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Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

Saving our green lanes from off-road vehicles

October 2019 Newsletter

PDNPA agrees full TRO on Wetton - again

In May 2016, the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) announced they intended to start the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process on a “green lane” called Wetton Hills. This route runs from Manor House Farm, Back of Ecton at SK 105566 to the Leek Road / Manifold Trail at SK 098557 in Staffordshire. In September 2018 after a series of consultations the now defunct Audit Resources and Planning (ARP) Committee voted to proceed to a full TRO on the lane. This proposed TRO would stop all recreational motor vehicles using the route.

After the September 2018 ARP decision, PDNPA officers would have to write formally to all the objectors to the TRO and to publish the formal notice of the TRO before the TRO could come into effect.

Before this work was completed a Section 56 Notice under the Highways Act 1980 was served on Staffordshire County Council (SCC) by the Trail Riders Fellowship (an organisation representing motor cyclists involved in off-roading) claiming the route was “out of repair”. SCC is the Highway Authority responsible for repairs on the route.

Following a request from SCC reported at the March 2019 ARP meeting, PDNPA delayed completing their TRO (see our March 2019 newsletter for more details of this meeting).

In July 2019 SCC placed a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) on the route in order to carry out repairs which have now been completed. The TTRO remains in place to allow the surface to settle and grass seeds to germinate. This TTRO prohibits all use of the route, whether motorised or not.

PDGLA believe that because the grounds for the TRO were natural beauty and amenity and not damage to the surface of the route, any proposed or actual repairs would not invalidate the ARP Committee decision. But PDNPA (probably to avoid any legal challenges by off-roading organisations) decided that Members should re-visit the decision to proceed to a full TRO when repairs were completed.



Photograph May 2019. The photographer thought the ruts had increased since March 2019. The deepest rut was about 19 inches deep.

The newly formed Programmes and Resources (P & R) Committee re-considered the proposed TRO at their 4th October meeting. The papers for this agenda item can be seen at <https://democracy.peakdistrict.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=451&Mid=2388&Ver=4> . This was the first public meeting of the new committee which had many new Members who had not been involved in the previous decisions on the proposed Wetton Hills TRO. A site visit was arranged for the P & R Committee Members before their October meeting. All Members speaking during the debate were impressed with the beauty, character and tranquillity of the “green lane”.

Eight members of the public spoke at the meeting. Our chair spoke on behalf of PDGLA. Friends of the Peak District spoke and another speaker spoke on behalf of both Peak Horsepower and the Local Access Forum (the first time the LAF had sent a speaker in support of a TRO). Five local people came to the meeting to tell eloquently what the route meant to them and why they supported a TRO. Ecton is only a small hamlet and the fact that so many were prepared to attend and speak at a public meeting demonstrates the importance of the route to local people.

The National Trust sent a written representation supporting the TRO. GLASS (Green Lanes Association) – an organisation representing recreational motor vehicle users – sent a written representation alleging the consultation process was invalid as PDNPA had not consulted SCC as required to do by law. Sue Smith (PDNPA Rights of Way

Officer) was able to confirm that SCC had been consulted as required. The TRF made a written representation asking that motor cyclists be exempted from the TRO.

The P & R Committee Members voted unanimously to proceed to a full TRO after a debate.

There are still two causes for concern. Firstly, PDNPA is unable to complete their TRO on the route whilst the SCC TTRO is in place and theoretically that TTRO could last until January 2021. Secondly, PDNPA need to make their TRO by 14 February 2020. This means that SCC and PDNPA will need to work together to ensure that the PDNPA TRO does not fail because of the SCC TTRO still being in place on 14 February 2020.

PDGLA will continue to monitor the status of the SCC TTRO and will bring you pictures of the repairs when the TTRO is lifted and it is legal to walk the route again.