

Written representation on the proposed rights of way over the World Heritage Site at Stonehenge, A303 Highways England
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General remarks on the importance of the proposed new rights of way

The provision of safe rights of way for non-motorised users (NMUs) over and through new road schemes is now an important component of the development of modern road schemes nationally. The A303 Stonehenge tunnel project should be a shining example of this.

To ensure that the new rights of way offered by the scheme offer the best connectivity and the safest possible non-motorised routes for all NMUs, I would like to make the following comments on the scheme as it stands.

Western section – safe connectivity improvements

1 There needs to be a safe tunnel or bridge crossing at Yarnbury Castle, which will otherwise be too dangerous for NMUs to cross.

No provision is made for this.

2 There needs to be a safe road crossing over the A360 for the new bridleway proposed to run up the south side of the new Winterbourne Stoke approach road, to take it over the A360 and on towards Green Bridge 4.

A bridge or tunnel is needed, rather than the currently proposed traffic lights, as otherwise horse riders and other NMUs will be forced to queue to cross a dangerous road.

This new bridleway is an essential link for NMUs from Winterbourne Stoke wishing to access the WHS and linked routes towards the Woodford Valley via the old A303 restricted byway (RB) and Salisbury Plain via Larkhill.

3 The new RB (created from the route of the old A360) running south down the eastern side of the new route of the A360 apparently goes to a dead end at the A360.

From the new Longbarrow roundabout it needs to connect with existing RB BSJA9 on the west side of the A360. A suitable road crossing over the A360 is thus be required to achieve this.

Alternatively, a new RB could be constructed down the west side of the A360 (rather than the east side) to connect directly with RB BSJA9 (with the route of the old A360 either closed or left as a dead end).

4 The new RB (created from the route of the old A360) from Green Bridge 4 running north towards the Visitor Centre on the east side of the A360 apparently goes to a dead end.

It needs to be connected to the course of the old A344, now an RB, in a way which doesn't involve NMUs clashing with users of the Visitor Centre car park.

Note: Residents of Shrewton ideally need a direct RB connection to the old A344 RB at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre via a completely new route from Shrewton. This route is not within the remit of the plans, but is being considered as one of the

legacies of the scheme. Potentially this new route, if it ran parallel to the A360 from Shrewton to the Visitor Centre, could connect with a new RB put in as part of the scheme down the west, rather than the east, side of the new A360 running towards the Visitor Centre.

Central Section – resolving clash of interests on the byways

5 Byway AMES12. This provides an important access route onto the WHS and across it to Salisbury Plain and beyond for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers both from the south and the north.

A safe crossing over the A360 at Druids Lodge would make this route much safer and more attractive for NMUs travelling north to Salisbury Plain and south to the Wylde Valley over the WHS.

Alternatively, the connection via RB BSJA9 and a new RB down the A360 to the Longbarrow roundabout could be utilised, see 3 above.

AMES12 is and will be used by motorised traffic to travel to and park in the vicinity of Stonehenge and NMUs will find themselves sharing with significant levels of motor traffic travelling in both directions. This situation is far from ideal and needs to be addressed, see 7 below.

6 Byway AMES11. This provides the ONLY access onto the WHS for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers travelling north over the WHS from the Woodford Valley and Salisbury to routes over Salisbury Plain via Larkhill or via Winterbourne Stoke. Equally it is the only link for NMUs travelling south towards the Woodford Valley and Salisbury from the north. The new RB route from Stonehenge Cottages into Amesbury does not provide direct access to existing off-road connection to the Woodford Valley and further south.

AMES11 is currently shown as a dead end on the project plans (before it meets the new RB formed from the old A303). This means that NMUs will be sharing the route with motorised traffic travelling in both directions and attempting to turn round at various points along the route. This situation is, again, far from ideal and needs to be addressed, see 7 below.

7 Motorised use of Byways AMES11 and 12 will deter use by many vulnerable NMUs of the off-road connectivity offered by the scheme (horse riders of all ages and child/family cyclists are particularly vulnerable to motorised traffic, and the rutting of surfaces caused by motorised use is incompatible with cycling and in many cases horse riding). This outcome would significantly diminish the advantages intended to be offered by the scheme both to NMU leisure tourism and local community off-road access.

A solution must therefore be put in place by the Applicant to avoid this clash of interests between users of the byways.

New NMU routes running alongside both the byways might be a possibility, or a TRO on AMES11 and a parallel route for NMUs alongside AMES12.

Surfaces suitable for all NMUs

8 Where possible, all bridleways and restricted byways should have a grassed surface of at least 10 feet wide for the use of horse riders and walkers, as well as an all-weather surface for cyclists and carriage drivers. Where the available

width does not permit this, a friable, non-slip all-weather surface should be provided that is safe for use by all NMUs.

Grass surfaces on rights of way allow for the retention of a rural character for the network, and green corridors for plant and wildlife.

Fencing

9 All roads and cuttings must be securely fenced at a suitable height to prevent access by children and loose animals. Thorny hedging like hawthorn should be planted alongside all fencing to provide long-term, impenetrable barriers and bird-nesting opportunities.

10 A non-thorny dividing hedge between two user surfaces could be considered, subject to suitability of the environment of the WHS, which would also be very good as a wildlife corridor.