

West Sussex County Council: Historic Environment Access and Charging Policy

COVID-19 status update: The West Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) remains open for search enquiries and data provision. Although the HER staff are working from home and things may be a little slower than normal, we have full electronic HER access so information can still be provided in PDF and GIS formats.

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1. Introduction to the Historic Environment Record

Content of the Historic Environment Record

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) maintains and enhances the Historic Environment Record (HER) for the County of West Sussex. Chichester District maintains their own HER, therefore any enquiries should be directed to them: for contact details please see the [HER](#) webpage.

The WSCC HER is the primary source of information about the historic environment in the county. It includes a database that contains more than 14,500 records with information about the Palaeolithic to the present day. These provide information on nationally-designated heritage assets (conservation areas, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments, and protected wrecks) as well as locally-designated and undesignated heritage assets. Full details of the remit and content of the record can be found elsewhere in the HER's Information Policy.

Mapped Data

The database is linked to a series of digital maps held as Geographic Information System (GIS) files. The maps contain geographical depictions of all sites on the database, ranging from simple point locations to complex plots of extensive sites such as ancient field systems. Maps provided from the HER GIS are for information purposes only. Due to Ordnance Survey copyright restrictions this mapping must not be reproduced in researchers' own reports.

How do I access the HER?

The HER is based at West Sussex County Council in Chichester. You can receive information from the HER in a number of different ways, such as by letter, email, or telephone. All enquiries for HER information must be via the Request for Information form found on the [HER](#) webpage. Unfortunately, a request for information cannot be processed without the unique identifying number generated by the form.

Opening Times

The HER is available for either telephone or email consultation Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm. Unfortunately the HER is not able to offer visitor facilities.

During the current pandemic (2020), the HER staff are working from home. Although they have access to the HER and the majority of digital resources associated with the records, there may be some things that are only held in paper copy held in the office, which is, at the present time, inaccessible. Due to the challenges of remote working, there may be a delay in response to your enquiry/search request.

Searching the HER

HER searches provide information selected from the record, normally for a defined area, although bespoke searches can also be done for particular periods or types of records. The HER includes both digital and hard copy information and references to other sources held outside the HER. It is constantly being enhanced and the absence of a record should not be relied upon as indicating a lack of heritage interest; other national or specialist sources may contain information not held or indexed.

Unless otherwise stated in the Request for Information form, a 1km radial search area will be applied as a minimum.

For a Listed Building Consent or Householder search (subject to the West Sussex Threshold Guidance for an HER Search) a 250m radial search area will be applied as a minimum.

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2. Conditions of Use

Introduction

WSSCC is committed to the protection, conservation, and enhancement of the historic environment. In order to ensure that information from the West Sussex HER is used responsibly, those applying to consult it are requested to provide details about the nature of their enquiry and to follow the Guidance for Users outlined below. Please note that permission to use the HER may be refused or limited in certain circumstances.

Guidance for Users

1. West Sussex HER users are requested to inform WSSCC of the following by submitting the online form. Mandatory fields within the form are:
 - name;
 - email address;
 - contact phone number;
 - the type of, and reason for, the enquiry requested (to be chosen from the pick list);
 - whether the request is part of the validation requirement for a planning application;
 - if a location map has been attached;
 - if GIS shapefiles are required;
 - if the West Sussex HER Guidance for Users has been read;

- the names of any other bodies or individuals outside their organisation to whom it is intended to pass HER information.
2. A service charge for Officer time for the production of the HER search is made for commercial enquiries to the West Sussex HER. This is normally waived for enquiries for non-commercial, educational, or personal research purposes, except where searches require extensive work. The costs of paper, printing, and other incidental expenses may be charged to all users.
 3. The West Sussex HER is the copyright of WSCC. Some information held in the HER may also be the copyright of others. It is the user's responsibility to ensure that copyright law is not breached.
 4. Users are requested to inform, and to make their research available to, West Sussex HER where new archaeological sites or data are discovered as a result of their work.
 5. Users are requested to make appropriate acknowledgement of the West Sussex HER in any publication or report that has made use of its data.
 6. While efforts have been made to verify the data held in the West Sussex HER, WSCC cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of any particular data and its source.
 7. WSCC accepts that there may be a requirement to treat certain enquiries in confidence. Equally, the HER expects that users will not pass on information in an irresponsible or unethical manner.
 8. WSCC reserves all rights of Copyright that are owned in the material provided. Dissemination to a third party without the written consent of the HER Officer is a breach of copyright. Information supplied shall be used for the specified purposes only.
 9. Access to all or part of the information requested may be refused in certain circumstances.
 - 9.1 Information may not be disclosed if:
 - it relates to the subject matter of any legal or other proceedings, actual or prospective (including Local Planning Inquiries);
 - it relates to confidential, internal communications of WSCC;
 - it is contained in a document or other record which is still in the course of completion.
 - 9.2 Information will not be disclosed if:
 - it was supplied to the Council by another party who was under no legal obligation to do so and could not have been put under any legal obligation to supply it and has not consented to its disclosure;
 - its disclosure would increase the likelihood of damage to the environment affecting anything to which the information relates.
 10. A request for information may be refused if it is manifestly unreasonable or is formulated in too general a manner.

Clarification of the enquiry will always be sought before a final decision is made.

11. Enquiries will normally be processed within 10 working days of receipt, but more complex enquiries may take longer, in which case the client will be contacted. In some cases the HER Officer may contact the client for further clarification or additional information prior to processing.
12. Subject to resource availability, a priority service is offered with requests being processed within three working days of receipt.

Complaints Procedure

If you have any complaint about the service you have received please contact either of the following:

Rachel Salter, HER Officer

Email: Rachel.Salter@westsussex.gov.uk

Telephone: 0330 222 6453

Don Baker, Environment and Heritage Team Manager

Email: Don.Baker@westsussex.gov.uk

Telephone: 0330 222 6439

3. Charging Policy

A search fee is normally only made where the enquiry is for commercial or profit-making purposes. This applies to consultations made by enquiry form, telephone, letter, or email.

The fee is to cover staff time and will vary according to the nature of the enquiry and the time necessary to fulfil the request. Fees may be waived in certain circumstances.

For most other users, such as members of the public and students carrying out personal research, there is no search fee unless the enquiry is particularly complicated or time consuming to deal with. In such cases any charge will be agreed before the work is carried out.

Scale of Charges

The current rate for the HER service is charged per hour or part thereof.

All fees are subject to review. Prices correct at 14 September 2020.

There is a **minimum fee per enquiry** of:

- £252.00 plus VAT for a priority search;
- £158.00 plus VAT for a standard search;
- £95.00 plus VAT for a Householder search.

Users who are charged can either pay online or be invoiced.

Our current fees are listed below.

Householder HER Search

For a **Householder search** (subject to the [West Sussex Threshold Guidance](#) for when an HER search is required):

- £95.00 plus VAT at the current rate.
- Should the search return a negative result, there may be a charge of £47.50 plus VAT to cover Officer time.

Full or Element HER Search

The contents of a full HER search are listed on the [HER](#) webpage.

For a **Priority HER search** (three working-day turnaround):

- £252.00 plus VAT at the current rate for the first hour of work or part thereof.
- £126.00 for any additional hour(s) or part thereof.
- Should the search return a negative result, there may be a charge of £126.00 plus VAT to cover Officer time.

There may occasionally be circumstances, due to the absence of the HER Officer or Assistant (arising from annual leave or staff sickness) that it will not be possible to provide a Priority Search Service.

For a **Standard HER search** (10 working-day turnaround):

- £158.00 plus VAT at the current rate for the first hour of work or part thereof.
- £79.00 for any additional hour(s) or part thereof.
- Should the search return a negative result, there may be a charge of £79.00 plus VAT to cover Officer time.

A request made for **additional information** for a completed search, such as a change of search radius/area, an inclusion of data that was previously excluded at the request of the enquirer, or the creation of PDF maps when only GIS shapefiles were requested, will be classed as a new search and would be subject to a completed Request for Information form and charging.

Requests for scanned **Grey Literature** to be sent either by email or CD may be subject to charging at the rates specified above and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Method of Payment

There are two options for payment and a choice can be made when filling out the Request for Information form.

Online Payment

Following the receipt of the Request for Information form, details of the WSCC HER Search number, search cost, and instructions for payment are sent to email address given on the form. Once the HER Team have received your Payment Authentication Receipt from the online payment system, your search will be undertaken within the timescale allocated to

your search choice: Priority Search – three working days; Standard Search – 10 working days; Householder search – 10 working days.

Invoice

Following completion of the search undertaken within the timescale allocated to your search choice (Priority Search – three working days; Standard Search – 10 working days; Householder search – 10 working days), an invoice will be sent to the HER user by WSCC. Payment for the HER search will be specified on the invoice.

Incidental Expenses

This service is not possible in the current COVID-19 working practice.

All HER users may be liable for incidental expenses, such as photocopying, printing, compact discs, and postage. The costs are as follows:

Photocopying/Printing:

- Black and White: 10p per A4 sheet, 15p per A3 sheet.
- Colour: 50p per A4 sheet, £1.00 per A3 sheet.

Compact disc: £5.00.

Postage: Users may be charged postage if search exceeds 20 pages. Please contact the HER for further details.

4. Contact Details

Rachel Salter, HER Officer.

Email: Rachel.Salter@westsussex.gov.uk.

Telephone: 0330 222 6453.

Alternative email: her@westsussex.gov.uk.

Website: www.westsussex.gov.uk/her.