Collectively England’s byways and green lane provide the public’s largest free open space, and greatest access to the wide variety of England’s Countryside. Brexit will increase demand for ‘Stay-vacation.’

With health authorities encouraging the public to get out and get fit, to avoid obesity, strokes, heart disease, and aging, then demand for byway use on foot, horseback or mountain cycle, is set to increase.

So is off-road vehicle sports, which damage byway surface, aggravate water erosion, increase flood risks, deter other users, reduce their access, and threaten their safety. Byways are usually single lane, often narrow and steep, covered by trees, with blind corners with vulnerable surfaces, no drainage, lighting, no pavements to segregate users, no speed limits, no warning or advisory signs. No other road knowingly permits motor sports.

Kent County Councils states that it does not have the financial resources to maintain byways for use by all vehicles, or the legal resources to restrict motor vehicle use of byways and green lanes. Kent Police and Dover District Council’s Community Safety Team do not have the resources to police byways.

The simple and cost effective answer for all is legislation that enables local authorities to restrict byways as appropriate by local demand.

With global warming increasing rainfall and growing use by walkers and equestrians the problems can only get worse. The failure to resolve the problem is bringing government and enforcement agencies into disrepute, and will inhibit the growth of rural tourism.

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