

Farmers at the end of the road with 4x4s

● Cars tearing up landscape make job 'impossible'

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A HERDWICK sheep farming couple are considering relinquishing their National Trust tenancy because off-road vehicles have ripped up a vital track making their job 'impossible.'

Tilberthwaite Farm, near Coniston, has been in Dorothy Wilkinson's family since 1960, but due to the severe damage to an unsealed track that runs through the farm she and husband Glen are now at the end of their tether.

They say up to 30 4x4 vehicles a day pass along the track, which runs approximately 2.5 miles between High Tilberthwaite and Bridge End. They have churned up the ground to such an extent that bare rock has now been revealed beneath.

"It's totally impassable with the tractor and it's such hard work to take a quad bike and trailer up to tend to the animals," said Mrs Wilkinson.

"The state of the road has deteriorated to such an extent we are no longer able to carry on our farm practices as we should be able to."

Mrs Wilkinson added that parts of the road are now three feet deeper than they once were because of the the volume of traffic.

Off-roaders are entitled to use the track as it is a designated Green Road, which permits the use of vehicles on unsealed routes such as the one that runs through their farm.

The couple have backed an on-line petition calling on the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) to impose a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to preserve the area through which the track runs.

Another person to sign it is Dot Wood of Chapel Stile, Great Langdale, who said the damage being caused was depriving farmers of a livelihood.

"If they can't get quad bikes



Damage to the unsealed road which runs through Tilberthwaite Farm

up there to feed the animals they can't go about their normal farming business and it's because of the state of the road," said Mrs Wood, who represents Langdale on Lakes Parish Council. "I think it needs to be stopped or restricted."

But Dean Spencer, the Cumbria representative for the Green Lane Association (GLASS), said closing or restricting the small number of accessible lanes to off-road vehicle users was not the right course of action.

"Closing lanes is not the answer to these problems but opening more back up would help," he said. "As other areas close lanes by TRO it forces more people on to the legal lanes that are still open."

"Closing lanes will not stop people doing something they enjoy, it just forces them to do it illegally."

Mark Eccles, LDNPA's head of park management, said TROs

were a last resort while resolving issues surrounding off-road vehicle use.

"Although it would be preferable if people did not take vehicles on such Lake District routes, it is accepted it is a legal activity along the 125km or so of byways open to all traffic and unsealed public roads," he said.

"There are just over 3,200km of public rights of way; the vehicular ratio is less than four percent."

"The overall strategy is one of management and containment through partnership working, collaboration and other practical means - including repair and maintenance."

"Regarding the specific routes mentioned in the petition and complaints to LDNPA, inspections have been made on the condition of the surfaces. Discussions with partners will consider maintenance and management."

IN BRIEF

Attempted murder: Man in court

TIMOTHY Nickson, 42, appeared at Furness and District Magistrates' Court on Monday charged with attempted murder following an incident on Broughton Road, Dalton, on Thursday. A 46-year-old man from Dalton sustained life-threatening injuries and was taken to Furness General Hospital. He was arrested on suspicion of wounding. Police were called at around 8pm and seized an axe. Mr Nickson has been remanded to appear at court on July 20.

Pub homes plan

PLANS are brewing to convert the empty Crown Inn at Flookburgh into houses.

Applicant Giles Oakden, of Oakden Properties Ltd, Lupton, hopes to create four three-bedroom dwellings at the Grade II-listed former pub and a neighbouring barn, at Market Street, according to plans lodged with South Lakeland District Council.

Window smashed

POLICE are investigating a report of a smashed window at Sandylands Post Office in Kendal.

The incident occurred shortly after 8pm on Monday and police are appealing for anyone with information to call 101.

Child sex offender is jailed

A CHILD sex offender has been jailed for five years for offences committed in Kendal in the 1990s.

Robert Peter Bradley, aged 70, from Halifax, West Yorkshire, was sentenced at Carlisle Crown Court this week after being found guilty by a jury last month.

Bradley committed offences of gross indecency with a child and indecent assault on a child under the age of 14, the court was told. He was also issued with a Sexual Harm Prevention Order.

DC Matt McFall, of South Cumbria CID, said: "I



would like to commend the courage and integrity of the victim for coming forward and putting trust in Cumbria Police to deal with this case sensitively and professionally.

"I am aware that it requires a great deal of bravery for people to come forward in cases such as this, particularly when the events occurred a long time ago."

"I hope this case helps encourage other victims of sexual offences who have not yet come forward to do so."

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