

Zip Wire Attraction Open Meeting 29/09/2014

Summary

Outline Proposal

- Tree Top Treks (TTT) considering a number of sites in the LDNP for a new “attraction” which will be somewhere between its current attraction in Brockholes and its attractions in Wales
- Greenside is the only site to date for which planning advice has been sought
- No details on exact route, set up have yet been decided on but...
- Target is for around 4 parallel zip lines with top speeds of around 60 mph running from “somewhere” on Greenside down to the Lightfoot fields
- “Riders” would park in the village and been bused/driven up Greenside Road and Bridlepath to the start point at the mine
- Target market is family market to include the “grey pound” grandparents
- Aim to attract 150-200 people per day
- No explicit number was given on likely jobs to be created but Brockholes employs 9 FTEs (although seasonal). Brockholes has a 250m zipline.
- Currently no figures on potential noise levels generated

Status of the Proposal

- No planning application has yet been made
- Planning advice statement issued in May and since then LDNP stated that no further discussions had taken place
- So far TTT have only spoken to LDNP, Peter Lightfoot from Gillside and Owners of Bell Cottage. Aim to meet with Ullswater Valley Planning and Ullswater Association

Status of LDNP Position

- No explicit planning application made, just the planning advice statement which is usual and one of 100s the LDNP issue every year
- This is produced by the planning department of the LDNP (Andrew Smith)
- The LDNP confirmed they own the proposed starting point for the zip lines
- They confirmed that they will enter into a commercial arrangement with TTT for use of their land
- They stated that there was no conflict of interest about them gaining financially from a positive planning decision as the planning committee was separate from the Estate Management Group who would negotiate with TTT
- LDNP accepted that they had been working with residents along the bridlepath to reduce unauthorised traffic from using it

TTT Criteria for Taking the Proposal Forward

- TTT would “never proceed without community support”
- TTT can never implement zip lines over anyone’s house without their explicit permission
- TTT can never implement zip lines over a private road without the owners explicit permission

Next Steps Should they decide to proceed

- Detailed Topographical Survey to determine suitability of terrain for proposal
- Complete full consultation with the local community to look at the benefits (and potential costs/issues) to the local community

Main Objections

- There was concern over the ability of the LDNP to be truly impartial in making a planning decision where it is set to gain financially. As stated by TTT the successful planning application at Brockholes allowed the LDNP to keep their visitor centre open.
- The National Park is fundamentally in place to preserve the tranquility and character of the Lake District. It was the criteria of tranquility which led to previous planning applications for this type of attraction being turned down
- Despite the potential for the attraction to bring in visitors there is a real concern that it will also stop other people coming to the area who are attracted by the peace and quiet.
- In addition the current visitors are more likely to stay for days/weeks and therefore spend money in local shops/pubs/restaurants as opposed to people coming to do the zip attraction and then leaving again
- There was concern over the potential “snowball” effect. One of TTT stated objectives was to turn the LDNP into the “adventure capital of the UK” so if they got permission for this attraction what would be next – more zip lines, jet skis on Ullswater, etc etc
- There were many practical concerns raised about parking in the village – already stretched on busy days
- There were many practical concerns raised about use of the bridlepath and Greenside road. It was unclear how “riders” would be taken up to Greenside although one option mentioned was a land train.

Main Supporting Comments

- It was stated that some businesses had suffered a fall in visitors recently and this would bring much needed visitors back to the area
- It was also stated that the attraction would bring in much needed jobs for young people. TTT stated that full training would be given to people being employed

Potential Straw Poll Vote

- It was generally agreed that no vote should be taken at this meeting as until a formal and detailed planning application was in place any vote would have little meaning.
- Should a formal planning application be made then the Parish Council would initiate a formal Parish vote for those people on the electoral/Parish roll. A similar vote has been made some years ago regarding the potential to change the Greenside Bridlepath into a road and residents had voted overwhelmingly to keep its status as a bridleway.

Next Steps

- Parish Council to initiate a visitor survey to look at visitor numbers over recent years and also criteria on which visitors are attracted to the area
- TTT to continue their deliberations “over the next few months” with a view to deciding on whether to take the proposal forward.

Main Concerns from Residents communicated prior to the Meeting

- Noise of Screams from Thrill Seekers using the Zip Wire
- Noise from Zip Wire Users will bounce back along the Valley
- The buzzing of the wires and the noisy screams will be amplified as it bounces off both sides of the valley
- The National Park have a policy in place referred to as 'Quieting the Heads of the Valleys' – Introduction of a Zip Wire will contradict this policy
- Sensitivity and Respect for the Area. The LDNPA authority have already identified and fenced off sensitive areas within the proposed vicinity
- The proposed Zip Wire would have a major visual impact on the Valley and degrade its natural beauty and tranquility
- Such an artificial attraction flies in the face of the LDNPA core strategy of preserving the natural attraction of the Fells
- Such a man made amusement will inevitably attract a very different sort of Visitor to those who enjoy the natural beauty
- The Greenside Bridleway is insufficient for present use and could not cope with extra traffic
- The LDNPA 2011 Land Allocations Policy identified the 'narrows' by the Travellers Rest as unsuitable for more traffic which would occur as the result of a Zip Wire Installation
- Negative effect on traffic flow and parking
- A Zip Wire should have no place in this area – this is a NATIONAL Park not a THEME Park

Supporting Comment Received prior to the Meeting

- I think that the proposed zip wire could benefit the village in terms of employment and attracting visitors.