

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

**Your request:**

In the Goyt Valley is a trail running the length of Fernilee Reservoir's eastern shore, formerly the Cromford and High Peak Railway trackbed. Though without any public right of way designation, the path has been used by both walkers and cyclists for decades. It provides a vital safe, traffic-free link into the upper valley avoiding the nearby A5004.

The route has been improved in recent years through a collaboration with the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) with the key aim of improving accessibility, making a good 3-metre width path similar to any cycle trail. Earlier this year, new, easy-access bridleway-style gates were installed at both ends, greatly improving access further as a presumed permissive bridleway, as alongside many similar United Utilities Water PLC (UU) reservoirs.

Now, as of 2/09/25, large, official-looking "no cycling" signs\* have appeared on the gateposts at both ends. As this relates to public access to the environment and cultural features, and to public health (being that it allows exercise and avoiding a recognised dangerous A road), please answer:

- Did United Utilities authorise and/or install these "no cycling" signs?
- If yes, under what directive, brief or reason were they installed? Please provide any written communication held by UU relating to their installation and any correspondence with public authorities (eg. PDNPA) who may have been informed of or approved their use.
- If yes, how does this align with UU's requirement under the Water Industry Act 1991 to provide recreational opportunities and access at its sites, given there is clear pre-existing use of this path for cycling, and a clear need to provide such, given the lack of alternative, legitimate, safe routes locally through the valley?
- If yes, and we take the signs to mean "no cycling", how does the company define this, given that the path has been designated by PDNPA as a 'Miles Without Stiles' route for users of all abilities, including those using a variety of personal mobility devices? For many people, a cycle is a mobility aid. Will users have to carry evidence that their use of a cycle or mobility device (which may then be defined as "cycling") on this wide, well-surfaced trail is due to a disability or mobility impairment? How will this use be managed or policed?
- If yes, what opportunity is there for the hundreds if not thousands of users who cycle this path each year to make a representation to UU? Please provide the best communication

channel to do so.

- If no, please answer who did action or install them and on what brief or reasoning.
- If no information exists whatsoever, please presume they have been placed illegitimately and action their removal from your property at the earliest opportunity. In addition, for the avoidance of doubt, please clarify in writing and on localised signage that this is indeed a permissive bridleway, with access legitimately granted to those walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding.

#### **Our response:**

Having liaised with our local Catchment Team, I can confirm the path referenced in your request has never been designated as a permissive bridleway or official cycleway, it is designated as a concessionary footpath. The footpath was improved to allow better access to disabled users as part of the '[Better Outside](#)' Partnership with the Peak District National Park. As part of this project, disabled access (RADAR) gates were installed at both ends of the track, which allowed disabled users to open the gates with a 'radar key', which allowed them access.

Unfortunately, the gates along the concessionary footpath have continually suffered from vandalism, and signage was frequently removed or vandalised. Following the installation of disabled access (RADAR) gates, these were also frequently vandalised so that the gate would open all the time without the need for a key. Earlier this year, the vandalised disabled access (RADAR) gates were replaced for conventional gates by the PDNP. We believe that the no cycling signs that you reference may have also been installed at the same time, by the PDNP staff. The message conveyed by the signs is correct, as the path has never been an official cycle path, as aforementioned.

For further information, whilst this route is not currently classed as an official concessionary bridleway, it can be accessed by horse riders as part of a keyed access agreement, however horse riders must apply to United Utilities for permission to use the route for this purpose. Additionally, we have previously allowed organised cycle events to use this route following a request for access, and these events usually last no longer than one day.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at [EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk), addressing your request to [REDACTED], and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

We'd love to hear your feedback on how we handled your request! If you have a moment, please complete our short survey [here](#) – your input helps us improve our service.