

FOOTPATH CHARTER

Approved: 26th November 2019

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Introduction

Public footpaths cross public land and private land owned by farmers and householders. Landowners have an obligation to make footpaths accessible to individuals, and individuals using footpaths have obligations to the landowner. This charter details each party's obligations.

Landowner Obligations

The landowner has a duty to ensure:

- Footpaths are accessible by maintaining gates or stiles.
- Footpaths are kept clear of vegetation, although it is acknowledged that this may be more challenging at certain times of the year.
- Footpaths are kept clear of physical obstructions, although ploughing and harvesting are required at certain times of the year.

Footpath User Obligations

The footpath user has a duty to ensure they:

- Keeps strictly to the footpath and does not stray onto adjacent land.
- Uses the footpath for walking or running only. Bicycles, horses and motorised vehicles are not permitted (see bridleways below).
- Keeps control of dogs and does not allow them to stray onto adjacent land.
- Keeps dogs on lead when in a field with livestock and, if chased by cattle, releases the dog immediately.
- Clears up and removes dog mess.
- Reports any damage caused to the landowner.
- Avoids ground nesting birds.
- Leaves farm gates as they find them as they may be preventing animals access to water.

Bridleways

In addition to walkers and runners, horse riders and cyclists are permitted on bridleways, but not motorised vehicles unless the landowner has given permission. Cyclists must give way to equestrians and walkers.

West Sussex County Council and Rusper Parish Council

West Sussex County Council works with landowners to ensure their obligations are achieved. It consults on a local level with Rusper Parish Council, which has a good knowledge of its public footpath network. West Sussex County Council can be contacted by both footpath users and landowners at prow@westsussex.gov.uk or by calling 01243 777620.

Rusper Parish Council can be contacted by both footpath users and landowners at clerk@rusper-pc.org.uk or by calling 07871 340986.