

Event Guidelines on Public Rights of Way

Every year organised events provide an excellent opportunity for people to visit and enjoy the West Sussex countryside as well as raising money for charity. These guidelines have been produced to help you organise a successful event and to avoid conflicts with other users and landowners. They apply to all Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in West Sussex.

The event organiser is responsible for the safe running of the event and we advise you should ensure all appropriate permissions, marshalling, first aid cover, contingencies, risk assessments and insurance are in place.

Who can run an event?

If an event in West Sussex uses PRoW please be aware that anybody has the right to travel along the route at any time. Anyone can run an event whether it is a sponsored marathon, cycle ride, a cross country running challenge or just a large group of hikers, but you must remember that you do not have exclusive use of the route.

Your event must not prevent, block, or interfere with other lawful uses or users of the path and only use the path for its legal use i.e. not cycle on footpaths.

To help minimise clashing with other events contact West Sussex County Council (WSCC) in advance of your proposed event via prow@westsussex.gov.uk.

Please note that other events may be being held along the route which are not known to us.

Restrictions

There are four types of PRow and some users are restricted to using specific routes. The information panel shows the types, waymarking colour coding system and who can use each type of route. This is used throughout England.

Public footpaths can be used by pedestrians and mobility scooters only.

Public Bridleways can be used by pedestrians, mobility scooters, horse riders and cyclists. Motor vehicles are not allowed on Public Bridleways.

Walkers and horse riders have priority on Public Bridleways.

Section 30 of the Countryside Act 1968 allows cyclists to use Public Bridleways provided they give way to pedestrians and equestrians.

Under Section 31 Road Traffic Act 1988 it is illegal to race bikes on Public Highways. This includes time trials. There should not be a prize for coming first and a list of results including competition times should not be published.

It is an offence to drive a motor vehicle on a Public Footpath, Bridleway or Restricted Byway without lawful authority (Road Traffic Act 1988, Section 34). As such, event vehicles cannot drive along Public Footpaths, Bridleways or Restricted Byways unless permission has been given by the landowner(s). In this instance any damage done to the surface by vehicular use is the responsibility of the event organiser to reinstate to the same or better standard than before the damage occurred.

Items such as checkpoints, first aid points, refreshments points and toilets cannot be erected on any PRow as this would constitute an illegal obstruction, nor can they be erected off a Public Right of Way without the landowner's permission.

Key considerations for organisers

1. Start planning early.
2. Organisers should satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the route and should always consult with the owners of the land over which the PRow runs and gain their express permission for the event to take place.
3. PRow may also run along public or private roads or farm tracks. Vehicles and machinery may also be using these routes.
4. Keep to appropriate participant numbers for the location.
5. Participants should give way, be courteous to and respect other users.
6. Participants must be prepared to stop and/or slow down and do not have priority over other members of the public.

Information



Footpath



Bridleway



Restricted Byway



Byway



7. Cyclists should not expect other users to get out of their way but should slow down and ensure a safe passage past other users.
8. Some paths on the PRow network may be closed. Wherever possible long-term closures are listed on the [WSCC Web pages](#) although in some instances emergency closures may not be listed. Event organisers are advised to regularly check the WSCC web pages and have a contingency in place in the eventuality of a closure.
9. Carefully consider how participants will get to and from your event. Individual travel by car should be discouraged as should parking on grass verges.
10. Seek landowner permission for the putting up of signs.
11. If you put up your own signs do so as close to the event as possible and include a contact telephone number. Ensure the signs do not flap as this might frighten horses and they may also blow away. Do not use paint, or nail or staple any signs to existing way markers or other infrastructure such as gates. Use ties or string instead.
12. Do not obscure existing waymarks, signs or notice boards.
13. Ensure all event signs, way markers, ties and string are removed immediately after the event.
14. Avoid large numbers of participants setting off at the same time e.g. arrange staggered starting times of small groups.
15. It is the responsibility of the event organisers to ensure all litter is removed from the route.
16. Organisers should ensure that all participants are fully briefed before, at the start and throughout the event including the following:
 - Ensure all participants are clear about the route of the event.
 - Where the route crosses, or uses some sections of roads, all participants should to take necessary precautions.
 - They are properly aware of the public's rights and responsibilities when using Public Rights of Way as set out above and in the [Countryside Code](#).
 - Walkers and horse riders have priority. Cyclists must give way to them.
 - Participants should not bunch up as this restricts the width of the path.
 - Use bells or politely call out to warn people of your approach. Be mindful that some people are hard of hearing.
 - Particular care and attention must be taken where horses may be present. Horses may be "spooked" by unexpected occurrences.
 - Respect the needs of landowners and respect the privacy of residents.
 - Farm machinery may be working on or adjacent to the route.
 - Take all litter home.
 - Use toilets and not fields, trees or bushes etc.
 - Follow the WSCC Think, Share, Be Aware message –
 - Think of others
 - Share with others
 - Be Aware of others

Helping to Maintain the PRow Network

The PRow network is maintained at public expense and by volunteers, for the public's use and enjoyment. Events, especially large events, can put extra strain on popular routes but you could help by donating money to help maintain and improve the route.

If participants pay an entry fee why not consider asking for a donation towards the maintenance of the PRow network by adding a tick box to your application form and collecting additional money. All donations can be sent via bank transfer to WSCC's Countryside Services Team and ring-fenced for improvement works on the PRow network. Please contact prow@westsussex.gov.uk.

After the event

To help us manage the PRow network effectively it is important to know how many people attend organized events, so it is useful if you let WSCC know the number of participants that took part in your event. We would also welcome any other feedback about the PRow network.

WSCC Contact

prow@westsussex.gov.uk

Telephone: 03302 225544

