Submit a Stone — Guidance & Policy

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POLICY PRINCIPLES

Permission — Establish lawful access and obtain permission where required.
Protection — Protect stones, landscapes, habitats, heritage and archaeological features.
Responsibility — Do not assume that publication on English Stonelifting grants permission to access or lift.
Reversibility — Where a stone is temporarily moved, return it substantially to its original position and condition unless otherwise agreed.
Respect — Respect landowners, land managers, other countryside users and the wider environment.
If in doubt, ask first.

1. Purpose

English Stonelifting exists to document and celebrate England's stone-lifting heritage while encouraging responsible access, respect for landowners and protection of the landscape. Submitting a stone is an opportunity to record its location, history, folklore and lifting characteristics, but **publication on English Stonelifting does not grant permission to access land, move, place or lift a stone**. Users remain responsible for establishing any permission, consent or access rights required.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — Rights of way and accessing land | GOV.UK — The Countryside Code

2. Before Submitting

Before submitting a stone, contributors should establish:

- The precise location of the stone.
- Whether the land is privately owned, publicly owned, common land or open-access land.
- Who owns or manages the land, where this can reasonably be established.
- Whether access to the stone is lawful.
- Whether the stone is naturally situated or has been deliberately placed.
- Whether permission is required to access, lift, temporarily move or otherwise interact with the stone.
- Whether environmental, archaeological, heritage or land-management restrictions apply.
- Whether visiting or lifting the stone could cause damage, disturbance or obstruction.

Where the legal or permission position is unclear, **do not assume that access or lifting is permitted**. Seek clarification from the relevant landowner, land manager or authority.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — Rights of way and accessing land | GOV.UK — The Countryside Code

3. Landowner Permission & Access

Private Land

Where a stone is situated on private land, contributors should obtain permission from the landowner or authorised land manager before submitting the stone as a lifting location.

Where appropriate, permission should clarify:

- Access to the stone.
- Routes of entry and exit.
- Parking arrangements.
- Whether lifting is permitted.
- Whether temporary movement is permitted.
- Whether the stone must be returned to its original position and condition.
- Any conditions imposed by the landowner or land manager.

Public Rights of Way

A public right of way provides a recorded right of passage for specified users. It does not automatically provide permission to leave the route, enter adjoining private land or carry out activities beyond the rights provided.

Stones must not obstruct, damage or interfere with a public right of way.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — Rights of way and accessing land | GOV.UK — Countryside Code: advice for land managers

4. Open-Access Land

The **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act)** normally provides a public right of access on foot to mapped open country and registered common land, subject to restrictions, exclusions and temporary closures.

Open-access status should therefore be checked before submitting a stone. The right to access open-access land should **not be interpreted as a general permission to move, relocate, place or alter stones**.

English Stonelifting's position is that a natural, in-situ stone should only be lifted where the activity is compatible with the applicable access rights, restrictions and conditions, causes no damage or disturbance and does not involve unauthorised movement or alteration of the landscape.

Where there is uncertainty, contributors should seek advice or permission from the relevant landowner, land manager or authority.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — Open access land: management, rights and responsibilities | GOV.UK — Open access land and the coastal margin: restrictions | GOV.UK — Countryside Code

5. Environmental Protection

Stones should not be submitted where accessing or lifting them would cause unnecessary environmental damage or disturbance.

Contributors should avoid:

- Digging or excavating around stones.
- Removing soil or vegetation.
- Damaging trees, hedges, walls, banks or paths.
- Creating informal lifting areas.
- Repeatedly trampling sensitive ground.

- Disturbing wildlife or livestock.
- Moving other natural features to facilitate a lift.
- Leaving equipment, materials or other objects behind.

The **Countryside Code** encourages visitors to respect the countryside, protect wildlife, leave gates and property as found and leave no trace of their visit. English Stonelifting adopts these principles as a minimum standard for responsible stonelifting.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — The Countryside Code | GOV.UK — Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors

6. Protected Sites, Heritage & Archaeology

Particular care is required where a stone is located within or near a protected or historically significant site.

Scheduled Monuments

A stone must not be treated as an ordinary lifting stone where it forms part of, or may be associated with, a scheduled monument or archaeological remains.

Works affecting a scheduled monument may require **Scheduled Monument Consent**. Contributors should therefore check the heritage status of a location before undertaking activity that could disturb the ground, move archaeological material or affect a protected monument.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Where a stone is located within a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**, contributors should establish whether the proposed activity could affect the site's protected features.

Natural England provides guidance on activities requiring consent on SSSIs. Where an activity could affect a protected site, contributors should work with the landowner or occupier and seek appropriate advice before proceeding.

Other Heritage & Conservation Sites

Additional restrictions may apply to:

- Archaeological sites.
- Registered historic sites.
- Nature reserves.
- Protected geological features.
- Land subject to local byelaws.

- Land subject to specific estate or management restrictions.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — Sites of Special Scientific Interest: managing your land and getting consent | GOV.UK — Scheduled Monument Consent | GOV.UK — The Countryside Code

7. The Stone

English Stonelifting primarily seeks to document **natural stones that are already present in the landscape**.

Preference should be given to stones that are:

- Naturally occurring or historically established at their location.
- Free-standing or accessible without excavation.
- Suitable for lifting without damaging the surrounding ground.
- Away from busy paths, roads and other areas where lifting could create conflict or danger.
- Associated with documented history, folklore, local tradition, geography or recreational use, where known.

A stone should **not be deliberately placed on land to create an English Stonelifting location without appropriate permission**.

Where a stone has been moved or placed by a person, the submission should clearly state this rather than presenting the stone as a naturally occurring or historic in-situ stone.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — The Countryside Code

8. Returning the Stone

Where a stone is lifted from an established position, the preferred practice is to **return it substantially to its original position and condition**, unless the landowner or land manager has expressly agreed otherwise.

Temporary movement should be limited to what is reasonably necessary for a safe lifting attempt.

Contributors should not:

- Permanently relocate a natural stone.
- Bury or expose additional parts of a stone.
- Dig around it to make a lift possible.

- Alter the surrounding ground.
- Shape, drill, cut or mark the stone.
- Move the stone to another location without appropriate permission.

The principle is simple: **lift responsibly and leave the stone and landscape as you found them.**

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — The Countryside Code

9. Safety & Responsibility

Stone lifting is a physically demanding activity and carries inherent risks. English Stonelifting does not supervise individual lifting attempts and publication of a stone does not represent a guarantee that it is safe to lift.

Anyone attempting a lift is responsible for assessing:

- Their own physical ability.
- The condition and stability of the stone.
- The surrounding ground.
- The presence of other people.
- The potential consequences of dropping or moving the stone.
- Weather and environmental conditions.
- Any site-specific restrictions.

The presence of a stone on the English Stonelifting website **must not be interpreted as an instruction or recommendation to attempt a lift.**

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — The Countryside Code

10. Information Required for Submission

Contributors should provide accurate information wherever possible, including:

- Stone name.
- Location.
- Weight, where known.
- Photographs or video.
- Accessibility information.
- Permission status.

- Landowner or land-manager information, where appropriate.
- Lifting challenge.
- History or folklore.
- Information about how the stone was discovered.
- Any known environmental, heritage or access restrictions.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — The Countryside Code

11. Verification & Publication

Submission does not guarantee publication.

English Stonelifting may request additional information, clarify the permission or access position, restrict location information, decline publication or remove an existing listing where concerns arise.

This may include:

- Landowner objections.
- Unclear or disputed access.
- Environmental damage or sensitivity.
- Heritage or archaeological concerns.
- Unsafe access.
- Obstruction of a public right of way.
- Excessive visitor pressure.
- Unauthorised placement or relocation.
- Inaccurate or misleading information.

English Stonelifting reserves the right to remove or restrict a listing where responsible access cannot reasonably be established.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — Rights of way and accessing land | GOV.UK — The Countryside Code

12. The Principle

IF IN DOUBT, ASK FIRST.

English Stonelifting exists to document and celebrate stones and their stories — not to encourage trespass, environmental damage, obstruction or irresponsible use of the countryside.

Respect the stone.
Respect the land.
Respect the people who own and manage it.
Leave the landscape as you found it.

Guidance & references:
GOV.UK — The Countryside Code