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Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

Saving our green lanes from off-road vehicles

Judicial review of the Lake District National Park Authority decision

We asked you in December 2019 to support the crowd funding appeal to fund GLEAM's (Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement) legal action against the Lake District National Park Authority. The appeal raised over the target of £60,000 and GLEAM has started the legal action for a judicial review. GLEAM is the national organisation with aims similar to PDGLA's.

Here is a message from the GLEAM Honorary Secretary, Diana Mallinson, explaining what has happened since then. It was written for GLEAM members but we thought it simplest just to use it as written.

"You will recall that I contacted you in December 2019 about our legal action (judicial review) against the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA), contesting the LDNPA's decision not to use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to protect two unsealed fell tracks in the Little Langdale area from the impact of recreational 4x4s and motor bikes. Thank you very much for your support for our action.

The High Court has now given permission for GLEAM's judicial review case against the LDNPA to be heard. The LDNPA and the Trail Riders Fellowship (the body which represents motor bike users of green lanes) had both put forward legal submissions seeking to persuade the court that the LDNPA has no case to answer. But the court did not agree. It said that our case against the LDNPA is 'arguable' and 'significant'.

The case will be heard by the High Court in Manchester. Two days have been set aside for the hearing, although we have not been notified of a date and we do not know how the civil courts will be affected by the impact of coronavirus."

Peak District National Park Authority and Covid-19

PDNPA has closed all offices, ranger hubs, visitor facilities and car parks. They are asking visitors to stay away. Please see the message from Sarah Fowler (Chief Executive) dated 24 March 2020 for further details using this link.

<https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/learning-about/news/current-news/coronavirus-covid-19-update>

At one time the Programmes and Resources Committee were listed as planning to discuss the Green Lanes Action Plan 2020 – 2021 at the March meeting. It was not on the agenda for the meeting on 20 March 2020 and that meeting was cancelled following government advice to avoid social contact. The Forward Plan page shows this Action Plan now planned to be discussed at the May meeting but that meeting is now suspended until further notice (as are all PDNPA meetings).

Other responses to the Covid-19 pandemic

The three Welsh National Park Authorities (Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia) have used emergency powers granted by the Welsh Government under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 to temporarily close public rights of way and access land in popular parts of their areas. These restrictions on movement are part of their actions to stop visitors travelling to these areas and coming into close proximity with others, to slow the spread of the virus and so protect rural communities and local health services. The restrictions follow “*unprecedented*” volumes of visitors over the weekend 21/22 March.

Outdoor activity organisations (e.g. British Horse Society, British Mountaineering Council, Open Spaces Society, Ramblers) across the UK are advising people not to travel but to exercise in their local area.

Of the two national organisations which represent motorised users of green lanes, the Green Lane Association is endorsing this advice, saying “*avoid using green roads*”. However the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) says that it would be wrong for any organisation to provide definitive advice but will share advice on its bulletin board (<https://trail.trf.org.uk/2020/03/24/coronavirus-bulletin-board/>). The advice on their bulletin board is confusing. Currently this bulletin board comprises two statements from the TRF. The earlier, dated 18 March 2020, says that “*members could continue trail riding whilst taking extra precautions*”. The later statement, dated 24 March 2020, does not explicitly change this advice but asks members to follow government advice. This confusion may just be a result of poor site maintenance. But it leaves open the possibility that some TRF members might consider trail riding is exercise which meets the government guideline for one form of exercise a day.