

## The Desert

"The Desert" is a location that has for many years now, been used as a site for Off-Road enthusiasts. It is located in a woodland nature reserve in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire.

This land is owned by UK Coal, (sublet to Lafarge Aggregates for sand quarrying purposes) Surrounding land and forest is owned by The Forestry Commission, Notts County Council and Newark and Sherwood District Council. None of these allow access to the site for Off-Road activity.

Many of the people who arrive at "The Desert" have travelled some distance and are normally law-abiding citizens who ride legal, well-maintained machines. They are often unaware that they are not permitted to use "The Desert".

It appears that these people have been misinformed, either by websites advertising "The Desert" as a legal location or by word of mouth from others who have been misinformed.

As mentioned above, the use of this land for off-road motorised use is unlawful. Numerous complaints have been received from local residents, land-owners and legitimate users of the area, (such as horse riders, cyclists and walkers) about the **anti-social behaviour** of some of the off-roaders. The security staff employed by UK Coal have also been subjected to **threats and intimidation** by some of the visitors.

In addition to this, there are real **concerns for the safety** of those who use the site, not only because of the activities that they are involved in, but because of the numbers involved, which makes the risk that much greater. The site has no marshalls, no first aid facility and no rules or guidelines for its use. The people who have been using this site also range in ability from complete beginners to semi-professionals, and in age from 8 year olds to adults. As a result of this mix of ages and abilities, the potential for serious injury or death to a user is **greatly increased**. There has already been 1 fatality and numerous serious injuries at the site over the last couple of years. The risk to its users is also compounded by the fact that in recent weeks, the forested area of the site has been found to contain home made booby traps, consisting of barbed wire strung at head height between trees, across commonly used tracks.

Due to the inaccessibility of the site, the response times for medical staff to reach injured riders is far greater than most other areas of the county, and the emergency services are then themselves put at risk if called upon to deal with an accident at the site.

The **long-term ideal for UK Coal, the Local Authorities and the Police is to establish a properly managed site within this area** which will be professionally run for off-road enthusiasts. This is still, however, years away and the progress of this venture is actually being hampered by people using the site illegally.

The consequences of using a vehicle in this area for off-road activity, whether the vehicle is itself used for off-road activity or if it is used for the transportation of an off road vehicle to the area, are as follows:

- A Section 59 Warning Notice (vehicle used Anti Socially) can be issued, and if ignored your vehicle can be seized and crushed
- You can be reported for various driving offences and summonsed to court

- Your vehicle can be seized for being used on public footpaths or roads without adequate 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance cover and crushed

Also, should you be using a work vehicle for the transportation of your off road vehicle to the site, your insurance company may not cover the use of the works vehicle for this purpose and therefore an offence of no insurance would be committed.

If you are using a company vehicle for transporting off-road bikes, you may be committing an offence of Taking a Vehicle Without the Owners Consent if your employer has not authorised the vehicle to be used in this way.

The details of all vehicles sighted by police in this area which are seen to be involved in off-road activity, will be taken and letters will be sent to the registered keepers / owners.

Nottinghamshire Police asks you to consider the consequences of using this site, and the repercussions should you be involved in an accident with a member of the public, a child, or have a work vehicle seized that does not belong to you.

Please feel free to post links to this letter or to copy and post it onto other Moto X or Off-Road Sites.

Should you have any further enquiries relating to this letter please contact Nottinghamshire Police on:

TEL: 01623 420999

Email : [adivmmotounit@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:adivmmotounit@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk)

Website : [www.nottinghamshire.police.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk)