

Contact information

You can contact us at:

Rights of Way & Countryside Maintenance,
Economy, Transport & Environment Department,
ESCC, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent
Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE

tel: **0345 6080193**

e-mail: countrysideamangement@eastsussex.gov.uk

The Bluebell Railway now connects to East Grinstead linking Sheffield Park, Horsted Keynes and Kingscote.

tel: **01825 720800**

www.bluebell-railway.com

The Spa Valley Railway connects Eridge, Groombridge, High Rocks and Tunbridge Wells

tel: **01892 537715**

www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk

How to get there

Forest Row, Hartfield, Withyham and Groombridge are served by regular bus services. There are train stations at East Grinstead and Eridge. For information on timetables and routes, contact **Traveline 0871 2002233** or **National Rail enquiries on 08457 48 49 50.**

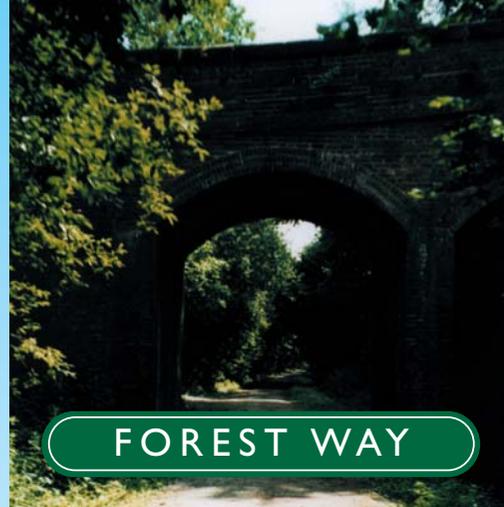
There is a public car park and toilets at Forest Row. There is also parking available at Hartfield Old Station and in Groombridge (see map).

To further explore the rights of way network in the area, the 1:25000 Ordnance Survey Explorer map No. 135 Ashdown Forest, includes all of the Forest Way.

For more local information try:

www.enjoysussex.info

www.lovesussex.com



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The Forest Way takes you deep into East Sussex countryside, part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Walk or ride the Forest Way and take in the delights of the great outdoors. The flat, tree-lined track winds through a peaceful, historic countryside of small fields and scattered farmsteads among wooded, rolling hills for mile after mile. It is particularly accessible for people with mobility problems.

The History of the Railway

The line was opened in 1866 as a continuation of the line from Three Bridges. Although becoming a busy commuter line, it eventually fell under the axe of the Beeching cuts in 1966. Ironically, Dr Beeching lived near Forest Row and regularly travelled up to London on the line when he was Chairman of British Rail.

The disused railway line was bought by East Sussex County Council in 1971 and designated as a Country Park in 1974.

Major surface improvements in 2002 led to the Forest Way's inclusion in the Sustrans National Cycle Network - route 21 - which runs from London to Eastbourne.



The Forest Way Code

The track is a Shared Use Path – please have consideration for others

Litter - take it home

Flowers - admire and study but please leave for others

Access - respect adjoining owners' property and use only recognised paths and routes

Horse riding - refrain from galloping

Dogs - keep under close control and clean up after your dog

No motor vehicles allowed.

Cycling along Forest Way

When cycling please remember:

- to give way and leave plenty of room to walkers, horses and people with mobility problems
- to carry a bell or call out; never assume people can see or hear you approaching
- take care at road crossings and on the shared drive between Tablehurst Farm and the A22



www.highweald.org

National Cycle Routes
Regional Cycle Routes
County/Unitary Auth boundary
District/Borough boundary



FOREST WAY



East Grinstead

Bluebell Railway and trains to London



Swallows

with their distinctive forked tail streamers and glossy blue-black plumage can be seen from April to October and are likely to be nesting in nearby barns and buildings. Take a moment to admire their agile graceful flight as they feed on insects on the wing.



Badgers are nocturnal mammals seldom seen during the day. Look out for tracks and excavations. They live underground in 'setts', which can often be hundreds of years old. Badgers are protected by law and must not be disturbed.



Groombridge originally meant 'servant's bridge'. Local tradition suggests that it owes its origin to a Saxon named 'Gromen', who built a moated stronghold where Groombridge now stands.

Main route:
9 1/2 miles /
15 km



Forest Row

Forest Row village began as a series of lodges to house Royal hunting parties visiting Ashdown Forest. It later developed as a coaching halt on the London to Eastbourne road, but did not gain full parish status until after the coming of the railway.

Foxes can sometimes be seen during the day. They live in underground 'earth's' and use a strong musky scent to mark their territories - see if you can catch a whiff!



Wild garlic

is found growing in large colonies and carries a distinctive garlic smell. It looks its best between April and June when it produces an abundance of white flowers.



Hartfield's name also records Ashdown Forest's past as a Royal hunting ground. Derived from the Saxon word 'feld' meaning open land, Hartfield is literally 'open land where harts (deer) graze'.

Withyham lies at the point where the rivers Withy and Ham converge. Withyham means 'withy meadow' or water meadow where coppiced willows grow. This pleasant hamlet boasts a cluster of quaint tile-hung houses of which the earliest is dated 1507.

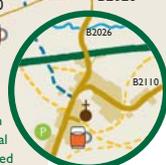
Forest Way

Roads

Footpaths

Bridleways

NCN cycle route



Trees and Wildlife of a river valley

You may notice that many of the trees along Forest Way and in the surrounding fields are Alder or Willow. This is because you are in the floodplain of the River Medway and these trees like the wet ground -

large areas to either side of the Park can be flooded for weeks at a time. The river also attracts birds: look out for Mallard, Herons and Moorhens along the river; and even the occasional Kingfisher.