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Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

Saving our green lanes from off-road vehicles

May 2017 Newsletter

PDNPA Green Lanes Action Plan for 2017/2018

PDNPA members debated the Action Plan at the May Audit Resources and Performance Committee meeting. You can hear the full debate by following the link at <https://democracy.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=1571&Ver=4>

We have significant concerns about the plan and its supporting documentation. You can see the plan by following the links to the following web page:

<https://democracy.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=1571&Ver=4>

Members are given a lot of data but crucial supporting information (like the individual Route Summaries) are only available via web links. It is therefore not easy to assimilate the information given because it is spread over multiple sources, the significance of the data in the appendices to the Action Plan is not drawn out anywhere and the rationale behind individual route action plans is not explained. The format of the Action Plan and appendices does not provide for monitoring of what was achieved in the previous year. Officers have little or no involvement in some of the actions promised each year e.g. “support highway authorities in determining legal status”.

Traffic Regulation Orders

The main activity on Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in 2017/2018 is completing the TRO on Washgate (Hartington Upper Quarter and Hollinsclough) this Summer and starting the consultation process on a possible TRO on the route at Wetton. The latter activity was in last year's Action Plan for starting in Autumn 2016. It was not started. No explanation has been given but we assume it was because of the second public consultation for the TRO on Washgate, necessitated by not considering vehicle trials earlier in the process.



Washgate: The steps on the Staffordshire side. The TRO needs completing. March 2017



Wetton: PDNPA plans to consult the statutory consultees in Summer 2017 about a possible TRO. February 2017

Voluntary restraint



Moscar Cross Road - ruts and a vehicle stuck on the route. February 2017

Voluntary restraint is proposed for Minninglow Lane (Ballidon), Moscar Cross Road (Sheffield) and School Lane (Great Hucklow). The first two are among the few routes used by recreational motor vehicles which have stretches that are grassy. They become heavily rutted and water logged during the winter. These two routes are discussed later in this newsletter.

Surface conditions are not the problem on School Lane. The village primary school is on the route and local people have been concerned about speeding vehicles for many years. The proposed voluntary restraint on School Lane would be during term time and on weekdays. Voluntary restraint was also proposed in the 2015/2016 and the 2016/2017 Action Plans but nothing came of it then. We can't see why PDNPA will be any more successful with the proposal this time round. The voluntary restraint may be complicated by a Derbyshire County Council Temporary Traffic Regulation Order valid until 24 November 2017 banning vehicles wider than 1.5 metres from using the route.

Public speakers

There were many speakers from the Bamford and Hathersage area advocating a TRO on Hurstclough Lane. PDNPA Members questioned whether it was really necessary to await repairs on Hurstclough Lane before PDNPA considered a TRO request. Sue Smith (PDNPA Rights of Way Officer) admitted it is not actually a PDNPA policy. She expected Derbyshire County Council to start the long promised repairs soon. There were also requests for TROs on Minninglow Lane, Ballidon from Friends of the Peak District, and Moscar Cross Road, Sheffield from a Sheffield resident. Many speakers deplored PDNPA only starting one TRO in the year

2017/2018. Officers explained it was because of the time and effort a TRO takes and their lack of resources. In the following discussion, Members were frustrated at the slow progress but still didn't feel it possible to do more than one TRO in the year ahead.

Mario Costa-Sa (one of the directors of the Trail Riders Fellowship) spoke at the meeting and said there was a risk of a judicial review for 10 issues (unspecified) in the Action Plan and asked for the paper to be withdrawn. He was also unhappy with PDNPA's lack of engagement with the TRF nationally. Mike Rhodes (PDNPA Rights of Way Officer) defended officers' engagement with vehicle user groups, which is focussed on local ones and vehicle user representatives on the Peak Park Local Access Forum.

The Action Plan was accepted unanimously.

Voluntary restraint on Minninglow Lane during the winter of 2016/2017



Both photographs were taken in December 2016 before the notices about the voluntary restraint went up on the route. These photographs show that the voluntary restraint started far too late to prevent the inevitable winter damage to the route.

Voluntary restraint on Minninglow Lane, Ballidon was part of PDNPA's Action Plan for 2016/2017. Unfortunately the logging data for the route was not available when this year's Action Plan was published. So members had no **information** on which to judge the success of it this winter. Moreover since PDNPA officers have never said what successful voluntary restraint means, members have no **criteria** for making a judgement either.

There are several possible criteria for successful voluntary restraint. One would be that damage does not make the route difficult for non vehicle users. If that criterion had been adopted, the voluntary restraint was a failure as the route was unusable by horse riders, carriage drivers, some cyclists and was challenging for many walkers. Since ruts persist throughout the summer, but are concealed by long grass, the route becomes even more dangerous for horse riders then.

Other criteria could be a reduction in motor vehicle use during periods of voluntary restraint compared to similar periods of non-restraint (i.e. during the same season); or progressive reduction in vehicle use in successive periods of restraint.

None of the data available allows the former comparison to be made. It is also difficult to compare this winter's voluntary restraint logging data with last winter's for the following reasons.

- There is confusion about when the voluntary restraint actually began. PDVUG (a vehicle user group) announced it on 2 December 2016 on their Facebook page. But notices on the route in January (which include PDVUG's name) said that the voluntary restraint started in January 2017. PDNPA monitoring data (which is labelled as being during a period of voluntary restraint) for 7 December 2016 until 15 February 2017 includes a period of about 3 weeks when there were no notices on the route and the voluntary restraint probably hadn't started.

So you can't compare this logging data with that of 19 December 2015 to 19 February 2016 where there was signed voluntary restraint throughout the period.

- The logging data for 2016/2017 is less extensive than the previous winter. No logging was done after mid March 2017 despite the voluntary restraint continuing until 1 May 2017.

PDGLA feels the logging data is insufficient to determine whether this winter's voluntary restraint was more effective than last winter's.

Our final criticism of the voluntary restraint is that it started too late. The route was in a poor condition in mid December 2016. Ideally any voluntary restraint should have started at the beginning of October 2016.

The PDNPA logging data can be seen at http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/760943/RS1705-Minninglow-Gallowlow-Lanes.pdf

PDNPA Route Summaries published for the Sheffield and Kirklees Priority Routes



Some of the off-piste activity off Kiln Bent Road near Holmfirth that is causing concern. April 2016

Individual route summaries and route action plans are intended to give information about priority routes that would assist PDNPA Officers and Members in making decisions.

PDNPA has now published route summaries and action plans for all the priority routes. The final ones, prepared this year, for Houndkirk Road, Kiln Bent Road, Jumble Lane, Moscar Cross Road and Ramsden

Road/Lane can be seen at <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/vehicles/priorityroutes>

We are disappointed that the route summaries are less detailed and less informative than those prepared in previous years. For example, none of the new ones contains a location map. Only that for Kiln Bent Road contains photographs. Route summaries prepared earlier all contained photographs which help those unfamiliar with the route to see what it looks like. No vehicle logging has been done on Ramsden Road yet although that route has been on the priority list since 2013.

We are also disappointed that the scoring for all these routes was carried out in 2013 and has not been revised for these new documents. We appreciate that it is unrealistic to redo the sustainability analysis every year for every route, but feel the score should reflect current conditions when a completely new report is prepared. Conditions on routes can change very quickly.



A deeply eroded section of Ramsden Road near Holmfirth. April 2016

The Local Access Forum comments in these route summaries seem less considered than those done in previous years. For example, Ramsden Road is in a poor condition and has the highest numerical sustainability score of these five routes. Whilst the LAF recommend that PDNPA carry out vehicle logging and inspection by officers regularly for all the other routes in Sheffield and Kirklees, they do not appear to believe such action is necessary on Ramsden Road!

Moscar Cross Road



PDNPA is proposing voluntary restraint for Moscar Cross Road, Sheffield during the winter months. Every winter the grassy part of this route becomes deeply rutted and impassible to carriage drivers, horse riders, many cyclists and some walkers. This winter some of the ruts were 2 feet deep. Since this route is one of the few non tarmac routes out of Sheffield, it is important to all users.

Every Summer, Sheffield City Council re-grade the route and re-seed it. And at the end of every Winter it is in the same poor condition.

Moscar Cross Road in February 2017. Note the depth of the ruts and the walking pole in the rut.

Vehicle logging data for 7 October 2016 until 10 November 2016 in the route summary, shows that vehicle use was noticeably higher on Sundays compared to all other days. There were 1.2 large vehicles/Sunday and 2.4 motor cycles/Sunday in that period. If that level of vehicle use (13 large vehicles and 23 motor cycles in a period of 35 days which averages 1 vehicle per day), is typical of the whole of the winter period, then it seems that it doesn't take much vehicle use to severely damage the route.

Given the ineffectiveness of voluntary restraint on Minninglow Lane in keeping the route open to all users, we have doubts that voluntary restraint will be any more effective on Moscar Cross Road. We would love to be pleasantly surprised.

Survey into effects of off-roading on horse riders

The Peak Horsepower Bridleway Group has carried out the first ever national survey to find the impact that recreational motor vehicle users have on horse riders in England. You may be interested in a summary of their findings.



High Lane, North York Moors. July 2016

The survey was sent to 1057 riding clubs, bridleway groups and other types of equestrian organisations in England. The survey found that riders in all English counties are being affected by off-roading and that the worst problems appear to be in Berkshire, Devon, Kent, Lancashire, North Yorkshire, Somerset and Surrey.



AE563 near Ruckinge. KCC plan to repair this BOAT. Photograph July 2016

Three quarters of respondents said that their off-road riding routes are being used by 4x4s and motor bikes. Ninety per cent of these respondents said that 'off-roading' is creating problems on one or more of their riding routes. Over a third of them said it is causing problems on many or most of their riding routes.

Respondents who reported problems with 4x4s and motor bikes were asked what kinds of problems they are facing.

- Seventy-nine percent of those reporting problems said that 4x4s and motor bikes have damaged the surface of their riding routes
- 72 per cent said that the noise of off road vehicles is frightening horses
- 54 per cent said that vehicle speed is a problem
- 54 per cent said their riding routes are too narrow to pass motor vehicles easily or safely on a horse
- 51 per cent said there was nowhere to get out of the way of motor vehicles
- 35 percent said that blind bends are a problem.

Over sixty percent of respondents reporting 4x4s and motor bikes using their horse riding routes also said that these vehicles do not stick to routes where off-roading is currently legal. They said that in their local area 'off-roading' is also taking place on bridleways and restricted byways, which is illegal.