

BREAKDOWN OF OBJECTIONS

A total of 74 letters or emails objecting to the advertised TRO have been received. Each objector generally raised two or more objections. The following is a summary of the types of objection and the number of objectors citing each type of objection.

	 GROUNDS FOR OBJECTION	NUMBER OF TIMES CITED
1.	TRO is unnecessary - path is in good condition	63
2.	Damage is caused by heavy use by farm vehicles, which would be exempt from the TRO	12
3.	High scenic value of Smeathe's Ridge would be denied to vehicle users, especially less able bodied	4
4.	TRO will not benefit non-vehicle users as there is sufficient room for all	8
5.	Existing character of Smeathe's Ridge is because of vehicle use	5
6.	Exemption should be made for motorcycles because they do not cause physical damage	12
7.	Amenities will not be improved for banned users	4
8.	TRO is only being considered because WCC has failed in its duty to maintain	6
9.	Money for the TRO should be spent on maintenance instead	11
10.	Waste of public money - TRO is unnecessary	6
11.	Alternative route, Gypsy Lane, needs repairing/unsuitable	55
12.	WCC not following "Making the Best of Byways"	7
13.	WCC not following its own policy on consultation	24
14.	WCC allowing itself to be unduly influenced by anti-vehicle interests	13
15.	Only Friends of The Ridgeway invited to Cabinet meeting 20 th June 2003	25
16.	Matter should be referred to a Public Inquiry	25
17.	WCC unduly influenced by Councillor of adjoining authority	3
18.	Additional individual types of objection too vague for objective response	21

Responses to Objections

1. TRO is unnecessary - path is in good condition

The western part, the wide green sward area, does have vehicle wheel ruts along it. The intention is to repair these and re-seed with grass. The eastern part is severely damaged because vehicles have to travel on a single unsurfaced track. The County Council refutes the statement that the route is in good condition.

2. **Damage is caused by heavy use by farm vehicles which would be exempt from the TRO**

There is not a significant use of the route by farm vehicles. Objections 1 and 2 partly contradict each other.

3. **High scenic value of Smeathe's Ridge would be denied to vehicle users, especially the less able bodied**

Able-bodied vehicle users can park in the Barbury Castle car park and walk the short distance to Smeathe's Ridge. The County Council accepts there will be a disadvantage for the less able bodied. However, if there is good compliance with the Order, it would be possible to keep the access open for disabled drivers.

4. **TRO will not benefit non-vehicle users as there is sufficient room for all**

This is a question of the amenity value, particularly for the western part. There will be a benefit on the eastern part where vehicles and other users by and large have to use the same unsurfaced track.

5. **Existing character of Smeathe's Ridge is because of vehicle use**

This is a difficult point to argue because it is a matter of opinion.

6. **Exemption should be made for motorcycles because they do not cause physical damage**

The TRO is being invoked not just because of the damage being caused, but to improve the amenity

7. **Amenities will not be improved for banned drivers**

Agreed. With all TROs there are perceived winners and losers.

8. **The TRO is only being considered because WCC has failed in its duty to maintain**

The TRO is being invoked to prevent damage. The existing damage will be repaired regardless of the TRO.

9. **Money for the TRO should be spent on maintenance instead**

The County Council has a range of duties and associated powers which it can use at its discretion. Carrying out maintenance work to a grass surface without initiating some form of management or control when it is likely that the damage will recur would be a failure to manage. In this instance the County Council is invoking its discretionary powers.

10. **A waste of public money - the TRO is unnecessary**

This is largely a question of opinion and not too dissimilar to 9 above.

11. **Alternative route, Gypsy Lane, needs repairing/unsuitable**

Works to repair Gypsy Lane are in hand and the TRO would not be enforced until it is available for use.

12. **WCC not following "Making the Best of Byways"**

This document is advisory and targeted at surfaced tracks. It is not wholly applicable to Smeathe's Ridge.

13. **WCC not following its own policy on consultation**

The Ridgeway Management Group carried out an informal consultation on the use of TRO's during the preparation of the Ridgeway National Trail Surface Standard Draft Action Plan. The County Council was aware of the outcome of that consultation and was of the opinion that no new significant type of objection was likely and therefore decided to make the Order. As a result of the advertisement of the Order no new significant type of objections were received.

14. **WCC allowing itself to be unduly influenced by anti-vehicle interests**

The County Council refutes this statement. The authority endeavours to manage all its functions without fear or favour to any particular interest group. It is accepted that this is a contentious issue but the County Council is the Highway and Traffic Authority and has to make decisions.

15. **Only the Friends of The Ridgeway were invited to the Cabinet meeting of 20th June 2003**

The Friends of The Ridgeway were not invited to the meeting, they exercised their prerogative as allowed in the County Council's Constitution, to address the Cabinet meeting.

16. **Matter should be referred to a Public Inquiry**

There is no statutory requirement to refer this TRO to a Public Inquiry. It is an option outlined in the Regulatory Committee report. The Regulatory Committee could decide to refer the TRO to a Public Inquiry.

17. **WCC unduly influenced by Councillor of adjoining authority**

WCC refutes this allegation.

18. **Additional individual types of objection too vague for objective response**

In scheduling the types of objection 21 were identified which did not easily fit into any of the 17 types but were too vague to respond to in an objective manner.

