



## **Peak District MTB**

### **Secretary’s Report – 2018 to 2019**

#### **British Heart Foundation Bike Challenge**

Peak District MTB again route advice to the BHF, although the event was rescheduled several Peak District MTB volunteers acted as marshals including:

- Paul B.
- Seb
- Mike
- Rich
- Paul @ H.
- Apologies if I have missed anyone!

We are working with BHF in relation to their next Bike Challenge which is scheduled for mid-2020

#### **Cut Gate (Mend our Mountains)**

A success, Peak District MTB and other stakeholders raised in excess of the £74,000 needed for the maintenance on the route. Special thanks should go to Chris Maloney (aka Keeper of the Peak) and Si Bowns (Ride Sheffield) who have been instrumental in driving this project and making it a success

#### **Data Protection**

Because of legislation all organisations who retain data had to comply with the GDPR, Peak District MTB is no different to any other organisation and we have a Privacy Policy and Data Protection Policy. Not cycling related but we need to ensure that your information is safe with us.

As a result of the GDPR legislation we have had to cleanse our database of members, you are not a member could we encourage you any of your friends to register at:

<http://peakdistrictmtb.org/join-peak-district-mtb/>

This will allow us to demonstrate that we represent the views of mountain bikers riding in the Peak District.

Please note there is a double opt-in process. Check your Junk email for the confirmation email, otherwise you may not get our email news! If you’ve not had an email newsletter from us this year, you’ve probably not double opted-in.

## **Dig Days**

Trail maintenance is a key to the enjoyment of the trails within the Peak District. The work that we are undertaking is making a real input into the maintenance of trails as well as resurrecting trails. Over the past 12 months we have focussed our efforts in two areas

- **Hope Valley / Dark Park**

Led by James Irwin we have worked on the following trails / locations:

- Whinstone Lee Tor
- Cutthroat Bridge
- Derwent Edge
- Gores
- Mam Nick / Greenlands
- Aston

We calculate that we have provided 78 volunteer hours and our thanks go to all volunteers who given their time and effort to support this activity. The result of the work has received very positive feedback

- **The Roaches**

Working with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and led by Dan Noble we undertook several days maintenance on the Roaches again we would like to thank members who supported this activity. We’ve now done nearly 170 volunteer hours at the Roaches alone, including re-instating the original permissive bridleway line above Gradbach that has for years been a 70m long axle-deep puddle in wet weather, forcing users to create a ‘cheat’ line in the higher moorland.

As a group we are always looking for other locations to undertake work and would welcome suggestions of members

## **Lost Rights of Way**

This is an on-going activity, although progress is slow, members have identified several routes that at first glance could be upgraded to the benefit of all users. The feedback has been circulated to other user groups for comments.

If you wish to see what routes have been identified please log onto the following link, the password is 2026 - <http://www.bhsaccess.org.uk/dobbin/Project2026.php>

Within the southern area of the Peak District several footpaths have been identified and evidence provided to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) in order to progress upgrades, unfortunately the wheels of local government work slowly.

Peak District MTB are consulted by DCC on proposed changes or upgrades to footpaths and bridleways

## **Project 2022**

Currently the national percentage of rights of way that are bridleways is around 22% (Cycling UK and OpenMTB) but in the Peak District National Park it is only 11% (figure provided by Peak District National Park Authority). This equates to just 220km of permissible routes whereas it should be 440km. To put this into context, there are 2136km of footpaths in the national park, upgrading some of these to bridleway status would still leave 1916km of rights of way with footpath status, the more than the distance from London to Minsk, in Belarus.

The aim of the project is to identify more cycle friendly and sustainable routes to spread the cycling load. Feedback provided by followers has identified 29 possible routes which we are currently reviewing – some of the suggestions are already existing permissive bridleways or are subject to DMMO claims

## **Rushup Edge**

DCC recommenced work on this byway in spring 2019. We were concerned that rocks had been cemented down looking like crazy paving. There was infill with loose material brought from offsite apparently to “make it safe” for the Easter bank holiday. As we expected this was quickly washed away. We raised our concerns with DCC, and they conducted a site visit and agreed to leave the route at that state to see what happened over the summer.

In November 2019 a member reported some work commencing on the top boggy section. PDMTB didn’t have a particularly strong objection to work in this area. Routes need maintaining, especially when causing an obstruction. We asked DCC for clarification who said that this top section would be filled in with rock (and not the geotextile they’d previously suggested), the Rushup descent would not have any

further work and that they were planning to clear the drains on Chapel Gate (Edale side).

We also clarified using a freedom of information request that only one legal notice had been served on DCC regarding Rushup and this was AFTER work commenced. The threat of legal action was one of DCC’s main (perhaps only) justifications for doing the work so we thought it was interesting that they appeared to be able to see into the future when deciding to do the work.

### **Trail Sabotage**

This became the focus of significant media coverage following the publication of an editorial in a Sheffield based free newspaper. The subsequent media interest was a surprise to us with articles (with some journalistic licence) in local, regional and national newspapers with Chris Maloney being interviewed by Jeremy Vine on BBC Radio 2. In August 2019, Esther Hobson featured in an item on BBC News about trail sabotage and “hanging bridleways” with a follow up with BBC Online

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-derbyshire-49450062/cyclists-and-walkers-should-say-hi-to-avoid-conflict>

Despite claims that much of the sabotage was anecdotal, data provided by Open MTB discounted this as members were able to identify areas where sabotage had regularly occurred.

Following a meeting with Derbyshire Police we were advised that members need to report all instances of trail sabotage as without it the Police would not be able to investigate it – these should be reported to the 101 number. Derbyshire Police have stated if someone is injured as a result of sabotage, they are a victim of an assault and the perpetrators would be charged with assault. If one location is identified as a hotspot then the Police would consider the use of motion sensing cameras to gather evidence of a crime taking place.

We have created a template for members to report any trail sabotage to us, but in the first instance they should be reported to the Police via 101 or the local Safer Neighbourhood Team

As an incredibly positive note, we managed to turn the media attention from sabotage to MTB advocacy and ‘Be Nice, Say Hi’

### **Severn Trent Water**

In my 2017/18 report we reported that we were trying to improve access for MTB in the forestry the western banks of Ladybower Reservoir. This was going to be the creation of a permissive cycleway, as you may remember at the last-minute Severn Trent Water (STW) withdrew their permission. This was a massive blow to Peak

District MTB, especially as we were going to undertake all the physical work and provide gates and signage etc.

We are pleased to report that following a change in management this has led to a change in direction at STW there is a more proactive understanding of the benefits of mountain biking within the Upper Derwent Valley (UDV). A series of meetings have been held with Senior Managers and Land Managers at STW which has resulted in the establishment of an exciting partnership with huge potential to identify cycle routes within the UDV estate.

### **Working with other Groups**

The number of groups / organisations that we work with is increasing, we continue to work with and support the work of the PDNPA and our thanks go to Mike Rhodes and other rangers.

We have an active member, Paul Richardson, on the Board of the Peak District Local Access Forum who represents to views of MTB’rs and provides a valuable input in relation to the policies and plans of the LAF

We are in regular dialogue with Peak Horsepower, MADBAG, Staffordshire Moorlands Bridleway Group, Horse Access Campaign, Ride Sheffield, National Trust, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Open MTB, Cycling UK, Experience Community, National Trust and advocacy groups in Kirklees, Barnsley and Lincolnshire.

### **Random Statistics!**

- Signed up members – 374 (up 54% from 2018)
- Facebook followers – 5,386 (up 23% from 2018)
- Twitter followers – 2,557 (up 16% from 2018)
- Instagram followers – 1,088 (up 11% from 2018)

### **.... And finally**

We would like to thank all our members and Facebook followers for their support, comments and suggestions. The Committee would also like to thank mine hosts at the Old Hall Hotel for hosting our meetings