

Cycling on Public Rights of Way

Position Statement

Aims

1. This statement explains the Society's position on cycling on public rights of way. It also includes what we consider to be best practice for shared-use paths. The statement primarily addresses the sharing of paths by walkers and cyclists.
2. The Society believes that paths are there to be enjoyed by everyone that has a legal right to use them, and on many public rights of way, this includes cyclists.
3. The society seeks to protect public access rights, which includes those for cyclists. We also work to prevent abuse of these rights.
4. **Public Footpaths** are waymarked by yellow arrows, telling you that you are on a footpath and have a legal right to be there on foot only. They can be used by right by walkers only, which includes prams, pushchairs, and motorised or manual wheelchairs.
5. **Bridleways** are waymarked with blue arrows. As these routes are used by horse-riders, they are stile-free. In addition to walkers and horse-riders, they also carry public rights to those using mobility scooters and to pedal cyclists.
6. Cyclists also have a right to use **Byways Open to all Traffic (BOATs)** and **Restricted Byways**.

Conflicts of Interest

7. Where a conflict of interest may arise, underlying causes of this conflict should first be identified. Many conflicts can be resolved through maintenance or improvements, for example to surface or drainage.
8. In the cases of Restricted Byways and BOATs, Highways Authorities (HAs) have a duty to maintain routes in a suitable condition for cyclists (and other legal users) and should therefore be encouraged to exercise their duty. Though cyclists can legally use bridleways, HAs do not have a duty to ensure accessibility for cyclists.
9. Where a conflict of use cannot be mitigated by maintenance or improvements, the society will prioritise use by walkers. For example, if use of a definitive public footpath by cyclists was cited as evidence of the dedication of public rights for cyclists, and we considered that the cycling use had created a public nuisance for walkers, we would argue, as is provided by the law, that the use was not evidence of dedication.

Guidance for Shared-Use Public Rights of Way

10. The legal right of cyclists to use bridleways is bound by legislation which provides that “cyclists shall give way to pedestrians and persons on horseback”.
11. When approaching other users, cyclists should reduce their speed and use a bell or a verbal notification, and be prepared to stop if they are not heard.
12. Walkers should be aware that riders of bikes or horses will be sharing the path; we recommend keeping an ear out for those passing from behind.
13. Dogs should be kept under close control.
14. Walkers should be aware of problems they may cause, such as obstruction for other users, especially when in larger groups.

Best Practice

15. We expect all users to share paths responsibly and to show consideration for each other.
16. We welcome the use of clear signage showing which users are legally allowed and are therefore to be expected on the route. We also welcome the use of ‘share with care’ type logos along shared use routes.
 - 16.1. Examples of both these types of signage are shown in the appendix.



Appendix

Examples of good practice clear signage for shared use paths.

'Share with care' reminder to all users:



Clear indication of who is legally entitled to use the route:



Version History

Version	Summary of changes	Effective from:	Effective to:
1.0	First version	2023-03-31	2024-05-24
1.1	Minor revisions	2024-05-24	

