

Newsletter 10

March 2022



A real chance to protect our green lanes: please respond to the Defra consultation

The Government has issued a public consultation on its response to the Glover Landscapes Review. The consultation document includes questions that give respondents the opportunity to call for the prohibition of recreational motor vehicles on green lanes.

We urge you to respond. This chance won't come again. You can find the online consultation [here](#) and a short briefing document [here](#).

The questions that Defra is asking about motor vehicle use of green lanes and response options offered are:

Q 14. Should we give National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority and local highway authorities additional powers to restrict recreational motor vehicle use on unsealed routes?

YES

NO

UNSURE

Please give reasons for your answer: (open text box)

Q 15. For which reasons should National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority and local authorities exercise this power?

- Environmental protection

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[Download our leaflet here](#)

Lake District Green Lanes Alliance

- Prevention of damage
- Nuisance
- Amenity
- Other [PLEASE STATE]

Q 16. Should we legislate to restrict the use of motor vehicles on unsealed unclassified roads for recreational use, subject to appropriate exemptions?

Yes – everywhere

Yes – in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty only

Yes – in National Parks only

No

Unsure

Please give reasons for your answer: (open text box)

Q 17. What exemptions do you think would be required to protect the rights and enjoyment of other users e.g., residents, businesses etc?

Please answer questions 14 to 17 in the online questionnaire at [Government response to the Landscapes Review - Defra - Citizen Space](#).

You can also send a statement by email to Landscapesconsultation@defra.gov.uk.

The online questionnaire asks many other questions about the countryside. If you don't want to answer these you can click through straight to questions 14 to 17.

A summary of the environmentally damaging impact of motor vehicles on green lanes is [here](#) - and a description of its antisocial effects [here](#).

Please take part in the consultation and please pass on the word to friends and contacts.

The consultation closes on 9 April.

The National Park's Position Statement on green lanes (unsealed roads)

On 19th January the LDNPA issued a new [position statement](#) on unsealed roads.

It is more tolerant of green lane driving than a previous version from 2004 ([see Annex 1](#) of the Committee Paper). The 2004 document says:



LDNPA 2004:

The Lake District National Park Authority is opposed to recreational driving on unsealed routes ('green roads'). The activity is considered incompatible with the special qualities of the National Park.

The Lake District National Park Authority is opposed to recreational driving on unsealed routes ('green roads'). The activity is considered incompatible with the special qualities of the National Park. The ability to enjoy the area in tranquillity is threatened by vehicle intrusion into its quietest parts. When vehicles are encountered or their physical impact is witnessed, the sense of peace and quiet is lost and enjoyment is diminished.

And:

Continued tolerance of recreational green road driving as of right undermines the potential of the National Park to present itself as a special area where such activity will not be encountered.

The position statement agreed by the Park's Strategy and Vision Committee in January 2022 merely states that the LDNPA is "concerned" about driving on unsealed roads and Byways Open to All Traffic. It now considers the activity to be a "potential disruptor" rather than incompatible with the special qualities of the National Park (and now World Heritage site).



LDNPA 2022:

The Lake District National Park Authority remains concerned about driving on unsealed roads and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) often referred to as 'green lanes'.

This is particularly worrying because since 2004 there has been a substantial increase in the motorised use on a number of green lanes. There is also much better knowledge about the effect of climate change on the Lake District, particularly in relation to track and path erosion and the impact on neighbouring habitats.

We welcome the clear commitment in paragraph 4 of the position statement to introducing a TRO if there is unequivocal evidence of harm to OUV or the special qualities of the National Park. But paragraphs 7 to 11 seem to weaken this commitment by making the establishment of a management group of stakeholders and its recommendations a prerequisite for the introduction of a TRO.

Whether such a group will be set up at all is in turn dependent on the availability of resources – not a good omen given the current financial situation.

Lake District Green Lanes Alliance

A better way forward would be to develop a green lanes strategy on the basis of the first four paragraphs. We would like to discuss the draft for such a strategy with the LDNPA.

... and how they did it in the Yorkshire Dales

As this table from the website of the Yorkshire Dales National Park shows, in June and August of just one year, 2008, nine Traffic Regulation Orders were made on some of the most vulnerable lanes – and all to protect amenity and natural beauty. No question of Management Groups, since in any case TROs can only be introduced after statutory consultation with stakeholders.



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

CURRENT TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS IN THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

There are restrictions on a number of routes in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. These are for the purposes of preserving the amenity, conserving the natural beauty of the area, or for the prevention of damage.

Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders				
Name of route	Grid reference	Type of restriction	Start date	Comments
Foxup Road/Horton Scar Lane	SD809 724 to SD872 767	All motor vehicles	June 2008	Also includes route to Hesleden Bergh
Ling Gill (Old Ing to Cam End)	SD804 774 to SD802 804	All motor vehicles	August 2008	This route is restricted byway
Cam High Road (Far Gearstones to Cam Houses)	SD785 803 to SD822 828	All motor vehicles	August 2008	This route is restricted byway
Mastiles Lane from Street Gate to Kilnsey	905 656 to 971 676	All motor vehicles	August 2008	Exemption for Alan Jeffries Trial
Long Lane from Clapham to Selside	752 694 to 787 746 and 779 756	All motor vehicles	August 2008	
Horsehead Pass from Halton Gill to Yockenthwaite	879 766 to 905 786	All motor vehicles	August 2008	
The High Way	SD842 921 to SD787 969	All motor vehicles	June 2008	Through route is available using Shaw Paddock byway
Pockstones Moor	SE078 616 to SE129 593	All motor vehicles		Order placed by NYCC
Barth Bridge to Garsdale	SD 694 888 to SD 697 911 and SD 687 913	All motor vehicles	August 2008	
Carlton to Middleham High Moor	SE 063 849 to SE 067 868	All motor vehicles	August 2008	Exemption for Gerald Simpson Memorial Trial
Gorbeck Road (Langcliffe to Malham)	SD888 649 to SD830 652	All motor vehicles	August 2010	
Turbary Road	SD701,786 to SD707,791	All motor vehicles	March 2017	Order placed by NYCC. Only applies to Yordas

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Through the Hierarchy of Trail Routes the LDNPA has identified around 20 routes that “are heavily used, many of which are also popular routes both to the fells and in the valleys for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.”

Not one of these has so far been protected with a TRO. We politely, constructively and in a spirit of cooperation suggest that action is now needed.

White moles and green lanes in Little Langdale

With a certain pride Richard Bowness says that he is the oldest male born in Little Langdale, and he still lives near there. Before he retired Richard was a building contractor, but he is also an inventor, who appeared on Dragons' Den with his Truncator, a kind of sawhorse that allows you to cut many logs at once.



Today, looking at the church and school house in Little Langdale, it's difficult to believe how much life there was in the village in the 1950s and 60s. Richard particularly remembers the Harvest Festival and Jim Hodgson, the farmer at Wilson Place Farm:

Jim would be waiting on the door after we'd done our singing, and he'd give you a Mint Imperial out of his waistcoat. He would give you these Mint Imperials, and one time he pulled out this white mole out of the same pocket, to show us

he'd caught it. We used to have a few white moles here, obviously most moles are black. There is also a few up High Arnside, but they're pretty rare. They paid £50 for a dead white mole, apparently.

Richard's mother taught at the village school, but he was taught by Miss Johnson. He remembers his school outings:

Yes, the big expedition was to Tilberthwaite and back over the top. You would come over Slaters Bridge. It was to get you to explore. I think our teacher Miss Johnson was exceptional. Basically if you went to Tilberthwaite all the lanes were well made up and well drained. Tommy Birkett used to look after them. So there were no cycles, no motorcycles, there were only two tractors in the valley. The lanes weren't used at all for motor vehicles, except for the quarry. But on our walks we never met any. And if you saw a wagon you'd stand there in awe, really.

Those tracks were completely green up the middle and they were really good. No motor vehicles with tourists at all. Maybe in the 80s there was the odd bod coming through, you might see one in three months or so. Even on Ullet's Nest [the track to Elterwater] there was hardly anything. Far better to go on the tarmac road. That's why they had the tarmac. The farmer would obviously go down that track, but no motorbikes, no 4x4s, nothing.

So what's your impression now when you walk that track?

On Saturday, when six 4x4s went up the road, I followed them, and I could see all the discoloured water going down into the field, because of the fines. If you actually looked you could see all the silt. Above the road – no silt.



It isn't rocket science, go on any wet day, put a few 4x4s up there, and you can just see how much erosion is happening.

You can still see it today. When it wasn't even raining, and there wasn't even a flood. But you put six 4x4s on to that road, and it's raining, you've literally got water that looks like milk coming down the road, going into the gutter or into the fields. It isn't rocket science, go on any wet day, put a few 4x4s up there, and you can just see how much erosion is happening. Little Langdale Tarn used to boil with trout. Now a huge amount of silt has gone into the Tarn. I would say there is now 95% less fish in the Brathay catchment.

What was the original material they used for the surface of this track?

It was called 'sammel', it's an amalgam of stones and clay. It's completely different from what they've put on now. That crushed material that's on there now isn't the same thing at all. Vegetation can't grow on it, because it doesn't have a fine enough structure. But more importantly, if you put proper sammel on the track, it will outlast any of that crushed stuff.

And sammel grasses over. So sammel is a far better road material. But if you get water on it in potholes, you wreck it in no time. Those sort of roads, if you put vehicles on them, need looking after nearly once a week. When I walked there I saw that all the fines are washing out, you're ending up with basically flat gravel. You can look at the runoffs, and there is all the fines stuff.

With the new road material, on wet days, it's just going to erode and erode. And you'll just end up with more and more material in the Tarn. And motorbikes are going up the middle, and they certainly put the power on there. So it isn't just two tracks that are getting worn.

And also, when you get noisy motorbikes where birds are nesting, then birds relocate and nest again. It's like a drip drip, it's like the erosion going into the river.



Is the situation any different in Great Langdale?

Well, there was this track called the Old Road, that was used for motorcycle scrambling and by people who were learning to drive. The paradox is that in 2000 what did they do? They made the Old Road into a track for walking and cycling, and I can zoom along there now with my electric bike. They've done a beautiful job, cycling along there is an absolute joy. No 4x4s, no quads, no Enduro bikes. And there is no noise, even though it's near a B-Road. No noise, no hassle, everybody's happy. Coming into Little Langdale, what have you got, 4x4s getting in your way, all the rest of it. Electric bikes and bicycles is the future for the Lake District, not all these motor vehicles with all the stinking fumes.

And you think the same thing should happen in Little Langdale?

Yes, Little Langdale is more intimate, it's God's country. More wildlife, more history, and a concentration of tracks in this area. They are pulling in a massive amount of people with motor vehicles that have no regard for anybody. I sometimes tell people 'you're going the wrong way' and I get a lot of abuse. Occasionally I tell them what I think. There are some good guys, but I love our valley. I go down to the Ford and I see three blooming quad bikes going into the river, going up and down the river, underneath the bridge, driving up the banking, and they are actually circling the "No Motor Vehicles" sign. I've spent thousands of hours trying to improve the river down here, and then you get 4x4s in the River Brathay, creating pollution.



So how do you safely put into a 6-8 foot wide road motorbikes, quad type things, electric bikes, cycles, walkers with buggies? Into a completely unregulated road?

What about safety when you get a mix of motorbikes, 4x4s and walkers?

Right. If you get 4x4s, motorbikes, all that stuff, it's almost like an event. And if you were organising that kind of event you would not allow walkers wandering about, they wouldn't be allowed anywhere near, let alone putting bicycles on the same track. So how do you safely put into a 6-8 foot wide road

motorbikes, quad type things, electric bikes, cycles, walkers with buggies? Into a completely unregulated road?

Has the National Park done a risk assessment to see whether it's safe? It's legally a road, but it never was a road. The safety aspect is just horrendous.