

Written representation from Wiltshire Ramblers on A303 Stonehenge proposals

It is proposed that a new footpath and cycle track will run along the north side of the existing A303 from Winterbourne Stoke to the south side of the new junction, and continue on into the World Heritage Site (WHS) – see below. This appears to start some way east of Winterbourne Stoke. Neither does it link with WSTO4 where it joins the existing A303, and appears to rely on the existing A303 to cross the River Till. We would like it to begin at the junction of the existing A303 and WSTO4, and to cross the River Till on its own footbridge north of the existing A303. We would also like it to be available to horse riders.

It is proposed that, when the tunnel has been constructed, the present A303 in the central section would become a “green byway”, effectively a bridleway, but “fenced to keep users within the boundaries of the byway”. We have always thought that one of the objectives of the whole scheme was to enable visitors to the WHS to roam freely around the site, and that one of its by-products would be to allow visitors simply to walk across the old A303 to view the archaeological sites to the south, so we do not understand the need for the fencing. We support the second option for the tunnel entrances which requires large ventilation holes to be cut into the roof of the tunnel at its entrances. Clearly there would be a need to keep the public away from these holes, and from the new A303 and tunnel entrances themselves, but surely these could be fenced off, leaving the old A303 unfenced?

To make up for the stopping up of byways AMES1 & 2, it is proposed that a new link would be created between AMES1 and Allington Lane south of the A303 along a private lane. Presumably this would be open to motorised vehicles as well as pedestrians etc.? Going west, it would cross bridleway AMES29, which itself terminates at the approach road to a bridge for traffic across the A303 in Solstice park. As such, if one was walking up either AMES1 or Allington Lane expecting to cross the A303, it would require a considerable diversion to the west to do so. We request that a footbridge be built over the A303 where Allington Lane/AMES2 crosses it at present. We believe that the need to maintain this crossing point is considerably strengthened by the fact that military staff are housed in married quarters at Boscombe Down and many will cycle over to Bulford Camp and back. Officers will also rent accommodation in the locality and similarly commute in. Demand may further increase with the Army Re-Basing Programme, which we understand involves the withdrawal of some 7,000 Army personnel from Germany and their rehousing on Salisbury Plain and its environs. We note that Wiltshire Council has been asked to respond to our request that a footbridge across the A303 be erected at this point to avoid the unreasonably inconvenient diversion to the west (question Tr.1.33 on page 243 of the Examining Authority's Written Questions), and await its answer with interest.

We request that all public rights of way (for walkers as a minimum) be kept open during the construction phase, or at least that reasonable, convenient and non-lengthy diversions be offered as alternatives, with reasonable notice of any temporary closures.

Tim Lewis
Area Footpath Secretary
Wiltshire Ramblers
1 May 2019