EAST SUSSEX & KENT



EQUESTRIAN ACCESS GROUP

Campaigning for improved equestrian access and connection of bridleways

# NEWSLETTER UPDATE

## MAY 2026

Thank you to all our members for your continued support, engagement and enthusiasm.

*Together we are making progress!*

These notes summarise two meetings held during May 2026:

- 29 April 2026 – Meeting with Forestry England (FE)
- 19 May 2026 – ESKEAG Committee Meeting

## TWO IMPORTANT MEETINGS

This newsletter brings together the outcomes from our meeting with Forestry England on 29 April 2026 and decisions from our Committee meeting on 19 May 2026.

## FORESTRY ENGLAND MEETING SUMMARY (29 APRIL 2026)

ESKEAG met with Forestry England to discuss parking loss, future collaboration and opportunities to improve equestrian access.

### KEY OUTCOMES

- FE confirmed ESKEAG will be their recognised collective voice for riders.
- Additional meetings can be arranged throughout the year with landowners and other stakeholders.
- FE will provide ESKEAG with direct Ranger contact details for enquiries, concerns and minor proposals.

### FUNDING & OPPORTUNITIES

- Both BHS and DEFRA funding may support access improvements.
- Applications should be solution-focused and evidence-based.
- Current schemes prioritise walkers, cyclists and disability access – equestrian projects are under-represented.
- Rider wellbeing and mental health should be included in future funding proposals.

### MOUNTING BLOCK PROJECT

- Potential funding for mounting blocks at FE parking locations.
- College-supported project work.
- Co-branded signage promoting partnership working and visible benefits for riders.

### COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS

- FE will share information on closures, forestry works and site updates.
- ESKEAG will establish a central email address and website/information hub to share updates and reduce misinformation.

### FRISTON PLANNING

- As FE is planning Friston, ESKEAG will continue ensuring rider needs and access requirements are represented.

## COMMITTEE MEETING: 19 MAY 2026

### STRATEGY & REPRESENTATION

The committee agreed that ESKEAG now needs a clear 12-month strategy focused on:

- Retaining existing off-road riding routes.
- Maintaining and improving access.
- Expanding safe riding opportunities.
- Strengthening partnerships with Forestry England, landowners and access groups.
- Ensuring riders have a strong, unified voice in local access matters.

Work is also beginning to improve representation for Kent riders through closer links with Kent-based contacts and groups.

### ESKEAG EXPLORING NEW PLACES TO RIDE

ESKEAG is exploring managed riding access models similar to the successful Broughton Park scheme in Northamptonshire, where riders register before using private land.

### POSITIVE PUBLICITY & AWARENESS

Plans are underway for positive media coverage focusing on:

- Rural road safety for horse riders (or lack of!)
- Why ESKEAG was formed
- ESKEAG's strategy and aims

The aim is to raise awareness and support for equestrian access in a constructive, forward-looking way.

### HAVE NEWS, IDEAS OR PLACES TO SHARE?

Message us on Facebook – we'd love to hear from you! Your experiences help strengthen our collective voice.



Keep riding. Keep connected. Keep our bridleways open.