

Stakeholder Working Group calls for evidence

The British Horse Society is urging equestrians to contribute information to a key initiative to develop rights of way in the UK.

Natural England has formed a Stakeholder Working Group to bring together key representatives to consider ways of improving access through public rights of way. It is expected that its proposals will be completed by the end of 2009.

The Group are keen to hear from anyone with first hand experience in amending the Definitive Map, whether as a local authority officer, applicant or someone affected by a proposed change. They are particularly keen to find specific examples of problematic situations. The aim is to determine examples of best practice in resolving these situations.

The information will be added to the knowledge amassed during work under the Discovering Lost Ways project to inform the work of the Group.

If you would like to contribute then please send details of your example to swg@naturalengland.org.uk. The closing date for submissions is 27 February 2009.

Mark Weston, The British Horse Society's Director of Access, Safety and Welfare, said: "It is vital that equestrians with any such examples send these in. At present it can take 20 years to get the definitive map amended so it is imperative that we find ways of making this process more efficient so that equestrians and other public path users can use these routes now rather than having to wait 20 years or so before they are able to do so.

"BHS Access volunteers will be forwarding examples but there will be many other groups or individuals who can make an important contribution."

For further information please contact: Mark Weston, Director of Access, Safety and Welfare, The British Horse Society on 01926 707760 or mark.weston@bhs.org.uk

More information on the group and its aims can be found at:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/rightsofway/swgrows/default.aspx>

The Discovering Lost Ways Project (DLW) closed following a review carried out in 2007/08. The review concluded that the challenges of securing a complete and accurate 'definitive map' were beyond the scope of a research-focused project, and a new approach was required. However the 2026 deadline for the project – in which all routes not recorded on the Definitive Map will be lost forever – has not been repealed.