

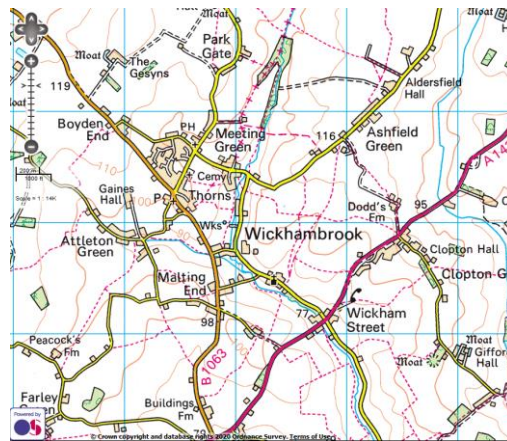
## Recording Ancient Footpaths

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 was brought in to make new provision for public access to the countryside, and amended the law relating to public rights of way.

One of the impacts of the Act was that a cut-off date was imposed beyond which, all unrecorded footpaths and bridleways created before 1949 could no longer be recorded – this date being 2026.

In 2012 the government started work in consultation with groups such as the Ramblers and Country Land and Business Association to modernise the process of recording rights of way, to make it easier for walkers, horse riders and cyclists to protect unrecorded rights of way.

There is a free online Ordnance Survey map showing UK Public Footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways and other rights of way for walking, cycling and other activities.



The Parish Council also has more detailed mapping available through its Parish On-line subscription.



Suffolk County Council has a statutory responsibility to maintain and update the definitive map and statement on which all public rights of way are recorded. The recording of a route on the definitive map is conclusive evidence in law of its status, position and existence as a public right of way.

The working copy definitive map is held on parish based negatives at 1:10,000 scale, and is accompanied by a definitive statement which may define the position or width of a right of way shown on the map and describe limitations such as stiles or kissing gates.

There may be unrecorded public rights of way in existence whose legal status can only be determined by evidence (for example historical documents and/or from a continuous period of public use). Anyone can make a claim to the County Council for a route that they believe to be a public right of way to be added to the definitive map by means of a **definitive map modification order** (DMMO)

There is a lot of guidance available on how to make an application and the process, and how the County Council prioritises its work. It is likely that as the deadline for registering unrecorded public rights of way approaches, a back log of applications will accrue, which is why this is being considered now.

The costs of modification orders are borne by the surveying authority, and there is no power to charge applicants for modification orders either for their applications or for any subsequent appeals.

**Action:**

**The committee is asked to consider whether to approach the Wickhambrook History Group to enquire whether they would like to undertake a joint project to check public rights of way in the Parish and identify whether there are any unrecorded paths.**