

FROM GLEAM (THE GREEN LANES ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION MOVEMENT)

Dear Parish Council/Parish Meeting/Town Council

Government consultation on the Glover Landscapes Review – an opportunity to stop ‘off-roading’ in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

You will be aware I am sure that the government is consulting on its response to the Glover landscapes review. I am writing on behalf of the Green Lanes Environment Movement (GLEAM) to draw your attention to the part of the consultation which addresses the problem of recreational motor vehicles (4x4s, quad bikes and motorbikes) driving on green lanes, in particular in the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Green lanes are either Byways Open to all Traffic (BOATs) or unsealed unclassified roads (UURs). BOATs carry legal rights for motor vehicles. The rights of way on all UURs are unknown.

We know from our work with Parish Councils that ‘off-roading’ on both BOATs and UURs is a serious issue for the local communities affected by it, for non-motorised users and for farmers and landowners. It is also clear that, despite the legal powers available to the Highway Authorities and the National Park Authorities, the current legislative framework for controlling use of recreational motor vehicles on unsealed tracks in the countryside has not stopped the damage which is being done to the fabric of either the National Parks or the AONBs. Nor is the current legislation protecting local communities and non-motorised users from public nuisance, sometimes danger.

As you will know the AONBs have no legal powers of their own to stop or control off-roading and are dependent on the Highway Authorities. The latter are reluctant to act because of the costs involved in making Traffic Regulation Orders and the risk of legal challenge by the recreational motoring lobby. Meanwhile cash-strapped Highway Authorities are having to bear the costs of repairing, often re-repairing, green lanes that cannot sustain use by powerful recreational motor vehicles.

We hope that your Parish Council/Meeting or Town Council will want to take part in the consultation and will ask for new legislation which will fully protect all green lanes in the AONBs.

The government’s response to the Glover review and the online consultation on its response are at [Government response to the Landscapes Review - Defra - Citizen Space](#). The ‘off-roading’ questions are questions 14 to 17. For further information, a briefing paper from GLEAM is attached to my email. Please note that the consultation closes on 9 April 2022.

Yours sincerely

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GLEAM Briefing

An opportunity to end use of green lanes by recreational motor vehicles.

The Government has issued a public consultation on its response to the Glover Landscapes Review. The consultation document includes questions that give respondents the opportunity to call for the prohibition of the use of green lanes by recreational motor vehicles. We urge you to respond. This chance won't come again. You will find the online consultation at

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/future-landscapes-strategy/government-response-to-the-landscapes-review/>

The background.

The Government recognises the vital role of nature for the nation's wellbeing. Since the pandemic, this has become even more obvious. Equally, the Government acknowledges the urgent need to reduce our dependence on motor vehicles. Green lanes - the thousands of miles of ancient, unsealed tracks that criss-cross the English countryside - are much more than just access routes: they are a historic, precious part of the rural landscape. Some green lanes are ancient drovers' roads or cart tracks. Others are older, dating back to Roman, or even prehistoric times. They have survived for hundreds of years as precious features of the rural heritage. They need protection.

The impact of recreational motor vehicles on green lanes.

Recreational motors – chiefly motorbikes and 4x4s – are noisy, intrusive, polluting, and sometimes dangerous. They destroy the fabric of green lanes, often reducing them to rutted quagmires. Beautiful, tranquil places have been made ugly. Recreational motor vehicles damage not just the tracks themselves, but the amenity and enjoyment of other users – farmers, disabled people, walkers, cyclists, equestrians. The lives of those who live alongside green lanes, or who need them for essential access, are made difficult. The health of the natural environments of which the lanes form an important part is degraded.

The need for legislation.

The Government has recognised that protecting green lanes has become a pressing issue. It has devoted part of the consultation on its Glover Landscapes Review response to a series of questions on the future use of green lanes – questions 14 to 17. Please take part in the consultation and use your answers to these questions to call for an end to the use of recreational motor vehicles on green lanes. GLEAM campaigns to protect green lanes from the danger, difficulty and inconvenience caused by recreational motor vehicles. It is calling for such vehicles to be prohibited everywhere, leaving the lanes open only to motor vehicles with a legitimate need for access.