

School Lane

Route Management Plan



School Lane - Route Management Plan



School Lane (New Hedge Lane)

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

The lane commences in Main Road, Great Hucklow and proceeds generally northwards, then eastwards to Hucklow Edge.

Legal Status:	Non-classified Highway (claimed as a BOAT)
County:	Derbyshire
Parish:	Great Hucklow
Grid Reference:	SK 178779 to SK 182781
Length:	600 metres

Nearest Other Byways / Non-classified Highways / Claimed Byways

There is a claimed Byway at Foolow about 500 metres to the east. To the west, a claimed Byway exists 100 metres from this lane, southwards is the track at Silly Dale.



School Lane





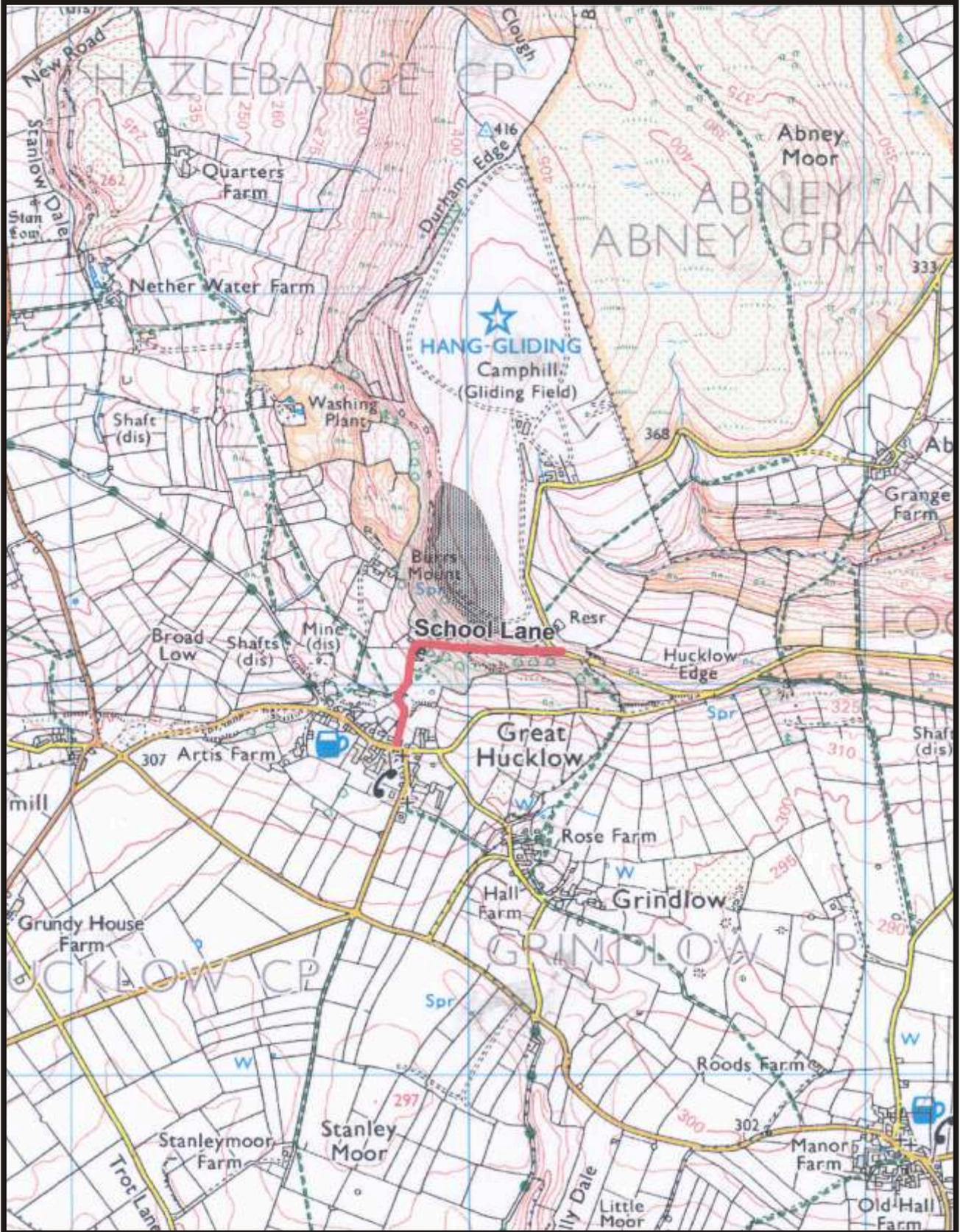
School Lane

 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 = 2

Comments:

During wet weather the route would be very difficult for riders and carriage drivers to use, and footing is not ideal for walking due to ruts. Most users would find the muddy sections above the school difficult at this time and adjacent desire lines have appeared to avoid the worst damage.

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 = 2

Comments:

The route crosses a protected area but users are now keeping to the highway due to restrictions placed on illegal areas by PDNPA rangers.

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:

As the safety of children using the school is in question, local feelings are high, and the police have been involved, antagonism by a very small group of motorbikers have caused bad feeling.

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 = 2

Comments:

The Highway is rutted and quite muddy in places.

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:

The route is narrow, steep and has bad visibility, particularly near the school when approaching from the north, as a section is tarmac speed could be a concern.

Total Score = 12 / 15

2.2 Engineering Report

- *Width (including latest road safety and engineering advice used for roads)*
Wherever possible a width of 3m to be achieved. Otherwise a practical width to be constructed to suit site conditions.
Access off both highways (Hucklow edge road and Main road) would need to be addressed with signage etc and possible restrictive measures.
- *Incline (as above)* This will be dictated by existing ground levels and could vary extensively. (Gradient along the existing track is approximately 1:10 average)
- Height difference between each end of the route is approximately 62m. over a distance of 600m
- *Drainage Issues* - A piped carrier / filter drain or channel to outfall or soakaway. An intercepting cross drain at the access off Hucklow road should be considered to control the water shed from the highway. Additional cross drains may be necessary to control the flow along the route.
- *California Bearing Ratio* - DCC highways laboratory to investigate. (If necessary)
- *Repair Specification*
 1. Preparation:- Vegetation overhang to be cut back as required. Loose material (stone aggregate) cleared away (possible re-use in drainage works)
 2. Track treatment:- Existing potholes rutting and surfaces to be graded to receive new stone topping (Re-cycled materials if suitable) to specification.
 3. Metal surfacing could be applied to this route. (Base / Binder course and surfacing) to specification.
- *Cost to repair* £60k + (Tarmac surfacing if approved approx: £35k) = £95k
- *Estimated annual maintenance cost* Depending on usage (< £5k).
- *Additional comments by engineer* The above details are dependant on what classification is given to the route.

Historical Maintenance

From the village to the school entrance, the lane is as well maintained as necessary. Routine treatment will be surface dressing every c.10 years, preceded by minor patching repairs. Beyond the school there is no record of any work.

2.3 Conservation Report

2.3.1 Ecological Report

Site Designations

The route does not pass through, or abut onto, any SSSI, SPA or SAC. Approximately 60% of the route runs through a listed Section 3 Woodland on Ancient Woodland Site, though the track itself is excluded.

Description and ecological interest

The southern sector of School Lane consists of a hard-surfaced road from Great Hucklow village to the school, bordered by gardens and narrow verges. From the school the route is an unsurfaced track running approximately west-east through Great Hucklow Wood to the minor road to Abney.

Great Hucklow wood is a mature, broad-leaved plantation on an ancient woodland site. It is dominated by beech, ash and sycamore, with occasional wych elm and hawthorn. The relatively heavy shade cast by the mature trees limits the ground flora in terms of both percentage cover and species diversity and much of the woodland floor is bare or dominated by leaf litter, with sparse brambles, herbs and tree seedlings. The main ecological interest is in the regeneration of the broad leaved woodland.

Vehicles leaving the highway

In places the highway consists of a sunken track bounded by banks up to 3m. A pathway used by pedestrians and some two-wheeled users has been created on the south side to avoid these sections. There is some evidence of motorbike use more widely within the wood, but no signs of 4WD vehicles leaving the highway.

Impact

The surface, composed of soft, damp soil and leaf litter, is easily damaged by vehicle passage. Long sections of the track have been severely churned up, especially in damp or wet areas. The main ecological effects are erosion on the woodland floor and physical damage to tree seedlings along the margins of the lane caused. Increased use by vehicles would add to these effects, especially if the lane becomes widened through formation of passing places and alternative sections to avoid damaged stretches.

2.3.2 Landscape Character Assessment

School Lane lies on the boundary the White Peak and Derwent Valley character areas, and is characterised by its 'lower lying landscapes associated with the valley of the river Derwent and its tributaries.' One of the key landforms are the wooded slopes and valleys, with 'narrow winding, often sunken lanes'. Also mentioned are the villages and outlying estate farmsteads and field barns'.

2.3.3 Cultural Heritage Report

Please see annotated map on next page illustrating detailed information on cultural heritage features on or close to the route.

Historic landscape character information: the northern section of the route runs through an area which is characterised as Managed Plantations/Woodland. This stretch of woodland was present by 1849 (Great Hucklow Tithe Map).

To the north of Great Hucklow the route runs through an area which is characterised as Industrial. This area was part of a much larger enclosed area with no internal boundaries in 1631 (Senior Map), marked as Great Hucklow Pasture. Enclosure boundaries date from after 1631 and before the 1803 Great Hucklow Enclosure Map. Lead mines are marked here on the 1880 1st ed. 25" OS map.

As the route enters Great Hucklow it runs through an area characterised as Ancient Enclosure - Irregular Fields (not on strip fields) which was enclosed prior to 1631.

Map illustrating cultural heritage features on or close to the route

2.4 Evidence of levels of use

Friday 1 Feb 08 – Thursday 6 March 08 (35 days)

Daily totals	Cars only	Motorcycles only
Mondays	1	3
Tuesdays	4	4
Wednesdays	0	3
Thursdays	1	7
Fridays	1	2
Saturdays	0	13
Sundays	2	85
Mon-Fri total	7	19
Sat-Sunday total	2	98
Overall total	9	117
Average per day	0.26	3.34

Observations relating to the Implementing of Actions

Part of route is access to school. During the week local people do not access the lane with vehicles so that children feel safe using the route at these times.

Ownership and agricultural access

Private access may be required to woodland although access needs are likely to be infrequent, other private access may also be required on occasion. The southern tarmac section of the road provides access to some properties and the school.

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. Danger to school children.
2. There is known friction between trail bikers passing the school at speed, endangering the children.
3. Given the potential danger caused by vehicles coming suddenly upon a school down a steep muddy place (the) signage is minimalist to an unacceptable extent. Vehicular use makes it unpleasant for walkers.
4. Dangerous exit on to the Abney road. Safety issues where the track passes the school if wheeled users travel above 5 mph in that area.
5. Signage - "No dog fouling" sign at end of lane, and "Caution, children playing" signs beside primary school at lower end of lane. The width varies, but at narrowest, one vehicle wide, with no passing places and steep and muddy banks.

Cause(s) of damage

1. None.
2. Minimal rutting/scouring over a short section.
3. Recreational vehicles.
4. Damage is limited to route between school and Abney road and is heavily rutted by 4 wheel vehicles. I consider quite challenging for normal cars.
5. Horses, four wheel drives, scrambling bikes, walkers. Deep badly rutted mud with four wheel drive tracks in this, thus difficult to walk on due to depth of mud and the churned up nature of the ground.

Solutions

1. TRO prohibition of vehicular use. As a short route it offers little to enjoyment of the countryside. It appears to be used to gain access into woodland for off-roading, causing damage.
2. a. Place speed limit and school signs on the approach from the unsurfaced end, supplemented by voluntary agreement signs endorsed by MPV organisations.
b. Put notices on MPV users web-fora
c. Involve the police to monitor speeding.
3. Permanent TRO for reasons of safety, difficult exit onto carriageway and nuisance to the local community.
4. It would be possible to reinstate the rutted portion but the school makes the use of this track as a through route for motorised traffic problematic. Signs are needed at the Abney end.

5. It seems unnecessary for powered vehicles to use this lane, as it links across from one tarmac road to another, so an alternative route is feasible.

Long-term management options

1. Prohibition of vehicular use.
2. Routine maintenance of the road surface and vigilance by the police in enforcing the speed limit.
3. Permanent TRO.
4. If it is decided that motorised traffic is permissible then regular maintenance will probably be needed to keep the track open.
5. Closure to motor powered recreational vehicles?

Local Access Forum sub-group recommendations

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

Their agreed recommendation for School Lane was:

- A permanent TRO for all motor vehicles.

3 Action Plan

Summary of Issues

- Children use the lane as primary access into the school on all weekdays.
- Local people (excluding those who require access) observe a voluntary restriction not to drive on the road.

A very small number of motorbikers were recently involved in an incident where children were frightened by reckless passing motorbikers. This incident was investigated by local police. Signage has since been installed and use monitored.

Pre-Management Plan Actions:

Meetings with residents / school / police to diffuse problems relating to motorcyclists using the lane when children are going to/coming from school, signage will be in place by the new school term. Works carried out on site by Rangers to protect areas where illegal use is occurring.

- Vehicle use has been logged
- Local people have a voluntary agreement not to use the lane (which gives access to the school) on weekdays
- Meetings have taken place with the head teacher of the adjacent junior and infant school and local people to provide better signage, this signage is in place
- PDNPA ranger staff have erected barriers at illegal access points.

4 Recommendations

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

School Lane

Although the ecological interest is currently limited due to planting of heavily shading non-native trees, ancient woodland sites are associated with relatively undisturbed soil profiles which are of importance in themselves and have the potential to support an important flora and fauna with appropriate management. The main ecological issue here is therefore preventing spread of off-route use. The provision of a sustainable surface to the existing track would be an acceptable way of doing this, subject to minimizing area. If any work were proposed off the current line of the track it may impact on the Natural Zone and have policy implications.

5 Management Proposals

Implement a School Safety Plan

Action: Derbyshire County Council Highways

Priority: Immediate

Timescale: 2009/10

- NPA to supply use-level data to safety team

