On 1 January 2026, historic routes in England that aren't properly recorded will be lost to the public forever. We are looking for people to volunteer their time to help us identify and register these routes before it is too late.

To help meet this challenge, the BHS has received funding from Sport England through the British Equestrian Federation to safeguard as many bridleways and byways as possible before the deadline. It will do this by offering training, advice, support and financial assistance to volunteers across England who are researching and making applications to their local authority to record these historic routes.

Who are we looking for?

We are keen to hear from volunteers with a range of skills and abilities which might include some of the following:

- Computer literate, with access to the internet
- Map reading skills
- An interest in local history
- Interpretation of old documents and transcripts
- An eye for detail
- Solving puzzles
- Patience

You don't need to be a member of the BHS – or even an equestrian – to take part. We have walkers, cyclists, canoeists and even people who prefer the great indoors helping with Project 2026!

What will I be doing?

2026 research can be a really flexible activity which can be done as and when you have the time and energy. It could involve some, or all, of the following:

- Identifying routes and carrying out research from your home using www.bhsaccess.org.uk and other online resources
- Visiting your County Records Office and other archives to gather evidence
- Walking or riding routes that you are investigating and putting up notices on them
- Completing and submitting forms as part of the Definitive Map Modification Order application process



This project has been kindly part funded by Sport England through the British Equestrian Federation.



What help will you receive?

You will have support from our 2026 Project Manager along with BHS local, regional and national staff. You will also be able to call upon technical support, guidance and training from the dedicated BHS Access Department, whilst the Volunteer Support Team are also on hand to help and assist throughout. Of course, you will also become part of our wide network of other 2026 volunteers, many of whom will be happy to share their experience and knowledge with you.

You will be covered under our public liability insurance whilst volunteering for us.

Training

There is an extensive range of training and support for 2026 volunteers, both online and face-to-face, covering the basics of rights of way, through to the interpretation of historical evidence and using our dedicated 2026 mapping and research website. Experienced staff and volunteers can also offer advice and one-to-one support to help address specific issues and questions.

Expenses

Through the support from Sport England, we are able to offer financial assistance to volunteers to help cover their expenses incurred in the submission of eligible Definitive Map Modification Order applications to their local authority. More details at <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/access/campaigns/2026/financial-support-dmmo>.

If you would like to register to support the BHS 2026 Project in your local area, then please contact our Volunteer Support Team on volunteer@bhs.org.uk



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