

# Report on The Ridgeway Delivery Group Meeting and demonstration: Uffington

11<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Site visit to The Ridgeway at Uffington and the recent resurfacing.

Oxfordshire council's trail ranger has an interesting and probably controversial viewpoint on 4x4s. He suggests from his experience that the issue of 4x4s is reducing considerably and becoming almost a non-issue. Whether this is due to making the surfaces flat and unchallenging or just going out of fashion, he doesn't know; probably a bit of both.

Also, his view is that it is cheaper in the long term, in funding and manpower, to make good repairs to the surface capable of taking heavy farm vehicles, rather than have permanent gates, droppable bollards, keys and codes, etc, which require manpower to maintain and replace when damaged or removed illegally. Installation of temporary restrictions and/or closure of the byway whilst repairs are under way and time for them to bed in, 6 to 9 months typically, and advertised in advance. He says, *'it's very difficult to have effective restrictions on routes that have essentially porous boundaries as fences are easily broken and ditches are expensive to create and are unsightly'*. He agrees there is a case where nuisance or criminal activity takes place and he praises the rural police who respond to specific cases until it dies down.

The trail repairs at Uffington consisted of cutting out the sides of the track to fill in the central channel which was largely due to water erosion on the slope. The width was 30 feet across. Then a layer of local limestone, 250/300mm deep, was laid with a top binder of 40mm limestone down to dust.

The trail was restricted by large (cheap) concrete blocks with a 1500mm wide gap which stopped most vehicles, but not motor bikes. These blocks were removed after 6 months once the limestone had bedded in – see the point above about restrictions. Monitoring takes place and the rural police are taking an interest with intermittent visits. There appears to be no illegal use of this part of the trail, the only exception might be hare coursing and this is regarded as a police matter and part of their monitoring.



**The finished surface of limestone and finings**



**A couple of disability scooters who used the same surface**



**Two of the concrete blocks used to restrict access during the repair and settling down 6 months**



**A horse carriage driver on the new surface coming downhill**