

INCLUSIVE COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

A stepping stone to improved inclusivity
in green lane management & usage culture



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Green Lane Association

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Author: Lauren Eaton AIPROW

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A note from our Chief Executive Officer



The Green Lane Association prides itself on promoting inclusive countryside access for all and reinforces its aims and objectives through its internal working practices and collaborative partnerships with outside organisations.

Our organisation adheres to codes of conduct and guidelines as set out by our professional memberships to the Sports and Recreation Alliance, Land Access and Recreation Association, the National Council of Volunteer Organisations, Disabled Motoring UK, and the Government's Disability Confident Scheme. We also proudly support numerous other national user organisations through membership and shared resources, and over time have worked successfully with managing authorities in both England and Wales.

These relationships have proven to be very advantageous to the effective management of the unsealed road network, and to shaping comprehensive, inclusive, and successful approaches to common problems, as well as reducing historic barriers between groups.

As an organisation that champions equality and diversity as well as sustainable and responsible use of the countryside, we have evidenced that the two aims are both supported and strengthened by each other, and that this approach fosters outcomes that are more effective and fit for purpose.

Encouraging collaborative working practices and engaging with service users and organisations that represent their needs opens the door to numerous opportunities to managers, as well as ensuring that decisions are made against robust consultation practices.

The countryside is for everyone and, therefore, management strategies must consider the repercussions of their decisions on end service users, their enjoyment, health benefits, and equal opportunity of access to green spaces.

Together, we can improve on historic reductive strategies that have diminished public rights causing clash-points to inflame, and create a more inclusive and sustainable network for all to enjoy.

Tristan Craddock

Chief Executive Officer of GLASS

May 2022

Foreword

The Green Lane Association believes that access to the countryside should be for all, without prejudice to method of travel, or physical, sensory, mental, cognitive, developmental, or intellectual challenges faced by users.

Recreation and time spent outdoors is undeniably good for both physical and mental health¹. Since Covid struck and the country faced a lockdown situation, the benefits of access to outdoor green spaces has probably never been felt so acutely by so many. Acknowledging this vital importance to human health, the government put measures in place to protect our rights and need to spend time outdoors despite huge challenges during that time.

Unfortunately, recreational motoring on unsealed roads has long faced much misunderstanding and criticism. Because of this the network has historically faced many closures and byways open to all traffic (BOATs) now make up only around 2% (DEFRA, 2005) of the rights of way network in the UK². The Green Lane Association works to protect these vital resources for the benefit of all users.

For the purposes of countryside legislation, motorised use is classed as outdoor recreation and some aspects of motor vehicle use are now part of our cultural heritage³, this is therefore something that public authorities are obliged to consider conserving.

Our local authorities have a duty to maintain rights of way without prejudice to any particular user type and under equality and discrimination laws cannot disadvantage those who face physical or cognitive challenges to a legal and beneficial activity⁴.



While we all faced a communal challenge during Covid, one in five people in the UK⁵ face daily barriers to various activities due to some form of disability. This can often be particularly felt when wishing to access our country's more remote areas.

The UK is full of beautiful hills, valleys, mountains, and lakes that may feel inaccessible to some due to physical challenges they face that prevents them from travelling to their isolated locations. Others may find

¹ See page 49

² https://laragb.org/pdf/DEFRA_2005i2_MakingTheBestOfByways.pdf

³ See page 10-12

⁴ [Equality Act 2010](#)

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021>

distance a challenge due to fatigue, the need to carry medical equipment, or sensory overload when visiting tourist hotspots full of crowds and activity.

Using our nation's network of ancient un surfaced roads from the comfort of a vehicle can make stunning vistas, historical sites, and beautiful green spaces accessible to those who may well believe that the rights of way network for foot, cycle and horse traffic offers little opportunity to them

Challenges that affect 20% of our population can vary hugely from one person to the next, and this can often lead to missed opportunities to experience the beauty of the UK's great outdoors, but the Green Lane Association believe that access really should be for all where possible and the UK's equality laws insist that authorities work towards this very goal⁶.

Aims of this paper

This document will explore two demographics: the minority user group who drive or ride unsealed public roads as a lawful recreational pursuit, and those within that group who identify as disabled. It will then go on to discuss threats to that pursuit and opportunities afforded by tried and tested inclusive management strategies that can be used instead of the current trend to close and restrict the unsealed road network to a legitimate user group and thus reduce public rights and opportunities to access green spaces.

No other class of right of way provides access to as many user types, or grants as many opportunities for those who cannot safely access footpaths or bridleways into the deeper countryside without additional support. This precious resource is deserving of our protection as are the rights of all those who use them, and by proxy the numerous mental and physical health benefits that arise from their use for recreational purposes.

As the needs and abilities of the individual countryside user are unique to each person, this document will attempt to increase understanding of the minority user group often termed as 'green laners'. It will also encourage inclusion on several levels by:

- *Exploring the activities and needs of an often-misunderstood minority user group*
- *Encouraging engagement and mutual understanding between all user types and those who manage countryside access*
- *Inclusion of those who face additional challenges to accessing the countryside*
- *Highlighting threats to public access and spotlighting inclusive management strategies that have been successful*
- *Consolidating evidence and guidance available that can help when forming these strategies*



⁶ See pages 20-23

Inclusivity - the bigger picture

While inclusivity is most often thought of as including those with additional needs or protected characteristics, many that affect us all for example, gender and the inevitability of age, and this of course is an important legal requirement, inclusion of all demographics is also an important consideration when managing rights of way.

Positive discrimination (the act of favouring one particular group) is legislated against in acts that pertain to equality, and local authorities have a duty to provide fair and proportional access to all users, not just those in the majority user groups such as walkers and cyclists⁷.

Inclusivity aims to build an equal platform for all where possible, and thankfully our rights of way network does cater for all types of user. It is the management of those resources that is not always inclusive.

Historically, the unsurfaced road network has been subject to restrictive and discriminatory actions that have been implemented with little to no effect on the problems they were intended to manage. It is quite clear that a more proactive and less punitive strategy is required.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006⁸ removed the rights of the motorist from over 50% of unsealed roads overnight. This reduction went ahead despite an independent survey commissioned by DEFRA having found no significant problems on byways open to all traffic with the exception of isolated local issues. The survey also evidenced that the majority of traffic using BOATs did so for the purposes of land management (62%) and recreational use had a far lesser impact in comparison. [Faber Maunsell Report⁹]

This blanket closure, and the subsequent closures and restrictions imposed on motorised users since 2006, has done nothing to improve problem management. The same issues persist, clash points have been inflamed as users struggle to share a greatly reduced network, and many Roads Used as Public Paths (RuPPs) that were downgraded to Restricted Byways have become choked and overgrown through lack of use¹⁰. Those who face disadvantages to participating in outdoor recreation due to disability have seen their opportunities reduced, as have legitimate responsible motorists, while those who break the law or behave anti-socially have lost nothing. All this loss has come at great cost to the public purse and public rights.

While restriction has done little but inflame the issues it was intended to manage, proactive organisations have been working collaboratively with stakeholders and have a lot to bring to the table where motivation to reduce rather than manage still exists.

These organisations have identified concerns over further reduction and discriminatory management practices, along with fears that in many cases legislation has been misused or completely ignored during decision making processes that have impacted access rights of millions of people and thousands of access routes.

There is a better way. But first we need to understand who uses the unsealed road network, the benefits this legitimate outdoor activity affords its users, and explore the activities of those working for inclusive and sustainable management who have proven that inclusion rather than exclusion is a huge benefit to all.

The purpose of this document is to further understanding of green lanes and the people who use them, and to encourage proactive thought and dialogue between interested parties and decision makers when managing green lanes.

⁷ [Equality Act 2010](#)

⁸ [NERC Act 2006](#)

⁹ [Faber Maunsell Report](#)

¹⁰ See page 62

The history and heritage of motoring in the UK



CLIMBING HONISTER. Two Morris Minors were recently taken from the show-rooms of Appleyard of Leeds, Ltd., and driven successfully up some of the worst hills of Lakeland, including Honister Pass and Howtown Hause.

A celebrated part of our nation's history



Motoring in the UK is undeniably something that we are proud of and take great effort to preserve in national museums dedicated solely to the subject, and to celebrate when British Marques such as Land Rover reach milestones like their 75th anniversary.

The motorcar features in some of the most important and poignant national occasions. The death of Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, was marked with the custom build of a Land Rover hearse, a project that spanned 16 years. The Queen requested that Land Rovers appeared in her Platinum Jubilee parade. There is little doubt that British motoring history is important to our nation.

For generations British cars and motorbikes, and their drivers and riders have set out to conquer some of the most gruelling and challenging tests of speed and endurance. In 2012, British duo Jason De Carteret and Kieron Bradley completed the fastest overland journey to the South Pole and arrived having driven 1,114 km (692 miles) in 15 hours and 54 minutes. The world record for the tightest parallel park was set in 2015 by Gloucester-born Alastair Moffatt. Royal Air Force pilot Andy Green holds the land speed record of 763.035 mph.

But of course, while these motoring achievements, and the British brands of motor vehicles, remain something to applaud or cherish, most motorists are far more sedate in their pastimes, yet there is contentiousness over their use by the general public.

The nostalgic picture of a Land Rover trundling along a rural country lane is something so ingrained in our nation's culture that many countryside clothing stores use these vehicles as a backdrop to their product range, advertising the epitome of British outdoor pursuits by whisking the viewer to a place of quaint rural familiarity and nostalgia. While few people would think it incongruous that Dubarry¹¹, a well-known and well-heeled outdoor clothing company, feature Land Rovers in their catalogues to set the scene of the environment their products are designed to be used in, or that a farming publication would feature similar images, people do still question the use of these 4x4s in the countryside.

The Land Access and Recreation Association reminds us of the history of green lanes:

“ The vast majority of green roads were built for motorised vehicles. They were created or improved after motorised road transport was invented, as far back as 1769, established as being practicable in the 1830s and/or after legislation from the 1860s required all roads to be built for motor vehicles. A minority of green roads are unsurfaced soft roads with no engineered drainage or improvements to the road surface. Those ancient horse and cart tracks pre-date 1835 and constitute a small minority of green roads, typically being confined to rare examples where engineering improvement was not undertaken from the 1860s.¹² ”

It was not until very recently that minor rural roads such as those found in our National Parks, were tarmacked, but motorised use had been in progress for decades.

¹¹ <https://www.dubarry.com/>

¹² https://laragb.org/pdf/LARA_20220613_ManagingMotorVehicleUse.pdf



This image shows a motorcar travelling through Cumbria on an unsealed road in the 1920s. At the time those wishing to travel to rural areas had little choice but to drive on an un-made surface, but those roads were created specifically for vehicular traffic.

Of course, the increased population, ownership of vehicles, and the advent of mass motor touring which began in the 1950s and 60s, has necessitated the use of tarmac on the most well-travelled routes. But this has not changed the right of the motorist to use them, nor has it caused an incomparable maintenance requirement between unsealed and sealed roads.

“ The increased use of motor vehicles and non-motorised traffic on both sealed and unsealed highways has resulted in a deterioration in the condition of some parts of the highways network. While some minor and rural highways are evidently in better condition than 200 years ago, some have suffered from misuse and some unsurfaced routes from unsustainable levels of vehicular use. Moreover, local authority resources have been significantly depleted over the last decade.¹³

There is incomparable impact to the local environment is discussed on pages 45-49, where we can see that the need for tarmac has reduced overall species diversity and green linear features. This of course is an unfortunate but unavoidable repercussion of an increased population and need to travel, but the evidence shown in that chapter extols the virtues of maintaining use of green lanes and even creating more in order to counter the decline of species diversity.

While new modern ways of life that we take for granted are impacting our environment and landscapes permanently, some of our older ways can be shown to be beneficial, yet they are attacked and reduced due to popular opinion, or to reduce expenditure.

“ This has in some cases led to authorities using their powers to effect the prohibition of vehicles from highways as a way of attempting to reduce their maintenance burden and relieving themselves of complaints from those opposed to sharing the countryside, where in many cases better and less draconian alternatives exist. Increased levels of recreational activity across all sectors has increased the potential for conflict between different interests and there will always be factions that disapprove of motor vehicle use in the countryside as a matter of principle.

But it is not appropriate to prohibit a lawful activity because there are some people who disapprove of it. And by definition, prohibition curtails only lawful activity and is no deterrent to unlawful activity. Such measures also adversely impact on other legitimate and beneficial activities, many of them important to the health of the economy at a time when economic recovery is so badly needed.”

Attraction of the motorist to our National Parks and other rural areas continues to this day. Driving mountain passes such as Wrynose and Honister in the Lake District, Horseshoe, Llanberis, and Bwlch y Groes in Wales, and Bealach na Ba in Scotland, all minor roads designed and built for the motorcar and all until relatively recently unsealed, bring in huge numbers of tourists and very much needed economic

¹³ https://laragb.org/pdf/LARA_20220613_ManagingMotorVehicleUse.pdf

benefits to areas with few job opportunities. They also bring their problems, yet there is no talk of closure to the millions of vehicles that traverse them annually for recreational purposes, yet there are for the green lanes that only a handful of people frequent in comparison.



Motorsport has its roots in rural areas and continues to this day on sealed and unsealed rights of way, some that hold no public motorised rights such as bridlepaths, forestry tracks, and private roads. These events are very popular, bring in much needed jobs and revenue sources to rural communities, and encourage tourism from abroad by highlighting popular activities to holiday makers. Rallies, races, and endurance events have been part of our motoring heritage for generations. Some provide opportunities for disabled users, charities such as Future Terrain¹⁴ (a GLASS affiliate organisation) provide rehabilitation for ill and injured service personnel using motorised means from the design of vehicles to their use in events.

While green lanes are mostly driven by ordinary people wishing to experience the history of our road network first hand just as it was when these roads were first travelled, this living history is dwindling. Motor vehicles are now safer than ever, they are also greener than ever and improvements of emissions and other environmental considerations are being addressed by governments the world over.

The internal combustion engine and the vehicles we have come to know and love will soon no longer be produced, we will therefore have only museums and private collections to rely on to experience the heydays of the relative infancy of motoring, but this does not mean that we must also lose the tangible history of our transport network. In fact, the 'greening up' of our typical motor vehicle will allow us to traverse the remaining historical unsealed roads without the unintended but currently difficult to avoid impact of the less favourable consequences of the pastime, such as emissions.

The future of motoring is not aimed at reducing ease of transportation through reductive methods, but to maintain the required level of travel through more sustainable technologies. While in over the next 20 years the vehicles we drive may be quite different to those we drive today, the road network will not be so very different. It has been designed with need in mind and is constantly being expanded for the same reason, and that need will not change as dramatically as what we drive or ride on the network, and nor will the need to be aware of our history or to be able to experience it first-hand.



The green lane network is the living survivor of our transport history, it teaches us through first-hand experience, it provides a unique habitat for flora and fauna¹⁵, gives recreational opportunities to many, and provides jobs, income, and access to the deep countryside in areas where these things are more difficult to come by than they are in our urban areas. For these reasons alone the network is worthy of protection and conservation.

¹⁴ <http://www.futureterrain.co.uk/>

¹⁵ See pages 45-49

Why we drive/ride: MEET THE MOTORISED USERS



Meet the Das Family



“ My wife and I are both consultant doctors working for the NHS in London. We were trying to find something that we as a family could do together and enjoy.

When you're green laning you're constantly challenging your mind and brain to face the different types of challenges that you come across.

It's kind of unpredictable and you need to juggle your way through that which is a challenge. It's interesting and fits the group pathology of all of us to do something like this, which is one of the nicest things.

It's also a nice outlet for us from the mundane professional activities that we do. As much as we love working as doctors, it does add stress to our lives. But getting out and doing something different definitely refreshes you.

When you go off tarmac suddenly what happens is you need to decide which way to go and which line would be best for you, then you work out a solution and you do it. This is what is called adaptive learning, which helps us in our professional lives as well.

It also helps with mental health to do something new, to be outdoors and be in touch with nature.

The Green Lane Association has really helped us to find new friends and to have access to the outdoors and really beautiful places. GLASS has also helped us to understand what is legal, what is illegal, where you can drive off tarmac and where you cannot, and to make sure that these lanes are used responsibly so they will still be there for future generations.

If we meet another family who wants to do green laning, we're definitely going to say yes! It's something that they need to explore and that they will definitely enjoy.

Their daughter added that the best thing about green laning is the slopes that you go on and it also helps you spend time with your family.

At the end of a day's green laning we just want to do it again! It's fabulous!

To watch the Das Family video, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhBKrOtOXAk>

Meet Simon

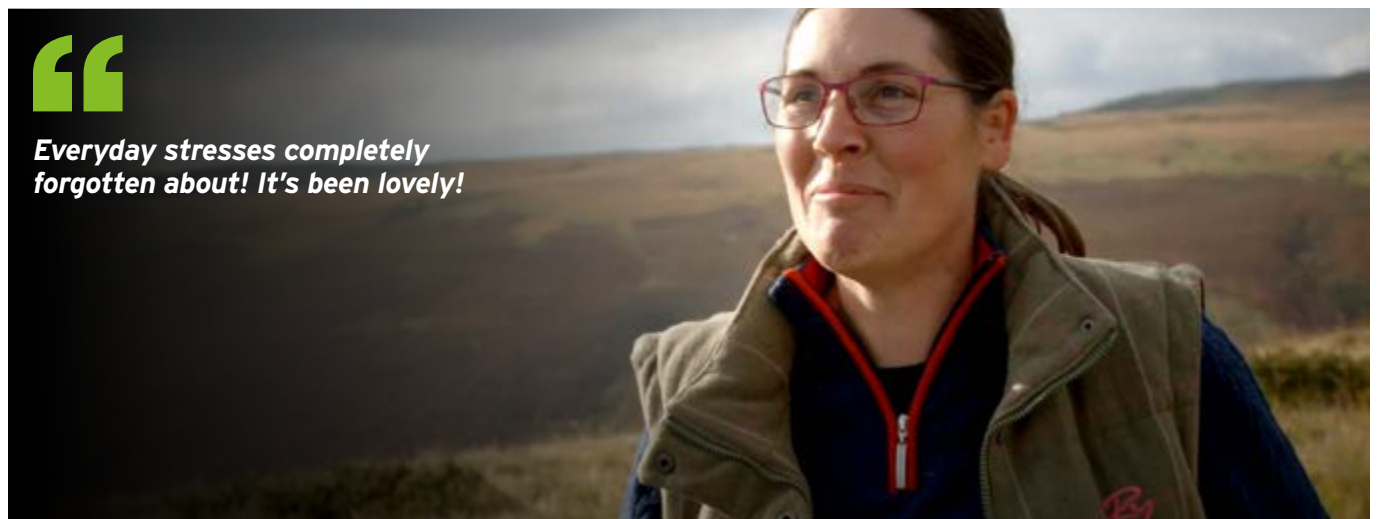


“

I love mountains, I love the countryside. On a lane you get new views around every corner and it's just fantastic.

What GLASS does to keep the lanes open is a great thing and that is worthy of support.

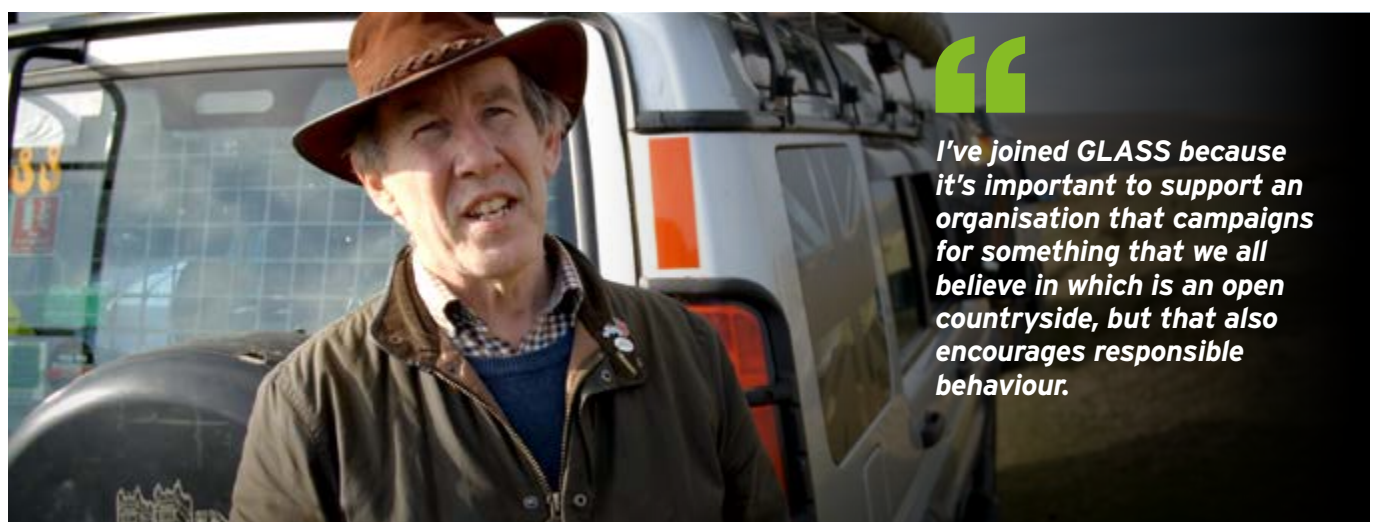
Meet Emma



“

Everyday stresses completely forgotten about! It's been lovely!

Meet Tony



“

I've joined GLASS because it's important to support an organisation that campaigns for something that we all believe in which is an open countryside, but that also encourages responsible behaviour.

Meet Charlie

“

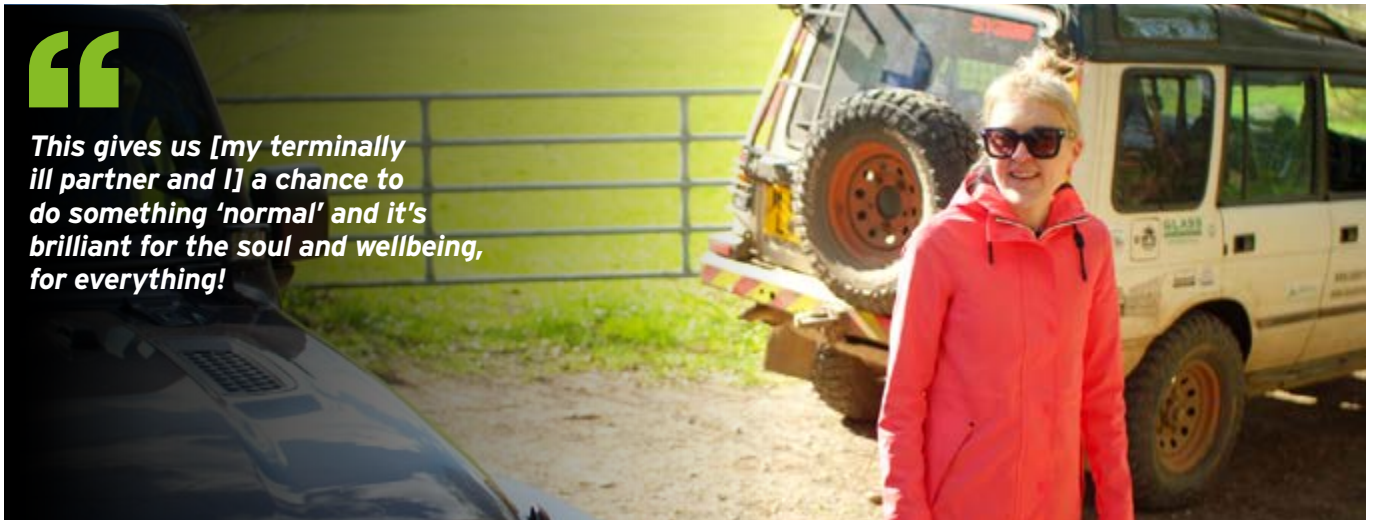
Green laning is a great way to see the countryside. You've got the scenery, the views, you go to places you probably wouldn't normally think of going to, you've got the wildlife, the flora and fauna, there's just so much to see and do while you're out. It's not just a drive, you're out in the countryside enjoying it.



Meet Louise

“

This gives us [my terminally ill partner and I] a chance to do something 'normal' and it's brilliant for the soul and wellbeing, for everything!



Meet Joyee & Sumitro

“

It's difficult to explain in one sentence, it means a lot to us. Being part of a community, meeting people face to face rather than staying at home, working day and night, not talking about IT for a change! It feels like heaven!



Meet Lt. Col. Kev



When I first joined the military, one of my first jobs was a driver. Travelling the world, learning to drive in arduous conditions, it became more of a passion than a job & I still enjoy doing it to this day. For me, not being able to get out onto the highways & byways, into the deep of Salisbury Plain, it would be very painful, a real loss of something I enjoy doing.



Meet Angela



When you've got all the stresses of life, it's a time when you've got nothing else to think about, a time just for you. A day like today puts perspective back into your life I think, that's why I do it.



Meet Penny



I like driving unsurfaced roads because it gives me a chance to escape and be with nature, you are able to find locations that are great for wellbeing. If access to the byways were to be taken away, it would be devastating. I would feel that I've lost so much, this is like a lifeline to me, I wouldn't be able to cope with that.



Meet Andy



“

Green laning gives us the opportunity to do something completely different. It is a slow paced way of enjoying what's around us. The boys love getting out into the wilderness and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Meet Dale



“

In England and Wales, walkers, horse riders, and cyclists have access to 140,000 miles of rights of way whereas motorised users only have access to less than 3% of that network. We started the Green Lane Association to protect that 3% and to protect it for ALL users.

Meet Lee



“

I like driving unsurfaced roads I guess because it's a bit of an adventure. We know where we're going to start, we know where we're going to come out, it's that middle bit that I like. There are two guys who join us on a regular basis, and they have both expressed that they have found it a great help, good for their mental health and wellbeing."

To watch some videos about green lane users and why they partake in the hobby, go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb2M_XesONs

Exploring disability and inclusion



Legal considerations



Although not exhaustive, this section highlights some of the most pertinent sections of existing legislation and associated government guidance as it pertains to inclusive access to recreational activities within England and Wales.

It is quite clear that the public sector must ensure fair access where possible, thankfully a huge resource already exists that provides access opportunities for all users, including those with protected characteristics such as disability, the unsurfaced public road network.

This precious resource is beneficial to a significant demographic that is not currently catered for with any equality in the most rural areas of the countryside. Unfortunately, this network is under constant threat of further reduction despite the legal requirement to minimise disadvantages to those who have additional needs.

Proactive management of the green road network would make considerable headway in balancing the current inequality and reduce the expense of creating new access opportunities, particularly in areas where this would be challenging due to terrain and isolated locations.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)¹⁶

Article 30 - Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

5. *With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:*
 - a) *To encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels;*
 - b) *To ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organize, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources;*
 - c) *To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and tourism venues;*

¹⁶ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

- d) *To ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system;*
- e) *To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services from those involved in the organization of recreational, tourism, leisure, and sporting activities*

The resources do exist, it is now imperative that they are managed effectively to avoid closures and a reduction of a network that can provide so many opportunities to this demographic.



The Equality Act 2010¹⁷

The Equality Act 2010, and more specifically section 149 Public Sector Equality Duty, asks that public authorities and those who exercise public functions must:

- (1) *A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to–*
 - (a) *eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
 - (b) *advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
 - (c) *foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it*
- (2) *A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).*

And they must:

- (3) *Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to–*
 - (a) *remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;*
 - (b) *take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;*
 - (c) *encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low*

¹⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

And they must:

- (5) *Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—*
- (a) *tackle prejudice, and*
 - (b) *promote understanding.*

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011¹⁸

These regulations require that local authorities and other public bodies, must publish information that demonstrates their compliance with the Equality Act 2010 on an annual basis. This information must detail one or more objectives, how their activities affect its employees, and any other persons affected by their policies and practices, and must be available to the public.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹⁹

This Act requires that public bodies address and make improvements to well-being in Wales against measurable targets. The areas covered include economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being and specific goals are explicitly outlined.

“ **A healthier Wales: A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.**

A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.”

The legislation also outlines targets of enhancing biodiversity, this is explored on pages 41-43.

“ **A more resilient Wales: A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change”**

Government issued guidance

Public rights of way: local highway authority responsibilities (Natural England)²⁰

Access and equality for disabled users

You must consider the needs of people with mobility problems and other disabilities. Section 5.4 of the rights of way circular (1/09) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rights-of-way-circular-1-09>) gives more detail about the requirements. There are no mandatory requirements for how to approve structures on a public right of way, but you must comply with the Equality Act 2010 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>).

Improvements

You should make improvements to public rights of way so they are accessible to all users, e.g., stiles should be replaced with gaps or gates, wherever possible. Before making improvements, you should consider the: historical character of existing structures and the landscape needs of other users, e.g. parents with children in pushchairs accessibility of the route as a whole needs of the landowner - you should negotiate with the landowner to make improvements to existing structures.

¹⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/2260/contents/made>

¹⁹ <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/WFGAct-English.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-local-authority-responsibilities#access-and-equality-for-disabled-users>

Guidance for Local Authorities on Public Rights of Way October 2016 (Welsh Government)²¹

Equality Act 2010

2.26. The Equality Act 2010 brings together various aspects of anti-discrimination legislation. It requires public sector bodies to be proactive in eliminating discrimination, in advancing equality of opportunity and in fostering good relationships between people with a disability and others. It widens the definition of disability: mobility difficulty, poor sight, learning difficulties, manual dexterity and certain long-term illnesses are all included within the Act.

Needs of people with mobility problems

2.29. Authorities should be aware of the latest best practice guides, including those produced by relevant user groups such as the Fairfield Trust and Pittecroft Trust. Such documents, together with the British Standard BS 5709 for gaps, gates and stiles, should provide authorities with enough information on how to assess the needs of people with mobility problems and to determine which routes should have priority for improved access for such people. Authorities should implement a Least Restrictive Access policy, seeking to minimise barriers when replacing and installing gates and stiles, in agreement with the landowner. Tackling physical barriers on rights of way is only one part of providing better access to the countryside for people with disabilities or mobility problems and consideration needs also to be given to publicity, parking, and other relevant facilities.

2.30. When preparing their ROWIP, authorities should set out how the local rights of way network meets the current and future needs of local users, including blind people and people with mobility problems. Local Access Forums should endeavour to ensure that representatives from local disability groups are invited to sit as a member of the Forum. Further information can be found in ROWIP Guidance published by the Welsh Government.

The **Rights of Way Circular (1/09) Guidance for Local Authorities (DEFRA), Guidance for Local Authorities on Public Rights of Way October 2016 (Welsh Government), and Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) 2021 (Local Government Association)** will be discussed on pages 76-77.



²¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/public-rights-of-way-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf>

Case Studies

1 - 14



Case Study 1 - Marilyn's Story



Green laning means freedom, otherwise I'd just be stuck in a chair. If I couldn't go out into the countryside, it would be back to misery again. I couldn't envisage life without it.

1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

Yes

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

I broke my foot and ankle spectacularly when I was a professional horse rider and that and my foot cannot be fixed. I now use two crutches and have significant difficulty walking.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

Over 25 years.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

Get worse due to age.

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

No. I was thrilled to own my "mechanical horse" my Land Rover! It means I still have my freedom.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life?

Please explain why.

Hugely. I'm a very outdoorsy person and to be suddenly unable to enjoy outdoor activities was very impactful to my quality of life. Discovering green laning was wonderful. I am proud that I am able to go out and not be a nuisance to anybody and just enjoy the outdoors.

7 Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access?

Please explain why.

Without the freedom of green laning I'd just be stuck in a chair. If I couldn't go out into the countryside it would be back to misery again. I couldn't envisage life without it.

Marilyn was kind enough to allow us to video a day out with her.

The video can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBbu5USZY1M&t=2s>

Case Study 2 - Jim's Story



1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

Yes.

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

Well, it's particularly important to me to get out on the green lanes, because during the first COVID lockdown I got diagnosed with terminal cancer, multiple myeloma, and what happens is, my muscles have wasted away, and my skeleton gets eaten away by the cancer.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

I was diagnosed during the first lockdown in 2020.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

It will get worse, there is no cure.

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

The muscles are gone, and the bones are fragile, and I might look the part but inside I've got terminal cancer and I'm very fragile and I cannot walk great distances without the risk of falling over. So I can't afford to fall over and I'm not the best on my feet, any slight undulation and I can go over.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

A few months ago, my wife got a phone call in the middle of the night saying I wasn't going to make it through. I was having a very strong treatment called stem cell transplant and I'm very susceptible to infection and after the stem cell procedure in November I was cooped up indoors, I couldn't get out. I had to wait 'til my immune system came back, and it did, and when we were then able to jump in the jeep and go out and take lanes, it was night and day difference for me. It was relief - it was the best medicine that anyone could have given me.

7 Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

You never know when something like terminal cancer's going to hit, and there's two ways you can handle the news. You can stay at home and confined and be depressed, or you can get out and live and take advantage of all the good days that you have, and that's the approach I take, and I'm confident that's why I'm in the shape I'm in with terminal cancer, that I'm able to get out and do things like this.

Jim was kind enough to allow us to video a day out with her.

The video can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLZ6-KepiLE&t=52s>

Case Study 3 - Sue's Story



Sun shining, birds singing, it really makes me feel well. Yes I could get to the countryside but it would be the manicured, prepared countryside for people who are disabled but that doesn't give me the same feeling as driving lanes. It gives me a spirituality that I don't get in a prepared environment.

1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

Yes.

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

I have arthritis, two artificial knees - only one of which was successful, and I have had abdominal muscles removed due to cancer. I have significant difficulty and pain when walking.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

Since my 30s, I am now 70.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

It will get worse, and I will age!

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

No. I use my automatic Land Rover as I am unable to access a low vehicle or use a clutch anymore. Walking is very difficult, exhausting, and painful. I have to use a stick while out and about and stop regularly. I have decreased balance which can easily lead to a fall or injury.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

Very important. I was always a keen horse rider and cyclist but the injuries I sustained from that and working on farms mean that my arthritis is worse in those joints. I was born and raised in the countryside, and it is very important to me that I can get out and enjoy it for as long as possible.

7 Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

If I couldn't use my Land Rover, I would only be able to walk very short distances which would mean I was stuck at home. Even over short distances I am at risk of falling and injuring myself, but in my Land Rover I feel safe. Green laning gives me freedom, independence, and a huge amount of enjoyment. It also gives me a social life and an opportunity to meet likeminded people. Without it I would be stuck indoors, and my mental and physical health would suffer significantly.

Sue was kind enough to allow us to video a day out with her.

The video can be watched here: https://youtu.be/HVoA_Xx-H2E

Case Study 4 - David's Story²²



David was a very good friend who loved the great outdoors. He would explore the countryside whenever he could, both in this country and when on holiday abroad. He was a youth leader who encouraged young people to get out and about and would organise day-long walks and youth hostelling weekends in different parts of the country.

So, when David was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease it was a cruel blow. It started gradually, with his left hand not being able to properly play the keyboard at our church. But as the years went by the disease spread to all parts of his body. His walks were limited to shorter and shorter distances, until he was forced to use a mobility scooter. However, his wife would drive him to places where there was a suitable network of surfaced country paths. They would then reassemble the scooter and David would be able to drive the paths at his own pace, stopping to look at whatever took his fancy.

David made a bucket list, with one item being to visit Iceland and see the Northern Lights. However, he couldn't foresee a way to see the lights from Iceland, so in Spring 2013 he went on an evening charter flight for an aerial view of the lights, which wasn't ideal, but better than nothing. At about that time my interest in Iceland was raised by an article in a 4x4 magazine about guided self-drive 4x4 hire of Icelandic Land Rover Defenders, with massive tyres, set up to drive on glaciers.

I discussed this with David, and we decided to take a three-day tour, as he felt that seven days might be too much for him. We needed to go as soon as we could, as David was not able to walk far, even with sticks, and could not drive a Land Rover by that stage, despite enjoying cars and driving all his life. So, we booked our trip for July 2013. The company we booked with were very helpful, and even provided David with a set of steps to climb up into the raised Defender, so with a bit of help David could manage to get in and out.

We packed a lot into the three full days of driving. David and I both loved the landscape, and the remote, uninhabited areas that we visited, well away from the tourist routes.

Back in the UK, we went to a Beaulieu Land Rover Day, and took the opportunity to take my Discovery 4 on their off-road course, with our wives. David and I were keen for a second run, but this time our wives elected not to accompany us!

Previously David had shown no interest in the green laning trips I had been on, preferring Shanks' Pony! However, our trip to Iceland, and the Beaulieu off-road course, had shown David that 4x4s and green lanes could be a useful way to still get into his beloved countryside.

²² Taken from the GLASS Green Lanes magazine, summer 2019 issue

In 2014 we decided to visit some of the areas David knew from his walks in our local area of Surrey. I was able to help him in and out of the Disco into his wheelchair when we stopped at a suitable hostelry for lunch, aided by the Discovery's air suspension which means the vehicle's height can be raised and lowered to suit - making access easier for a disabled person.

That proved a great success, so we then went slightly further afield, to the Berkshire Downs and then to the great network of green lanes in and around Salisbury Plain. He hadn't walked much of these areas and was impressed by the wide-open spaces and the rolling downs. We would sometimes stop and quietly watch the local wildlife of kites, buzzards, deer, and hares. And, in contrast, the less peaceful activities of the British Army on Salisbury Plain!

By early 2015 David had very little strength and had to be lifted in and out of the Discovery, but once he was strapped in with his special cushions all was well. Unfortunately, as the Motor Neurone Disease progressed, he became ever weaker and needed lateral support to his head as well, which was not easy to provide. At that stage it was too dangerous to tackle typical green lanes, as these could have hidden ruts, causing unanticipated lurches, which would cause David pain, or worse, so we had to cease our green laning.

Sadly, later that year David died, but I was pleased that in the last years of his life I was able to help him enjoy the countryside by taking him along a number of green lanes to remote areas, even when he had no mobility himself.

Every disabled person is unique, both in their disability and in what they would like to see. Having a high 4x4 is not necessarily a bar to taking someone green laning - my wife suffers from rheumatoid arthritis, and it is easier for her to get in and out of my Discovery 4 (albeit with the suspension lowered) than a normal car. Even with an extreme lift vehicle, like those in Iceland, there are ways and means.

Dare I suggest that we ask our local Ramblers if they have members who are no longer able to 'ramble', and offer to take them green laning?



Case Study 5 - Nigel's Story



It gives me and my wife some respite to see our children calm and benefitting from being outdoors.

1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

No, but my children are.

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

My children have autism.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

Since birth.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

Stay the same.

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

I am but as a family we cannot access the countryside without a vehicle. My children have complex sensory and cognitive challenges. They do not process the world like those without autism do. Things that are not threatening to us can appear confusing, distressing, or even painful to them. Crowds, certain noises, colours, changes in weather, or unexpected situations like meeting an animal or person who tries to communicate with them can cause a violent reaction. They feel safe in our 4x4, they do not need to be subjected to triggers as they would travelling by any other method. Our 4x4 allows us to go out as a family and enjoy the day, we can stop in places I know they will feel safe so they can get outside or drive on past anything I know will distress them.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

Hugely! If we don't go green laning our options of outdoor activities are very limited to our garden. Most activities suitable for our sons are indoors and very costly. It gives me and my wife some respite to see our children calm and benefitting from being outdoors.

7. Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

Yes. Both me and my wife are lovers of the outdoors and until we discovered green laning there were no options of outdoor activities that we could do as a family. This was upsetting to both of us. My sons quite obviously benefit from our trips out, they sleep well and appear far calmer after a trip.

Case Study 6 - Nicola's Story



I was so depressed when I was stuck inside, I would hate to go back to that again. Being able to access beautiful places and not have to worry about my health is wonderful.

1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

Yes.

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

I have fibromyalgia. This is a chronic pain and fatigue syndrome.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

7 years.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

I don't really know. It is not treatable so will either stay the same or get worse.

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

No. I suffer from chronic pain and fatigue, also sensory problems. I can't walk for long and am always in pain, I get fatigued very quickly and this worries me while walking as I may not be able to get back home. In a vehicle I can go out independently or with friends who can drive me home if needs be.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

Very important. I am still in my 20s and to think I'd be stuck indoors and not able to explore the countryside like I did as a teenager is awful. I became very depressed when I got ill but I met a partner who was into green laning, and this changed my life. We now go out together with our young son and have a wonderful time as a family and with friends. It's not just improved my ability to get out into the countryside, but it has also improved my social life.

7 Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

I was so depressed when I was stuck inside, I would hate to go back to that again. Being able to access beautiful places and not have to worry about my health is wonderful. I can drive and feel independent, stop and have a short walk knowing my car is nearby, have a picnic, see places miles from anywhere that I would never see without being able to green lane.

Case Study 7 - Roger's Story



I'm the ripe old age of 73 and have several problems including heart trouble and an inability to walk. My Land Rover allows me to travel on some of the lanes that I used to walk when I was fitter and younger.

It gives me the freedom to be in the countryside and explore the areas that I want to without the need for any extra help.

I live fairly close to the Lakes and Yorkshire Dales and am getting alarmed at the gradual reduction in the lanes I can travel on, the latest being the fabulous track over Tilberthwaite near Coniston. That track has had much work done in the past on the eastern side, especially a wall next to a drop off (funded by GLASS, Editor). I've used that track for over 60 years either walking, or on a motorbike, or in the last 15 years by Land Rover. I've seen very little change in it in that time. The base of the track is solid stone on the whole, which hasn't changed. The top section has actually got easier over the years as it's been eroded by the heavy rain. The Cumbrian authority claim that a Youtube video online shows that not long ago it was far better than now. The local farmer claims that it's so difficult now that he wants to give up his tenancy as he can't reach his stock.

Apparently the lane will be opened again after repairs but they are looking to make a TRO on it, and are holding meetings about this. I find this quite humiliating considering the amount of land open to walkers in the Lakes, and the reduced access we have, especially since 2006 when the NERC Act closed so many routes that were open to us. It's a bit like suggesting we close Helvellyn and Scafell Pike due to damage to the paths from the weather and overuse!

How many more tracks will be closed in the future I wonder? I consider it my right to travel on any legal lanes in the National Parks. These were set up to give the people freedom of movement, which is especially important to me now that I'm disabled, which has been the case for about 5 years, and now I rely on my good friends to be gate openers!

Case Study 8 - Lawrence's Story



“

I use a vehicle with hand and foot controls, or I sit as a passenger with friends and we get out and about which is fantastic because without that I'm stuck really. There's no other way to get out there otherwise and I'm sure I'm not the only one who is disabled and can't go walking or riding a mountain bike in these places anymore.

1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

Yes.

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

I have Multiple Sclerosis. I am unable to walk without significant difficulty.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

Since I was 21.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

It will get worse.

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

No. I need a modified vehicle with hand and foot controls, or I sit in as a passenger. Without green laning I'm completely stuck, there is no way for me to get out and around otherwise.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

I've always been outdoorsy, I used to cycle everywhere, I've always been outside. With my truck I can get out with friends and see the beautiful Welsh countryside which is fantastic.

7. Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

Without green laning I'd be stuck sitting at home all day, I can't image life without access to the outdoors.

Lawrence was kind enough to allow us to video a day out with her.

The video can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIMYqhPMOg0>

Case Study 9 - Jessica's Story



Before I went green laning I was totally isolated, very depressed, and had no social life. My mental and physical health were deteriorating.

1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

Yes.

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, social anxiety, agoraphobia. I find social interactions, crowds, open spaces, strangers, and new places terrifying.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

2 years.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

It will improve.

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

No, at least not yet. I suffered an abusive relationship and subsequent stalking by my partner, this caused my whole life to change. I went from being a runner and cyclist to being stuck indoors scared to go out, I lost my trust in people, and all my self-confidence. This impacted my physical health, I put on weight, lost my fitness, and started on a downward spiral. A trusted friend convinced me to go green laning with them, this started my road to recovery. I feel safe in my own car, I don't have to interact with people although I can now wave and acknowledge them whereas before I'd avoid all eye contact. I can also find empty places and get my confidence to walk outdoors back up knowing that my car is close by if anyone appears, or I start to panic. I'm now able to go out with a group, before that would be impossible but because I have my own space in my own car, I don't feel overwhelmed. After talking to people on our CB radios for a few trips I can now sit and have lunch with them, this is a big step for me.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

It is vital. Before I went green laning I was totally isolated, very depressed, and had no social life. My mental and physical health were deteriorating.

7 Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

Definitely. It's taken a year, but I am now able to go out without panicking although I still need the support of my car, I have new friends, have lost weight and am rebuilding my confidence. Compared to this time last year I am a different person. Without it I would be unable to function.

Case Study 10 - John's Story²⁴



At 45 years young, I was a self-employed maintenance engineer and doing quite well financially. My girlfriend had lived with me for a couple of years, a fantastic person, who I knew I would spend my life with - she's a nurse and all was looking very positive for us. Stable home and jobs, six grown kids between us and even they were all good.

Life turns upside down

Then suddenly I was taken ill with a heart problem that turned out to be heart failure (stage 3). At the end of very distressing initial treatment, I was left with a pacemaker/defibrillator, a tub of pills every day and a prognosis that suggested that I might have 3-5 years left before the old ticker gave up and I tootled off this mortal coil. With that, I lost my ability to work which meant that a second car in the house was beyond us. Sue's car was the only car in the house, and she used it for work, as her job involves work in the community.

My heart problem meant I couldn't walk for more than a few hundred yards without rest, and it got progressively worse if I pushed it. I even needed to be collected by car, just to get to the local shops.

I became a hermit over the next few years, rarely leaving the house and losing touch with nearly all of my friends.

Sue was now contracting, working from Yorkshire to Leicestershire. One afternoon I got call from a very distressed Sue - she had suffered a panic attack whilst driving on the M1 near Barnsley, 50 miles from home. She was taken to hospital, and I needed to be with her, but couldn't get there. Luckily a close friend was off work and was able to get me to her.

Sue and I agreed that I would now need a car just in case I needed to get to her if there was any type of incident. Sue also needed the reassurance that I was able to reach her.

4x4 time

A 4x4 was decided on as Sue's area included the Peaks and our own village can be pretty much cut-off in bad snow. We decided on a Suzuki Jimny, and we soon purchased one from a local dealer. I was like a kid, out for a drive every day, looking for errands to run, 'going for a drive'... like a 20-year-old with his first car.

The Peaks are only a 20-minute drive from our place, and I started to drive some of the more obvious and easy lanes. 4x4 driving was not new to me, nor the modification of standard cars.

²⁴ Taken from the GLASS Green Lanes magazine, summer 2019 issue

I joined the 'jimnybits' forum, which was super welcoming and full of advice. I decided that I wanted the car to remain standard looking but wanted a bit more from it. So, I fitted BFG AT KO2 tyres, all new suspension with AVO dampers and a Quaife ATB differential.

I drive out at least once a week now, usually alone still, but I have joined a couple of trips with some more experienced drivers. Mainly the Peaks, but with a notable trip to the Lakes recently. Hopefully there's more of these to come.

The lanes give me access to the countryside. I can drive to find seclusion and stillness, experience the joy of nature again. Mostly, to escape.

4x4 driving lets me be adventurous, tests my skills as a driver, lets me take my small walks in interesting places, and gives me access to beautiful locations. Places and vistas that have been excluded to me for years. I feel alive again!

It has given me so much...

- *My wife and I have more interesting conversations! I actually have some interesting input now.*
- *I have met some other members of the jimnybits forum and made friends.*
- *I have enjoyed the process of modifying my car.*
- *I can get out and see nature again: deer, birds of prey and the dramatic scenery that is on my door.*
- *Access to so much....*

We are now six years into my illness and things are going surprisingly well. In the last year my condition seems to have plateaued and is stable with no more hospital admissions.

A recent scan actually showed an improvement in function. The doctors are quite positive and have put the change down to a lift in my mood. The uplift in my physical condition and the positive effects on my spirits, or zest for life, have all come in the last year or so. The same year that I started driving lanes and 4x4'ing in general.

The future

It has also allowed me to give back a little, though I stayed in the car, a snow shovel and a tow rope saved several people from long walks during last winter's snow. The loss of these lanes would be a very negative thing for me. Keep fighting for access and I'll tread lightly for a while yet.



Case Study 11 - George's Story



The thought of not being able to get out is terrifying, I've never been one for sitting indoors.



1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

No, but my body disagrees!

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

I'm approaching 76 and my body has aged faster than my mind.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

I've had increasing trouble for about 10 years.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

I wish I could stop it but aging is inevitable, it will get worse.

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

Not anymore. Gone are the days I can fell run or swim laps of the lake, I used to cycle to market when it was on (sic: being held) 30 miles away, but now a walk around Tesco is about as much as I can manage.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

I still love the hills, so I go out in my Land Rover with my grandson. It's great to watch him chase the dog about, we sometimes do a bit of fishing, and I can tell him about the birds we see. There's quite a lot of wildlife around here. We take a packed lunch and sit by the pool, make a cup of tea on the tailgate, it's my favourite thing to do, I used to take my wife until she passed away. I don't get out much, but every Sunday is our special day together, it means the world to me.

7 Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

The thought of not being able to get out is terrifying, I've never been one for sitting indoors. It will come one day I know it, but while I still can I'll be out enjoying the hills and the lake as long as I can. I hope one day my grandson takes his kids up there, it's been a special place for my family for generations. The day I can't make it up there is a day I don't want to think about just yet.

Case Study 12 - Mike's Story



1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

Yes.

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

I have kidney failure due to diabetes. This causes fatigue, the requirement for me to manage my medication and food intake closely, to be very sensitive to temperature, and the need for regular dialysis.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

3 years.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

It will get worse.

5. Are you able to access the countryside safely and consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

No. I need to carry a lot of medical equipment, food, and clothing. This includes dialysis equipment. I am able to stop while out and hand the dialysis bags from my roof bars and have it while I sit and enjoy a nice view instead of being stuck at home. I also need a passenger to drive for me if I feel too tired.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

Very important. This illness is life limiting, it is vitally important that I am able to access the outdoors for as long as I can. I spend a lot of time in hospital and when I'm not there I would like to be outdoors enjoying the time I have left. Before I became ill, I was a keen walker and cyclist, I used to train children to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and teach long term unemployed people to repair footpaths. The outdoors has always been my life, I do not even want to think about being stuck indoors!

7 Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

If I couldn't get out in my 4x4 I would be stuck at home. My mental health would suffer tremendously. The great outdoors has been my whole life and I'd like to continue to enjoy it for as long as possible. I was worried I'd not be able to continue getting out after I started dialysis, it is wonderful to maintain my independence and not have to worry that I can't live my life because of illness.

Case Study 13 - Colin's Story²⁵



The freedom of the open road

I have been a disabled driver for a long time and have always enjoyed the freedom of the open road.

I have during my working life driven a lot of different vehicles far and wide, but my love of 4x4s is the best.

I love nothing more than to go into the wilds of the Lake District or North and Mid Wales and drive where the beauty of the countryside can really be seen. Far from being a loner, I like to drive with like minded drivers who have a love for this hobby.

I drive a 28 year old Defender 90 which I have owned for 23 years. The truck is well maintained and is just what I always wanted it to be - able and up to the job without being over the top.

While I was working for a living, I was unable to do as much green laning that I would have liked. However now I am retired, and apart from being disabled in some areas and abilities, I love to be out and about. I don't need to go far and have no interest in going abroad to do my hobby, so all the lanes I need or would like to drive are in and around this island.

I am an active member of the Liverpool Land Rover Owners Club and have been out with them often. There is always someone who has an idea of where we should go next and the weather is never a problem for us.

The only downside that comes with being classed as disabled, is that some people think that we will be a hindrance to others, and that we are unable to do the things others can. The only things I can't do that able bodied people can, are in my head, my hands and my feet. Its not that they don't work, its just that they are worn and don't work as well. I used to walk with a stick, but don't now, I used to walk far but I don't now. I used to be able to tighten nuts and bolts with my finger tips, but I can't now. I can drive, and drive as well as anyone else and that is what I do and want to do, explore green roads all over the country.

²⁵ Taken from the GLASS Green Lanes magazine, summer 2019 issue

Case Study 14 - Lauren's Story



1 Do you face additional challenges when accessing the countryside?

Yes.

2 Can you explain the nature of your additional needs?

I have lupus, arthritis, post-cancer lymphedema, and solar urticaria. I suffer from widespread chronic pain and fatigue; both are increased post exertion. I have body-wide swelling due to lymphatic system dysfunction which increases pain while reduces mobility. I am also allergic to sunlight.

3 How long have you had these additional needs?

Since my 20s, I am now 40.

4 Will it - improve, stay the same, get worse over time?

It will get worse and requires constant management.

5 Are you able to access the countryside safely consistently without any support from a vehicle? Please explain your needs.

No. While I have good days and bad days, and may be more able on good days, if I exert myself when feeling well this will cause my symptoms to flare for a considerable time afterwards - at least a week. Even on an overcast day I have to take precautions to avoid sunlight, even in a car I need to wear factor 50+ sunscreen, cover up, and have tinted windows. I can carry all sorts of things in the back of my truck so I can drive somewhere and go for short walks or swims knowing that I will have everything I need close at hand should I need it.

6 How important is countryside access to your quality of life? Please explain why.

It is everything to me. I was born in a very rural area and have spent my whole life outdoors or using rights of way. I was a keen hiker, wild swimmer, and horse rider, sometimes I'd mountain bike too. To find myself unable to do the things I love was life changing and I suffered clinical depression until I was able to buy a Land Rover, rediscover the outdoors, and manage the challenges I face while out.

7 Do you believe your health would suffer without countryside access? Please explain why.

It would suffer significantly. I became depressed not being able to do the things I used to do. I also need to exercise to manage my disabilities, if I don't symptoms get worse, but to do this outdoors requires the support of a vehicle, otherwise I would be stuck indoors and that is unthinkable to me! Green laning gives me the independence to continue to enjoy the outdoors and to manage my disabilities.

Case Study 15 - Stuart's Story²⁶



One Sunday morning in late summer, a very manly friend I have known for 35 years told me how, post lockdown and following the death of his father and the suicide of a mate, he was really struggling with life. I stopped what I was doing and paid attention.

He was someone I had always admired for his stoicism, physical strength, and strength of character. I admired his ability to keep soldiering on despite any issues that came his way, building magnificent sheds, re-roofing French barns single-handedly whilst living alone in a barely waterproof stone house. We used to run a children's Saturday club together and for 10 years, each week he alone visited dozens of the club families at their homes to take them project sheets and check they were doing okay. He always seemed in control of his life and on top of everything that was part of it, and I was in awe. His confession made my alarm bells ring.

I also knew him to be someone who was not forthcoming at opening up, perhaps much like most of us middle aged blokes. That does seem to be changing over time with the culture, as men get a bit more in touch with their inner voices, their 'feminine side' (shiver...). The magnificent shed was the space into which he would retreat and shut the door when his kids were younger, and then older, whenever he needed some space. Convivial chit chat was not one of his core strengths, but I knew him to be a good man with a big heart.

Yet here he was, freely revealing his angst. I asked if he wanted to talk and almost right away, he texted back a 'yes' - another warning signal from a fellow who would often not look at his phone for weeks.

But what to do together? Pubs were lockdown shut, and I don't drink, and we'd both just eaten. He'd never been out on a lane with me, so I decided to give it a try. "Do you fancy coming out in the Landy?" I tentatively suggested. That would be fine he said. I'll be round in 20 minutes I replied.

'Green laning as therapy' was not a concept I had previously considered but as I drove the mile to his house that afternoon and thought about where he might be and how I might even begin to help, I was hoping that the trip out might do its usual trick of inducing joy and freedom and perhaps open us both up. It certainly always worked for me, despite seven years and thousands of miles. Might it also bless my brother in arms?

²⁶ Taken from the GLASS Green Lanes magazine, summer 2019 issue

We headed down to the M25 on my favourite local Surrey route that takes three hours or so and includes the best of the local byways. We talked about trivia, cars and work, and how he has to answer the mobile phone these days now he is a grown up and a partner in a business. He seemed okay if subdued, focused on the ride and the shouting over the racket of Solihull's finest, entirely uninsulated, TDi.

We slowed down for the first right turn onto lane one and I noticed a small blue flashing beacon placed at the junction, which was odd.

Turning into the lane revealed the reason - a plethora of blue flashing lights belonging to, bizarrely, two fire engines that were parked up on the wide part at the start of the lane. Things had suddenly become interesting.

Fire fighters were busy loading bags of water onto the second vehicle, a 130 Defender fire engine. Knowing the lane was a bit of a state, and a favourite for the dumping and incineration of stolen vehicles, I assumed there was a car related problem.

I climbed out and said hi to the firemen (although several were women, possibly called Sam). They told me that the issue was an out-of-control barbecue fire in the woods, which in those tinder dry days was by no means trivial. The commander saw our Disco with its large GLASS sticker and came over.

"Do you think we will get down the lane in that?" he asked, waving his radio casually at the Defender. "Probably," I replied, going on to express concern that it might be a little easier if the tons of water were not added to by the tons of firemen with their kit, and perhaps they should not all pile onto it? "Tell you what," I said, "I'll give you a lift."

And so it was that my thoughtful friend and I found ourselves bouncing down Surrey's roughest lane with two firemen in the back. We deposited them after 200m where their 130 was heading seriously off-piste in search of said BBQ. The last thing I heard them say was "Even the bloke who reported it can't find it now!". They all seemed to be laughing for some reason.

The ice was broken, and my friend and I spoke freely. We discussed life and death, as both of us being mid 50's had recently been bereaved. We talked about our spouses, our children, and relationships in the third trimester of our lives. My friend was hurting about his mate who had killed himself just a few weeks previous. They had known each other for years - decades even - and were close. There was no warning. He seemed okay when they had last met, other than wanting to give some stuff away. So, did that mean he was planning it for two or three weeks beforehand? Should the signs have been spotted? Could something have been said to prevent the tragedy? These things were weighing heavy on my friend's shoulders - and upon his heart. What about us, he said? We were two introspective, thoughtful, and pragmatic people, much like the friend. Were we too at risk of some switch going in our heads, setting us on a path leading us inexorably to a dark and desperate conclusion?

I shared of my own mental health struggles - the regular black holes into which I sank that had blighted my career and ability to do the things that 'normal me' knew I was capable of. I spoke about the years of depression various members of my family had dealt with. There were no easy solutions, but what I could say with confidence was that there were always good days and the hope of more to come. And perhaps that darkness made the light shine more brightly when we actually saw it. There were those wonderful times where the hidden sun momentarily peeping out through the clouds was not less, but somehow more spectacular, more memorable than those days of sun and blue skies that we can tend to take for granted.

Heavy stuff, but somehow it all helped the cognitive processes as the lanes served up bounce and challenge and ... fun. Somehow in this context the depth of our weighty conversation felt acceptable, the load lightened by both the act of sharing and the ever-changing landscape, and by distractions unveiled before us.

It had been a dry late summer punctuated by devastating heath fires and today the overdue rains chose to

arrive. At one point as we drove down from Leith Hill on roads overhung by 10-foot banks held in place only by centuries of intertwined tree roots - a thin river flowed beneath us. As we drove up London Lane from Shere, a trickle turned into stream, and a previously benign lane became chalky and slippery. The elements were bigger and stronger than us, and tackling it made our issues diminish. It is a myth that primitive and pastoral societies don't experience depression - it is not just a western thing, - but being outside in the elements, and away from screens, doing walking and gardening and having exposure to nature and its slow rhythms really does help bring perspective.

Today, laning was doing the trick. As the rain came down, our spirits went up.

Near to the old Wisley aerodrome where Wellington bombers and later VC10s had been fitted out until the 1960s (built at nearby Brooklands and test flown to Wisley for completion), there lies an orphan lane, once an access route to the perimeter of the concrete runway. Now an overgrown stem rarely driven. As it was pouring with rain and we were finally in a good mood, I decided to check it out. A summer of lockdown and lots of sun meant the overgrowth was significant, and after 100m we were ankle deep in slush, chopping back and trimming limbs and small fallen trees.

Adventure is a human thing. The opportunity to face up to challenge and overcome it, and the chance to bond with fellow travellers in the shared task, bring opportunities to create memories of good times. Ready to be accessed and re-lived during the darker days.

Firemen, floods and now lane clearance did it for us today. I know my friend was helped by the experience and the chat, and that in turn reminded me of the value that laning has as a contribution to our well-being. It's so much more than just mucking about in 4x4's.



Current solutions to disabled access

As we can see from the case studies, disability is not, as many current 'inclusive' strategies would have us believe, constrained to mobility issues.

There are numerous publications that extol the benefits of motorised mobility scooters, re-surfaced routes, and the removal of stiles on footpaths to allow for those with mobility issues. Several charities and schemes exist that loan these vehicles out to users and some local authorities have taken steps to make changes to PRow furniture or surface materials but this is far from widespread across the UK. There is merit in this advice and these schemes for some users, but do they take diversity into consideration and provide equality of opportunity for:

- 1) *All people with a huge variety of disabilities, age-related, or health problems?*
- 2) *People who live in different locations? Are these schemes available everywhere?*
- 3) *People of differing socio-economic backgrounds? Are scooters affordable?*
- 4) *Do these schemes and vehicles provide access comparatively to the access of people without protected characteristics?*

And:

- 5) *Are they accessible to all? Are they readily and easily available UK wide?*
- 6) *Do they consider if access for scooters is physically possible across the footpath and bridleway network in all areas?*
- 7) *Do they allow for true independence for all people with disabilities or health issues?*
- 8) *Has consideration been given to the use of scooters drawing attention to and clearly identifying people as disabled and how users may feel about that?*
- 9) *What about the risks?*

Environmental, economic & health considerations



Existing environmental research papers on green lanes

There exist several studies on species diversity on green lanes compared to single hedgerows and surrounding arable land. While each paper has its own perspective, some look at flora, fauna or both, while others focus on particulars such as bees and butterflies, what they all do is agree on the following points:

- *that species diversity is more abundant on green lanes,*
- *that surfacing with concrete or tarmac is detrimental to species diversity*
- *that there is a case for continued use of green lanes, lack of use causing the creation of less diverse linear woodland*
- *there is a case for creating more green lanes for the benefit of the natural environment*

“ Senior Lecturer in Ecology, Dr John Dover, who has led much of the research carried out on green lanes, said: “We know from earlier studies that vegetation is better in green lanes and that butterflies and bumble bees are more abundant. However, the findings of this latest research are so significant I’m tempted to use the word stonking. It makes it very clear that we should retain green lanes and manage them sympathetically. There is also a case for creating new ones.”²⁸

It has been a long-held belief that the motorised use of green lanes is a detriment to the environment, but studies show that responsible and sustainable use (the upmost objective of the Green Lane Association) is actually rather helpful.

“ To maintain the diversity of vegetation inside green lanes requires continued usage of green lanes by farm vehicles, livestock, horses, and people to prevent lanes from becoming overgrown and eventually strips of linear woodland, which, although valuable in their own right would be unlikely to maintain the structural and plant community diversity found in green lanes.”²⁹

One reason species diversity is increased is the variety of environments created by motorised use. The wheel ruts and central section between them encourage the growth of different ‘trample-hardy’ species and grasses, while the inner and outer verges attract different species simultaneously. Light levels are different again for the inner and outer verges, and the central section, as are nutrient and water availability.

“ The high Ruderal, and low Stress-tolerator and Competitor values indicate that the central track is more disturbed than other areas of the lane. This is probably as a result of trampling by livestock, horses, and people, mowing and flattening by vehicles, resulting in an abundance of trampling-tolerant species such as *Plantago major*...strong correlation found between CSR Ruderal and Ellenberg L-values suggest that it may be disturbance rather than light largely influencing these results. Disturbance may also contribute more to the results than nutrient levels.”³⁰

Ground pressure is also a consideration. When standing, approximate ground pressure of a human male is 8psi and an adult horse exerts 25psi, and when running a human will exert twice the pressure, when galloping a horse will exert up to 500psi. Ground pressure for a pneumatic tyre is roughly equal to its inflation pressure, which on green lanes is typically low (between 15-25psi)³¹.

²⁷ See reference section ‘environment’

²⁸ Staffordshire University, 2005. New study reveals birds flock to green lanes. Staffordshire University Press Office.

²⁹ Walker, M. P., 2006. Hedges and green lanes: vegetation composition and structure. Springer, Biodiversity and Conservation 15 [2595-2610]

³⁰ See 27

³¹ https://www.liquisearch.com/ground_pressure/example_ground_pressures

The parallel hedgerows protect the interior environment from pesticides that would deter insect species and provide shelter for both flora and fauna.

Continued use of green lanes maintains the environment between the hedgerows, preventing it from degrading because of overgrowth that reduces diversity of both flora and fauna. Overgrowth and choking not only deters species diversity but also users.

We can see from the following photographs of what was a Road Used as a Public Path (RuPP) prior to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, that it has become unusable to anyone since it became a Restricted Byway. It is now what is termed as a linear woodland, and while these features do have some benefits, they are far from the thriving ecosystem the right of way once was when it was in use.

“ In his paper entitled ‘Birds and green lanes: Breeding season bird abundance, territories and species richness’ Mike talks of the need to preserve the “unsealed nature” of green lanes while at the same time maintaining usage to prevent “scrubbing up and the eventual formation of linear woodland.”³²



Photo: Choked restricted byway in Oxfordshire

Lucas, C., et al (2019) make an excellent summation of the importance of green lanes in the European landscape.

“ The European landscape has dramatically changed during the Holocene as a result of human impact and climatic change [1,2]. Especially since the industrial revolution, landscapes have been deforested and reshaped into rural and agricultural landscapes. These are dominated by a mosaic of grasslands, forests, and urban areas, separated or connected by linear landscape elements such as roads, ditches, tree lines, vegetated lynchets, and hedgerows [3-5]. The distribution, abundance and richness of species in these landscapes is related to the amount, height, length, and quality of linear vegetation elements [6-8]. The same holds true for the dispersal of seeds and the flow of matter, nutrients, and water [1,9]. Additionally, linear infrastructures such as roads and railways form barriers which lead to habitat fragmentation. In contrast, green lanes, which are flanked by hedges and/or tree lines may form connecting corridors. Hence, linear vegetation elements are of key importance for biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. Nowadays there is also awareness that historic agricultural practices are part of the cultural heritage [10,11] and need to be conserved. However, the occurrence of green lanes and hedgerows has strongly diminished in many countries [12,13]. This is mostly a consequence of larger agricultural fields, monocultures and a reduction in non-crop features which reduces the complexity and diversity of landscape structure [8]. Detailed knowledge of the spatial occurrence, current status, frequency and ecological functions of linear vegetation elements in a landscape is therefore of key importance for biodiversity conservation and regional planning.”³³

³² Staffordshire University, 2005. New study reveals birds flock to green lanes. Staffordshire University Press Office.

³³ Lucas, C., et al, 2019. Identification of Linear Vegetation Elements in a Rural Landscape Using LiDAR Point Clouds. MDPI.

National Parks - our protected landscapes?

While this paper was being written, the Landscapes Review (Glover 2018)³⁴ public consultation was in progress. This Review looked at the most cherished and protected landscapes in England, our National Parks.

Motorised use in National Parks is a sorely contested subject, many believe that our 'wild, unspoiled countryside' should remain so, and this is understandable. But are our National Parks really unspoiled and untouched? What are the true risks to their ecological value? And what is the real impact of 'green laners' compared to other user types?

One of the arguments against the motorised use of unsealed roads is that it is incongruous with the unspoilt countryside, but,

“ According to the World Conservation Union, Britain's national parks 'only just' meet the nature conservation standards for international recognition...Unlike parks in the United States, none of Britain's national parks are truly wild. More than 90 per cent of the Peak District is farmland, while the drystone walls, fields and hedgerows of the Lake District that inspired Wordsworth and Beatrix Potter have combined to create a landscape that may be picturesque but is far from natural.³⁵

The papers referenced on previous pages discuss the impact of farming on our natural landscapes. Farming is of course an essential practice and solutions to providing food for the nation in the most ecologically friendly way is out of the scope of this paper. But it must be considered when identifying where ecological improvements can be best made, and even more so before laying blame for “ecological devastation” at the feet of a minority user group who are using a tiny percentage of rights of way in an area that is 90% farmland and visited by 13 million people each year, most of whom arrive by car (Rowe, 2020).

One focus of the Glover Report, was that:

“ A lot more must be done to meet the needs of our many fellow citizens who do not know the countryside, or do not always feel welcome in it.

And Andrew Hall of the Campaign for National Parks agrees that:

“ We've lost the “national' from national parks...They've become a little too local. It should be like the NHS, there for everyone.” (Hall, Campaign for National Parks).

And while these sentiments are not untrue, how can welcoming more people to our National Parks be managed against the protection of those landscapes?

Mark Rowe's dossier, the failure of Britain's National Parks (2020), gives us an insight into the total number of visitors as well as how these visitors travel to National Parks,

“ The Peak District is home to just 38,000 people but sees more than 13m visits a year, with 20m people living within one hour's car journey. Just over 41,000 people live in the Lake District but more than 19m people visit it each year. The South Downs is the most populated park, with 120,000 people calling it home, and receives around 16m visitors every year. Since its inception as a National Park in 2005, the New Forest has seen 14 per cent more visits; there were 13.9m trips to the New Forest National Park in 2017, with a projection that this will rise above 16.5m within 20 years. Even where national parks are well served by trains, the vast majority of visitors come by car - in the New Forest that figure is 96 per cent.

³⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>

³⁵ <https://geographical.co.uk/uk/item/3614-national-parks>

There are no definitive figures of the number of motorised users in the UK, but the Green Lane Association, the largest and longest running user organisation to represent all users of green lanes, and the Trail Riders Fellowship, the longest running motorised user organisation, together estimate around 49,000 people partake in the hobby UK wide at least once per year[†].

To put this into a clear percentage, the total number of motorised users is 0.26% of the total number of visitors to the Lake District or 0.3% of the visitors to South Downs in only one year, but many motorised users will have never visited these places so the actual number of people who use green lanes in those Parks will of course be far lower.

These figures, along with the environmental studies discussed above, beg the questions:

- *Are we considering the true risks to our landscapes?*
- *Or are we focused on an easy way to placate the conscience of the public when we look to remove a minority user group? Especially if we continue to welcome a huge majority in landscapes that are already up to 90% unnatural due to their management and at risk because of it?*
- *Will removing the potential (but in reality, far less) 49,000 visitors really have any significant impact compared to millions of other visitors?*

As the Faber Maunsell Report³⁶ states:

“ The number of complaints can be a poor indicator particularly if they are not backed up by hard evidence. ”

The matters of motorised use in the Lake District and the impact of other user types, are discussed further in this paper.

Healthy spaces for all

There are numerous guidelines and papers that detail and extol the benefits of accessing green spaces³⁷. These can be found in the bibliography and further reading section at the end of this document. The fact that National Parks exist evidences that we are fully aware of the need for and benefits of time in the countryside, and the Glover Report is adamant that more people should have the opportunity to access those benefits. This document does not aim to repeat what we already know about this subject, but merely to draw attention and provide effective solutions to the challenges some people face when accessing these green spaces and the benefits that they afford to them.

The cost-benefit of motorised recreation

The Green Lane Association and partner organisation the Trail Riders Fellowship, have spent time assessing the economic investment that motorised use brings to local economies. This is of particular importance in rural areas such as National Parks that rely on tourism as one of the largest industries along with agriculture.

The Green Lane Association and Trail Riders Fellowship estimate that motorcycle users spend £116,625 per mile of green lane each year³⁸. The Green Lane Association estimate that other motorised users spend £200,000,000 each year. This is a conservative estimate that does not cost-benefits to local authorities or the market value of specialist businesses aimed at users.

It is important to note that these figures do not include cost-savings to managing authorities gained from the use of volunteers, taking advantage of the physical and financial resources of user organisations, the cost preventative measures afforded by lengthsman and educational schemes, or the implementation of multi-disciplinary working groups.

³⁶ https://laragb.org/pdf/DEFRA_200709_FaberMaunsellReport2.pdf

³⁷ See bibliography and further reading environment section page 108

³⁸ <https://tinyurl.com/2p95j4cr>

[†] <https://glass-uk.org/files/TheEconomicValueofRecreationalMotoringonUnsealedRoadsv2.pdf>

Threats and opportunities to an inclusive network



Threats to inclusivity



Photo: Illegal blockage of a green road in Wrexham

Public perception – social memes vs evidenced fact

Anti-access organisations

There are organisations that exist not for the benefit of the public at large or to contribute anything to countryside users, but solely to remove public rights and reduce an already dwindling network from those who already have the least.

While Green Lane Association members act directly to improve the network we use, or rely on it to access green spaces, we watch anti-access organisations campaign with public money to attack that work and reduce rights. This money has been used to fund court action that has failed on numerous occasions to agree with the anti-access rhetoric presented, yet campaigners continue to make further attempts to push exactly the same worn-out arguments at additional cost to the public purse when authorities are forced to defend these egregious legal actions.

This money could be far more proactively spent on the rights of way these campaigners profess to protect. With authority budgets stretched to breaking point nationwide and public rights of way falling into disrepair, the money spent on attempts to reduce a network that is already at risk could be used for the benefit of all instead of to the detriment of the few.

Our concerns are that:

National anti-access organisations are promoting misinformation to the public at large which leads to added pressure on the network and those who use or manage it,

These organisations are using a platform of blatant bias and untruth in an attempt to guide the hand of the both the public and decision makers, seeking to reduce access rights nationwide, and they are doing so with unaccounted, donated money gathered on the back of this misinformation,

These organisations focus the sum total of their activities on reducing public rights while failing to inform the same public of matters that are inarguably pertinent to the activities of those interested parties. They give nothing of benefit to the network or the public, nor do they provide education or value to anyone, they simply seek to take.

The consequences of their actions impact vulnerable countryside users who have additional needs the most, while doing nothing to deter illegal or irresponsible users.

The repercussions of these campaigns are causing clash points to inflame, often to dangerous and costly levels. The misguided belief that motorised users cause harm has led people who believe the untruths to illegally block, lay spikes and other objects intended to cause damage/harm, and physically destroy rights of way to prevent access. This then has to be remedied using public funds, although GLASS often assist where possible. In other cases, verbal and physical threats and assaults have been reported by legal responsible motorised users simply wishing to enjoy the countryside.

The main focus of anti-motoring organisations is to insist that people walk, this document has already identified that this is not possible for many.

Green laning is a legitimate and legal pastime, discrimination against anyone who chooses to partake in it, irrespective of ability, is incongruous with the law and the spirit of recreation. Access to the countryside should not be gate-kept by one user group to the detriment, or even the risk, of the rest.



Social memes and the media

When a pragmatic approach to the arguments for and against motorised use of the green road network is used, it becomes clear that many of those against could be described as a social meme. That is to say a belief that has propagated through repetition - word of mouth, the press, social media, and the messages of anti-access organisations - rather than from factual evidence or experience.

The Green Lane Association sends out many press releases each year. These documents, prepared at the expense of the organisation, detail the voluntary work done to assist local authorities, the public money saved, and the benefits that motorised users have brought to the green road network in their own time and often at their own expense. In the last 12 months, GLASS has sent 81 documents to the press, of these only one was partially used [not including articles in the motoring press].

Approximately 25% of these documents sought to right incorrect information contained within articles already published. A notable example of this was an article published about a byway the author of this paper was at the time project managing maintenance work upon .

"Road which poses 'serious' injury risk to people closed for six months." The author of this paper (a person with mobility issues) has walked and driven the lane several times when in its poorest condition prior to project managing the repair work. While maintenance was clearly long overdue, the condition of the lane was muddy and rutted along one section but was still useable, and in current use, without any major concerns or incidents. What was problematic was anti-social behaviour, but this cannot be attributed to

³⁹ <https://www.leicesterm Mercury.co.uk/news/local-news/road-poses-serious-injury-risk-6390524>

surface conditions and was often caused or inflamed by local residents purposefully and aggressively engaging users or blocking the public highway.

It portrayed motorised users as anti-social and motorised use as inherently damaging, yet at the time of publishing motorised users had, after 18 months of failed attempts to communicate with the managing authority (with support from local residents, the police, and land managers), served a legal notice on the local authority, settled out of court, and were managing the repair of a byway that had seen such little maintenance carried out on it that local residents were unable to safely access their properties.

If it were not for motorised users stepping in when they did, the lane would have not been repaired. It would have been closed and local residents would have continued to complain with little result. But sadly, the article explicitly stated that motorised users were at fault.

While numerous news reports of green roads that have seen little to no maintenance work for decades are aimed solely at blaming users for attempting to use them, there are also many about far larger and more costly maintenance works on non-motorised routes.

The work carried out to repair any public right of way is vital and should be applauded in all cases, but what is interesting to see is the difference in language and sentiment used when motorised use causes maintenance issues. These differences can have serious repercussions both for the network and those who use it, this will be explored in the next sections.



Works far more costly than anything seen on the green road network, are seen as 'wonderful'. Stories of 'human-related erosion is spiralling out of control and having a devastating effect on wildlife and habitats' do not garner calls for closure of footpaths or the banning of walking as an outdoor activity, yet far less impactful maintenance requirements on motorised routes invariably do. And when motorised users save local authorities significant amounts of money while assisting in RoW projects, their stories are rarely heard outside of motoring publications.

Figure 1 (left) Footpath erosion, Coledale Hause to Whiteless Pike (Pic: Fix the Fells)

It is common practice for the minority motoring user groups to spend significant funds on RoW projects, yet the far larger anti-access organisations spend similar amounts taking managing authorities to court in an attempt to remove motorised rights rather than to seek a solution.

What follows are examples of articles about non-motorised RoW issues.

- 1) Scafell Pike footpath use causes serious erosion and habitat destruction⁴⁰. Fix The Fells programme manager Joanne Backshall said:

“ It is wonderful that so many people are enjoying Scafell Pike and the surrounding peaks each year. Now more than ever, we’re seeing more people reaping the benefits that spending time in nature can bring.”

⁴⁰ <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/work-lake-district-national-trust-scafell-pike-england-b931126.html>

But she said:

“ With so many people using this route up Scafell Pike, human-related erosion is spiralling out of control and having a devastating effect on wildlife and habitats.

The work we are doing to maintain and repair eroded footpaths on Scafell Pike is critically necessary to protect this iconic mountain, its environmentally sensitive habitats and this world-renowned scenic landscape, so that people can continue to enjoy this classic ascent and the natural beauty of the Lakes for years to come.

2) A footpath that crosses a live railway line is threatened with closure for safety reasons

“ If it was seriously attempted, the council would consider utilising all available legislation to protect the public interest and public use of this valuable piece of infrastructure.

3) Non-motorised users complain over maintenance work

“ Resurfacing works on a Snowdonia path have been described as “environmental vandalism” by some walkers after parts were gravelled over Snowdonia National Park said essential repairs were needed to the bridleway from Capel Curig to Crafnant.

The park’s head of warden services Adam Daniel said:

“ With more walkers using the route and damage caused by climate change, the original path had eroded badly, to the point walkers had widened it significantly by forging their own routes to avoid boggy areas. We’re tackling those issues to ensure the path is there for users for the future, and to ensure that the habitat either side doesn’t get encroached any further.

Capel Curig community councillor, Shan Ashton, who regularly walks the route said while maintenance had to be carried out, it was not suitable.

“ If you go up to the mountains, you go to the mountains, this isn’t a path through the middle of town - it doesn’t need a perfect surface, it’s going to be wet, muddy and rocky,” she said.”



It is difficult to know where to begin in disassembling these articles, there are simply so many conflicts with how far less costly or dangerous issues on motorised RoWs are reported. But far more importantly, these huge differences in attitude are mirrored in the actions and decisions of those who manage both motorised and non-motorised ways.

Left: The queue for Snowdon summit in September 2020.

⁴¹ <https://tinyurl.com/2p82pazn>

⁴² <https://tinyurl.com/2tvuc2zv>

The starkest differences are that closure is never mentioned, even in light of serious dangers to walkers crossing a live railway line with nothing but a reminder sign to look before crossing. In fact, the council states it *"would consider utilising all available legislation to protect the public interest and public use of this valuable piece of infrastructure."*⁴³ There are green lanes in the very same county at the very same time under threat due to allegations of public safety issues that are little more than water erosion gullies and neglect by those responsible for managing the road [Proposed Prohibition of Driving Order. Ffordd Bryn Siriol & Siambar Wen, Bro Garmon Ref: CCBC-041587]. These gullies are caused naturally and do not move at high speed towards users like a train does, yet they are used as a "reason" to call for a closure to motorised users for reasons of safety.

Then we look at example 3, while routes frequented by motorised users are closed because of *'wet, muddy and rocky'* surfaces, non-motorised users are here complaining that the path is no longer those things⁴⁴.

If we compare these three non-motorised RoW articles to probably one of the most notorious green road cases in recent memory, that of High Tilberthwaite and Oxen Fell, we can clearly see the power the media and social memes have.



Photo: A helicopter used to transport stones to a path on Coniston Old man (Pic: Fix the Fells)

⁴³ https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/rail-company-accused-stealing-footpath-23221855?fbclid=IwAR1xHxPNpwGrw7_dr9sKSiR3Yws1oJtNXPOun5r20ukPRPqwFfTOvy9dOo4

⁴⁴ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-60175334?at_medium=custom7&at_custom4=C5D698FE-812A-11EC-9B83-F91216F31EAE&at_custom1=%5Bpost+type%5D&at_campaign=64&at_custom3=bbc_wales_news&at_custom2=facebook_page&fbclid=IwAR1vslJII0z4OQPdAUwFBBb38Hb9H5qYERpljR4mEv05OuiNqHfhfnfXR3Q

The situation in brief:



360,000 people, although that number was heard to be a false representation in the High Court, signed a petition to ban motorised users from unsealed roads in the Lake District National Park. The media coverage of the allegations put to the National Park Authority was comprehensive and long-running, in fact it still continues to this day despite the complainant's case failing to convince a judge at judicial review.

The following quotes are taken from the Lake District National Park Authority Assessment report:⁴⁵

“ 13.8.17: It is also notable that we had not received any significant complaints from walkers, horse-riders, or cyclists that they were finding the route difficult to use. Once the petition started, we did receive adverse comments about damage to the surface-but again, few of them were actually directed around any issues of difficulty of use, they were more along the lines of “the surface is wrecked by vehicles”.

“ 14.6.2: However, there are no comments about not wanting to see vehicles on surrounding roads, such as Wrynose Pass, or on the road to Tilberthwaite Car Park (or indeed in the car park). It is therefore difficult for us to judge the actual impact of around 40 a week 4WD vehicles using these roads, when compared to the vastly greater use of the surrounding road network. Both uses have an impact on the views of the valleys and fells, and it is difficult to say that prohibiting vehicles on the Tilberthwaite Road would substantially enhance the views and the landscape as a whole.

At judicial review, the Judge ruled:⁴⁶

“ Having considered each of the grounds upon which this application for judicial review has been pursued I am satisfied that each of them must be dismissed.

It is an absolute fact that any use of rights of way, irrespective of method of travel, will cause an impact on the surface thus resulting in maintenance requirements eventually. It is also an absolute fact that every user type will bring other impactful behaviours to the areas they frequent, but when making decisions about management of the network these must be considered as part of the overall bigger picture.

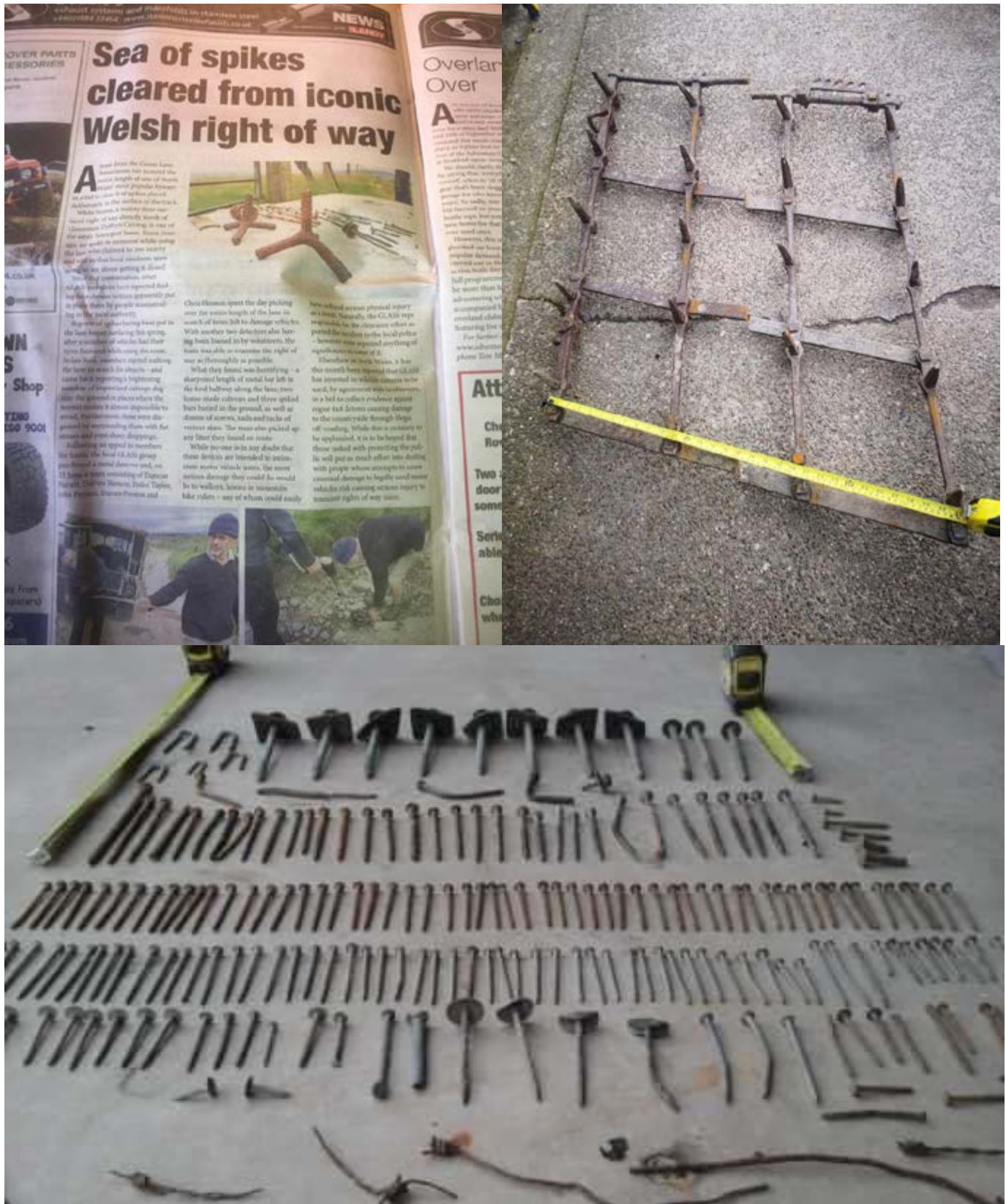
We have already heard from the Faber Maunsell Report that in the case of motorised use, issues have been witnessed on ‘almost certainly less than 5% [of the unsealed road network], and that more serious problems are localised.’ But conversely, any press reports pertaining to motorised use in the countryside is unanimously negative. Claims that vehicles are “destroying” our National Parks, even threatening World Heritage status of the Lake District, are not only common, they have become the ‘norm’. If these allegations were true, which a day trip to any county or National Park in the UK will prove it is not, there would be good reason for the level of negativity aimed at the minority user group, but there simply isn't the evidence to back these claims up.

⁴⁵ https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/151742/Committee-Report-Assessment-Paper.pdf

⁴⁶ [Judicial Review judgement](#) Stubbs (on behalf of Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement) v Lake District National Park Authority & Ors [2020] EWHC 2293 (Admin) (21 August 2020)

Repercussions of skewed public perception

Illegal blockages and damage



Photos: Examples of items purposefully placed on unsurfaced roads or buried in puddles that were retrieved by motorised users.



Photo: Excavation and obstruction of an unclassified road in North Wales to stop 'damaging' motorised use. The pit extends across the full width of the road and is more than 2m deep.



Photo: A green road excavated and blocked in several places to prevent motorised use because it is claimed to be 'damaging'. The material was dug out and behind it lies a large pit, this has filled with water diverted from an existing drain. This road lies adjacent to SSSI land and is unsafe for all users.



Photo: The condition of the road along sections that have not been purposefully damaged to prevent motorised access. It is quite clear decades of motorised use since any maintenance work has taken place, has not caused any of the alleged 'destruction'.

Threats and aggression



The following incident happened to GLASS members. Two 4x4s approached a farmyard, driving along an unclassified road shown on the List of Streets as continuing through the farmyard. The second vehicle carried a Dash Cam.

As the first vehicle entered the farmyard, a man, believed to be the occupant, ran across to it and threatened to smash the windscreen of the vehicle with a large piece of timber several feet long. He was fortunately restrained by his female partner who was nearby at the time unloading a car.

The incident was recorded on the dashcam of the second vehicle and eventually reported to the Police. With the video evidence and two statements, the Police proceeded to prosecute, and the man was given a suspended sentence and fined.

The following are examples of incidents reported to the Green Lane Association that occurred on legal public byways and unclassified roads.

“ I encountered the very aggressive farmer at the south end of the lane. When his son appeared out of the house with a carving knife, we decided it was better to retreat.”

“ Warning - a 4x4 driver has reported being threatened with a hammer by a local resident on this lane.

“ I live locally. I ventured down this illegally blocked lane and was confronted by a man who took pictures and threatened me. Stumps need moving. It should not be blocked.

“ WARNING - Do not attempt this lane at present - I have been threatened with a firearm. Drove the northern end - this has a culvert where the banks have been dug out to narrow the track you will have problems with anything wider than a Jimny. The gate at the southern end is still there as well as glass along the road to damage tyres and smashed roof tilings. On taking photos of this I was threatened with a shotgun and ordered to leave.

With viewer discretion advised due to foul language, this link shows a gentleman out with his children being verbally and physically assaulted by an approaching walker without any provocation other than the simple fact that he was a motorised user. He had stopped to provide his children with a snack when the event occurred: <https://youtube.com/shorts/hhR6X8IM-Z4?feature=share>

Closure is not management!



Reducing the network has historically proven to cause more problems than it solves. It:

- *Forces the same number of users onto a far smaller network*
- *Increases overall traffic and the associated maintenance requirements*
- *Fails to deter illegal use and only penalises responsible users*
- *Discriminates against a minority user group*
- *Removes opportunities for those who cannot access the countryside without a vehicle*
- *Increases clash points*
- *Creates hotspots of excessive usage*
- *Encourages illegal use of areas without vehicular access rights*
- *Creates a disjointed network*
- *Can cause the creation of linear woodlands and reduce species diversity*
- *Reduces enjoyment for all*

While anti-access organisations campaign for closure, further reductions then make it appear that all the concerns mentioned in the anti-access messages have increased, but in reality, it is the action of reducing the network that often causes the increased problems. This creates a vicious cycle.

In 2007, DEFRA and the Countryside Council for Wales commissioned Faber Maunsell Ltd to investigate illegal motorised use of the public rights of way (PRoW) network. The aims of the report were to evaluate and identify illegal usage, the causes, the extent of the problem, and to propose potential effective management strategies based on evidence.

In regard to the extent of the issue, the report found that:

“ **...it appears that illegal MPV use affects only a small part of the PRoW network, almost certainly less than 5%, and that more serious problems are localised⁴⁷.** ”

Responsible motorists fully support proportionate access and use of legislation to manage the public network but it is vital that this is used fairly across all classes of rights of way to avoid compounding existing problems or discriminating against one particular user group.

There are countless examples where closure has not been effective in managing illegal use, and there are countless more where public unsurfaced roads have been closed because illegal driving off them has taken place. It would appear quite obvious that if illegal activity is taking place on land where no public rights exist that closing routes where they do exist is not going to be a solution to the former problem. There are also significant downfalls in the current reporting process, considerations must be made before acting.

⁴⁷ https://laragb.org/pdf/DEFRA_200709_FaberMaunsellReport2.pdf

The Faber Munsell Report goes on to elaborate:⁴⁸

Do you have a problem and what is it? Remember that:

- ***In many cases, the apparent 'problem' may be transient or not of a scale to warrant large commitment of resources. It is important to gather sufficient information to establish whether the level of MPV use is significant. The illegal use of MPV can be very transient within a local area although the same perpetrators may turn up in a number of different areas often well dispersed.***
- ***The number of complaints can be a poor indicator particularly if they are not backed up by hard evidence.***
- ***Good hard evidence with dates and vehicle details, supported by photographs and a description of the effects of illegal user, is essential to establishing the nature and extent of any problem.***
- ***It appears that MPV use is often by a relatively small group of people. Identifying who these are and what they are doing is a good start***

Reducing responsible and legal use is quite the opposite of a deterrent to illegal behaviour. The fewer law-abiding users in an area the more likely those willing to break the law will continue to do so without the restraining influence of witnesses who can report their behaviour. The Faber Munsell Report concurs:

- ***The presence of other people appears to be one of the greatest disincentives to illegal motor vehicle use. Where other recreational users are present in significant numbers, illegal MPV use appears to be deterred." (Faber-Maunsell, 2006)***

The Green Lane Association have undertaken research into the reasons given for historical unsealed road closures and found that while Traffic Regulation Orders are often used to prohibit motorised users, rarely are other user types restricted permanently, even when significant incidents or even loss of life occur on non-motorised routes or on the surfaced road network. Byway closures are most often imposed due to maintenance requirements, conversely non-motorised routes receive millions in funding to repair them.



⁴⁸ https://laragb.org/pdf/DEFRA_200709_FaberMaunsellReport2.pdf

The consequences of closure

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 removed motorised rights from 50% or more of the byways in England and Wales overnight. Roads used as public paths (RuPPs) became Restricted Byways (RBs) and it was claimed that this measure would help to preserve and conserve these PRowS and the environment. But is this what actually happened?

The following are examples of what were once, prior to 2006, accessible PRowS to all users. Sadly, since being downgraded they are no longer accessible to anyone and many have formed linear woodlands which we have already discussed as being less species diverse than green lanes that are used.⁴⁹



West Berkshire



Hampshire: Of a 3km RB, only the section currently used by farm traffic is accessible, the rest is no longer passable



Surrey



Brecon



Talgarth



Gloucestershire

⁴⁹ Photos taken from the GLASS archive

Risk - a comparison between activities



While there are sadly many life-threatening incidents on mountain paths, climbing faces, cycle ways, horse riding incidents, accidents in lakes, the sea, and rivers, not to mention the surfaced road network, loss of life has never been a comparable risk to those who drive green roads or the other users who share the routes⁵⁰. So much so Mountain Rescue do not include the pastime in their incident statistics.

Many popular hill walking routes claim lives every year but are under no restrictions, yet many green lanes where no deaths have ever occurred are closed permanently due to alleged safety risks to users.

Risks cited in Traffic Regulation Orders often include ruts, narrow width, or weather erosion, yet there are 1000s of miles of narrow single-track tarmac roads with no footways and few passing places, many footpaths with ruts and erosion at several hundred meters above sea level, and bodies of water with innate dangers, yet there are rarely any permanent restrictions. Management of these non-motorised resources includes warning signs and education, but in the most part relies on the common sense of the user.

If we take a closer look at statistics from organisations such as Mountain Rescue it is quite clear that hillwalking accounts for over three quarters of all call outs. In the most popular areas, such as National Parks, the number of call outs per year equate to more than one per day.



In 2017 incidents that occurred from outdoor recreational pursuits used 97,208 voluntary operational hours, not including associated administrative time, to assist 1722 people. While 4x4 vehicles may well have been used to access casualties during these call outs, the user group who use these recreationally does not appear in the statistics as no incidents were reported.

It would be pertinent to mention that the Green Lane Association is proud to have officers active within the organisation who are volunteers in the Mountain Rescue and 4x4 Response services.

⁵⁰ <https://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2017MREWIIncidentReport.pdf>

Cost - the reality



Expenditure on maintenance is also unequal across classes of rights of way. In many cases closure to motorists is often used in favour of repair work, even in areas where millions is spent annually on non-motorised routes. There is clear prejudice as to which public routes receive funding for maintenance.

The Future management of unsealed sections of public roads U5001 High Tilberthwaite to Fell Foot, and U5004 High Oxen Fell to Hodge Close, Lake District National Park Authority Rights of Way Committee Report 8 October 2019, was compiled after a public campaign to ban motorised access to these unsealed roads in the park. One key argument made was the 'damage' and maintenance requirements that motorised users cause; a comparison was made between expenditure on green roads (1.6.3) and footpaths and bridges (1.6.4) which evidenced that the allegation was unfounded in this case⁵¹.

“ 1.6.3 A key piece of work was the repair of the Tilberthwaite Road, and the previous tenants of Tilberthwaite (from 1960) know of no similar work being done within their time at the farm. There are certainly no records within our organisations of the route being repaired to this level before. The practical work cost around £50,000, mainly funded by Cumbria County Council, with £10,000 being provided by the National Trust.

1.6.4 To put this into context, we have just completed a £3 million project to repair some of the rights of way network following damage caused by Storm Desmond in December 2015, and are currently overseeing a £7.9 million project to repair the Keswick Railway Path damaged in the same storm. Individual bridges can cost in the region of £50,000, and the Fix the Fells projects have spent many millions over the last decade or so repairing erosion scars caused by a combination of walkers, land management practices, and weather.

Other projects include 1km of repairs to Scafell Pike that involve exorbitantly costly means to ferry materials and machinery to the repair location. Byways by their nature do not require such costly works, because vehicles can access them transportation is far simpler and less costly.

“ Most of the work will be carried out by hand by a team of rangers using materials found on the mountain where possible, while 230 bags of stone are also being lifted on to the site by helicopters.

For repairs to one stretch of path, a 360-degree excavator is needed, which will be flown on to the mountain in pieces and reassembled by specialist contractors, the trust said. The six-month project will concentrate on five sections of path totalling 1km (0.6 miles), with work on areas from the valley bottom to the summit.⁵²

⁵¹ https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/151742/Committee-Report-Assessment-Paper.pdf

⁵² <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/work-lake-district-national-trust-scafell-pike-england-b931126.html>

Overcriminalization - too many laws do not equal less crime

Overcriminalisation is the idea that as government creates more laws and regulations to control people's behaviour, citizens cannot possibly know all the laws that exist and thus face increased risk of prosecution.

In order for laws to be effective they must be clear and understandable, and enforcement must be possible to manage any infringements, without this more laws do not mean less crime. Enforcers, the police in the case of criminal acts, and in the case of bylaws, PSPOs, and civil offences the local authority, must also have a clear understanding of the law and a robust process that outlines the ways that they are authorised to prosecute when the laws are broken.

Having spent four years travelling around England and Wales to work with those who manage and police our RoWs, it became clear to the author that there is a huge variation in the knowledge and understanding across Police forces, local authorities, and users. This is where multi-disciplinary working groups were of huge benefit, they bring together all parties and facilitate knowledge sharing and discussion that encourages understanding.

Case A

A member approached us having received a fine for contravening section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002. He alleged that he had driven a legal byway and could provide significant evidence of this. On assessing the evidence GLASS were certain he had broken no law and after representing our member to the Chief Constable the section 59 action against our member was rescinded.

The Police Officers who were present when the driver exited a legal public byway were not aware that some roads are unsealed, they instead believed that the farmer's allegation that the road was a farm track over his land. Our involvement in the case, and subsequently a byway maintenance project in the county that involved a multi-disciplinary working group including the local authority, safety partnership, landowners, other user groups, and residents, increased the knowledge of all parties and led to an understanding of the law and users' and local residents' needs.

GLASS not only provided signage for the byways and project managed the repairs, but they also attended events organised by the police to increase community knowledge and awareness of the law and good practice when using rights of way. Our working partnership continues to this day.

Case B

A police force in Wales contacted the author because of a complaint received by a local farmer. The allegation was that four vehicles had driven along a known legal byway and then along a farm access track that did not have any public rights. The police officer dealing with the case was unsure about the status of the second track and so contacted GLASS before proceeding with any action. I knew the first UCR mentioned was definitely a public road and believed the second track to be private but checked before responding and provided three pieces of evidence to the police officer that in fact it was a public road. The farmer was not aware of this and because it had never been used by the public since he lived there, he presumed only he had access rights.

As well as evidence of the status of the road, I provided information about the different statuses of green lanes - byways and UCRs - and explained where further information could be found to accurately research the current legal status of roads. The police officer requested access to our database of green lanes, Trailwise2, and stays connected to check information, to ask our members to be vigilant when rural crime has been reported in the area, and signposts users and landowners to us when they require advice.

Case C

A police force in northern England contacted the author to set up a working partnership. They believed that their efforts to police rights of way could be improved and wished to engage with GLASS to facilitate that.

It turned out that comparatively the force was very knowledgeable and proactive. They understood the interests of legal and responsible users, the status of byways and UCRs, and the methods they could use to enforce the laws that governed them. They had already identified the importance of timely messages and had erected signage on the most popular routes in their county to advise users of the status of the unsealed roads and also the repercussions of deviating from the legal route or partaking in anti-social behaviour. This made the situation clear; users knew the routes were legal, what was expected of them when using them, and what would happen if they chose to ignore the law.

The force also uses dashcam and social media content as evidence, this is not something all forces do but has proven to be extremely successful in this county and others. It is not just the use of social media content that has been helpful, the advertisement of prosecutions having been brought has disbanded a notorious group in the area who actively sought to head out and behave illegally and completely stopped anti-social behaviour in one area that was previously a hot spot for problems.

In this case we spoke about extra methods of engaging with the community and how legal users could be of benefit to the area. It was at this first meeting that Countryside & Rural Watch was born. The idea behind the scheme is that legitimate countryside users are a valuable deterrent and provide eyes on the ground in cases of a variety of rural crimes. The scheme aims to advise the public what they can do if they come across an incident while out, who to report it to, how to report it, and further hints and tips about staying safe. The resources created, such as signs and roundels, are a visual deterrent in themselves because they show that while a location may be remote, that people value that space and are actively monitoring it.

The force wishes to use the GLASS Smile&Wave resources in conjunction with the Countryside & Rural Watch scheme to cover all aspects of countryside access.

Summary

Over the last four years, the author has identified that many common problems, such as deviation from the legal route and anti-social behaviour, were far less common in areas that:

- *Engaged with user organisations, users, and the community*
- *Work to improve their knowledge and understanding*
- *Maintain public highways that they are responsible for - neglect sends the message that no one cares about an area which attracts irresponsible users who think they will not face repercussions*
- *Provide visual information and deterrents - this could be simply not closing routes to legal users who are a deterrent by their mere presence, the use of information signs and social media content that is advisory but also shows the repercussions of illegal use*
- *Are fair in their management strategies - discrimination towards one user group, or positive discrimination of another breeds animosity towards the managing authority and inflames clash-points between user groups*
- *Encourages education and understanding between all interested parties*

Where prosecution is necessary, the Land Access and Recreation Association⁵³ has created a paper that details driving conduct and traffic offences enforcement against anti-social and unlawful motoring in the countryside⁵⁴.

⁵³ <https://laragb.org/>

⁵⁴ https://laragb.org/pdf/LARA_20190314_DrivingConductAndOffences.pdf

The psychology of prejudice and bias

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory⁵⁵ proposes that a person's sense of identity is heavily influenced by the groups they belong to. Our group memberships give us a sense of belonging to a social world, they identify us as part of a wider community, and give us a sense of pride and self-esteem.

But this is not without its downfalls. Dividing the world into 'us' and 'them' is a normal cognitive process, grouping things together helps us to understand the world in simple terms, but in doing so we tend to exaggerate the differences between one group and another, while also exaggerating the similarities of things in the same group. It causes us to fail to respect people as individuals with their own unique and diverse skills, interests, needs, and characteristics, instead preferring to stereotype based on group affiliation, and this is a form of prejudice.

We divide people in the same way as things. Those in the in-group (us) as being different from the out-group (them), and members of each group as being more similar to each other than they actually are. This includes viewing what we do ourselves, or what those we are familiar with do as being innately "good", the "bad" invariably comes from external or lesser known [to us] sources.

If we think of this in a rights of way context, the in-group being walkers for example, and the out-group being motorised users (or vice versa), we can begin to understand why conflicts arise.

But if we think more pragmatically (systematic processing) we also know that there are few motorised users who have never used a footpath or taken a recreational walk in their lifetime. It would appear odd to suggest otherwise if we asked outside of a RoW context.

If you walked out of your front door and asked passers-by "do you believe most people have taken a walk at some point in their lives?" Inevitably the answer would be yes. It is only when we are thinking about the behaviour of others from the in-group/out-group perspective do we discount this as a consideration when judging others - "motorists should walk!", as if this is something they have never done and would never wish to do. Is it not true that the majority of walkers drive to their destination to walk? Green laners are no different, many do exactly the same thing, the only difference being the use of unsealed RoWs to do so. "Motorists destroy our RoWs! They don't care about them!", is the presumption that no motorised user will ever have, or will ever want to, use a RoW on foot, or ultimately that a walker and motorised user may not very well be one and the same person! This way of thinking also presumes that people who want to use rights of way are also willing or even seek to destroy them, the question of why someone would seek to destroy something they wish to use, which would be completely self-destructive, is rarely considered.

These biases then become extrapolated to include larger and wider reaching allegations, "motorists are destroying our National Park!", "the UNESCO World Heritage status is at risk!" when this was found to be untrue⁵⁶.

We can further explore this in opposite terms when thinking of those who have never walked due to disability. In this case we have to include culture, law, and social attitudes, it is not legally or morally appropriate to judge or discriminate against those with a disability in the UK. So, in this case despite a clear difference in the abilities and activities of the in-group and out-group, we would not be so quick to judge!

The differences between RoW user groups are not as stark as some allow themselves to believe. But that is not to say that there are no differences. Group culture (in-group and out-group) is an inevitable repercussion of individual group activity, and the central hypothesis of social identity theory is that group members of an in-group will seek to find negative aspects of an out-group, thus enhancing their self-image.

⁵⁵ Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979

⁵⁶ Discussed here with links to further information <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/things-to-do/unsealed-roads/future-management-of-tilberthwaite-and-oxen-fell-roads>

Stereotyping⁵⁷

One common way we simplify a complex social world is to stereotype, and we do this because it enables us to reduce the amount of mental processing we have to do in order to respond rapidly to a new situation or person.

The disadvantage of these snap judgements is that they are based on an over-generalised belief of a particular group, such as “all 4x4 drivers like to tear up the countryside!”, rather than “all user groups enjoy the countryside equally and for the same reasons, it is just their method of experiencing it that differs.” The more research and complex processing we do, the more we could add to that, “but even their method does not differ to any great extent because most countryside users use motorised vehicles to get to their destination or enjoy driving through the countryside themselves as a stand-alone activity.”

Stereotypes once formed are then driven by social culture, the media, the human wish to want to fit in with the current social narrative, the narrative of their in-group, and historic actions and experiences, i.e. “the done thing”, irrespective of whether that thing has ever worked successfully or not, or the culture of either group or society as a whole has changed over time.

Stereotyping is a form of prejudice. Prejudice can lead to discrimination and unlawful behaviour; this is particularly the case when people with protected characteristics are negatively impacted. This impact does not need to be intentional to be unlawful, particularly when a body has a duty to not act in a discriminative way or fails to follow guidance or policy that insists all service users are treated fairly.

Critical analysis (systematic processing) or group comparison is rarely used when forming opinions to an emotive situation because this requires admitting that a personal opinion may be wrong, which is uncomfortable, while ignoring emotional reactions and snap-decisions in favour of careful attention, deep thinking, and intensive reasoning, which requires a lot of effort. If biases are found to be inaccurate it also reduces self-image of the in-group. But it is critical that managers rise above the emotion and seek to encourage inclusive practices, understanding, and engagement in order to motivate reasoned thinking.

Like vs dislike

It is unimportant and often unhelpful for us as managers to consider our own personal likes and dislikes when making a decision that affects the public. What must be considered is evidence, the needs of the people that will be impacted by our management strategies, legislation, guidance from respected sources, and an impact assessment about how our choices will affect users, the environment, and equality of service provision.

Evidence vs exaggeration - Reported incidents/usage levels vs user count survey results

Stereotyping, prejudice, and bias lead to exaggerated accounts of what an individual and group are doing. This can be seen when allegations are assessed, and their validity tested.

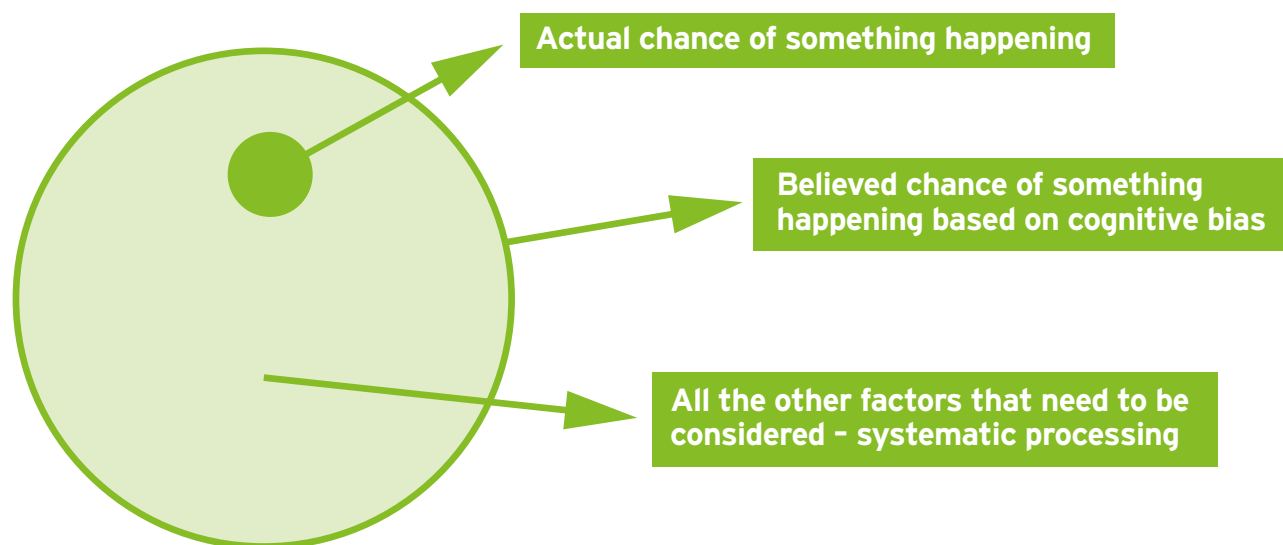
See **User Surveys - information collection and sharing** on page 89.

⁵⁷ L. Rosenthal, N. Overstreet, in Encyclopedia of Mental Health (Second Edition), 2016

⁵⁸ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/blogs/when-prejudice-turns-discrimination-and-unlawful-behaviour>

⁵⁹ <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/article/1745837/avoiding-inadvertent-discrimination-traps>

Shaping and changing perspectives



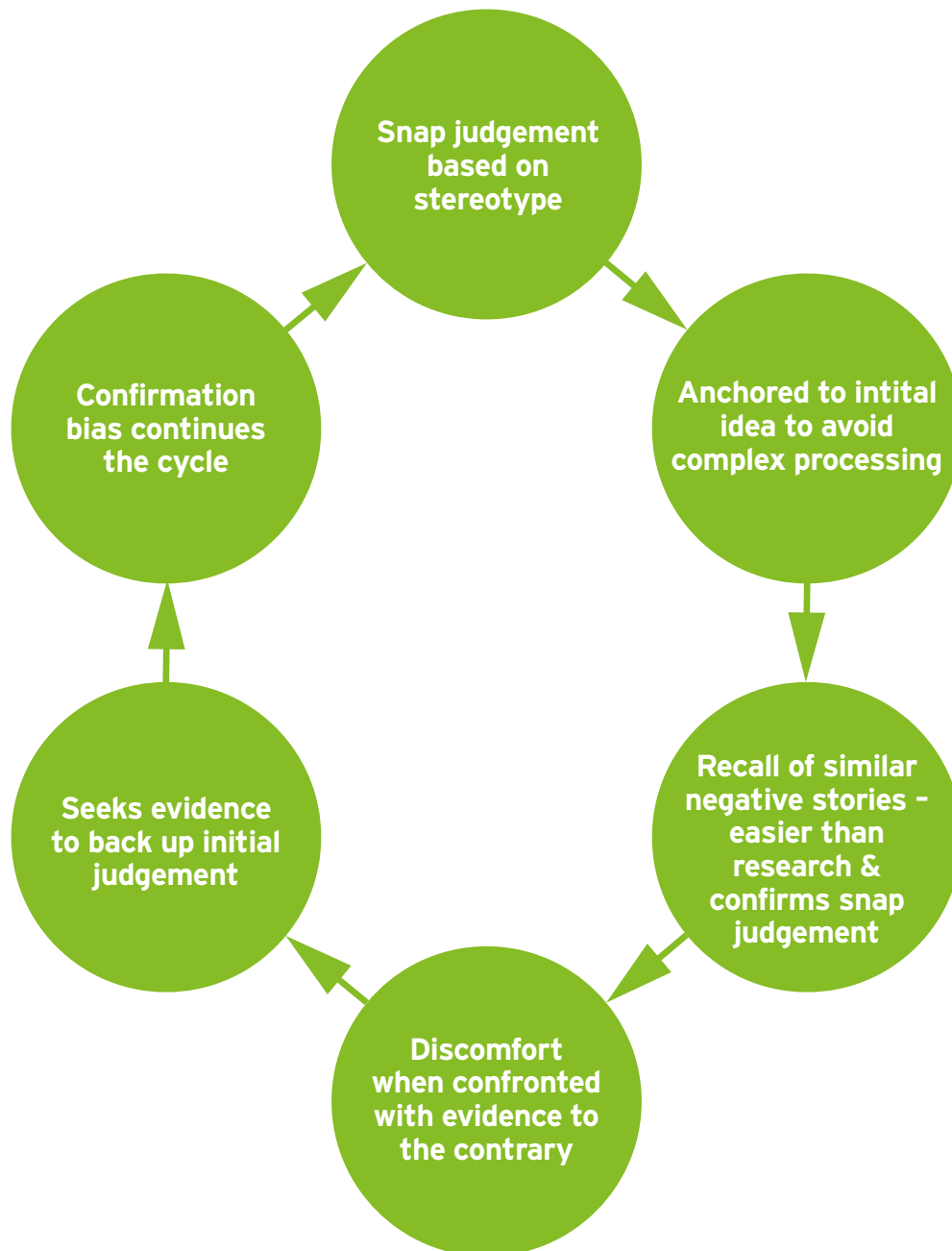
Changing the way people think and what they believe is not a simple matter. This simplified model goes some way to explain a vicious cycle that perpetuates stereotyping:

Heuristic processing⁶⁰ is a mental shortcut that allows people to make judgements quickly but inaccurately:

- 1) The representativeness heuristic: People make judgements on the basis of existing prototypes, social memes, and stereotypes rather than evidence. This includes viewing what they do themselves, or what those they are familiar with (the in-group) do as being innately "good", the "bad" invariably comes from external or lesser known [to them] sources. This belief is then projected onto the whole out-group irrespective of accuracy. E.g., One motorised user behaves inappropriately = all motorised users behave inappropriately.
- 2) Anchoring and adjustment heuristic: where people start off with an initial idea (anchor) or exposure to an idea such as a media article, and adjust their belief from this starting point. Invariably the adjustment will remain close to the anchor point of the initial value because change involves admitting fault and embarking on complex processing of the situation.
- 3) Availability heuristic: how likely people assess something will occur based on how easily similar events can be brought to mind (the media). We have already discussed how much more likely it is that an individual will have seen a negative article about motorised use compared to a positive one, despite this exposure not being representative of the overall user group.
- 4) Cognitive dissonance: The discomfort felt when beliefs are challenged with evidence to the contrary - evidence can be seen, even understood, but it isn't liked. So therefore, is ignored in favour of...
- 5) Confirmation bias: People seek out information that confirms their existing beliefs and ignore what challenges their viewpoint, in order to reduce their discomfort.

⁶⁰ https://sk.sagepub.com/reference/hdbk_socialpsychtheories1/n13.xml

The negative cycle of simple processing



Real life examples

This paper has already touched upon a very well-known case, that of the Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement (GLEAM) v The Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA)⁶¹.

Breaking down the activities of GLEAM prior to, during, and after the case was heard by a Judge during the judicial review process brings the psychology discussed here into a real-world setting (see diagram overleaf, 'we' refers to GLEAM). It is also an example of how while evidence is absolutely necessary for RoW managers to consider before taking steps that impact public rights, that in every community there will always be outliers who will be defiant in the face of any and all evidence.

The activities of such extreme groups can be very costly to managing authorities when they are faced with such public pressures. In such cases, compiling robust evidence and record-keeping is recommended in order to answer such allegations to more reasonably parties and potentially the courts.

⁶¹ <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2020/2293.pdf>



With such an extreme example that has failed to change perspectives even after explicit evidence has been shown to disagree with the pressure group's narrative, how can we encourage change when clash points arise between user groups and build a more inclusive culture?

The Robbers Cave Experiment

Muzafer Sherif proposed that inter-group conflict, i.e., in-group vs out-group, or walkers vs motorised users, occurs when two groups are in competition for limited resources, i.e., the rights of way network⁶².

He conducted a study called The Robbers Cave Experiment (Sherif, 1954, 1958, 1961). While the details of the experiment are not required here, the results are. He discovered that when groups with an interest in the same resources were in conflict, that simply increasing contact between the groups, even in pleasant circumstances, only served to increase tensions. But when the groups had to engage with each other in order to work towards common goals, that prejudice and tensions were greatly reduced.

⁶² <https://www.simplypsychology.org/robbers-cave.html>

This can be evidenced in schemes such as 'Friends of' groups. These multi-organisation groups⁶³, attended by authorities have proven that forming a group, even if they initially have very varied opinions and are prone to disagreement, come together and find common ground when faced with tackling a challenge with a common goal. In the case of the groups mentioned in this paper, that goal was respectful usage of rights of way and green spaces by all users.

Even short-term working groups evidence how working together can be successful in removing tensions and promoting understanding and respect between previously intolerant groups. The following example is typical of dozens that have followed the same progress over the last four years.

The author of this paper embarked on a project to address a byway in the Midlands that had fallen into disrepair and was surrounded by unpleasant and even aggressive anti-motoring calls to close it.

On arrival the first meeting began in a disagreeable manner, but with mediation from the author the group soon began to work together. Not only was the byway fixed by the very group that was at first unwelcome and done so at a cost saving to the local authority, but previously angry anti-motoring residents also began to welcome and value the organisation's input, and the police called upon them for advice and to attend educational and rural crime events. While the working group is no longer required many of the participants remain connected.

This describes the invariable outcome of any multi-disciplinary engagement strategy that is led or mediated by an individual, organisation, or process that is fair and civil to all parties involved. Parties who are at first inclined to disagreement are, in the context of rights of way, usually aiming for the same objective which is to reduce or preferably remove irresponsible use and to protect the network going forward.

While the method of use by each group may differ, the objectives are the same and therefore any animosity or exclusion will inevitably only reduce the diversity of skills, knowledge and experience of a working group and hinder progress towards this mutual goal. The same can be said for anti-one particular user type pressure groups, for them to work towards their alleged goals of protecting RoWs they simply must engage with all interested parties in order to facilitate an effective strategy, otherwise they do not have access to complete information to draw informed conclusions and build proposals from.

Case studies in effective strategies

While the following examples have proven to be far more successful than reductive methods such as closures or bans, in every community there will always be outliers who will be defiant in the face of any and all evidence. These outliers may be acknowledged but should not be encouraged to divert the course of proactive and pragmatic working relationships.

⁶³ See page 90 for more information

Opportunities - Inclusive & collaborative working practices



Inclusive working practices



The Hierarchy of Trail Routes & The Lake District Green Road Code⁶⁴

The Hierarchy of Trail Routes scheme is a cooperative scheme between the Lake District National Park Authority, Cumbria County Council, motor-vehicle user groups, other user groups, and landowners. It details management strategies for recreational use of motor vehicles on unsurfaced roads in the National Park and is a positive example of what can be achieved through proactive collaboration.

Strategies use the existing legislative framework and focus on inter-stakeholder and user engagement, education, and proactive monitoring of the unsurfaced network. Links to full information can be found in the final pages of this document.

The Lake District National Park

The Lake District National Park is a special place. Created in 1951, it is one of a family of National Parks in England, Wales and Scotland. The national park covers some 2,292 square kilometres and within its boundary it includes England's highest mountain (Scafell Pike) and deepest lake (Wastwater), as well as a stretch of coastline and busy tourist towns like Keswick and Bowness-on-Windermere.

The Lake District National Park Authority

The Lake District National Park Authority is a local government body which has two purposes:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

In pursuing these purposes we will also seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

The cover of the 'Lake District Green Road Code' features the title in large blue letters, the subtitle 'FOR VEHICLE USERS', and a photograph of several motorcyclists on a road. The Lake District National Park Authority logo is at the top.

Published, written and edited by the Lake District National Park Authority, Market Street, Oxencliffe Road, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7BL. Tel: 01524 75413, Fax: 01524 74822. E-mail: help@lake-district.gov.uk www.lake-district.gov.uk © Lake District National Park Authority, LA9 7BL/7AL



The guide aims to manage sustainable levels of activity on routes through voluntary restraint where possible, rather than using statutory measures such as Traffic Regulation Orders. At the same time, the use and condition of routes is monitored. Some routes in sensitive areas can become badly eroded, and in such places recreational motor vehicle users are asked to comply with management measures; for example, one-way traffic systems for vehicles or a route permit system. User organisations are involved in the decision-making and monitoring.

⁶⁴ https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/roads-transport/public-transport-road-safety/countryside-access/hotr/hierarchy_of_trails_routes.asp

Working Groups

Since the GLEAM v LDNPA case, the National Park has set up [The Tilberthwaite Partnership Management Group](#)

“The purpose of the group is:

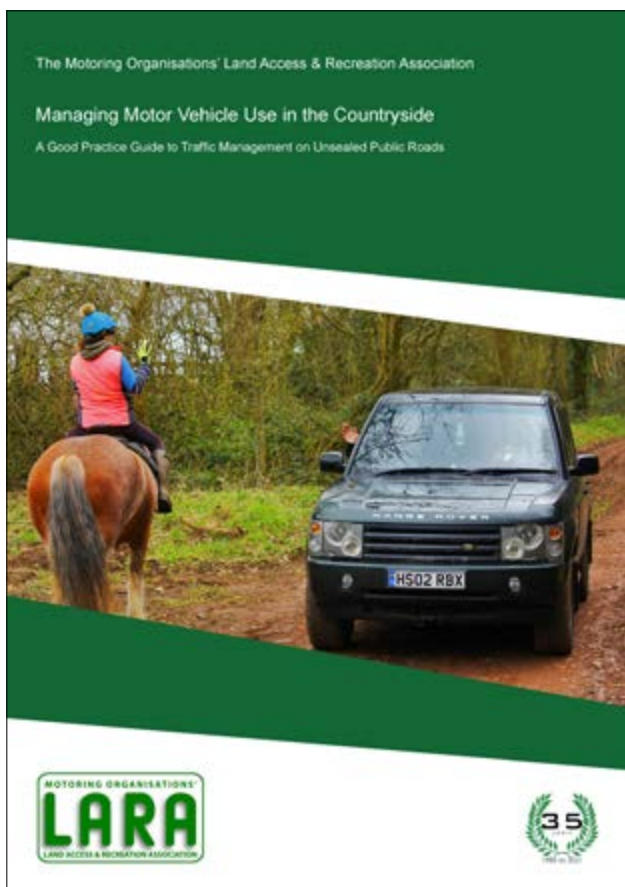
To steer and monitor a collaborative approach to the establishment and proving of a long term sustainable management regime for the unsealed section of U5001 public road (High Tilberthwaite to Fell Foot)”

Other working groups such as Friends of Ramsden Road, Friends of the Wayfarer, Friends of Pengwern Vale, and temporary working groups that are formed during the period of a specific project are active in many counties in the UK. The benefits of these organisations are discussed on page 83.

The Motoring Organisations’ Land Access and Recreation Association⁶⁵

The existence of the recent LARA Managing Motor Vehicle Use in the Countryside Paper⁶⁶ renders explaining the full gamut of management strategies in this document unnecessary. The paper takes a wider look at unsurfaced road management under the current legislative framework.

As a guide it provides a full overview of all the methods of management and aims to advise managing authorities’ during decision making processes prior to consultation. A link to the Land Access and Recreation Association can be found in the final chapter of this document.



“The purpose of this publication is to present vehicle management authorities (local authorities, and the Police) with a range of possible practical solutions to problems that arise with the lawful [and responsible] use of motor vehicles on unsealed public roads and “byways open to all traffic.”

The aim is to help authorities choose the most appropriate solutions to problems on the ground prior to consultation. It is intended also to help other interests, primarily: local access forums, parish councils and other user organisations, to understand the processes involved and issues raised.

It is a practical guide to what measures can be applied from common sense right through to permanent all-vehicles, all-seasons, traffic regulation orders. It explains what each option means, where and when it could be used and how it could be implemented, with background and supporting information where applicable.”

When considered with the LARA paper Surface Standards for Unsealed Public Roads⁶⁷, these documents provide robust guidance on the legal and physical management of green lanes.

⁶⁵ <https://laragb.org/>

⁶⁶ https://laragb.org/pdf/LARA_20220601_ManagingMotorVehicleUse.pdf

⁶⁷ https://laragb.org/pdf/LARA_20190329_SurfaceStandards.pdf

Volunteer Organisations - collaborative working

Motorised byway user organisations have been around since the 1970s. These groups have decades of experience and are supported with guidance from LARA, they are experts in their fields when it comes to the law, best usage practice, but also management strategies of the unsealed road network.

Their aim is to work with managing authorities, other stakeholders, and user groups to protect and preserve green roads now and for the future. The work that they do benefits all user types and those who manage the network, yet the uptake of the opportunities these organisations can provide is often low.

Armed with thousands of members, these organisations have carried out numerous projects across the UK that range from simple tasks such as litter picks and vegetation cutbacks, signage erection, to major groundworks, education and training resources/events, and legal action. Their representatives assist the police, help to marshal permit only routes, educate users, fundraise for the benefit of the network, and commit to work that greatly reduces costs for authorities who take up the opportunity to work alongside them. More information and links to project works are available at the end of this document.



Many government bodies have prepared guidance for local authorities that advocates liaising and working with users, user groups, the wider community, and volunteers:

Rights of Way Circular (1/09) Guidance for Local Authorities (DEFRA) Informing individuals and other groups⁶⁸

3.4 To complement Local Access Forums, strategic role, authorities may wish to establish, or maintain, liaison groups that, like Local Access Forums, draw together the representatives of all interests in the rights of way network. In those areas where changes to the network are needed to ensure that it is better suited to the needs of users, or to help the efficient use of land for agriculture or protect wildlife, liaison groups can also play a valuable role in helping to define proposals and in ensuring that they represent the best possible balance between, and confer the greatest mutual benefit to, all interests. The more detailed scrutiny that liaison groups can give to rights of way proposals is a valuable adjunct to the work of Local Access Forums and many Local Access Forums have sub-groups to perform this type of function.

⁶⁸ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69304/pb13553-rowcircular1-09-091103.pdf

Guidance for Local Authorities on Public Rights of Way October 2016 (Welsh Government) Informing Individuals and Other Groups⁶⁹

2.21. To complement Local Access Forums' strategic role, authorities may wish to establish or maintain liaison groups that draw together the representatives of all interests in the rights of way network. In those areas where changes to the network are needed to ensure that it is better suited to the needs of users, liaison groups can play a valuable role in helping to define proposals which represent the best possible balance between all interests. The more detailed scrutiny that liaison groups can give to rights of way proposals is a valuable addition to the work of Local Access Forums. Local Access Forums may establish sub-groups to perform this type of function.

Wardens and Volunteers

2.24. Authorities have powers to appoint wardens, both within the countryside generally and, by virtue of s. 62 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to act on public rights of way. Wardens can advise members of the public on the use of rights of way. They can also help to guard against inconsiderate behaviour which can sour relationships between landowners and rights of way users. 2.25. When carrying out their duties to maintain public rights of way, authorities should make use of available help from landowners and voluntary groups. Voluntary groups can assist in a wide variety of activities such as route surveying, undertaking repairs and waymarking. Authorities utilising voluntary assistance should ensure that appropriate training is provided in areas such as the use of tools and health and safety, and that adequate supervision is given.

Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) 2021 (Local Government Association) Effective community engagement criteria⁷⁰

The organisation has an agreed approach to engagement. It is clear about different levels of engagement (i.e. informing, consulting, participating, co-producing) and when these are appropriate. Engagement structures are in place. There are opportunities for under-represented groups to engage with decision making. The organisation can evidence examples of these opportunities. Shared engagement structures/mechanisms are in development with partners. There are some shared engagement activities with partners.

People from under-represented groups are encouraged and enabled to participate in decision making. A range of engagement methodologies are used. Priorities have been changed as a result of community engagement with a clear and demonstrable evidence basis. The organisation and its partners share information and the results of engagement activities to ensure that particular groups are not being over consulted with. There is an increase in the involvement of underrepresented groups. Engagement with the community and voluntary sector and the wider community effectively inform decisions. There are processes and plans throughout the organisation and with partners to increase stakeholder and voluntary and community sector involvement in informing priorities. Feedback is given and people in the community are able to challenge and have their views taken account of.

⁶⁹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/public-rights-of-way-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf>

⁷⁰ <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/equality-framework-local-government-eflg-2021>

Volunteer Lengthsman⁷¹



Lengthsmen used to be employed to work on a small area of highways to do simple 'stitch in time' maintenance work, a shovel full of stone into a pothole here, clear a ditch there, type of work. Some Highway authorities and/or individual parishes are again employing Lengthsmen, but the focus now is the surfaced Highway network.

Our Volunteer Lengthsman take on a single lane or group of lanes and are tasked to visit those lanes a minimum of three or four times a year to check on the condition of the lane, and a minimum of twice a year to walk the lane and do a litter pick, i.e., walk the lane with a bin bag and pick up any litter that has been dropped.

If, during their travels, the Volunteer Lengthsmen come across minor problems such as a ditch that has become blocked or a branch that has fallen from a tree, they can be simply dealt with there and then, more serious problems can be reported to the local Area Rep and/or the local Rights of Way Department or Highway Authority as appropriate.

The scheme has proven popular with members and has delivered cost-saving and cost-preventative benefit to a number of counties. The regular visual presence of someone monitoring areas that have historically faced problems has also proven to be a successful deterrent to unlawful use.

A recent example would be several lanes in Lancashire. The representatives for the county became Lengthsman for several lanes in the area that had faced anti-social behaviour and illegal driving onto adjacent land. Their presence and work on these lanes have not only reduced incidents, in several cases where 'off-piste' driving had occurred regularly this has now stopped, and no further incidents have occurred.

The measures employed were quite simple: being a regular visual presence, erecting directional and advisory signage with permission of the local authority, placing barriers that are sympathetic to the environment but discourage off-piste driving in problem spots with permission of the landowner, and engaging with the police, other user groups, and local residents. The Trail Riders Fellowship run their own version of the scheme called Green Road Guardians.

⁷¹ A GLASS scheme open to members

Codes of Conduct

Recreational motor vehicle user organisations invariably insist that their members adhere to a code of conduct while using unsealed public roads. While this guidance holds no legal weight, the advice given is an excellent practical method of preventing any potential problems before they happen.

Driving or riding green lanes quite frequently misunderstood. The term 'off-road' is often inaccurately used to describe driving legal, public unsealed roads. Semantics can have the unfortunate result of steering the behaviour of the listener/reader and using the term 'off-roading' has been seen to both cause confusion and even offence to those who are not aware that motor vehicles are permitted to drive or ride unsealed roads. It has also had the unfortunate repercussion of influencing the minority of drivers and riders who do not believe the laws of the road apply where the tarmac ends simply because the term 'off-road' suggests the road and therefore the Road Traffic Act ends with the tarmac.

Alongside explaining that the Road Traffic Act applies to green lanes, these codes go several steps further to make motorised users aware of best practice when using the network. They also call for voluntary restraint of speed, numbers of users in convoy, avoidance of certain terrains at different times of the year and weathers, and general good driving/riding practices.

With adherence to the advice contained within these codes of conduct, many potential problems can be avoided altogether. Alongside this information the largest user groups also provide beginner guides⁷² and give their members access to interactive mapping⁷³ that assist users to not just stick to legal routes but to be aware of seasonal and temporary restrictions, any reported issues, or requests to avoid areas.

As the national organisation for all users of the unsurfaced road network the Green Lane Association publishes their code of conduct⁷⁴ to the public, along with advice on where it is legal to drive: a beginner's guide to driving green lanes, and advice for all user types to adhere to when visiting the countryside⁷⁵.

As the national organisation for trail riding, the Trail Riders Fellowship also offers a code of conduct and beginners guide⁷⁶, and a guide for safely sharing trails with equestrians⁷⁷.



⁷² <https://glass-uk.org/about/where-can-i-drive.html>

⁷³ <https://www.trailwise2.co.uk/>

⁷⁴ <https://glass-uk.org/about/our-code-of-conduct.html>

⁷⁵ <https://glass-uk.org/other-info/smile-and-wave.html>

⁷⁶ <https://www.trf.org.uk/beginners/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.trf.org.uk/equestrian/>

Smile&Wave!⁷⁸



When we talk about inclusive management it is important to focus on encouraging best practice between all user types as well as for each group individually.

It was apparent that many guides focus on one type of user, either on motorists singularly or on the “big three”, walking, horse riding, and cycling, with the exception of motorised users. Even the updated Countryside Code fell short as a ‘complete’ guide for all.

As previously discussed, this has led to confusion and misunderstanding. Non-motorised users are not always aware of green laning or what is legal or illegal off tarmac in a vehicle, and conversely the latter can apply to those wishing to partake in recreational motoring on unsealed roads.

It seemed quite clear that an over-arching advice guide was needed.

As an organisation that works for the benefit of all user types, the Green Lane Association have a unique perspective of viewing public access from all sides. While a significant number of members absolutely rely on vehicular support to access the deeper countryside and would be at a distinct disadvantage if they could not continue to do so, many others partake in several outdoor recreational activities as well as green laning.

Their experience of walking, horse riding, and cycling, as well as motorised travel, was collected and from it an inclusive guide for all user types was created.

The guide provides clear, simple advice. Firstly, graphically illustrating the classes of rights of way in England and Wales and who can use them. Then widening the scope of the document into best practice advice to cover basic but essential considerations that all countryside users need to be aware of, such as fires/BBQs, dog mess, livestock, litter, and gates, before offering hints and tips for polite and safe behaviour when sharing outdoor spaces with others who may be partaking in a different activity to the reader.

The Green Lane Association created online, paper, and video resources to proliferate the message to as many people as possible. Links are available at the end of this document.

⁷⁸ <https://www.glass-uk.org/other-info/smile-and-wave.html>

Examples of collaborative work in action



Award winning volunteering

Working in partnership with the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation



Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) is the largest military training area and collection of range complexes in the United Kingdom. SPTA covers one ninth of the county of Wiltshire (94,000 acres) and has some 300 miles of public rights of way, approximately 70 miles of which are in range danger areas, to which access is denied when the ranges are active. The Plain can be very difficult to navigate as not all tracks are shown on Ordnance Survey maps. To make things even more difficult, MoD has inserted some 200 miles of Mendip stone tracks to protect the SSSI and they are not differentiated from unsurfaced tracks on OS maps.

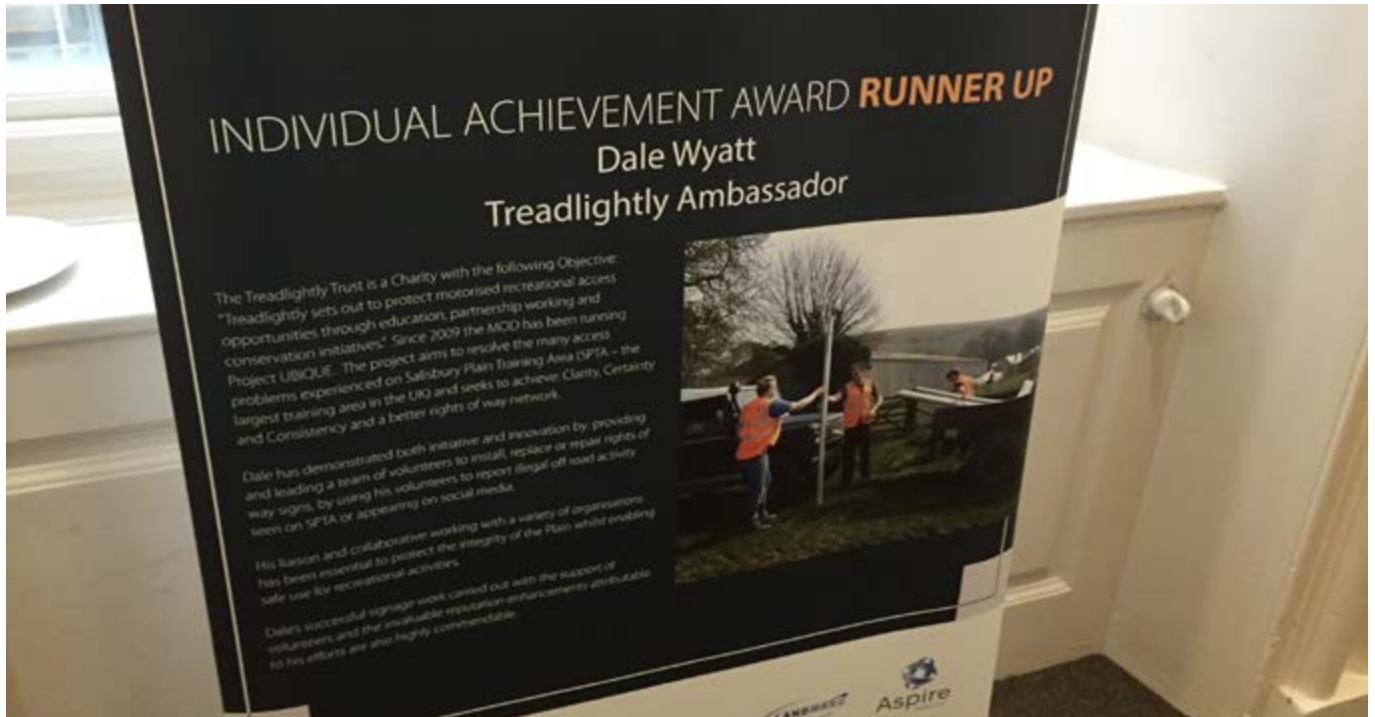
The brief was simple - to waymark Salisbury Plain for the benefit of all users and also for the soldiers using SPTA on a daily basis so they are aware of where civilians have access. The project was enormous. Salisbury Plain covers an area the size of the Isle of Wight. The project was commended by Wiltshire Rights of Way, stating that the project would never have happened without volunteers.



The MOD also awarded the Green Lane Association project leader a Sanctuary runner up Award in the Individual Achievement category - quite a rarity for a civilian. The project was completed in 2017 after running for nine years, covering two counties, and all classes of rights of way, where we inserted, repaired,

or replaced more than 1600 rights of way signs and way marks on the Plain on 50 working days. Volunteers have included Green Lane Association members, TRF members, equestrians, and other interested parties - all co-ordinated by our Wiltshire rep.

In total the use of volunteers in this project saved the managing authority an astonishing £100,000!



Work with SPTA, the MOD, and DIO continues to this day. Along with maintaining waymarking at the site, volunteers have been involved in creating and promoting educational materials as well as working in partnership with the DIO to promote their 'Respect the Range' campaign.



More information on SPTA and how the Green Lane Association and MOD have worked together can be found in our video https://youtu.be/zRRm2g_71I0

Collaborative working in Shropshire - Wootton Lane



After continued off-piste activity around Wootton Lane in Shropshire, a multidisciplinary meeting was organised to discuss the plight of a very scenic lane that has sadly seen some wilful deviation from the designated ROW onto neighbouring land.

Attending a meeting on site on the byway were local councillor Tina Woodward, Shropshire Rights of Way Officer Tim Simmons, local Ranger Mike Annis, Shropshire GLASS Rep Stu Pickering, and GLASS Executive Officers Richard Price and Lauren Eaton, as well as representatives from the National Trust and a local farmer who's land has been affected by the illegal driving in the area.

National Trust representatives suggested a potential closure, this was countered by ROW Officer Tim, GLASS and the local farmer. The lane itself remains in good condition, this was not a case of misuse of the lane itself, or the terrain being unsafe for vehicular or non-vehicular users, all damage and littering had occurred off the ROW.

One major consideration was that a closure would negatively impact responsible legal users and do little to deter criminals who were not interested in driving a byway, their interest lay in the challenge the adjacent land afforded them. Access to the private land had also been made via farmland and not just the lane; in light of this closure was vetoed and an alternative was discussed.

The solution put forward and (at this point unofficially) agreed upon by all parties present was to block access to the off-piste area from the lane using a number of concrete blocks. All parties went away for further discussions including representatives from Severn Trent, who manage the watercourse that supplies drinking water locally and makes up part of the BOAT, and the Environment Agency.



Fast forward to December and Wootton Lane had continued to see its fair share of continued off-piste activity. Several more 4x4s stuck in the deep mud in the woodland, one left burnt out in the watercourse, more litter left strewn around. But finally, all parties had agreed upon a solution that satisfied everyone, budgets had been discussed and signed off, including funding from GLASS, the police had re-opened the lane, the Environment Agency had given permission for an outside agency to remove the dumped vehicle, and work could finally begin.



It took over a week for Shropshire Rights of Way Officer Tim Simmons and local farmers to remove the burnt out Land Rover, cut back into the banks of the watercourse, lay concrete blocks, back-fill and make tidy the previously scarred land. Passing places were cut into the high-sided lane and the material removed was used as back-fill or to grade any minor surface erosion.



Projects like this really shows how working together we can preserve public rights while keeping the criminals at bay.

Preventing closure - Braintree/Bocking 93, Essex



Braintree/Bocking 93 was under threat of closure as Essex County Council (ECC) did not have the funding to repair it before the winter. However, after an offer to help with repairs from the Green Lane Association, the closure was prevented through collaborative working.

Local Green Lane Association reps met with council highway engineers, and after walking the byway and discussing what was required, it was mutually agreed that they would allow the Green Lane Association to carry out the work.

Essex County Council would supply the materials needed to repair the surface, and the Green Lane Association had agreed to pay for the plant required, and supply voluntary labour.

A date was set, the Green Lane Association organised volunteers, plant machinery, and contractors were booked. The local authority temporarily closed the lane using a Traffic Regulation Order to cover the period of the works and delivered materials to site.

In all 10 volunteers were used, along with one digger and one self-loading dumper, plus a considerable amount of manual labour.

1.6km of byway was repaired for the benefit of all users at a considerable cost saving to the managing authority. This project is only one of many where the use of volunteers has not just reduced costs to the local authority, but completely removed an imminent threat of reduction of the public rights of way network.



Our reps & affiliate clubs help out where it counts⁷⁹

Landy owners aid landowners in repairing damaged Lancs green lane



Rights of way users often assume that landowners will be nothing but trouble. For responsible 4x4 drivers, however, the opposite is frequently the case.

This was perfectly illustrated recently when members of the Northern Monkey 4x4 Club spent a day repairing Snape Rake Lane in Lancashire – and creating barriers to prevent irresponsible drivers from leaving the right of way to damage the adjoining woodland.

The group's leader Nathaniel Holloway, who is also the Lancashire Rep for the Green Lane Association, was contacted by the landowner and his wife, Mr and Mrs Fitzherbert-Brockholes, following previous maintenance days on which local 4x4 drivers have

helped with repairs to the lane. These repairs have held up well – however the landowners' call came after the vandals had returned to destroy all the work that had been done to block access to the adjoining river bed.

'Myself, my youngest lad Isaac, my assistant rep Ali Burgoync, along with his son Morgan, and fellow Northern Monkey 4x4 member Liam Greenwood had a productive day,' Nathaniel reports. 'We've blocked off the "off-piste" entry where undesirables have been driving down the river and under the bridge. We've shored up the banking and added defences preventing further access to the river upstream of the ford, and we've tidied up the boggy mess of wheel ruts.'

Keeping on top of the damage done by the rank criminality of this kind of 4x4 driver is a bit like painting the Forth Bridge. And when the vandals' arrant selfishness is matched by the arch-opportunism of a certain kind of landowner, responsible users can be caught in the sort of downward spiral that has been the death of many much-loved lanes in Wales, Derbyshire, Surrey and Yorkshire, among other parts of the country.

With luck, however, the team's efforts will yield long-term rewards. 'We also now have wildlife cameras installed and I've got some signage coming in the post,' says Nathaniel. 'So once it arrives, I'll go back down and fit them and hopefully find our hard works paid off.'

⁷⁹ Taken from The Landy, February 2022 issue, <https://www.thelandy.co.uk/>

Community work - the outdoors is for everyone



Everyone has the right to experience the great outdoors.

This belief is at the core of the Community Interest Company Lets Get Out C.I.C⁸⁰ and of the Green Lane Association, so when Let's Get Out C.I.C began a fundraising campaign to 'Revive the Woods'⁸¹ that they use for their outdoor education events, the Green Lane Association stepped in to offer their support.

The woodland, in Brentwood Essex, is used as a base for activities ranging from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award training and expeditions and running their Forest School, to bushcraft classes, social meets, and outdoor activities for adults and children. But sadly, over the last few years, it has become the unauthorised playground of illegal drivers who have left large areas unusable due to criminal damage.

On the 10th September 2021 Let's Get Out C.I.C launched their 'Revive the Woods' crowdfunder. Its aim was to raise enough money to install gates, fences, and containers, repair damage, and offer courses in outdoor skills. They hoped to raise £10,000 to complete the initial phase of the project and on the 14th September, the Green Lane Association confirmed they are able to donate the full £10,000 along with resources including information boards, leaflets, and signage.

GLASS Essex rep, Rob Tongue, who made initial contact with the directors of Let's Get Out C.I.C, will be on hand to organise volunteer labour, while GLASS Executive Officer Lauren Eaton assisted with PR and coordination. *"This is a project we see as a long-term investment for both organisations, the environment, and the community at large", they said, "we hope that this is the start of an ongoing working relationship for the benefit of all."*

Duncan Moore, CEO of Let's Get Out C.I.C said, *"I'm blown away! We've been working tirelessly during Covid to get the paperwork and groundwork done, the time our team have given to the project has been huge with no financial reward, we do it out of passion for sharing a love of the outdoors. To have such a generous donation of funds and time from the Green Lane Association is just wonderful!"*



⁸⁰ <https://letsgetout.co.uk/>

⁸¹ <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/revive-the-woods>

User Surveys - information collection and sharing



Data collection can be vitally important before plans even begin. Without access to accurate data that evidences any alleged problems, or that details the scope of users who will be impacted by a problem or even a solution, any proposals may not be fit for purpose.

User groups can provide the resources to carry out cost effective surveys and deliver data to the managing authority who requires it. This has a cost-saving potential not just because volunteers collect the data, but because the data may show that the scope of the perceived problem is not as large as it was first thought. This has been the outcome of several surveys conducted by authorities themselves, or with the assistance of Green Lane Association county reps.

Following the formation of the Tilberthwaite Partnership Management Group⁸² in the Lake District National Park, Green Lane Association Representatives for Cumbria carried out surveys after a local pressure group alleged use by over 400 vehicles per month. Their findings were as follows:

“ As yet no empirical data can be found to substantiate the claims referred to in Appendix 3.4 Section 3.3 of the 2019 LDPNA report made by the Save the Lake District Campaign of 400 ‘4x4’ vehicles a month / approximately 100 a week using the road.⁸³

Similar results were collected during user surveys carried out in other counties. After claims that so many vehicles were using the unsealed roads in the Ceiriog Valley in Wales that local residents and walkers “could not fit on them to use them”, the author of this paper organized user counts over four such roads, these roads were purposefully chosen to be the most popular routes in the area, as were the days and times chosen to carry out the surveys. The results showed that only 67 motorised vehicles used the four roads during peak times (weekends between the hours of 9am and 5pm) over a period of a month.


Other useful information was gleaned from this survey. While the use of motorised vehicles was far lower than alleged, 4x4 and motorcycles did make up the majority of the use of the roads. This is likely because the roads are very rural and not easily accessible by other means without considerable time and effort. The 3:1 split of motorised and non-motorised use could give insight into the likely level of maintenance requirements of the routes based on ordinary traffic in the area.

⁸² <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/things-to-do/unsealed-roads/future-management-of-tilberthwaite-and-oxen-fell-roads>

⁸³ <https://www.glass-uk.org/tilberthwaitesurvey2021>

'Friends of' and other working groups

One of the most effective tools that has been identified during four years of mediation between stakeholders when problems arise, has been that of the multi-disciplinary stakeholder group.



ER COF AM
"WAYFARER"
1877 - 1956
UN OEDD YN CARU CYMRU
A LOVER OF WALES
ERECTED BY THE R.S.F.

A Green Lane Association initiative

Friends of the Wayfarer

Proudly protecting and preserving our historic rights of way by bringing communities together

Contact lauren.eaton@glass-uk.org for more info

Bringing a diverse range of interested parties together to collaborate towards a shared goal has numerous advantages:

- It makes people feel valued
- It encourages discussion between historically combative groups
- It pools skills, knowledge, and experience for the benefit of everyone
- It can reduce costs
- It encourages harmony and can reduce clash-points
- It enables managers to see the bigger picture instead of micromanaging or focusing on only one part of the problem
- It encourages creative thinking and problem-solving
- It can be proof that managing authorities have considered all information before making controversial decisions



Ramsden Road needs you!

Ramsden Road is a historic lane in the upper Holme Valley, on the edge of the Peak District National Park, used for centuries by packhorses, peat-cutters and pedlars. Today it is a public Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT), used regularly for recreation and enjoyed for its beautiful scenery by many local residents and visitors from further afield.

Ramsden Road is an important lane for all its users, but it is in need of repair. Blocked, broken drainage systems and surface erosion have left large parts of the lane in a difficult, rutted condition. The lane needs to be available to all eligible users - walkers, mountain bikers, horse riders, wheelchair users, motorcyclists and 4x4 drivers - as well as to farm and emergency vehicles.

Friends of Ramsden Road (FoRR) represents all user groups and is working closely with Kirkles Council, the highways authority and local landowners to find a long-term, sustainable solution to these issues.

You can help by...

- Joining the group
- Volunteering - many roles available
- Making a donation

 Friends of Ramsden Road
 jojohnston99@hotmail.com


- It can support public consultations
- It can speed up decision-making processes by making the information gathering process more efficient
- It supports the requirement of managing authorities to consider the needs of users and those with protected characteristics
- It supports the requirement of managing authorities to provide equal opportunities and fair and inclusive management strategies
- It can improve the reputation of the managing authority by showing fairness and valuing the end user in its decision-making processes
- It can reduce complaints and litigation against the managing authority
- Depending on who is included in the working group, it may bring in funding opportunities for specific projects
- It may actually identify that an alleged or perceived problem is not as large or as problematic as first thought, or not as difficult to manage as was originally believed

Working with the Police



Through our working partnerships that span well over a decade, we understand that Police forces are far more successful in public relations and resolving unlawful use issues when briefed with well-informed knowledge on where in the countryside the public can go in a motorised vehicle and what rights they possess. This is particularly important for the 20% of the population who area affected by disability.

The Green Lane Association partners with forces in several ways:

- *Inform - with our extensive knowledge on the green lane network and unsurfaced roads*
- *Guide - with our education programme on where the public can reasonably go and what they can lawfully do*
- *Offer - with the installation of motion detection cameras on problem hot spots, attending events, and supplying informative and educational resources*
- *Provide - full access to our green lane database and our internal knowledge base*
- *Encourage - our members to be your eyes and ears in the countryside*

Through voluntary working partnerships successful projects have taken place in dozens of counties. Each project takes into consideration the needs of the area, the resources available to the force, and closely monitors the behavioural outcomes of actions taken.

In all cases, positive outcomes for all involved were evidenced and relationships continue to grow and flourish.

To read project examples please go to:

<https://glass-uk.org/search.html?searchword=police&ordering=newest&searchphrase=all>





Holmfirth green lane awareness/education day



Promoting responsible use in Northumberland



Countryside Watch Derbyshire



Joint police operation, Strata and Trefil Quarry



Police seek prosecutions based on social media videos



Cheshire Police work to reduce illegal activity



Building relationships with Leicestershire Police



Working with North Wales Police



Essex police utilise digital images for Section 59s



Dyfed Powys police work with the Green Lane Association



Powys Farmer Prosecuted using Video evidence



'Operation Dagnet', Surrey

Education partnerships



Countryside and Rural Watch⁸⁴ is a scheme that was proposed to Lancashire Police by the Green Lane Association at a working partnership meeting. It was born from the long-running assistance that countryside users, landowners, and residents of rural locations can be very helpful in tackling rural crime by being eyes and ears on the ground. Many areas had unofficial chat groups formed to keep locals, user group representatives, and even the police informed about suspicious activity or incidents in rural areas.

Historically this worked very well but giving a visual presence to otherwise unseen surveillance provided by countryside users and residents was an attempt to bring a preventative measure into the mix. The idea is a simple one, if those willing to flout the law were aware that they may be seen and reported they are less likely to offend.

Information provided to scheme participants includes where and how to report a variety of common issues they may come across in a rural setting, this reduces pressure on the Police 999 and 101 services while speeding up the process of reporting and any required action by the authorities or organisations responsible for the respective incident or occurrence.

Respect the Range⁸⁵ is a scheme run by the Defense Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) who manage Ministry of Defence rural estate. The aim of the campaign is to educate users of public rights of way that cross training ground such as Salisbury Plain.

The Green Lane Association have worked for over a decade to waymark all of the rights of way across Salisbury Plain and were asked to assist with the Respect the Range Campaign launch.

Smile&Wave⁸⁶ is a Green Lane Association education resource created in partnership with local authorities, the police, and other stakeholders that is aimed at educating countryside users about all aspects of responsible and legal access.

“ *The countryside is a shared space for us all to enjoy. Access for all is vitally important, everyone should be able to explore our nation's beautiful open spaces however they choose to travel. Understanding where we can legally walk, cycle, horse ride, or drive, and which other users we may find ourselves sharing our rights of way with is the first step to planning your next outdoor adventure.* ”

⁸⁴ <https://www.glass-uk.org/csrwatch>

⁸⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safe-access>

⁸⁶ <https://www.glass-uk.org/other-info/smile-and-wave.html>



Attending events

Community engagement is vital to the successful management of public resources. Recreational, educational, or focused events such as rural crime prevention events are all opportunities to meet with end users, stakeholders, and other managing authorities and organisations.

GLASS are particularly active in attending local and national events and are often invited to speak at other user organisations' events, rural crime initiatives, community events, and training days.

The positive role of the media

Along with their own members' magazine and online e-bulletin, GLASS have numerous magazine affiliations that allow the organisation to reach their target audience. These publications are available online and in print, free or for a payment, or a mixture. This allows us to get messages out in a timely way and the most important messages can be delivered quickly and without a cost barrier using online free publications or magazines' free news sections on their websites or via their social media accounts.

More complex information can be included in feature articles in subscription magazines and links shared across over 40 of GLASS's own social media accounts, by organisations we have working partnerships with, and by the public.

One example of this is the news that GLASS was able to assist Cheshire Police to secure funding for the maintenance of their Land Rover Defender 'Monty'. While the vehicle is no longer in active service it is used for education events and activities and has become a well-known character in its own right in the county.

Monty is used at events and on green lanes to promote education and encourage communication between the police and community⁸⁷.

⁸⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/CheshPolRural/photos/a.2008793922733941/3068720146741308>

Charitable causes and fundraising



Fundraising and helping the community is something that many motorised users are heavily involved with at local and national level.

GLASS itself uses members' fees to help improve the public resources their members and others use, but in conjunction with this both the organisation and those affiliated with it, partake in fundraising activities to fund specific projects or to assist other organisations and charities.

GLASS is a member of or makes regular donations to:

- *The Ramblers*
- *The Open Spaces Society*
- *The British Horse Society*
- *The Woodland Trust*
- *The Trailriders Fellowship*
- *The British Driving Society (carriage drivers)*
- *ScotWays*
- *Disabled Drivers UK*
- *Land Access and Recreation Association*
- *Sports and Recreation Alliance*
- *National Council for Voluntary Organisations*

Our affiliate clubs are involved in organising fundraising for charities such as:

- *The Air Ambulance Service*
- *Guide Dogs for the Blind*
- *Alzheimer's Research UK*
- *Blood Bikes*
- *And many others*

As you will know, Freelanders First Club also sponsors a Guide Dog for the Blind, and up until recently, our 'Puppy' was Spirit. Well Spirit has now completed his training and is now with his new owner, James. Spirit and James are currently settling in together and enjoying going on lots of walks. Everything that Spirit has learned over the past two years has helped towards him becoming a fully fledged guide dog. Below are two photos from the day Spirit met James for the first time.

We now sponsor Marley as he embarks (pun intended) on his two year training program

Guide Dogs is a registered Charity in England and Wales (209617), and Scotland (SC038979)



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE NUMBERS FOR THE FFC

In this past difficult year and a half, the near-total absence of events and get-togethers means that most clubs' fundraising efforts have taken a steep downturn – but the Freelanders First Club has found a creative and innovative way to raise a lot of money for the Air Ambulance and Guide Dogs for the Blind charities.

To raise funds, the club introduced a new-style over-panel for rear side window glass areas of both the three-door and five-door Freelander 1. Club chair Mike Pitt describes it as, 'A lifestyle panel that's durable, lightweight, easy to fit and – importantly – looks good.'

The club also introduced a limited-edition sequenced graphic confirming its support of the Air Ambulance charity, where the club member can either have the next available number (or pick a preferred number), then choose a colour for the 'number' part of the sticker (see photograph, above).

These new initiatives have helped Freelanders First reach a total of £12,000 for their supported charities to date – a fantastic effort.

For more info on the club: freelanders.co.uk.

#feelgoodfriday Thanks to the efforts of the Jeep Owners club, @modified_jeeps_uk, our sponsors, and the generosity of our club members we raised £1535 for KSS Air Ambulance. Supporting the local community where we hold events. Well done club!

#togetherwecan
#teameffort
#jeepuk
#fundraiser
#kssairambulance



Staffs Glass will be holding a social and camping evening Sat 25th Sept and running a photo rally event on Sun 26th

Camping £7.50 per tent
Photo Rally entry £7.50 per car
All proceeds after costs are covered will be going to the Blood Bikes charity

All details can be found here
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/515812622844704/?ref=share>



Serving the community



The very fact that unsealed roads with public rights exist has created an opportunity to implement user's driving skills and vehicles to assist the community. 4x4 Response Service⁸⁸ was created by motorised users in order to bring a benefit to their communities. The Service is now recognised nationwide.

Alongside the emergency services many volunteer organisations such as 4x4 Response, Blood Bikes, Mountain Rescue, and other trained response services bring their skills, their vehicles, and their commitment to the front line when major incidents occur.

These organisations work continually even in times of significant national emergency such as the Covid19 pandemic. While the whole UK was in lockdown, volunteers were out on the front line using their furlough time to assist. Official 4x4 and motorcycle organisations have been integral to providing food, medication, blood, logistical support, and volunteer driving to assist vulnerable members of society, the NHS, Police, and the ambulance service.

We are all extremely proud of those who use their 4x4s, motorcycles, and driving/riding skills to assist communities in times of need. From ferrying NHS staff to work in adverse weather, reaching casualties far from the nearest road, delivering medication, food, and essential supplies to homes, hospitals, and ambulance hubs, to manning Police roadblocks and assisting with flood water and debris safety management...every mile these motorists give helps us all.

While recreational motorists all enjoy using their vehicles for recreation, many of them use those vehicles and driving skills to give a huge amount back to their communities without the expectation of anything in return. Without the requirement to own and use their vehicles on the unsealed road network it would be inevitable that these vital support services would dwindle.



⁸⁸ <https://www.4x4response.info/>

North Wales 4x4 Response assist the NHS and Police during the pandemic⁸⁹



From deep flood waters to gale force winds, to snow blizzard conditions, 4x4 Response Wales - North Wales Area has had a busy winter when it comes to deployments. Throw Covid-19 into the mix and it's made for an 'interesting' season for our volunteer responders...

Who are we?

4x4 Response Wales - North Wales Area is one of six areas within 4x4 Response Wales who in turn are affiliated to 4x4 Response UK. We are a voluntary charity whose members use their own 4x4 vehicles to support the emergency planning officers, the emergency services and care providers in times of bad weather, flood, poor access, and other emergency conditions throughout Wales.

Winter callouts

This winter's brief snowstorm made for some interesting driving conditions in North Wales, even for our most seasoned responders! So, when we received a call from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board for assistance to help transport essential NHS workers to hospitals, surgeries and to remote patients, we were only too happy to oblige.

In January our team drove more than 52 essential NHS staff to four hospitals and assisted district nurses to make their routine house visits and 14 individual drivers were deployed at various times, covering 2,086 miles over 102 hours across the Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy counties - all using their own vehicles and volunteering their spare time. Due to Covid-19 this made it rather tricky when it came to choosing the right vehicle and driver for the job. Our Covid-19 risk assessment requires our controller to only deploy a vehicle with at least two rows of seats to maintain the maximum distancing along with a driver who isn't in an 'at risk' age group.

The team was also called to a major incident when North Wales Police asked us to assist with the evacuation of the residents at Bangor on Dee. This call came through at 1.30am on 21st January and our team worked through the night and into the next day to get all those concerned to safety. This callout came at a time when our team had already been busy transporting NHS staff that evening. So, we had to begin to think about shift rotations and perhaps bringing responders in from neighbouring regions. Again, Covid-19 made this quite challenging deployment even harder as we had to maintain safe distances, and disinfect our vehicles between different residents, particularly as many of our passengers were extremely vulnerable. Our team demonstrated yet again, how versatile, and adaptable they can be under challenging circumstances.

⁸⁹ GLASS Green Lanes magazine, summer 2021

Training in lockdown

As a response group we never know when our next job is going to come in, or what that job might be. Therefore, when we have some downtime, we try to vary our training sessions as much as possible. This is so we can be as ready as possible for whatever is thrown at us. Training might be: advanced off road driving, first on-scene, first aid, winching and recovery techniques, radio procedures, navigation practice, incident control training or flood awareness. It's always good to keep these skills fresh and up to date.

Covid-19 has made it very difficult to keep our training going, almost bringing any face-to-face or travel related training sessions to a halt as we adhere to the restrictions in place across North Wales. Instead, we've made use of online technology and virtual meeting platforms, such as Zoom, to meet with our responders to conduct some training sessions, as well as to meet with any new volunteers to conduct inductions. Hopefully, we'll be able to meet up as a team this summer for some outdoor training and to get our new responders through their responders' assessments ready for any imminent callouts.

Join us!

We are always looking at expanding our team. We need responders, support staff and incident controllers to spread the ever-increasing workload.

Our drivers are DBS checked and specially trained to drive their own vehicles in adverse weather such as snow, ice and floods, as well as advanced off-road training, navigation and communications, first aid, risk assessments and water and flood awareness. They carry a full range of emergency and survival equipment to make them resilient if conditions deteriorate. During Covid-19 they work to a risk assessment which is designed to keep both the drivers and the passengers safe.



Opportunity for all!



The Green Lane Association are proud to be at level 2 of the UK Government Disability Confident scheme⁹⁰. The scheme required that we assessed the organisation against standards set out to encourage inclusivity and diversity while working towards constant improvement by identifying and continually assessing what we do well and upon what we can improve.

The steps we have taken so far include:

- *50% of our Senior Management Team (full time employees) consider themselves disabled*
- *More than 50% of our part time staff have a disability or long-term health issue*
- *We have a dedicated Accessibility Team staffed by disabled users who are qualified to at least Level 2 in Equality and Diversity and take other courses to improve skills in remote working techniques and teamwork*
- *We have a robust and up to date Equality Policy*
- *We have a flexible working strategy that allows people to work primarily from home and decide their own working hours, should they wish to engage with our project work this can easily be facilitated with the help of our Accessibility Team and project manager who is herself disabled*
- *We champion the needs of disabled members through telling their stories, representing their needs to decision-makers and in everything we do, encouraging them to get as involved as they wish with the organisation, and providing signposting to outside organisations who may be able to further support them as required*
- *We encourage suitably qualified and skilled people to apply for voluntary and employed roles irrespective of their individual characteristics or additional needs. We also encourage applications from people who wish to learn while they work with us*
- *We provide information in various formats - printed, online, graphics, videos, and can provide large print or audio versions at request*
- *We are members of Disability Motoring UK*

The next steps:

- *We are planning a suite of resources to further educate, inform, and support our membership on matters pertaining to disability, equality, and to support their own health and wellbeing*
- *We are working toward level 3 of the Disability Confident scheme, Disability Leader*

⁹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

Summary & conclusion



“ For cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders and others, shared use routes are an increasingly important resource, providing sustainable transport links and carefree travel to and from the wider countryside. That they are safe, and are perceived to be safe, is a key factor in their promotion, though there is a view that when different users (e.g. cyclists and walkers) share routes, it leads to conflict. However, this research found that conflict is a rare occurrence. When it occurs, structural issues (e.g. width and maintenance of the route) are important factors. Route owners/managers should be developing within user groups a ‘culture of thoughtful and tolerant use’. A Code of Conduct should focus on the rights and responsibilities of all user groups in order to reduce ambiguities concerning issues such as right of way, passing etiquette, the meaning of bells, control of dogs, and the speeds that should be adopted for safety and courtesy. The policing of shared routes would ensure that users know they are actively managed. Shared use routes should have information panels at their access points detailing the Code of Conduct as well as the contact person in the responsible agency for maintaining the route and to whom comments, complaints and reports of conflict should be directed.⁹¹

⁹¹ The Countryside Agency, 2003. How people interact on off-road routes: Phase II.

The cons of discriminatory management practices vs pros of inclusive strategies

Cons - discriminatory	Pros - inclusive
Closures/restrictions force the same number of users onto a far smaller network	Access for all = access to more Decentralises hotspots and clash points
Increases overall traffic and the associated maintenance requirements	More space = less focused user impact
Fails to deter illegal use and only penalises responsible users	Treats all responsible users fairly
Discriminates against individual user groups	Creates an inclusive network
Removes opportunities for those with additional needs	Creates opportunities for all
Increases clash points	Decreases clash points
Creates hotspots of excessive usage	Decentralises use over a wider area
Network reduction encourages illegal use of areas without vehicular access rights	Gives users more opportunities thus reducing the temptation to break the law
Creates a disjointed network	Creates a coherent fit-for-purpose network
Requires costly legal processes	Reduces the requirement for legal processes. Costs can be reduced through multi-stakeholder engagement and collaborative working strategies
Reactive	Proactive
Encourages divides between user groups	Encourages understanding and sharing
Creates barriers for people with protected characteristics. Conflicts with current equality legislation & other guidance	In-line with current equality legislation & guidance that promotes green space recreation as a health benefit

Advantages of working with national organisations



Increased understanding of users' needs



Access to information & resources



Training & education



Physical project assistance



Community engagement & mediation



More eyes & ears on the ground



Cost savings & access to funding



Reduce clash points & improve relationships



Increased message reach



Improved communication between stakeholders



Access to advice & support



More effective solutions & ongoing monitoring

Conclusion



It is abundantly clear that working from a basis of prejudice against one user type above another has not worked and is not warranted considering the benefits it can bring to the RoW network. It can be evidenced that punitive measures such as closures or increased restrictions are not successful management strategies and could even be in contravention of legislation and guidance, just as it can be proven that collaborative and inclusive methods are far more effective.

Green lanes with legally defined vehicle rights make up only 2% of the UK's rights of way network⁹². Motorised users only equate to tens of thousands of people compared to millions of non-motorised users, a significant number⁹³ of whom are the most vulnerable in our community or face additional challenges to countryside access due to protected characteristics. For the latter, a suitable alternative that allows access to the deeper countryside does not currently exist⁹⁴. Current isolated solutions are not available across much of the UK and nor do they provide access to much of the rights of way network. To implement them as an alternative in all areas of the UK would be impossible due to cost and practical implications.

'Damage' is a common stick used to beat motorised users with, but this viewpoint makes no consideration for the fact that all users inevitably cause maintenance requirements, often that far outweigh the overall scale on the motorised network, or the failure of some local authorities to carry out their legal duty to protect and maintain public highways and to assert public rights to use those ways. This is a matter motoring organisations are heavily and continuously active in addressing at a financial cost to our members and a saving to local authorities.

The current view on environmental impact of motorised use fails to take into consideration of the benefits green lanes afford the agricultural environment by increasing species diversity of flora and fauna. Nor does it consider the maintenance of these environments requires continued use to prevent the formation of linear woodlands which reduce species diversity compared to actively used and maintained green lanes⁹⁵.

Millions of car journeys carry pedestrians across the UK to use footpaths, cycle routes, and bridle ways, descending on local communities in numbers that outweigh the national total of green laners by tens of thousands to one. Significant money has been spent to manage that impact, including large swathes of tarmac laid at cost to the public for these users to park on and millions spent on foot fall erosion.

⁹² https://laragb.org/pdf/DEFRA_200512_MakingTheBestOfByways.pdf

⁹³ GLASS disabled membership reflects the national statistics

⁹⁴ See page 44

⁹⁵ See pages 45-49

These projects permanently change the landscape in the most beautiful, sensitive, and cherished areas of the UK while simultaneously costing the public more money and reducing species diversity. It is entirely wrong to allege that 'green laners' are guilty of such impact and devastation when evidence exists that far greater and more costly repair work is ongoing on routes, and within the natural environment that are not accessible to or impacted by vehicles⁹⁶.

While incidents and loss of life occur in every public space in the UK, there is no comparable risk to those who recreationally use the unsealed road network, yet motorised users are frequently losing access to routes on the basis of an alleged but often unevidenced or incomparable risk⁹⁷.

Anti-access organisations who openly discriminate and seek to reduce public access rights, often at a financial cost to the very people they seek to prohibit, sit at decision making tables, while proactive user groups who work for the benefit of all countryside visitors are not included. The needs of recreational motorists and those with disabilities and additional needs are rarely given a voice, the legislation that protects them is often ignored in favour of reductive measures.

As an organisation that works for the benefit of all user types, we have a unique perspective of viewing public access from all sides.

We fully support proportionate access and use of legislation to manage the public network, but we cannot sit back and watch continued reductions that only serve to compound existing issues, particularly when public money should be used for the benefit of all and the land that we share.

There is a better way. The information contained within this document hopes to encourage a shift in perception towards the unsealed road network, who uses it, and why, in the hope that the more insight decision makers have of the people and resources they manage, the more inclusive their management strategies will become.

By signposting those who manage the network towards inclusive and proactive resources, it is hoped that costs and problems can be reduced, a more fit for purpose public resource can be shaped, true protection and conservation strategies can be formed, and that the countryside can be made available to more users who are given the information they need to use the outdoors responsibly and sustainably however they choose to travel.



⁹⁶ See pages 52-56

⁹⁷ See page 63

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