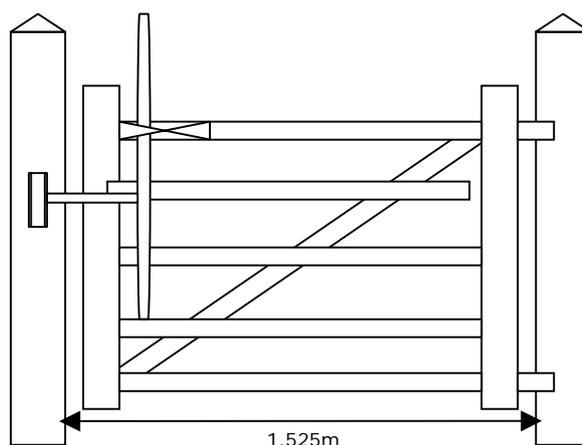


GUIDANCE NOTES FOR LANDOWNERS – PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

EQUESTRIAN ACCESS

Structures

- As well as the individual, a horse-rider also has to manage a horse of independent mind, so it is important for access points such as gates on bridleways to be as user-friendly and as easy to operate as possible. Riders should not have to dismount to operate a gate.
- A minimum clear width of 1.525m must be available between the gateposts on bridleways.



- Where possible 2-way opening gates are preferred as it is far easier to open a gate in the direction of travel for both equestrians and other users.
- Gates should open to at least 90 degrees and swing easily on their hinges without need of lifting due to grounding. The lighter the gate the better.
- Self-closing devices should not sharply close any gate as this may frighten a horse. Weights should not be attached to gates to increase closure speed.
- Gates sited at a path's junction with road highways should be set back at least 4m from the road edge to allow horses room to stand without entering the road carriageway.
- The surface of the gateway should be firm and flat. Horses are not comfortable standing in a deep puddle or mud and dealing with uneven ground in the gateway increases the difficulty in operating the gate safely.

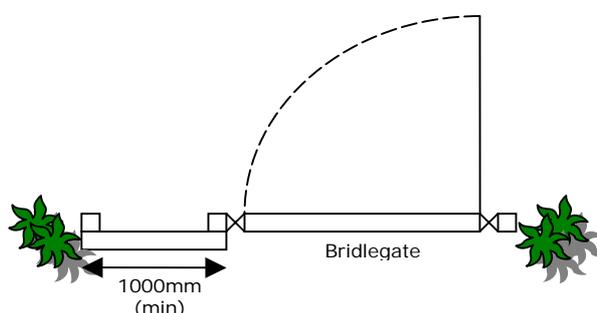
Handles, Catches and Loops

- There are various different types of handles and catches and loops found on gates with users varying in their preference.
- Ideally all should be operable with one hand, as a rider's other hand is needed to hold the reins and control the horse.
- All should be able to be operated equally easily from either side of the gate.

- Any fitting should not project into the width between gateposts as horses and riders may be injured trying to pass through the gate.
- It must be remembered that whatever fitting is used, this must be easily operable by all lawful path users including those with mobility or other impairment.

General Maintenance

- Gates are most easily operated from horseback by turning a horse parallel to the gate with its front feet by or just beyond the catch post. So as not to be in discomfort and to be able to turn its head, a minimum length of 1m should be cleared past the catch post and latch for a horse; this area, including any overhanging vegetation, may need clearance twice or more during a growing season.



- There should be no barbed wire or electric fencing capable of giving a shock inside the structure or within 1 metre of the structure or manoeuvring space.
- The entrance to a bridleway must be at least 1.525 metres wide, irrespective of whether there is a gate present, with greater width before and after the point of entry and clear of any obstructions and vegetation. An average horse needs a minimum of 2.9 metres turning space.
- Overgrowth at the sides of a bridleway should be cleared to a height of 3.75 metres to allow a rider to pass safely.

Assistance from WSCC

- WSCC is able to assist landowners in improving accessibility of existing gates on bridleways through the provision of various equestrian handles and catches free of charge; please contact the Rights of Way team for further details.

Contact Details...

✉ Public Rights of Way, West Sussex County Council, Northleigh (First Floor), Tower Street, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RH

☎ Tel: 01243 777620

✉ prow@westsussex.gov.uk

🌐 www.westsussex.gov.uk/prow