Lower Wye Tracks and Trails Steering Group Workshop Discussion Summary

Note: This document records discussion and feedback provided during the workshop. It should not be interpreted as an agreed position of the Steering Group.

7 January 2026

About the Wellbeing Planner

Success in a team, a community or business is based on shared understanding to inspire collective action. Whether it's tackling climate change or focusing the efforts of a corporate team, success comes from people working towards a shared goal.

As the Wellbeing Planner, I provide customer focused services that help groups of people, whatever their circumstance, to work together more effectively.

This is a report for the Tracks and Trails Steering group from a workshop held on the 15 December 2025. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

For information on the Wellbeing Planner, please visit www.wellbeingplanner.co.uk

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Background

The Wellbeing Planner was commissioned by the Wye Valley National Landscape Team to facilitate a discussion about the findings of an audit by the Earth Science Partnership into the Wye Valley National Landscape Unclassified Roads Audit for Tintern and Whitebrook Pilot Areas.

The aims of the workshop were to share the work of the consultant and gather initial feedback and perspectives from workshop participants. The discussion highlighted a range of views, questions and potential ideas for future work. The workshop was not intended to reach formal agreement or establish a strategy, but rather to capture feedback to inform further discussion.

Methodology

The workshop was held on the 15 December 2025 at Shire Hall, Monmouth.

A list of participants is provided in **Appendix One**. The workshop agenda is included in **Appendix Two**. A record of individual's detailed feedback provided in **Appendix Three**.

The following section captures the observations made from the workshop.

This report reflects notes and observations recorded during the workshop and should be read as a summary of the discussion that took place. The content does not represent a formal position of the Tracks and Trails Steering Group, nor does it constitute an agreed strategy or action plan.

Observations

The presentations highlighted significant concerns amongst some participants, primarily regarding legal clarity and recommendations by the consultants. Several participants expressed that more input was required about the laws governing unsealed county roads, the information contained with the legal appendix (Appendix E), and confusion over route designations such as Horse Way. The participants wanted more information regarding the costings of any future interventions, which they felt were part of the original brief. They also wanted more information on community impacts and future priorities. They felt a legal briefing or similar might help everyone understand the legislation and how it's applied in the area. Improved monitoring of trail usage, and clearer communication with communities were also discussed.

The participants wanted practical solutions, such as resurfacing roads to make them safe and usable, exploring flexible Traffic Regulation Orders, and improving enforcement and reporting mechanisms between the police, community and local authority.

Suggestions included referencing the Highway Code on signage, monitoring noise levels, and ensuring accurate mapping. The group stressed the importance of stakeholder engagement, regular communication, and identifying quick wins where possible. Overall, the group felt the report summarised the issues but lacked actionable steps or clear priorities.

Listening to the participant feedback, it's clear that the technical report is only part of what's needed to help create change within this community, with the stakeholders involved. Developing a communications plan would ensure that the communications were effective locally – that the right messages went to the right people at the right time.

A stakeholder map would further strengthen this process by broadly identifying the different audiences, whether they are beneficiaries (those who gain from improved access and cooperation); change makers (groups with the power to influence decisions); observers (those affected but less directly involved); or shapers (individuals or organisations that shape opinions). Using the four quadrants outlined in figure 1 would help tailor communication and engagement efforts so that each group is appropriately involved, increasing the likelihood of sustainable and widely supported outcomes.

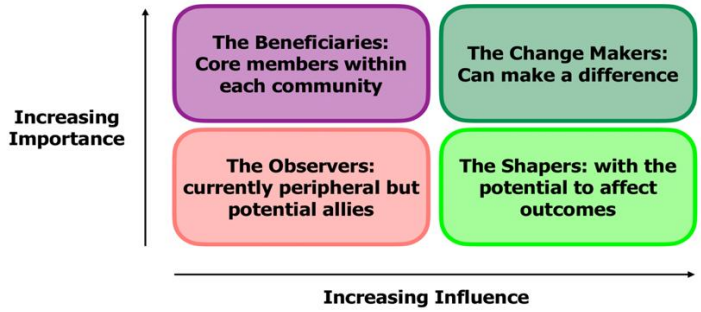


Figure 1: An example of a stakeholder map

The following themes emerged from comments made during the workshop discussions:

a. Legal and Regulatory Ambiguity:

- There was a misunderstanding about laws related to unsealed county roads (UCRs) within the pilot area.
- It was the community member's view that the UK Government's Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs sets the framework, which is then interpreted by local authorities.
- They felt Appendix E in the report was flawed: in their view it needs source legislation, how it applies to the National Landscape, and where the legislation might conflict with the Tracks and Trails group objectives.

b. Community Impact and Engagement:

- The workshop participants said that the local communities had been reporting long-standing issues (20+ years) with little response.
- They highlighted the anxiety that exists around legal use of UCRs and illegal off-road bike use in the area, intimidation between different stakeholders, and a lack of clarity on their rights.
- It's clear that communication needs to be regular and proactive to manage stakeholder expectations and actions.

c. Enforcement and Reporting Challenges:

- Enforcement levels are seen as being very low – compounded by community members not reporting as they felt the incidents weren't being policed.
- A concerted effort is needed to encourage reporting and reassure residents there will be no adverse consequences.
- Monitoring noise levels, possibly involving environmental health, could also help address gaps in evidence.

d. Infrastructure and Condition of Routes:

- The poor condition of UCRs attracts vehicle users from outside the area but discourages some non-vehicular local users.
- Resurfacing roads to make them safe or restricting unsafe routes is seen as critical.
- It was queried whether moderate repairs could be funded nationally by users, as seen in Chapel Hill Rd (2019).

e. Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) Options:

- TROs don't have to be applied using the "full-fat" option; flexible options exist (seasonal, one-way, time-based, vehicle-type restrictions) and could be explored.
- Understanding TROs and their application in the National Landscape was seen as essential for effective management of users in the area.

f. Information and Signage

- Signage was seen as confusing; clarity on routes and hierarchy of users is needed.

- Accurate maps and connectivity information are critical for planning and monitoring usage.

Ideas Raised During Workshop Discussions

The following section summarises ideas and potential actions raised during workshop discussions (See Appendix Three for details). These should be understood as suggestions and topics for further exploration rather than agreed actions or a formal work programme.

Phase 1: Next 12 Months

Objective 1: Prioritise and Scope Urgent Routes

1.1 Remove non-contentious roads from the list of routes under review.
1.2 Understand the impact of the following factors on the routes: route users, frequency of usage, frequency of accidents / incidents on the route and levels of disruption caused.
1.3 Assess heritage features and define measures to prevent damage along these routes.
1.4 Prioritise two routes for action based on all this information.

Objective 2: Develop Costed Work Packages

2.1 Review consultant's report and specify what needs to be done to make routes safe and signposted / waymarked.
2.2 Prepare detailed cost estimates for proposed works.

Objective 3: Secure Funding

3.1 Identify funding sources (grants, stakeholder contributions, user groups).
3.2 Submit applications for funding.

Objective 4: Education and Communication

4.1 Develop a communications plan about the issue and any proposed interventions. The Communications Plan should contain information on background, aims / objectives of plan, key messages, channels / tools available, timeline, roles / responsibilities, monitoring and Communications Plan Risks.
4.2 Develop a Stakeholder Map (see Figure 1 for details).
4.3 Seek information about legislation / legislative advice.
4.4 Communications Plan to include the provision of legislative advice and plain-language briefings for stakeholders.

Objective 5: Feasibility and TRO Options

5.1 Work with stakeholders on options like one-way systems, permits, seasonal TROs
5.2 Consult on options and assess feasibility
5.3 If funding secured, carry out the necessary works.
5.4 If funding not secured, prepare Traffic Regulation Orders using Temporary, seasonal, trial options to manage the use of these routes and monitor their impact.

Phase 2: Beyond 12 Months

Objective 6: Strategic Route Management

6.1 Prioritise the remaining routes in terms of required interventions.
6.2 Consider connectivity and future needs of users.
6.3 Develop a classification for the routes in terms of need and progress using a red, amber and green traffic light system. Ensure that this information is included in the Communications Plan.

Objective 7: Monitoring and Improvements

7.1 Implement signage and improvement works suggested.
7.2 Work with stakeholders on options like one-way systems, permits, seasonal TROs.
7.3 Ensure community voice is included as part of the programme monitoring.

Objective 8: Recreational Route Development

8.1 Promote sustainable use and access of all routes to users & stakeholders.
8.2 Investigate creation and marketing of designated "fun" routes for motorbikes to reduce nuisance and improve safety. Ensure these routes are safe and prevent intrusion into private property.

Ongoing Actions

Objective 9: Reporting and Enforcement

9.1 Invite a Police representative in the Tracks and Trails Steering group.
9.2 Develop a clear reporting system – using flow chart in Appendix Four.
9.3 Work with residents to create a community database and check with Police records to see if both datasets align.
9.4 Understand any discrepancies and plan remedial actions if necessary.

Objective 10: Strategic Management Plan

10.1 Draft a supplementary plan capturing all routes and development options with suggestions based on future needs.
10.2 Present this Plan to Local Access Forum or National Landscape for information and comment.

Possible Outcomes Discussed

Participants discussed what progress might look like in the coming years if the issues identified were addressed. These points reflect aspirations expressed during discussion rather than agreed targets.

1. Informed, signed, monitored, and agreed Plan of Action.
2. Improved signage within the Pilot area.
3. Better documentation of issues through community, police and local authority monitoring.
4. Consulted and agreed Traffic Regulation Orders.
5. Consensus amongst stakeholders on route management.

Appendix One – Workshop Participants

Andrew Blake	Manager Wye Valley National Landscape
Anne Underwood	Member of the Local Access Forum Steering Group
Barbara Heys	Member of the Local Access Forum Steering Group
Carl Touhig	Head of Neighbourhood Services and Decarbonisation Monmouthshire County Council (online)
Celyn Davies	Project Officer Wye Valley National Landscape
Colette Bosley	Countryside, Destination and Environment Manager Monmouthshire County Council
Graham Kinsella	Traffic and Road Safety Manager Monmouthshire County Council
Ian Mawdsley	Member of the Local Access Forum Steering Group
Irene Brooke	Member of the Local Access Forum Steering Group
Kelvin Varney	Member of the Local Access Forum Steering Group
Ruth Rourke	Countryside Access Manager Monmouthshire County Council
Sallie Roderick	Member of the Local Access Forum Steering Group

Appendix Two – Agenda

10.00 – 10.15	Introductions / Use of interactive equipment
10.15 – 10.35	Presentation of the Consultant's Work to answer some of the following: • Context • Why we've got to this point. • What did the consultant do
10.35 – 10.40	Questions for clarification
10.40 – 10.50	Discussion on: • What stood out from the presentation? • What seems critical from the presentation?
10.50 – 11.00	Discussion on: • What insights are beginning to emerge from our conversation?
11.00 – 11.20	Presentation of the Consultant's Recommendations.
11.20 – 11.40	Discussion on: • What stood out from the presentation? • What seems critical from the presentation? • What insights are beginning to emerge from our conversation?
11.40 – 11.55	Comfort Break
11.55 – 12.55	Creating Consensus
12.55 – 13.00	Summing up and next steps.

Appendix Three – Workshop Notes

First Presentation Feedback

What stood out from the presentation?

- Real concerns with the details of the Appendix. Lots of misunderstanding about the laws relating to unsealed county roads. I believe DEFRA sets the framework locally which is interpreted by the local authority. This confusion is a fundamental flaw for the whole report.
- It's unclear about Horse Way's designation - confused by signage.
- Thank you, Celyn, for making sense of the report and drawing out some key points.

What seems critical in the presentation?

- Resurfacing and making the roads useable for traffic as they were in the 1970s. Need to understand what is required? Where is the desire? What is the priority?
- The report doesn't include any costings or budgets - that was part of the brief that was not addressed at all in the report.
- Appendix E has several flaws ... legal bit is too short - it needs to include the source legislation. It's not clear about how roads can be closed in AONBs which is specific. It suggests a way forward that cuts across the objectives of the Tracks and Trails working group. It's a bit confusing. Going off in every direction – and we end up with a camel. Could we have a briefing from the legal department to understand the legislation? This would help us make informed decisions.
- We don't have the information about the impact on communities or users of the trails. To capture their concerns such anxiety of legal and illegal use of off-road bikes etc. Not local people. And intimidating if confronted.
- Look at ways of monitoring usage on the routes.
- Signage is confusing.
- Clarity of the routes.
- We need to bring the community along with us. And how do we deal with the expectations that have been raised.
- If we want actions and a road map, we need to clarify what we want.
- There is a letter from Trellech Community Council that has been widely circulated which documents comments that we have received from residents about the impact on them of use of the tracks. It has not been reviewed by the Tracks and Trails group or the LAF as we have not been able to meet since the letter was written in May.

Second Presentation Feedback

What stood out from the presentation?

- It would be interesting to know what anti-social behaviour has been formally recorded. How many and where? Formal recording will help justify action.
- The different users cause clashes and problems.
- There are several options within a TRO it does not have to be a full fat TRO it could be a seasonal, one way, time of daytime of the week, type of vehicle. The latter may be more successfully implemented.
- It should be realised that the poor condition of some of these UCRs is what attracts some vehicle users from further afield. If they weren't in a poor state a lot of users wouldn't turn up.
- If the cost of moderate repairs was known this may be able to be funded or partly funded by the users nationally. This did happen on Chapel Hill Rd in 2019.

What seems critical in the presentation?

- Should we refer to the hierarchy of users on the signage?
- Could there be reference to the highway code on the sign for UCR.
- Highway code does apply to UCRs.
- We will need a concerted effort to get people to report issues - our communities tell us that they have been reporting issues for about twenty years. The police tell us they don't have a good log of complaints as people have got fed up of reporting and seeing no change.
- Monitoring of noise levels - have we talked with environmental health?
- Information is critical. Having the right maps of the area would be very helpful.
- Work out where the connectivity.
- Understanding the TROs and the options with AONBs.
- What are the rights on each of the roads?
- Communications with the community need to be a regular occurrence.
- We want some positive action out of this.
- Enforcement is critical. Very low levels of enforcement.
- A recognition that some of these routes are unsafe for many users - and a basic minimum should be that they are made safe or restricted.
- The report is a useful summation of the issues - what it doesn't do is target the exact locations where the quick wins might exist. And understand what the next steps are.
- The report shows some quick wins - signage and who can use these routes. This then helps the police get involved. Or a tread lightly approach.
- We do need to report people to the police and start to create a log of issues.
- People need to be reassured that if they do report that there's no comeback.
- Understand the stakeholders and work out how to get them into the conversations and decision making.

Recommendations to take forward

In the next 12 months

1. Prioritise action on two routes.

    a. Identify two routes as Urgent / Priority – this is a manageable number, and the information is contained within the Consultant's report.
    b. Priority is based on issues of safety and disruption.
    c. Data sources e.g. on users, method [use of the route], numbers, casualties etc., are all gathered.
    d. Also, identification on how to prevent further damage / preserve heritage features.
    e. Look at the report and see what needs to be done to make them safe etc and get it costed.
    f. Secure funding.
    g. Can this work be done with the routes in full use?
    h. If answer to f) is no - consider a Traffic Regulation Order that can be temporary, seasonal or trial.

2. Education and communication knowledge / legislation (etc.). The group want some legislative advice.

3. Take out the non-contentious roads, create a prioritised list of remaining roads with a detailed breakdown of what needs to be done and where, and communicate this with communities and stakeholder organisations (with them on board).

Beyond the next 12 months

1. Medium term - prioritisation of route management (using different approaches such as Traffic Regulation Orders).
   Possibly classify routes or issues as amber, red and green.
   Prioritise quick wins.
   Those ones or parts requiring urgent action.
   Consider connections.
   Future and current needs.

2. Monitoring, implementing signage and improvement works, working with stakeholder organisations to implement options such as one-way systems, permits, seasonal Traffic Regulation Orders. Include the voice of the community

3. Create and market 'fun' routes for motor bikes etc. (e.g., there are bicycle routes e.g., Forest of Dean) so people can have fun, be reasonable safe and not end up in someone's garden.

Anything else

1. Police should be part of stakeholder group - we need to develop a very easy way for communities to report issues, so we have a database as part of our monitoring. Develop a community database to match with Police records. Or if they do exist, collate the information and check with the Police reports.

2. Publish the route for reporting problems.

3. Need a strategic management plan - supplementary management plan. Capture these routes and understand how they could be developed and presented to the Local Access Forum or given to the AONB.

What you expect to see in 2 years' time?

- Informed, signed, monitored and agreed plan of action.
- Signage improved.
- Better understanding and documentation of the issues through monitoring.
- Signage. Consulted on proposed TROs.
- Consensus on TROs.

Appendix Four: Proposed Vehicle Nuisance or Misuse in the Lower Wye Valley National Landscape Flowchart by Celyn Davies December 2025.

