

To the Members of the Lake District National Park Authority

As experts working in the fields of sustainable resource management and climate change we welcome the National Park Authority's vision for the Lake District as an example of sustainable development. You rightly regard climate change and resilience as one of your cross-cutting themes, with particular implications for sustainable travel.

Could we ask you to address a connected problem as a matter of some urgency: that of green lane driving in the Lake District?

Although using motor vehicles as a leisure pursuit on unsealed roads is only part of the problem created by increasing visitor numbers and increased traffic flows into the National Park, this activity is unsustainable in two important aspects: not only do off-road motor vehicles using green lanes have high carbon emissions, they also adversely affect the landscape character of the Lake District, regardless of the engine type they use. Natural England has characterised the High Fells as "the most biologically diverse suite of upland habitats in England" with internationally important fell habitats. Motor vehicles disturb this highly fragile environment and disrupt its tranquillity through visual and noise intrusion.

Importantly, the Authority does not have to wait to deal with the problem: it can act now by regulating access to green lanes in the interest of carbon reduction and of protecting the unique landscape and biodiversity of the Lake District fells.

We think that in the context of the Authority's intention to foster sustainable tourism, for instance through its "Smarter Travel" strategy, an effective policy on green lanes is essential. And we are confident that the LDNPA will want to develop such a policy without delay, taking into account the need to protect the landscape character of the Lake District National Park and World Heritage site.

June 2021

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