

Press Release

For immediate release 16th February 2016

Peak Horsepower calls on new Peak District 4x4 company to stick to sealed roads

The Peak Horsepower bridleway group (PHP) is dismayed that a company (1) is being set up in the Hope Valley which will be offering off-road trips in 4x4s. PHP works to improve the bridleway network in the Peak District National Park and is affiliated to the British Horse Society (see www.peakhorsepower.co.uk).

Off-roading poses dangers for horse riders and other users because of the serious damage it causes to the surfaces of green lanes and the risk of accidents when encountering vehicles. The only survey of public opinion on off-roading, conducted by The Ramblers Association in 2004 (2), showed that 87% of people think that recreational off-roading should be banned in national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty to preserve the peace and tranquillity of the countryside. Almost 80% said that 4x4s and trail bikes using rights of way in the countryside meant increased danger for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and that these vehicles were damaging the environment by introducing noise and pollution and damaging habitats. 69% said that meeting vehicles would spoil their enjoyment of a country walk.

Peak Horsepower Chairwoman Wendy Neilson says:

'We were horrified to read of a new business set up to offer "off-road" experiences in the Peak District National Park. Horse riders are all too aware of the destruction caused by motorised vehicles on unsurfaced routes. All over the National Park riding routes are being destroyed. So much damage is being done that we can no longer ride some routes because the surfaces are no longer safe (3).

'As well as the risk of injury from damaged surfaces, horse riders run the risk having accidents caused by vehicles coming too fast on narrow lanes with blind bends.

'Our green lanes were never intended to be used by motorised vehicles in the way they are now. They were for horses and carts, not for heavy, powerful modern motor vehicles. Businesses such as this further endanger their survival'.

'We call on the new company to use only sealed (tarmac) lanes and not to contribute to the destruction of the Peak District's precious green lanes'.

Peak Horsepower is also campaigning for a change to legislation that would ban the use of all recreational motor vehicles from unsealed lanes.

Further information and photographs of the damage caused by 4x4 vehicles to the Peak District's ancient green lanes available by emailing peakhorsepowersecretary@hotmail.co.uk or phone Sue Mayer on 07930 308807.

Notes to editors:

1. Hope Overland see: <http://www.hopeoverland.co.uk/>

2. Public opposed to trail bikes and 4x4s on 'green lanes'. Western Mail (Cardiff) March 23, 2004.
<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Public+opposed+to+trail+bikes+and+4x4s+on+'greenlanes'.-a0114507499>
3. See Peak Horsepower report to the Joint Committee on the Draft Deregulation Bill 2013 September 2013, and 'The effects of off-road vehicles on horse riding in the Peak District National Park: the need for Derbyshire County Council to act'. Peak Horsepower, October 2011. Available at www.peakhorsepower.co.uk