

● Lakes rural right of way row escalates

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A POPULAR rural road in the Lake District has become a battleground in a row about rights of way.

The unclassified U5001, linking High Tilberthwaite near Coniston with neighbouring Little Langdale, is at the centre of a tug-of-war over its use.

Off-road drivers, mountain bikers, walkers and horse riders have all staked a claim to use the public road as have those living and working nearby who depend on it for access.

The Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) has come under pressure from some parties to impose a traffic regulation order (TRO) banning certain vehicles, such as 4x4s.

And a petition to encourage national park bosses to impose a traffic ban on off-road vehicles has attracted more than 220,000 signatures with organisers aiming for 300,000.

The issue reached a head this year because of the road's deteriorating condition which has necessitated a major repairs job which started last month.

That has involved a partnership between Cumbria County Council, which is responsible for the road, the

Road rage as 220,000 put name to petition



Public roads used by mountain bikers and 4X4 vehicles at Tilberthwaite Farm are at the centre of a battle over their use

National Trust, and the LDNPA which is leading on the work.

The road has been shut to vehicular traffic between High Tilberthwaite Farm and Fell Foot Bridge in Little Langdale, but with access allowed for other types of users.

The topic was discussed at a meeting of the authority's rights of way committee at Murley Moss, Kendal, on Tuesday.

Members were told if a TRO is decided as the way forward, any ruling would not be made until at least October 2019.

Head of park management Mark Eccles said the repair project would be completed in the next two to three weeks but the road would remain closed to vehicles for some time.

"This is simply to allow the repairs to settle and bed in," he said.

"The intention in the long term is to come back to this committee in October 2019 with recommendations over whether we proceed with a traffic regulation order, or not.

"A traffic regulation order must be evidence-based and based on fact. That is why

we are putting the road back into condition in its legally-designated form.

"That should benefit all types of users - walkers, cyclists, horse riders, motorised vehicles, or those requiring access for agricultural use and land management."

Park officials have recorded the "state of the route" and information about the levels of use, with more information being gathered next year.

"We have been doing face-to-face surveys on site to get people's feelings about the condition of the route and what they believe the use of the route should be," said Mr Eccles.

He warned committee members to be wary of passing comment in case it appeared they had made up their minds over any TRO.

"This committee has to be careful before giving any comments because it will be this committee that determines the next steps regarding the regulation order. You have to be careful over giving any sense of predetermination," said Mr Eccles.

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