

Chapel Gate

Route Management Plan



Chapel Gate - Route Management Plan



Chapel Gate

Introduction

In March 2006, a Derbyshire County Council Improvement and Scrutiny Committee examined the issue of the use of unsurfaced highways. The key recommendation of the Committee was that each Non-classified Highway in Derbyshire would be surveyed to define whether it is sustainable or unsustainable.

National Park staff acted behalf of Derbyshire County Council to conduct a baseline survey of routes within the National Park. A full condition survey of all 180 'other routes with public access' has been completed and prioritised.

At it's meeting on 7th March 2008, the National Park Authority requested that the routes showing highest priority from the survey should be subject to management plans, in order to determine the most appropriate courses of action.

This plan is therefore intended to inform the Highway Authority (Derbyshire County Council) and the National Park Authority to enable the development and review of measures to improve the management of the route.

1 Description

Chapelgate is a Byway Open to All Traffic which commences on Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith (Rushup Edge road) and ascends towards Rushup Edge in a generally NE direction before descending to the Edale Road near Barber Booth, Edale.

Legal Status:	Byway Open to All Traffic
County:	Derbyshire
Parish:	Chapel en le Frith and Edale
Grid Reference:	SK 093825 to SK113842
Length:	2700 metres

Nearest Other Byways / Non-classified Highways / Claimed Byways

The Roych (NCH) which carries the Pennine Bridleway, lies within 100 metres of the west-end of this route (this route also 'may be unsustainable'). Little Mam Tor Road is approximately 4km east. The greater Castleton network of NCHs is accessed some 2kms south. Approximately 3km north is Jacobs Ladder (which is the subject of a TRO excluding all traffic except for access)



Chapel Gate





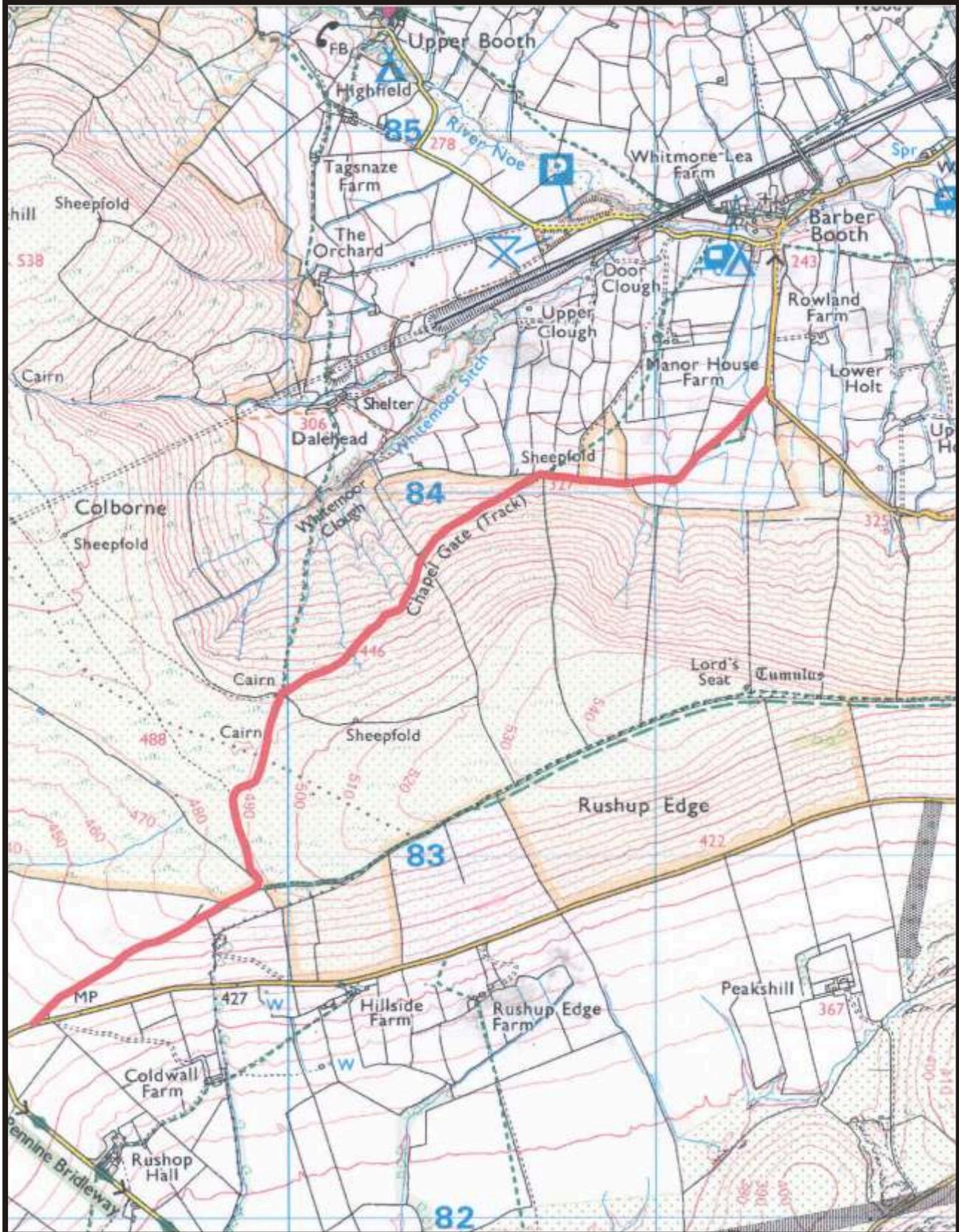
Chapel Gate

 Route with proven or possible motor vehicle rights which may be unsustainable

DESIGNATIONS

-  Site designated as one or more of
 - Site of Scientific Interest
 - Special Area of Conservation
 - Section 3 & Natural Zone
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument

Representation on this map of a route is no evidence of a right of way.
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2 Report

2.1 Sustainability Analysis

The ability of a route to sustain use is largely dependent on the existing route surface, the topography and the drainage of the route. The surface can vary from mineral soils or grass to a stone-surfaced track. On most routes some engineering works have been carried out to alter the natural surface and drainage.

Each Non-classified Highway in Derbyshire has been surveyed to define whether it is sustainable or unsustainable.

The methodology was considered and approved by Derbyshire County Council Improvement and Scrutiny Committee in March 2006, the Peak District Local Access Forum in December 2005 and the National Park Authority as part of its 'Strategy to Manage Recreational Vehicular Use of Unsurfaced Highways and Address Off-road Use' in October 2007.

National Park staff, acting on behalf of Derbyshire County Council, conducted a baseline survey in the National Park. A full condition survey of all 180 'other routes with public access' has been completed and prioritised.

The survey was intended to provide a quick review of all routes to place each into one of three broad categories:-

- Sustainable
- Unclear
- Maybe unsustainable

Method:

1. Does the route show serious signs of physical damage resulting from usage?
Yes/uncertain/No
2. Is the route subject to any protective designation (for heritage or wildlife)?
Yes/uncertain/No
3. Have there been any complaints about vehicular use conflicting with other uses?
Many/Some/None
4. Is the character of the route being damaged by vehicular use?
Yes, a lot/Yes, a bit/No
5. Is the free passage of non motorised users being prejudiced?
Yes, a lot/Yes, a bit/No

Each positive response registers 'may be unsustainable' each negative response registers 'sustainable' and other responses register 'unclear'.

One or more 'Maybe unsustainable' responses will put the route in the 'Maybe unsustainable' category at this stage.

No 'Maybe unsustainable' responses but one or more 'Unclear' responses will put the route in the 'Unclear' category at this stage.

All 'Sustainable' responses will put the route in the 'Sustainable' category at this stage.

All routes recorded as 'maybe unsustainable' will be the subject of a management plan.

Results:

The above methodology has been refined in order to clarify the questions/answers, and allocated scores to enable a statistical comparison.

1. Does the route show serious signs of physical damage resulting from usage?

Is it difficult for user groups to use this route? (for users groups we have defined walking, cycling, horse-riding, carriage driving, and vehicles).

3 points – 4 or more user groups would find the route hard to use,

2 points – 2-3 user groups would find the route hard to use

1 point 1 or no user groups would find the route hard to use.

Score = 3

Comments:

All user groups would, in our opinion, find certain sections of the route difficult, PDNPA staff have seen motorbikers and mountain bikers fall and risk injury and it is our opinion that use for many groups whilst the route remains in its present state of repair, is not only difficult, but dangerous.

2. Is the route subject to any protective designation (for heritage or wildlife)?

We have defined protective designation as Scheduled Ancient Monument, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation or Section 3 and Natural Zone.

3 points a route crosses or abuts a protected area and vehicle users are (for whatever reason) leaving the highway,

2 points – the route crosses or abuts a protected area,

1 point – no areas of protection abut or cross the highway

Score = 3

Comments:

Most of the route crosses a designated area, to avoid damaged sections of route users are straying from the legal line, some erosion of the route has caused sub-base and surface material to wash onto nearby protected land.

3. Have there been any complaints about vehicular use conflicting with other uses?

3 points - Yes many complaints from a variety of sources,

2 points - Yes from localized sources or individuals,

1 point – few or no complaints

Score = 3

Comments:

Frequent and from a variety of sources, vehicle users on site included.

4. Is the character of the route being damaged by vehicular use?

3 points – the highway and adjacent land are affected,

2 points – the highway is affected,

1 point – little or no affect (including 1 or 2 minor areas of damage on the highway)

Score = 3

Comments:

The highway damage is highly visible from some distance, and as users of all types have tried to avoid the worst sections the width of the route has spread, exposed bedrock is frequent and spoil from earlier repairs is still prevalent.

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

Are there issues regarding the width, visibility, slope and speed of use by vehicles?

3 points yes (3 or 4 issues),

2 points yes (1 or 2 issues),

1 point – minor/no issues

Score = 3

Comments:

Parts of the route are steep (in exposed areas of bedrock several shallow drops occur), and visibility in the upper reaches can be poor, this section is also narrow.

Total Score = 15 / 15

2.2 Engineering Report

- *Width (including latest road safety and engineering advice used for roads)*
- A minimum width of 3m should be achieved wherever possible. Otherwise a practical width to be constructed to suit site conditions.

- *Incline (as above)* This will be dictated by existing ground levels and could vary extensively (Gradient 1:20 – 1:5)

- *Drainage Issues - Installation:-*
- 1. A 'V' section ditch / channel along desired sections where gradients dictate the water shed.
- 2. A piped carrier drain + inspection chambers / Head walls. as required.
- 3. Provisional :- Stone blanket drainage in areas where ground is subsided or at lower levels than the existing track.
- 4. Buffer type cross drains at intervals to reduce flow of water shed along the track route.

- *California Bearing Ratio* DCC highways laboratory to investigate. (If necessary)

- *Repair Specification*
- 1. Extreme voids along route – these should be filled to a level such that a passable surface for user traffic can be achieved. (It may be possible to move certain large rocks / boulders into place before any infill is placed)
- 2. Type of imported stone to be approved.
- 3. Sections near to or of flat grade to be further graded to receive a topping of suitable material (Type to be approved)
- 4. Erosions in adjoining banks would need to be addressed with stone infill for track protection.

- *Cost to repair :-* £ 200k For a metal / tarmac surface (If approved) + £85k

- *Estimated annual maintenance cost.* £20k

- *Additional comments by engineer*
- Due to the length of this route the repair works would need to be carefully programmed

Historical Maintenance

Plannings were laid by the DLO (Direct Labour Organisation) in c. 1990 on a badly damaged section of this track, uphill from c. SK 106 840, work to a value of £25,000. Some work was also done to channel surface water under the track. Unfortunately, not enough drainage was carried out and within 6 months all our work had been washed away.

2.3 Conservation Report

2.3.1 Ecological Report

Site designations

Rather more than half the route passes through the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation, the Dark Peak SSSI and Peak District Moors SPA. A further short stretch is designated Section 3 Moorland.

The Dark Peak Moors SSSI was designated for its complex of upland vegetation types and the regionally and internationally important bird assemblage.

The South Pennine Moors SAC was designated for the presence of three European Appendix I habitats, two of which occur along the course of the route, supplemented by a further two App. I habitats.

Description and ecological interest

The route runs from the A625 over Rushup Edge down to the minor road to Edale. It passes through areas of acid grassland, grass-heath transition communities, upland heath and wet flushes, all of which are of high ecological value. The two lowest sections, at the beginning and end of the route, run through semi-improved pasture.

Vehicles leaving the highway

Most of the route is enclosed between intact drystone walls, limiting the options for off-highway use. The upper section across Rushup Edge is open and could provide access to the wider moorland but no obvious signs of such use are visible.

Impact

The most obvious impacts of vehicle use are evident on the downhill section on the northern side of Rushup Edge where the surface has been severely damaged, leaving long rough and uneven stretches, steep rocky steps and narrow strips of tarmac from an earlier repair attempt left exposed and standing clear of the eroded surface. Destruction of the highway surface has exposed several land drains and at least two of these are broken across the width of the highway, with the result that water flows down the line of the lane, potentially increasing erosion and disrupting the hydrology of the hill slope. Two drains are partly exposed and currently intact but further disruption to the surface will leave them vulnerable to being broken by the full weight of passing vehicles.

A path has been worn on the downslope side of the highway along this section, presumably to avoid the uneven and broken surface. This path is evidently used by pedestrians, bikes and motor bikes and results in some trampling damage to the marginal vegetation.

There is a strong possibility that the poor and deteriorating condition of the route will encourage users to forge alternative routes around the worst sections, adding to erosion and damage to the ecological interest.

2.3.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Chapel Gate lies within the Dark Peak landscape character area – a sparsely settled area of gritstone uplands...an extensive upland plateau with steep gritstone slopes...that drop away to lower lying slopes and deep valleys. The upper valley pastures and enclosed gritstone upland have transport routes...relict trade and commerce routes over the moors...but are relatively rare when compared with some that cross the gritstone uplands further south.

2.3.3 Cultural Heritage Report

This route was assessed in 1993. The road as comprising a relatively deep hollow-way where it leaves the present (tarmaced) road, south of Barber Booth, then becoming a terraced trackway when it crosses the valley side. It is suggested that the route may have medieval origins.

Historic landscape character information: the route runs through land which is characterised as Enclosure of unknown date - with irregular fields. The earliest map evidence showing enclosure boundaries for the whole parish is the Edale Tithe map of 1839, although the eastern end is shown on a Devonshire Estate Map of 1808.

2.4 Evidence of levels of use

Use has varied between average and high, with a logged peak of 62 vehicles on one day the weekend before Christmas 2007. Other vehicle use is notably high, with vehicle numbers over 1 per day regularly, peaking at 24 in a single day (although it should be noted this was the Saturday before Christmas 2007).

Thursday 1 Feb 07 - Friday 9 March 07 (37 days)

Daily totals	Bicycles	Cars only	Motorcycles only
Mondays	3	0	0
Tuesdays	4	0	2
Wednesdays	11	0	15
Thursdays	14	4	7
Fridays	17	4	5
Saturdays	77	10	51
Sundays	92	33	80
Mon-Fri total	49	8	29
Sat-Sunday total	169	43	131
Overall total	218	51	160
Average per day	5.89	1.38	4.32

Friday 30 November 07 - Wednesday 2 January 08 (34 days)

Daily totals	Cars only	Motorcycles only
Mondays	0	7
Tuesdays	2	4
Wednesdays	8	9
Thursdays	13	3
Fridays	11	30
Saturdays	25	19
Sundays	57	99
Mon-Fri total	34	53
Sat-Sunday total	82	118
Overall total	116	171
Average per day	3.41	5.03

Demand from other Users

The route appears to be popular with mountain bikers (see table above).

Dispersal Issues

PDNPA Officers are concerned about the possibility of dispersal onto Jacob's Ladder (not classified in the sustainability survey), where currently a full TRO is generally well observed.

Ownership and agricultural access

All owners need access to land, for livestock (cattle, sheep) management, and repairs and maintenance of gates, dry stone walls etc.

Vehicles are tractors, landrovers, pick-ups and quads, and as needed, for stock management and maintenance work as mentioned above.

Ditching and other minor repairs funded by NT where route crosses their land does seem to helping to keep water off the track at the moment.

Comments from other parties

'The (Edale) Parish Council consider there is an urgent need to take action on the Chapel Gate Track (Edale 16).

'2.5 Local Access Forum Subgroup Members comments

Members of the Peak District Local Access Forum were invited to visit the site and make comments based on a methodology and proforma. They were requested to discuss the routes with other Members and try to reach a general recommendation, however, if they were unable to agree, members were invited to provide their individual observations.

Their comments are summarised as follows:

Safety Issues

1. In places conflict may occur when people and horses can't get out of the way of MVs.
2. None observed, although the width is restricted in places due to washouts.
3. The state of the route could be a danger to inexperienced horse-riders and cyclists.
4. Saw 5 motorcycles, 30-35 cyclists, 15-20 walkers. (cyclist rally?) over 1 hour. Signs of occasional horse use and rare agricultural/motor use. The erratic routing of the various paths and their poor condition is likely to create safety problems from the different speeds of the various users. There is a byway signs at either end, a footpath signpost at junction with Mam Tor path but no guidance on vehicular use.
5. The state of this route was unbelievable. In one area over 20-30 yards erosion was 5' deep. It must be impossible for 4x4 vehicles to pass this way legitimately. The type of traffic (the route) has taken in recent years is certainly not the traffic it was designed to take.

Cause(s) of damage

1. The route is deeply rutted in several places by MVs. Much material washed down.
2. Recreational use has aggravated the water scouring of the poorly re-laid surface. The one-time tarmac road was resurfaced with road planings in the 1980s, but the road camber and drainage were not laid correctly. Consequently the planings were washed into adjoining fields and the remaining surface has degenerated through use and water scouring.
3. Route is damaged as a consequence of several factors:
 - Topography - route crosses steep moorland hillside
 - Geology - route lies on rather unstable sandstones & shales, saturated with sub-surface water. There is much landslip visible in the valley.
 - Damaged infra-structure of byway, which is further distressed by existence of sub-surface water seepage & surface water run-off from steep slopes.
 - Lack of consistent, adequate maintenance by Highway Authority over many years.
 - Breakdown of voluntary negotiated relationship between DCC & motorised vehicle users, due to perceived ineffective action over repairs allegedly promised by Council staff.
 - Continued unregulated use of route by all forms of motor vehicles.
 - Failure to reach agreement with abutting landowner[s?], as to how to manage the water run-off, currently adversely affecting the route.
4. Difficult to assess original cause but cyclists/motorcyclists will have played some part in the erosion of the original track and continue to damage new 'bypasses'. Motor vehicles will have been important previously but route is now virtually impassable. Natural erosion is now the main source of damage especially at the Edale end. A complicating feature are broken drains which could have led water under the road but now lead water down it.

5. Water erosion has taken over from wheeled vehicles where passage by the latter is no longer an option and scouring will continue the deterioration in wet periods. It is imperative to ameliorate the drainage problem - a huge fan of sediment up to and above the level of the stone wall and run-off has caused a trench to be eroded in adjoining agricultural land.

Solutions

1. Temporary TRO until surfacing carried out, then possibly a one-way permit to reduce use.
2. Re-do the botched repair. This would have the benefit of making this road less of a magnet for the off-road thrill seekers - inc the large groups that come from Europe, esp Belgium.
3. Attempt to involve users in a form of 'joint venture' with DCC, to undertake restoration of route - under supervision of Highways Dept. If this worked, it would enable the users to "own" the outcome & perhaps lead on to assisting with the provision of on-going care in some form or other. If the motor veh use were appropriately controlled, then it would permit access to all users. However, this (may be) a "pipe dream". Financial & legal issues, among others, are put forward as serious obstacles, which seem effectively to quash the idea.
4. The route is currently usable by walkers, cyclists, motor-cyclists and horse riders but not by any but the most rugged 4WD (signs of use by quad bikes). Some maintenance in terms of filling in pot-holes, restoring drainage, shoring up banks (safety issue) is needed for the existing users as bikers are frequently dismounting and it isn't very walker friendly either. There seems no point in restoring the track for motor use.
5. Current use is not sustainable and a temporary TRO should be imposed immediately with as much remedial work and drainage as is necessary to prevent additional damage to the route, adjoining moorland and agricultural land and limit the cost of essential repairs. The temporary TRO should only be lifted if the route is adequately repaired.

Long-term management options

1. Maintenance.
2. Routine maintenance of road surface.
3. Reluctantly, I have to admit that there seems an inevitability that it will be necessary to invoke a TRO in this case. Short of a miraculous donation from the Lottery, there is no justification for spending up DCC's RoWIP funds [meagre as they are] on a single project, that even if restored now, would absorb unthinkable sums in the future, just on maintenance.
4. It would be an immense effort/cost to maintain this for 4 wheel vehicular access but the track is well used by others. Signing needs improving and some sort of regulation for other users from a safety standpoint (especially in the more rugged steep patches and catering for multi-use).
5. One-way downhill with speed limits if ever it can be made serviceable.

Local Access Forum sub-group recommendations

The sub-group met at Losehill Hall on 28th November 2008 to discuss their observations.

Their agreed recommendations for Chapelgate were:

- Re-surfacing and maintenance.
- One-way system downhill (Rushup Edge to Edale).

3 Action Plan

Summary of Issues

- Chapel Gate is in a very poor state of repair, and has maintenance and drainage issues.
- The route passes through an area of considerable natural beauty and it engenders strong opinions from all parties.
- The amount of funding required to repair the route (even to a lesser status than Byway) is very considerable and we have genuine concerns about dispersal.
- Based upon electronic monitoring the route is regularly used.
- There are concerns about the safety of those using this route.
- Initial repairs have not worked.
The legal status of this route has been resolved as a Byway Open to All Traffic.
- Regardless of the final management recommendations the route must be repaired.

Pre-Management Plan Actions

- Vehicle use has been logged
- The Local Access Forum has visited the site to appraise them of the issues
- Vehicle user group CRAG has visited the site with PDNPA officers to discuss voluntary repair and maintenance

4.1 Conservation Recommendations

General

- The timing of works may be important in some cases, notably on moorland sites where the bird breeding season will be sensitive
- The extent of surfacing, and ensuring machinery avoids sensitive areas. In general there is a presumption that the extent of surfacing should be the minimum required to ensure sustainable use
- Type of materials- generally limestone material will not be appropriate in shale-grit areas, for example
- Storage of any materials obviously needs to avoid sensitive areas
- Associated drainage- need to avoid adverse impact on hydrology of areas of interest
- Repair/revegetation of any existing areas of damage.

Route specific

Chapel Gate

Potential impacts of vehicle use and/or of remedial works on the SSSI/SAC/SPA are obviously a key factor here. Potential impacts include i) disruption of hydrology, ii) potential off-route use and iii) disturbance to breeding moorland birds. It is essential that Natural England are consulted on proposals for the management of this route as there are statutory implications. The route is also within the Natural Zone so there may be policy implications regarding any upgrading of the surface, for example.

5. Management Proposals

1. Identify the significant resources necessary to carry out repairs.

Action: Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service

Priority: Urgent

Timescale: 2010/11

2. Seek voluntary assistance to manage use of the route (possible one-way system) and minor repairs.

Action: Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service / Peak District NPA

Priority: Medium

Timescale: 2010/11

