



## Colton Parish Council

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5th May 2009

Tim Farron, MP  
Acland House,  
Yard 2, Stricklandgate,  
Kendal  
Cumbria  
LA9 4ND

Dear Tim,

### **Condition of Unclassified Country Roads in Colton Parish**

Many thanks for your letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> February, and copy of the letter from the Chief Executive of Cumbria County Council. I apologise for the delay in replying but it has taken quite some time (and research) for us to begin to understand the issues here!

First, may I thank you for pursuing this matter on our behalf; that is much appreciated. We note that you offer to make further representations and, at the risk of over-burdening you with this, our Council would be most grateful if you could continue your efforts a little further and I have been mandated to write to you again. In addition, we are organising a meeting of interested parties in the near future and it would be helpful if we could have input from County at that stage.

I would also take this opportunity to point out that the condition of the routes that we identified in our original letter has deteriorated still further, meaning that a resolution to this issue is more pressing than ever.

I have agonised about what information it is that we need to find a clear way forward in our understanding. Mr Stybelski's letter shows that we are not on the same wavelength and I conclude that we have some differences in definitions of the constituent parts of the road network. I believe that it would help us in our understanding if Mr Stybelski could answer the questions that we have attached to this letter and would be most grateful if you could forward them to him.

Finally, perhaps I might add that our farmers are becoming increasingly frustrated and irate about the lack of action on this matter, not helped by recent threats and physical skirmishes with trail riders which have been serious enough to involve the police.

We thank you for your continued interest in this difficult issue.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Barr  
(Chair, Colton Parish Council)

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## Condition of Unclassified Country Roads (UCRs) in Colton Parish

Questions for Mr Peter Stybelski, Chief Executive, Cumbria County Council

1. ***Why has the Highways Authority not replied directly to Colton Parish Council in response to the two letters which the Council sent in 2008 concerning UCRs?***

***Background:*** We wrote a lengthy letter to the Chairman, Cumbria Highways Authority, on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2008 in which we detailed serious defects in parts of the road network in this parish. We followed this with a letter on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2008 requesting a reply to our first letter. This complete lack of response from County is very discouraging in these days of joint working and parish charters.

2. ***What does Mr Stybelski mean by "unclassified roads" which, he says, probably make up much more than 70% of roads in Colton?***

***Background:*** We have obtained maps from County showing all the numbered roads in Colton parish and have measured all of these reasonably accurately. Only about 56% of these have road number starting with 'U' (i.e. Unclassified). Apart from a very short length of the A590 (which is not relevant here), all the other roads are 'C' roads.

3. ***Are the eight Unclassified roads specified in our letter of 6<sup>th</sup> June 2008 (U5051, U5062, U5064, U5203, U5204, U5213, U5216 & U5566) part of the County's adopted highway network?***

***Background:*** In our letter of 6<sup>th</sup> June, we were quite specific about the eight numbered routes we had concerns about. These are unsealed roads that we had understood were part of the County's adopted highway network, and which we referred to as 'Unclassified Country Roads' (UCRs) - a term used by County to refer to these roads on its own 'Hierarchy of Trail Routes' web pages.

If the answer to 3. above is 'YES', then:

4. ***Were these roads included in the surveys carried out "in accordance with ... the Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance"? and***
  - a) ***If they were not included, then why not?***
  - b) ***If they were included, then how can they possibly be said not to contain any defects which breach the government's inspection guidelines, given that one, in particular, is so badly eroded that it is impassable even by tractor for local farmers and other routes are rapidly going the same way?***
  - c) ***Can we see a copy of the most recent survey report for this parish?***
  - d) ***Can we see a copy of the Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance?***

If the answer to 3. above is 'NO' then:

5. ***Who is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of these eight routes?***

(Questions submitted on behalf of Colton Parish Council by Colin Barr, Chairman - May 2009)