

# Working towards 2026: Restoring Lost Routes

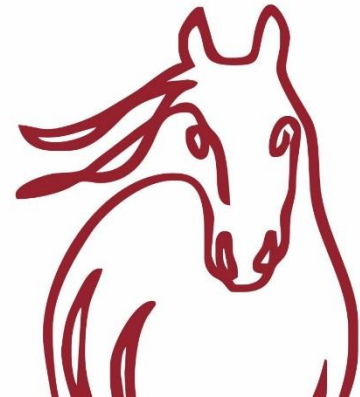
or

Experiences of submitting 50 DMMO applications  
in 12 months

Phil Wadey, BHS Historic Research Advisor



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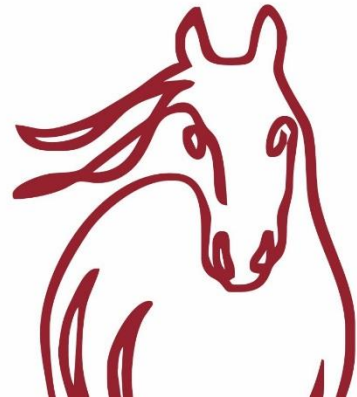


# Highway Hunting

- Another term for finding **unrecorded public rights of way**, and applying for them to be added to
  - The definitive map of rights of way, and/or
  - The List of Streets Maintainable at the Public Expense



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EC202 Oakridge Lane, Aldenham

EC349 Hyde Lane, St Stephen





EC328 Hogg Lane, Aldenham



EC793 Coltsfoot Lane, Anstey

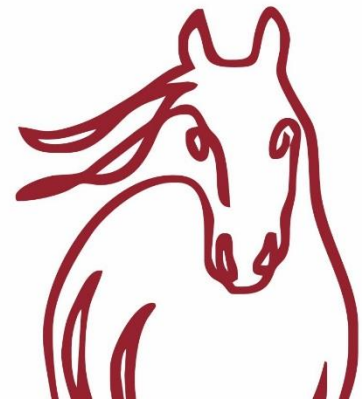
# Why does this matter?



- This route would not be recordable
- So it wouldn't appear on maps
- So over time, it could disappear from use



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# Why does this matter?

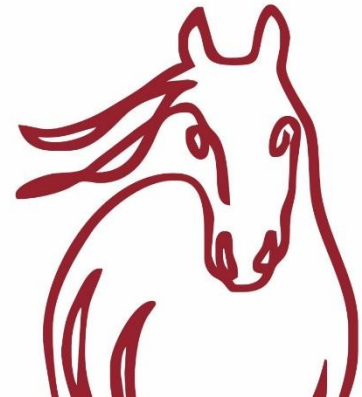


- This route would have ceased to exist in law
- Landowner could use land for other purposes
- What is the alternative route?
- (It's the A5)



The  
British  
Horse  
Society

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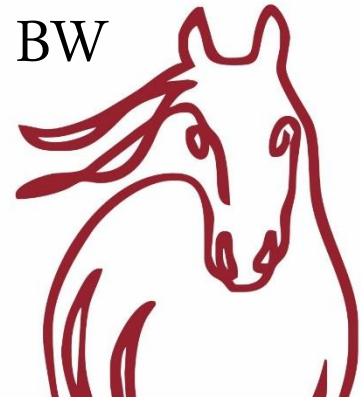
# Why does this matter?



- This route would become a footpath.
- Motor vehicle use would be illegal
- Access to BW next to the red car no longer a right on horseback
- Effective loss of the BW



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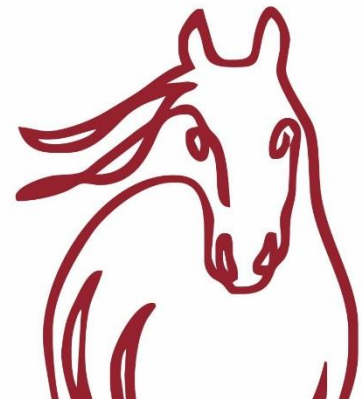
# Why does this matter?



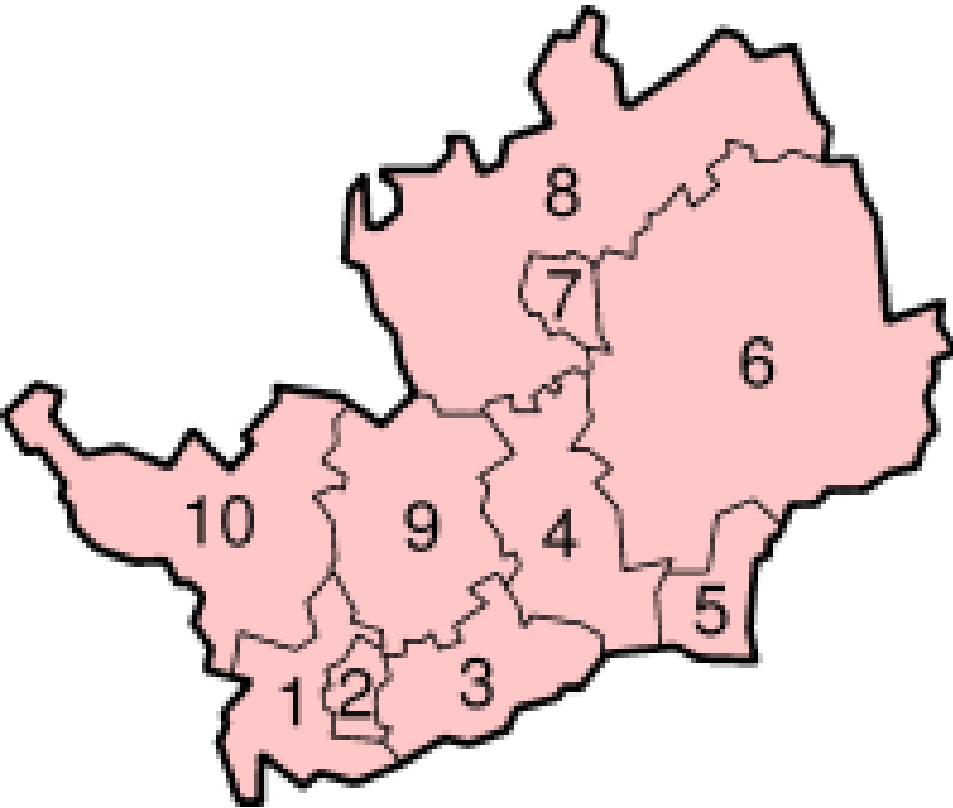
- Public rights would cease to exist
- It would leave two cul-de-sac paths with no way of linking them
- Effective loss of a BW



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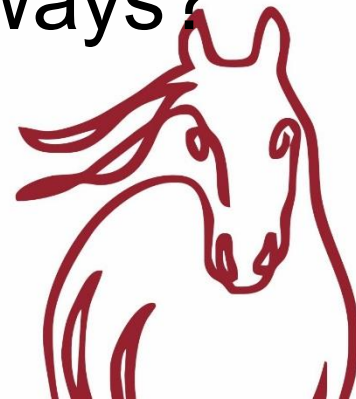
# Hertfordshire



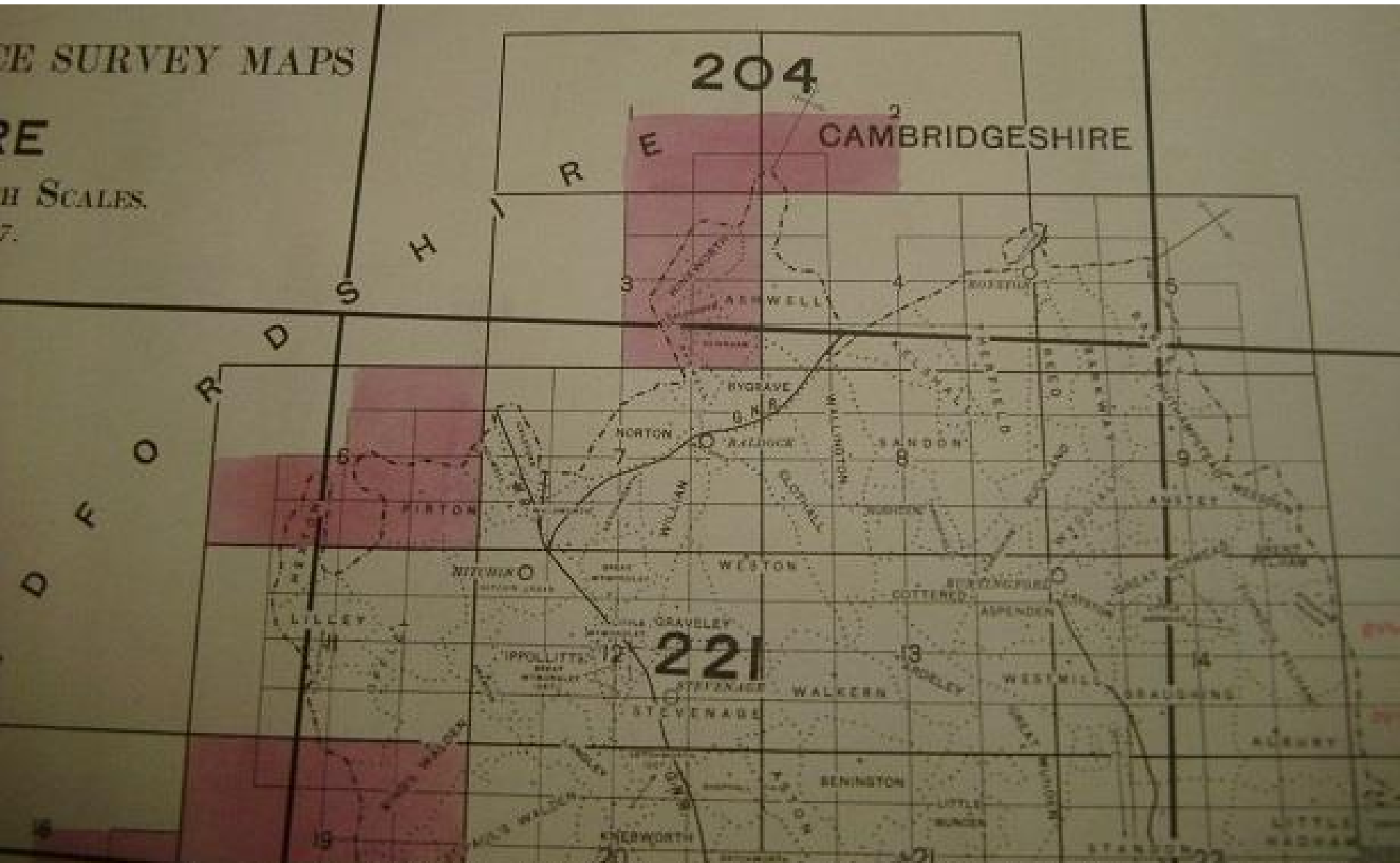
- 634 square miles
- 10 districts
- 135 parishes
  
- How many unrecorded ways?



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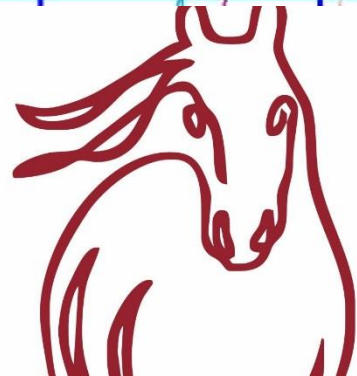
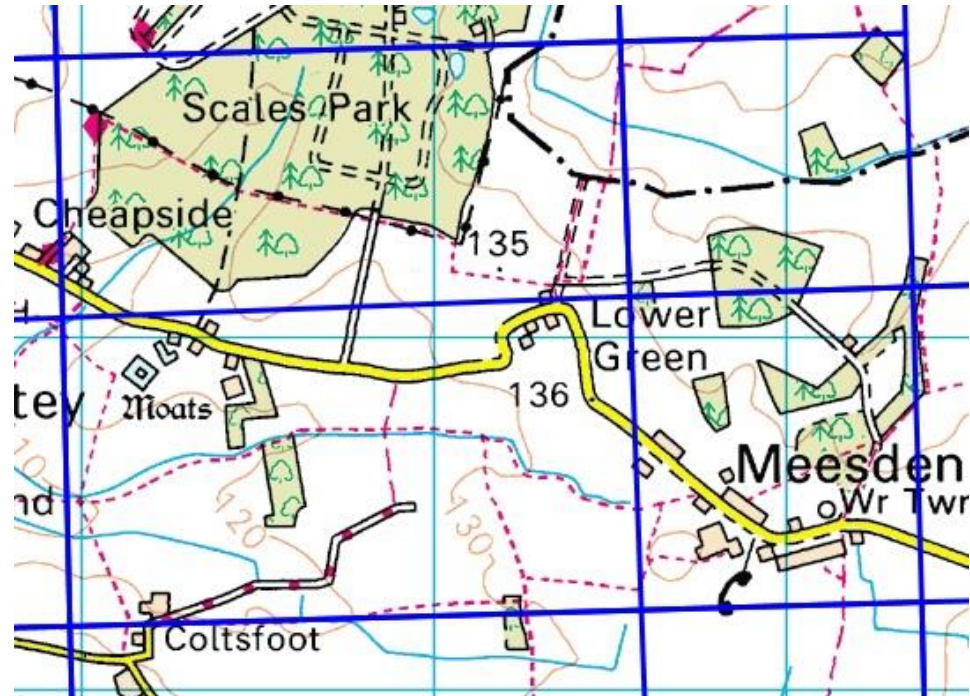


# Hertfordshire Methodology

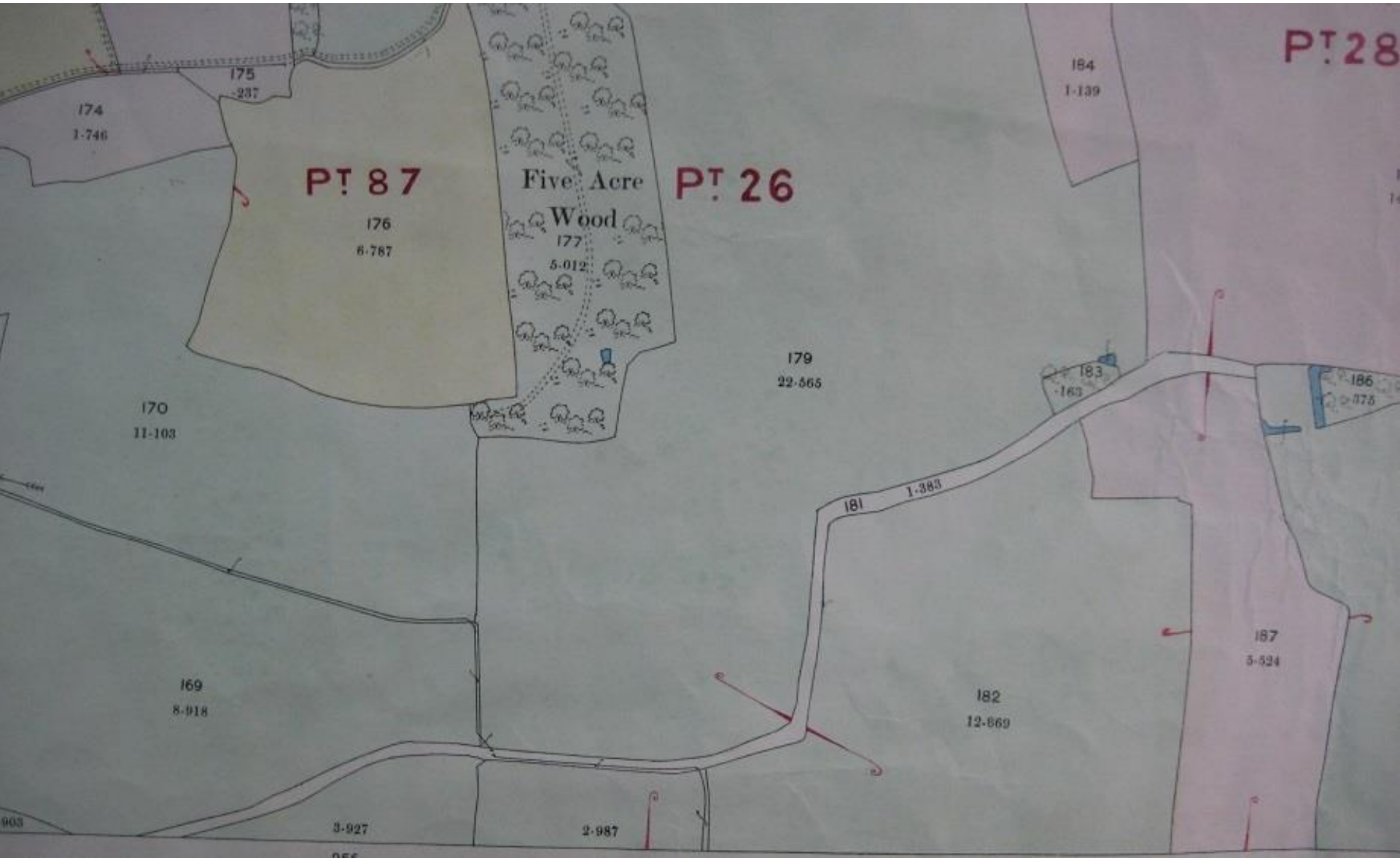


# Hertfordshire Methodology

- 528 small grid squares
- One at a time
- Start with Inland Revenue Valuation Maps (c.1910)








# Inland Revenue Maps





# Lists!

			Out of county
Hertfordshire IX 8			
	IR 126/4/79	IR1/	No unrecorded white roads found.
Hertfordshire IX 9			
	IR 126/4/80	IR1/	Part of Anstey 10 FP is shown as a white road. All the route is named as "Roger's Lane". The first part of Anstey 11 FP is shown as a white road. need to see Herts IX 14 to see if it continues as such. No other unrecorded white roads found.
Hertfordshire IX 10			
	IR 126/4/81	IR1/	EC791 Brent Pelham and Meesden 10 BW is shown as a white road and named "Wood Lane". EC792 Brent Pelham and Meesden 1 BW is shown as a white road. EC793 Brent Pelham and Meesden ORPA is shown as a white road.
Hertfordshire IX 11			
	IR 126/4/82	IR1/	No unrecorded white roads found.
Hertfordshire IX 12			

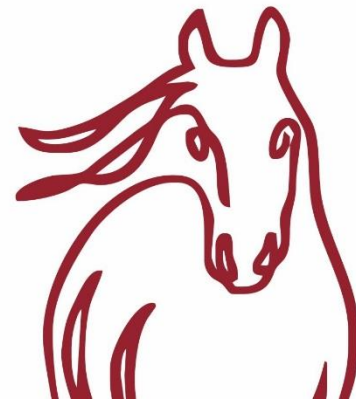


# But this is just an indexing method – we still have to check other sources

EC	Hertfordshire Definitive Map Work		OS Map	OS Area Book	Dury & Bryant	Tithe	Inclosure	Railway	Object Name Bk	OS Boundary	IR 1910	MAF	HCC M Roa
No	HCC	Brief Description											
641	EH410	Thundridge and Ware Rural UUCR1 Poles Lane	H 29-4	Thundridge 116		Dr Rd	Not Ckd	Not Ckd	N/A	OS35/3317	IR126/4/222	MAF73/18/29	Not Sl
641		-do-	H 29-8	Ware 232		Dr Rd	Not Ckd	Not Ckd	N/A	OS35/3317	IR126/4/226		
642	DAC130	Tring Rural UUCR 1	H 25-2	Tring 246			Not Ckd	Not Ckd	N/A	Not named	IR126/8/31	73/18/25	Not Sl
643	DAC131	Tring Rural UUCR 2 Puttenham / joins Bucks route	H24-8&25-£	Puttenham 68			Not Ckd	Not Ckd	N/A	Not named	IR126/8/29&32	73/18/24&25	Not Sl
644		Tring Rural UUCR 3 Puttenham N	H 25-1	Puttenham 18		L or B					IR 126/8/30	73/18/25	Not Sl
645		Walkern UUCR 1											Not Sl
646		Little Berkhamstead 14 FP upgrade	H 36-10	LB - No LU		L or B					IR126/4/270	73/18/36	Not Sl
647		Potters Bar/Enfield boundary path											
648		Northaw 13 FP to Holly Hill and extension to The Ridgeway	M 2-9	Enfield 78								73/27/2	Mid
649		Northaw Parallel to Coopers Lane Road											
650		Clothall 19 FP to RB + RB, Harveyshill Farm											
651		Cottered 12 BW to RB Spring Lane	H 13-3/7	Cottered 297		L or B	Not Ckd	Not Ckd	N/A	OS35/3264	IR126/4/121 part 1	73/18/13	Pt is
652		Weston 36 BW to RB Lolleywood Lane											
653		Weston Dane End Farm route 5U18											
654	3R	Rickmansworth 32 FP upgrade or add width											
655	EH	Walkern 42 FP upgrade and extend											



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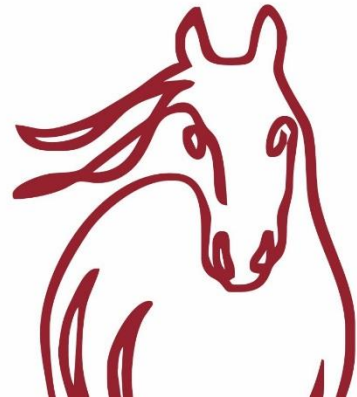


# Hertfordshire Results

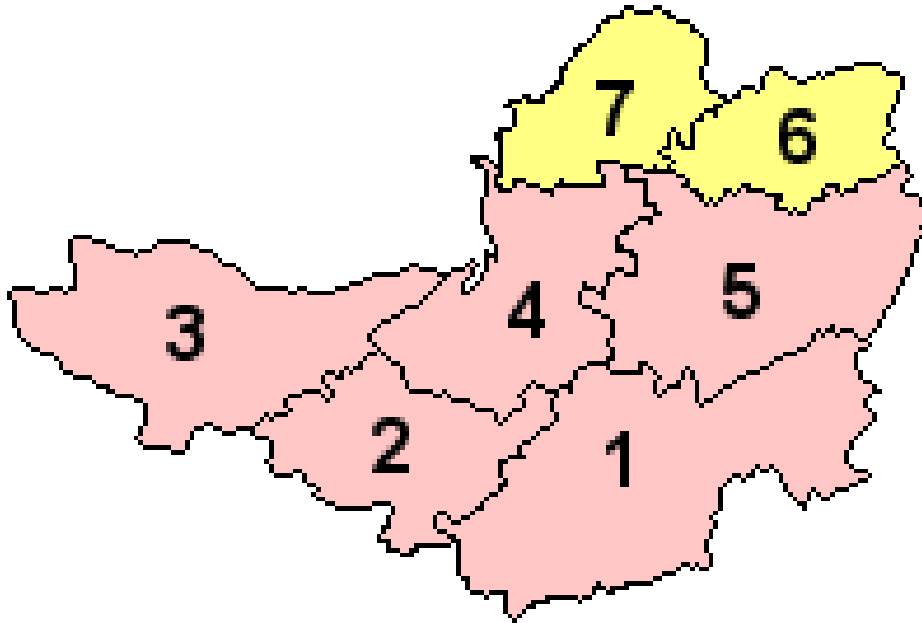
- Inland Revenue records photographed for approximately 95% of the county (50% during the project)
- Checked against definitive map
- 151 routes for investigation (now over 200)
- 51 applications made (restricted byway)
- Total cost: £3,706 (£73 per application)



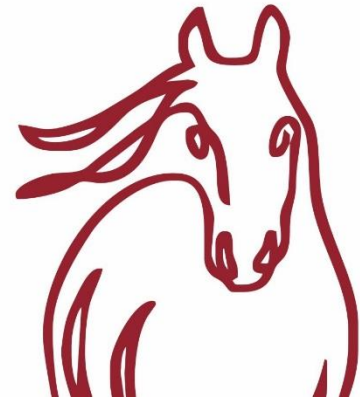
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# Somerset



- 1,610 square miles
- 7 districts
- 417 parishes
  
- How many unrecorded ways?

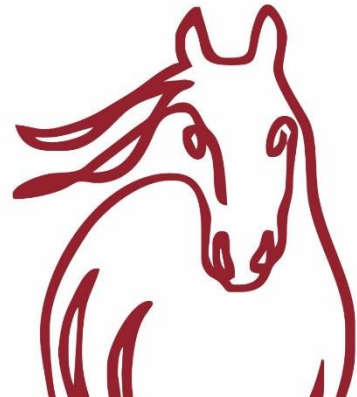


# Somerset approach: route led

1. Create long list of paths based on inputs from Affiliated Bridleways Groups
2. For identified paths, do 'initial research' for those parishes/map sets
3. If positive, then collect supporting evidence from Somerset Heritage Centre
4. View route on the ground
5. Make applications



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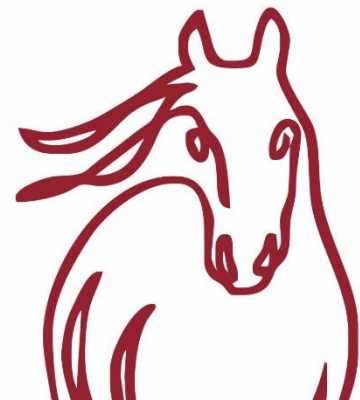


# The long list

- All of these were suggested by people with local knowledge (we only looked at part of Somerset)
- 87 possible routes initially, and at least another 12 came to our attention
- 49 parishes
- 4 affiliated bridleway associations plus a few individuals



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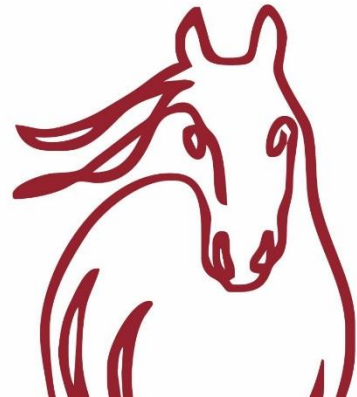


# Somerset Results

- 56 DMMO applications submitted
  - 20 were for upgrades and 36 were for additions
- Total length 36 miles (57.6 km)
- About 22.5 miles (36km) currently ridden
  - Longer than the Channel Tunnel
- Riders will feel the effect of closure of 22.5 miles of paths currently in use



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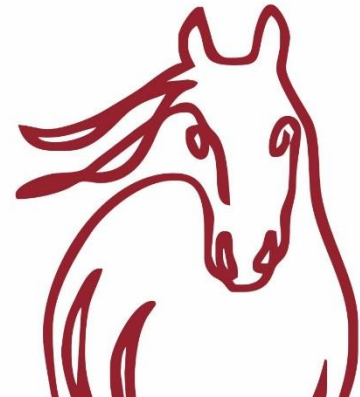


# Somerset Method Notes

- A lot of riders do not know the status of the routes they currently ride, nor do they realise that they could lose them in 2026.
- Local knowledge is very valuable, local people often know where the unrecorded routes are.
- Many DMMO applications are for routes already in use
  - Land use is unaffected
  - Path saved from extinguishment on 1 January 2026
  - Clarity brought in by examination of the evidence.



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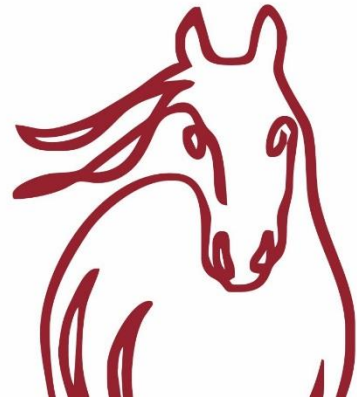


# Conclusions

- **Plenty of unrecorded routes to be found**
- There are many other sources that we need to be checking to find candidate routes
- **Building a research library is essential**
- More volunteers are needed!
- **Failure to take action is throwing away riding routes!**



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# Way Forward (1)

- Regardless of approach, **you need to get the evidence**
- Systematic research means no paths are missed
- But this costs TIME and EXPENSES

## TIME

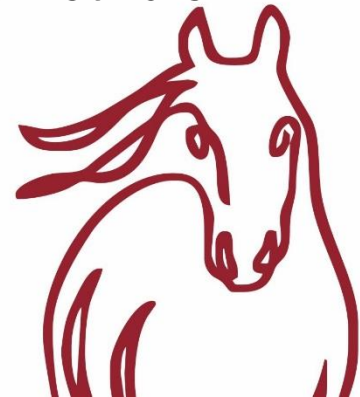
- Be thorough & systematic
- Store logically
- Pool data with others

## EXPENSES

- Plan ahead
- Share workload with others



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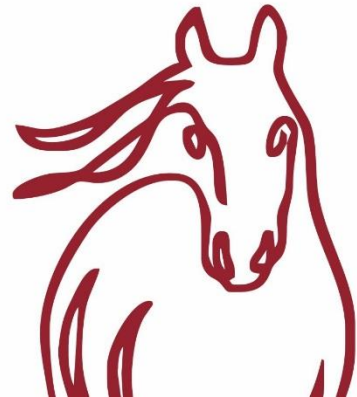


# Way Forward (2)

- We need to ensure the review of un- or under recorded paths is done once, properly
- We need more volunteers
- We need to be lobbying for classes of exemption from the cut off date provisions



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# Any Questions?



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