Policy	**Responsible Stonelifting Policy**
Organisation	English Stonelifting
Status	Current Policy
Policy Number	ES-POL-001
Version	1.0
Effective Date	September 2026
Policy Owner	English Stonelifting
Review Frequency	Periodic review, and following relevant changes to legislation, official guidance or land-management requirements.
Applies To	Stones, locations, activities and content published or promoted by English Stonelifting.
Primary Purpose	To promote responsible, lawful and sustainable recreational stonelifting while respecting landowners, protecting the environment and safeguarding heritage.
Important	Inclusion of a stone on the English Stonelifting website, map, register or social media does **not** constitute permission or authorisation to access land, lift, move or otherwise interact with a stone.

Mission Statement

English Stonelifting exists to preserve, promote and responsibly develop the tradition of natural stone lifting in England.

We celebrate strength, heritage and community while respecting landowners, protecting the landscape and environment, and ensuring lifting stones and their surroundings are cared for.

1. Responsible Stonelifting Policy

English Stonelifting is committed to promoting the responsible, lawful and sustainable practice of traditional stone lifting across England.

1.1 Role and Authority of English Stonelifting

English Stonelifting is a documentation, information and mapping platform established to record and share information about stones used or identified for recreational stonelifting in England. English Stonelifting is not a landowner, land manager, governing body or statutory authority, and has no authority to grant access to land, place or move stones, or give any person the right or permission to lift a stone.

The inclusion of a stone on the English Stonelifting website, map, register or social media channels does not constitute permission, consent or authorisation to access the land, lift, move, place or otherwise interact with the stone.

Any required permission or consent must be obtained from the relevant landowner, land manager or other competent authority.

Participants are responsible for establishing what rights, permissions, restrictions or conditions apply to each individual location before attempting to access or lift a stone.

English Stonelifting does not confer or create any legal right of access or right to lift a stone by listing or mapping it.

2. Private Land

Any stone located on private land must have the express permission of the landowner or authorised land manager before being added to the English Stonelifting register or lifted.[1]

Permission should establish access arrangements, including entry and exit points, routes, parking and any conditions, and confirm whether the stone may be lifted or temporarily moved and whether it must be returned to its original position and condition.[1][2] Lifters must remain within agreed areas and respect the land, livestock, crops, buildings and other property at all times.[2]

Participation is at the lifter's own risk, and landowners or land managers should not be regarded as responsible for injury, loss or damage arising from participation, except where liability cannot lawfully be excluded or limited.[3][4]

2.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Access private land
[2] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors
[3] GOV.UK – Writing a fair contract for customers
[4] GOV.UK – Unfair contract terms (CMA37)

3. Open-Access Land

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act), certain areas of land in England provide a public right of access for open-air recreation, subject to restrictions

and exclusions.[1] GOV.UK recognises activities such as walking, running and climbing as examples of open-air recreation.[2]

Where recreational stonelifting can reasonably be considered open-air recreation, English Stonelifting considers that lifting a naturally occurring stone in situ, without causing damage or disturbance, and returning it carefully to its original position and condition after the attempt, may be compatible with the recreational use of access land.

However, this should not be interpreted as an automatic legal right to move, alter or place stones, and participants must comply with any applicable restrictions and obtain landowner or land-manager permission where required.[3][4]

3.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Section 2 – Rights of access

[2] GOV.UK – Use your right to roam

[3] Natural England – Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities

[4] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

4. Site and Stone Assessment

A stone should only be considered suitable for recreational lifting where:

- It is naturally occurring and already loose, free-standing or above ground.
- No excavation, digging or disturbance of the surrounding ground is required to lift it.
- Lawful public recreational access exists at the location.[1][2]
- The stone and immediate lifting area are not within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), unless the activity is permitted or any necessary consent has been obtained.[3]
- The stone does not form part of a Scheduled Monument, archaeological feature, historic structure or known heritage asset.[4][5]
- It is not a protected geological feature or subject to geological conservation restrictions.[3]
- The location is not subject to nature reserve restrictions or another conservation designation that prevents or restricts the activity.[3][6]
- No relevant local byelaw, access condition or land-management regulation prohibits lifting.[1][2]

- Lifting can take place without damaging vegetation, habitats, trees, walls, paths, archaeological material or the surrounding ground.[6]
- The stone can be returned safely to its original position and condition following each lift.

4.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Use your right to roam

[2] Natural England – Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities

[3] GOV.UK – Sites of Special Scientific Interest: managing your land and getting consent for activities

[4] GOV.UK – Scheduled monuments: permissions and consents

[5] Historic England – Heritage protection and advice

[6] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code

5. Low-Impact Lifting

Where the above conditions have been reasonably established, the temporary lifting of a loose natural stone, followed by its careful replacement in substantially the same position and condition, may be considered a low-impact form of recreational stonelifting.[1]

The stone must not be permanently relocated, altered, marked, chipped, shaped, drilled or otherwise modified. Lifters must avoid dropping or repeatedly moving stones in a way that could damage vulnerable ground, vegetation or habitats. Where repeated use causes visible erosion, damage or disturbance, lifting should cease and the location should no longer be used.[1]

The guiding principle is to leave the stone and surrounding landscape as they were found, with no lasting physical or environmental impact.[1]

5.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

6. Landowner and Land-Manager Rights

Public access does not constitute ownership of the land, nor does a right of access automatically provide permission to alter, move or place objects on the land.[1][2] The rights and reasonable wishes of landowners and land managers should therefore be respected at all times. Where an activity falls outside the applicable public access rights, permission should be obtained from the relevant landowner or land manager.[1][2]

Permission should be obtained before:

- Excavating or exposing a stone.
- Permanently moving or repositioning a stone.
- Creating, clearing or modifying a dedicated lifting area.
- Installing signs, plaques, markers, equipment or other infrastructure.
- Organising events or undertaking commercial activities.
- Undertaking any activity capable of materially altering the land or stone.

Where a stone is likely to receive substantial publicity, repeated use or increased visitor numbers following its inclusion within the English Stonelifting directory, seeking agreement from the relevant landowner or land manager is considered best practice.[3]

All activity should follow the Countryside Code, including the principle of leaving property, rocks, stones and the surrounding environment as they are found and avoiding damage or disturbance.[3]

6.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Rights of way and accessing land

[2] Natural England – Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities

[3] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

7. Stone Removal, Relocation and Placement

English Stonelifting does not encourage the removal of naturally occurring stones from their setting, the permanent relocation of stones, or the introduction of stones to new locations without appropriate permission and consideration of any applicable legal, environmental, archaeological or land-management requirements.[1][2]

Where a stone is temporarily moved for the purpose of a lift, it should only be moved as far as reasonably necessary and should be returned carefully to substantially the same position and condition, unless an alternative arrangement has been expressly agreed with the relevant landowner or land manager.[1]

Stones must not be excavated, dug out, buried, dismantled from structures or boundaries, or otherwise disturbed for the purpose of creating a lifting opportunity.[2][3]

7.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

[2] Natural England – Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities

[3] Historic England – Heritage protection and advice

8. Heritage and Conservation

The protection of England's natural, historic and archaeological environment takes precedence over recreational stonelifting.

Where there is uncertainty about the archaeological, geological, ecological or historic significance of a stone or its location, lifting should not take place until appropriate checks have been completed.[1][2][3]

Any stone suspected of forming part of an archaeological feature, historic structure, ancient boundary, cairn, monument or other heritage asset should be left undisturbed.[1][2]

Stones must not be excavated, exposed, altered or removed where doing so could damage or disturb a protected or otherwise significant feature. Certain works affecting Scheduled Monuments require prior Scheduled Monument Consent, while activities likely to damage the special features of an SSSI may require consent from Natural England.[1][3]

English Stonelifting reserves the right to remove from its website, directory, maps or social media channels any stone or location that does not comply with this policy.

8.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Scheduled monuments: permissions and consents

[2] GOV.UK – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

[3] GOV.UK / Natural England – SSSIs: managing your land and getting consent for activities

[4] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code

9. Environmental Impact and Cumulative Use

English Stonelifting recognises that environmental impact can result not only from an individual lift but also from repeated visits to the same location.[1]

Where repeated use results in erosion, vegetation loss, ground compaction, damage to paths, disturbance to wildlife or other visible environmental impact, lifting should cease and the location should be reported to English Stonelifting and, where appropriate, the relevant landowner or land manager.[1][2]

The publication of a stone may increase awareness and visitor numbers. English Stonelifting may therefore withhold, amend or remove location information where publication could reasonably be expected to result in environmental damage, disturbance, conflict with land management or other unacceptable impacts.[1][2]

9.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

[2] Natural England – Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities

10. Publication, Mapping and Location Information

Information published by English Stonelifting is provided for documentation, historical, educational and recreational purposes. Information concerning a stone's location, weight, accessibility, ownership, condition or suitability may change and should not be assumed to remain accurate or current.

Participants must independently verify access rights, permissions, restrictions, site conditions and any relevant local requirements before visiting or attempting to lift a stone.[1][2]

English Stonelifting may deliberately limit the accuracy or precision of publicly available location information, or withhold a location entirely, where this is considered necessary to protect a stone, landscape, heritage asset, landowner's interests or the wider environment.[3]

10.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Rights of way and accessing land

[2] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code

[3] Natural England – Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities

11. Responsibility of the Lifter

Participation in stonelifting remains the responsibility of the individual.

Before attempting a lift, lifters should assess the condition and stability of the stone, surrounding terrain, access arrangements, weather and their own physical capability.[1]

English Stonelifting encourages all participants to follow four simple principles:

1. Lift responsibly.
2. Protect the stone.
3. Respect the land.
4. Leave no trace.

English Stonelifting exists to preserve and develop the tradition of natural stone lifting while helping to ensure that the landscapes, communities and heritage associated with these stones are respected and protected for future generations.

11.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

12. Children and Young People

English Stonelifting recognises that some stones and locations may be of interest to children and young people under the age of 18. As English Stonelifting does not organise, supervise or provide coaching for stonelifting activities, responsibility for deciding whether a young person participates rests with their parent, guardian or responsible adult.

Young people should only attempt to lift a stone where the activity is considered appropriate for their age, physical ability and experience, and where any required landowner or land-manager permission has been obtained. Appropriate adult supervision should be provided where necessary, particularly for younger or inexperienced participants.[1][2]

English Stonelifting does not provide instruction, coaching or supervision to children or young people and should not be regarded as a provider of organised youth sporting activities. Any organised activity involving children or young people is the responsibility of the organiser, who should ensure that appropriate safeguarding, health and safety and supervision arrangements are in place.[1][2]

English Stonelifting will not knowingly encourage children or young people to undertake activities that are inappropriate, unsafe or beyond their physical ability. The same requirements concerning access, permissions, environmental protection, heritage and responsible lifting apply regardless of the participant's age.

12.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Using after-school clubs, tuition and community activities

[2] GOV.UK – Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers

13. Injury, Health and Liability

English Stonelifting is a documentation and information platform and does not organise, supervise or control individual stonelifting attempts or training activities.

Participation in stonelifting is undertaken at the participant's own risk. English Stonelifting does not accept responsibility for injury, illness, death, loss or damage arising from participation, except where liability cannot lawfully be excluded or limited.[1][2]

Stonelifting can involve significant physical exertion and manual handling. Participants should assess whether they are physically capable of undertaking the activity and,

where appropriate, seek advice from a suitably qualified medical professional before attempting a lift.[3][4]

Participants who have not exercised for some time, have a medical condition or have concerns about their ability to undertake strenuous physical activity should consider seeking advice from a GP or other suitably qualified healthcare professional before attempting a lift.[3]

Participants are responsible for assessing their own ability and experience and for considering the condition and stability of the stone, surrounding ground, access arrangements, equipment, weather and other potential hazards before attempting a lift.[4][5]

The inclusion of a stone on the English Stonelifting website, register, map or social media channels does not constitute an instruction, recommendation or guarantee that the stone is safe or suitable to lift.

Where appropriate, participants should seek suitable supervision, instruction or professional advice before attempting a lift.

Nothing in this policy is intended to exclude or restrict any liability that cannot lawfully be excluded or restricted.[1][2]

13.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – Writing a fair contract for customers

[2] GOV.UK – Unfair contract terms (CMA37)

[3] NHS – Physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64

[4] GOV.UK – UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines

[5] Health and Safety Executive – Manual handling at work

14. Organised Events and Group Activities

English Stonelifting distinguishes between individual recreational lifting and organised activities involving groups, events, competitions, demonstrations or commercial activities.

Organisers of group activities are responsible for obtaining any permissions, consents, insurance, risk assessments or other arrangements required for the activity and must not rely solely on the inclusion of a stone on the English Stonelifting website as evidence that an activity is authorised.[1][2]

Where an organised activity is likely to attract significant numbers of participants or members of the public, organisers should consider the potential effects on landowners,

access routes, neighbouring land, wildlife, vegetation and the surrounding environment.[1]

14.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

[2] Natural England – Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities

15. Reporting Concerns and Removal of Listings

English Stonelifting encourages landowners, land managers, lifters and members of the public to report concerns relating to any stone or location listed on the website.

Concerns may include incorrect access information, disputes regarding permission or ownership, environmental damage, erosion, damage to the stone, unsafe conditions, archaeological or heritage concerns, inappropriate behaviour or any other activity inconsistent with this policy.

English Stonelifting may temporarily suspend, amend or permanently remove a stone, location, map, image or other content where concerns have been raised, where information cannot be adequately verified, or where continued publication could reasonably contribute to harm or conflict.[1]

Where appropriate, English Stonelifting will seek clarification from the relevant landowner, land manager, conservation body or other competent authority before restoring or continuing publication.

15.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

16. Policy Review

English Stonelifting will periodically review this policy in light of changes to legislation, official guidance, land-management requirements, conservation considerations, landowner feedback and experience gained through the operation of the platform.

Where necessary, individual stones, locations or categories of activity may be removed or restricted while the policy is reviewed or updated.

16.1 Sources and Guidance

[1] GOV.UK – The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors