

The Fosse Way at Whitewalls Avon Crossing, Easton Grey Information Sheet

The Roman settlement at Fosse Way at Whitewalls Avon crossing is a significant Roman small town, one of five located in Wiltshire. It is a Scheduled Monument considered to be of national importance. There are also other remains that both pre and post date the Romans. There is also ecological importance at the site; the river is a spawning ground for trout and a family of otters live further along the bank.

There has been extensive misuse of this section of byway particularly by irresponsible 4x4 users driving in and out of the river and carving ruts and divots into the surface exposing and damaging the archaeological remains. There have been past attempts to prevent abuse at the site, including installation of barriers and bollards. However, these defences have always been winched out of the way by the irresponsible 4x4 drivers, allowing the river to be used like a vehicular playground once again.

Wiltshire Council is looking to work with all parties with an interest in the Fosse Way to find a workable solution that will be supported and implemented jointly by all parties which will include Wiltshire Council, English Heritage, local Parish and Town Councils, Wiltshire Police, Landowners and users groups. The Fosse Way is used and enjoyed by many people and groups with differing interests, which has meant that a simple solution has not been possible and that compromises must be made.

Proposed Actions

Information and interpretation signs

Education about the significance of the site will be a major part of the solution. Currently people using the location as a vehicular playground do not know that they are contributing to the destruction of a major historical site. Education could also result in more interest in the site as a tourist destination.

2 Traffic Regulation Orders

1. Permanent TRO restricting the highway to the main track leading over the bridge. Prohibition of driving of any motor vehicle or accompanied horse from the areas of highway identified on the plan attached (i.e. confining use by motorcycles and accompanied horses to the main track).
2. Permanent TRO prohibition of driving any motor vehicle other than a solo motorcycle from the full extent of the byway.

Ground work protecting the site

Installation of gates/barriers to prevent 4x4 access to the byway open to all traffic.

Ground work reinstating the site

English Heritage and Wiltshire Council to work jointly to reinstate the north and south of the river crossing to existing levels and to restore the site.

Camera Surveillance

Wiltshire Police to provide and maintain surveillance cameras at the northern end of the route once a TRO is in place.