

**Route Summary Report
Wetton Hills
February 2018**



Description

The route commences at the end of the tarmacadam section of the non-classified road immediately adjacent to Manor House Farm, in a generally south west and then south easterly direction to its junction with Leek Road.

Legal Status: Non-classified Highway and Green Lane
County: Staffordshire
Parish: Wetton CP
Grid Reference: SK 104 566 to 908 569
Length: 1420 metres

Nearest Other Byways / Non-classified Highways / Claimed Byways

Links directly to NCH cul-de-sac route to Top of Ecton northwards, southern end links to Manifold Way NCH which is subject to an all vehicle TRO

Sustainability Analysis

Undertaken in 2013

Physical - Does the route show serious signs of physical damage resulting from usage?

Comment: The route is largely unsurfaced

Score: 1 (1 or no user groups would find the route hard to use) – as at 2013

Conservation - Is the route subject to any protective designation (for heritage or wildlife)?

Comment: Within SSSI.

Score: 2 (the route crossed or abuts a protected area)

Complaints - Have there been any complaints about vehicular use conflicting with other uses?

Comment: Generally localised and landowners.

Score: 1 (few or no complaints)

Character - Is the character of the route being damaged by vehicular use?

Comments: A small amount of traffic could have a major impact upon the route

Score: 2 (the highway is affected)

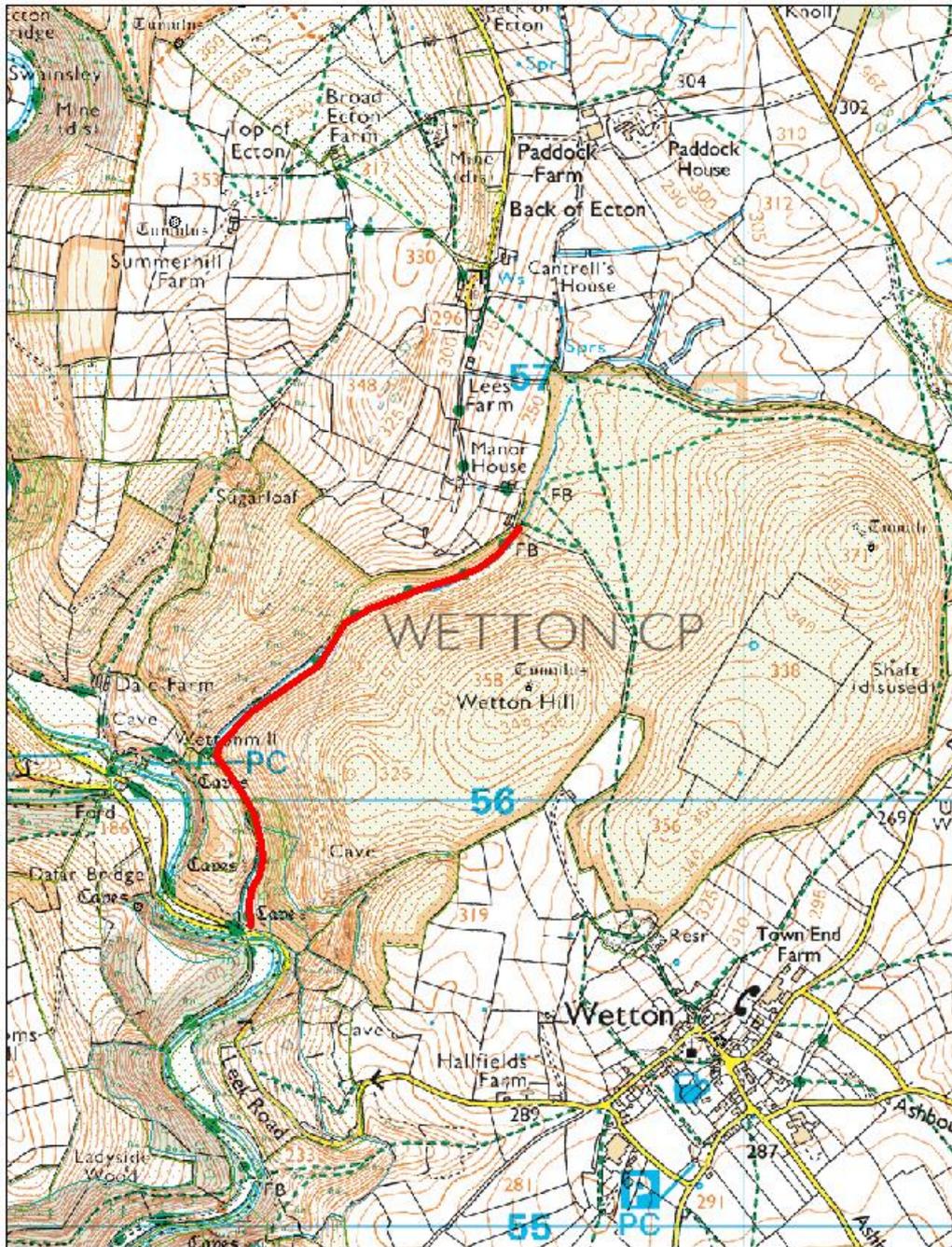
Conflict - Is the free passage of non-motorised users being prejudiced?

Comment:

Score: 1 (minor/no issues regarding the width, visibility, slope and speed of use by vehicles)

Total Score =7/15





 <p>PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK</p>	<p>N</p> 	<p>Wetton</p> <p> Route with proven or possible motor vehicle rights which may be unsustainable</p>	<p>DESIGNATIONS</p> <p> Site designated as one or more of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site of Scientific Interest - Special Area of Conservation - Section 3 & Natural Zone <p> Scheduled Ancient Monument</p>
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Representation on this map of a route is no evidence of a right of way.
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Levels of Vehicular Use

Weds 2 April 2014 – Fri 23 May 2014 (52 days)

Daily totals	Large Vehicles	Motorcycles only
Mondays	2	0
Tuesdays	0	0
Wednesdays	0	0
Thursdays	2	0
Fridays	0	0
Saturdays	2	1
Sundays	4	4
Mon-Fri total	4	0
Sat-Sunday total	6	5
Overall total	10	5
Average per day	0.15	0.13

Thursday 20 August 2015 – Friday 20 November 2015 (93 days)

Daily Totals	Large Vehicles only	Motorcycles Only
Mondays	0	10
Tuesdays	0	0
Wednesdays	2	0
Thursday	0	3
Fridays	0	2
Saturdays	11	18
Sundays	14	43
Mon-Fri Total	2	15
Sat-Sun Total	25	61
Overall Total	27	76
Average Per Day	0.3	0.8

Friday 15 January 2016 – Thursday 24 March 2016 (70 days)*

***During period of voluntary restraint by all users**

Daily Totals	Large Vehicles only	Motorcycles Only
Mondays	0	4
Tuesdays	0	5
Wednesdays	0	0
Thursday	0	0
Fridays	0	0
Saturdays	1	22
Sundays	3	18
Mon-Fri Total	0	9
Sat-Sun Total	4	40
Overall Total	4	49
Average Per Day	0.05	0.7

Friday 25 March 2016 – Saturday 30 April 2016 (37 days)****During period of voluntary restraint by all users**

Daily Totals	Large Vehicles only	Motorcycles Only
Mondays	0	1
Tuesdays	1	1
Wednesdays	0	0
Thursdays	0	0
Fridays	0	7
Saturdays	0	3
Sundays	0	1
Mon-Fri Total	1	9
Sat-Sun Total	0	4
Overall Total	1	13
Average Per Day	0.02	0.35

Friday 14 October 2016 – Thurs 18 March 2017 (156 days)

Daily totals	Large Vehicles	Motorcycles only
Mondays	0	11
Tuesdays	0	6
Wednesdays	0	13
Thursdays	0	4
Fridays	0	14
Saturdays	4	51
Sundays	4	90
Mon-Fri total	0	48
Sat-Sunday total	8	141
Overall total	8	189
Average per day	0.05	1.21

Friday 17 March 2017 – Friday 21 July 2017 (127 days)

Daily totals	Large Vehicles	Motorcycles only
Mondays	23	30
Tuesdays	11	6
Wednesdays	4	2
Thursdays	5	9
Fridays	4	3
Saturdays	6	9
Sundays	11	31
Mon-Fri total	47	50
Sat-Sunday total	17	40
Overall total	64	90
Average per day	0.5	0.7

Saturday 22 July 2017 – Thursday 17 August 2017 (27 days)

Daily totals	Large Vehicles	Motorcycles only
Mondays	3	2
Tuesdays	0	2
Wednesdays	0	0
Thursdays	0	0
Fridays	2	1
Saturdays	0	1
Sundays	0	9
Mon-Fri total	5	6
Sat-Sunday total	0	10
Overall total	5	16
Average per day	0.18	0.59

Friday 18 Aug 2017 – Thursday 4 Jan 2018 (140 days)

Daily totals	Large Vehicles	Motorcycles only
Mondays	0	5
Tuesdays	0	2
Wednesdays	0	4
Thursdays	0	16
Fridays	0	7
Saturdays	13	29
Sundays	5	45
Mon-Fri total	0	34
Sat-Sunday total	18	74
Overall total	18	108
Average per day	0.12	0.77

Conservation interest

Ecology - An ecological survey was carried out in February and May 2015 (Appendix 1). The whole route lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Natural Zone and the lower section within a Special Area of Conservation.

Landscape – The route lies within the White Peak landscape character area – an elevated limestone plateau dissected by deeply cut dales and gorges. Regular field boundaries have generally been built using quarried stone, (and) isolated stone field barns are often incorporated within the pattern of stone walls. Lead-mining and quarrying (have produced) industrial features very important to the White Peak landscape character. The pattern of straight roads (is) defined by stone walls, reflecting the late enclosure of the land from common and waste.

Cultural Heritage – An archaeological report summarising desk-based research was provided in 2015 (Appendix 2). The route runs through Historic Landscape Character areas.

Peak District Local Access Forum Comments

The Green Lanes Sub-group surveyed the route and met in November 2014. Appendix 3 sets out their individual observations. The Sub-group expressed concern about the current state of the route and that opportunity exists to take action before the route further deteriorates, but that action needs to be taken urgently.

- PDNPA to approach the National Trust and PPCV with a view to carrying out minor repair works on rutted section, infilling with appropriate stone materials
- Escalate the monitoring of this route to ensure it does not deteriorate further and that if deterioration continues, actions should be escalated.

Issues

People

- User conflict – recreational value for all users

The Route

- Route condition – rutted

The Area

- SAC, SSSI and Natural Zone

Site: WETTON

Date of survey: 15.02.2015 & 04.05.2015

Description and ecological interest

Length: 1.36 km. The route runs along the north-western and western edges of Wetton Hill, from Manor House to a point on the minor road through the Manifold Valley a short way below Wettonmill. It follows a shallow dip between Wetton Hill and the slope on the other side.

The site was first surveyed on 15 February then resurveyed in early May, spring flowers are beginning to show and a more complete botanical assessment is possible.

The track itself and a narrow, level strip on each side, consist of semi-improved grassland. The adjoining habitat is mainly good quality, calcareous grassland. Some patches of hawthorn scrub are developing at the southern end.

The slopes of Wetton Hill and the opposite slope contain high-quality calcareous grassland (NVC CG2d). Species present include sheep's fescue, sweet vernal grass, salad burnet, rock rose, mouse-ear hawkweed, glaucous sedge, spring sedge, meadow saxifrage, fairy flax, harebell and carline thistle. Higher up on the western bank, early purple orchid is locally frequent. A large extent of habitat on both sides of the route qualifies as Category A grassland under the PDNPA's assessment criteria.

Site Designations

The whole route lies within the Hamps and Manifold Valleys SSSI.

The north-eastern part of the route is designated as Section 3 Hill and Heath. The south-western part of the route is designated as Section 3 Limestone Dale.

Vehicles leaving the highway

There is a wall and/or fence on the NW/W side but the SE/E is open. In theory this could permit access to Wetton Hill, but the slope is quite steep. No vehicle or motor cycle tracks were visible away from the line of the route, except at the northern end where a side-track curls round the N side of Wetton Hill. Vehicle tracks here may have been made by farm vehicles.

Impacts

Most of the route has a soft surface that is muddy in many places and has been rutted by the passage of vehicles. One stretch of c. 150 m has ruts to 25 cm deep parts of which are filled with water. This has encouraged walkers, cyclists and motor cyclists to pass this section to the side thus widening the effective width of the track by about 1 m on each side. A short way to the south is a 30m section passing over bedrock that is exposed, showing 4 rock steps and a deep hole in one rut.

Continued use by vehicles can be expected to deepen and extend the existing rutting and damage to the track surface as well as encourage spread to the adjacent strip, causing further damage to the grassland in the SSSI.

Appendix 2 – Cultural Heritage Report

Historic Environment Record/archaeological survey information

The route falls within the scope of a detailed archaeological survey of the National Trust South Peak Estate which was undertaken by the National Park Cultural Heritage team survey archaeologists in 2005/6. The route is not listed as a separate heritage asset in its own right but there are recorded features at either end of it. These are: a building platform, possible site of early mill at SK 1050 5666; stone slab footbridge over the stream at the bottom of Wetton Hill at SK 1047 5665; leek and Manifold light railway at SK 098 556 (centred on).

Historic Landscape Character

The northern section of the route runs through land which is characterised as: Post-1650 Encl - Regular: Piecemeal/Award, no details. This is shown on the two earliest maps as forming part of a large enclosed area with no internal boundaries shown. Marked as 'Brode Ecton' in 1587 and 'Mr Burgons Ecton - Fre Land' in 1617. Senior's map of 1617 does not show enclosures belonging to anyone other than the Duke of Devonshire, so it is possible that some of this area was in fact enclosed before 1650. However, the earliest map to show enclosure boundaries is dated 1809.

The southern section of the route runs through enclosed moorland. Marked as 'the Hille' in 1587 and 'Wetton Hill' on Senior's map of 1617. Assumed to have been part of the commons at that time. Some land has been taken in since 1617, and the remaining area is considered now to be 'enclosed moorland'.

General recommendations

Should any monitoring projects be proposed, the route should be walked and the condition of any features be noted and photographed. Particular consideration should be given to gateposts, walls and wall furniture and earthworks. On the basis of the information collected, recommendations for damage mitigation could be made. This information can also be used to inform the nature and scale of any intended repairs to the route.

General

One has, I suppose, to respect the law even where it is self evidently an ass. To pretend that a quiet grassy dale like this has MPV rights is both a logical nonsense and, for many, an affront.

That said I think the ruts must be backfilled with suitable chatter as soon as possible. I do not perceive this to be a technically difficult job, and within the compass of volunteers if the chatter can be brought on site (in dry weather).

I think the lower part of the track has at some time been surfaced with something like 40mm. This has weathered in well and is providing a durable surface.

When we visited the grassy track below Minninglow we thought it was not too bad. I have since seen alarming pictures of how it has deteriorated. I would hate there to be a case of déjà vu in respect of Wetton. This suggests immediate action is indicated: no wait and see about it.

There is another reason for backfilling. At the moment it is a flat, unchallenging route which presents no particular driver challenge. If it is left deterioration in its condition will paradoxically encourage increased usage because the driving challenge will become greater, and there will be a major problem.

The status should really be challenged, but there is real risk that that could perversely draw added attention to what is a little used way be counter productive. Enduring and retaining current low levels of usage may be preferable (and cheaper).

My recommendation therefore is to back fill the rutted areas as soon as possible, and then keep a watchful eye.

General

This is a delightful route through stunning limestone scenery. It is used regularly by walkers and horse riders. There is evidence of damage by vehicles and some deviation from the track by other vehicles avoiding the most damaged sections. As ever drainage is an issue but the low level of use to date hasn't caused a lot of washout. We visited the route after a period of dry weather and it would again be worth noting the effects of prolonged rain.

Repairs could be undertaken by volunteers or by the National Trust and I believe little attention should be drawn to the route to help to keep use to a minimum. I believe the route would very quickly deteriorate if levels of use increased.

General

This route runs from Back of Ecton by a tarmac surface down into the Valley and then is unsurfaced over grassland (National Trust ownership) along to Wettonmill. A culs-de-sac spur northwards to Broad Ecton Farm is also part of the assessment.

I assume it to be popular for walking and horse riding and possibly some mountain bike usage off the Manifold Way (more information from monitoring would be welcome). There does seem to be a minor (but growing) problem in the Valley section with some ruts due to motor vehicle use (probably m/cycles. (More information from vehicle logging would be helpful). Overall the route is in good condition, but the developing rutting needs considering and addressing.

Liaison Needed with Staffordshire County Council before and at LAF Sub Group really re policy, approach and resource issues. Do they support the Peak's Strategy. Also good to talk to the National Trust

Suggested Objectives:

People

- Reduce impact of use on the local community
- Promote responsible use
- Encourage voluntary action
- Improve amenity and safety for route users

The Route

- Improve surface condition in the few places where ruts have developed to the detriment of non vehicular users
- Maintain unspolited character of the route down the Valley

<p>The Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the environment of the area
<p>Safety issues</p> <p><u>Signage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridleways and footpaths nearby are signposted and the area is signed as being National Trust land. • OK • National Trust sign • Scope for some advisory signage initially as used in other parts of the Peak <p><u>Surface & Off-site information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None observed • Generally good surface condition apart from some rutting in short sections of the Valley - SSSI? <p><u>Conflicts of different use</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is popular with walkers and the nature of the area is such that vehicles would not be expected or anticipated. • The route is used by motors (4W & 2W), horses, bikes and walkers but is comparatively spacious with good visibility • Evidence of use by walkers and MPVs. No conflict observed. • Steep narrow section of tarmac surfaced route likely to involve motor/other recreational users in conflict but no details. Grass route down the Valley should be enjoyed without significant disturbance <p><u>Width</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate • 2-3M at the narrowest • The track crosses open land, but on the ground varies between about 3 metres to 4+ metres. • generally reasonable <p><u>Speed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 mph • None observed • Not apparent as an issue from the visit
<p>Cause(s) of Damage</p> <p><u>Recreational Use</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite there being relatively light use of this route by vehicles the surface is being to break up and become rutted in several places. • There are significant vehicle ruts at the central section which are expanding sideways as driver take evasive action. They appear to be mainly 2W motorbike in origin • About 20 metres slightly rutted • Vehicle logging which is planned will be important to getting information on existing vehicular use patterns <p><u>Agricultural use / access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apparently very limited • Some agricultural use visible • No agricultural or access use observed • Affects farmland in the Valley and is a good access spine linking into the Manifold way <p><u>Natural erosion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The damage to the route is beginning to effect drainage • The ruts fill with water but there does not appear to be much erosion • Negligible • does not seem to be an issue
<p>Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a classic case. If action could be taken now while the damage is limited the route

could be expected to heal with a bit of limited, careful repair and the prospect of an ugly muddy scar down this beautiful valley avoided. If use continues and increases the damage will become serious and unsightly and will destroy the natural beauty of the valley. The area is well walked and is very popular it is also of high botanical value.

- This route is OK at present but there are signs that it will deteriorate with present use if the ruts are not filled with rubble. This could be done relatively cheaply with volunteer labour but would require more extensive repairs if it is left alone.
- Fill the short rutted section with stone, as has already been done at the southern end of the route.
- Offer collaboration between NT, PDNPA and MPV user volunteers to carry out repairs.
- Signage as referred to above
- Voluntary restraint with
- Some filling in of ruts
- Monitoring and review

Long-term management options

- Repair, sympathetically, the current damage. Contact the National Trust to see what their view about this route is and encourage them to be involved in its management. A TRO would be my preferred option but if this is not possible then some kind of voluntary restriction needs to be considered.
- This route considered alongside Swan Rake and Limer Rake offers the opportunity to make serious cases about the issue of green lanes to whatever 'powers that be' are relevant. This route is one that could be saved; Swan Rake and Limer Rake are what can happen if no action is taken. Will anyone take any notice?
- Monitoring of use to check progress
- Routine inspection and filling in of ruts that might develop
- Repairs to the surface in the Valley as needs be - with County Council
- Monitor and review
- Seems some way off justifying TRO approach at this stage, but depends on further information, consultation, usage details and logging