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REF: CONSULTATION - Green Road BOAT & Letcombe Regis & West Challow BOAT (Letcombe Bassett/Regis & West Challow) Proposed Prohibition of Motor Vehicles & Carriages.

Annex A - Lived experiences from members of the Association

To ensure the proposed Order is considered with a full understanding of its practical impact, the Association invited comments from its members with direct experience of the affected routes. Their responses, excerpted below, offer insights into the personal, lawful and inclusive use of this lane, reflecting both recreational engagement and broader public interest. These accounts reinforce the submission's central themes of accessibility, procedural fairness and responsible stewardship, and should be considered alongside the Council's own representations to inform any final decision.

The number of member experiences gathered so far has been limited due to the routes being closed for a considerable period of time.

Route 1: Green Road BOAT

Route 2: Letcombe Regis/West Challow BOAT

Member A

I have been a member of GLASS for over 15 years. I used to drive these lanes two or three times per year in a group of up to 4 vehicles. Route 1 wasn't well maintained and used to get VERY scratchy towards the East end. Route 2 was always very scratchy, damaging to paintwork etc. because it wasn't regularly maintained.

There are few available lanes in Oxfordshire, these were some of the nearest to me and are important because they form part of a larger circular route (Wilts / Berks / Oxon).

I don't have a disability myself, but the group I laned with (when these were open) included someone with no use of his legs. Laning was his only method of getting to the outdoors.

The lack of care of these lanes has led to their poor condition for all users.

Member B

I am supporter of the Association and I've driven route 1 as a nice route to take instead of the main roads. The only difficulty I had was just overgrown hedges and branches.

These routes are nice to have a drive down, get out and explore the countryside and enjoy the views. Also being a Land Rover enthusiast, it's nice to go through some mud, bumpy uneven terrain.

Member C

I have been a member of GLASS for 31 years. I moved to Wiltshire in 1997 and would often include them in my routes once or twice a year. From about 2009 I relocated to Oxfordshire near Faringdon and I would drive them on average three or four times a year until closure. I've cycled and walked them also. For route 1 I would always drive the whole length as there was good connectivity to other lanes. It was overgrown in places. The fence pinches in at one point when in all probability it shouldn't. The lowest point and western end can get a little rutted, but that's never been dealt with as far as I have seen. At some point in the past the surface has been dug up to allow services to be put in. In my experience the surface is never as good afterwards when this is done.

Route 2. north of the crossroads was almost always overgrown and had quite a sideslope, although for me that was the best bit.

These lanes are highly important, not least because Oxfordshire has so few green lanes on which the recreational four wheel drive user can drive, but because they offer excellent connectivity into neighbouring counties and other lanes. In 2006 we lost so many lanes in the county because of the NERC Act and since then OCC have slowly been closing more. These historic lanes are highly important and should be preserved for future generations to explore... and for all user groups, including those with limited mobility who still have freedom to explore the countryside in a 4x4.

I don't have a disability but with the natural aging process I may in future find it difficult to walk far, and if that was the case I'd still like to think I could get away from it all and enjoy the countryside in my 4x4. Closure isn't management.

Closing this lane to vehicular traffic for almost seven years shows a serious neglect of duty on the part of OCC, when in my opinion, there was no real reason for this and I would like to know the justification for this. Did they ever engage with any MPV user groups to discuss what voluntary help might have been on offer?

Member D

I have been a member of the Association for 13 years. I drove these lanes annually from 2010 to 2017 initially as a member of the Four Wheel Drive Club and latterly as a group leader for the same club. They were both part of a route travelled in the summer by the club. I think the last time I drove them was 2019 on my own on that occasion.

On route 2, I remember the width being restricted by Beech trees and parts being scratchy.

All unsealed road routes are very important to me as they represent a unique and diminishing resource.

As I age, I will be 68 this month, I am sure access to the countryside will be of increasing benefit to both my physical and mental wellbeing.

Member E

I have been a supporter of GLASS and I have in the past driven and ridden both of these routes from 2002 through to 2018.

I enjoy getting out into the countryside using both motorised transport and on foot,. These lanes are recreationally valuable to me and my family. My partner suffers from plantar fasciitis and finds walking difficult so using a vehicle enables her to access the countryside. I'm also neurodivergent and take great pleasure getting out into the countryside using my car.

I would urge that all users should be permitted to continue to use the lanes 1.60m is too narrow to permit the use of 4x4 for my partner and me to gain access to the countryside.