

# **Peak District Local Access Forum**

**Date: 21 September 2017**

**Item: 9**

**Title: Green Lanes Update**

**Author: Sue Smith**

## **Purpose of the Report**

The report provides an update on progress with managing recreational motor vehicles in the National Park.

## **Traffic Regulation Order Update**

In July, the Authority made a traffic regulation order permanently prohibiting all mechanically propelled vehicles from Washgate, near Hollinsclough save for the Bemrose Trail and Reliance Cup events on such terms as required by the Authority. Details of the order and the Regulation 14 decision notice giving the reasons for not acceding to objections made can be seen at [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/tros](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/tros).

The Local Access Forum provided a response to the Regulation 4 consultation under the National Parks Traffic Regulation Order (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2007 on the route at Wetton following discussion of the item at the Forum meeting on 15 June 2017 and a site visit by the Green Lanes Sub-group on 14 July 2017. The letter is attached in Appendix 1.

On the 15 September 2017, National Park Authority members resolved to proceed to publicise a proposal to make a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to prohibit mechanically propelled vehicles at all times at Wetton. The LAF will be notified under Regulation 5 of the National Park Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England) Regulations 2007 in due course.

## **Recommendation**

- 1. That the report and the Forum's response to the consultation at Wetton is noted.**

## Appendix 1



Peak District Local Access Forum (LAF)  
C/o Peak District National Park Authority  
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Sue Smith  
Rights of Way Officer  
Peak District National Park Authority  
Aldern House  
Baslow Rd  
Bakewell  
Derbyshire  
DE45 1AE

Your Ref:A.76228/SAS  
21st July, 2017  
sent by email

Dear Sue

### **Wetton - Consultation under Regulation 4 of the National Park Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England) Regulations 2007.**

Thank you for your letter of 12th June which was referred to at the Local Access Forum meeting on 15th June when after some comments, it was agreed we should make a further Green Lanes Sub Group site visit which took place on Friday 14th July with 5 LAF members present, including Jon Stewart who declared his interest as also being the Peak District Manager of the National Trust as owners of the land through which the route runs. You had kindly previously agreed an extension of time for response from 10th to 24th July in our role as an advisor to the Authority.

The route in Wetton Parish is 1,420 metres long. It 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. Its legal status is a Non-Classified Highway. It links directly to Non Classified Highway cul-de-sac route to Top of Ecton northwards, the southern end links to Manifold Way NCH which is subject to an all vehicle TRO. It follows a shallow dip between Wetton Hill and the slope below the Sugar Loaf on the other side.

The whole route lies within Access land (being the largest area in the White Peak), and the Hamps and Manifold Valleys SSSI. 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.

The Green Lanes Sub-group first surveyed the route and met in November 2014. The Sub-group expressed then concern about the state of the route, and that opportunity exists to take action before the route further deteriorates, but that action needs to be taken urgently. It concluded then that:

- The National Park Authority should approach the National Trust and Peak Park Conservation Volunteers (PPCV), with a view to carrying out minor repair works on rutted sections, infilling with appropriate stone materials. *(We heard on the site visit that a meeting had taken place between Peak District NPA and National Trust staff, but no work had been carried out).*
- Escalate the monitoring of this route to ensure it does not deteriorate further and that if deterioration continues, actions should be escalated. *(We heard on site that monitoring of usage had continued, but was low overall in the case of both 4WD's and Motor Cycles. Nevertheless, the effects on the ground were clear with an increased amount and depth of ruts since the visit in 2014, and some members have mentioned it is worse still in winter).*

### **Our key findings and conclusions were:**

- The damage and rutting has deteriorated significantly since our 2014 visit with deeper and more extensive ruts - we suggested this could be demonstrated by photos taken then and since. There is a metalled surface at either end, but the substantial length of the route is grass and unrestricted vehicular use is not considered sustainable.
- It was noted that Voluntary Constraint had been tried but had not been effective given low usage numbers and that this would not be appropriate in future given low numbers and that not all users respect these initiatives. A TRO would not affect recreational vehicle activity significantly in the wider Peak.
- There is no likelihood of Staffordshire County Council as Highway Authority doing a review of status so use by vehicles is likely to continue to be a problem.
- We considered that the solution to the current issues needed to be considered in relation to the wider National Park issues to safeguard the landscape, the SSSI and the tranquility of the Access land - the largest area in the White Peak area.
- One member thought a downwards one-way TRO restriction might be the answer but colleagues thought this would not be sufficient.

**Recommendation: We share the National Park Authority's concern about the impacts recreational motor vehicles are having on this route in a tranquil area enjoyed for walking, horse riding and cycling. Our agreed approach was to recommend a TRO for all vehicles with the exception of land management and farm usage, and use by emergency services or by any local authority or statutory undertakers in pursuance of their statutory powers and duties.**

This response now follows the 14th July findings and recommendation above and subsequent consultation with all Peak District LAF members on a Draft response, and 8 of 19 current members who responded supported the recommendation.

Please keep us informed and consulted on this after reporting to your Committee.

I have now received a minority response from Richard Entwistle and Clare Griffin which I have attached.

Yours sincerely

John

John Thompson

Vice Chair , LAF

cc: LAF members, Mike Rhodes, Richard Pett, Emma Stone and Gill Millward

## **COMMENTARY**

Referring to the 2nd and 3rd paragraph of JT's draft I would like to use the following Staffordshire CC's official description of the lane;

The route in question falls within the remit of Staffordshire County Council. An extract of their description is:

NSG Class 0.5-100K: BACK OF ECTON

Maintenance Responsibility SCC (Highways) Maintenance Category NO MAINTENANCE

Class Description Green Lane

1. The route is in a fairly narrow steep sided valley, where the sides are mainly covered in soft vegetation, not bare rock. The noise footprint of any motorised vehicle is contained within this small area, with any noise being dampened by the natural soft vegetation. These natural characteristics of the route mean that vehicular noise cannot be considered as harmful to the quality of the area.
2. No other RoW shares the valley, the only intercepting RoW is Wetton 20, a bridleway coming from Wetton Mill and Farm. The land contours are such that this bridleway comes through a valley or pass of its own, which effectively shields most of the bridleway from any noise on the Wetton route under consideration.  
Close by is Wetton 40, a footpath, but this joins the tarmac road in front on Manor Farm (D1133), so is not on the route in question (G1133).
3. The Wetton route is without width limiting walls, hedges, or fences, so there is plenty of space for users to pass by without constraint.
4. The Wetton route is generally straight, with easy curves; there are no sharp bends around which travellers can suddenly appear.
5. The Wetton route is gated at both ends, so there is no risk of vehicles inadvertently carrying excessive speed from a sealed surface road onto the Green Road.

Referring to JT's paragraph 3 I propose these comments

A road or byway can go through or over a SSSI, but it is not a part of the SSSI itself, and wear and tear to the road isn't damaging the SSSI.

Concern about the continued use by vehicles deepening and extending the rutting is exaggerated. There's no evidence of any off-piste driving on the Wetton NCH, which is noted in PDNPA's report and any increase in the depth of existing ruts can be attributed mainly to water run-off. In fact comparing the 2014 and 2017 photographs a notable difference is the vegetation growing in the ruts

Referring to JT's bullet points

1st point - One rut in particular has become deeper since the 2014 visit, but passes close to a ponding area where the adjacent stream goes underground and is easily avoided by users.

2nd point - Voluntary Restraint **did reduce vehicles usage**, but volumes are so low as to make any attempt at statistical analysis meaningless. Actual levels of vehicular use are recorded by PDNPA as follows:-

- Apr/May 2014: Average 0.05 cars per day, average 0.01 motor cycles per day;
- Aug/Nov 2015: Average 0.3 cars per day, average 0.8 motor cycles per day;
- Jan/Mar 2016: Average 0.05 cars per day, average 0.7 motor cycles per day\*; \*denotes VR in place.
- Mar/Apr 2016: Average 0.02 cars per day, average 0.3 motor cycles per day\*;
- Oct/Mar 2017: Average 0.05 cars per day, average 1.17 motor cycles per day.

4th point - Staffordshire CC's description of the lane says there is not a problem of safeguarding the landscape, the SSSI or the tranquillity

5th point - PDNPA members are unlikely to be deflected from their intention to apply TRO and any suggestion that involves management or is seasonal or temporal will fall on deaf ears. Over the years GLASS has advised using this lane downhill (southwards). Nevertheless, for the sake of applying a permanent TRO to minimise any potential damage by vehiclesthis could be

- one-way restriction, downhill (southwards) or
- closed to motorised or horse drawn vehicles between 1st October and 30th April annually.

6th point - Recommendation - see point 5 above. Also obtain an expert's assessment about following up the 2014 proposal to effect repairs to the route using volunteer labour.

Richard Entwistle and Clare Griffin