



# **Access & Rights of Way**

**Annual Review**

**2025**

**For horses. For people. For life.**

Registered Charity Nos. 210504 (England and Wales), SC038516 (Scotland) and 1382 (Isle of Man).



## Access & Rights of Way Round Up



**£27,078.07**

fundraised for our  
Ride Out Fund



**280.6km**

improved by BHS  
intervention



**4,224**

Project 2026 DMMO  
applications submitted



**468**

consultation responses  
submitted



**32**

Ride Out UK  
events



**1,505**

Rideathon and ROUK  
participants



**264**

volunteer Access &  
Bridleway Officers



**101**

Historical Research  
participants



### A HUGE THANK YOU

To our volunteers, EAGs and participants  
for all your support throughout 2025

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## Looking back on a fantastic year for equestrian access

Another year has flown by. British Horse Society continued to work to improve off road access for all equestrians. We are eternally grateful to all our volunteers who do so much for us all around the UK to improve access. It was great to see this being recognised nationally with Janice Bridger being nominated for the Horse and Hound Unsung Hero of the Year Award, Phil Wadey being honoured with an MBE, and at the Society's November Awards at Newbury, Peter Natt receiving his 50 years long service award at the Society's awards ceremony at Newbury and Adrian Bigg receiving the President's Award for his truly outstanding service to the Society.

When we started Project 2026, the 1 January 2026 seemed such a distant date but now, we are there, and it is so important that the Society's lobbying along with our partners was so successful, and equestrians will not now be losing these historic routes that are not yet recorded on the definitive map. You will see below just how successful Project 2026 has been to date, but we must not rest on our laurels, it is just as important now to continue to get these routes recorded so that they are protected for future generations.

Whilst access still does not seem to be high on this Government's agenda we will continue to press for access to be moved up its agenda. With our partners we have helped to set up the All Party Parliamentary Group for Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature, and we are lucky to have Andy Macnae MP and Phil Brickell MP leading the group and being such good advocates for outdoor access.

We are prepared for the 2026 elections in Scotland and Wales. In Wales we have worked with the Outdoor Alliance to produce an access manifesto, and in Scotland we have worked with the Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance to produce an access manifesto.

Active travel continues to be a bone of contention for equestrians as we continue to be excluded from some active travel schemes. In 2025 we commented on Active Travel England's draft Rural Design Guidance. We produced and sent to all Local Authorities '[The Impact of Active Travel Plans and LTN 1/20 on equestrians' guidance](#)'.

We produced a 2025 Equestrian Strategy and in that we undertook to produce a report on our achievements so please do read that report to get a fuller picture of our 2025 access achievements.



## Project 2026

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2025 started on a real high as on Boxing Day 2024, the Government had announced its intention to repeal the cut-off date due to take effect on 1 January 2031. However, a year later we are now a year closer to that date, with no news or indication of when the repeal might be implemented. This delay and drift just reinforce our advice to all our amazing Historical Research participants to keep going with the hard work – cut-off date or not, the best way to protect these routes from obstruction, development or neglect is to get them recorded by making a DMMO application.

The very generous funding for the project from Sport England through British Equestrian – and matched by BHS – which started in 2018, has continued throughout the year but will finally finish at the end of March 2026. As a result, a further 514 routes have been applied for, taking the project total to an incredible 4,254. This represents more than 4,700km of potential equestrian routes protected from the cut-off.

In mid-April, we logged the milestone 4,000<sup>th</sup> application. This was made by a volunteer from the Ramblers, who has “contributed” a total of 75 applications to our project. This one was seeking to record a byway in East Woodhay in Hampshire. The project has thrived over the years, through our close partnerships with other like-minded groups such as the Ramblers, the Open Spaces Society and Cycling UK.

The level of new applications is down from its peak two or three years ago but a significant part of that appears to be due to many of our more experienced and prolific volunteers becoming more involved in the subsequent stages of the processing of their applications. This can be complex and time-consuming but is equally essential if the rewards are to be reaped from the original research.

During 2025 the list of routes that have been finally added to the Definitive Map and Statement following a confirmed DMMO has risen to 95, an increase of 68 since this time last year. This equates to more than 90km of additional bridleway or byway, saved for use by equestrians and other users across the country. Obviously as many of the remaining thousands of applications are eventually processed by the relevant councils, this number will continue to grow, but we can't do it without the incredible effort and dedication of our volunteers.

Although the Sport England funding is coming to an end in the next few months, Project 2026 most definitely continues. To reflect the growing focus on progressing existing applications through order making and determination stages, our resources will become more targeted on developing training and support for volunteers starting to grapple with appeals, written representations and hearings and inquiries.

Nonetheless, we are still strongly encouraging people to research and make new applications for further unrecorded bridleways and byways as they are identified. The costs for this will have to be met locally on a case-by-case basis but given that so much evidence has been digitised and made available via our online evidence libraries linked to Dobbin, our brilliant online mapping and research website, these are generally much reduced from previously.

Our final word is one of thanks to Adrian Bigg, who has created, maintained and developed the aforementioned Dobbin website at [www.bhs.org.uk/2026](http://www.bhs.org.uk/2026). This has been absolutely key to the success of Project 2026 thus far and should continue to do so in this next phase of the project.

[www.bhs.org.uk/2026](http://www.bhs.org.uk/2026)

## Ride Out UK

[access@bhs.org.uk](mailto:access@bhs.org.uk)

Our ever-popular Ride Out UK events raised £21,136.39 for our Ride Out Fund. The first event was held in March, and the last event was held in November. We ran 32 events – both leisure rides and online information events - with 1,360 attendees. We welcomed some new venue hosts this year, and progress has been made for more in 2026 too – stay tuned to find an event near you.

[www.bhs.org.uk/rideoutuk](http://www.bhs.org.uk/rideoutuk)

## Rideathon

[access@bhs.org.uk](mailto:access@bhs.org.uk)

Rideathon Challenge 2025 was launched in March, with campaign activity running through May. We had support from Naylor's who donated £2,000 straight into the Ride Out Fund alongside £1,000 worth of vouchers for our top ten fundraisers. We also had continued support from Ordnance Survey who gave three months free access to OS Maps Premium to everyone who signed up, and a prize bundle for our top fundraiser. We had 145 people sign up raising £5,941.68 for our Ride Out Fund. We're excited for Rideathon 2026 and would love to see you join in.

[www.bhs.org.uk/rideathon](http://www.bhs.org.uk/rideathon)



Ride Out UK  
Bramham Park  
October 2025

Across the UK, great progress has been made at a local level, with our thanks extended to our volunteers, affiliated Equestrian Access Groups and Access Field Officers.

## East of England

Access Field Officer, Teresa Hudson  
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### Byway clearance in Norfolk

Roydon Restricted Byway had become overgrown with low hanging branches, making the route narrow and impossible for equestrians to use. After action was taken by local Access Field Officer, the overgrown foliage was cut back. This route has now had positive feedback on the improvements from local equestrians one of which said, *“It looks amazing, and all done before the birds nesting.”*

### East of England Access Conference

Held in Newmarket, the day started with a very impressive presentation on “Engaging with the planning system” by Meghan Bonner. It was great to hear about the fantastic work of two local Equestrian Access Groups, Essex Bridleways Association and Swavesey & District Bridleways Association, and to learn about the Trails Trust. The outstanding work of our Bedfordshire Access Team on an aspiration map of central Bedfordshire showed their hard work and commitment. A ‘Map Your Hack’ session engaged all attendees with insights into where equestrians ride and carriage drive.



The enthusiasm and commitment of our brilliant Access & Bridleway Officers, their dedication, and efforts to protect and improve equestrian access is truly amazing. Working together to secure a safer, more inclusive, and better future for all equestrians. A big thank you to all the speakers and attendees for making BHS East of England Access Conference a day to remember and an inspiration to us all.

## East Midlands

Access Field Officer, Wendy Bannerman  
[wendy.bannerman@bhs.org.uk](mailto:wendy.bannerman@bhs.org.uk)

### Mounting blocks in Northamptonshire

National Highways installed mounting blocks either side of the bridge over the M1 between Crick Lodge and Lilbourne, Northamptonshire. Negotiations for this started in 2021 as the bridge, carrying Bridleway FP3 and approximately 4m wide, has low parapets so is off-putting for many riders. Mounting blocks are now in use linking bridleways EX6, FP2 and FP3 for a lovely 4.5km off-road stretch. Feedback on social media and from local riders has been positive.

## Gate improvements in Derbyshire

When a local Access & Bridleways Officer (ABO) originally reported issues with four gates to the Highway Authority (HA) in October 2024, the HA put the landowner and BHS in touch. County Access & Bridleways Officer (CABO), ABO and Wendy met with the landowner in January 2025 and agreed on the improvements needed. Ride Out Fund and Melbourne Footpaths Group (MFG) paid towards the materials to make the gates safer and more user-friendly. The ABO worked closely with MFG to repair and improve the gates. A great success for local riders.

## Trent Vale Trail, Nottinghamshire

The opening of the Trent Vale Trail (TVA) was celebrated on Saturday 28 June. The section from South Clifton opposite the Sports pavilion to Green Lane (Restricted Byway Girton 1) has been dedicated as a bridleway. Wendy joined the celebration with the Trustees of TVA and local walkers, cyclists and riders, they then walked the route to see the gate funded through BHS Ride Out Fund.



## London and South East

Access Field Officer, Sarah Rayfield  
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### Signage secures safer route for Kent riders

BHS played a huge part to resolve a rat run problem in Woudham Kent following local development, Kent Highways proposed a “No Entry” system at one end of the village. Vehicles were still allowed to move in both directions in the street but only allowed to enter from the south. This was not a problem for motor vehicles, but the alternative route was unsafe for horse riders and, unfortunately, the no entry signs were deemed by other road users (incorrectly) to include them.

Local riders’ objections at first fell on deaf ears, but a local BHS member persisted with lobbying and kept local riders motivated with the help of new volunteer Access & Bridleways Officer. A “No Motor Vehicles” sign was proposed instead of the no entry sign to make it clear that it only applied to vehicular traffic. This proposal, together with an offer of funding if required from BHS for a new consultation, persuaded Kent Highways to change the Order and the signs.

### Bridleway dedication

Kent Wildlife Trust formally dedicated as a bridleway two short stretches of path used with permission by local horse riders for years. Our volunteer Access & Bridleways Officer for the area was happy to present them with an Access Award. These short links are so valuable in allowing riders to make safe connections with other off-road access and are also of benefit to Squirrels, the local approved riding school!

## **Surrey's "Have a Go" Day**

On Monday 30 September, BHS Surrey Committee, together with the South East Regional Manager and Access Field Officer, hosted a "Have a Go" day for Surrey County Council (SCC) Countryside Access Officers at BHS Approved riding centre, Silvermere Equestrian.

It can be extremely hard for a non-equestrian to understand the issues that people on horseback and in carriages can experience whilst using the rights of way network, for example, negotiating gates, gaps, narrow paths, barbed wire and sight lines. The purpose of the event was to give the SCC Officers a firsthand experience of some of these in a safe environment from the back of a horse. Following the mounted experience, discussions continued over tea and cake in a nearby café. Working together with our highways authorities helps to keep them more aware and helps to improve understanding of the pressures on all parties in keeping our precious rights of way network safe and accessible.

Thanks to the BHS Surrey Committee and to SCC PROW for getting involved.

## **North of England**

Access Field Officer, Reanne Benson  
[reanne.benson@bhs.org.uk](mailto:reanne.benson@bhs.org.uk)

### **Mounting blocks in East Cumbria**

Bridleway 305007/342017 crosses the River Lowther between Askham and Brampton, on the beautiful Lowther Estate in east Cumbria. It is a key route to cross the river, connecting the off-road networks east of the M6 with the Fells further west, allowing connection between local communities and for those wishing to ride longer distances.

In 2024 the bridge decking was replaced by Westmoreland & Furness Council, but the gates remained unusable by horse riders as they were hung on the ends of the bridge. This meant riders had no space to turn and close the gates behind them, which caused concern for livestock, which are part of the estate's inspiring drive towards rewilding. By kind permission of Lowther Estate and funded by The Lake District National Park, new gates have been installed set back from the ends of the bridge with safe manoeuvring pens. Mounting blocks funded by the BHS via the Ride Out Fund and the county committee along with Cumbria Bridleways Society have also been installed for those who wish to dismount to cross the bridge. The council advise dismounting to cross due to the height of the parapets.

The work was completed to a fabulous standard by Ullswater Countryside Management.



### **Kielder Forest Ride Out UK event**

BHS North joined forces with the Northumberland Endurance GB (EGB) group to host a fun ride.

There were 50 riders who attended on the day.

Riders could choose to either ride 8km, 16km or

21km, the day had a great atmosphere and lots of good interaction was had with EGB riders who found it highly informative to hear about the access and safety work we do. The day was a remarkable success, and much fun was had by all.

## North West of England

Access Field Officer, Reanne Benson  
[reanne.benson@bhs.org.uk](mailto:reanne.benson@bhs.org.uk)

### Whitegate Way mounting block

A new mounting block has been officially opened on The Whitegate Way in Cheshire, at the Whitegate Station carpark. It is a result of a collaboration between Mid Cheshire Bridleways Association (MCBA) and Cheshire West and Chester Council, with funding for the block from BHS Ride Out Fund and MCBA, and the base funded by Cheshire West and Chester Council.



The Whitegate Way is a former rail line stretches for 6 miles (10km) from Winsford to Cuddington in the heart of Cheshire. It is a multi-user route that can be reached by several restricted byways and permissive routes which allow horse riders to ride circular routes, or via free parking at Whitegate Station car park (CW7 2QE) where the new block is located. As a bonus, there is a wonderful community café in the old station buildings (Station House Cafe) that serves fantastic coffee, cake and sandwiches.

## South of England

Please contact [access@bhs.org.uk](mailto:access@bhs.org.uk)

### Hampshire restricted byway surface repaired

Surface repairs of restricted byways at Brighton Project were managed by the local volunteer Access & Bridleways Officer, with support and guidance from Hampshire County Council Countryside Services. The historic damage caused by motor vehicles illegal use made the route impassable. The work was historic damage caused by motor vehicles illegal use. Route became impassable. After rebuilding the surface with draining improvements, it opened 8 miles of byways.

### Road crossing safety improvements

The new crossing on Woodhouse Lane is now finished and open, the work was completed to agreed designs. Some extra signs are still needing to be put up but it has allowed much safer off-road access to the diverted bridleway route via the bridleway on Holmesland Lane (Botley), across Woodhouse Lane thence via the diversion to Shamblehurst (Hedge End). There is also a short bridleway connecting to Dowd's Farm and Tollbar Way.



### **Restricted byway circular route**

Breach Farm, Drumner is an ongoing project for a volunteer Access & Bridleways Officer. Orders for the creation, extinguishment and upgrades of routes to restricted byways have been confirmed after over 3.5 years of work. A circular route for local equestrians, as well as providing better access to the wider network in the area. BHS, Ramblers, and Cycling UK requested that all the changes take place simultaneously, thus avoiding a long, drawn-out process of doing one order at a time. Horse box parking is also being investigated.

### **Collaborating with and education council teams**

Time was spent collaborating with local riders, landowners and Milton Keynes Rights of Way department educating them on equestrian access. This was due to an incident that happened on an extremely overgrown and tree obstructed bridleway, narrow gates and other issues that had led to a horse injury exiting onto the A5 slip road. Since then, a key bridleway in the area accessing wonderful headland riding in an area with very little off-road provision. Work is also in progress to link this route into the extensive Milton Keynes bridleway network.

## **South West**

Access Field Officer, Philip Hackett  
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### **Somerset Enforcement Action**

Enforcement Action was taken on Bickenhall T2/11, Somerset, this has been a problem for over 20 years. The landowner insisted a bridleway on the Definitive Map was recorded 'in error'. There were repeated complaints to Somerset County Council (SCC) which were ineffective. SCC deferred taking the enforcement action despite the Planning Inspector finding that the bridleway was correctly recorded. BHS, supported by Ramblers and Open Spaces Society, instigated a Section 130A, which led to the bridleway being opened in September 2024.

### **Gloucestershire bridleway surface improvements**

Surface improvement has been made to Hazel Woods bridleway, in Gloucestershire. There have been long term issues with the boggy surface and overgrowth on the popular bridleway, and it has received repeated rider complaints to Gloucestershire Public Rights of Way (PROW). As a result of the local volunteer Access & Bridleways Officer (ABO) collaborating with the Local Warden, and Philip meeting with the PROW Manager, money was found for surface improvements and cutting back vegetation and trees. The local ABO is now in discussion with the local landowner to try and develop a permit system to increase equestrian access to other parts of the woodland.

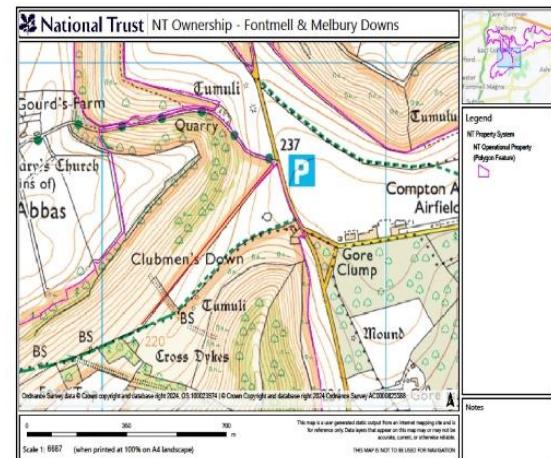
### **Forestry England signage success**

West Moors Plantation in Dorset has always been enjoyed by all for many years until the winter of 2024, due to 'conflict' between dog walkers and equestrians, many routes were closed off by the local Forestry England (FE) Warden, partly due to waterlogged paths. 'No

Horses' signs on selected tracks were wrongly interpreted by some residents as no horses anywhere in the woodland. Philip worked with the FE Warden and riders to negotiate an agreement. Areas near houses were preserved and other tracks were reinstated for equestrian access.

### Road crossing improves Dorset riders' safety

Riders needed a safe road crossing in Gore Clump, Dorset. This had been highlighted to Dorset Highways for many years without action. Other Routes with Public Access from Compton Abbas to the car park and bridleways to the east of Gore Clump airfield, the staggered layout creates a dangerous bridleway severance. BHS suggested the use of the National Trust (NT) permissive footpath, and a revised layout of the junction at Gore Clump. Highways agreed new road layout if NT would allow equestrian use of the path and eventually this was all agreed.



## West Midlands

Access Field Officer, Wendy Bannerman  
[wendy.bannerman@bhs.org.uk](mailto:wendy.bannerman@bhs.org.uk)

### New Wyre Forest mounting block

Forestry England funded the installation of a mounting block in Wyre Forest. The mounting block was made by students at Heart of Worcester College, negotiated by BHS and Worcestershire Bridleways & Riders Association (WBRA). This will be used by horse riders visiting the forest to enhance their visit to enjoy 13 miles/21km of off-road forest trails and is located in the horsebox parking area.

### New bridge in Herefordshire

In February 2024 riders reported to BHS that a bridge on BW 3 Morton on Lugg at the parish boundary was out of repair and had been closed to horse riders for some time. Wendy contacted the Rights of Way officer and provided details about bridleway bridges and signposted to resources. Wendy met riders on site and contacted the parish councils for support. In February 2025 after continued pursuit of this, Rights of Way took funding request to Herefordshire Council panel. The new bridge was installed and reopened in June 2025.

### Solihull permissive route reinstated

In October 2024, a rider contacted BHS as 'no horses' signs had been erected in Dorridge Park, forcing riders to use the main roads to access off-road riding. The rider, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Wendy liaised regarding risk assessment, examples of parks including horse riding and signage needed. In February 2025 Solihull MBC agreed to reinstate the permissive horse route and shared a way marker design to use on the route

## Farming in Protected Landscapes funding

Jack Myton Way bridleway 527, a promoted route, has been restored. The surface of the bridleway had been out of repair for several years. Volunteer Regional Access & Bridleways Officer (RABO) and Wendy applied for funding from Farming in Protected Landscapes and from BHS Ride Out Fund. Total project cost was £28,800. FiPL contributed over half, with remainder from the Ride Out Fund, Long Mynd and District Bridleways Association and BHS regional and county committees.



## Staffordshire's "Have a Go" day

On Friday 2 May, seven members of the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way team attended a "Have a Go Day" event at Rockstar equine. Five of the team experienced horse riding around a series of simulated obstacles such as low branches, a gate, water, narrow corridor and fallen branches.

It was an enjoyable event with a serious message about the challenges that equestrians face when hacking out on Public Rights of Way.

## Yorkshire

Access Field Officer, Mark Corrigan  
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### Brand new bridleway in East Yorkshire

A new bridleway at Skeffling in East Yorkshire is opened in 2025. The bridleway has been almost ten years in the planning, development, consultation, and construction phases. Utilising a flood defence system, the 7km bridleway runs along the top of the embankment, showcasing fantastic views over the flood plains and the sea. The surface of crushed stone, with flexi-pave, a porous bound-rubber surface, on the slope to aide grip. With a conveniently located car park, developments are ongoing to create linear connections with other routes. The car park is on Humber Side Road, south of the hamlet of Weeton.

### Historic Holmfirth bridleway confirmed

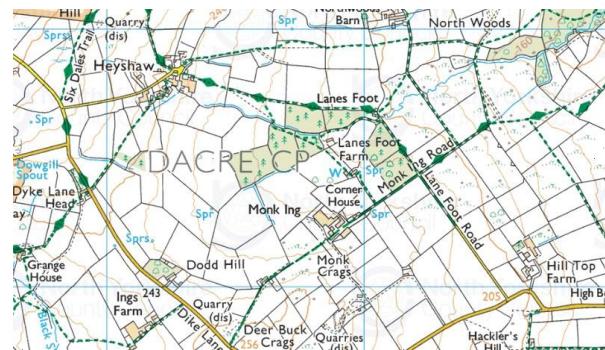
In 2022 whilst reviewing a planning application for a small housing development, Mark noticed a footpath partially within the boundary. As a matter of course the history of the footpath was investigated, historical maps named the footpath as Moisy Lane currently named as Robinson Lane, Brockholes, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. Historical information was collected by Mark and further evidence provided by the local Equestrian Access Group, Kirklees Bridleways Group. The historical evidence was compiled, and a definitive map modification order (DMMO) was applied for by BHS in March 2022.

The DMMO has been successfully confirmed as an official Bridleway (Holmfirth 31) on the May 13 2025 by Kirklees Council.

## Heyshaw history brought back for local riders

A new bridleway being added to the map from Lanes Foot Road, Dacre to Heyshaw Village in Yorkshire. This ancient path is part of a longer pack horse road which runs north from Heyshaw Village towards Pateley Bridge. There are old features on the path which include pack horse trods or causeys and an old Clapper Bridge which is adjacent to the path. This route had been recorded in the 1950s as a footpath, and despite the local council at Dacre making the then West Riding County Council know that it was a bridleway across the fields to Heyshaw Village, it remained as a footpath until last year, when, after a long process, it was finally recorded as a bridleway.

The process started in December 2017 when after researching and finding documents which showed the route should be a bridleway, volunteer County Access & Bridleways Officer for North Yorkshire, made an application to North Yorkshire Council to have it changed to a bridleway. The council made the Order to change the route's status, but this was opposed, and so the application had to wait until October 2024 for a local hearing, where the evidence was presented by the CABO, supported by Mark Corrigan. The evidence was examined by an Inspector who agreed that the evidence showed the route should be a bridleway.



The order was confirmed on the 11 of November 2024, and the route is now open.

## Wales (Cymru)

Access Field Officer, Helen Donnan  
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### Outdoor Alliance Wales

British Horse Society Wales/Cymru is one of over 50 member organisations that belong to Outdoor Alliance Wales, campaigning to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from the outstanding natural green, blue landscape, culture, and heritage of Wales. Promoting and delivering sustainable and responsible outdoor recreation. Only 14% of our trails are legally rideable on horseback or bicycle, so by helping to deliver the Outdoor Wales Manifesto to Welsh Government, equestrians can play a part in influencing a more accessible Wales.

On 24 September, member organisations came together at the Pierhead Senedd Building in Cardiff to deliver the manifesto and debate important questions. There were opportunities to take part in activities and hear a speech by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Youth Ambassador. BHS were represented by Helen and Angela Wetherall, National Manager for Wales.

### Carmarthenshire Equestrian Access Strategy

On 29 September, Cabinet approved Carmarthenshire Equestrian Access Strategy. Horse riders in Carmarthenshire could get more off-road access to the countryside under plans approved by council chiefs.

The strategy followed a consultation which 502 people and groups responded to. Two-thirds of adult respondents said they often faced hazards while riding off and on the road. The most popular option to overcome barriers to participation was more off-road access. A desire for more equestrian facilities, circular routes and easier gates was also expressed among other things.



Some of the points on the equine strategy include:

- Improving and enhancing routes beneficial to equestrians when resources allow.
- Assessing footpaths on council-owned land to see if they're suitable for a bridleway upgrade.
- Assessing council-owned land suitable for additional permissive equestrian access.
- Developing a volunteer equestrianism maintenance workforce.
- Inviting horse riders to respond to next year's consultation about updating the county's Active Travel network map.
- Big thanks to the local volunteer Access & Bridleway Officer who has put in many years work along with Carmarthenshire PROW Team to achieve this hoof in the right direction for safe off-road riding.

### **New non-motorised route in Heads of Valleys**

BHS and local equestrians were consulted by Future Valleys/Cymoedd y Dyfodol Construction team on a new 14km non-motorised route on the A465 Section 5 & 6, Heads of Valleys, South Wales. The route is now open for pedestrians, horse riders, and cyclists. Connections have been made between surrounding villages to make it more accessible and reduce congestion in the area.

### **Horse-friendly Ceredigion**

BHS partnered with Ceredigion Public Rights of Way Team to focus on horse friendly routes. BHS and Ceredigion Bridleways Group (CBG) work together to identify routes and provide useful information on them. BHS funded over £1,000 for new gates on bridleways and £6,500 for Pont Sian bridleway improvement.

### **The Great Glamorgan Way / Llwybr Mawr Morgannwg**

All Saddles Welcome. Helen Donnan and local equestrians have worked in partnership riding, surveying and taking part in promotion photography for the website. Over the past five years of the project the project secured through Government funding to connect trails for Horse riding and cycling through five counties in southeast Wales. See the website for mapped routes. [https://greatglamorganway.co.uk/en\\_gb/](https://greatglamorganway.co.uk/en_gb/)

### **Safety awareness event in RCT**

The Equestrians of Rhondda Cynon Taf, one of the local Access & Bridleway Officers, supported by Helen, Brynna Taff Ely Bridleways RCT Equestrian Group, Edwards Coaches, RCT Highways and Local Councillors to run a Safety Awareness Event to help raise awareness and promote safety for equestrians in the Church Village and Llantrisant area.

Equestrians are being forced onto busy highways with the presumed inference that vulnerable road users could not use a safer route called a shared community path. Alan Hiscox attended with a presentation which has resulted in more appreciation of local equestrian needs. Further actions to follow on with RCT Highways and meetings. Access and safety is very much interlinked as planning developments and road schemes including Active Travel impact on equestrian safety.

### **North Cardiff Woodland**

Helen has joined the stakeholder working group for North Cardiff woodland. The purpose is to ensure different users views and needs are reflected in the projects works. Members of

the stakeholder working group will act as representatives for their community/user group. Its aim is to help create a space where all users can have safe and appropriate access to the woodlands, any potential conflicts are reduced via co-design and nature's recovery is balanced with human use.

### **Natural Resources Wales (NRW) / Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru**

NRW manages Wales natural environment, including green spaces for public benefit. A lot of Welsh Government woodlands are managed by NRW and have public bridleways, byways, and permissive routes. BHS Wales / Cymru have been working with NRW Officials, attending National Access Forum for Wales and contributing to improving equestrian recreation and access, discussing permits and the renewing of the Concordat.

BHS Access Volunteers have also been busy in their areas working alongside area managers with installing corrals and opening routes.

## **Scotland**

Access Field Officer, Stacey Galbraith  
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### **Terras Valley Nature Reserve**

Stacey spent the day with one of our volunteer Scottish Access Representatives (SAR), who has worked tirelessly to keep the Terras Valley Nature Reserve (TVNR) available to all access takers, with her drive and vision. The photo shows the gates that she collaborated with Dumfries and Galloway Council to have erected. There will soon be an application to the Ride Out Fund for a kissing gate to be replaced, at another entrance point into the TVNR, creating even more accessibility for equestrians and others.

This work is fundamental to access across Dumfries and Galloway.



### **20 years of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC)**

To celebrate 20 years of SOAC, BHS Scotland gained funds, through an application process (£2,000) to produce ride out videos promoting responsible equestrian access. Six videos were produced and shared on BHS social media, reaching like-minded people all over Scotland:

- Respecting the Working Countryside
- Dung
- Taking Responsibility
- You are an ambassador
- Sharing Space
- Riding on Soft Ground

Since the six videos have been published, and additional £1,000 grant from NatureScot, to celebrate 20 years of Scottish Outdoor Access Code, the grant will allow a sharing space campaign to be created, to be used on socials as well as printed flyers.

### **Knockdarroch Farm gate improvement**

For many years, there was an old, blocked gateway in the uppermost boundary wall into a forest, this was completely inaccessible due to efforts of the previous landowner to exclude

deer from the farm. After making some enquiries about this old access point, however, it emerged that the current landowner was more than happy to consider removing the old deer fencing and replacing it with a working gate, however the landowner didn't have the funds to do so.

A local equestrian got in touch with Stacey who went to see the site and talk through the options. Subsequently, the Ride Out Fund provided funding for the Knockdarroch Farm project, and a new gate was installed.



### **“Have a go” carriage driving day**

On 31 May BHSS held a “have a go” carriage driving day at Stirling Agricultural Centre, this was a huge success and was very positively received by the participants.

### **New gate in Dumfries and Galloway**

Funding from the Ride Out Fund was granted for a new gate to be installed at Mochrum Wood in Dumfries and Galloway, opening miles of safe off-road riding.

### **Ministry of Defence funding awarded to BHS Scotland**

£10,000 has been awarded to BHSS from Stewardship Fund (MOD). This funding will be used to create a parking facility for equestrians at the Dreghorn Barracks site in Edinburgh, opening MOD land to equestrians in the Pentland Hills, this will be accessed via A720 underpass from the Dreghorn Site. To be completed by June 2026.

### **Working with Pony Club to educated on access**

Eglinton Pony Club have participated in educational evenings to allow the participants to gain their Countryside Access Badge.

## **Northern Ireland**

National Manager, Susan Spratt  
[susan.spratt@bhs.org.uk](mailto:susan.spratt@bhs.org.uk)

We continue to protect the Access & few Rights of Way that exist across Northern Ireland whilst promoting safe and responsible off road riding and carriage driving opportunities throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. We continue to work with local government and stakeholders in public access across Northern Ireland to make representation for equestrians to increase access, responding proactively to consultations and opportunities that arise. Access established in recent years, and the Grey Abbey Toll Ride continue to flourish.

We remain alert to localised issues in respect of equestrians, for example complaints of horse droppings in public spaces and share BHS resources to address/educate on this where appropriate.

We use our strategic document “Enabling Equestrian Access in Northern Ireland” to support and guide our work. This document can be found here [Off-road access in Ireland | The British Horse Society](#)

### **BHS Ireland Greyabbey Toll Ride**

Opened on 1 March 2006 by our then Vice President and twenty years later the Greyabbey Toll Ride is still in operation. Annual membership is available to BHS Gold members and operates within the privately owned Rosemount Estate, owned by the Montgomery Family. The Toll Ride route meanders for 6.5km through old farm tracks, across streams and through woods on a purpose-built path. It takes you through a little river, across open field, by a picturesque lake and includes breath-taking views of Strangford Lough. We currently have 67 members, and it is a haven of peace away from the busy roads.

### **Ride Out UK at National Trust's Mount Stewart**

Our relationship with the National Trust at Mount Stewart continues to be strong and supportive.

We were delighted to run five evening Ride Out UK Rides at Mount Stewart this year and welcomed 136 BHS members. The 5.5 mile route provided safe hacking and beautiful scenery within the 1,000 acre estate and was greatly appreciated by all. We were supported in our work by St John's Ambulance and a great team of volunteers who made the whole thing possible.



## **Contact us**

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Hours            Monday to Thursday, 08:35 – 17:00

Friday, 08:35 – 15:00