

1. Introduction

Good evening, my name is Bev Marks – I am the Ramblers Local Footpath Warden for both Whatlington and Battle Civil Parishes.

Lately, I have just stepped down from being a member of the Local Access Forum - a statutory body that works with the County Council's Rights of Way team to represent the communities needs for footpath, bridleway access throughout the land. Arising from that, there is a requirement on all Local Highways Authorities - in our case East Sussex County Council – to produce a **Rights of Way Access Plan** as originated in Section 60 of Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, therein previously called a **Rights of Way Improvement Plan**. The current ESCC Improvement Plan is well out of date (2017), so it is good news that ESCC has now launched a [public consultation questionnaire](#) on the subject.

The timing of the consultation was decided quite urgently to avoid any 'purdah' restrictions that the national government's announcements about mayors and unitary authorities might impose.

As a former member of the LAF, I had some considerable time ago delivered Sussex Area Ramblers comments, that had been gathered over recent years, to the RoW team and consultants prior to the recent consultation, which included details from my 2x parishes. Furthermore, for completeness I responded to the consultation in February as the LFW with both Parishes needs foremost in my mind.

2. Extract of LFW responses - 2025-02-11

See: BMHP>C:\Users\bevm\Dropbox\Ramblers Sussex 25\BM submitted to Rights of Way Access Plan_20250317.docx

Delivered to the Parish Clerk on 2025-03-17 - an extract of general responses:

21. Have any of the following issues negatively affected your experience on public rights of way? Please choose all that apply.

- [Lack of fingerpost signs showing the start of public rights of way from the road](#)
- [Lack of waymarking along routes \(directional signs on the route showing you where to go\).](#)
- [The paths are overgrown by vegetation, surfaces in poor condition, e.g. muddy or slippery paths](#)
- [Stiles in poor condition](#)

22. How could the public rights of way network be improved to support your activity?:

- [Promoted paths surfaces and signage \(particularly where they cross roads\) should be improved, to help access for all](#)
- [Easily downloadable local route mapping \(using QR code signs\) should be available on high footfall routes, to encourage usage](#)

26. Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way has:
Please select only one item

- Stayed the same

Please give reasons for your answer:

My response shows positive and negative comments:

- I have noticed improvements to Finger Posts at road junctions
- But slowness of response to fix reported issues has possibly increased
- On-line reporting RoW problems is much easier and progress info is improved
- Overall surface and green obstruction (overhanging branches) clearance seems to have deteriorated slightly. (Very subjective question!)

28. Please tell us your experience of using 'our circular and long distance walks. How might we improve your experience?

- Circular routes are by far preferred - to be able to return to start point for transport.
- Linear routes are good, but require more planning to be able to access return transport.
- Railway station to station walks are welcomed, because in the countryside they offer more assurance of return service timings.

33. How would you report an issue on public rights of way?

- Via the online website only
- (Fix My Street and other methods don't give me the progress info I want.)

3. Whatlington News December 2024

Lastly, for more information on local Footpaths and the parishes only bridleway have a look at pages 6 and 7 of Whatlington News December 2024...

Only 9.3km of paths to walk to be able to say: **"I have walked all of Watlington's paths!"**

Noting the page 7 idea about walking in September:

Walking festival planned

A possible village walking festival is being considered for 2025. The Parish Council will be consulting local walkers' groups with a view to several organised walks during Walk Whatlington Week in September.

I have confirmation from Battle Ramblers, who cover Watlington Parish that they are planning a circular walk in Whatlington on one or other of the **High Weald Walking Festival Sundays** starting at 10:00 from the Village Hall carpark (*I hope this is taken as a formal request for permission to use the car park for this event?*). All walkers are welcome to join this Festival walk, putting **"Whatlington's countryside on the map!"**



Feeling full? Walk off that festive feast

Residents urged to take part in footpath survey

Villagers are being urged to work off their festive feasts by treading some of Whatlington’s 10 kilometres of footpaths and bridleways.

At the same time they are asked to take note of any problems, such as broken bridges, gates and stiles, surface and vegetation obstructions, and missing, broken or misdirected signs.

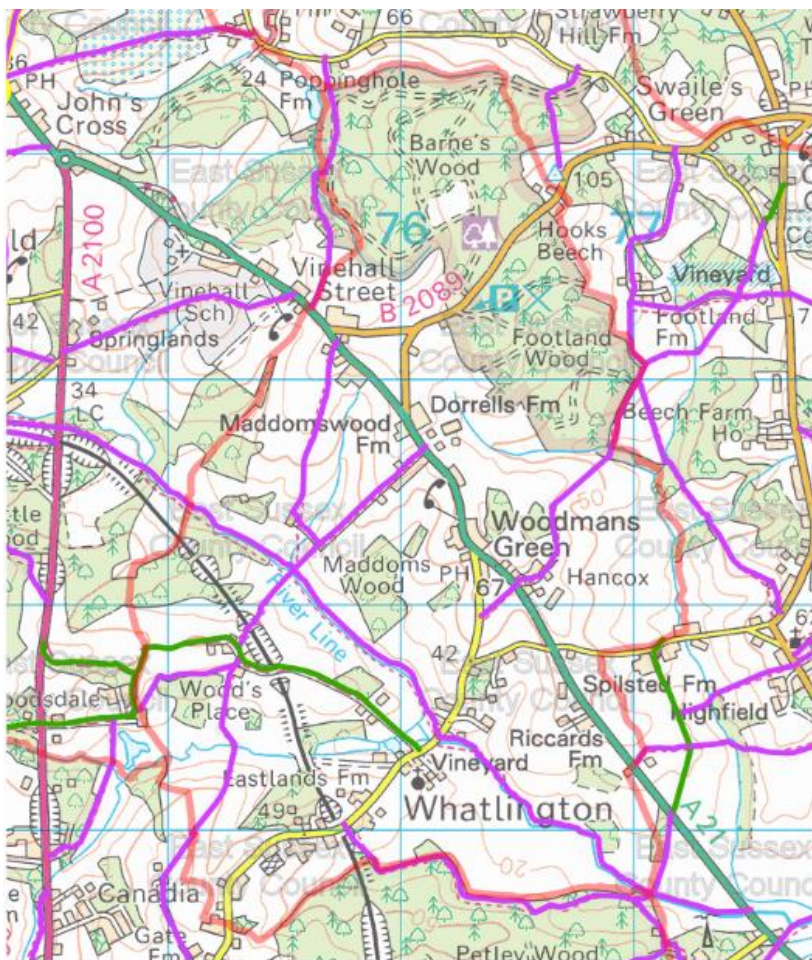
The Parish Council initiative will be the first survey of the village’s footpaths for many years and is designed to check where repairs are needed.

Footpath Warden Bev Marks says: “We are fortunate to live in a designated Area of Outstanding Beauty with footpaths and bridleways taking in some wonderful scenery.

“Walking has huge mental and physical health benefits and is a great way of getting some activity during the festive break.”

Route Code	Name	Length	Type
WHA/1/1	Whatlington 1	400.85	FP
WHA/10/1	Whatlington 10a	1032.03	FP
WHA/10/2	Whatlington 10b	512.63	FP
WHA/11/1	Whatlington 11	1242.04	FP
WHA/12/1	Whatlington 12	210.33	FP
WHA/2/1	Whatlington 2a	155.10	FP
WHA/2/2	Whatlington 2b	630.36	FP
WHA/3/1	Whatlington 3	821.16	FP
WHA/4/1	Whatlington 4	209.23	FP
WHA/5/1	Whatlington 5	978.53	FP
WHA/6/1	Whatlington 6	427.93	FP
WHA/7/1	Whatlington 7	506.82	FP
WHA/8/1	Whatlington 8a	47.79	FP
WHA/8/2	Whatlington 8b	828.18	FP
WHA/9/1	Whatlington 9a	910.56	BW
WHA/9/2	Whatlington 9b	44.93	BW
WHA/9/3	Whatlington 9c	422.43	BW
Total:		9380.89	metres

SPOT AN ISSUE? Problems can be reported direct to the county council's Rights of Way team via the website <https://row.eastsussex.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx> Additionally, so that there is a local record of your report, email the web reference number (sent to confirm your report), to parish footpath warden, Bev Marks at: bevm@hollyblue.net



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