



Access & Rights of Way Strategy Achievements 2025 Report

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For horses. For people. For life.



Protecting the Future of Horses in Society - Lobbying

Engaging in high level lobbying across the UK to ensure that equestrians are considered and included where appropriate in all legislation.

- With our partners The Ramblers, the Open Spaces Society, British Mountaineering Council and Paddle UK we have set up the All Party Parliamentary Group for Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature.
- We responded to the Group's inquiry, a copy of our response can be found here www.bhs.org.uk/media/dzsl1pqr/appg-evidence.docx
- The Society has lobbied Heidi Alexander MP Secretary of State for Transport.
- The Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Access met with Baroness Hayman, Defra Parliamentary Under Secretary of State.
- The Access and Safety Directors have met with Lee Dillon MP, Samantha Niblett MP, Andy MacNae MP, Helen Whately MP, Jack Rankin MP.
- In Wales we are a member of the Cross Party Group on Active Travel.
- In Wales we have worked with the Outdoor Alliance to produce an Access Manifesto for next year's Senedd elections.
wato.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/OAW-Manifesto-2026-FINAL-sml.pdf
- In Scotland we have worked with the Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance to produce an Access Manifesto for next year's Scottish elections.
[Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance Manifesto | The British Horse Society](#)

Ensuring there is a presumption in favour of including provision for equestrian access automatically alongside access for walkers and cyclists in (i) all Local Development Plans and Local Transport Plans, (ii) when roads are created or improved, and (iii) when new developments are planned, unless there is a strong evidence reason why this would not be possible.

- In 2025 we responded to 468 consultations.
 - 1 National
 - 31 in East of England
 - 87 in East and West Midlands
 - 76 in London and South East
 - 16 in North and North West
 - 74 in South of England
 - 40 in South West
 - 71 in Yorkshire
 - 122 in Scotland
 - 39 in Wales
- Lewes draft Local Plan – horse riders included.

Ensuring that horse riders have access to active travel routes. Horse riders, like walkers and cyclists, are vulnerable road users. Currently horse riders are often excluded from these routes leaving them to ride on roads that are not considered safe for walkers and cyclists to use.

- The Society has commented on Active Travel England's draft Rural Design Guidance to make it more relevant to equestrians than the current LTN 1/20 guidance.
 - The Society produced and sent to all Local Authorities 'The Impact of Active Travel Plans and LTN 1/20 on Equestrians.'
- [202505-the-impact-of-active-travel-plans-and-ltn-120-on-equestrians-british-horse-society.pdf](#)

Ensuring that permanent and permissive public access options are embedded in the Environmental Land Management Scheme paying landowners also to improve and enhance existing bridleways and byways (such as rolling green lanes, or leaving cross-field bridleways uncultivated), and to create parking places so that people can access and enjoy those opportunities.

- To date only permissive access is provided for in schemes.

Ensuring the 2026 cut-off date in Wales is repealed and the 2031 cut-off date in England is repealed.

- The Welsh Government has finally enacted the legislation to repeal the 2026 cut-off date in Wales. In England the Government has announced that it will delete the 2031 cut-off date in England.
- [https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Bhn1gimsf/](#)

Extending the right of access to equestrians to access land, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

- We continue to lobby on this front. One of the recommendations of the APPG for Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature to Government is to extend statutory access rights for a broader range of recreational activities, including but not limited to wild camping, paddling, swimming, cycling, caving and horse riding.
- [https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AkTadYXXP/](#)

Lobbying for the creation of new routes.

- We continue to lobby on this front. One of the recommendations of the APPG for Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature to Government is to legislate to simplify the process for upgrading suitable public footpaths to allow cycling and horse-riding.

Encouraging riders and carriage drivers to lobby their MP.

- We shared about the Safety / Project EDWARD campaign which had a write to MP call to action. And the APPG call for evidence.
- [https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1KgghraoTc/](#)



Everyone is Welcome - Increasing riding out and carriage driving

Encouraging people to ride and carriage drive out.

- Scotland held a 'Have a Go' carriage driving day at Stirling Agricultural Centre, which received very positive feedback and was well attended.
- Ride Out events and Rideathon took place.
- 14 Ride Out Events were held in Scotland with a total of 526 participants.
- 22 Ride Out Events were held in England and Wales.
- 5 Ride Out Events were held in Ireland.

Making routes easily accessible via maps, GPS, waymarking.

- We now have over 800 routes recorded on Ordnance Survey.

Developing our Rideathon hacking challenge

- Rideathon Challenge 2025 was launched in March; activity ran through May, we had new support from Naylors who donated £2,000 straight into the Ride Out Fund and then £1,000 worth of vouchers. 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. We had 145 people sign up and we raised £5,941.68.

Developing park and ride (horse box and trailer parking).

- We are still looking for sites if anyone knows of a willing landowner please contact us. We are currently looking for opportunities for the forests in the southeast of England where Forestry England have closed horse box parking facilities.
- Horse box parking being investigated at Breach Farm Drummer.
- £10,000 funding secured from MOD to create equestrian parking on their Dregghorn Barracks site.

Encouraging responsible behaviour and use of routes and spaces.

- We have an advice note that is updated regularly.
- We also promote the Countryside Code at various times of the year.
- Six Scottish Outdoor Access Code videos produced.
- Assisted Natural England with creating videos informing landowners about gate design and installation for equestrian access.
- West Midlands BHS Access and Safety Conference held – Planning Your Next Adventure.

- £1,000 funding received from NatureScot, to create a Canva for a sharing space campaign in Scotland.
<https://www.facebook.com/reel/10018048011618536>
<https://www.facebook.com/reel/679631854952528> <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1435245924140016> <https://www.facebook.com/reel/478224885344434> <https://www.facebook.com/reel/2524677227870431>

Running pleasure rides.

- Ride Out UK raised £21,136.39, the first event was held in March and the last event was held in November. We ran 32 events with 1,360 attendees.
- A total of £27,078.07 was raised for the Ride Out Fund.

Marketing events that take place throughout the year.

- Two map my hack events held in South Yorkshire 24 DMMO applications constructed & registered with the local authority, highlighted by horse riders at these events.
- Educational evenings have been run in Scotland to Pony Club Branches (Eglington and Kilbarchan) working towards the participants receiving their Countryside Access and Mapping Badge award.
- Virtual access training evenings were held in Scotland, these consisted of four sessions one hour each covering all aspects of access law and access rights in Scotland.
- Our Ride Out UK Facebook page has 16,577 followers which is a growth of 22.8% since January 2025, we had 4,091,039 views and an average daily reach of 7,342.36 over the course of the year and our overall engagement, which is likes, comments and shares was 187,474 which is up by 29.3%.
- Two “Have a Go Day” events delivered at BHS approved centres with Rights of Way Officers from Staffordshire and Shropshire to provide an equestrian perspective in their work.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DSC55MRt3/>
- Secured funding from FIPL for creating a resource for horse riding routes in Cannock Chase.



Safer Roads and Better Off-Road Routes - Creating routes to link existing routes and to avoid dangerous roads

Gaining access for horse riders and carriage drivers on footpaths, cycle routes, tow paths, access land, behind the hedge routes, the public forest estate.

- BHS were successful in lobbying for an appropriate TRO to avoid the “No Entry” sign and replace with a “No motor vehicles sign” avoiding confusion and conflict for horse riders in Wouldham, Kent.
- Bridleway dedicated by Kent Wildlife Trust at Burham.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1470389111756365&set=a.521839196611366>
- Bridleway dedication link opened Keyingham East Yorkshire opens access to 14km.
- Secured new bridleway in Pitty Close Farm development Drighlington West Yorkshire.
- Crimble Valley North Yorkshire. Bridleway Creation order 10m missing middle link.

Working with large landowners to create new routes.

- New bridleway dedicated on the Trent Vale Trail.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/186StRnZ2W/>
- Permissive bridleway secured at National Trust Gore Clump Dorset.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CFGrLKC55/>
- Circular routes created at Breach Farm Dummer, Hampshire.
- Permissive access restored and formalised with way markers through Dorridge Park, Solihull.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1G2ZhU3kFB/>
- New bridleway dedicated in Meverley, Shropshire.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Ai6JUNubK/>
- EAG Staffordshire Moore Bridleway Group successful in upgrade of FP28 and FP29 Ipstones, Staffordshire to Public Bridleway.
- New 7km Environment Agency bridleway created at Skeffling, East Riding of Yorkshire.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AZWGAj39U/>

Recording suitable recreational trails on the definitive map as bridleways. Currently, many of these trails have no defined status or exclude horse riders. Recording them as bridleways on the definitive map would ensure that they are available to more users, and therefore of benefit to more people.

- 14km new non-motorised route created at A465 Sections 5 and 6 Heads of Valleys, South Wales.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1488747799920496&set=a.521839196611366>

Ensuring routes are created in new development proposals.

- We continue to respond to development proposals to make representations for equestrian access to be included.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BMbSY39rn/>
- Secured a new sensor operated Pegasus Road Crossing. Buck Lane Bradford West Yorkshire.
- Following years of engagement, Lower Thames Crossing was approved in March 2025 and work has begun on finalising details of the miles of additional bridleways that will be built and connected as a result.



Safer Roads and Better Off-Road Routes - Protecting, reinstating, and improving existing routes

Researching and make applications to record routes.

- 4,224 Project 2026 DMMO applications have now been made.
- 32 Project 2026 orders confirmed in 2025.

Stakeholder Engagement.

- Across 2025, our volunteer Access & Bridleways Officer numbers grew to 296, Historical Researcher participation reached 101, and we welcomed 85 Equestrian Access Groups, including a number of new groups, with over 9,350 members across the groups.

Training and supporting Access and Historical Research volunteers.

- We delivered 3,000 minutes of training across 27 equestrian access and Project 2026 training sessions, with 138 attendees, totalling 15,180 minutes of learning time. Access conferences delivered in west/east midlands region, east region, north region and northwest region.

Partnership with Ordnance Survey.

- Our partnership with Ordnance Survey developed, and we reached 806 partner routes and 14,145km of length. These routes share recommended riding and carriage driving routes on the OS platform and reach audiences wider than BHS too.
- To develop our OS routes, we launched our “Map My Hack” initiative to Access volunteers, Equestrian Access Groups and BHS Approved Centres, and we plan to roll this out wider in 2026.

Working to defeat illegal and damaging use.

- Enforcement action taken at Bickenhall T2/1 Somerset.
- Secured removal of obstruction (wooden post) on Public Bridleway W86, Ullesthorpe, Leics
- Secured removal of long standing obstruction (large fallen tree) by Forestry England on Public Bridleway Bretby12
- Secured removal of longstanding obstruction (fallen tree) on Public Bridleway 1 Hawksworth, Notts.
- Secured removal of obstruction on Public Bridleway 12 Rempstone, Notts.

- Secured removal of a footpath gate and installation of a bridleway gate on Public Bridleway GT13 Little Oakley, Northamptonshire
- Obstruction removed bridleway Silsden 55 Bradford.
- Obstruction removed two old gates replaced bridleway Brighouse 132 West Yorkshire.
- Obstruction removed Huddersfield Byway 233. West Yorkshire.
- Multiple obstructions have been removed across Scotland.
- An illegal sign indicating Cut Throat Lane in Folkestone (a HMPE) was a “permissive footpath” was finally removed earlier this year.
- Obstruction removed on Bishopstoke Lane.
- Obstruction removed to bridleway at the junction of Mare’s Lane and Monarch’s Way.
- Obstructions removed on/ off Ridgeway National Trail.
- Obstruction removed Bridleway 27, Warsash.
- Obstruction Removed Hannington on eight of ten bridleways.

Responding to definitive map modification order applications and public path orders.

- 5.2km of restricted byway added at ‘Hotbank South Road’ in Northumberland.
- 5km of restricted byway added at ‘Smeeth Bank’ Norfolk.
- Footpath upgraded to byway in East Woodhay Hampshire.
- Footpath upgraded to bridleway in Holmfirth West Yorkshire.
- Upgrading of footpath to bridleway at Lanes Foot Road, Dacre, Harrogate North Yorkshire.
- Following an eight-day public inquiry in 2024 where the BHS opposed the replacement of a BW level crossing with a 900m lineside route at Tackley, Oxon, the SoS has agreed the proposed new route is unsuitable and instead is now recommending an alternative route suggested by the BHS at the outset.

Ensuring that equestrians are not required to purchase permits to ride/carriage drive in the Forest England public forests. At present there are some forests where equestrians are required to purchase permits when this is not required of walkers and cyclists. This is unfair and discriminatory.

- Permits are now only required in two Forest England forests following years of lobbying by British Horse Society.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/183Fm374m1/>

Stop the surfacing of definitive bridleways and restricted byways with tarmac, unless they are within an urban environment and are already tarmacked.

- Avoided the tarmacking of a bridleway in Cowden. Thanks to BHS involvement, highways were tasked with improving drainage and the need for tarmac removed.

Repairing routes, route furniture and improving signage.

- Roydon restricted byway cleared – ‘It looks amazing and all done before the birds nesting’ Gill, a local horse rider.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Agwi9EpVw/>
- Surface repairs carried out on restricted byways at Bighton Hampshire.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CWuoorPhL/>
- Surface improvement secured at Hazel Woods, Avening, Gloucestershire.

- Surface improvements secured on the Jack Mytton Way, Eaton under Heywood Public Bridleway 527.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16bb5SLN7H/>
- New bridleway built as the original line diverted. in Honley West Yorkshire. HOL 6/10.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DFrN5vtuL/>
- Resurface and new drainage installed bridleway Mel/50 Kirklees West Yorkshire.
<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1743779563098611>
- Two new replacement gates with rider friendly handles installed. BW132 Brighouse.
- Meltham. Greenway 1km x two of overhanging and encroaching vegetation cleared.
- Surface improvements secured Bingley bridleway No151.
- Surface improvements secured Meltham West Yorkshire. Bridleway 64.
- Bridleway repair secured Huddersfield390 resurface & concrete grips with drainage improved.
- Replacement Gate secured on Bridleway HOL6/10,
- Secured surface and drainage improvement, BW Todmorden49. Sagar Lane West Yorkshire.
- Secured surface & drainage improvement Ramsden RD BOAT HOL/90 West Yorkshire.
- Cattle grid infilled, new gate with extended handle on northern end of bridleway 2108 at Storrington.
- New field gate fitted with an equestrian friendly trombone handle. Post and rail fencing to the side to separate off a cattle grid.
- Hinge post re-set to gate at Storrington which wouldn't close unless lifted.
- Severe flooding on bridleway 2665 resolved by substantial works funded by Storrington legacy.
- Secured bridleway surface repair. Grange Moor Huddersfield. West Yorkshire.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1ANCyy4dU3/>
- A badly eroded bridleway in Maidstone was regraded, resurfaced and new, safer bollards installed at the roadside to make the junction of this popular route safer for equestrians.
- Two new field gates with horse friendly handles installed on a bridleway in Storrington. A disused and damaged cattle grid was removed and infilled and new fencing alongside another cattle grid was erected to make opening the gate alongside safer for equestrians. The post to a further field gate was reinstalled to make the gate sturdy and usable.
- Excellent width for riders cleared on bridleway in Offham, Kent.
- An unnecessary, unusable and very overgrown bridleway gate was removed in Kent.
- Gate repaired National Trust estate near Ashdown House, Ashbury.
- Clearances in Worcestershire by WBRA, Shropshire by LMDBA and Whixhall Bridleways Group and Derbyshire with BHS and other volunteers.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1ASQW9r7Ap/>
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CM8QeSYpr/>
- BW635 Cowden, Kent. Landowner wanted to tarmac the bridleway; we objected given the gradient of the slope. As a result of a site meeting, highways were asked to sort out their drainage which appears to have resolved the issue of erosion for now.
- Mounting blocks for bridleway bridge over M1 between Crick Lodge and Lilbourne.
- Gate improvements provided on bridleway Bretby 8.

- New bridge provided over the River Lowther Cumbria
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BJk8wFYv1/>
- New mounting block provided on Whitegate Way Cheshire.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DPpKFnhes/>
- New crossing at Woodhouse Lane Oxfordshire.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AThpSggFz/>
- New mounting block provided at Wyre Forest.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1EoPYPpnRh/>
- New bridge installed on Moreton on Lugg bridleway 3 Herefordshire
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17yF7591Xb/>
- Three new gates on bridleways D104 and B25, Leicestershire.
- New gate on Wettonmill in partnership with National Trust.
- Secured new gate and new handle/latch on second gate on Bridleway W66, Dunton Bassett, Leics.
- Two new gates provided via funds from Ride Out Fund at Tarras Valley Nature Reserve, Dumfries and Galloway.
- An equestrian gate at Mochrum Wood in Dumfries and Galloway..

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