Written evidence submitted by the Greenlane Association Ltd. (GLASS) (RUT0288)

Having only just being informed of this enquiry I find that the submission date has pasted however I hope that you will still consider this submission from The Greenlane Association LTD. (GLASS).

As an organisation we look to keep open those minor unsealed highways otherwise known as green lanes for recreational vehicle use and also to promote responsible driving on these roads. We are a national organisation with 1300 or so full members but with affiliated clubs whose total membership is several thousand. there are also a large number of people who drive these green roads who are not members of any club. around the country there are a number of commercial enterprises offering guided tours using green roads in areas such as the Peak District, North York Moors, the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia. To cater for the more extreme activity of "Off-Roading" there are a number of "Pay and Play" sites which are also run as commercial ventures.

Club and affiliated club members organise "greenlaning days" trips which involve for or five vehicles and range from single days to long weekends. By their very nature they take place in the countryside bringing income to rural shops, fuel stations, camp sites, B&Bs and food outlets from roadside burger vans to restaurants. Repair days are also part of the club's activities which helps the local councils by volunteers carrying out maintenance and clearing lanes to improve access for all users. It is becoming evident in recent years since the passing of the National Environment and Rural Communities Act in 2006 that many of those routes once used by motor vehicles but which lost their rights for MPVs with the passing of the Act have become overgrown and unusable.

Whilst accepting that there are a small number of localised problems associated with lack of repair and excessive use by MPVs for the vast majority of lanes there are no significant problems as reported by Faber Maunsell in 2005.

The restriction of access to the countryside for the recreational motorised user, for some of the less mobile it is their only access, reduces their in put to the rural economy whilst increasing pressure and therefore maintenance costs on those routes still available. Greater access to unsealed routes would create more opportunities for greenlaning days which would increase the financial in put to the rural economy but would also spread the load over more routes reducing both conflict with other users and maintenance costs by helping to keep routes open for other users which would otherwise become overgrown.

The motorised users of green roads who voluntarily carry out maintenance work, especially those with 4X4s, are well placed to carry tools and materials on unsurfaced routes and can also help with removal of fly tipped waste. Such work was recently carried out by members of GLASS and the TRF in the LDNP on the Gatescarth Pass to repair storm damage work which they also help fund similar work has been carried out on the Wayfarer's Track in Wales. Around the country GLASS members have helped sign and waymark routes to improve access for all users which in its small way helps to encourage use of Rights of Way and rural tourism.

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