
Wetton - Conservation Interest

Ecological/Geological Interest

The whole route runs through the Hamps and Manifold Valleys SSSI with the southern end also being within the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (approximately 200m in total). The north-eastern part of the route is Limestone Hill and Heath/Natural Zone and the south-western part Limestone Dale/Natural Zone.

The Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation was designated primarily for the presence of two internationally important habitats listed in Annex 1 of the European Habitats Directive 1992, one of which – semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland on calcareous substrates – occur along the course of the route.

The SSSI was designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland, scrub communities, grassland, and invertebrates and for the limestone geology and geomorphology and cave fossil deposits.

Archaeological Interest

The route passes through a range of Historic Landscape Character areas including Post-1650 Enclosure - Regular: Piecemeal/Award and Enclosed Moorland.

A Scheduled Monument - a prehistoric bowl barrow - lies at the summit of Wetton Hill. This is a rare survival in the Peak District of an unexcavated example of this type of monument. The route lies 300m downslope of the barrow, at its nearest point. The route lies within the setting of the monument.

A number of features lie adjacent to the route. These are noted on the Historic Environment Record and have been identified as assets of local or regional importance whose conservation contributes to the overall cultural heritage of the National Park. These include a building platform, which is the possible site of an early mill (110m from the route), numerous caves and fissures of cultural heritage interest around the southern end of the route, a stone slab footbridge at the bottom of Wetton Hill (20m away from the route) and the former Leek and Manifold Light Railway (which joins the track at its southern end).

The Manor House at the northern end of the route is grade II listed.

Landscape Interest

The route lies within the White Peak Landscape Character Area (LCA) and within Natural Zone.

The National Park is designated for its internationally and nationally important landscape.

The Natural Zone designation comprises areas whose natural beauty it is particularly important to conserve. Within the National Park it comprises the wilderness areas in which the influence of man and of development is less marked.

The overall strategy for the White Peak LCA is to protect and manage the distinctive and valued historic character of the settled, agricultural landscapes, whilst seeking opportunities to enhance the wild character and diversity of remoter areas. The route is within the Limestone and Limestone Dales and Limestone Hills and Slopes Landscape Character Types within the White Peak LCA.