

Our input into the Lake District Partnership Plan

To comment, you can use the [link](#) provided by the Friends of the Lake District, but please add your views about 4x4s and motorbikes on fell tracks.

I General comments:

The Plan says that it is guided by National Park purposes and World Heritage Site purposes. Each proposal should therefore be judged against those purposes.

Out of the 13 Special Qualities seven are particularly relevant to green lanes:

1. A world class cultural landscape
4. Unique farming heritage and concentration of common land
5. The high fells
6. Wealth of habitats and wildlife
10. A source of artistic inspiration
11. A model for protecting cultural landscapes
13. Opportunities for quiet enjoyment

1 Green lanes are one of the defining features of the fells, historic farm and quarry tracks made for people and horses or horse-drawn carts. That they were not surfaced with tarmac is no accident: nobody except farmers needs to access them with motor vehicles.

4 Some green lanes run through sheep farms: 4x4s and motorcycles disrupt farm work and disturb sheep on the fells.

5 As documented in [Natural England's Character Area Profile](#), the High Fells are a "Spectacular, formerly glaciated, mountain scenery of open fells and craggy peaks separated by U-shaped valleys with a radiating pattern of rivers and lakes." This unique landscape with great biodiversity and relative tranquillity is no place for off-road vehicles.

6 The [DEFRA Magic](#) map shows in detail which habitats have been lost over the last decades and which are in danger. Restoring this biodiversity requires the protection of tracks across precious habitats.

10 Many visitors want to see the peaceful, scenically stunning and often remote upland landscape that has inspired writers and artists over centuries. Much of the intrinsic value of this landscape is lost through the intrusion of motor vehicles on fell tracks.

11 Green lanes offer a respite from traffic on tarmac roads Some of them cross large stretches of land left to the nation by Beatrix Potter. It is reprehensible and a real reversal of her conservation efforts to act as though these tracks were just ordinary public roads.

II Comments on Green Lanes can be made under the following headings of the Partnership Plan:

- Climate action – achieving net zero and adapting to climate change
- Future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate change
- Sustainable travel and transport

Climate action – achieving net zero and adapting to climate change

Two important points here:

- a) 4x4s and motorbikes are highly polluting vehicles. Allowing them to drive across the fells while also trying to reduce motor vehicles on tarmac roads is illogical. How can we say we care about carbon emissions, when we tolerate motor vehicles in some of the wildest, most remote and beautiful areas where they are most unnecessary and their access could be prevented.
- b) Climate change is leading to an increased number of extreme weather events. The combination of rain and motorised use inevitably causes surface erosion on green lanes that were not intended and not made for powerful modern motor vehicles. This applies to electric vehicles just as much as to vehicles with combustion engines.

Future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate change

- a) Sheep farmers already face major challenges. The last thing they need is convoys of 4x4s and motorbikes coming through their farms, on the lanes they use to move their stock and on the fells where their sheep are grazing. This is making their lives more difficult.
- b) The [DEFRA MAGIC](#) map shows the rich biodiversity of the Lake District. Nature recovery is hampered by unnecessary motor traffic on fell tracks.

Sustainable travel and transport

The use of motor vehicles on green lanes is doubly unsustainable:

- a) They are high polluters in terms of carbon emissions. Allowing green lanes to serve trail circuits for drivers of polluting, carbon-intensive off-road vehicles from the UK and across Northwest Europe contradicts the aspiration of sustainable travel.
- b) Although carbon emissions are common to all vehicles with combustion engines, off-road vehicles on green lanes have additional highly damaging impacts, regardless of the type of engine used: they fundamentally change the character of an often remote, wild and peaceful landscape. Tranquillity is not just the absence of noise, but also of visual intrusion, for instance that of heavy vehicles crossing the fells.