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Peak District
Green Lanes Alliance

Saving our green lanes from off-road vehicles

February 2018 Newsletter

PDNPA starts public consultation on a TRO for the Wetton Hills route

Last year, PDNPA started the consultation process on the route it calls Wetton Hills in Staffordshire which travels from the Leek Road / Manifold Trail at SK 098557 to Manor House Farm, Back of Ecton at SK 105566. Now they have begun the public consultation which runs until **5pm on Thursday 6 April 2018**. The proposal is for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) that bans all mechanically propelled vehicles from the route with exceptions for certain classes of vehicles such as land management vehicles, invalid carriages and the emergency services.

All the papers prepared by PDNPA for this public consultation can be seen at <http://consult.peakdistrict.gov.uk/details.cfm?TROID=11>



The more wooded lower part of the route in July 2017. The track is on firmer ground here and is less likely to be affected by vehicles.

Wetton Hills is shown on OS Maps as an ORPA (other route with public access) which means that its legal status is not yet known but it can be and is being used by recreational motor vehicle users. It lies within the White Peak Landscape Area and within the Natural Zone. (Both these terms used by PDNPA are described in Appendix 2 of the papers.) The route travels down a secluded, dry, limestone valley. The character changes from being open in the upper part of the valley near Manor House Farm to being more enclosed and wooded near the Manifold Trail. There are extensive views when travelling both up and down the valley. It is one of the few genuine green lanes in the National Park.

The route seems very remote from civilisation and is very quiet – except when the tranquillity is broken by the revving of motor cycles. These can be heard approaching from a great distance. The route has links with minor roads, footpaths, bridleways and the Manifold Trail all of which can be used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists to explore an area with beautiful, varied landscapes; historical features and geological interest.

PDNPA 's Notice of Proposal gives the grounds for a TRO (using the legal language of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) as:-

- (a) for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property
- (b) for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs
- and
- (c) for the purpose of conserving or enhancing the natural beauty of the area, or of affording better opportunities for the public to enjoy the amenities of the area, or recreation or the study of nature in the area

PDGLA agrees there is evidence to support a TRO on all these grounds and fully supports the proposal.

PDNPA's papers consider other options for the route such as voluntary restraint. Voluntary restraint is normally initiated only by recreational motor vehicles user groups - not PDNPA. during Voluntary restraint was tried on Wetton Hills in the winter of 2015/2016. The PDNPA vehicle logging data for this period can be seen at http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/760980/RS1802-Wetton-Hills.pdf Motor cyclists are the main vehicle users of the route and our analysis of the data shows that voluntary restraint had little impact on their usage during the early period of restraint. PDGLA has many doubts about the effectiveness of voluntary restraint on any route. The results on Wetton Hills during the winter of 2016/2017 show that it was not effective in reducing use and in any case was initiated too late as significant signs of damage were showing before it started. We do not believe voluntary restraint is a viable way of managing this or any other route in the long term.



December 2015 before voluntary restraint started.



The same are in March 2016 during voluntary restraint.

PDGLA members have been monitoring the condition of the route since 2011 (when there were no visible signs of any vehicle use). From 2013 onwards the condition during the winter months has deteriorated with significant vehicle tracks and ruts developing in the middle section. Fortunately, there is some healing over the

summer. Whilst PDNPA is not using the condition of the route as a ground for the proposed TRO, a TRO will halt this deterioration and allow the route to recover probably with either minor repairs or even with no repairs at all. PDGLA fully supports pre-emptive TROs which protect lanes from further deterioration and allow non vehicle users to use them in peace and quiet.



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The Wetton Hills and surrounding area are well worth a visit, so if you are unfamiliar with the route, please do go and see it. We have been impressed previously by how seeing a route for themselves has enhanced the understanding of PDNPA Members.

Please take part in this consultation. You can reply on-line using the link on the webpage at <http://consult.peakdistrict.gov.uk/details.cfm?TROID=11> .

If you want to reply in writing, write to Rights of Way at Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1AE.

If you are writing to PDNPA please ensure you include as part of your representation:-

1. your full name and address;
2. whether you are representing your personal views or the views of an organisation;
3. whether your comments are in favour of the proposed TRO, objecting to the proposed TRO or are general comments. If your comments object to the proposed TRO, please set out the grounds on which your objection is made.

Representations whether on-line or in writing must be received by 5pm on Thursday 6 April 2018.