

**Route Summary Report
Sough Lane
March 2015**



Description

Sough Lane commences at Moor Lane, east of Chelmorton heading generally northwards before descending generally north east to the A6 west of Taddington. Route shared with the Limestone Way.

Legal Status: Byway Open to All Traffic.

County: Derbyshire

Parish: Taddington

Grid Reference: SK126702 to 132714

Length: 1400 metres

Sustainability Analysis

Undertaken in 2007

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

Comment: Central section has drainage and surface issues

Score: 2 (2-4 user groups would find the route hard to use) – as at 2007

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

Score: 1 (no areas of protection abut or cross the highway)

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

Comments: Mostly local

Score: 1 (few or no complaints)

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

Comments: Central section badly rutted

Score: 2 (the highway is affected)

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

Comments: Central section is difficult to use in wet weather.

Score: 2 (1 or 2 issues regarding the width, visibility, slope and speed of use by vehicles)

Total Score = 8/15





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

Route shared with the Limestone Way.

Levels of Vehicular Use

Thursday 9 April 2009 – Thursday 14 May 2009 (36 days)

Daily Totals	Large Vehicles only	Motorcycles Only
Mondays	8	8
Tuesdays	0	11
Wednesdays	0	7
Thursday	0	8
Fridays	0	3
Saturdays	8	15
Sundays	13	43
Mon-Fri Total	8	37
Sat-Sun Total	21	58
Overall Total	29	95
Average Per Day	0.8	2.6

Fri 27 Dec 2013 – Fri 17 Jan 2014 (22 days)

Daily totals	Large Vehicles	Motorcycles only
Mondays	6	7
Tuesdays	2	6
Wednesdays	4	3
Thursdays	1	2
Fridays	0	0
Saturdays	18	26
Sundays	23	10
Mon-Fri total	13	18
Sat-Sunday total	41	36
Overall total	54	54
Average per day	2.5	2.5

Conservation interest

Ecology - An ecological survey was carried out in January 2013 (Appendix 1). Part of the route passes through species-rich grassland.

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 March 2013 (Appendix 2).

Peak District Local Access Forum Comments

The Green Lanes Sub-group surveyed the route and met in August 2012. Appendix 3 sets out their individual observations. The group recommended:

- Resurface and drainage on bad section – but maintain the character of the steeper section
- Signage needs improving to reflect the route's importance as Limestone Way
- Monitor use and verge flora

Parish Council Comments

A response from Taddington & Priestcliffe Parish Council was received in May 2013 and is set out in Appendix 4.

Issues

People

- User conflict – recreational value as part of the Limestone Way

The Route

- Route condition – poor surface and drainage

Summary of Issues

- Central section of route is badly drained and the surface is poor.

Appendix 1 - Conservation Report

Date of survey: 12 January 2013

Description and ecological interest

The route runs from Moor Lane northwards to the A6.

Most of the track runs through semi-improved / improved pasture fields and is walled on both sides. A short section at the start of the slope down to the A6 is unwalled and crosses hummocky ground that is apparently part of old lead workings and this section supports species-rich calcareous grassland.

The surface is generally hard but unsealed, and has a rutted, muddy section on the highest part..

Vehicles leaving the highway

The route is walled on both sides over most of its length. There were no signs of off-route vehicle use on the short open stretch.

Impacts

There is a heavily rutted, wet and muddy section on the highest part of the route that is vulnerable to further churning and rutting by continued vehicle use.

From an ecological point of view the most valuable section is the short section of high-quality calcareous grassland on old lead spoil at the top of the steep slope down to the A6. As this track is open on both sides, it would be susceptible to damage from vehicles leaving the track (e.g. motor cyclists seeking a more challenging descent route). However, no obvious signs of such damage were evident.

The verges along the rest of the route are narrow and composed of rough grassland of relatively low biodiversity value.

Appendix 2 – Cultural Heritage Report

Historic Landscape Character

Sough Lane largely runs through land which was thought to have been enclosed during the 18th century or later. The 1690 map of Taddington & Priestcliffe Wastes & Commons shows this as 'The Kings Third', which appears to extend northwards into Blackwell. Only the southern and eastern margins of this area are shown on the Taddington & Priestcliffe enclosure map of 1795, marked 'Fivewells Pasture'.

The southern section of the route (dark blue area) was enclosed by act of Parliament in the first half of the 19th century.

Existing Historic Environment Record data, surveys and designations

The route runs through an area of lead mining remains, Whain Rake/Harda Head vein, which are categorised as a High Priority site (N152) under the Lead Legacy initiative. It is thought that this area was being worked for lead in the late 17th century. The site of two associated soughs (drains) occurs immediately to the north of the lead rake remains, the outlet to one of the soughs still being open. A small entrance opening gives access to a small dry walled reservoir chamber, with an opening at the back leading to the sough tunnel. This runs southwards into the hillside. This sough was in existence by 1653 and is shown on a map of 1690.

Both the Whain Rake/Harda Head vein and soughs are recorded on the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (DHER nos: MDR 8793 and MDR 8794).

A lime kiln and quarry (DHER MDR 2024) also occurs in this area, approximately 50m to the west of the track.

The HER also records a possible barrow on land immediately to the south of the end of the route at Shallow Grange (MDR 1212). This was identified from place name evidence only.

The northern section of the route runs through Crossroads farm - land that was archeologically surveyed by John Barnatt In 1992.

Land holdings belonging to Shallow Grange and Thorncliffe Farm, which have also been surveyed, are immediately adjacent to the route.

General recommendations

The northern section of this route is covered by the Crossroads farm survey, but that was done some time ago. This remainder of the route has not had any detailed archaeological survey.

Ideally, the whole length of the lane should be checked by means of a rapid walk-over survey with the condition of surviving features being noted. The remains of Whain Rake/Harda Head vein are a particular concern as the route runs directly through them. Consideration should also be given to features such as gateposts, walls and wall furniture and earthworks. The results of this work would form a good basis for recording damage to any features which might have occurred already, as well as monitoring on-going damage.

On the basis of the information collected recommendations for damage mitigation could be made. This could also inform the nature of any repairs to the route.

Appendix 3 - Peak District Local Access Forum Vehicle Sub-Group – Individual Comments

General

A 'no issue' way, save for the self evident observation that maintenance is required now. Extent of illegal deviation from the way should be monitored.

This route links the A.6 by the Waterloo Hotel to Moor Lane across Taddington Moor. It is part of the Limestone Way from Matlock to Castleton and there are excellent views from it over the surrounding countryside as it climbs up to some 420 metres after leaving the A.6. There is clearly vehicular usage and it would be good to have more information about that. Sub Group colleagues and I recollect that there was a very badly rutted and wet section which has been repaired by the County Council. There remains an area on the top between gates which is rutted and boggy. I think it can be sustainable with urgent surfacing works & ongoing monitoring.

Safety Issues

Signage

- Signed as route of Limestone Way
- Limestone Way signs, but could do with advisory signs about use (like on The Roych), so walkers, horse riders and cyclists know to expect legitimate vehicle users as well.
- None observed.

Surface and Off-site information

- Limestone surface and previous repairs noted. Problem with central section which has got badly rutted and very boggy
- No off-site information observed.

Conflicts of different use

- Walkers may not be aware that vehicles can use the route.
- No direct evidence on the inspection, but apparent that vehicular use on a very popular walking route is causing some problems.
- The top nearly level section of the road is used for livestock movements, but the road is about 10 metres wide at this point so conflict is unlikely .

Width

- Generally good and visibility of oncoming users is reasonable.
- Top section: about 10 metres between walls. Lower section from A6: about 3 metres

Speed

- Does not seem to be an issue from the site visit.
- None observed

Causes of Damage

Some evidence of illegal off-roading on land surrounding the zigzag section. This is regrettable as the area is of botanical importance i.e. lovely for wildflowers. On the higher section the surface is deeply rutted across the whole width the result of motorbike and 4x4 use of the track.

Recreational Use

- Popular with walkers and evidence of horse riding and 4WD/ Motor Cycle vehicular use. Is there vehicle logging information available? This would be helpful and interesting.
- Rutting in the section that is also used for stock movement

Agricultural use / access

- There is probably some use by vehicles from adjoining farms/farmland. Additional information and knowledge would be useful
- Top section churned by cattle movements

Natural erosion

- Erosion seems more down to usage on some sections
- Minimal, with some water scouring on the hairpin bend about grid SK128711.

Solutions

- Warning signs needed to make walkers and riders aware that vehicles can use the route. Action to prevent illegal uses of adjacent land. The badly rutted section needs to be repaired. Further on the surface is good as a result of repairs done a few years ago. Before this work was done the surface of the track was in exactly the same state that the bad section is now. It seems likely that a similar repair would solve the problem, at least in the short term, but the repair has changed the nature of the track from a 'green lane' to a surfaced one. It is regrettable that this is the case and I think we should be aware of the appearance of repair work like this in the landscape. Is there any other kind of repair that could be carried out?
- Consider advisory signage re usage, and
- Messages to promote code of conduct
- Fill in the Ruts and surface the section on the top between gates with stone
- Consider Voluntary restraint and action on the route
- Encourage responsible use and respect for land use and management
- Monitor and Review
- Repair the rutted section (about 100 metres) to the same standard as the level, southern end was repaired about 15 years ago
- Improve the water run-off

Long-term Management

- Consider a seasonal TRO to limit further damage.
- Repairs to surface as needs be – County Council and Volunteers
- Monitor and Review
- May need to think about TRO if usage (problem previously addressed on part of this route) continues to pose problems and question whether this is sustainable in the longer term
- Back-fill depressions as they occur
- Keep drainage working properly

Appendix 4 – Parish Council Response

The lane can broadly be considered in three sections:

1. A6 to the open access land near the top

There are no known problems although there is evidence that ruts are getting a little deeper. You may need to consult the Waterloo Hotel.

2. The open access land

The parish council attaches considerable importance to this area because of its flora and enjoyment value. The road is generally satisfactory for walking. However, there are signs of cyclists short-cutting across the open access area (although the land has recovered slightly since last year). This might be because the road is rougher than is suitable for cyclists.

3. Open access land to Moor Lane

The Parish Council raised concerns about this stretch some years ago but were ignored. Following an accident when ambulance assistance was severely impeded by the state of the road, part of it was re-surfaced and is satisfactory.

However, the remaining stretch is deeply rutted and muddy and can in some weather conditions be very hazardous for pedestrians - the problems are clear from site inspection. Also, the Parish Council reported some years ago that stones were being taken from adjoining dry stone walls to make the roadway passable.

The Parish Council considers that the Access Forum's comments do not fully reflect the actual position, which is rather worse than the report or the accompanying photographs suggest. The ruts cover the entire width of the lane. Pedestrians find it difficult to avoid being drenched if a 4X4 comes past.

Whilst some levelling may be desirable, at the very least urgent action is needed to restore and protect the verges and make a safe route for walkers. If it is considered appropriate to resurface the entire length, you may need to consider the impact of this both on speed, on the open access area and further down the route if, eg, the result would be more traffic.

The Parish Council is bemused by the suggestion that walkers may not be aware that vehicles also use the route and the need for signage to tell them this. Such signage would be a waste of public money.