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Peak District  
Green Lanes Alliance

## April 2016 Newsletter

### Reminder of the Washgate Consultation for a Traffic Regulation Order



*The "ford" over the River Dove. If motor bikes stopped using the route, there would be natural healing of the ruts made by 4x4s and motor bikes in the past. January 2015*



*The route is very narrow where it flattens out on the Staffordshire side. Potential conflicts between vehicle users and non vehicle users would be eliminated if there were a Traffic Regulation Order. August 2015*

The PDNPA consultation on a full Traffic Regulation Order for Washgate closes at **5pm on 22 April 2016**. Please take part if you haven't done already

There is more comprehensive information about the route in our March 2016 Newsletter which can be found at <http://pdgla.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PDGLA-March-2016-Newsletter.pdf>

All the PDNPA documents giving more information about the reasons for the proposal can be found by going directly to <http://consult.peakdistrict.gov.uk/details.cfm?TROID=8>

## Minninglow Lane Voluntary Restraint Update

Voluntary restraint on Minninglow Lane, Ballidon was on PDNPA's Action Plan for 2015/2016. The recreational motor vehicle users unilaterally declared voluntary restraint on the route in mid December 2015 without consulting PDNPA or Derbyshire County Council (who are the Highway Authority). We believe that any measures to protect this vulnerable route should have started earlier as by mid December it was water logged and difficult for all users to use it.

If the effectiveness of voluntary restraint is to be objectively assessed at the end of the period, desired outcomes and criteria for success should be agreed and established before it starts. As far as we know, this had not been done, probably because it was declared without any consultation. We are not aware of any published criteria to judge its success.



*Photograph: March 2016*

One possible objective might be to keep the route passable for all non vehicle users during the winter. In late March 2016, much of the countryside had started drying out and was walkable in trainers without too much care. The section of Minninglow Lane shown in the photograph above was not suitable for walking in trainers. If success was keeping this section of Minninglow Lane open to non vehicle users, we don't think it has worked too well.

Another measure of success would be to have minimal signs of recreational vehicle use on the route. The photograph over the page, also taken in March

2016, shows nearly wall to wall ruts (which would make it difficult for horse riders to use the route). There are also plenty of vehicle tracks.



We will be interested to see PDNPA's logging figures for the period immediately before the voluntary restraint started and during the period of restraint to see if there has been a significant drop in vehicle usage. However a “usability” criterion as suggested above, would still be a preferable measure of success.

### **Off-piste Activity in the Peak District National Park**

Off-piste activity is a problem on a number of routes within the National Park. A significant minority of recreational motor vehicle users do not go out on “green lanes” to enjoy the countryside but rather to test their driving skills and vehicle capability; and the rougher or muddier the terrain, the better. These drivers would rather drive on soft, muddy ground than on a firm, wide route. Some of this off-piste activity is illegal but all is anti-social.

One type of off-piste activity is “playing on the verges beside a route.” Depending how the width of a route is defined in legal documents such as Enclosure Awards or in Turnpike specifications, this may be legal. Historically route widths were generous for public horse and cart routes (or public carriage roads as they are known in Enclosure Awards). When the route became impassable because of ruts (books often use the word founderous to describe such routes), users could start using another bit of the defined route (until that too became impassable.) But even if this use of the verges is not illegal, it is anti-social. Often the route

itself is not a challenge for vehicles and the deviations are because a hillock beside the track provides a sharp up and down gradient or because driving on the sides of a sunken route allows the driver to tilt the vehicle dramatically.



*Driving on the banks on a sunken part of Clough Lane, Derbyshire. The route is wide enough here to allow a 4x4 to use it without problems. April 2016*



*Extensive damage caused by vehicles driving on the verges of Over Hill Road. The nuisance is compounded by the fact that this section of the route is a restricted byway and should not be used by off-roaders. January 2016*

This type of driving destroys vegetation on the verges, makes the route less visually attractive to other users and encourages further off-piste activity.

Sheffield City Council has placed boulders in a number of areas along Houndkirk Road to discourage off-roaders straying onto the moorlands and damaging them. The moors have SSSI status. Boulders are effective in preventing 4x4s straying but don't stop motor bikes. And there are still, unfortunately, fresh motor bike tracks on areas protected by boulders.



*A "deviation" on Houndkirk Road. This "deviation" is not protected by boulders. PDGLA members have pictures of this off-piste activity from May 2014 and the ruts have been getting steadily deeper. March 2016*



*A small hillock on the side of the ORPA between Edensor and Handley Lane has been getting steadily more eroded with time. There are no problems with the surface necessitating this detour. April 2016*

Another problem is when recreational motor vehicle users use a BOAT or ORPRA to access an area that they then treat as a “play ground”.

Pin Dale Lead Side Veins, a Scheduled Monument, is on the northern side of the route known as Pindale. Recreational motor vehicles driving on the old lead mines has been a problem since at least 2009. Boulders now line most of the northern side of the route to prevent access to the old lead mines. There are two access points for 4x4s and trail bikes that have been deliberately created where the boulders end. Trail bikes may be able to get between the boulders where the gaps between them are too large. There are plenty of visible tyre tracks at lower levels on the scheduled monument.



*Boulders lining Pindale with the old lead mines – a Scheduled Monument - above. March 2016*



*Pindale: Boulders on the right stopped access to the lead mines. But a new route has been created on the left. March 2016*

Another example of a scheduled monument being damaged is How Grove Lead Mine near Castleton– listed because of the survival of rare late mining features.



*One access point from Dirlow Rake onto the mines for recreational motor vehicle users. March 2016*



*Some of the ruts created on top of the scheduled monument are waist deep. March 2016*

Unfortunately much of this damaging off-piste activity takes places on routes that are remote from houses. If you see any such activity, please contact the Police on the non-emergency 101 number when it is safe for you to do so. Don't expect flashing blue lights. But if the Police are unaware of the problems, they won't devote any resources to that area. It is also worth contacting the Rights of Way Officers for the Local Authority and the National Park by email to alert them of the problem.