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Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

May 2015 Newsletter

PDNPA puts Route Summaries for the Staffordshire Priority Routes on the Internet

The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) plans to prepare Route Summaries for all the Priority Routes. These are the routes that PDNPA believe cause the most concern. The Derbyshire routes were done first. The Staffordshire routes were completed in 2014. PDNPA plans to do the Cheshire ones this work year.

The Route Summaries for Limer Rake and Swan Rake, Hollinsclough; Rake Head Lane, Hollinsclough; and Wetton have now been placed on the Priority Routes page. They can be found at <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/vehicles/priorityroutes>. We assume that the Staffordshire part of the routes around Three Shires Head will be done at the same time as the Cheshire route which joins it and that the Staffordshire part of Washgate will be done when the Route Summary for Washgate is updated. (Note: On the Swan Rake and Limer Rake report, in Appendix 2 on page 8, under the heading of "General" the information refers to Wetton and not the Rake. PDNPA has been told about this error but have not yet corrected it.)



Swan Rake: The largest of the stone steps. October 2014



Limer Rake: Some of the rough stones that make the route difficult for many users. October 2014

The Route Summaries are important and useful documents because they contain information about the route that is not available elsewhere such as

- vehicle logging information
- a report about the condition of the route (at the date of the survey)
- information about sites of ecological or archaeological interest on or adjacent to the route
- information about the relative volume of complaints received
- and a report of the visit by the Green Lanes sub group of the Local Access Forum (LAF).



Wetton in March 2015

They also contain the sustainability analysis which is a scoring system used by PDNPA to rank the seriousness of the detrimental effect of vehicle use on each route. This system was developed in about 2007. It probably needs refining as it doesn't for example reflect the importance of the route in the historical landscape. PDNPA list this as one of the special qualities of the National Park - "Thousands of years of human influence which can be traced through the landscape." However it provides a

defensible methodology for ranking routes and is better than some employed by other national parks (eg the Lake District) although not as sophisticated as those employed by Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks. Some of the sustainability analyses need revisiting as they are eight years old and conditions can change significantly in that time. However, the sustainability analysis is an attempt to use objective scoring to prioritise which routes need attention first. We would not want PDNPA to abandon it for subjective impressions.

Although other factors can affect PDNPA's decisions about what action to take on a particular route (for example, whether the Highway Authority proposes carrying out any work on the route and the Highway Authorities progress on determining the status of the route), these Route Summaries should be guiding PDNPA's decisions. It is therefore to be regretted that the published information on the Staffordshire routes contains errors. We were also surprised that the Action Plan for 2015/6 which recently went to PDNPA's ARP Committee did not give these Route Summaries greater prominence. PDNPA Members do not have the intimate knowledge of routes we have developed through walking and photographing them and the Summaries would give them the best understanding they could get in the absence of knowledge on the ground.

Update on the Brushfield Upperdale Route

Derbyshire County Council made an order adding the non-classified highway between Upperdale and Brushfield to the definitive map as part bridleway/part footpath in 2014. This order has been referred to the Planning Inspectorate because objections were received, arguing that the route has public motor

vehicle rights. A public inquiry will be held in September 2015, for the Inspector appointed to decide the order to hear evidence about its status. Derbyshire County Council is now taking a neutral position because it received a large amount of user evidence from motorised users after the closing date for evidence had passed and it had made its decision. One can question why it needed an adverse decision before this avalanche of evidence was triggered.

Two distinct sets of information are used to determine the status of a route. Historical evidence, from documents such as Inclosure Awards, Tithe Maps, railway plans and highway records, is considered. If the conclusion from studying these documents is that the route has public motor vehicle rights, user evidence becomes irrelevant. If the study of the historical documents shows footpath or bridleway status, then user evidence becomes the deciding factor on whether public motor vehicle rights exist. However this can be countered by evidence of recreational motor vehicles causing public nuisance which is why it is so important for non-vehicle users to present their experiences at Public Inquiries.



Damage to the historic lead mines earthworks on Putwell Hill. February 2015



Vehicle tracks caused by recreational use on the open farmland on the other side of the track at Putwell Hill. February 2015

Since the bridleway/footpath order was made in 2014, PDGLA has discovered evidence that the historical status of the route is bridleway throughout. This means that we and Peak Horsepower will be making the case at the Public Inquiry for the Inspector to modify the order to bridleway in place of part bridleway/part footpath. We will also be arguing that the late motorised user evidence received by Derbyshire County Council is insufficient to prove that public motor vehicle rights have been created by use, in part because of the problems caused by such use for those walking, cycling or riding horses on the route.

The Peak District National Park Authority had previously decided to consult on a traffic regulation order (TRO) on this route. But this decision is in abeyance until the outcome of the public inquiry is known, as a TRO will not be needed if the Inspector decides that the status is public bridleway.

The National Park is concerned about preserving the natural beauty of the Brushfield area and the loss of amenity to non-vehicle users. It is also concerned about the damage being done to historic lead mining earthworks (part of a scheduled ancient monument), adjacent to the route, by recreational motor vehicle users. Last winter it put up notices asking 4x4 users and motorcyclists not to drive over the earthworks; however, damage is still taking place, so the National Park will have to fence off the earthworks so affecting the open character of the route in the area of the lead mining remains.

South Yorkshire Police to take action on illegal use of recreational vehicles in Wharncliffe Woods, Sheffield



There is much concern about illegal use of recreational vehicles on paths in Wharncliffe Woods, Sheffield. These woods are popular with walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders. Although outside the Peak District, the problems there are typical of those associated with illegal use of recreational vehicles. The Police and Forestry Commission are working to reduce the problem although policing in such an area is difficult. The Police and Forestry Commission have posted notices stating that bikes will be seized without further notice using sections 34 and 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002. Barriers have been placed on some tracks to deter illegal access.

The Police Commissioner has issued a statement on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Grenowharnynuisancequad/posts/1585820368316419>

For details of an accident to a horse rider in that area which the person reporting it says was caused by illegal use of the woods by motor bikes and quad bikes, see the entry for 15 May 2014 at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/AllResponses?open&cnt=all&unid=FEDCD891AE2DF77380256C840040736C>

Illegal activity can cause problems and dangers for other users as well as spoiling the enjoyment of non-vehicle users by the noise and surface damage. If you spot such illegal activity, please report it to the Police on the non-emergency number of 101.