

PDGLA
PO Box 7976
Great Longstone,
Bakewell,
Derbyshire, DE45 9AY
Web: www.pdgla.org.uk
Email: sec.pdgla@btinternet.com



Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

Saving our green lanes from off-road vehicles

Newsletter May/June 2019

An update on the progress of the proposed PDNPA TRO on Wetton Hills route

We told you in our March 2019 newsletter that Staffordshire County Council (SCC) have asked PDNPA to delay implementing their proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on the route known as Wetton Hills because the Trail Riders Fellowship (whose members use motor cycles for riding on “green lanes”) had served a Section 56 Notice on SCC claiming the route is out of repair. Please see the March 2019 newsletter which is available at http://pdgla.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PDGLA-Newsletter-2019_03.pdf for information about where the route is, the background to the TRO and what a Section 56 Notice is. That newsletter also contained a photograph of the route in March 2019. The photograph showed the lane to be in reasonable condition and certainly not “out of repair”. Since then the route has suffered marked degradation and the need for repair has become more apparent. We find this surprising since last winter was not particularly wet and similar grassy lanes (like Moscar Cross Road) are currently not showing anything like the degradation at Wetton.

PDGLA is very concerned about the delay in implementing the TRO. The TRO process needs to be completed by February 2020 and although that seems a long way off any delays may derail the TRO. We know from experience on Chapel Gate, Hurstclough Lane and Minninglow that once a Highway Authority (HA) starts considering repairs, the process drags on and on – particularly if any public consultation is involved. Because the route crosses a SSSI, Natural England will have to be consulted. Once an HA puts a temporary TRO on a lane in order to carry out repairs, a National Park Authority is prevented from implementing any TRO of their own. The reverse is not the case however, so we consider it imperative that PDNPA complete the process on which they should be well advanced already. The state of repair of the route is irrelevant to PDNPA, since their chosen grounds for implementing their TRO were related to the character, amenity and natural beauty of the lane, not its surface condition. In particular, we would like to feel that PDNPA have completed all their responses to the objections raised against the TRO, since this is a time consuming exercise.

However we do not know whether this is the case, since the latest update released by Sue Smith (Rights of Way Officer at PDNPA) says:

I can confirm that we are actively taking the traffic regulation order forward, in so far as giving due regard to the matters raised by Staffordshire County Council and notifying them of the Authority's intent to make a traffic regulation order on this route and that this be progressed.

The latest update from the County Council is that they have undertaken a condition survey and are considering the nature of repairs having regard to the use of the route and the designated interests. We will be involved in commenting on this.

As I'm sure you will be aware this is a matter of process. At the appropriate time, a future item of update will be brought back to the Audit, Resource and Performance Committee. In the meantime, officers are continuing to log vehicle use and monitor the route.

Note that:-

- SCC seem to have launched themselves down the repairs process and appear to be committed to soliciting views at least from PDNPA (but probably wider).
- Whilst Sue Smith affirms that PDNPA wants to progress its TRO, currently it is only doing so in respect of talking to SCC about possible repairs (and not apparently working on their responses to objections).
- PDNPA are afraid of making any mistake in the process of implementing their TRO. While this is wise, we do not believe this precludes them from completing it independently of whatever SCC decide to do.

Members recently walked and photographed the route. They reported that in spite of a relatively dry Spring the condition of the route in the middle section has deteriorated since March 2019.

PDGLA members have been monitoring this route for some time. In November 2011 there were no visible signs of use by recreational motor vehicles. The photographic evidence shows how vulnerable grassed surfaces are to recreational vehicle use. We would like PDNPA to expedite the TRO to avoid further damage and loss of amenity to non vehicle users.



The height of the dog at its back legs is 19 inches (about 48 cm). Rocks have been added to partly fill the rut (we don't know by whom or from where). Both photographs 28 May 2019.

Time heals – Sough Lane, Taddington

Sough Lane or Taddington BOAT 70 goes from the A6 near The Waterloo Hotel southwards to a minor road called Moor Lane. Recreational vehicles driving off the track have been a problem for a number of years; both driving well off the track to cut off a corner or play on a hummock and widening the track by driving on the verge.

A recent visit showed success in dealing with the off-piste driving which cut off a corner of the track on a steep slope. It showed how in time grass can regenerate. Although the ruts are still visible in places they are now grassed over. The combination of a wooden barrier and notice from PDNPA, Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Police detailing the penalties for driving off the track has been effective in stopping use of this shortcut. We suspect that the notice on its own would have been ineffective but even a partial barrier means that vehicle users might stop and read the notice. Although not shown in the photographs in this newsletter, there are no problems with the surface of Sough Lane in this area necessitating use of this deviation from the track



Near the gate at SK 131712. Damage from off-roaders cutting off a corner on a steep hillside. April 2016



The same area in September 2016. Grass makes the damage look less but the deep ruts are still visible.



The same area in April 2019 with a wooden fence acting as a partial barrier and "threatening" notice.



The top of the previous short cut. Although the barrier is damaged there were no visible signs of deviations from the track here.

The healing has not been as effective on a hummock beside the track. Again there are no problems with the surface of the track and the scarring has been caused by motorists “playing” on the hummock to test their vehicles.



In March 2014 there were visible tyre tracks on the ruts on this hummock beside Sough Lane.



In April 2019 although no visible tyre marks, the scar still remained.

Unfortunately there are still signs of vehicles leaving the track to drive on the verges. One example is shown in the photograph below.



Tyre tracks clearly visible in a deep rut beside Sough Lane. Although not illegal as the actual BOAT is defined as being between the walls, such driving is unnecessary and unsightly. April 2019

PDNPA hope that a publicity campaign which they proposed in their Action Plan for 2019/2020 will help to stop off-piste and off the track activity. To date there is no information about this campaign on their website.