

Extract from Report to Regulatory Committee of 14th July, 2004**OBJECTIONS AND OFFICERS' RESPONSE**

Objection Number	Nature of Objection	Officers' response
1	Not all of the sections proposed for closure (as shown on the consultation plan) suffer from vehicular damage.	The orders are not proposed solely to protect the path from damage but also on amenity grounds.
2	Not all of the connecting routes shown suffer from vehicular damage. Other cul-de-sac byways elsewhere in Wiltshire are used responsibly by vehicles without problems. Lack of use of some of the connecting byways could result in their becoming overgrown.	The orders are not proposed solely to protect the path from damage but also on amenity grounds. It is also considered that some motor vehicle users would be likely to disregard the TRO on The Ridgeway if they arrive at it and are then obliged to retrace their route. If they do retrace their route, the risk of damage to that route is doubled. Overgrowth is unlikely to become a problem during the Winter months.
3	Closure of some of the sections proposed would prevent access to other byways which it is not proposed to close.	The proposals have been revised in the light of this objection to keep such occurrences to a minimum.
4	Damage is also caused by private farm traffic and by horses; these should also be excluded by any TRO that is made.	There is no legal provision by which private access rights can be denied to the holders. However several of the landowners who have been consulted have agreed to avoid using The Ridgeway where they have other means of accessing their land. The purpose of National Trails is to provide high quality continuous routes for walkers and horse riders, so to include horse riders in the TRO would defeat part of the National Trail's purpose. In the majority of cases, the surface of The Ridgeway in Wiltshire is not especially prone to damage by horses.
5	The Ridgeway is one of the best maintained paths in Wiltshire and, when compared with other paths in the County, the expense of TROs cannot be justified.	As a National Trail, The Ridgeway is managed to the highest possible standard and a higher level of expenditure is justified. The Countryside Agency has agreed to meet the costs incurred by local authorities of making the TROs, so that existing budgets are not adversely affected.
6	There are variations between the legal route of The Ridgeway and the used route. Any orders made would need to take this into account.	The TRO, if made, will take this into account.
7	The closures proposed are believed not to be for maintenance purposes but are the start of	The TROs are intended to protect the route during the Winter months when and where the path is most vulnerable to

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	measures to ban vehicles totally from The Ridgeway.	damage caused by motor vehicles. The aim is to ensure that it can then be kept open to all users during the Summer months.
8	Use by motorcycles does not damage The Ridgeway. Although this objector (on behalf of The Trail Riders Fellowship) does not object in principle to a seasonal order, there is concern that once an order has been made it would be too easy to extend it.	There is limited evidence of damage by motorcycles which when combined with use by four-wheel drive vehicles is a major source of concern. The TROs are also being made for amenity reasons and it is considered that motorcycles are incompatible with the amenity of a National Trail.
9	The existing TRO on Smeathe's Ridge should be amended to a Winter seasonal one only; there is no material difference between Smeathe's Ridge and other parts of The Ridgeway.	Smeathe's Ridge, due to its grass sward surface, is at risk of vehicular damage at all times of the year. There is therefore no intention to re-open it to motor vehicle users for the Summer months.
10	Exclusion of vehicles from The Ridgeway may result in the use of and damage to less suitable routes.	This possibility is acknowledged, but the overall benefits to The Ridgeway as a National Trail are considered to outweigh any consequential effects elsewhere. However, other byways in the area will be monitored to see if this does become a problem.
11	Alternative routes should be opened up.	Where suitable alternative routes exist, appropriate information will be provided to potential users.
12	Consideration should be given to a weekend-only ban on vehicles.	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.
13	Any order made should be kept under review to measure its effectiveness, and revoked if unsuccessful.	This point is accepted and the position will be reviewed at the end of the closure period, if the TRO is made.
14	Policing of the TRO will be an issue	The County Council and the Friends of The Ridgeway are working with Wiltshire Police to address this concern.
15	Irresponsible users will not observe a TRO.	This is not considered to be a sufficient reason not to attempt to resolve the problems of motor vehicle use. The County Council and the Friends of The Ridgeway are working with Wiltshire Police to address this concern.