

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Richard Price](#)
Subject: Summary of evidence given at oral hearing of 12/6/19 public inquiry into A303 Stonehenge. Issue Specific Hearing 5. 7.2
Date: 14 June 2019 14:08:49

In respect of how the proposed Stonehenge tunnel scheme would impact on not only my own religious beliefs as a druid and Archdruid, but on the beliefs and well-being of the many thousands of our congregation who regularly attend the solstice and equinox seasonal celebrations at Stonehenge, in order to practice their religious and spiritual beliefs, I feel obliged to say the following:-

It has come to our attention as druids, that the Planning Inspectorate for the proposed Stonehenge A303 tunnel Public Inquiry, has received an application from Wiltshire Council, for a draft consent order, were this scheme to go ahead, to permanently close the droves and Byways Open to All Traffic at Stonehenge, to all but limited traffic.

Were this to come into effect, it would prohibit parking in the Stonehenge arena, at the times of the solstices and equinoxes, for all members of the Stonehenge congregation, except for those lucky enough to get into the severely limited English Heritage pay parking facilities.

The consequences of such an action, could lead to civil unrest on a scale not seen at Stonehenge since the late eighties, and the infamous days of the so-called exclusion zone.

Having served on the Round Table group meetings for Managed Open Access to Stonehenge, alongside members of Wiltshire Constabulary, Wiltshire Council, the National Trust and English Heritage, for nearly 25 years, during which time there have been no disturbances since Access was first granted in the year 2000, I can only say that where prohibitions on access occur, there is trouble, whereas where provision is made for entry and parking etc, all is well.

I would like now to paint a picture of what such a permanent closure of the byways would mean for the residents of Wiltshire, and the financial pressures such a closure would mean for its local authority.

English Heritage has pay parking facilities for approx. 450+ cars. Which means that in practice 800 or 900 people at most, perhaps more with further car sharing, can take advantage of their facilities at any one time, provided they are prepared to pay.

But seasonal events at Stonehenge are more often than not attended by upwards of 2000 people, the remainder having temporarily occupied byway 12, as by custom and usage, an unofficial overflow car park, which has existed as such for over thirty years.

If this facility were to be removed, and in the absence of any valid means of legal redress, ordinary people, our congregation, would be forced to walk, often with small children in tow, a distance of up to 3 or 4 miles, there and back, in order to attend the proceedings, if at all, and without any access whatsoever for the disabled amongst them, unable to reach English Heritage facilities.

In the face of such difficulties, it would not be surprising, given the strength of feeling involved, and the genuine love for Stonehenge that the monument/temple inspires, for the religious minded general public to decide to take matters into their own hands, and

seek to park wherever they can.

Once the E.H. Visitors` Centre is full up, traffic will begin to pile up on the approach road to the Visitors` Centre from Longbarrow crossroads (A360), the A344 from Shrewton, and the road up to Rollestone. And that`s just to the West.

To the North, Larkhill and its surrounds and by-roads will also start to fill up with cars, vans, mobile homes and other means of transport, when Wiltshire sought to try a temporary traffic restriction order twice previously.

To the East, the road from Countess roundabout to Durrington (A345), will start to fill up with parked vehicles, all the way from Countess farm to Woodhenge.

And I have even heard it said, that were restrictions to become that onerous, to the South, the tunnel itself might very well become a car park, were it seen to be both a blight on the landscape and an excuse for draconian legislation and unjustified prohibitive traffic regulation orders, out of all proportion to the context of the but four days a year when public druidic religious festivities actually take place.

All this, should it occur, would put an enormous drain on Wiltshire local resources. To give comparative figures. In 2014, English Heritage`s budget for putting on the summer solstice, was declared at £150K. That compares with the last time they tried to stop the event in 1999, for which the bill was an estimated £1.5 million. A figure that would be 3 or 4 times that today.

I have spent the last thirty years facilitating reasonable and fair religious access to Stonehenge for our druid ceremonies and celebrations, and, with my colleague Arthur Pendragon, might well be said to have ushered in a new era of peace and normality locally, after all the troubles of the mid-eighties. I do not wish to see all that happen all over again, on account of previously permitted access to the droves and byways, being arbitrarily denied and refused by Wiltshire Council, and I can only hope that Wiltshire Council will take heed, and withdraw or amend this application.

I would like to request, that when the Planning Inspectorate, or the Minister responsible, come to assess the Wiltshire Council application for the draft consent order, then at the same time the Planning Inspectorate or minister should assess our Council of British Druid Orders request that the droves, particularly byway 12, should be kept open for religious observances 12 days per year as set out in the 2011 order for Variance, (or at the very minimum, 2 days each at Spring, Autumn and Winter, the day/night before for people to arrive, and the day itself to celebrate and leave.)

We are the fifth largest and fastest growing religious grouping in the U.K., and our members and congregation have the same rights as members of any other religious grouping, i.e. to access their place of worship, and not to be penalised and/or criminalised, and/or seriously and drastically inconvenienced, through lack of already existing parking facilities, being arbitrarily taken away from them.

Rollo Maughfling, Archdruid of Stonehenge & Britain.
Stonehenge Officer, Council of British Druid Orders.
Founder member, English Heritage Round Table for Managed Open Access to Stonehenge.

See also:- Summary of evidence given at oral hearing of 22/5/19 Public Inquiry into A303 Stonehenge.

Re Question HW1.6.

Document in relation to question HW1.6, Stonehenge Traffic Regulation Order
Inquiry 22/6/2011, Byway 12 - An Order for Variance.