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Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

Saving our green lanes from off-road vehicles

June 2016 Newsletter

PDNPA Action Plan for 2016/2017

The Peak District Audit Resources and Performance (ARP) Committee approved the Authority's Action Plan for 2016/2017 at their May meeting. All the papers can be seen at <https://democracy.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=1429&Ver=4>. The documentation is voluminous (a main document and 8 appendices). Here is a summary of what is proposed.

Probably the most important proposal long term is “*refreshing the sustainability analysis to better reflect the priorities with the Authority’s strategy which focuses on our special qualities. This work is resource intensive but is proposed as a developing area of work for the forthcoming year.*” This is important because the sustainability analysis is one of the factors that determines PDNPA's ranking of routes needing protection. It currently does not include factors such as historic features.

Specific Action on Named Routes

Decisions on the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders on Washgate (Hartington Upper Quarter and Hollinsclough) and Derby Lane (Monyash) are planned for Autumn 2016. PDNPA has completed the public consultations on these routes and officers are looking at the responses and preparing a further report for the ARP Committee to use when making a final decision.

PDNPA will start consultation on “*vehicle regulation*” on the Wetton route (between Manor House and the Manifold Valley) in Autumn 2016. See later in this newsletter for more information about this route and why we believe a full TRO is essential.

PDNPA will again support voluntary restraint on Minninglow Lane in Autumn 2016. Please see the item below on the “success” of voluntary restraint during the Winter of 2015/2016.

PDNPA will trial voluntary restraint on School Lane, Great Hucklow in Spring 2016. Voluntary restraint was also proposed in the 2015/2016 Action Plan but did not happen. The explanation given in this year's Action Plan was that the proposal was complicated by the closure of an adjacent road. Surface conditions are not the problem. The village primary school is on the route and local people are concerned about speeding vehicles.

Illegal use



Bradley Lane, Pilsley. Although now a bridleway, logging is detecting a high level of illegal use. Photo: January 2015

Logging vehicle use on routes subject to illegal use is one of the activities the PDNPA Rights of Way team undertake. (They also have a programme for logging on Priority Routes which are BOATs and other Priority Routes with possible vehicle rights.) If you want to see the logging results for a particular Priority Route, they will be in the route summary on the Authority's Priority Routes web page.)

Of the four routes with PDNPA Traffic Regulation Orders, Leys Lane is still experiencing significant illegal motor vehicle use. (Information on the condition & illegal use of all routes with PDNPA TROs is in Appendix 1 of the Action Plan)

Black Harry Lane (Longstone Edge) and Bradley Lane (Pilsley) (both previously on the Priority List and now bridleways with no vehicle rights) still have significant levels of illegal vehicle use as does Sheen Footpath 41. (See Action Plan Appendix 4 for further details about illegal use)

Other matters



Hurst Clough Lane, Bamford. April 2016

Bamford residents again spoke at the meeting about their desire for a Traffic Regulation Order restricting access to the lane for recreational motor vehicle users and their frustrations with Derbyshire County Council delaying promised repairs to this route yet again.

We believe that it is important for communities and people who are concerned about the effects of off-roading on their local lanes to make PDNPA and DCC members aware of their worries and what they would like to see happen.

Results of voluntary restraint during the Winter of 2015/2016

No criteria for success were specified at the start of the voluntary restraint on Minninglow Lane and Wetton. Such criteria are essential for evaluating the success of any voluntary restraint. This omission is perpetuated in the current Action Plan. Instead PDNPA say that they will carry out logging and photograph the condition of the route. Although logging is useful, we do not think, in most cases, a simple reduction of numbers of recreational vehicle motor users on the route, should be the sole criterion for judging the success of Voluntary Restraint. It should be linked to other criteria such as:-

- an improvement in the condition of the route at the end of the voluntary restraint or
- no deterioration in the condition of the route at the end of the voluntary restraint or
- an increase in use of the route by non vehicle users

Motorcycle usage of Minninglow Lane up 22% in first 63 days of voluntary restraint

Recreational motor vehicle users unilaterally instigated voluntary restraint on Minninglow Lane/Gallowlow Lane, Ballidon from 19 December 2015 until 30 April 2016.

PDNPA had a vehicle logger on the route for most of this period, but only for a more limited period during the previous winter (2014/15). The logger results for the 2015/16 winter and for periods in previous years are in their route summary (which can be seen at http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/760943/RS1605-Minninglow-Gallowlow-Lanes.pdf). We have placed relevant supporting information in an appendix to this newsletter.

We believe it reasonable to compare logging data for the period from 12 December 2014 to 18 February 2015 (the only data available for the 2014/2015 winter) with logger data for the first 63 days of voluntary restraint (19 December 2015 to 19 February 2016). These are similar winter time periods with the same number of Bank Holidays. [data is available in the Appendix]

77 motorcycles used the route in the earlier period. 94 motorcycles used the route in the later period (which was also 6 days shorter.) **This means that the number of motorcycles using the route during the first 63 days of the voluntary restraint increased by at least 22%.**

45 large vehicles (and it is not clear whether this figure includes farm vehicles or not) used the route in the earlier period and 44 large vehicles used the route in the later period. This decrease of one vehicle is not statistically significant, especially as the later period was 6 days shorter. **So it appears that the first 63 days of voluntary restraint had negligible or no impact on the number of large vehicles using the route.**

Voluntary restraint was therefore **not** successful in reducing use during the first 2 months of operation. One explanation could be that the publicising of bad conditions actively encourages some users. If true, this would tend to disprove the assertion (often made) that most off-roaders care deeply about the countryside and simply want to potter across it.

It is harder to evaluate the overall success or failure of the voluntary restraint in terms of vehicle use throughout the rest of the period. PDNPA has no logging data for a period of a month during the voluntary restraint. This missing month includes the Easter 2016 Bank Holiday period, where one might expect higher use as people have more leisure time. Secondly, there is no data from 19 February 2015 until 30 April 2015 to use as a comparison. We have been told that use of some routes – including Minninglow Lane – is higher in the winter than the summer. This is because these grassy, rutted and potentially muddy routes are felt to be more challenging to drive in the winter. In the absence of comparable data for the voluntary restraint period after 19 February 2016, it is not possible to determine if it might have started to reduce vehicle numbers in it's last two months. [See Appendix for further information]. The monitoring is therefore seriously flawed.

The January 2016 Newsletter <http://pdgla.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/PDGLA-January-2016-Newsletter.pdf> showed pictures of the lane before the voluntary restraint started. The April 2016 Newsletter <http://pdgla.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/PDGLA-2016-04-April-Newsletter.pdf> had pictures of the route

during the voluntary restraint. We do not believe that the condition of the route improved during the period and may even have deteriorated.

Members walked the route in June 2016, six weeks after the Voluntary Restraint ended.



Route only passable by balancing on the narrow verges and avoiding the barbed wire and electric fence. June 2016



Deceptively grassy. The long grass hides the ruts. This will be specially dangerous to horse riders. June 2016



Photograph: Note the deep water filled ruts and the signs of vehicles “bottoming”. Some vehicles find driving along the ruts impossible and are using the remaining grassy section. Once ruts extend across the whole width, the route will become much more difficult for non vehicle users. June 2016

One of the special qualities of the Peak District National Park is “opportunities for outdoor recreation and adventure”. As the condition of this route continues to deteriorate, off-rovers will have their opportunities increased while those of walkers, cyclists and horse riders will be reduced.

In spite of motorcycle use increasing by at least 22% in the first two months of the voluntary restraint; in spite of being unable to assess the effectiveness of it in reducing recreational motor vehicle use; in spite of the route being difficult for non vehicle users at the start of the period and during it because of water logged deep ruts, PDNPA is proposing voluntary restraint for this route again in their Action Plan.

Analysis of motor vehicle use of the Wetton route during voluntary restraint

PDNPA had not planned for voluntary restraint on this route. So there is, understandably, no logging data from an earlier period that can be used as a comparison to their logging from January 2016 until 30 April 2016.

There are problems with the logging data in the route summary at http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/760980/RS1605-Wetton.pdf as of 30 June 2016. The calculation of averages associated with the 2014 logging is significantly wrong. There are more minor rounding errors in a further 2 calculations. The date of Friday 17 January is incorrect as the 17th was a Sunday not a Friday (This error potentially affects the number of days logging has been carried out and the relative number of weekdays and weekend days.) PDNPA has been made aware of these issues but has not responded.

As regards the condition of the route during the period of voluntary restraint, our March 2016 Newsletter <http://pdgla.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PDGLA-March-2016-Newsletter.pdf> contains comparison pictures of the route before the voluntary restraint started and in March 2016 (during the voluntary restraint). We judged the condition of the route to have deteriorated by March 2016.



Deep ruts in June 2016.

regulation” on this route in Autumn 2016. We think a full TRO is needed.

Members walked the valley in mid June 2016. The track had dried out but the ruts were still visible. The route was passable to all users, but some may need to stray off the route to avoid ruts.

What is particularly worrying is the degree of damage caused to this route (which crosses a SSSI site) by very low levels of recorded use and how the amount of damage increases each winter. This is a route that has been shown to be very vulnerable to damage with slight use in past winters. It needs protecting. Thankfully PDNPA is proposing to start consultation on “*traffic*

Appendix – Additional information about the Minninglow Lane logging data.

We believe it reasonable to compare logging data for the period from 12 December 2014 to 18 February 2015 with 19 December 2015 to 19 February 2016 as they both cover broadly similar winter periods with the same number of Bank Holidays. We believe that it is better to split average daily use between weekdays and weekends rather than use the simple average as used by PDNPA because:-

- Use is generally heavier at weekends.
- PDNPA logger data is not for constant time intervals. The numbers of week days and weekend days in any period will not influence the averages we are using but will influence the average per day used by PDNPA.

	Large vehicles Dec 2014 – Feb 2015. No VR	Motorcycles Dec 2014 – Feb 2015. No VR	Large vehicles Dec 2015 – Feb 2016 VR	Motorcycles Dec 2015 – Feb 2016 VR
Number of days	69		63	
Weekday total	6	8	22	26
Weekend total	39	69	22	68
Total number of vehicles	45	77	44	94
Weekday average per day	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.6
Weekend average per day	2.0	3.5	1.2	3.8

The 2014/2015 monitoring period included 20 Saturdays and Sundays compared with 18 Saturdays and Sundays in the comparable 2015/2016 and was overall 6 days longer. Weekend use of routes by vehicles is often higher. Without access to PDNPA's daily logger figures, it is impossible to know the real effect the slightly shorter logger period in 2015/2016 has had.

We have already commented on how the total number of vehicles remained effectively unchanged for large vehicles and increased by 22% for motorcycles in the main part of the newsletter. This latter increase is due to an over three fold increase in weekday use.

Looking at weekday and weekend averages, the weekday average for large vehicles increased during the period of voluntary restraint while the weekend average decreased. Both weekday and weekend averages increased for motorcycles. Large vehicles could include agricultural vehicles but it is much less likely that motorcycle data includes agricultural use. The level of agricultural use ideally needs to be known to distinguish recreational and agricultural use in the data for large vehicles.

Here is a summary of the logger data for the whole period (excluding the month when the logger was not present). We have used daily averages for weekends and weekdays rather than total number of vehicles because the periods are all for different lengths of times.

	19/12/15 to 8/1/16	9/1/16 to 19/2/16	20/2/16 to 17/3/16	15/4/16 to 30/4/16
Large vehicles weekday average per day	0.9	0.3	0.07	0.09
Large vehicles weekend average per day	0.8	1.4	0.8	1.8
Motorcycles weekday average per day	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.3
Motorcycles weekend average per day	2.3	4.5	2.6	2.2

Weekday averages per day fell for both large vehicles and motor cycles during the periods that logging data is available. (The difference between 0.07 and 0.09 vehicles per day is statistically insignificant given the small number of vehicles involved and the small size of the difference.) However, it is difficult to discern any clear pattern with weekend usage during the period of voluntary restraint. Usage is generally lower than the comparable averages for December 2014 to February 2015, but we don't know whether this drop is related to seasonal variations as spring approaches and conditions dry or to greater awareness of the voluntary restraint.

If it is the latter effect, it would suggest that the voluntary restraint should start before the route is water logged, so that when it is actually needed, recreational motor vehicle users are well aware of voluntary restraint and a significant percentage of potential users abide by it. This would suggest that starting voluntary restraint in October (when many seasonal TRO's start) would be preferable.