

OBJECTIONS TO THE ADVERTISED ORDER AND OFFICERS' RESPONSE

Objection Number	Nature of Objection	Officers' response
1	The Ridgeway is in better condition than it has ever been, due to past maintenance. Motorcycles cause little if any damage (as shown by the public inquiries in 1976 and 1992) and should not be included with 4x4 and agricultural vehicles.	One of the main reasons for the Order is to preserve The Ridgeway in good condition and to protect the amenity for non-motorised users during the Winter. However, it still does not meet the required standards for a National Trail and further improvements to the surface are proposed. Past experience shows that damage is caused by motor vehicular use during the Winter; the Order will prevent this and reduce the amount of repair work required to ensure that motor vehicles do not have to be excluded all-year round.
2	Motorcycles cause no more damage than horses.	National Trails are designated because of their ability to offer high-quality long-distance routes to walkers, and where the status of the trail permits, to horse riders and cyclists as well. Excessive use by horses in wet conditions can cause damage to the path surface, but to include horses in the TRO would be contrary to the National Trail designation.
3	Walkers, through weight of numbers, cause the most damage.	See the above comments regarding the purposes for which National Trails are designated. There is no evidence that walkers cause excessive damage to The Ridgeway.
4	Agricultural traffic causes the most damage on The Ridgeway so should be included in the Order.	There is no legal provision by which agricultural vehicles exercising private rights of access may be included in a TRO. However, the landowners that have been contacted have expressed a willingness to minimise their use of The Ridgeway during the Winter if the Order is confirmed.
5	The Order should only apply on weekends or just Saturdays.	Use by motor vehicles is not confined to weekends. A weekend-only ban could result in increased use during the week as users will be able to plan around the weekend closures.
6	Wiltshire County Council should follow the example of Cambridgeshire County Council by accepting that motorcyclists do not cause damage and therefore should not be included in TROs.	The experience in Wiltshire does not support the assertion that motorcyclists do not cause damage.
7	Motor cyclists should be able to enjoy the amenity of The Ridgeway just as other users.	The Order will protect the amenity of the Trail for non-motorised users at the request of the Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environment Quality.
8	The Order will neither improve nor preserve the amenity for trail-riders.	As 7 above.
9	All users have equal rights; it is prejudicial to exclude any one group or sub-group.	As 7 above.

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10	Non-motorised users already have exclusive use of 95% of the rights of way network nationally. Those users who object to motorised vehicles should plan their routes accordingly.	National Trails are designated because of their ability to offer high-quality long-distance routes to walkers and, where the status of the trail permits, to horse riders and cyclists as well.
11	The Council should rethink so as not to include motorcycles in the Order, or should reduce the closure period.	As 7 and 10 above.
12	The reasons given in the draft Order are vague and insufficient in detail.	The draft Order follows the statutory format.
13	The Order will result in an increase in all traffic during the Summer months when use by all users is greatest.	This will not necessarily be the result of the Order, but can only be assessed with the benefit of experience. If there is an increase in Summer traffic resulting from the Winter closure to motor vehicles, this will affect the amenity of the route. The surface of the path, however, is better able to withstand use by motor vehicles during the Summer months.
14	A number of connecting and crossing byways appear to have been included in the parish of Aldbourne which are not cul-de-sac routes.	The Order includes only one connecting byway in the parish of Aldbourne. This byway links The Ridgeway to the B4192 road and is used by motor vehicles to gain access to The Ridgeway. The Ridgeway itself beyond that point leading northwards is unsuitable for vehicles and is recorded on the Definitive Map as a bridleway. It is therefore necessary to include this connecting byway in the Order.
15	The draft Order includes more than 8km of connecting byways. Their inclusion lacks credibility and should be tested at Public Inquiry or removed from the Order where, together with any unclassified roads, they measure more than 1km in length.	This objection is considered at paragraphs 13-15 of the main report.
16	The draft Order contains errors in the map and schedule in respect of byways Berwick Bassett 14 and Winterbourne Bassett 9, which would seem to necessitate re-advertising the Order.	This objection is considered at paragraph 16 of the main report.
17	The Committee members need to consider whether they will be failing in their duty to assert and protect the rights of all legitimate users in this instance. The Public Inquiry held in 1992 which considered whether to prevent motor vehicle use on The Ridgeway on Sundays and Bank Holidays only could find no overwhelming reason to do so.	As 7 and 10 above. The 1992 Public Inquiry is considered at paragraphs 17 and 18 of the main report.
18	The Order if made will be seasonal and permanent, and will be difficult to remove if it proves unsuccessful. A trial Order should be made for two Winters and monitored for its effectiveness.	The Order can be rescinded by the County Council at any time if unsuccessful.

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19	Reasons (b), (c) and (d) for which TROs may be made (see paragraph 6 of the main report) could be cited to close virtually any road in the county to motor vehicles other than thoughtfully ridden motorcycles.	As 7 and 10 above.
20	The Order will adversely affect the local economy by reducing income from motorised users who may stay overnight in the area.	Any such reduction may be offset against the potential increase in non-motorised users who are also likely to spend money in the area.