



## Research Report

# Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – Motorised Users

Findings from a survey of motorised users within Warwickshire about the  
Rights of Way Improvement Plan

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## Introduction

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 ("CROW") placed a duty on the County Council to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), a 10-year plan for improving the provision of access to the countryside.

The plan will include the County Council's assessment of such things as;

- the extent to which Warwickshire's rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public,
- the opportunities provided by rights of way for exercise and open air recreation,
- the accessibility of the rights of way network to blind or partially sighted persons and those with mobility problems and
- targets for the future of the rights of way network.

In order to assess what should be included in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, consultation with interested parties was undertaken. Seven different questionnaires were designed and distributed to walkers and general countryside users, cyclists, horse riders, land managers, motorised users, Parish / Town Councils and Tourist Information Centres. The results in this report relate to the findings from the questionnaires returned by **motorised users**. The consultation was carried out in August and September 2004.

## Definitions

The terms 'off road' and 'off roading' were used in the questionnaire to mean the use of a highway, or other land, which does not have a sealed (tarmac) surface.

## Key findings

- Most respondents use byways and/or unclassified county roads (83%) and green lanes (79%) to drive 'off road'.
- Four in ten respondents (40%) indicated that they follow a voluntary code of practice, [TRF (Trail Riders Fellowship) or GLASS (Green Lane Association) codes of conduct].
- Water, hedged lanes, routes without hedges, routes with trees and dry and sunny weather were all factors looked for when respondents go 'off roading'.
- To take in the views and scenery, was the main reason why many respondents drove 'off road' in Warwickshire.
- More than 60% of respondents were uncertain about the legal status of Warwickshire's unsurfaced roads.

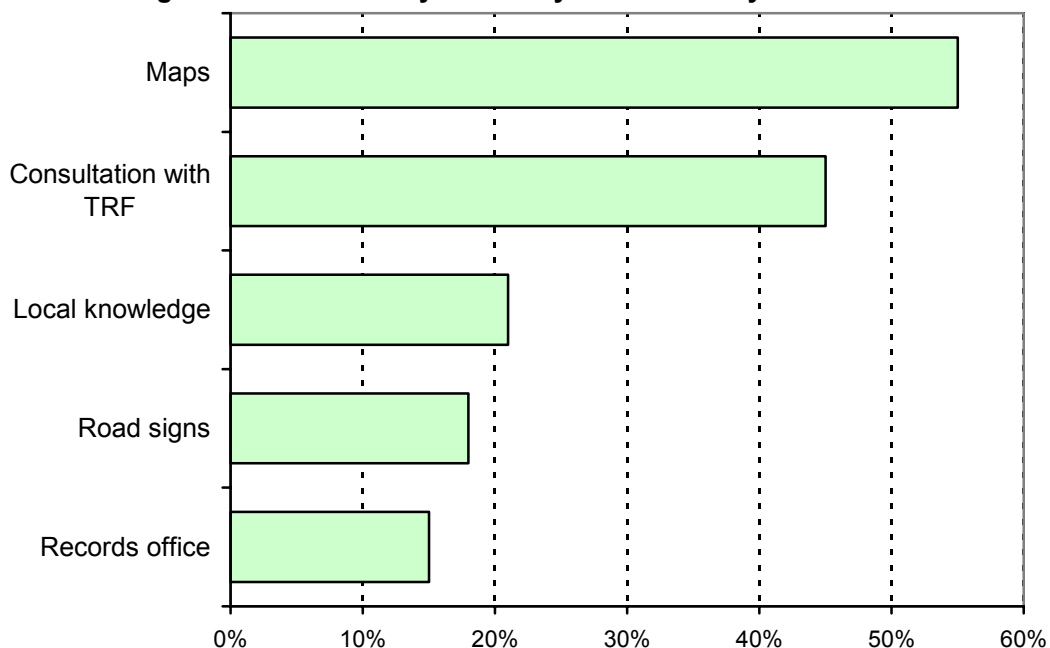
## Response rates

- The questionnaire attracted 95 respondents. The vast majority of respondents (95%) were male, and most respondents (74%) were aged between 30 and 59, whilst one in five respondents (20%) were aged under 30. The vast majority of respondents (98%) classified themselves as being 'White' – with the other respondents classifying themselves as 'Asian or Asian British' and 'Black or Black British'.

## Results – Your vehicle and 'off roading'

- Respondents were initially asked what vehicle they use when driving 'off road'. The most popular type of vehicle was a Land Rover or other 4x4 vehicle, driven by 59% of respondents. 46% of respondents rode a motorcycle, 6% drove an ex-military vehicle and 2% rode a quad bike or trike.
- 22% of respondents owned a motorcycle that they only use 'off road'. 2% of respondents owned a Land Rover or other 4x4 that they keep just for 'off road' use and 1% owned a quad bike or trike that was only used 'off road'.
- Most respondents use byways and/or unclassified county roads (83%) and green lanes (79%) to drive 'off road' and 85% of respondents go outside Warwickshire to drive 'off road'. Many respondents also use specialist sites or courses (45%) and private land (43%).
- Respondents were asked how they identified which routes they can use; the most popular responses are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: "Tell us how you identify which routes you can use."**



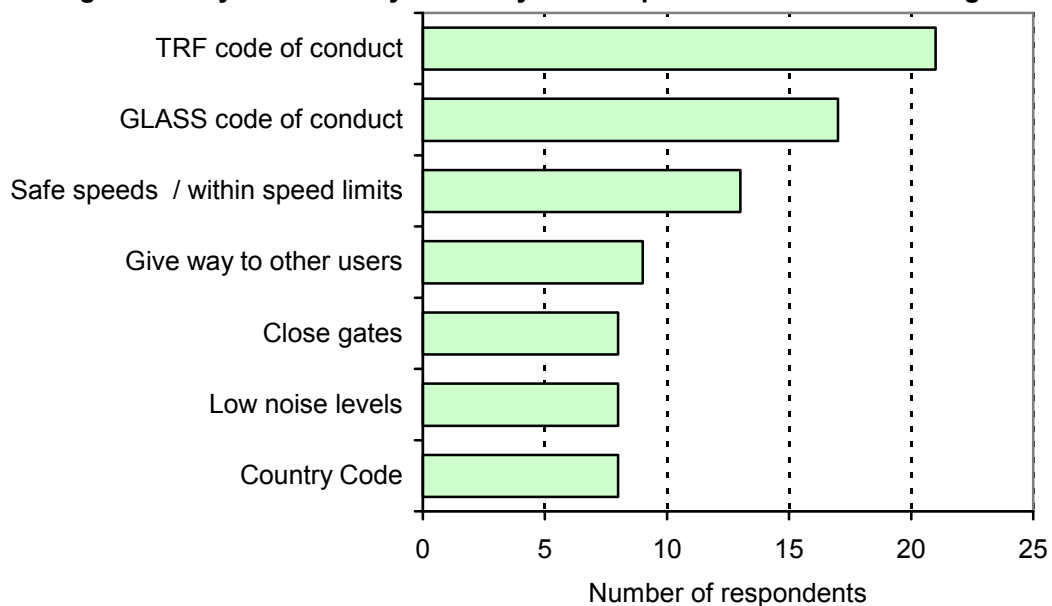
- Nearly four out of five respondents were a member of a special interest motorised user group. The most popular groups that respondents were members of were the Trail Riders Fellowship (28 respondents) and the British Motorcycle Federation (27 respondents). Figure 2 shows the results in more detail.

**Figure 2: Special interest motorised user groups**

Organisation	No. of respondents
Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF)	28
British Motorcycle Federation (BMF)	27
Green Lane Association (GLASS)	9
All Wheel Drive Club (AWDC)	8
Disabled Off Road Association (DORA)	4
Land Rover Owners Club	3
Land Access and Recreational Association (LARA)	1
Other	40

- 34 respondents were members of more than one user group.
- Respondents were asked whether they followed any voluntary code of practice whilst 'off roading'; Figure 3 shows the results.

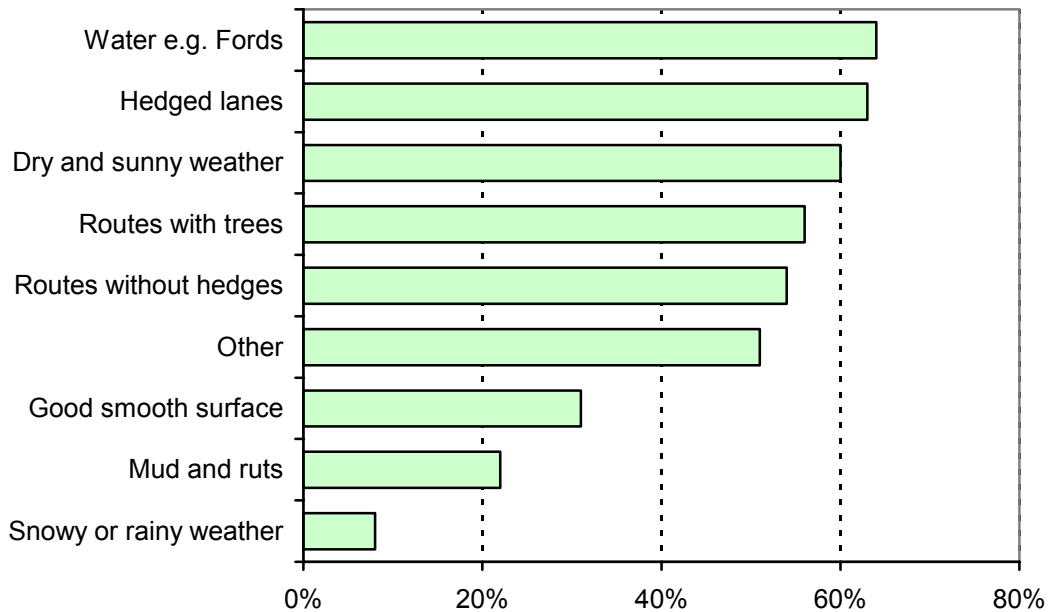
**Figure 3: Do you follow any voluntary code of practice whilst 'off roading'?**



- One in six respondents go 'off road' driving in Warwickshire at least once a week, a further one-half of respondents travel 'off road' at least once a month, whilst the remainder travel 'off road' less often.
- Respondents were asked who they usually go 'off road' driving with. The results were fairly evenly spread between respondents going in a single vehicle, in a group of other vehicles or on an organised day out with a special interest group.

- Respondents were asked for their opinion on the unsurfaced roads in Warwickshire – 25% of respondents said that they were generally good, although 3% said that they were generally bad. 18% of respondents thought that the signage could be better, although 4% of respondents said that they thought signage was good. 11% of respondents thought that the roads required more maintenance and 9% of respondents thought that more 'off road' facilities should be available in general.
- Respondents were asked what they look for when they go 'off roading' in Warwickshire; the five most popular answers are shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: "What do you look for when you go 'off roading' in Warwickshire?"**

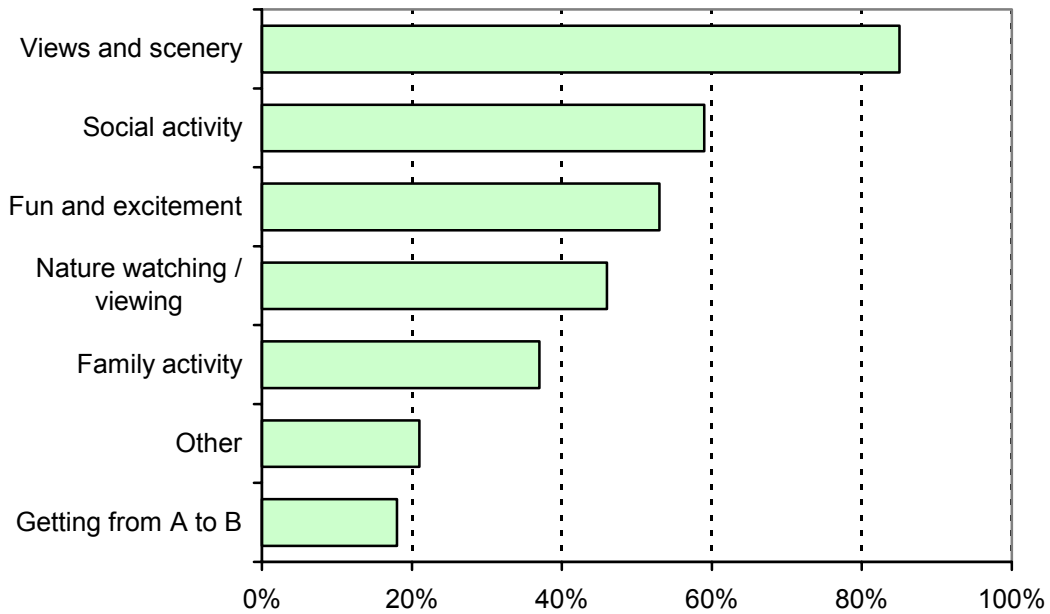


- Of the 50 people who ticked "other", the following topics were mentioned several times;

<b>Comment</b>	<b>no.</b>
good views and scenery	16 respondents
places which cannot be reached by a normal car	4 respondents
routes which are legal for motor vehicles to use	5 respondents
routes which have not been damaged/badly rutted	9 respondents
places without mud and ruts	8 respondents

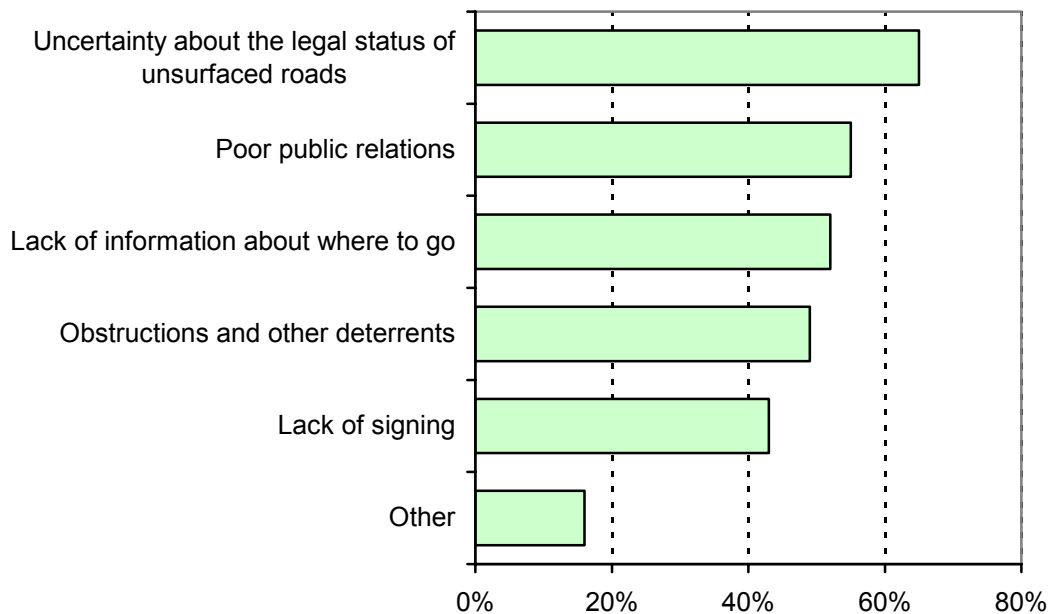
- Taking in the views and scenery was considered the main reason for 'off roading' in Warwickshire, the other main reasons are shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: "What are your main reasons for 'off road' driving?"**



- "Other" answers mentioned include using historic routes, exploring the countryside and navigational challenge.
- Respondents appeared to be divided as to what the most important factors were that affected their use of Warwickshire's unsurfaced roads. Respondents were given a list of six options, and several received similar levels of support; Figure 6 shows the results.

**Figure 6: "What are the most important factors affecting your use of Warwickshire's unsurfaced roads?"**



Of those who ticked "Other" several people mentioned the unhelpful attitudes of other rights of way users and some landowners.

- Respondents were asked what they understood by the term 'unclassified county roads' to mean. The most correct answer would have been to identify that
  - they are maintainable at public expense,
  - they are public highways and
  - some of them can legally be used by motor vehicles.

More than one-half of respondents (55%) stated that they are public highways and one in five (20%) stated that they are green lanes. More than two in five respondents (43%) think that they are maintainable at public expense.

There seems to be some confusion about whether they can legally be used by motor vehicles, 48% said that some of them can, 42% said that all of them can, and 1% said that they can only be used by motor vehicles.

Although many respondents chose one or two of the correct options, there was just one respondent who got the answer totally correct, as defined above

- Respondents were asked if they had any general or specific improvements they would like to see to the 'off road' network; the most common responses were:
  - Better signage of routes
  - Clearer / better defined legal routes
  - More lanes / legal routes
  - More Rights of Way legislation / enforcement
  - Up to date information
  - Quicker resolution of claims / disputes
  - More tolerance from other user groups / awareness