

Response to the LDNPA March 2024

The LDNPA has written an indignant letter to the members of the Tilberthwaite partnership management group after we published the dates for the planned Tilberthwaite on-site survey.

The LDNPA thinks that “from the information published, should the called for actions be responded to, the survey results would have been skewed and unrepresentative.”

It adds, rather sanctimoniously, that “many of you will perhaps feel a breach of trust has been committed.”

We emphatically reject this: at no point were the members of the group told that the information was confidential and should not be shared.

However, in our view the survey is seriously flawed and unsuitable as a basis for any decisions about motorised access:

- **It limits the target population to people who happen to use the route on specific days.** It excludes key stakeholders who a legitimate interest in how the route is managed are excluded: all those who have used the route in the past; walking and climbing organisations; residents of nearby villages. People who have decided to stop using the route because they do not want to run the risk of encountering a 4x4 or motorbike have no opportunity to make their voices heard.
- **The survey presents the legal status of the route as unchangeable fact.** Respondents are not told that the LDNPA has the power to prohibit recreational motor vehicles and are not given the opportunity to request a ban.
- Having been informed that the route can be used by motor vehicles, respondents are then asked whether sharing it with motor vehicles “would” (note the conditional) affect their use of it. However, the issue is not the level of comfort pedestrians/cyclists/horse riders feel about sharing the route, but the impact on tranquillity and other special qualities of the National Park and World Heritage Site.

We have fed these criticisms back to the LDNPA but have received no response. None of them were taken into account.

We also pointed out that the route has already been surveyed twice, and that the LDNPA has a wealth of information on the negative impact from motor vehicles on people’s enjoyment and on special qualities. Ignoring these impact statements and

carrying out yet another survey can only mean that the LDNPA is determined to do as many surveys as are necessary to reach the desired result.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee sets out clear requirements for the LDNPA: it should draw up a regulatory strategy for visitor management based on the protection of OUV. The nomination dossier for World Heritage status contains detailed descriptions of the attributes of OUV for Langdale, as it does for other valleys. That should be the basis for any decision, not surveys of small groups of people who happen to use a specific track on a specific day.