



RAMBLERS

Sussex

Now Open

July 2026

**Highlighting the work done by the
County's Rights of Way teams and
Sussex Area maintenance groups
to keep our footpaths open**

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) - July 2026

Removing Barriers to Access in the High Weald National Landscape

Led by the High Weald National Landscape with support from the Government's Access in Protected Landscapes fund the following stiles have been replaced with gates which will enhance people's ability to access and enjoy the beautiful, farmed landscape of the High Weald. A great opportunity to make rights of way more accessible for people who find stiles difficult to use.

Hartfield 54c stile replaced with gate G8424 TQ 465/385

Before and after photos:



Withyham 63 stile replaced with gate G8420 TQ 495/396

Before and after photos:



Bridges

Laughton 38b footbridge B1831 replaced TQ 483/115

An 8-metre bridge has recently been replaced by the maintenance rangers on Laughton footpath 38b.



Hertsmonceux 67 footbridge B1638 replaced TQ 611/105

An 8-metre bridge has recently been replaced by the maintenance rangers on Hertsmonceux footpath 67.



Withyham 63 footbridge B1657 replaced TQ 459/396

A 13-metre bridge has recently been replaced by the maintenance rangers on Withyham footpath 63.



Buxted 24 footbridge B1311 replaced TQ 493/268

Buxted 24, which forms part of the Wealdway, was reopened after a long path closure due to a landslip. Following works to stabilise the area had been completed by the landowner, the 13m bridge B1311 has been replaced and the vegetation was cleared. Malcolm McDonnell has provided a report on the official re-opening ceremony, which you can read at the conclusion of the maintenance updates.



West Sussex County Council (WSCC) - July 2026

West Sussex County Council have nothing to report this time around.

Sussex Ramblers West Sussex Maintenance Team - July 2026

May 26, 2026: A team of 12 volunteers carried out vegetation clearance on footpath 828 on the edge of Coldwaltham parish where the footpath passes through a copse adjacent to the River Rother. This was a joint task with WSCC due to the need for additional machine tools to be used, including a chain saw to clear some larger material. Aside of clearing the legal line, WSCC also asked us to help clear vegetation on an offline route within the copse that is on slightly higher ground and is used when the area floods. A second section of the same footpath near its junction with the line of the old railway, which was also overgrown, was also cleared.

June 16, 2026: A team of 6 volunteers replaced a stile with a metal kissing gate on footpath 1493 in Rusper. We also cut back vegetation encroaching on a nearby stile and plank crossing on the same footpath. This was an additional task day that we took on at the request of the WSCC Access Ranger, as the elderly landowner was unable to take on the work himself.



Footpath Buxted #24 reopened at last after 14 years!

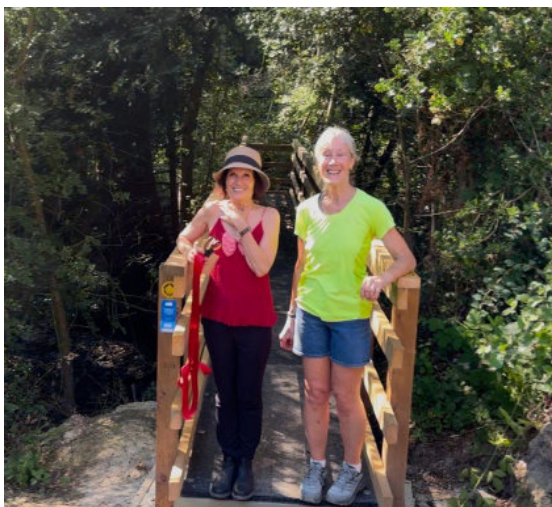
In 2012 the path leading to High Hurstwood from Stroods house to the north was closed by a landslip that took out the access walkway on the south end of a long bridge across a ghyll. Initially Ramblers tried our hardest to get it re-opened as quickly as possible, as it's a very popular village path as well as being part of the Vanguard Way route.

Being at the bottom of a typical steep Wealden ghyll, fixing it was a major task. But a neighbouring house adjacent was also threatened with subsidence and the whole business became mired in insurance claims and other issues, and Ramblers eventually got distracted by the many other RoW problems around the county and our attention to Buxted 24 waned. Use of an alternative route became the norm and it was incorporated into the Vanguard Way.

But local people did not forget and weren't prepared to write the path off. In the early '20s their frustration led Carol Woodward and Debs Kempson-Wren to form a group who began lobbying their MP and local councillors, and raising a petition signed by 415 people. They sent 493 emails, made countless calls and updates, and held more than 25 meetings. They carefully monitored the intentions, responsibilities and work of the 12 key stakeholder groups, and Ramblers and the Open Spaces Society helped with technical advice and support. Now at last there's a new bridge and a solidly engineered access path from the south side, supported by gabion walls.

Of course, credit also goes to ESCC's Rights of Way Team. The glacial rate of progress over 14 years was largely due to matters beyond their control and was as frustrating for them as it was for us path users, whilst we all get fed up when path problems don't get resolved, the RoW Team do their very best given their limited resources. And, also, of course, the Rangers Team who have managed what is actually a major feat of civil engineering.

So, on Friday 26th June, Carol and Debs arranged a celebratory reopening of the bridge and a walk around the restored path. A 'Happy Bridge' cake was baked and a cheerful assembly of folk from the village, plus members of the Ramblers High Weald Walkers group, the Open Spaces Society and the chair of the Vanguard Way Association attended. We heard speeches from Carol, Debs and Karl Luckhurst, the head teacher of High Hurstwood primary school, who then cut the ribbon. The school plans to reinstate the pupils' annual sponsored circular walk, which has not been possible for fourteen years. It was wonderful to be able to say: "the bridge is built, the stabilisation work is complete, and path is now open."



Debs & Carol at the bridge



Karl gives a speech



Celebratory cake



The new approach to the bridge

