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Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

Newsletter January 2013

This newsletter is a Chapel Gate special. Although other things are happening elsewhere in the Peak District (such as repairs on a number of routes and the further DCC Temporary Traffic Regulation Order [TRO] on Long Causeway) we felt that you would like an update on what is happening on Chapel Gate as soon as possible. We will let you know about everything else early in February 2013 in another newsletter.

Chapel Gate – Temporary TRO for essential maintenance and drainage works



*September 2011
(DCC repairs finished)*



*November 2012 – Damage due to run
off water with no off-roading*

Derbyshire County Council has closed Chapel Gate between the Barber Booth/Mam Tor road and Edale Footpath 2 for essential maintenance and drainage works between 14 January 2013 and 7 June 2013 (or earlier if the work is completed quickly). We're not sure exactly what DCC are going to do although a DCC paper of August 2012 described the work as "attend to drainage and culverts" and estimated the cost as about £15,000. We hope that they will improve the drainage at the lowest, flat section near Barber Booth. Run off water has been causing problems in this area and eroding the path ever since the initial DCC repairs. The path above this area has also deteriorated markedly since recreational motor vehicles started using it again when the Experimental Traffic Regulation order banning these vehicles was lifted by the Courts in November 2012.

Chapel Gate – PDNPA decides to defer a decision until 22 March 2013

The Peak District National Park Authority had planned to consider whether to proceed with a traffic regulation order at a meeting scheduled for 25 January 2013 (following the consultation with the statutory consultees). However, they have now said that this item will be considered at the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee on 22 March 2013. The reason given was:-

“This rescheduling is to allow for a closer analysis of the comments we have received from the consultation, the need for further advice, and the on-going maintenance works by Derbyshire County Council.”

We are pleased that PDNPA appears to be trying to get things right to avoid another court challenge by the off-roaders. We are, however, concerned that the route may be reopened to recreational motor vehicle traffic again when the Derbyshire County Council Temporary TRO expires (in June at the latest). There would be insufficient time to go through all the stages for a permanent TRO between March and June.

This delay may also mean the March meeting could have a very full agenda of off-roading matters including a report on the progress made on off-roading in the last 12 months and updating the list of priority routes to include routes outside Derbyshire. We wouldn't want to see either of these delayed until later. Also, we do not yet know when the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee are going to consider the responses to the public consultation on Long Causeway and The Roych. We hope that it will not be left until May 2013. They also have to decide what to do about the results of the initial consultations on Chertpit Lane and Brushfield and start the initial consultations on Bamford Clough and Brough Lane. Work is building up and we are concerned that their work programme is slipping.

Chapel Gate – report on the route

PDGLA members walked and photographed Chapel Gate early in November 2012 (before the Experimental TRO was lifted by the Court and when there should have been no recreational motor vehicle use); on Boxing Day 2012; and on 13 January 2013 (the day before the route was closed for further repairs.)

The route has significantly deteriorated since the early November visit. The surface was heavily rutted in places on the latter two visits and the ruts were new. There were tyre tracks on the side of the sloping banks which border the route. Vehicles were leaving the official path to travel on the banks. Grass which had been regenerating on the path was being destroyed. On the flat plateau section, which has always been peaty, badly drained and fragile, vehicles are using the newly healed parallel tracks and destroying this fragile SSSI site. We are worried that if this amount of damage can occur in two months, how the route will survive if it is re-opened to recreational motor vehicle use for any long period of time. Some of the money that DCC has spent (reputed to be of the order of £60,000 so far) appears wasted as a result of the recent deterioration.

All the photographs below are of areas that DCC repaired unless described otherwise.



November 2012. Grass regenerating on both sides of the track.



January 2013. The same area with the the grass dead and a mud rut eating into the bank.



December 2012. Ruts starting to form on the left hand verge



January 2013. The same area with both deeper ruts on the track and more ruts on the verges.



January 2013. Ruts



January 2013. Vehicle track on the bank above the main track



December 2012. Tracks on the side of the bank. (this area not repaired by DCC)



January 2013. Vehicle tracks beside the main path on the plateau area. The walkers in blue are on the official path (this area not repaired by DCC)



January 2013. The peaty plateau. All users leave the path to avoid this area when the ground is wet (not repaired by DCC)



January 2013. A rock step when descending to the Sheffield Road. A parallel track has developed on the bank (not repaired by DCC)

The current Temporary TRO covers the same part of the route that DCC repaired previously. Even if DCC makes good and resolves all the problems shown in that section of Chapel Gate, there are still problems with the plateau area and the descent to Sheffield Road which are not included in the current repairs. We believe that PDNPA must protect these areas regardless of any work that DCC carries out in 2013 and as quickly as possible.

In the PDNPA notice of the delay in considering what action to take on Chapel Gate, statutory consultees were asked to submit any further comments by 1 February 2013. We will be asking PDNPA to impose a Temporary TRO to run as soon as the DCC works stops to prevent any further damage before a permanent TRO can be implemented.