

# Peak District Local Access Forum

**Date:** 14 June 2023

**Item:** 5

**Title:** Access Update

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## **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on issues related to access in the Peak District.

## **Access Land Direction**

The National Park Authority has continued the direction at Silence Mine restricting public access on safety grounds until 30 April 2025. The consultation outcome, which includes the LAF's response is attached in Appendix 1.

A further site meeting is planned with Derbyshire County Council officers to discuss reinstatement and to consider future access provision.

## **Green Lanes**

Comprehensive schemes for repair and reinstatement works undertaken by Derbyshire County Council, the Highway Authority, are being considered by the Peak District Local Access Forum for routes in their area. This includes a number of Green Lanes where the improvements to surfacing will increase accessibility and help people to keep on track to protect verges.

Further accessibility enhancements have been funded from the Defra Access for All programme and from donations to the Authority's Access Fund. At Long Causeway, a section of resurfacing will help provide for a new Miles without Stiles easy access route. At Wetton Hills and Moscar Cross, replacing stiles with bridleway gates next to the field gates will increase accessibility for a range of users.

## **Monitoring**

The biennial Ease of Use Survey reports on a randomised 5% of the rights of way network. This includes signage, waymarking, structures, obstructions, and surface condition. Consideration is also given to scope for improving accessibility. In 2022/23, 82% of the network was easy to use, based on the selection surveyed.

## **Access Fund**

The Peak District National Park's [Access Fund](#) provides for supporting access improvements through donations. Donations from the public are made via the Peak District Foundation.

In 2022, donations totalled £1080. Sales from the Miles without Stiles handbook via the Authority's visitor centres, totalled £967.

Works during 2022, included anniversary gates at Oarystones and Chrome Hill, replacing stiles with gates at Conksbury and Moscar Cross, a new access point at Sir William Hill, repairs and replacement gates at access points on access land, widening the pedestrian gate on the broken road at Mam Tor, steps on a steep slope at Back Dane, and surfacing improvements to a chicane on the Trans Pennine Trail.

### **Recommendation**

- 1. That the report is noted.**

## Appendix 1

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# CONSULTATION OUTCOME REPORT

## COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY (CROW) ACT 2000

### PROPOSAL FOR A LONG-TERM DIRECTION RESTRICTING ACCESS

#### APRIL 2023

Land Parcel Name:	Direction Ref.
Silence & Old Grove Mines, Great Hucklow & Foolow	2018088745

#### 1) Introduction

The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) has completed its consultation on the proposal for a long-term direction to restrict CROW access on this land. The consultation was held between 16 March and 14 April 2023.

The following consultation comments were received:

**Peak District Local Access Forum** – recognise the significant public safety issues arising from the ongoing collapse of the land in and around the Silence and Old Grove Mines site. Based on the information received, agree that the continued temporary restriction of CROW access to the extent identified in the consultation documents is necessary on public safety grounds.

Have discussed the issues and challenges associated with this site for several years, since the first application for closure of CROW Access Land in 2018. Pleased that a geotechnical report has been completed and reinstatement works are now being considered. Understand that any work will take time to agree and to implement, and therefore support the proposal for an extension of up to two years, until 30th April 2025, or until the completion of remediation in connection with geotechnical investigations have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Authority.

Wish to see this area re-opened to the public as soon as possible, and ask that PDNPA continues to keep pressure on all parties to remediate and to reinstate access as soon as possible, and continues to keep the LAF informed of progress with the works.

Finally, whilst recognise that Public Rights of Way are not covered by this direction, note that, as a result of the same public safety concerns, the Public Rights of Way running through the site – an east-west restricted byway made up of Grindlow RB6 and Foolow RB10, and north-south footpath Foolow FP9a – also remain closed. In addition, the minor road running along the northern boundary of the site is suffering slippage, and has been closed several times in recent years for repairs. As a result, east-west access, for horse riders and cyclists in particular, is often effectively closed through this area, affecting some well-used circuits. Alternatives for walkers travelling east-west or north-south require use of minor roads which themselves may be unsafe due to sometimes fast-moving traffic. Ask the PDNPA and DCC to consider the impact of these PROW closures and explore alternative routes through the area for non-car users.

**Derbyshire Dales Ramblers** – no objection to the proposal to extend the duration of the above direction until 30 April 2025 or until completion of remediation in connection with geotechnical investigations, to the satisfaction of the PDNPA as the Mineral Authority, whichever is sooner.

Aware of the instability of the land around the mines and the potential danger to Access Land users. Would like to see nearing the end of the two-year duration, consideration of the future opening of part of the Access Land to the east, taking into account safety implications, if a further direction is needed.

Would also note that there are two Rights of Way running across the Access Land. Foolow FP 9 runs north to south and Restricted Byways Grindlow RB6/Foolow RB 10 run west to east. Both these RoWs offer walkers off-road safe access and link to the wider RoW network. There has also been previously the temporary closure of the highway running north of the Access Land. Any alternative off-road routes for walkers and other RoW users would be very beneficial. The local country lanes are narrow and the vehicular traffic can present considerable danger to vulnerable road users.

**Great Hucklow Parish Council** - agree that the closure should be extended to 30th April 2025 as proposed.

**Foolow Parish Meeting** – in the light of the ongoing risk to individuals, due to the state of the land and the future uncertainties, fully support.

**Individual** - against reducing open access to the public unless it is temporary and for safety reasons. The next generation will not thank this generation for freedoms lost, freedoms to roam and enjoy the countryside.

## 2) Outcome

The PDNPA is satisfied that the restriction of CRoW access to the extent identified is necessary on public safety grounds having regard to the occurrences of instability, the presence of a potential contributory factor, and the nature and character of the land.

The PDNPA, as Mineral Planning Authority, has commissioned geotechnical investigations into the instability at this site and is considering the conclusions and recommendations of the reports provided. This includes the approval and implementation of reinstatement works. Pending this, it is necessary to protect the safety of the public by extending the temporary closure of the land.

Having regard to the continuing evidence of instability, potential contributory factors, and the nature and character of the land, PDNPA is satisfied that a restriction of CRoW access to the extent identified is necessary on public safety grounds. It is considered that the extension of up to two years would be an appropriate period of time for identification and rectification of the instability and for the monitoring of this.

This direction shall cease to have effect on 30 April 2025 or, if earlier, the date on which PDNPA as Mineral Planning Authority approves completion of the necessary remediation having regard to the outcome of the geotechnical investigations undertaken by the PDNPA as the Mineral Planning Authority and for an associated monitoring period. In the event of the instability being more extensive or requiring more extensive remediation, including monitoring, the direction shall be further reviewed.

3) Summary of Restriction

<b>Land Parcel Name:</b>	<b>Dates of Restriction</b>	<b>Reason for Exclusion</b>
<b>Silence &amp; Old Grove Mines, Great Hucklow</b>	<b>30 April 2025</b>	<b>Public Safety</b>

Details of the restriction will appear at [www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk).