
Staying on the Right Track

Vehicles in the Countryside in the Peak District National Park



Update – June 2011

Trial exclusion of “off-road” vehicles on country track

The Peak District National Park Authority is to temporarily exclude trail-bikes, quad-bikes and 4x4s from Chapel Gate, a country track between Chapel-en-le-Frith and Edale.

The Authority's audit, resources and performance committee (June 3) approved an experimental 18-month Traffic Regulation Order after officials advised it as a last resort to halt further severe environmental damage to the 3km route near Rushup Edge.



The route crosses a landscape of the highest international importance for its wildlife and natural beauty - it is a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

But deep ruts, mud, water and exposed rocks are now deterring walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, and erosion has widened up to 12 metres as people deviate onto surrounding land with fragile wildlife habitats.

Although Chapel Gate is a centuries-old public highway, officially designated a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT), the committee heard that the environmental harm was so great that a respite was needed from motorised traffic.

Committee chair Christopher Pennell said: “We agree that time is needed for the landscape to recover and to establish whether that recovery is sustained over two growing seasons with motorised traffic excluded.”

People who spoke in support of the 18-month ban were representing the Peak District Green Lane Alliance, Peak Horsepower, the Forum for Ancient Byways, Rocking the BOAT (action group), and the Peak District Local Access Forum, an independent advisory group of walkers,

climbers, cyclists, horse-riders and motorised users, which originally recommended the measure. No member of the public spoke against.

A six-week public consultation earlier this year resulted in 309 responses in favour of a temporary ban, and 207 against.

People in favour were concerned about danger, ecological damage, erosion, disturbance to wildness and tranquillity, pollution (noise and emissions), water run-off, and impact on agricultural access.

Those against argued that lack of maintenance had caused the current state of the route; motorised traffic was not the only cause; there were few legal "off-road" routes available to them; riders came from all over the country to ride Chapel Gate; they too wanted to experience wildness; riders were being unfairly discriminated against, and a ban would put pressure on other routes.

Access and rights of way manager Mike Rhodes said: "We are working hard to maintain a positive relationship with responsible recreational motor-users and we value the contribution of the Peak and Derbyshire Vehicle User Group in educating and informing drivers and riders."

This umbrella group takes part in volunteer work parties and in joint Operation Blackbrook days with the police and national park rangers, talking to users at popular "off-roading" spots, offering leaflets and information.

The ban will come into force when a current Derbyshire County Council closure for repairs finishes at **the end of August**, and will then last for 18 months.

This is the Authority's first experimental Traffic Regulation Order of this kind. The committee's support for it was unanimous apart from one abstention.

Voluntary Restraint (Nov 2010-May 2011) at Minninglow/Gallowgate Lane, Ballidon ends

This voluntary restraint has now ended. Thank you to all users who refrained from using this route over the winter and spring. Vehicle use fell by almost 70% during the period and as a consequence the route has improved.

Signs about the restraint have now been removed from the site. Thanks to members of the Peak and Derbyshire Vehicle User Group for their help in advertising this restraint and to local farmers Mr Edge and Mr Cooper for their help with the improvement works and during the closure itself.

The photos show how the lane looks now.



Update from the Roych

We continue to monitor the voluntary one-way system at this route, between Sheffield Road, near Rushup Edge (GR SK 09 82) and Beet Farm, near Hull End (SK 06 83). This request for restraint is to protect narrow steep sections of the lane, for safety reasons and to prevent trespass onto neighbouring farmland caused by drivers avoiding a step feature which is due to be repaired.

Warning signs have been put up near Hull End to give 4-wheel-drivers and motorbikers the opportunity to turn around before reaching the section that is covered by the voluntary restraint.

The Peak and Derbyshire Vehicle User Group held an awareness day recently, and although the route was very quiet on that day, we thank them for their efforts and hope

that all responsible users will help to make this management action work by adhering to the one-way system.

