Proposed Diversion Order and Creation Order (Hinds Pit and Hinds Pit to Tarr Steps, Parishes of Withypool & Hawkridge and Winsford)

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980
EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Public Bridleway DU10/38
Proposed Public Path Diversion Order 2026 [Ref: Hinds Pit Map A]
Proposed Public Path Creation Order 2026 [Ref: Hinds Pit to Tarr Steps Map B] + Overview Map

Summary

Background

Public bridleway DU10/38 runs from its junction with public bridleways DU10/36 and Public Bridleway DU11/5 north of the ford and bridge over the river Barle near Great Bradley to its junction with public bridleway DU3/11 in Liscombe Wood, also the parish boundary with Dulverton. A permitted footpath runs from a point on DU10/38 where it crosses the River Barle at Hinds Pitt along the western bank of the River Barle to its junction with the County Road near Tarr Steps.

This proposal is to divert a short section of public bridleway at Hinds Pit and by separate order, create a new section of public footpath along the western bank of the River Barle linking public bridleway DU10/38 to the County Road at Tarr Steps.

The current definitive line of public bridleway DU10/38 runs along the western bank of the River Barle between points A and B and then crosses the River Barle via a deep ford between points B and C.

For many decades, the public have crossed the River Barle via a footbridge between points A and D and then used a permitted bridleway on the eastern bank of the River Barle to rejoin public bridleway DU10/38 east of the deep ford at point C at Hinds Pit. In recent years, horseriders have not used the bridge but have used a permitted ford crossing approximately 200 metres north of the bridge. This then linked to the bridge via a further section of permitted bridleway.

The bridge was installed in the 1950s, apparently by the local hunt and Royal Engineers – it is a WWII Bailey Bridge. Whilst the bridge was originally installed for use by the hunt, over the decades, it has become increasingly used by the public, in particular as part of an extremely popular circular walk from Tarr Steps known as the Tarr Steps Circular. Given the levels of public use, ENPA have been arranging inspections of the bridge for some years.

In May 2025, the bridge failed an inspection and was closed to the public. As the public right of way did not pass over the bridge, ENPA has been negotiating with the relevant landowners to discuss how best to replace it.

After considerable discussion, this proposal to divert the public bridleway and create a new public footpath along the western bank is being put forward. **However, we must make it clear that this proposal is not yet agreed with all landowners concerned and negotiations are continuing**. ENPA proposes to replace the bridge in the same location and for the new bridge to be designed for public bridleway use. Our proposal is to divert the public bridleway over the new bridge and create a public footpath on the western bank of the River Barle to secure the entire circular walking route for the future.

Current Proposal

Exmoor National Park Authority proposes to make a diversion order at Hinds Pit in the interests of the public. The order is being made to move the public bridleway to a position where it crosses the River Barle at the site of the proposed new bridleway bridge. The route that is being proposed is 'substantially as convenient to the public' compared to the current definitive route (this being the legal test that has to be met in diverting a public path).

Exmoor National Park Authority also proposes to make a footpath creation order between Hinds Pit and Tarr Steps. The order is being made to link the public bridleway at Hinds Pit Bridge to the County Road at Tarr Steps, forming part of the very popular Tarr Steps circular walk. The route being proposed significantly adds to 'the convenience or enjoyment of a substantial section of the public' (this being the legal test that has to be met in creating a public path).

The proposed orders are as follows:

Proposed Public Path Diversion Order 2026 [Ref: Hinds Pit Map A]
This order will divert part of public bridleway A-B-C to A-D-C.

Proposed Public Path Creation Order 2026 [Ref: Hinds Pit to Tarr Steps Map B]
This order will create a public footpath A-E-F-G.

Therefore, it appears to the Exmoor National Park Authority that in the interests of the public it is expedient that part of Public Bridleway DU10/38, Parishes of Winsford and Withypool & Hawkridge should be diverted, as described on the enclosed proposed schedule & plan.

It also appears to the Exmoor National Park Authority that in the interests of the public it is expedient that a public footpath is created, in the Parish of Withypool & Hawkridge, as described on the enclosed proposed schedule & plan.

Proposed Public Path Diversion Order 2026 [Ref: Hinds Pit Map A]

SCHEDULE

PART 1

DESCRIPTION OF SITE OF EXISTING PATH OR WAY

1. Part of public bridleway DU10/38 starting from a point approximately 138 metres due north of where the Westwater Stream joins the River Barle near Hind's Pit, point A on the proposal plan, and running in a generally southerly direction along the western bank of the River Barle for approximately 138 metres to point B. From point B, the bridleway turns to run in a north-easterly direction for approximately 54 metres, crossing the River Barle, to a point approximately 39 metres due north-east of where the Westwater Stream joins the River Barle near Hind's Pit, point C on the proposal plan. A total distance of 192 metres.

Part of DU10/38 to be stopped up	Length (m)
A-B-C	192

PART 2

DESCRIPTION OF SITE OF PROPOSED NEW PATH OR WAY

1. A public bridleway starting from a point approximately 138 metres due north of where the Westwater Stream joins the River Barle near Hind's Pit, point A on the proposal plan, and running in an easterly direction, crossing the River Barle via a 2-metre-wide bridge for approximately 32 metres to point D. From point D, the bridleway turns to run in a generally southerly direction, along the eastern bank of the River Barle, for approximately 111 metres to a point approximately 39 metres due north-east of where the Westwater Stream joins the River Barle near Hind's Pit, point C on the proposal plan. A total distance of 143 metres.

Description of site of new path or way	Length (m)	Width (m)
A-D	32	2.0
D-C	111	3.0

PART 3

LIMITATIONS AND CONDITIONS

Position	Limitations and conditions
	Gates may be needed on the end/s of the bridge - TBC

Proposed Public Path Creation Order 2026 [Ref: Hinds Pit to Tarr Steps Map B]

SCHEDULE

PART 1

DESCRIPTION OF SITE OF PROPOSED NEW PATH OR WAY

1. A public footpath starting from a point on public bridleway DU10/38 approximately 138 metres due north of where the Westwater Stream joins the River Barle near Hind's Pit, point A on the proposal plan and running in a southerly direction for approximately 133 metres to a field gate at point E. From point E, the footpath continues in a southerly direction for approximately 8 metres to cross the West Water stream via a 1.4-metre-wide bridge at point F. From point F, the footpath continues in a generally south-westerly direction for approximately 1188 metres, mostly along the western bank of the River Barle to a point where it joins the County Road, approximately 23 metres west of the centre of Tarr Steps, point G on the proposal plan. A total distance of 1,329 metres.

Description of site of new path or way	Length (m)	Width (m)
A-E-F-G	1,329	2.0

PART 2

LIMITATIONS AND CONDITIONS

Position	Limitations and conditions
E	Field gate to BS5709 – 2018