



## **Policy for the Management of Vehicular Use on Byways Open to All Traffic and unsealed Non Classified Highways within the South Downs National Park**

### **Introduction**

This policy supersedes the previous policies for the use of motorised vehicles on the South Downs, other than legitimate farming and forestry vehicles, dated July 1981 and March 1988 and draws from a range of sources illustrating best practice in this field. It sets down the Society's strategy for managing motorised vehicular use of routes throughout the South Downs National Park. The Society wishes to work closely with the National Park Authority in the management of motorised vehicles in the countryside and also recognises the importance of the role of the Local Highway Authorities.

The Society recognises that a balance has to be struck between enjoyment of vehicular use rights over a route and the impacts on amenity for the local community, the environment, and other types of use. Recreational driving groups have highlighted their desire to pursue and promote only lawful and responsible activity. This in turn serves to underline the need for effective communication to users about precisely which rights can be assumed to exist over a particular route and which cannot.

This policy applies to Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT) and unsealed Non Classified Highways (NCH) other than any NCH's over which the Local Authority (LHA) considers public vehicular rights do not exist. Where these rights do not exist, it is expected that the LHA will maintain signs at the relevant junctions to that NCH to indicate highway users that public vehicular rights do not exist over it. With the approach of the 2026 deadline for identifying and recording of Unrecorded Rights of Way as set out in the Deregulation Bill 2015 it is anticipated that there will be pressure to add to the list of BOATS within the National Park.

### **Sustainability**

LHAs are duty bound to keep in repair highways which are publicly maintainable including most public rights of way and the great majority of the routes which are of interest to vehicle users. The Society recognises that the LHAs strive to maintain highways in a condition in keeping with their designations and importance. However resources are limited and in practice levels of maintenance vary widely. The Society recommends that the following measures might be introduced to ensure that BOAT's which are identified as being acceptable for recreational driving remain suitable for such use:

1. Encouraging local groups to watch-over routes and report problems to the LHA.
2. Encouraging user-groups to "adopt" a route and maintain it on behalf of the LHA, using expert advice and materials from the LHA.
3. Ensuring that routes are included in formal LHA inspection regimes.
4. Ensuring that any reported localised damage is repaired immediately to reduce higher levels of expenditure in the future.
5. Encourage the use of a permit system with gates controlled by combination locks or similar where this may be deemed appropriate.

### **Management of vehicular use**

1. In some instances it may be necessary to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to preserve the character of the route or to ensure that the route is not damaged when at its most vulnerable.
2. Liaise with user groups to encourage voluntary restraint when necessary.
3. The use of barriers or similar structures on routes not carrying public motorised vehicular rights ensuring that any structure does not impede access for other users.
4. The appropriate LHA to carry out monitoring of traffic on routes by using vehicle loggers.
5. Use of non-vehicular routes e.g. Restricted Byways and Bridleways, by motorised vehicles will be referred to the Police.
6. The use of organised motor trials using BOATS should be discouraged within the confines of the South Downs National Park.

### **Policy Statements**

1. The Society recognises the rights that motor vehicle users have to access parts of the rights of way and unsurfaced road network.
2. The Society does not encourage this activity but acknowledges that responsible use on some routes can be sustained.
3. The Society will expect the LHA to take action to limit or prevent access by motor vehicles if this use is damaging to the route or local environment, or conflicts with the reasonable interests of walkers, riders, cyclists or carriage drivers.
4. Where such action may be necessary the Society will examine each case individually and on its own merits.
5. The Society will work to encourage responsible behaviour by all countryside users and a better understanding of the network
6. The Society is opposed to the unlawful use of motor vehicles on rights of way and unsurfaced roads, and will work with the Police and others to prevent such access.
7. The Society will review this Policy every 5 years and where necessary make amendments based on experience and comment from its members.

Robert Self  
Chair of the Access and Rights of Way Committee  
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