

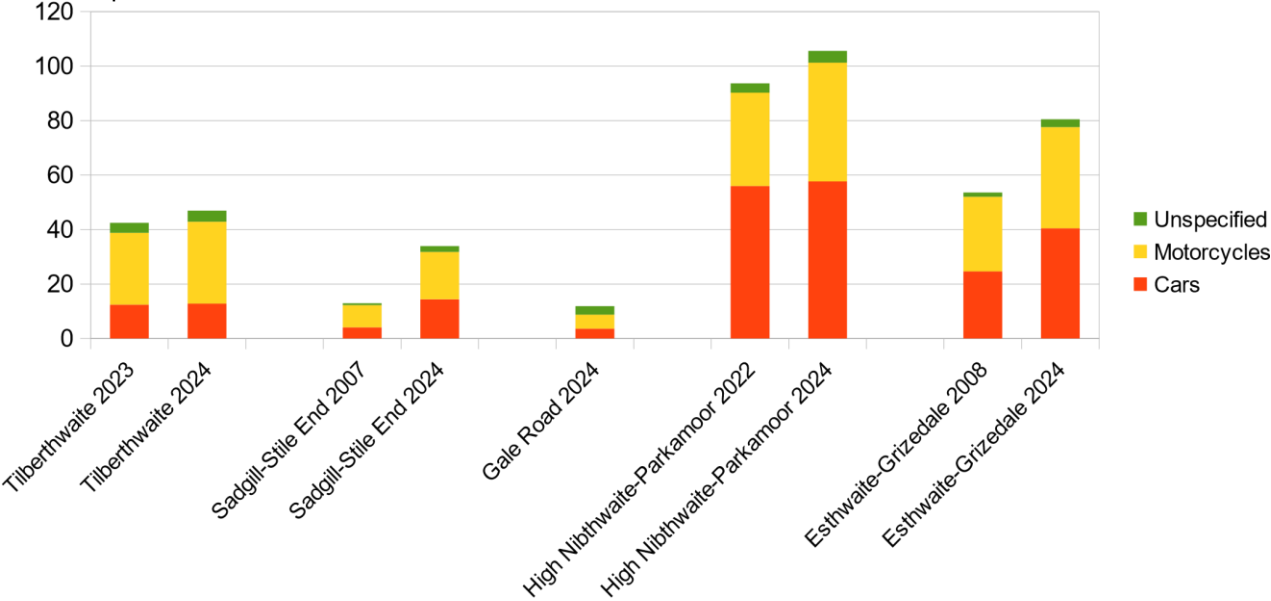
Green lane monitoring – a crucial choice

In our last newsletter (April 2024) we explained why we think the LDNPA’s current user survey does not ask the right questions to establish how recreational motoring affects the special qualities including tranquillity, and whether a ban on recreational motor vehicles would conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the area.

We also have serious reservations about the choice of routes which the LDNPA says it is monitoring. In the 1990s the LDNPA, together with off-roading groups, developed categories for the vulnerability of green lanes, which resulted in a list of 38 routes. 25 were categorised as amber (“*may not be passable in all weathers*”, “*route with moderate use requiring some monitoring/management*”) and 13 as red (“*may be environmental issues plus the potential for misunderstanding or conflict with other users*”, “*route with significant use requiring significant monitoring/management*”).

In December 2023, the LDNPA decided to monitor use and users’ experience on three green lanes, Tilberthwaite (red), Sadgill-Stile End (red) and Gale Road (amber). It makes sense to monitor motor vehicle numbers on the first two routes, as there are earlier vehicle logger data for comparison. But for Gale Road there is no previous monitoring data (other than inspections at infrequent intervals). The graphs below show the 2024 vehicle logger data available so far for these three routes, plus the most recent comparative data for two other (red) routes, High Nibthwaite-Parkamoor and Esthwaite-Grizedale. It would seem logical to prioritise these as they are clearly more used by motor vehicles than Sadgill-Stile and Gale Road,

Motor vehicles per week on green lanes monitored in all or part of the first five months of 2024
Comparison of 2024 and most recent earlier data



There is one crucial question the LDNPA needs to clarify: what level of motor vehicle use is acceptable? When we asked them in March 2024 the only response was that more routes would be monitored, resources permitting.

This is worrying. Defra's guidance for national park authorities making traffic regulation orders (TROs) says that "*The Government considers in many cases a level of recreational motor vehicular use that may be acceptable in other areas will be inappropriate within National Parks and incompatible with their purposes.*" But without any clear idea of what levels are acceptable the monitoring makes little sense.