

Protecting the beauty and tranquillity of our green lanes



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Lake District Green Lanes Alliance

www.ldgla.org
contact@ldgla.org



A glimmer of hope?

In the recent Landscapes Review Defra asked:

“Should we legislate to restrict the use of motor vehicles on unsealed unclassified roads for recreational use, subject to appropriate exemptions?”

The [response](#) from the LDNPA took us by surprise:

“Yes - everywhere”

Explaining its position, the LDNPA describes its difficulties with TROs: “It is not that grounds do not exist in legislation for National Park Authorities to use, it is the difficulty in applying without challenge that is more the issue.”

Specifically, the LDNPA’s says its concern “lies in the risk of challenge to what constitutes evidence of impact on amenity because of the subjective nature of the evidence.”

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We understand this cautious approach, but urge the LDNPA to look at evidence successfully used in other national parks. This was firmly based on the harm to natural beauty and amenity as attested by visitors and residents, precisely the type of data we also have in the Lake District.

Green lanes in Westmorland and Furness and in Cumberland



From 1st April 2023 two new local councils will replace Cumbria County Council. How many Lake District green lanes do they cover each? Altogether there are about 80 green lanes in the National Park. The Hierarchy of Trail Routes, a voluntary restraint scheme adopted by the LDNPA and Cumbria County Council, identifies two categories of routes deserving special attention:

Red = Route has a lot of use, proceed with great care and follow advice or signs explaining special controls in place.

These routes are under the greatest pressure and there may be environmental issues plus the potential for misunderstanding or conflict with other users.

Amber = Route has moderate use; proceed with special care - there may be a lot of other users or land management issues. It may not be passable in all weathers.

There are 12 red routes, all of them in Westmorland and Furness. One, the Old Coach



Tilberthwaite to Bridge End: a red route

Road, falls under the responsibility of both new local councils. Of the **26 Amber routes** 21 are in Westmorland and Furness, 5 in Cumberland.

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12 Red routes in Westmorland and Furness:

U5002	Hodge Close (Skelwith)
U5015	Tarn Hows (Skelwith/ Coniston/ Hawkshead)
U5203	Moss Wood (Colton)
U5255	Stile End (Kentmere/ Longsleddale)
U5739	Old Langdale Road (Lakes)
U2236/ U3132	Old Coach Road (St Johns, Castlerigg & Wythburn/ Threlkeld/ Matterdale)
U5001	High Tilberthwaite (Coniston)
U5003	Little Langdale (Skelwith/ Coniston)
U5004	High Oxen Fell (Skelwith)
U5050	Grizedale - Esthwaite (Satterthwaite/ Hawkshead)
U5064	Ickenthwaite (Colton)
U5213	The Riggs (Colton)

20 Amber routes in Westmorland and Furness

U3278	Breast High Road (Whinfell, Tebay, Orton)
U5597	Green Lane (Underbarrow & Bradleyfield)
U5600	Whitbarrow Rd (Crosthwaite & Lyth)
U5788/2	Droomer Road (S) (Windermere)
U5024	Scar House Lane (Claife)
U5051	High Nibthwaite – Parkamoor (Colton)
U5062	Thwaite Moss (Satterthwaite/ Colton)
U5066	Tail Bank Lonning (Broughton West)
U5077	Bay Bottom (Blawith & Subberthwaite)
U5079	Raisthwaite Lane (Blawith & Subberthwaite)
U5204	Old Hall Farm, Bouth (Colton)
U5216	Hulleter (Colton)
U5228	Simpson Ground (Cartmel Fell)
U5229	Sow How Lane (Cartmel Fell)
U5248	Lightwood (Cartmel Fell)
U5328	Spighot Lane (Crook)
U5333	Gamblesmire Lane (Underbarrow & Bradleyfield)
U5629	Elterwater (Lakes)
U5797	Green Lane, West (Crook & Winster)
U5798	Green Lane, East (Crook & Winster)

5 Amber routes in Cumberland

U4070	Old Corney Fell Road (Bootle)
U2121	Longlands (Caldbeck, Ireby & Uldale)
U2228	Threlkeld (Threlkeld, Underskiddaw)
U4066	Ulpha Park (Ulpha)
U4070	Old Corney Fell Road (Bootle)

Note: There is one more red route (Gatescarth Pass) and one more amber route (Rusland Pool) in Westmorland and Furness. These were omitted because they are subject to partial TROs.

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Disabled people and green lanes

Over 20 years ago, I was accompanying a group of disabled people on a walk in the Dales. The group included sight-, and hearing-impaired people, people with limited mobility, and learning-disabled people. Towards the end of what had been an enjoyable walk, we were descending the Pennine Way into Horton-in-Ribblesdale. We heard the noise of an approaching group of



On green lanes, disabled people and motor vehicles are a dangerous mix.

motorbikes. This startled people, especially the blind and learning-disabled people, who did not expect an alarming encounter with motor vehicles. We scrambled aside, but as the motorbikes came past, one rider

lost control, and crashed into the boundary wall, fortunately without injury to himself or to any members of our party. Then and there I formed the view that, on green lanes, disabled people and motor vehicles are a hazardous mix.

4x4 and motorbike users react to stories like this – and over the years I have experienced many more – in two ways. First, they tend to say ‘Why were you on this green lane in the first place? Why not walk on footpaths and bridleways from which motors are forbidden?’ The answer is that green lanes, apart from their intrinsic and unique beauty, have no stiles or kissing gates, both of which present often insuperable barriers to disabled people. Also, green lanes, unlike footpaths and many bridleways, are commonly wide enough for two people to walk alongside each other – an essential need for blind people and their guides, or for the partner of a user of an electric mobility scooter, or, in places where the surface is manageable, a wheelchair user. Green lanes are a precious asset for disabled people.

The second response from vehicle users is to point to the numbers of disabled people who either drive modified 4x4s, or are driven as passengers in them. The pleasures of green lanes, the argument runs, would be denied if the vehicles that disabled users depend on were to be prohibited. However, from the point of view of disabled walkers- especially blind walkers - it makes no difference if the 4x4 that they encounter, together with the ruts and mud churned up by the vehicle, is driven by a disabled, or an able-bodied driver. But in any case, it is a fallacy to claim that if disabled people are denied motorised access they would be suffering discrimination. Disability groups such as Open Country (opencountry.org.uk) have, for over 25 years, been running expeditions into the countryside for disabled people, every week, twelve months a year,

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rain or shine, and they have never used motor vehicles, apart from the minibuses that take members to the start of walks. Furthermore, some Country Parks, and National Parks hire out rugged electric mobility scooters that allow users, and their partners, to get away from motor traffic and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside. The Yorkshire Dales National Park has hosted groups from the Disabled Ramblers who bring their own mobility scooters and are escorted by park rangers and volunteers on trips up into the high fells – to places from which 4x4s and motorbikes are forbidden, by law. Rugged mobility scooters are expensive – but not as expensive as Range Rovers, and they can now be hired in more and more places.



There are less destructive, and far more rewarding ways of getting people with disabilities into the countryside.

There is no doubt at all that the countryside must be made more accessible to people with disabilities. But, emphatically, that does not mean that 4x4s driven by, or carrying, disabled people must be allowed on green lanes. There are less destructive, and far more rewarding ways of getting people with disabilities into the countryside.

Michael Bartholomew, chairman, Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Alliance

Is natural beauty just in the eye of the beholder?



Emily Brady is Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M University, specialising in environmental ethics and landscape aesthetics. Before that she was Professor of Environment and Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. She talks about her relationship with the Lake District and what makes it such a special place – even in Texas.

How did you get to know the Lake District?

Like many other people, I fell in love with the Lake District through time spent hill-walking. I taught at Lancaster University for ten years, during which time I came to know many of the fells and dales. I was lucky enough to be able to hike throughout the year, even in the snow!

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I also value the cultural and philosophical contributions of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Ruskin, all of whom knew the Lake District well. They have influenced my ideas and featured in my academic writings.

Having moved from the UK to Texas a few years ago, the Lake District is a place that I often long for. My professional background includes academic expertise in environmental philosophy and aesthetics which I developed largely within the UK context, as the majority of my career was spent there. I've reflected upon changes to landscapes and places from an aesthetic perspective, and the Lake District often comes to mind in so far as its landscapes have a unique beauty that is shaped by cultural and natural forces working together. It's no surprise to me that it is now recognised as a World Heritage site.



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Isn't natural beauty – landscape aesthetics - a purely subjective term?

Environmental and landscape aesthetics studies the combination of sensory, emotional, imaginative, and knowledge-based experiences that people have when they appreciate natural and semi-natural places. One of the key questions that philosophers consider is the extent to which people's aesthetic judgments are subjective, objective or **intersubjective**. Over the years I have argued that such judgments are intersubjective, and that we often arrive at intersubjective agreements about things that we find to be beautiful. This means that we can provide reasons and evidence for our judgments, and we bring this aesthetic form of evidence to bear upon our discussions with others about what we find to be beautiful (or not). I prefer this approach because it speaks to the particular character of places and their particular qualities.

Therefore, my position is that landscape aesthetics is an intersubjective matter and not a subjective matter. We are individuals coming from different perspectives who often find



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agreement when it comes to aesthetic values and meanings in the landscape. This means that aesthetic values can form the basis of an informed and reasonable grasp of the values of any particular

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place and play a role in guiding policy. If this were not the case, then it would be difficult to understand how UNESCO arrived at their designation of the Lake District as a World Heritage site which is recognised not least for its ‘harmonious beauty’.

If the relationship between humans and the landscape is a process, does that mean anything goes, because it's part of a process?

Absolutely not. Why? Well, consider that many processes are intentionally managed when it comes to the conservation of landscapes or ecologies. Again, I mention UNESCO because the World Heritage site designation is based upon a set of qualities and values unique to the Lake District. That designation explicitly mentions threats to those unique qualities and values such as ‘climate change, development pressures, changing agricultural practices and diseases, and tourism’ (UNESCO 2021). Addressing those threats means that it’s not the case that ‘anything goes’. The place-based and particular human-nature relationship of agro-pastoralism exemplified in the fells and dales of the Lakes is distinctive, managed, and conserved for a reason.

Is there an aesthetic value to abandoned quarries and mines?

Yes, certainly, there is an aesthetic aspect which combines natural and cultural features intertwined or in relationship. We might consider what the overall aesthetic character or aesthetic integrity is of a particular abandoned mine or quarry and ask how that should be managed. There will be many meanings and values associated with abandoned quarries and mines, such as historical and cultural values related to community, work, and place. Aesthetic values in such semi-natural places (where nature has returned to some extent to the abandoned site) will feature alongside these other meanings and values.

In terms of landscape aesthetics, how would you see motor vehicles on hill tracks?

Given my answers to the questions above, I would argue that motor vehicles on hill tracks would most likely disrupt the aesthetic character of the places where such activity is found. In order to protect the UNESCO-recognised agro-pastoral character of the Lake District, some farming vehicles are no doubt necessary but other uses would not align with the overall integrity and landscape character of the Lake District.

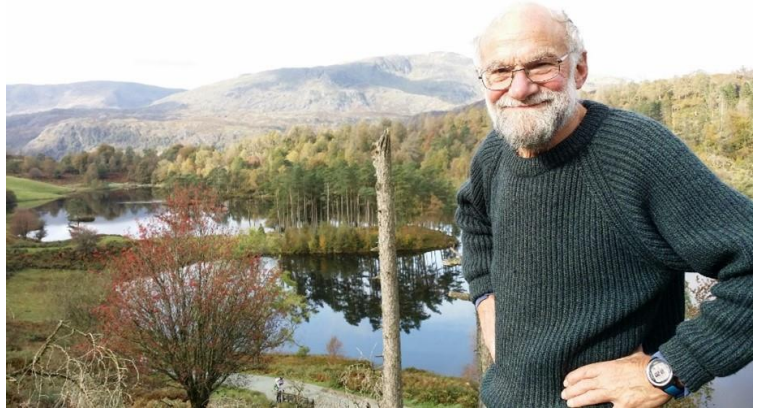


Aesthetic values can form the basis of an informed and reasonable grasp of the values of any particular place and play a role in guiding policy.

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Paul Truelove 1941 – 2021

Paul, together with his wife Anne, was one of the founder members of the Lake District Green Lanes Alliance. The expertise he shared with us was unique: it was that of a planner, fluent in theory and practice, with one unwavering and clear aim: the protection of the Lake District.



Paul studied mechanical engineering and first worked as a planner and then as a lecturer in transport planning. The title of a book he wrote is telling: ‘Decision making in transport planning’. What interested him was not just the principles of planning, but making planning work, and the administrative and political processes that are needed for this.

To say that in his retirement Paul remained active is an understatement: he was a Lakes Parish Councillor, a member of the Grasmere Society and he wrote his own blog about the challenges the National Park has to deal with. It’s an admirably cool-headed and extremely well informed discussion of the many problems caused by overdevelopment, by too much traffic and too many tourists – and, of course, by 4x4 drivers and motorcyclists using green lanes for their own enjoyment, to the detriment of the landscape and the enjoyment of others.

Paul was convinced that the National Park had not shown the necessary determination to deal with green lane driving in particular. As a passionate walker he thought there was something odd about this laissez-faire approach, so out of tune with the principle of nature conservation.

As one of his school friends said: “He had a big and unique presence. Not in a sense of an ego but in his ability to make life interesting and fun.” We miss him.