Byway users – Code of Conduct

This code of conduct aims to help vehicle users:

- share BOATs with walkers, horse riders and cyclists
- be more aware of problems they may encounter
- reduce their impact on byways

Give way to other users. Pull over, stop and switch off your engine for horses.

Only use your vehicle on paths that you have a legal right to drive on

Keep to the defined path. If you come to an obstruction, turn back and do not deviate from the path. Report any obstructions to ESCC.

Travel at a safe and unobtrusive speed. Drive at a speed which allows an immediate stop. Reduce your speed further and keep engine revs to a minimum when passing livestock and animals.

Be road-legal. If you can’t drive your vehicle legally on a road, it can’t be used on a byway.

Watch out for wildlife. Public rights of way are a valuable habitat for flora and fauna – especially during the spring and summer.

Don’t travel on byways which are at risk of being damaged. Many byways are vulnerable to damage from vehicles – especially in severe weather conditions.

Don’t practice vehicle recovery techniques (for example, winching) on public rights of way.

Follow the Countryside Code: http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/countrysidecode/default.aspx

Be prepared. Take a mobile phone, water, spare food and a first-aid kit for emergencies.

Don’t travel alone. Byways can be in very isolated countryside – travelling alone should be avoided.

Don’t drive in streams or rivers unless there is a right of way across them. Be aware of strong currents when using fords.

Rights of Way Access Team
East Sussex County Council
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Lewes BN7 1UE
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Phone: 0345 60 90 193
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What are public rights of way?
Public rights of way are paths in the town and countryside that can be used by the public. There are four types of Right of Way: footpath, bridleway, restricted byway and byway.
You can walk on all public rights of way and ride a horse or bicycle on bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic.

What is a byway open to all traffic?
This class of byway (byway open to all traffic or BOAT) is a public right of way that can be used by:
- Walkers
- Cyclists
- Horse riders
- Horse-drawn vehicles
- Motorbikes and quad bikes
- 4x4s and other cars
BOATs are sometimes called ‘green lanes’ – although this term has no legal standing. In East Sussex, BOATs make up around 2% of the rights of way network.

What is a restricted byway?
A restricted byway is a public path that can only be used by:
- Walkers
- Cyclists
- Horse riders
- Horse-drawn carriages and other non-motorised vehicles
The public do not have a right to drive motorised vehicles on restricted byways and offenders are liable to be prosecuted under Section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

How can I find public rights of way?
East Sussex County Council’s Rights of Way web-pages feature an interactive map and more information on byways:
eastsussex.gov.uk/rightsofway
Public Rights of Way are shown on Ordnance Survey Explorer and Landranger maps. These should be checked for accuracy as they are subject to change.

Who manages public rights of way in East Sussex?
East Sussex County Council (ESCC) looks after path surfaces, bridges and signposting.
Byways are sometimes closed to four-wheeled and other vehicles to protect the path surface. You can find out more about path closures on ESCC’s rights of way web-pages.
Please report any obstructions or issues to ESCC at: rightsofway@eastsussex.gov.uk or telephone: 0345 60 80 193
Please report any illegal or irresponsible off-road vehicle activity to Sussex Police’s Operation Pathwatch at: www.pathwatch.info or telephone: 101. Call 999 in an emergency.